

Birds of Prey and the Sport of Falconry in Italian Literature through the Fourteenth
Century: from Serving Love to Served for Dinner

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Birds of Prey and the Sport of Falconry in Italian Literature through the Fourteenth
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University of Wisconsin-Madison

This dissertation looks at the reasons for which and the ways in which images of falcons, hawks, and the sport of falconry are used in medieval Italian literature. It seeks to show that the use of these images changes in Italy over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The courtly love symbolism that the falcon and its kind evoke in French, Provençal, and English literatures becomes problematic in Italy because of the evolution of its poetry away from the courtly love ideal, and because of socio-cultural changes involving the rise of the merchant class in Italy and the fall of the old aristocratic way of life that was idealized in earlier love poetry.

In the first chapter a background is established that defines the role of falconry in medieval society through investigations of encyclopedic works, bestiaries, and falconry treatises. The cultural associations from that role are reflected in vernacular literature that is earlier to or concurrent with that in Italian; a glance is given to a few Old French, English, and Provençal works.

In the second chapter, poetry of the Duecento and Trecento is discussed. It is shown that falcons and their kind retain their *fin' amors* connotations in Siculo-Tuscan poetry, but disappear from that of the *Dolce stil novo* because of a changed approach to love. The birds return somewhat in the *cantari* of the Trecento, but mostly in madrigals, where they illustrate erotic earthly love encounters.

In the third chapter, Dante's *Divine Comedy* comes under scrutiny for his ability to take a courtly image of love and transform it into both a symbol of transcendental love, and of his own training as a pilgrim.

The fourth chapter looks at prose works, particularly *novelle*. Here falcons evoke nostalgia for the old courtly ways, and cause class conflict arising from confusion of roles in a changing society. It concludes with a look at Boccaccio's story of Federigo degli Alberighi, who makes the mistake of trying to live the chivalric ideal in a money-based society, and is forced to eat the last remnant of his courtly past, his falcon.

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INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times the falcon and the hawk have been admired as fierce predators. Likewise, since antiquity, people have domesticated them as hunters, and continue to do so to this day. These birds of prey have a close relationship with humans that is unique among other animals except dogs; they are pets, companions in recreation, and procurers of food. They are also expensive to maintain in that they require a great deal of care and training. For this reason and others, falconry as a sport comes into its own in the Middle Ages as recreation for the upper class.¹ Moreover, the birds that are the playthings of the rich become synonymous with their owners.

By the time of the emergence of vernacular literatures, the sport of falconry and the birds involved carry a symbolic significance that reflects their use by the aristocracy. A knight or lady with a hawk represents nobility, leisure and, further, courtly love. There is a ranking of birds that mimics that of the feudal system, with birds of prey at the top representing nobles and kings, and birds such as chickens and geese on the bottom, the peasants. Thus a lone falcon or hawk carries with it all the connotations of knighthood and courtesy, and can be anthropomorphized into a knight or a lady.

Hawks and falcons are seen often with such associations in English, French, and Provençal medieval vernacular literature. It seems worthwhile to investigate their appearances in Italian literature, to see if the same rules apply. This is a topic that has remained largely unexplored. The only major work to have been done on falconry in

¹ See Robin Oggins, "Falconry and Medieval Social Status," *Medievalia* 12 (1989): 43-55: "In modern sociological terms, [...] falconry was an almost perfect example of conspicuous consumption: it was expensive, time-consuming, and useless (as its purpose was not for acquiring food), and in all three respects it served to set its practitioners apart as a class."

medieval Italian literature is the recently published contribution of Daniela Boccassini, a book entitled *Il volo della mente. Falconeria e sofia nel mondo mediterraneo: Islam, Federico II, Dante*.² Her main interest is in the development of falcons as intellectual signs and the view of the sport of falconry as a quest for spiritual love or wisdom. In contrast, this present work concerns primarily how the relationship, both real and symbolic, between falcons and nobility influences their use in the secular world of love poetry and tales of society.

This dissertation looks at the reasons for which and the ways in which images of falcons, hawks, and the sport of falconry are used in medieval Italian literature. It seeks to show that the use of these images changes in Italy over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The courtly love symbolism that the falcon and its kind evoke in French, Provençal, and English literatures becomes problematic in Italy because of the evolution of its poetry away from the courtly love ideal, and because of socio-cultural changes involving the rise of the merchant class in Italy and the fall of the old aristocratic way of life that was idealized in earlier love poetry.

References to falconry and the birds involved are in fact much less common in Italian than in other vernacular literatures. The courtly connotations of birds of prey are less relevant to Italian society than to the still feudal systems of Northern Europe. In the Duecento and Trecento and beyond, Italian society is very dynamic. The rise of the merchant class steals the exclusivity of leisure time and its pursuits such as falconry from the crumbling aristocracy. The association of falconry with knighthood and courtly love, by now a conventionalized construct, is simply not very relevant to the new society.

² Daniela Boccassini, *Il volo della mente. Falconeria e sofia nel mondo mediterraneo: Islam, Federico II, Dante* (Ravenna: Longo, 2003).

This work is organized in the following manner. The first chapter examines how falconry achieves its position in literature prior to and outside of Italy. Familiarity with the environments in which falcons appear in literature by the Italian Duecento provides a base of comparison, showing the contexts that Italian writers have the choice of adopting or ignoring as they see fit. Chapter One looks back to classical writings to see when falconry makes its appearance as a sport. Falcons have a different sort of association in ancient literature; they are cruel and rapacious beings. Then, taking a cue from Robin Oggins,³ I examine bestiaries, encyclopedic works, and falconry treatises. I find, as he does, that falcons and hawks start to make their presence felt in bestiaries and encyclopedic works around the time of the Crusades, due to the increased contact with the Arab world, where the sport had been popular for centuries. Treatises on the sport appear in Western Europe at this time as well. I look at the Arab world, because of their own treatises, copied in Western Europe, and their conceptions of love, which have bearing on that in Provençal poetry. Then, in Provençal poetry, I examine images of domesticated falcons that are used to illustrate conventions of love. In Old French and English literature, there is also evidence of the association between falcons and noble love.

With this background established, Chapter Two looks at Italian Duecento and Trecento poetry. Birds of prey play the smallest of roles in Sicilian and Stilnovistic

³ Robin Oggins has done extensive research on the development of falconry as a noble sport in England, and on its place in European society in general. See Oggins, "Albertus Magnus on Falcons and Hawks," in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 441-62; "Falconry and Medieval Social Status," *Medievalia* 12 (1989): 43-55; "Falconry and Medieval Views of Nature," in *The Medieval World of Nature*, ed. Joyce E. Salisbury (New York & London: Garland, 1993), 47-60; and *The Kings and Their Hawks: Falconry in Medieval England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

poetry. The Sicilians adopt quite a bit of animal imagery from their Provençal forbears, but neglect the falcons associated with love relationships. The Stilnovistic poets largely, and probably consciously, forgo the animal similes common to Provençal, Sicilian, and Siculo-Tuscan poets; therefore, their lack of references to falcons is not surprising. Indeed, most falcons and hawks are found in Siculo-Tuscan poetry; here they are used as in Provençal, and also to illustrate the anguish that the poets' love causes them to feel.

In the Trecento, there is no falconry imagery evident in aulic poetry. After the *Dolce Stil Novo*, the falcons do not return to higher lyric poetry. Not even Petrarch uses the image, preferring, in speaking of love as a hunt, to employ the fish or the deer. Instead, the birds appear in many madrigals and *cacce*, alluding to very earthly erotic love encounters, usually between a poet and a serendipitous shepherdess or the like.

In the third chapter, Dante's *Divine Comedy* comes under scrutiny for the poet's ability to take a courtly image of love and transform it into both a symbol of transcendental love, and of his own training as a pilgrim. His use of falconry imagery is compared to his similar use of crane imagery to show a pattern by which birds in the *Comedy* are seen as symbols of the journey to God.

The fourth chapter looks at prose, particularly the *novella* tradition. The courtly undertones of falcons and hawks are affected by a changing Italian social scene. In the *Novellino*, they appear only in stories that are defined as having taken place several generations previously in courtly settings. In the works of Sacchetti and Sercambi, their presence is more problematic and illustrative of a tension surrounding the appropriateness of possession of hawks by various classes. In the *Decameron*, finally, a falcon is found that, along with its owner, Federigo degli Alberighi, carries every connotation of the

courtly love tradition, but in a story that shows the problems spawned by following its rules in real life. Driven to desperation by the poverty he has caused himself by living as a courtly lover, he is forced to serve his falcon itself, rather than any catch of the falcon, to his lady for dinner. The practicality of this solution mixes with his courtly impulse to extravagant action for his lady's sake, the type of behavior that ruined him in the first place, thus reconciling the practical and the idealistic, since his lady is moved by his actions to marry him.

In conclusion, in having attempted to explain trends in the use of images of falcons, hawks, and the sport of falconry in medieval Italian literature, I have found that the ways in which these themes are used are dynamic and problematic, changing with the development of poetry in its first century and affected by the evolution of the social scene that spawned the use of falcons as icons of courtly love in the first place.

CHAPTER 1: Falconry as symbols before (and outside of) Italian literature.

Although keeping tamed hawks for recreational hunting is a practice that goes back thousands of years in the Middle East and the steppes of Eastern Europe, and although falconry was practiced for food hunting on occasion in the Greco-Roman world, it truly finds its niche as a typical pastime of the nobility of Western Europe under the conditions of the feudal system. The feudal nobility have capital, leisure time, and land in abundance—exactly the qualities needed for recreational hunting. In addition, during the Crusades, the contact of Western nobility with the Islamic world brings the expertise, practices, and treatises of Arab falconers to Europe. The westerners, who enthusiastically embrace this hobby, write many treatises of their own, culminating in the *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus* written by Emperor Frederick II.

The growth of the special role that falcons and hawks have in society can be seen in their increasing inclusion in types of texts whose earlier incarnations omitted them or had merely cursory comments. Such is the case with bestiaries and encyclopedic literature, whose sections on falcons and hawks grow and multiply with the parallel growth of popularity in the sport and its accompanying how-to treatises.

Because of this close relationship between people and their domesticated birds, and because people admire them as fierce predators in the wild, they receive a unique treatment in art and literature as well. In art they are ubiquitous; a hunting party sets off with their falcons in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Allegory of Good Government in Siena; a man with a hawk is on the Campanile of Florence as one of the seven mechanical arts; this image appears on *cassoni*, seals, coins—the list is endless. The gentleman or

gentlewoman with hawk on hand is the most concise representation of the sport of falconry, and carries with it the connotations of nobility, love, and courtly society.¹

In literature, birds of prey and the sport of falconry carry the same significance as in art. Wild birds symbolize people who are being celebrated or condemned for their fierceness; domesticated ones symbolize noblemen. Both kinds, but particularly the domestic predators, are protagonists in hunting images that evoke the love pursuit. The association between the two meanings of venery is transparent, and used in literature since antiquity. Only in Medieval texts, however, are falcons and hawks used in this manner. The bird may represent Love, who seizes the prey, the lover, or it may be the lover, who is pursuing his beloved, or it may be the beloved, who is in the process of being trained by the lover/falconer.

In addition, the training of the falcon is occasionally used as a symbol of the spiritual training of the mind to reach for the Divine. This is seen in the *Aviaryum* of Hugh de Fouilloy and in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

As the old aristocracy faces obsolescence in the midst of the rise of the merchant class in the late Duecento and the Trecento, and the concept of nobility itself is questioned, the association of birds of prey with nobility becomes problematic; it is either a nostalgic ideal divorced from reality, or a symbol for the wastefulness and self-centeredness of the nobility. As can be seen in the *Decameron*, merchants fly hawks for sport as well as nobles, so the sport is no longer in itself a sign of courtly status. In northern countries, however, social change is yet far away, and the feudal connotations of hawks and falcons remain uncompromised.

¹ An excellent treatment of the subject of falconry in art and Medieval love is by Mira Friedman, "The Falcon and the Hunt: Symbolic Love Imagery in Medieval and Renaissance Art," in *Poetics of Love in the Middle Ages* (Fairfax: George Mason University Press, 1989), 157-180.

The ancient Greeks and Romans did not practice falconry as a sport. Hunting for birds was accomplished with nets; doing so by using predatory birds was a practice spoken of as something done in foreign lands. Literary references to falcons find them mentioned for their swiftness in flight, or their fierceness as predators, or as a symbol of Apollo. These properties make for excellent metaphors for sailing ships or war, but not for love. The association between love and falcons is not to be found in the ancient world. Homer uses them in several of his epic similes; in the *Iliad*, when Zeus commands Apollo to go and rally the demoralized Trojans, he hastens to do his father's bidding, and "swooped down from the mountains of Ida with the speed of a dove-destroying hawk, which is the fastest thing on wings." (XV, 237) Similarly, in the *Odyssey*, the ship that takes Odysseus to Ithaca is so fast that "not even the wheeling falcon, the fastest thing that flies, could have kept her company." (XIII, 87) It is worth noting that the compliment of "fastest flyer" is given in these examples to two different birds: in the *Iliad* the Greek word is ἰρηξ, hawk, while the *Odyssey* refers to the κίρκος, or falcon. Here, as commonly in literature right through the Middle Ages, little distinction is made between hawks and falcons. Only devotees of the sport of falconry are careful about speaking of the correct species; in literary references, the properties of both are similar enough that often either will do. Perhaps however the hawk is used in association with Apollo in the above instance because it is his totem, as is seen later on in the *Odyssey*, when, following a speech by Telemachus just prior to his arrival home, a bird flies to the right (a good omen, directionally): "It was a hawk, Apollo's winged herald, holding a dove in its talons, which it plucked so that the feathers fluttered down to earth half-way between the ship and Telemachus himself" (XV, 526). Its appearance is

considered a good omen not only for its direction of flight but because of the god that must have sent it.

In the ancient western world, the connotations that falcons carry are as likely to be negative as positive: fierceness can equally be a sign of cruelty as of valor. In fact, the first fable of Greek literature involves a hawk; it is portrayed in an unfavorable light. The fable is by Hesiod, who lived in the 7th century B.C. An Italian translation of it goes as follows:

Ora un esempio vo' proporre a' regi,
 benché saggi da sé. Tra i feri artigli
 lo sparviero traea verso le nubi
 l'usignoletto, che ha sì vario il canto.
 Stretto in quell'unghie il meschinel gemea
 pietosamente; ma il crudel con piglio
 imperioso: O misero, gli disse,
 a che ti lagni? In poter sei di tale
 ch'è più forte di te. Meco verrai,
 ov'io ti porterò, musico augello;
 e della carne tua, se pur m'aggrada,
 farò il mio pasto, o renderotti al volo.
 Mal cauto è quei che contrastar presume
 del più forte al voler; non che vittoria,
 ei ne riporterà dolore e scherno.²

The hawk is used here to represent someone who is so strong that he may do whatever he likes; he has the power of life and death over his prey. A similar scenario is used differently by Aesop, in which the hawk's intelligence, supplemented by its fierceness, turns it into a positive example for humankind, the moral of which is the familiar "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush". Again, a hawk seizes a nightingale, and the prey begs to be released, arguing that it is too small a bird to be sufficient for the dinner of a

² Trans. Alessandro Chiappetti, in *Lo specchio delle muse*, ed. F. M. Pontani, B. Costantini (Roma: Casa Editrice Oreste Bares, 1961), 50.

hawk. The hawk responds that it is not so stupid as to let go a sure meal in order to chase after one that cannot yet be seen.

Among ancient naturalist writings, the hawk is a noble and admirable bird. Aristotle and Pliny make minimal mention of the sport of falconry, but tell very similar tales of men hunting with birds in the area of Thrace. Aelian includes this tale as well. Aristotle says,³

In the part of Thrace once named as belonging to Kedropolis⁴ men hunt the small birds in the marsh in partnership with the hawks. The men hold sticks and stir the reeds and brushwood to make the small birds fly, while the hawks from above appear overhead and chase them down. In fear they fly down again to the ground; the men strike them with the sticks and take them, and give the hawks a share in the prey: they throw them some of the birds and the hawks catch them.

Pliny's account⁵ differs only in that he states that it is the hawks themselves who strike down the prey, rather than letting the men do so with sticks. Aelian, on the other hand, tells that it is falcons, rather than hawks,⁶ who are used this way in Thrace, and that the prey is caught by being chased by the falcons into the hunters' outspread nets.⁷

Only Oppian mentions falconry in a way that suggests that the practice is commonplace. He divides venery into three categories, based on the prey pursued: hunting for land animals, fowling, and fishing. He describes fowlers as hunting accompanied by hawks: "To their hunt the fowlers carry nor sword nor bill nor brazen

³*Historia animalium*, ed. and trans. D. M. Balme (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), VIII, xxxvi. 309.

⁴ Kedropolis was a king of part of Thrace in the early 4th century B.C.

⁵ *The Natural History*, trans. Bostock and Riley (London: H. G. Bohn, 1855) X. 10.

⁶ The word that Aelian uses that is translated as "falcon" in this anecdote is 'ίεραξ, whereas, when he is, elsewhere in his work, referring to hawks, he uses the word κίρκος, as do the other authors here cited who write in Greek.

⁷ Aelianus, Claudius, *De natura animalium*, ed. and trans. A. F. Scholfield (London, Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd., Harvard University Press, 1958), II. 42.

spear, but the hawk is their attendant when they travel to the woods, and the long cords and the clammy yellow birdlime and the reeds that tread an airy path.”⁸

Aelian, Oppian’s contemporary, has a great number of things to say about hawks, falcons, and falconry; for the most part they are tidbits of information scattered at random in his *De natura animalium*. Aelian’s work is a compilation from many different sources, all Greek, comprising facts, rumors, and anecdotes about various animals in no particular order. Everything he writes about fowling and birds of prey is set in foreign lands. In addition to his version of the tale of fowlers in Thrace, he tells about falconry in India,⁹ where they train the young of eagles, ravens, and kites to hunt hares and foxes, and he has many things to say about hawks in Egypt, most likely because of their important role in Egyptian religion. As he relates, hawks were consecrated to Horapollo in Egypt; a few were sacred and tended specially by men who fed them food identical to the offerings made to the god.¹⁰ He gives the reason for this association with Horapollo as the hawk’s ability to fly at a great height, seemingly on its back, and look into the sun without flinching.¹¹ Later, he tells that the various species of hawks are special each to a different god.¹² He says that hawks are beloved by the gods, and once they have departed life, they send prophetic dreams.¹³

Aelian has more anecdotes about the behavior of hawks and falcons than any other encyclopedic source. He gives examples of ways in which these birds display anthropomorphic behavior of high moral caliber. He relates,

⁸ Oppian, *Cynegetica* I. 54-70, trans. A. W. Mair (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1958).

⁹ Aelian, IV. 26.

¹⁰ Ibid., VII. 9.

¹¹ Ibid., X. 14.

¹² Ibid., XII. 4.

¹³ Ibid., XI. 39.

If a falcon sees the dead body of a man (so it is said), it always heaps earth upon the unburied corpse...and will never touch the body. And it even refrains from drinking if a solitary man is engaged in leading off water into a channel, feeling sure that it will cause damage to the man who so labours if it purloins the water which he needs. But if several men are engaged in irrigating, it sees that the stream is abundant and takes its share from the loving-cup, so to speak, which they offer, and is glad to drink.¹⁴

Hawks also show virtue and willingness to become tame and civilized:

When well treated they are good at remembering kindness. They are caught by pandering to their appetites, and when this has rendered them tame they remain thereafter perfectly gentle: they would never set upon their benefactors once they have been freed from their congenital and natural temper.¹⁵

For the sake of contrast, both with this last text and with later, medieval views of falcons, in which falcons are not only admirable but symbols of noble love, it is worth looking at Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. In Ovid's work the image of love as a hunt is well-developed: in advising those who wish to chase women, he tells them to figure out where they are, as hunters know where to look for prey:

Scit bene venator cervis ubi retia tendat,
Scit bene qua fredens valle moretur aper;
Aucupibus noti frutices; qui sustenit hamos,
Novit quae multo pisce natentur aquae¹⁶

He uses similar imagery when telling women, in book III, how to attract men:

Omnibus illa locis maneat studiosa placendi,
Et curam tota mente decoris agat.
Causa ubique valet; semper tibi pendeat hamus:
Quo minime credas gurgite, piscis erit.
Saepe canes frustra nemorosis montibus errant,
Inque plagam nullo cervus agente venit.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., II. 42.

¹⁵ Ibid., IV. 44.

¹⁶ Ovid, *The Art of Love*, I. 45-48 (London; Cambridge, MA: William Heineman Ltd, Harvard University Press, 1957), translation of J. H. Mozley: "Well knows the hunter where to spread his nets for the stag, well knows he in what glen the boar with gnashing teeth abides; familiar are the copses to fowlers, and he who holds the hook is aware in what waters many fish are swimming."

¹⁷ Ibid., III. 423-428. "Let her that is eager to please be always everywhere, and give all her mind's attention to her charms. Chance everywhere has power; ever let your hook be hanging; where you least

The chase of love, however, does not involve hawks in any way. For Ovid, hawks are insidious predators, and not to be emulated in love. In advising against quarrelling with one's lover, he sets up the hawk as a negative example:

Dextera praecipue capit indulgentia mentes;
Asperitas odium saevaue bella movet.
Odimus accipitrem, quia vivit semper in armis,
Et pavidum solitos in pecus ire lupos.¹⁸

Likewise, when Ovid warns against the dangers of one's lover straying if one is gone too long, he again resorts to the same pair of predators, the hawk and the wolf. He gives the example of Helen of Troy's legendary adultery while her husband was gone, and her lover was present under her roof, and asks, "do you trust timid doves to a hawk? Do you trust a full sheepfold to a mountain wolf?"¹⁹

Clearly for Ovid, acting like a hawk ruins love, rather than helping to gain or keep it. It will be interesting to note how this attitude toward hawks' role in the hunt of love changes as their role in society changes and increases.

In ancient writings the reputation of hawks and falcons ranges from cruel to generous. Where the idea of domesticating them is present, in which they learn to cooperate with humans, they are also admired and attributed favorable human characteristics. When, much later, the medieval craze for falconry develops, a similar anthropomorphic association will occur and be reflected in literature of all sorts.

believe it, there will be a fish in the stream. Often do hounds stray in vain through mountain glens, and a stag, without any driving it, falls into the nets."

¹⁸ Ibid., II. 145-148. "Chief above all does tactful indulgence win the mind; harshness causes hatred and angry wars. We hate the hawk because he ever lives in arms, and the wolves that are wont to go against the timorous flock."

¹⁹ Ibid., II. 363-364.

The popularity of falcons and hawks in the West can to some extent be traced through their appearance in two types of writings that were common in the Middle Ages: encyclopedic works and bestiaries. Although these begin as two separate genres, in the later Middle Ages they meld, so that by the time of the appearance of bestiaries in vernacular languages, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, encyclopedic text relating to animals finds its way into bestiary material, and vice versa. In the particular case of birds of prey, a third genre of instructional text is also produced at this time, namely, falconry treatises. Cross-contamination among all three genres is common. The existence of this third type of didactic work, prompted by the emergence of falconry as a sport for the nobility, causes entries in late encyclopedic works for falcons and hawks to be quite different from those for other animals, in that they include instructions for care.

Falcons and hawks appear much less frequently in bestiaries than in encyclopedic works; indeed, their eventual appearance in bestiaries is due to the influence of encyclopedias and falconry manuals, and depends primarily on them for content. The originator of the bestiary genre, the *Physiologus*, was written in Greek, most likely in Alexandria, around the third or fourth century A.D. The oldest extant Latin manuscripts of this work date to the eighth century, and can be divided into families according to their variations in content.²⁰ The *Physiologus* and its early descendants combine descriptions, sometimes fanciful, sometimes approaching reality, of various birds and beasts with

²⁰ A detailed discussion of the families into which the *Physiologus* descendants may be divided can be found in Florence McCulloch, *Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960). Indeed, the entire following treatment of the history of the development of bestiaries is heavily indebted to McCulloch's fine work.

Christian allegorical interpretations.²¹ The *Physiologus* and its first Latin imitators make no mention whatsoever of falcons or hawks.

A major change to the Latin text occurs sometime around the tenth century. The text is greatly expanded, both in the number and the length of entries, by additions from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. From this family of manuscripts, named versio B-Is by McCulloch, descend most of the vernacular bestiaries that will be written over the following centuries. However, falcons and hawks remain absent from B-Is, despite Isidore having included them in his own work. Indeed, birds of prey do not find their way into bestiary works until the twelfth century. At this time, a second transformation of bestiaries occurs. A huge expansion of content, adopted from Isidore of Seville and contemporary encyclopedists such as Bartholomaeus Anglicus, is combined with a reorganization of material into discrete sections on beasts and birds, following Isidore's divisions, and also a change in interpretation: allegorical and mystical Christian interpretation of animals' behavior usually, but not always, gives way to moral teachings about everyday life. Occasionally, moralizing interpretations are eliminated altogether. With the new expansion of content, falcons and hawks are finally included, and given entries that seem to be taken in their entirety from encyclopedic sources.

Italian versions of the Latin bestiaries begin to appear in the thirteenth century, though the known manuscripts are from the fourteenth century or later.²² Occasionally they may be bound together with falconry manuals: Kenneth McKenzie tells of a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, numbered Ital. 450, that has a *Libro degli*

²¹ For the history of the evolution of the allegory over time from these bestiaries through vernacular versions, see Luigina Morini, *Bestiari medievali* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1996), and Kenneth McKenzie, "Unpublished Manuscripts of Italian Bestiaries," *PMLA* 20 (1905).

²² McKenzie discusses the dating of these manuscripts, 382 ff.

animali, including a section on falcons, bound together with another work, *Cura di falconi*.²³ Most Italian bestiaries, versions of a common *Libro della natura degli animali*, include a section on the falcon, whose zoological information seems derived primarily secondhand from falconry manuals or common parlance. But rather than offering commonplace moral advice, the comments are interpreted entirely allegorically, as in the older Latin texts.²⁴

An exception to this is the *Acerba* of Francesco Stabili, known as Cecco d'Ascoli. In the fourteenth century, he writes a moralizing encyclopedic work in verse that includes a bestiary with moral commentary. His comments on the falcon are interesting in that the falcon symbolizes nobility, not of birth, but that which is demonstrated by proper behavior:²⁵

Erodio, il quale è pur detto falcone,
 Fere col petto più che non col becco.
 Ascolta quanto è in lui perfezïone.
 Se in due volati non prende sua caccia,
 Vergognosane forte e sta allo stecco
 Né più in quel giorno animali minaccia.

Nell' altro che domestico pur vaga
 O per vergogna nell'aria va sperso,
 Di ritornare a lui tardi s'appaga.
 Non becca mai della putrida carne,
 Sia quanto vuole di fame converso,
 E quando è infermo becca pur le starne.

L'uomo ch'è prode figliuol di virtute,
 Più fa col cuore che non fa con bocca
 Quando il raggiungono l'aspre ferute.
 Sempre è vergogna dove è gentilezza.

²³ McKenzie, 387 ff.

²⁴ A Tuscan version of this text can be found in Morini, "Libro della natura degli animali," chapter XXXIII, 45-46, and a sixteenth-century Venetian version is found in Max Goldstaub and Richard Wendriner, *Ein Tosco-Venezianischer Bestiarius* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1892), 56-57.

²⁵ Cecco D'Ascoli, *L'Acerba*, vv. 2439-2464, ed. Achille Crespi (Ascoli Piceno: Casa Editrice di Giuseppe Cesari, 1927), 277-278.

“Azaria” dico a cui tal ditto tocca,
 Che con la lingua gli inimici spezza.

Non prende l'uom gentil le brutte cose,
 Ma, per virtù dell'animo ch'è granne,
 Consegue sempre le più valorose.
 Ma sono al mondo coati gentilotti
 Che gridano, mostrando le lor sane,
 Schernendo altrui con loro grigni e motti.
 Per l'opera si mostra l'uom gentile,
 Si come è scritto nel secondo stile.

Here the falcon is synonymous with the new concept of *gentilezza* that gains favor in an increasingly bourgeois society, rather than symbolizing one of noble birth. More clearly here than elsewhere in Italian didactic literature, the falcon is used as an exemplum for moral instruction.

By far the most influential encyclopedic source of material on hawks is Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, copied often by authors of late medieval bestiaries. This seventh-century bishop's information on the *accipiter*, or hawk, is derived largely from the classical tradition. His account is as follows:²⁶

Accipiter avis animo plus armata quam unguis, virtutem maiorem in minore corpore gestans. Hic ab accipiendo, id est a capiendo, nomen sumpsit. Est enim avis rapiendis aliis avibus avida, ideoque vocatur accipiter, hoc est raptor. Unde et Paulus Apostolus dicit: "Sustenentis enim, si quis accipit"; ut enim diceret "si quis rapit", dixit "si quis accipit". Fertur autem accipiters circa pullos suos inpios esse; nam dum viderint eos posse tentare volatus, nullas eis praebent escas, sed verberant pinnis et a nido praecipitant atque a tenero compellunt ad praedam, ne forte adulti pigrescant.

²⁶ *Etymologiarum* XXII, 55-57. Florence McCulloch provides this translation, 123: "The hawk is more armed with determination than with claws, having great courage in a small body. Its name comes from *accipiendo*, "taking", related to *capiendo*, "seizing", for it is a bird which snatches greedily from other birds. On that account they call it accipiter, that is, a "robber". The hawk is said to be harsh with its young for when it sees them able to fly, it gives them no food, but beats them with its wings and pushes them out of the nest. It thus forces them while young to seek prey lest by chance they become lazy adults."

Hrabanus Maurus, in his eighth century *De naturis rerum*, repeats Isidore's statements, but adds to them Christian allegorical significance:

Accipiter interdum sanctum virum significat, utpote rapiens regnum dei. De quo scriptum est in Job: *Nunquid in sapientia tua plumescit accipiter expandens alas suas ad austrum?* (Job. XXXIX) id est, nunquid cuilibet electo tu intelligentiam contulisti, ut flante sancto Spiritu cogitationum alas expandat, quatenus pondera vetustai conversationis abjiciat, et virtutem plumas in usum novi volatus sumat. Potest etiam per hunc accipitrem renovata gentilitas designari.²⁷

This type of interpretation of animal behavior is typical of the *Physiologus* and its related bestiaries, however, Hrabanus's commentary is unique among Latin texts in including hawks. Hugh de Fouilloy will also take the opportunity to mention this text from Job, quoting the comments of Gregory the Great in his *Moralia*.

Encyclopedic literature of the twelfth century and later may include hawks and/or falcons, but instead of mystical interpretation, they include anecdotes about the birds' behavior, usually very favorable, or information incorporated from falconry treatises. Three thirteenth-century texts that saw wide distribution are the encyclopedias of Thomas of Cantimpré, Vincent of Beauvais and Bartholomaeus Anglicus. Their entries on hawks and falcons are greatly expanded compared to those of the earlier encyclopedists. They include naturalist passages from Aristotle and Pliny, and advice on caring for tame birds taken from various hunting manuals.

An earlier, twelfth-century text that takes a different angle is the *De Naturis Rerum* of Alexander Neckam. His encyclopedia is distinguished by its lengthy fables, nearly to the exclusion of other manners of description. It lacks any allegorization of

²⁷From *PL CXI* (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1852), 253-254. "The hawk sometimes symbolizes a holy man, such as one that steals the kingdom of God. In fact, it is written in Job XXXIX: *Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?* Which means: Did you perhaps give intelligence to someone you chose so that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he may expand the wings of his thoughts while shedding the weight of the old conversation and take the feathers of virtues for a new flight? Also, the hawk may designate symbolically the new gentility."

animal behavior, interpreting it instead in ways that teach everyday secular morality. He includes seven chapters (chapters 24 through 30) on hawks and falcons, each of which tells a tale in which the birds act like humans, and from which humans can learn moral values.²⁸

The first of these is notable particularly for its similarity to a story that appears a century later in the *Novellino* in which the human protagonist is not, as here, an anonymous British king, but the emperor Frederick II, well-known for, among other things, his serious interest in falconry.²⁹ In Neckam's version, a falconry-crazed king is out one day pursuing his favorite hobby, when one of his hawks is suddenly threatened by an eagle. The hawk escapes into a large basket full of lambs, but the eagle chases it, and gets its head stuck between the weaving of the basket. The hawk takes this opportunity to kill the eagle. A debate is had among the nobles and other dignitaries to decide what is to be done with the victorious hawk: should it be recognized for bravery or punished? While others determine that the hawk should be rewarded, the king declares that the hawk should be hanged for having killed its own master, the eagle, a "royal" bird, as an example of what might happen to traitors among his own people. The moral of this story, according to Neckam, is that it is necessary for the powerful to instill fear in their subjects, in order to hide the fear that they themselves have of their subjects. The *Novellino's* version omits this moral, but in it, as well, a hawk is hanged for killing its master, the eagle.

This story makes several interesting cultural assumptions: first, that falconry is a typical noble pastime, a fact that would not have been true a couple of hundred years

²⁸ These tales may be found in Neckam's *De naturis rerum*, ed. Thomas Wright (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1863), 75-82.

²⁹ See Chapter 4 for discussion of the version in the *Novellino*.

earlier; second, that there is a perceived hierarchy of birds that mirrors the hierarchy of feudal Europe, in which the ranking of an eagle above a hawk parallels the difference in status between the king and his nobles; third, that birds acting in ways really quite normal for their species—attack and defense—can be interpreted as having anthropomorphic emotions and motivations for their actions which permit them to be judged as if they were humans; and fourth, that this anthropomorphizing allows humans to learn moral truths from the birds' actions.

In following tales, hawks and falcons continue to be models for human morality and behavior. The next tale is a simple anecdote: in the cold season, Neckam tells, a hawk will catch a bird at night and keep it close in order to keep warm. In the morning, the hawk releases it unharmed, in return for its services. Neckam provides a few different interpretations for this action; the one he prefers is that the action demonstrates the generosity and fairness of the hawk. Neither does the hawk go to recapture the bird after releasing it, because of "*memor nobilitatis propriae*": its awareness of its own nobility.

Neckam also includes two instances in which humans are inspired to imitate the actions of falcons. He begins Chapter 26 by recognizing the useful role of both hawks and falcons in filling the larders of the upper class; he is the first encyclopedist to do so. Then, he tells of a type of human entertainment that is derived from watching falcons: he states that the practice of jousting in tournaments came from watching falcons pursue and catch their prey with marvelously agile dives. In Chapter 27, he tells of more military manoeuvres learned from birds. It is a story about two falcons, friends, who fight over territory with an eagle. Eventually, the eagle catches one of them alone and kills it.

Depressed and defeated, its companion leaves the area. Elsewhere, it finds a wooden bridge with a falcon-sized hole in it that would make an excellent defense against the eagle. It plans revenge, practicing swooping into the hole until it is able to achieve great accuracy. It returns to harass the eagle that killed its companion. Unable to defeat the eagle and finding it necessary to flee, the falcon retreats cleverly into its wooden refuge where the eagle cannot reach, but does not take further revenge.

Neckam praises the ties of friendship that bound the two falcons, comparing them to Patroclus and Achilles, and other legendary friends. He also relates that this occurrence was witnessed by a people that he calls the Rotomagi, who learned from it ideas on how to avoid the attacks of the Franks.³⁰

Neckam's stories show that the interweaving of the lives of humans and those of hunting birds in both a literal and a figurative sense is very strong in the cultural fabric of his time. Indeed, the surge in popularity of the use of animals as human exemplars as well as the beginning of the writing of fables in vernacular languages can be traced to the twelfth century.³¹ The mixing of genres found in this encyclopedist and those after him can be found also in later bestiaries: some fourteenth-century vernacular Italian bestiaries have appended to them series of animal fables.³²

In her book, *The Beast Within*, Joyce Salisbury also traces to the twelfth century the assignation to the animal kingdom of a social structure that mirrors that of human feudal society.³³ This association is quite clear in Neckam's text, and is evidence of the

³⁰ The Rotomagi lived in Rotomagus, the ancient Roman name for the modern city of Rouen. (*Storia del mondo antico*, (Cambridge University Press/ Garzanti, 1974) v. 9, 635.

³¹ For the history of the use of animals as human exemplars, see Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, particularly Chapter 4.

³² Salisbury, 116; McKenzie, 387 ff.

³³ Marie de France is cited as a particular innovator; see Salisbury 117 ff.

evolution of the late medieval view of hunting birds. Because they are fierce predators, they are representative of the ruling class, though still below the eagle; they represent nobility also because they are partners in life with that class as well, central to the nobility's recreational activities. Because of this association, the actions of the birds of prey are seen as showing their strength of character, or inner nobility: hawks release birds that keep them warm, because *noblesse oblige*.

The association of falcons and hawks with the upper classes is taken to a new level by Hugh de Fouillois, a twelfth-century Augustinian canon and the author of a work known as the *Aviarius*, which is unique in that it treats only the characteristics of birds, excluding other animals. It was a popular text; there are seventy-eight extant manuscripts, more than half with a standardized program of illustration, two of these of early fourteenth-century Italian origin.

The *Aviarius* is unique also in its structure. It is divided into two parts, the second of which is organized like a typical bestiary—one bird is discussed per chapter, with allegorical interpretation. The first part, however, consists of multi-chapter allegorical treatments of birds of particular interest, as well as of two trees, the cedar and the palm. The hawk receives seven chapters of attention, second only to the dove's eleven.

Hugh begins his book with two prologues in which he states his intention of structuring his work symbolically around the dove and the hawk. To understand why he did this it is helpful to know the circumstances under which the book was written. It was written for and on the prompting of a brother Rainier, surnamed *corde benignum*, who had been a knight before conversion to a religious life, where he would have been a lay-

brother. Hugh may have written the text as a guide, both verbal and visual, to help Rainier in the teaching of religion and morality to other, less-educated lay-brothers.³⁴ Hugh compares himself to a dove, and Rainier, the former knight, to a hawk.³⁵ One represents the contemplative, the other the active life. Rainier's conversion to the religious life is likened to the taming of a hawk: Rainier has progressed from being a wild hawk that hunts domestic fowl into being a domesticated one that seizes wild birds, i.e. laymen, and brings them to conversion:

Ecce in eadem pertica sedent accipiter et columba. Ego enim de clero, tu de militia. Ad conversionem venimus ut in regulari vita quasi in pertica sedeamus; et qui rapere consueveras domesticas aves, nunc bonae operationis manu silvestres ad conversionem trahas, id est saeculares.³⁶

In addition to the intriguing notion of the lay-brother/hawk doing good works by "capturing" sinners, the very idea of seeing the domestication of a hawk caught in the wild as a metaphor for the enlightenment and conversion of the sinner is quite rare. Although in Provençal poetry, Italian poetry of the Duecento, and German poetry as well, as we will see,³⁷ the training of the hawk is used to indicate the acquiring and "training" of a lover, only Dante in Italian literature truly exploits the mystical religious potential of this image.³⁸

Hugh's seven chapters on the hawk consist primarily of allegorical interpretations of various aspects of the lives of domesticated hawks. They begin, however, with a

³⁴ See Willene B. Clark, "The Illustrated Medieval Aviary and the Lay-Brotherhood," *Gesta* XXI, no. 1 (1982): 63-74; and her edition of Hugh's work, *The Medieval Book of Birds, Hugh of Fouilloy's Aviarium* (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992).

³⁵ Clark notes that the dove and hawk as symbols of monk and knight are not exclusive to this text but are found in others as well (*Aviarium*, p. 2, n.1).

³⁶ Clark's translation: See how the hawk and the dove sit on the same perch. I am from the clergy and you from the military. We come to conversion so that we may sit within the life of the Rule, as though on a perch; and so that you who were accustomed to seizing domestic fowl, now with the hand of good deeds may bring to conversion the wild ones, that is, laymen.

³⁷ See Chapter 2.

³⁸ See Chapter 3.

chapter that consists entirely of a quotation from St. Gregory's *Moralia in Job*, in which Gregory comments allegorically on Job 39:26: *Doth the hawk wax feathered by thy wisdom, spreading her wings to the south?* St. Gregory tells of the hawk shedding feathers by spreading its wings to the warm south wind in order to grow new ones. He interprets the casting off of old and the growing of new feathers allegorically in variations on the general theme of casting off sinful ways, growing warm in the light of the Holy Spirit, and assuming new virtue.

The next six chapters on the hawk, however, have a great deal of original material in them. Hugh parallels the life of the domestic hawk to the life of the monk, including God as the "falconer," in ways that are sometimes rather uncomfortable to read, but accurately portray falconry practices. Note his Chapter 17, which continues the contrast between wild and domesticated hawks:

Duae sunt species accipitris, domesticus scilicet et silvestris. Idem tamen, sed diversis temporibus potest esse silvestris et domesticus. Silvestris rapere consuevit domesticas aves, et domesticus silvestres. Silvestris quas rapit continuo devorat; domesticus captas domino suo relinquendas servat. Porro dominus eius captarum volucrum ventres aperit, et earum corda accipitri in cibum tribuenda sumit. Interiora ventris cum fimo eicit, qui intus remanens putredinem carniarum cum fetore gignit. Moraliter silvestris accipiter captas volucres et rapit et devorat, quia quilibet perversus actus et cogitationes simplicium dissipare non cessat. Domesticus vero accipiter est quilibet spiritualis pater, qui totiens silvestres volucres rapit quotiens saeculares ad conversionem praedicando trahit. Captas occidit dum saecula mundo mori per carnis mortificationem cogit. Dominus autem eius, id est, Omnipotens Deus ventres earum aperit quia mollitiem carnalium per Scripturas increpando solvit. Corda vero extrahit dum cogitationes saecularium per confessionem manifestas facit. Interiora ventris cum fimo eicit quando memoriam peccati fetentem reddit. Ad mensam itaque Domini captas volucres veniunt, dum in corpus ecclesiae peccatores doctorum dentibus masticati sese convertunt.³⁹

³⁹ Clark's translation: There are two forms of the hawk, namely, the tame and the wild. Nevertheless, they are the same, but sometimes the bird can be wild, and sometimes tame. The wild one is accustomed to prey on tame fowl, and the tame hawk on wild birds. The wild one immediately eats its prey; the tame one preserves the birds taken to be relinquished to its master. Afterwards its master opens the belly of the captured birds and takes their hearts to offer to the hawk as food. He throws away the gut with the

Indeed it was common practice to give the hawk the heart of the bird it had caught as reward, but to see that and the rest of the butchering of the prey as symbolizing the conversion of sinners is unusual to say the least. Hugh continues in this vein in the rest of the chapters on hawks. There is more on the casting aside of old feathers, then he discusses the method of carrying the hawk (on the left hand so that it may fly towards the right—from worldly goods towards the spiritual good). The hawk's perch and the cord that binds it to the perch have meaning as well: the perch symbolizes the monastic life, and it is sustained by two walls—the active and contemplative life. The cord that binds the hawk to the perch is the mortification of the flesh, which holds lay-brothers to the monastic life (Chapters 19-22).

If indeed Hugh wrote this text to instruct lay-brothers in the ways of living a Christian life by monastic rules, it stands to reason that he would employ images from contemporary life, to which these new brothers could easily relate, to achieve his goal. Falconry is an excellent source from which such examples could be mined, since it is highly likely that its practices were familiar to those brothers coming out of the secular world.

Another clerical writer who demonstrates a very close familiarity with the sport of falconry is Albert the Great. His work, *De animalibus*, written in the mid-thirteenth

excrement, which, if it <the gut> remains within, produces a stinking rot of tissues. Interpreted allegorically the wild hawk both seizes and eats the birds taken, because any wicked person continually disturbs the actions and thoughts of simple folk. But the tame hawk is any spiritual father, who seizes the wild birds whenever he draws laymen to conversion through preaching. It kills the prey while he compels laymen to die to the world through the mortification of the flesh. Moreover, the <hawk's> master, that is, Almighty God, opens the stomachs of <the prey>, because He does away with the weakness of carnal men by rebuking them through Scripture. Indeed, He extracts their hearts when through confession He makes manifest the thoughts of laymen. He throws away the gut with the excrement while he causes the memory of a sinner to stink. And the birds seized come to the table of the Lord while sinners, chewed by the teeth of the teachers, are converted into the body of the Church.

century, is not spiritual, but a voluminous encyclopedic work intended as a commentary on Aristotle's books about animals. Books 22-26 of his text, however, are written in the naturalist vein, providing descriptions of many different animals from various sources and also his own observations. Book 23 in this series is devoted to birds, and a solid half of this text is reserved for discussion of hawks and falcons, from both a naturalist's and a falconer's point of view. Along with dividing the birds of prey into species, he discusses in depth the birds' appearance, habits, coloration, bird-calls, classification, care and training, their preferred geographical area, and their relative usefulness for hunting. He also gives veterinary advice. His sources are his own personal experience, along with information he has received from consulting falconers, and the authoritative texts of the time: an apocryphal letter from Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, and treatises by Guillelmus falconarius and Gerardus falconarius. He also uses material from his contemporary, Frederick II.⁴⁰ In total, Albertus Magnus is practical, thorough, and knowledgeable, and he clearly appreciates the importance of falconry to the culture of his time.

Falconry treatises are integral parts of other encyclopedic works as well, in the thirteenth century. In addition to that of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Brunetto Latini's *Tresor* has a section on falconry, by far the most extensive description of rapacious birds that is to be found in an encyclopedic text in the French or Italian vernacular. The information that he provides about the birds emphasizes the perspective of their usefulness in hunting, as is shown by his first statement: "Ostours est uns oiseaus de proie, si come sont faucons et esperviers et autres oiseaus que l'en tient par delit a penre

⁴⁰ For detailed discussion of his sources, see Robin Oggins, "Albertus Magnus on Falcons and Hawks," in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 441-462.

autres oiseaus.” He has two chapters on the goshawk, one on the sparrowhawk, one on the falcon, and one on the merlin.⁴¹ In the goshawk entry, he repeats Isidore in describing their character and their behavior towards their offspring. Then he continues, here and in the rest of the chapters, with tips on selecting and keeping a bird. He describes the physical characteristics that one should search for (i.e. long head, yellow nostrils, etc.) when looking for a good hunting bird, and gives advice on keeping the hawk healthy.⁴² He keeps with this theme in the sparrowhawk entry. Here we find his comment that is of the most interest in a literary context, since literary mentions of hawks and falcons make this distinction as well:

E sappiate, che tutti gli uccelli feditori sono di tre maniere, cioè nidacie, ramacie, e grifagni. Il nidacie è quello, che l'uomo cava di nido, e che si nutrica e piglia sicurtade dale gente che l'hanno. Ramacie è quello, che già è volato, e ha preso alcuna preda. Grifagni son quelli che son presi all'entrata di verno, che son mudati, e che hanno gli occhi rossi come fuoco.⁴³

This is Bono Giamboni's translation, quoted here instead of the French because of the Italian falconry vocabulary that it includes; words to be recognized in literature: *nidace*, *ramace*, *grifagno*. These terms are well-known among poets, both Provençal and Italian; consider Dante's description in *Inferno* of “Cesare armato con gli occhi grifagni”⁴⁴. The comparison of Caesar's eyes should not be taken literally. A *sparviere grifagno* is an adult and experienced hunter of several years. Taken from the wild and tamed when already grown, it is considered fiercer than one that was taken to train when younger. It would be logical to conclude here not that Caesar has red eyes, but simply that Dante gives Caesar the penetrating eyes of a hawk, the word *grifagno* effectively

⁴¹ Francis J. Carmody, ed., *Li Livres dou Tresor de Brunetto Latini*, I, 146-150.

⁴² Bono Giamboni omits the section on goshawk maladies in his translation.

⁴³ P. Chabaille, ed., *Il tesoro di Brunetto Latini volgarizzato da Bono Giamboni*, 1877, pp. 155-156.

⁴⁴ *Inf.* IV, 123.

conveying the idea of Caesar's fierceness. It will be noted that in *Paradiso* it is the military leaders and rulers that are associated with falcons in a favorable manner; the bird is of course emblematic of the ruling or military class, and Caesar though in limbo fits in well with this group.

Again in *Inferno*, when he writes of the tussle between Calcabrina and another devil, Calcabrina is described as a falcon, while his adversary, he finds to his detriment, "fu ben sparvier grifagno /ad artigliar ben lui."⁴⁵ Like a fierce sparrowhawk, the devil fights with Calcabrina the falcon over the prey that they both lose when their victim dives under the pitch.

The earliest surviving Western European⁴⁶ treatise on falconry is a tenth-century fragment that treats hawks' ailments. The earliest complete treatise on falconry is the *De cura accipitrum* of Adelard of Bath, from two hundred years later.⁴⁷ He does not use Mediterranean sources, despite his use of Greek sources for other writings and his knowledge of the Arabic language,⁴⁸ but states that his sources are Anglo-Norman, from a book of Henry II and another from King Harold. His text leads one to an interesting conclusion, as stated by Dafydd Evans: "The manuscript tradition bears out Adelard's assertion that the art of hunting with birds was well-developed in England in the twelfth century; it seems to have a parallel only in the other Norman colonies, those in southern Italy."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Inf.* XXII, 139-140. For further comment, see Chapter 3.

⁴⁶ There are complete Arab falconry treatises from this time and earlier.

⁴⁷ Oggins, "Falconry and Medieval Views of Nature," 48-49.

⁴⁸ Charles Burnett, *Adelard of Bath, Conversations with his Nephew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xii-xiv.

⁴⁹ Dafydd Evans, "Adelard on Falconry," in *Adelard of Bath, an English Scientist and Arabist of the Early Twelfth Century* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1987), 27. See also Louise

Indeed, the Sicilian tradition of falconry was very strong. Frederick II's forbear, King Roger II (1139-54), had a falconer named Guillelmus who wrote a treatise that has not survived, but is used extensively by many authors after him. Of course, the court of Frederick II played a major role in promoting the study of falconry. Frederick kept Arab falconers in his court, and he ordered to be translated into Latin the Arab treatises of Moamin and Yatrib that become popular throughout Italy. He also wrote a seminal work himself.

Frederick II produced a truly remarkable book, the *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus*, into which he poured all of his superlative knowledge of his favorite pastime, and all that of other authors, particularly Arab sources, and Aristotle, with whom he takes an unusual, critical view. It is this empirical approach to falconry that makes Frederick's treatise unique in his time, and still a valid resource today. His book was the first zoological treatise to be written in the empirical method of modern science. He wrote it between 1244-1250, after thirty years of preparation.⁵⁰ The final version, prepared by his son Manfred, includes zoologically accurate and instructionally correct illustrations of the text. Frederick's book is also unique in that it does not include medical advice for treating maladies of birds of prey.⁵¹

The treatise is divided into books, and subdivided further into chapters. The first book is a noteworthy accomplishment by itself. In it he tells of the mating, migration, feeding and living habits of all sorts of birds. In his second book he begins to concentrate

Cochrane, *Adelard of Bath, the First English Scientist* (London: British Museum Press, 1994), Chapter 6: "Falconry."

⁵⁰ For more details, see the excellent introduction by Casey Wood and Marjorie Fyfe to their translation of the *De Avibus, The Art of Falconry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1943).

⁵¹ He implies however at the beginning of Book II that he planned to include that aspect of care as well. Wood and Fyfe, 106.

on falcons and hawks, telling about what types of falcons are good for hunting, how to raise and train the young, what kind of furniture is necessary to keep them, and devices to tame wild hawks. Here also he states what he believes the main goal of falconry should be: to possess the best hunting birds: “The falconer’s primary aspiration should be to possess hunting birds that he has trained through his own ingenuity to capture the quarry he desires in the manner he prefers. The actual taking of prey should be a secondary consideration.”⁵²

He goes into more detail in Chapter XLVIII about the qualifications of a good falconer: he must be proficient in all falconry responsibilities, have wisdom and ingenuity, and a desire to bring the sport closer to perfection, he must love the work involved, and be of even temper with no bad habits such as drunkenness. Physically, he must be of medium height and build, have good eyesight and hearing, be able to swim, and have a good carrying voice.⁵³

He also discusses how and when to take falcons from the wild, and makes a distinction in Chapter XXX between nestlings, taken from the nest, and branchers, who are old enough that they have left their nests of their own accord, or, in Italian, *nidaci* and *ramenghi*, an important distinction to poetry. He states that the branchers are by far better hunters, for they grow better and stronger in the wild, eating their proper food.⁵⁴

Frederick spends a good deal of time explaining how to tame falcons and describing the necessary equipment. The taming of the falcon and particularly the equipment involved are often mentioned in Italian literature; it is important to be conversant with them. Much of this is discussed in Chapters XXXVII through XLI of

⁵² Ibid., 105.

⁵³ Ibid., 150.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 128.

Book II. The falcon is connected to the perch by a leash, which is attached to jesses, two strips of leather the length of one's hand, each attached to a leg of the falcon, with a ring on the opposite end through which the leash may be passed. It is also by means of the jesses that the falconer holds on to the falcon when carrying it on his wrist. Also tied to the foot of the falcon is a bell, which helps in locating it outdoors when hunting.

In taming a falcon, it is desirable to take away its sight for a time; this calms the falcon down and makes it learn to be dependent on the falconer. There are two methods of accomplishing this: one is the use of a hood, a practice that Frederick adopts from his Arab falconers and introduces to European falconry. The hood is still used in falconry today. In addition to serving as a taming device, it is also used throughout the falcon's life to keep it calm, and undistracted by unsuitable prey, when being carried to the hunt. The second method, which was traditional in European falconry, and used in Arab falconry as well, is the practice of seeling, or sewing the falcon's eyes shut in a manner that raises the lower eyelid to the lashes of the upper. This is done with a needle and thread, by passing the thread once from the inside to the outside of each of the falcon's lower eyelids, passing the thread between them over the top of its head, tying a knot in the loose ends coming from the outside of the lower eyelids over the top of its head, and freeing some crown feathers to cover the knot so that the falcon cannot disturb it. The knot is adjusted at first so that the falcon's eyes are pulled entirely shut, then as time passes, the falconer loosens the knot progressively so that the falcon can open its eyes more as it becomes tamer.

It is also necessary to be familiar with the concept of the lure. Frederick discusses the lure at the beginning of Book III. The lure is used to call a falcon back from the hunt;

it is made typically of something that resembles prey, such as two crane's wings tied together, attached to the end of a two and a half foot long leather thong. Fresh meat is attached to the lure, and the falconer swings it above his head while calling out to the falcon in order to get it to return. The lure is used successfully with falcons, but not with hawks.

In Frederick's time and afterward, his book was not widely read despite its excellence. When thirteenth and fourteenth-century vernacular treatises are written, they hearken back to Albert the Great or Adelard, or they invoke several other texts as the voice of authority: the above-named Guillelmus, another falconer, possibly also attached to King Roger, called Gerardus, and a legendary but fictitious Indian king, Dancus Rex, often referred to as the original authority on falconry. Many treatises cite him as their ultimate source.⁵⁵

Of the many vernacular treatises on falconry, the only one to survive in Provençal is the work, in rhyming couplets, of Daude de Pradas, a thirteenth-century cleric. He was the canon of the Cathedral of Saint Mary in Rodez, a writer of love lyric, and a practicing falconer. His work is largely indebted to that of Abelard. He writes of the choosing and care of goshawks, falcons, sparrowhawks, and merlins. He starts by describing the physical characteristics of hawks, and which characteristics are to be prized in looking for a bird; then he describes the different qualities of hawks depending on how they were captured, as does Brunetto Latini. Daude notes, comprehensively, the different types of falcons and their favorable characteristics, how to raise and train the birds, how to cast

⁵⁵ See Giuliano Innamorati, *Arte della caccia: testi di falconeria, uccellazione e altre cacce*, Vol. 1 (Milano: Edizioni il Polifilo, 1965), 79-80, for an overview of these authors. He also cites an important work related to this subject that I was unfortunately unable to locate: *Gunnar Tilander, Dancus rex, Guillelmus falconarius, Gerardus falconarius; Les plus anciens traits de fauconnerie de l'Occident publiés d'après tous les manuscrits connus par Gunnar Tilander*, Lund, 1963.

them against prey, and how to call them back. He gives much medical advice—cures for problems with unwillingness to hunt, appetite, disease, parasites, broken wings, weight. He even provides phrases to say for luck, methods of retrieving a bird one has given away, and humorously, methods of disguising someone else's bird that one might want to keep.

In the Italian vernacular, there are a great number of falconry treatises.⁵⁶ An odd compilation of the above authorities is written in Italian in the thirteenth century, translated from Latin that had been translated previously from Provençal. The short version of its title is *Trattato del governo delle malattie e guarigioni de' falconi, astori e sparvieri*.⁵⁷ In it, a king, impressed by the knowledge Dancus Rex displays while they are on a hunt together, asks Dancus to tutor him. Dancus offers to tutor his son instead, and an arrangement is reached. The text then jumps, and explains that is written by Guillelmus in order to preserve the teachings of Dancus. Finally, there follows a short text about the different types of falcons and hawks, and the diseases that they get.

More evidence of the legendary authority of Dancus is found in a text of uncertain date, but, according to its editor, prior to the mid-fourteenth century, called *Libro delle nature degli uccelli fatto per lo re Danchi*.⁵⁸ It begins with information on curing diseases, then describes types of falcons and hawks, and how to train and hunt with them. These vernacular falconry treatises, and many others, share with each other this structure and basic content.

⁵⁶ Charles Haskins mentions several in his article, "Some Early Treatises on Falconry," *The Romanic Review* 13 (1922): 18-27, and there are three others in *Innamorati*, *Arte della caccia*, as well as those that I will mention that I found in individual texts.

⁵⁷ *Innamorati*, 83-114.

⁵⁸ Ed. Francesco Zambrini (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1874).

Having established the popularity of falconry as a noble sport in the late Middle Ages, and appreciated the unique relationship between birds of prey and humans, it is time to see how this relationship affects their portrayal in literature, particularly, the literature of love. First we will examine these images briefly in literature outside Italy.

If one is going to use hunting imagery in speaking of love, the image of falcons in their capacity of fearsome hunters being used to illustrate the pursuit of the beloved may seem both transparent and obvious. However, the origin of the association between the formal practice of falconry and the view of falcons as emblems of noble love, or what becomes *fin amors*, is less clear. Daniela Boccassini⁵⁹ finds this association beginning in Arab falconry treatises, where, starting in the ninth century when falconry became popular in Arab culture, courtly hunting poetry and anecdotes are added to the manuals that tell how to train falcons.⁶⁰

Training a falcon teaches it to deny its instincts; instead of hunting when it wishes for itself, it hunts when told, and brings back the prey to its master. Metaphorically, such training can be extended to the human denial of instinct; one who agrees to submit to a king, though powerful, i.e. a nobleman, is like a falcon who hunts against its instinct. Indeed one who submits to God is also like a falcon, agreeing to live to serve one's master. Boccassini cites a passage from Abdû'l-Majd Majdûd Sanâ'î, a 12th-century writer, that is worth repeating here:⁶¹

He draws thee to Himself by the kindness of the noose. If thou comest not, He calls thee towards Himself; He offers thee Paradise in His kindness, but because thou livest in this abode of sorrow, thou of thy folly hast taken the road of flight. Thou art as a shell for the pearl of the belief in the Unity (...); if thou guard that

⁵⁹ Boccassini, *Il volo della mente*, 229 ff.

⁶⁰ A good example of this is the *Kitab al-Bayzara*, a treatise written around 995 A.D. by the falconer of the Caliph al-'Aziz bi-llah, ed. François Viré (Leiden: E. H. Brill, 1967).

⁶¹ Boccassini, 239.

pearl, thou shalt raise thy head beyond the seven and the four, thou shalt reach eternal happiness, and no created thing shall harm thee; thou shalt be exalted in the present time, and upon the plain of eternity thou shalt be as a hawk; thy alighting-place shall be the hand of kings, thy feet shall be freed from the depths of the mire...the condition laid on such a one is that he should receive all food and drink from the Causer, not from the causes.

This training of the hawk is seen in its transcendent sense in Europe in Hugh de Fouilloy's *Aviarium*, in the training of the lay-brothers, as discussed previously, and in the *Divine Comedy* to express Dante's progressive enlightenment. Likewise, one who embraces a secular love that rises above the level of sheer carnality can be viewed as similar to a hawk, denying its basic instincts for a higher good. This training and civilizing of a wild hawk becomes associated with the idea of embracing a spiritual love for another person that goes beyond sheer carnality.

The spiritual aspect of love that is celebrated in Arabic poetry, which is sought even in corporeal relations, is seen in the *The Dove's Neck-Ring*, a treatise on love, in prose and poetry, written by a Muslim government official, Ali ibn Ahmad, called Ibn Hazm, born in Cordova in 994. The rules of attraction and of being a lover that the work lays out seem very familiar to anyone acquainted with Provençal poetry: among familiar characters we find the prototypical *lausengiers* (one who tells lies about the lover or the lady) and *gelos* (one who wishes the lady for himself), and there is an emphasis on the physical and emotional effects of love on the lover that is common to the Sicilians as well.⁶²

Ibn Hazm's treatment of love is forthright and somewhat realistic, embellished with numerous anecdotes of the behavior of lovers and their beloveds taken from his own

⁶² An extensive discussion of the Hispano-Arabic origins of Provençal poetry is made by A. R. Nykl in the introduction to his edition of *The Dove's Neck Ring* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1931).

circle of acquaintances to illustrate the progression of love affairs. The idea of the hunt of love and the role that birds play in it are mentioned to a certain extent in this text.

In his discussion of the role of the messenger between lovers, Ibn Hazm gives the example of a couple who exchanged letters by fastening them to the wing of a trained dove.⁶³ The dove is a bird typically iconographic of love and of particular significance to this book; its symbolism is made concrete by its being called upon to act as a lovers' go-between.

Ibn Hazm's treatise does not show a great deal of hawking or fowling imagery, however, the hunt of love involving birds does exist in small amounts. In the section on "Submissiveness" that discusses the submission of the lover to the whims of the beloved, Ibn Hazm gives advice to a lover whose beloved has lost enthusiasm for him and gotten a different lover on the side. Given the opportunity for love, he should act like a falcon and seize her.⁶⁴

Grasp the opportunity, and know that
Like the passing of a lightning do opportunities pass by!
How many things were possible, yet I went slowly about them,
They became bitter pills for me when they had gone!
Make haste with the treasure you have found,
And grasp the prey like a falcon that is hunting!

In this case, it is the lover who is seen as the predator and the beloved who is hunted. However, here as in later Western European works, one may find the roles of the lover and beloved reversed—it is the lover who often portrays himself, or is portrayed, as the victim in the hunt. In order to illustrate the agony of a lover's being forced to conceal his love, Ibn Hazm, says that his heart flutters like a trapped partridge when his love walks

⁶³ Ibid., 50.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 64.

past.⁶⁵ The lover is the helpless victim of the hunt; his heart's fluttering better illustrated by the image of a trapped partridge, who has the luxury of time to understand that it is doomed, rather than the quickly dispatched prey of a falcon. Images of avian venery such as these above will be joined by ones involving formally trained falcons in the love poetry of Provençal troubadours in coming centuries, while they adapt Ibn Hazm's attitudes towards love for the poetry of their own courts.

While falcons and hawks do not have a large role in Provençal poetry, they do appear in the works of a few poets.⁶⁶ Those found are not wild hawks but ones trained for human use. They are used to illustrate some of the aspects of courtly love. This type of love, also called *'fin' amors*, is common to the cultures of Provençal and northern French courts, and is a structured, formalized version of love in which the noble lady, usually married, is worshipped by a poet, usually of lower social class. This is the basis of the love relationship in troubadour poetry, in which the lady is *midons*, the poet's lord, and he serves her in a feudal relationship.⁶⁷

When falcons and hawks appear in this type of love poetry, they usually represent the poet's lady; its taming, the lady's becoming kind, merciful, approachable. In this way the falcon is very useful to illustrate one of the main themes of Provençal poetry, the lady's acceptance of the poet's love. Along these lines are the falconry references that Boccassini finds in three poets, Giraut de Bornelh, Peire Vidal, and Bertran de Born.⁶⁸

Giraut de Bornelh, active between 1190 and 1240, provides an example:

⁶⁵ Ibid., 53.

⁶⁶ A survey of where such images may be found is in Werner Hensel's "Die Vögel in der provenzalischen und nordfranzösischen Lyrik des Mittelalters," *Romanische Forschungen* 26 (1909): 584-670.

⁶⁷ For further information on courtly love, see, as a primary text, Andreas Capellanus, *On Love*, ed. P. G. Walsh (London: Duckworth, 1982); as a secondary text, C. S. Lewis, *Allegory of Love: a Study in Medieval Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

⁶⁸ Boccassini, 245-252.

C'una noch somnav' en pascor
 Tal somnhe que·m fetz esbaudir
 D'un esparver ramatge
 Que m'era sus el ponh pauczatz,
 Et si·m semblav' adomesgatz,
 Anc no vi tan salvatge,
 Mas pois fo maners e privatatz
 E de bos getz apreizonatz.

In Provençal poetry, the poet's goal is often, as here, to domesticate the hawk/lady. A similar comment is made by Peire Vidal, *circa* 1204:

Mas l'austors qu'es pres en l'aranh,
 Qu'es fers tro qu'es adomesjatz,
 Pois torna maniers e privatatz,
 Si's qui be·l tenha ni l'aplanh,
 Pois val mais d'autre quant a pres;
 Tot atresals uzatges es,
 Qui jove domna vol amar,
 Que gen la deu adomesjar.

Bertran de Born (d. 1215) protests that he has not been unfaithful to his lady by appealing to her logic:

Domna, s'ieu ai mon austor anedier
 bel e mudat, ben prenden e mainier,
 qe tot auzel puosca apoderar,
 sign'e grua et aigron blanc e nier,
 volria lo mal mudat, gallinier,
 gras, desbaten, qe non puosca volar?

He argues, if he already has a well-trained goshawk (his lady), why would he get one that was poorly trained instead?

Hawks and falcons play other roles in Provençal poetry too. The poet is like a hawk in that he displays the same innate ability to find the best lady as a hawk has in finding the best place to nest, as in Bertran Carbonel:⁶⁹

Aissi m'a dat fin'amors conoissensa
 com natura la don'a esparvier,

⁶⁹ Appel, *Provenzalische Inedita* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland), 1890), 69-70.

qu'en nulh albre somni far non l'aiensa
 mas el pus bel et en lo pus entier
 et el mièlhs fach, al cal l'adutz natura;
 aisi m'a fach per ma bon'aventura,
 bela dona, en vos amors chاوزir
 com en sela c'om mas be no'n pot dir.

Or, the poet may compare himself to the victim of a falcon, as in Peire de Cols d'Aorlac:⁷⁰

Be'm troba bas et a ssa voluntat
 selha qu'ieu am ses tot' altra amor,
 qu'enaissi-m ten en fre et en paor
 cum lo girfalç, quant a son crit levat,
 fai la grua, que tant la desnatura,
 ab sol son crit ses autre batemen
 la fai cazer e ses tornas la pren.
 tot enaissi ma dompna nobla e pura
 me li'e-m lassa e-m pren.

A poet of great importance to Italy is Rigaut de Berbezilh, active around the turn of the thirteenth century,⁷¹ who tends to employ a lot of animal imagery in his poetry. Here we find these birds representing Love as well as his lady. In the poem below, Rigaut describes Love's characteristics and behavior, first comparing it to the sun, then a goshawk, and then a falcon:⁷²

Tuit demandon qu'es devengu d'Amors
 et eu a totz dirai-ne la vertat.
 Tot eissamen con lo soleilz d'estat,
 que per totz locs mostra sas resplandors
 e-l ser s'en va colgar, tot eissamen
 o fa Amors, e quant a tot sercat,
 e non troba ren que sia a son grat,
 torna-sen lai don moc premieramen.

⁷⁰ Ibid., vv. 10-18, 229-231.

⁷¹ Gaspari, *Storia della letteratura italiana* (Torino: Ermanno Loescher, 1887), 110.

⁷² Interestingly, Cesare De Lollis pointed out that Chiaro Davanzati imitates this canzone in *Qualunque m'adimanda per amore*, in which he paraphrases Rigaut's first and fourth stanzas. However, Davanzati declines to borrow the middle stanzas from Rigaut, so that, despite the Tuscan's reputation as a great user of animal imagery, he omits any mention of falconry in his sonnet. "Sul Canzoniere di Chiaro Davanzati," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* (1898): 92-93.

Amors o fai si com lo bons astors
 que per talan no·s mou ni no·s debat,
 anzeis esta entro c'om l'a gitat
 et adoncs pren son ausel quan l'a sors.
 E fin'Amors esgarda et aten
 una domna ab entieira beutat
 on tuit li ben del mon son assemblat,
 e no·i faill ges Amors quan tal la pren.

Car senz e pretz e larguess'e valors
 e tut bon aip i eron aiostat
 ab fin'amor per far sa voluntat,
 et i era iois, domneiars et honors;
 tot eissamen con lo falcs que deissen
 vas son auzel quant l'a sobremontat,
 deissendia ab dos'omilitat
 Amors en cels c'amavon lialmen.⁷³

Love here is a trained hunter; it hunts perfect ladies with the discipline and accuracy of a bird of prey, and descends from above like a falcon onto worthy lovers. Boccassini notes that the language used particularly in this last description, “deissendia ab dos omilitat,” gives the falcon such noble, civilized characteristics that it is an honor for its prey to be picked; the world of hunting has become absorbed into the courtly environment.⁷⁴

In this next poem, Rigaut uses essentially the same items of comparison as in the previous: first the sun, and then the gyrfalcon. However, the hunt has transcended its reality in that the falcon brings down its prey, the crane, with its voice alone.

Be·m troba bas et a sa voluntat
 sella qu'ieu am ses tota fals'amor,
 car aysi·m ten en fre et en temor
 con lo girfalcs cant ha sobremontat
 fay la grua, que tan la desnatura
 c'ap sol son crit, ses autre batemen,
 la fa cazer e ses tornas la pren:
 tot enaisi ma donna, hon pres s'atura,
 me lia e·m lassa e·m pren.

⁷³ All poems of Rigaut de Berbezilh are from *Liriche*, ed. Alberto Varvaro (Bari: Adriatica, 1960).

⁷⁴ Boccassini, 254.

It is a hunt in which psychological intimidation causes physical surrender, and the predator and the prey cross a line over which their behavior is closer to their human models than to the reality of a hunt.

In a culture which often uses birds to represent lovers in literature, the noblest lovers will usually be represented by birds of prey. We have seen this in Provençal poetry; it is true in other genres as well, such as dream visions and short stories. The idea of the hierarchy of birds associated with love among different social classes is used more straightforwardly in feudal countries than in Italy, where the increasingly bourgeois society of the fourteenth century prompts a different view of status and birds of prey. However, the concept of representing human lovers by falcons or hawks in love is common to Italian literature as well. It is of interest to note how birds of prey are treated in contemporary fourteenth-century literature outside Italy.

The treatment of falcons in a couple of bird-conferences presented as dream visions is illuminating. This poetic genre, in which birds gather to discuss love or to pair off, often centers on a noble lover who is having problems with his choice of mate; the roles of these protagonists are played by eagles, falcons, and hawks.

A French dream vision of this type is the *Songe Saint Valentin* by Oton de Granson, a contemporary of Chaucer, in which birds gather on Valentine's Day to choose mates. Although the subject of this work clearly has much in common with Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*, its central dilemma is a bit different. Here the problem in the gathering of birds concerns a tercel peregrine falcon, representing the poet-lover, who has

chosen a mate so far above him in every way that he dare not presume to approach her. The scene is of a large gathering of birds singing loudly, courting, and happily choosing their mates. The poet, who has entered the garden, finds that he can understand the speech of the birds. As the poet explains the rules of love in this bird world, i.e., that the lovers may break off at the end of a year, he cites examples of bird-lovers in a list. Interestingly, this list mentions only birds of prey specifically, and it is a good guide to the types of hawks and falcons found most commonly in literature:

Mais, soit faucon ou esprevier,
 Sacre, gerfaut ou mylion,
 Ou oyselet d'autre fasson,
 Certez, ceulz la font faulceté
 Qui premier brisent l'amictié.⁷⁵

When it comes to birds as lovers, there are birds of prey, and then there is everybody else. Order of precedence continues to be maintained in that the bird who presides over the whole gathering is the eagle. It is this eagle who scolds the tercel falcon, asking why he has shown up to this gathering if he does not wish to choose a mate. The falcon tells of his dilemma, remarking that he would not switch the object of his affection even though she might be unattainable. After all, he explains, “sui je dez oiseaulx gentiz.”⁷⁶ “Gentle” birds, like their human counterparts, are to be forever faithful to their lovers; a change in affection is best left to the lower orders.

The tercel tells that he met the falcon that he loves when they both belonged to the same gentleman. He praises his loved one by describing the falcon’s fantastic abilities in flying and hunting. The tercel portrays his loved one as courageous, loyal, dependable, gracious, attractive, brave, and strong; in short, the falcon that he celebrates has all the

⁷⁵ *Oton de Granson; sa vie et ses poésies*, ed. Arthur Piaget (Lausanne: Librairie Payot, 1941), vv. 97-101.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 137.

virtues of a human knight. After finishing his eulogy, the tercel continues onto another theme common in human love poetry: the pain of separation from his loved one. He then flies off in search of the bird he loves, and the other birds disperse as well. The author awakes from his dream, and contemplates at length the ease of love matches in the animal world in contrast to the difficulty of human love affairs. He comes to the conclusion that it is intelligence and moral sense that keeps humans from enjoying the simple happiness of the animals. Standing apart from the other animals however, are those “gentle” birds, the falcons, who are more human than bucolic.

Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules* is the best known of the genre of dream vision in which assemblies of birds debate about love. The role that hawks and falcons play in this work is typical for the genre: they are representatives of and participants in *fin amors*, a variety of love whose complexity contrasts with the simplicity of the mating rituals of birds supposed to belong to the “lower orders”. Unlike in similar renderings, the author is not a lover but an observer; he is unaffected by love himself. There is a Dantesque flavor to the poem, particularly in its introduction. In his dream, the author is guided through the unfamiliar garden that he encounters by his own personal “Virgil”, Scipio Africanus, who shows up in appreciation of the care that the author has taken in reading his *Somnium scipionis*. They come across a two-sided gate, with mottos like those over the entrance to Dante's Hell. One side of the gate leads to natural, fertile love, its motto written in gold, and the other, written in black, marks the way to problematic, sterile love. The author has nothing to fear, he is told, from the two-sided gate: “For this writyng is nothing ment bi the, Ne by non but he Louys serwaunt be.”⁷⁷ Just as Dante in entering

⁷⁷ Vv. 158-160.

Inferno, Chaucer is in this place to observe and record; he himself is not concerned with love, just as Dante is not destined to join the denizens of Hell.

Scipio's words to Chaucer are prompted by the poet's hesitation at the gate, due to his state of mind, described in a way that echoes Dante's confusion in *Paradiso* IV, when his mind is torn in two directions considering the placement of souls in Paradise.⁷⁸ Chaucer compares himself to iron suspended between magnets of equal strength, while Dante extends the image to several examples, in which his role ranges from active to passive, predator to prey: he likens himself to a man who cannot decide which food to eat, a lamb that cannot decide which wolf to flee, a dog that cannot decide which deer to chase. Beatrice notes Dante's hesitation in his face, as Scipio does for Chaucer. Of course, the reasons for each poet's indecision are quite different. Whereas Dante is torn between two desires for enlightenment—explanations of the degrees of beatitude in heaven and of the movement of the resident souls—Chaucer is afraid and confused about his next action, much more akin to the Dante of *Inferno* III. However, unlike in *Inferno*,

⁷⁸ Compare:

No wit hadde I, for errour, for to chese,
 To entre or flen, or me to saue or lese.
 Right as betwixsyn adamauntis two
 Of euene myght a pece of yryn set
 Ne hath no myght to meue too ne fro--
 For what that on may hale, that othir let--
 Ferde I, that nyste whethir me was bet
 To entre or leue...

Intra due cibi, distanti e moventi
 D'un modo, prima si morria di fame,
 che liber'omo l'un recasse ai denti;
 sì si starebbe un agno intra due brame
 di fieri lupi, igualmente temendo;
 sì si starebbe un cane intra due dame:
 per che, s'i' mi tacea, me non riprendo,
 da li miei dubbi d'un modo sospinto,
 poi ch'era necessario, né commendo.

Also, note Scipio's perception of Chaucer's uneasiness, written in his face, in comparison to Beatrice's reaction to Dante's, which is similarly displayed:

...til Affriycan, myn gide,
 Me hente, and shof in at the gatis wide,
 And, seyde, 'It stant iwrityn in thyn face
 Thyn errour, thought thou telle it not to me;
 But dred the not to come in to this place,
 For this writyng is nothing ment bi the,
 Ne by non but he Louys serwaunt be:
 (PF 148-159)

Io mi tacea, ma 'l mio disir dipinto
 m'era nel viso, e 'l dimandar con ello,
 più caldo assai che per parlar distinto.
 ...Beatrice...
 ...disse: "Io veggio ben come ti tira
 uno e altro disio, sì che tua cura
 sé stessa lega sì che fuor non spira.
 (Par. IV, 1-18)

in which Virgil, after reassuring Dante, takes his hand to lead him through the gate, in the *Parlement*, Scipio first unceremoniously shoves the poet through the gate, and later reassures him with words and by taking his hand.⁷⁹

The author enters the fertile garden which is lush with greenery and has many different types of trees filled with singing birds and small animals. Harmonious music of stringed instruments is heard and women dance with unbound hair. Metaphorical personages, such as Beauty, Desire and Patience, along with darker figures such as Foolhardiness and Flattery, are in a court, in a temple, presided over by Venus; also present are other gods and many historical lovers. Finally the author finds Nature, "fayrere...than ony creature," who is presiding over her own court, in a natural, green bower, in which, as it is St. Valentine's Day, birds have assembled to choose their mates. The birds take their places in order of rank, and birds of prey top this list: first the eagles, then the goshawk, the falcon, the sparrowhawk, and the merlin. The list of birds present continues in lengthy detail. Most of these lower birds will have no problem finding a mate. The main issue—as Chaucer puts it, "But to the poynt"—involves a formel (female) eagle who is desired as a mate by three male eagles who compete for her. The royal tercel eagle has first choice, and he is described as having many excellent human—in fact knightly—qualities: he is "wyse and worthi, secre, trewe as stel."⁸⁰ He words his request for the formel eagle as if he is a poet in the *fin' amors* tradition: he asks to serve her, and appeals to her mercy and grace as his sovereign lady; if she refuses him, he will surely die. His lengthy and impassioned speech causes the formel eagle, despite, one would imagine, the limitations of her species, to blush in embarrassment. The second

⁷⁹ See note above.

⁸⁰ V. 395.

tercel eagle states that she should choose him because he has loved and served her longer than the others; therefore, he alone should receive the *gerdonynge*. This word, meaning sexual reward, is extremely common in and typical of *fin amors* poetry; this tercel too considers himself a human lover and poet. The third tercel also thinks he is human, insisting that he loves the formel eagle best: "I am hire treweste man." Irritation at the extreme length of this last eagle's speech causes unrest among the lower birds (seed fowl, water fowl, and those that live by scavenging) and leads to a comic scene in which they show their impatience. The goose, duck, and cuckoo point out the impracticality of promising to love someone forever if there is no hope of gaining the loved one. On the other side of the argument are the falcons and hawks. First the tercel falcon suggests a battle to decide which of the three is worthiest, then says it must be the formel to decide, for she knows who is "the worthieste/ Of knyghthod,.../ Most of estat, of blod the gentilleste."⁸¹ The goose argues that it would behoove the eagles to choose mates where there is some hope of success: "But she wele loue hym, let hym loue anothir!"⁸² She is derided by the sparrow hawk, "Lo, here a perfit resoun of a goos!" The turtle dove also agrees with the raptors, perhaps because of her traditional association with lovers. The formel eagle concludes the debate by asking Nature for a year's respite before she need make such a decision.

Quite aside from the fact that birds are having a meeting and speaking, it is the birds of prey in particular who act least bird-like and most human, adhering to the rules of upper-class love, vowing undying, though unrequited, love, and trying to decide who is noblest, most knightly, and therefore most worthy. They are idealists; the birds of

⁸¹ Vv. 548-550.

⁸² V. 567.

lower classes are shown to be more practical. This contrast between the idealist and the practical points of view represents here a class difference that translates in Italy to the tension between the old aristocracy and the new merchant class, and results in Boccaccio and others using this bird/love image to illustrate it as well.

Birds of prey act like noble human lovers in another of Chaucer's works. In his *Canterbury Tales*, the Squire's Tale includes the story of a falcon who has lost her lover. Here again one finds falcons practicing *fin amors*. While the representation of hawks as courtly lovers is fairly typical, it would be difficult to find literary falcons who act more human than this one and her faithless lover.

The Squire tells a tale in which an unknown knight comes to the court of Cambyuskan (Genghis Khan) and bestows gifts. To Cambyuskan's daughter, Canacee, he gives a ring that endows its wearer with the ability to understand the speech of birds. When next Canacee walks in the park, she encounters a female peregrine falcon⁸³ perched in a dead tree,⁸⁴ pecking herself and beating herself with her wings till she bleeds, while crying piteously. Canacee asks the bird about her grief, all the while holding her skirt out in case the falcon should faint and fall out of the tree. Before replying, the falcon does fall out of the tree, unfortunately missing Canacee's lap. However, Canacee picks her up, and hears her tale. The falcon tells of her cosseted upbringing, and then of the tercel falcon that lived nearby to whom, after much persuasion, she gave her love. He later betrayed her, giving his love to a kite, a bird representative of a lower social status. Before he showed his true colors, he kept all the rituals involved in "gentillesse of love," she says. He served his lady many years until

⁸³ The terms falcon and hawk are used interchangeably in this tale.

⁸⁴ The sterility of the tree echoes of course the futility of her love, as the lush garden echoes the fruitfulness of most birds in Valentine's Day poems.

she gave in for fear that he might die. She gave in under the condition that her honor might be retained, in private and public. His appropriately courtly reaction was to fall on his knees, “with so devout humblesse, With so high reverence, and, as by his cheere, So lyk a gentil lovere of manere.”⁸⁵ As often happens, the tercel later found it necessary to leave for a time. Despite a typically sorrowful leave-taking, in which the falcons promised faith to each other, the female found herself betrayed.

A particularly interesting aspect of this story is that beyond the fact that the peregrine falcon describes a *fin amors* love affair, as the telling of her tale proceeds, the things to which she compares her faithless lover change complexion from animal at the start to completely human at the finish. At the beginning he is compared to a serpent waiting for the right time to bite, then, he is a two-faced tiger. Soon afterward he is compared to several legendary deceitful lovers—Jason, Paris, the biblical Lamech. In fact, the falcon’s lover is such a hypocrite that no deceitful man through the ages would be “worthy unbokelen his galoche.”⁸⁶ A falcon who wears sandals is certainly a novel idea. However, at the end of her tale, the female falcon offers up some folk wisdom in which she really emphasizes the human comparison:

Whan it cam hym to purpos for to reste,
 I trowe he hadde thilke text in mynde,
 That ‘alle thyng, repeiryng to his kynde,
 Gladeth hymself;’ thus seyn men, as I gesse.
 Men loven of propre kynde newefangelnesse,
 As briddes doon that men in cages fede.
 For though thou nyght and day take of hem hede,
 And straw hir cage faire and softe as silk,
 And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,
 Yet right anon as that his dore is uppe
 He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,
 And to the wode he wole and wormes etc;

⁸⁵ The Squire’s Tale, vv. 544-546.

⁸⁶ V. 555. Galoche = sandal.

So newefangel been they of hire mete,
 And loven novelries of proper kynde,
 No gentillesse of blood ne may hem bynde.⁸⁷

The female peregrine describes her tercel falcon as a man, whom she compares further to an ungrateful caged pet bird. The metaphor seems startlingly inappropriate. If we step back one degree in storytelling, to the Squire who invented this grieving falcon, it is possible that these odd images for describing a falcon might be simply evidence of the Squire's ineptness at telling a tale. At the same time, stepping forward again, there seems to be an intentional progression from the animal world to the human, which appears as the female falcon's agitation grows, as she continues throughout to call him a hypocrite and bemoans her very human love affair.

By the Italian Duecento, the place of falcons and hawks in European texts of all sorts is firmly established, from encyclopedic and didactic literature to love poetry. They are an integral part of human society, and are particularly associated with the upper class, as they are the constant companions of that class. They represent power, nobility of breeding or of behavior; the birds and the sport in which they're used are commonplace metaphors for courtly love and its pursuit, a kind of love that is as complicated as the sport of falconry itself.

⁸⁷ Vv. 606-620.

CHAPTER 2: Falconry in Duecento and Trecento poetry.

The presence of images of birds of prey and the sport of falconry in Provençal poetry does, as one might expect, translate into similar, though less frequent, usage in Italian vernacular poetry of the Due- and Trecento. Other more traditional bestiary animals, such as the stag, the beaver, and the basilisk, achieve a stronger presence, and it is as interesting to note where falconry fails to appear as to note where it does appear and why.¹ It is nearly absent from Sicilian poetry and from the love lyric of the *stilnovisti*, while its presence, while never particularly strong, is felt much more in Siculo-Tuscan poetry. This may well reflect the influence of the troubadours in northern Italy, such as Rigaut de Berbezilh, discussed in Chapter 1.

Falconry imagery also sees limited use in the poetry of the Trecento. It is restricted largely to madrigals, where the relationship between recreational hunting and erotic encounters is overt. Also, the beloved lady is often represented as a falcon or hawk that the poet desires to have. In either case, the use of the falcon reflects the changes in the hunt of love in the Trecento to represent a more carnal and less spiritual kind of love.

As for the *Cantari* of the Trecento, falconry references are scanty and rarely related to love, though the few that are found in that context will be mentioned here. It is more common to see falcons associated with war and fierceness, as happens in the *Entrée d'Espagne*, and the *Spagna minore* and *maggiore*.² Falcons and hawks get occasional

¹ For a general survey of the Provençal origins of much Italian animal imagery, see Milton Stahl Garver, "Sources of the beast similes in the Italian lyric of the thirteenth century," *Romanische Forschungen* 21 (1908): 276-320. See also Francesco Sbordone, "I bestiari e le rime amorose del sec. XIII," in *Studi latini e neolatini* (Napoli: Lebreria editrice Ferraro, 1971), 167-208.

² In *Poemi cavallereschi del Trecento*, ed. Giuseppe Ferrero (Torino: UTET, 1965).

mentions in the *Cantari d'Aspramonte*,³ in the same sorts of contexts, as well as being a measure of wealth and nobility.

Although hunting is practiced in reality with many kinds of hawks and falcons, only a few are commonly encountered in medieval Italian literature. The most frequent references are to hawks: the *sparviero*, or sparrowhawk, is the most common; it seems to be the default bird in representing love or nobility in Old French, Provençal, and Italian literature. The *astore*, or goshawk, is often seen as well; it is a larger and more fearsome hawk than the sparrowhawk. Among falcons, the generic *falco* or *falcone* is often mentioned, along with the *falcon pellegrino*, or peregrine falcon, and the *girfalco*, or gyrfalcon, whose relationship to the generic falcon corresponds to that of the goshawk with the sparrowhawk. Occasionally contrasting with the above birds is the *nibbio*, or kite, a type of falcon that is small, and was considered lazy, cowardly, and an ineffective hunter. The choice of one of these birds over another in poetry seems usually arbitrary, with a few exceptions. The kite, of course, is used in a negative context. If the poet wishes to convey a sense of diving and striking swiftly from a great height, the natural choice is a falcon, which hunts in that manner, rather than a hawk. Likewise, if a poem is set in a forest, a hawk, which hunts low to the ground in brushy areas, and grasps its prey firmly in its talons, is more appropriate. Let us now examine these uses of falcons and hawks.

Despite the strong ties between the south of France and the court of Frederick II, and the emperor's obsession with the sport of falconry, falcons and hawks are practically

³ Edited by Andrea Fassò (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1981).

nonexistent in the poetry of the *scuola siciliana*.⁴ This fact may reflect a change of focus in Sicilian poetry.⁵ Where previously in troubadour poetry the lady/falcon was portrayed as being trained by the poet/falconer in the practice of love, and the joy of a reciprocal love dynamic was reflected in the relationship between falconer and falcon, in Sicilian poetry, the emphasis on the tyranny of love and the consequent suffering of the poet leads to hunting imagery being used quite differently. Here often Love itself is the merciless hunter, whose prey is the hapless poet. Many animal images are used to convey the poet's suffering in Sicilian poetry; frequently seen, for example, are animals associated with fire—the salamander, the phoenix—and venatory images are present as well: the poet may be a deer being pursued or a bird caught in lime.

What one might consider a natural falconry extension of this trend of thought—the poet as the helpless prey of Love, who is the pursuing falcon—seems to be absent from the opus of Sicilian poetry. However, this is not true of all predatory birds that may be seen to participate in the hunt of love. Giacomo da Lentini portrays himself as the victim of a predatory bird, though it is not a falcon but an eagle:

Lo giglio quand'è colto tost'è passo,
 da poi la sua natura lui no è giunta;
 ed io da c'unche son partuto un passo
 da voi, mia donna, dolemi ogni giunta.
 Per che d'amare ogni amadore passo,
 in tante altezze lo mio core giunta:
 così mi fere Amor là 'vunque passo,
 com'aghila quand'a la caccia è giunta.
 Oi lasso me, che nato fui in tal punto,
 s'unque no amasse se non voi, chiù gente
 (questo saccia madonna da mia parte):

⁴ See Boccassini (261) for a discussion of the arguments around the origins of the Sicilian school of poetry. However, whether influenced by the troubadours of Northern Italian courts or those of the south of France, it is still surprising to find such a dearth of falconry imagery in Sicily considering their abundance in the previous literature.

⁵ Boccassini, 264-268.

imprima che vi vidi ne fuo' punto,
 servi'vi ed inora'vi a tutta gente,
 da voi, bella, lo mio core non parte.⁶

Giacomo's heart, distinguished by the amount and quality of its love, is also, because of the "heights" it reaches in its superiority to the hearts of other lovers, as if it is a bird, singled out by Love and attacked. The eagle does not seem to be necessarily a trained bird, but simply a wild predator.

There is also a reference to the much maligned *nibbio*, or kite, a kind of small falcon whose reputation, thanks to hunting manuals, is of laziness and consequent poor hunting ability. It is found in a poem whose style is very imitative of Provençal predecessors; he celebrates the reciprocation of his love within the formal structure of a *fin' amors* relationship. The poet is Ruggerone da Palermo, active in the first half of the 1200s, who rejoices that his constancy in serving his lady has finally been rewarded, and advises other lovers to act with similar patience. In doing so he gives the negative example of lovers who don't try hard enough to win their lady, illustrated by the *nibbio*, who does not hunt well because he does not want to put forth the effort.

Ben mi degio alegrare
 e far versi d'amore,
 ca cui son servidore
 m'à molto grandemente meritato;
 non si por[r]ia contare
 lo gran bene e l'aunore.
 Ben agia lo martore,
 ch'io per lei lungiamente agio durato.
 Però consiglio questo a chi è amadori:
 non si ['n]speri, sia buon soferidori
 e *lui* no 'ncresca la gran dimoranza;
 chi vole [ben] compire sua ['n]tendenza,
 viv'a speranza,
 chè non mi par che sia di valimento

⁶ Giacomo da Lentini, *Poesia*, ed. Roberto Antonelli (Roma: Bulzoni, 1979).

da c'omo vene tosto a compimento.

Ben ò veduto [a]manti
 a cui par forte amare
 e non vole penare,
 e fa come lo nibbio certamente:
 ch' egli è bello e possanti
 e non vole pigliare,
 per non troppo affan[n]are,
 se non cosa qual sia pariscente.
 Così fa quelli, c' à povero core
 Di sofferire pene per amore,
 e già sa egli ca nulla amistanza
 non guadagna omo mai per vilitanza.
 Sia rimembranza:
 chi vole amor di donna viva a spene,
 [e] contisi in gran gioi tut[t]e le pene.⁷

He follows the above by setting up as a positive comparison the *buon marinaio*, an example of steadfastness, who is not daunted by bad seas but keeps going until he reaches land. For Ruggerone, the lover-poet's role is as the hunter who pursues the beloved, his prey. His advice is that it behooves the lover to imitate a better hunter than the kite. The poor kite appears in many poems from different areas of Italy, but always as an example of a worthless, lazy predator. However one may well wonder where all the other falcons have gone in Sicilian poetry. As an image that could be so easily adapted to various views of love, from the lover/falcon hunting the beloved, to the lover/falconer training the beloved as a falcon, to the unhappy lover as the prey of Love embodied in a cruel falcon, not to mention its cultural popularity and the Sicilian adoption of so many other animals from Provençal poetry, its scarcity in Sicilian poetry is a puzzle.

A falcon is found, however, in the work of a poet from Lucca with a great deal of Sicilian influence, Bonagiunta Orbicciani. His canzone, *Infra le gioi' piacenti*, is reminiscent in style of Provençal and Sicilian poetry; he addresses and praises his lady

⁷ From Bruno Panvini, *Le rime della scuola siciliana* (Firenze: Olschki, 1962), 165-166.

and exults in the joy he feels in loving her, while examining his emotions. Being far away, he wishes to return, and describes how quickly he would like to accomplish this, with a comparison to a falcon's speed:

Atendo di compire,
 e vado soggiornando
 in questo mio viaggio;
 e s'eo per tosto gire
 potesse, come stando,
 compier lo meo coraggio,
 farea questo passaggio – in tal maniera,
 che falcon di rivera
 apena credo ch'avanti mi gisse
 per fin che 'l meo viaggio si compisse.⁸

His desire to return to his lady is so great that he might nearly be able to outrun a falcon “di rivera,” one that hunts waterfowl, to get home. It is a simple comparison that effectively conveys a sense of the movement to which the poet aspires, and again evokes the linking of the falcon to love. A falcon flying fast is probably pursuing prey, as the poet wishes to pursue his lady.

Of course, sometimes, sensual love is not celebrated but condemned by the poet. Such is the situation in a moralizing work of Guittone d'Arezzo, the *Trattato d'amore*, a series of twelve poems, primarily sonnets, in which he warns of the dangers of love. This is a product of his later years, after he joined the order of the Frati Godenti, and became known as Fra Guittone d'Arezzo. The poems all center on analysis of a picture of Love personified, that he describes in prose in very specific detail:

Qui de' essere la figura de l'amore pinta sì ch'el sia garzone nudo, cieco, cum due ale su le spalle e cum un turcascio a la cintura, entrambi di color di porpora, cum un arco en man, ch'el abia ferito d'una saitta un giovene enamorado cum una ghirlanda in testa. Cum l'altra man porga un'asta cum fuoco di cappo; e per gli artigli si abbia le granfe de astore.⁹

⁸ Vv. 31-40. From Zaccagnini and Parducci, *Rimatori siculo-toscani del dugento* (Bari: Laterza, 1915), 62.

⁹ F. Egidi, *Le rime di Guittone d'Arezzo* (Bari: Laterza, 1940), 268.

It seems as if the text were meant to be illustrated, or, likely, the figure of Love, along with its interpretations, was meant to be used to instruct other brothers.¹⁰ The poems that follow it interpret the symbolic meanings of the parts of this figure. Guittone's main theme is that sensual love leads to death, particularly the death of the soul. The significance he gives to the talons of Love reinforces this idea:

La sovraditta morte per l'artiglia
mostra esser cosa che 'ngreffisce
e che dimostra quello unde assottiglia
di retener ciascun che l'obedisce;

sì cum astor che l'algetto piglia,
che quasi senza morte nol largisce:
ciò è la losingeval meraviglia
d'alcun piacer che l'amante tradisce,

che quince trade certo ogn'amatore,
quando, retinendol, a morte 'l mena
per lusinghe d'alcun piacer tutore.

E nullo è più mortal velen né pena
d'ogni losinga, che l'om ten di fore,
né han li amanti più crudel catena.¹¹

Guittone warns that the pleasures of erotic love do not let go of the lover and lead him to death. The image of the grasping *astore*, or goshawk, clinging to a small bird until its death suits his didactic purpose admirably, portraying Love as a merciless predator and the lover as, once caught, a helpless victim.

Surrendering to the clutches of love is, in the context of love poetry, quite a different, in fact, a positive thing. Often the poet hopes that his beloved will do so, and sets her up as the falcon's prey, the falcon being either himself or Love. In a *tenzone*

¹⁰ For incidences of illustrations of this text, see H. Wayne Storey, "The Missing Picture in the Text of Escorial e.III.23: Guittone's *Trattato d'amore*," in *Italiana* (River Forest, IL: Rosary College, 1988), 59-78; and his *Transcription and Visual Poetics in the Early Italian Lyric* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993).

¹¹ Egidi, 274.

between Pallamidesse Bellindote and Monte Andrea, we find a variety of hunting birds—the goshawk, the falcon and the kite—that are used to illustrate different perspectives on a love situation.

Pallamidesse:

La pena ch'ag[g]io cresce e non menova,
come di verno fa l'agua nel Po;
più ho dolor che rena in mar di Genova,
doglia tanta c'avantire non pò.

Morte chiama il mio core, e l'ha nova:
così vivo languendo e mal temp'ò;
dentro dal corpo un fuoco ardendo va;
di for non pare, e dentro divampo.

Tempèr d'angoscia posar me no larga
e 'ncalciami come falco colomba;
così manto di guaio adosso m'afib[b]io.

D'esti martiri già Dio alcun no sparga,
sed e' non piace a lei in cui valor piomba
di fare astor di me che son lo nib[b]io.

Monte:

La dolorosa vita che si prova
di voi, che prova? - di ciò far esempo,
che si disvia l'omo ch'a ciò comova,
e como va - non mai per via né 'n campo.
Sì del poder di sé fuori si trova,
ca retro va - sempremai tutto tempo;
ed argomento alcuno a ciò no giova,
ché ta' gio' v'à, - me' fora stare 'n Po.
Certitemi di voi cosa più nova:
se me' no v'à - pe[r] ricevere scampo.

Ché m'agradisce di voi vita larga:
però da larga - voi e vostra tomba!
Da mortal tomba - fate vostro trib[b]io.
Laove il poder d'Amor si mostra o sparga,
convien che sparga - tal suono sua tromba;
chi vi tromba - non pò dir come 'l nib[b]io.

We find here the image of the *nibbio* used in the same context as it was by Ruggerone di Palermo.¹² Pallamidesse wishes to have the courage and the hunting prowess of the better hunter, the *astore*, rather than the *nibbio* that he sees himself to be. However, as much as he wishes to be the hunter, he is also, and more so, the prey. He recognizes this himself in the first *terzina*, where he states that the emotional pain that love gives him harasses him as a falcon a dove. Monte reinforces Pallamidesse's status as prey in his answering sonnet, attempting to correct Pallamidesse's mistaken impression that he is the hunter; rather, the situation is in fact reversed: it is his beloved who has conquered him—and not like a kite, but, implied, like a better-hunting bird, perhaps the goshawk to which he aspired himself. There is a certain circularity to the hunt of love, in which the hunter and hunted may switch roles, while Love itself remains the falcon who never lets go.¹³

In exploring the occurrences of falcons and hawks in Duecento poetry, it would be easy to assume that Chiaro Davanzati would be included; after all, he is well known to have taken the use of animal imagery to extremes. There may be found at times four or more different references to animals in a single *canzone*. It has even been postulated by

¹² The contrast between the kite and a stronger bird of prey occurs in a different context, but carrying the same connotations, in Cecco Angiolieri's *Lasso vo' lo trovare de Becchina*, which consists of a list of ways in which the "Mariscalco," a political figure of uncertain identity, has a negative reality that is different from his favorable appearance. This is illustrated in contrasting pairs of things; in fact, in what might be called the social ranking of birds, Cecco sends him steadily downhill: "ed è un nibbio, e par un[o] girfalco; /e pare un gal[.]o, ed è una gallina." Vv. 7-8. Gianfranco Contini, ed., *Poeti del Duecento* (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1960).

¹³ Monte Andrea also mentions the falcon in its wild state in *Donna, di voi si rancura*, pointing out that lesser birds are right to fear its fierceness.

Che se gli augelli han temenza
e mostrano doglienza
del falco rudione,
non è per tradigione
né per sùia vilezza,
ma natural virtù ne fa certezza. (Vv. 55-60; from Contini, p. 162)

He uses this image, one of a series of animals in the *canzone*, to attempt to convince his beloved to abandon her pride, arguing that there is no shame in giving in to something stronger than herself: love, one would assume. By being cruel to him, the lady is acting contrary to the laws of nature.

Kenneth McKenzie¹⁴ that Davanzati's sources for his animals are all from a single Italian bestiary, which also included several fables, of which he was in possession.¹⁵ In his *canzoni* alone may be found nearly forty animal comparisons.¹⁶ However, hawks occur only twice in his opus, both in sonnets. In both cases the hawk is to be imitated for its courage and for its hunting ability.

Bono sparver non prende senza artiglio,
 e chi ben cacc[i]a prender non si larga;
 chi dona il cor per un levar di ciglio
 è uno proverbio ch'usan quei da Barga;

quand'om per non far guerra è 'n gran periglio,
 in gran bonac[ci]a i' non v[ò]i [st]are a larga,
 ca per tempesta l'u[l]timo consiglio
 si de' serbare, e 'l senno in ben si sbarga.

Perzò chi trova no'l si tegna ad onta
 i'nulla guisa se fosse ripreso,
 perch'ogn'om parla per lo suo pensiero;

ché molti son che sentenz'ha[n] non conta
 se non di con[in]ciar lor dire inceso:
 aucl di buono ailar nonn-è lanero.¹⁷

In this first sonnet, Chiaro advises those who write poetry to have the courage to write what they wish regardless of criticism, if they wish to write well. He sets up as an example the hawk, who hunts well because it is fierce: a good hawk uses its talons. He recalls this first verse in the final verse of the sonnet, reinforcing his theme with the negative example of the lanner falcon: it is a type of falcon whose reputation was as an inept hunter, not to be imitated. Chiaro frames his argument by counseling his audience

¹⁴ McKenzie, "Unpublished Manuscripts of Italian Bestiaries," 384-5.

¹⁵ On the other hand, it has been argued that he derives his animal references directly from late Provençal poets; see Cesare De Lollis, "Sul canzoniere di Chiaro Davanzati."

¹⁶ See Menichetti, *Chiaro Davanzati, Rime*, p. xlv.

¹⁷ From Menichetti, 331.

to be forceful like the sparrowhawk, rather than useless like the lanner falcon. Poetry, like hunting, should create a stir.

The second of these sonnets uses the image of the sparrowhawk in a similar manner. The poet seeks to overcome his timidity in love by acting like the hawk.

Io son tanto temioso e vergognoso
a tutte l'ore ch'io vi so' davanti;
spesse volte io mi muovo coraggioso
per fare e dire quel che fan gli amanti:

quand'io [so'] avanti a voi, viso amoroso,
el parlare e' pensier' mi sono afranti,
e 'l fino amar mi tien sì dubitoso,
ch'io non so far né atti né sembianti.

Ma io faraggio come lo sparvero,
ch'a lo incominciamento è dubitoso
quando è co gl[i] agellet[t]i a la foresta,

e poi diventa ardito e manero:
da che cominci diviene argogl[i]oso
e della caccia mena gran tempesta.¹⁸

Chiaro refers here to the domestic hawk's development as a hunter: taken when young from its habitat, it grows yearly into a more powerful hunter, a process commonly noted in bestiaries, encyclopedic literature, and hunting manuals. He states his plan to model his own transformation on that of the hawk. It will serve him well to emulate the hawk's hunting progress as he tries to improve his own hunting in love. In both sonnets, indeed, Chiaro shows that the hawk's boldness in hunting is an admirable quality to be imitated in one's own quest.

All the poems examined so far use falcons and hawks in images that relate to the hunting prowess of the birds themselves. But there are several instances that focus on the

¹⁸ Ibid., 405-406.

nature of the relationship between the falcon owner and the bird he trains and keeps.¹⁹ This relationship corresponds to that between the human lovers, and is most commonly used to illustrate problematic love, a loss of trust between the lover and beloved. We find the falconer/lady mistreating her charge, the falcon/lover, or the falconer/lady betrayed by the falcon/lover, who flies away. Pietro Morovelli's *canzone Donna amorosa* falls in the first category, and is a complaint of the poet's mistreatment by his beloved. The comparison to a neglected goshawk is not found in isolation but is the second of three images of bad caretaking in the canzone.

Donna amorosa
 senza merzede,
 per la mia fede,
 di me giucate
 com'omo face
 d'uno fantino,
 che gio' li mosa
 e gioca e ride;
 da poi che vede
 sua volontate,
 lo 'nganna e tace:
 ec[c]o amor fino!
 Pur a l'inoia lo fa angosciare,
 no li vuol dare
 gioia d'amare:
 però mal pare
 lo troppo fare quanto lo mino.

Sì che giocando
 penso perire
 e mal soffrire,
 como l'astore
 ch'è 'n perca miso
 e mal guardato;
 a quando a quando

¹⁹ This theme is found also in Provençal; see Boccassini, 256-257. She notes that Folquet de Marseille complains that he is badly looked-after by Love, like a hawk that is held so tightly by an inept falconer that it nearly dies (here of course Love is the falconer, rather than his lady). From *A! quan gen vens et ab quan pauc d'afan*: "mas aisi'm retengratz quo'l fols rete/l'espervier fer, quan tem que se desli,/que l'estrenh tan e'l poynh tro que l'auci;/mas, pus estortz vos sui, viure puosc be."

lo va' vedere,
 e par tenere,
 lo suo signore:
 trovalo impeso
 e disfilato.

Dunqua, Madonna, se voi m'amate,
 or mi guardate:
 di me ag[g]iate,
 bella pietate;
 non mi lasciate
 tanto ubriato.

Se voi, madonna, ben mi volete
 como dicete,
 di ciò son fello,
 ch'io pur atendo bocca parlando:
 ben par che voi vi dilette
 di me ch'avete,
 como 'l zitello
 che de l'ausello va diletando
 finché l'auzide, tanto lo tira,
 e poi lo mira,
 forte s'adira;
 ma tosto gira,
 c'aisi delira
 e va giocando.²⁰

The poet first compares his beloved's actions to those of a man teasing a child, then compares himself to a goshawk that is ignored by its owner, and finally compares his beloved again to a thoughtless child who toys with a bird to the point of killing it. He claims, through these comparisons, that he is, respectively, teased, neglected, and abused. Having established that his fate depends on her whim, he continues, in the rest of the canzone, to ask for mercy.

The reverse of this love betrayal expressed through falconry is found in an anonymous tenzone between a man and a woman, in which the female voice (the poet could well have been either a woman or a man) laments that her lover has left her for

²⁰ From Contini, 377-378, vv. 1-50.

another. *Tapina ahimè, ch'amava uno sparviero* is entirely a metaphor for the lover's betrayal of his lady expressed through the lady's bemoaning of the loss of her sparrowhawk, that she had trained and cared for, to another lady. The response to the lady, made by the lover, protests and denies the charges.

The sonnet exchange is as follows:

Tapina ahimè, ch'amava uno sparvero:
 amaval tanto ch'io me ne moria;
 a lo richiamo ben m'era manero,
 e dunque troppo pascer nol dovia.

Or è montato e salito sì altero,
 as[s]ai più alto che far non solia,
 ed è asiso dentro a uno verzero:
 un'altra donna lo tene in balia.

Isparvero mio, ch'io t'avea nodrito,
 sonaglio d'oro ti faceva portare
 perché dell'uc[c]ellar fosse più ardito:

or se' salito sì come lo mare,
 ed ha' rotti li geti e se' fug[g]ito,
 quando eri fermo nel tuo uc[c]ellare.

Response:

Vis' amoros, angelico e clero,
 in cui regna savere e cortesia,
 non v'apellate di tapin mestero
 per creder cosa ch'es[s]er non poria.

Ch'io partisse da voi core e penzero?
 Inanti foss'io morto quella dia:
 ch'io altra gioia non voglio né spero
 se no la vostra gaia signoria.

E ben confesso, sono alti salito,
 pensando che cangiato son d'amare
 da voi, cui sono fedele e gechito.

Chi altro vi fa credere o pensare

è disleale, larone e traito,
che vuol la nostra gioia disturbare.²¹

It is interesting to note the use of the technical language of falconry here: the hawk used to come back to her call, so she didn't have to tempt it back with food; she had tied a bell to it, and it broke its jesses to leave her. One may wonder also whether the phrase, "eri fermo nel tuo uccellare," has a sexual significance. The setting and the language of the poem belong very much to the courtly world in which ladies own and fly pet hawks; it is an excellent example of the association between love and this aristocratic pastime.

This is the only lament of its kind that has been found in Italian poetry, however, this same theme was very common in German poetry of the same period.²² One similar poem, known as the Song of the Falcon, is by Der von Kürenberg, from the mid-twelfth century, the earliest named German lyric poet.

Ich zôch mir einen valken mêre danne ein jâr.
dô iche in gezamete, als ich in wolte hân,
und ich im sîn gevidere mit golde wol bewant,
er huop sich ûf vil hôhe und vlouc in ándèriu lant.

Sît sach ich den valken schône vliegen,
er vuorte an sînem vuoze sîdîne riemen,
und was im sîn gevidere alrôt guldîn.
got sende sî zesamene, die gelieb wêllen gerne sîn!²³

²¹ From Contini, 442-443.

²² William C. McDonald, "Concerning Ambiguity as the Poetic Principle in Kürenburg's Falcon Song," *Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* (1978): 320 ff.

²³ Translation by A. T. Hatto, "Poetry and the Hunt," in *Essays in Medieval German and Other Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 313:

I reared me a falcon for more than a year.
When I had tamed him as I wished to have him
And wound his feathers all about with gold,
He raised himself aloft and flew to other lands.

Since then I saw that falcon flying rarely:
On his feet he wore silken jesses
And his feathers were all reddish gold.
May God send those together who wish to be lovers!

The exact topic of this poem is a vexed question among German scholars. It may be a woman's lament for her lost lover; it may also be a "Wechsel", a poem spoken by two voices, here the knight and the lady, who are far apart and hoping to see each other.²⁴ It is impossible to say whether this poem or others in German like it, in which falcons, symbolizing lovers, are trained and fly away, would have had any influence on this Tuscan tenzone of the following century. Similarity can also be noted between the Italian poem and Chaucer's Squire's Tale, in which a lady falcon complains that she has been betrayed by her falcon lover.²⁵ All that can be said for certain is that the theme of the falcon leaving its owner or lover can be found in a variety of European literature, because of the widely accepted correspondence between falconry and love.

The lover as a falcon can be viewed also in a positive light: the falcon or hawk, when it is well cared for, being content to stay with its owner is used as an image of the happy lover. Guido Orlandi, a Florentine contemporary of Guido Cavalcanti, provides a *canzone* full of hunting images used to illustrate his willing return to serve Love, despite having once been free of it:

Come servo francato
 sono servo d'Amore,
 membrandomi l'onore,
 e il ben ch'io presi nel primiero stato.

Stato gioioso presi di lui tanto,
 ch'io mi potria dar vanto,
 s'io ne volessi dir quanto riservo,
 e rinnovello d'amore di tanto.
 Porto cortese manto,
 libero sono, e confessomi servo,
 e fo siccome il cervo:
 passando a corso lento,
 dimostrasi leggiero,

²⁴ See Hatto and McDonald for these views and several others besides.

²⁵ The Squire's Tale is discussed in Chapter 1.

volgesi al grido, quand' egli è stancato.

Volto mi trovo umil come l'uliva,
 che prende e non ischiva
 virtù di rose, né di fior novelli.
 Condotto sono in porto d'acqua viva
 con diletta riva
 piena di gigli colorata e bella.
 Odo cantar gli augelli
 in lor dolce maniera
 la dimane e la sera;
 perch' io gioioso vivo innamorato.

Gioia amorosa m'ha tornato amico
 assai più ch'io non dico,
 e non di folle amore mi riprendo,
 né di servire mai non mi disdico
 al mio signore antico.
 A fren tirato sprono, e il vo seguendo.
 Donne ed Amor difendo:
 biasmo chi le combatte:
 poi buon astor non sbatte
 sopra dal guanto quando è pasturato.
 Perch' è ben forsennato
 chi segue tal furore,
 dicendo per errore:
 io amo tal, né da lei sono amato.²⁶

His returning to love is illustrated both by a common deer-hunting image, and by that of a content domesticated goshawk. The idea that the deer returns to the hunter on being called, and thence to its death, a counterintuitive action, is used often in illustrating a poet's returning to his beloved hoping for favor. This is found in bestiaries and in the work of other poets.²⁷ In Orlandi's exaltation of love he essentially portrays himself, the happy lover, as a goshawk that is not agitated on its owner's glove. Unlike the hawks in

²⁶ From Vincenzo Nannucci, *Manuale della letteratura del primo secolo della lingua italiana*, v. 1 (Firenze: Barbèra, Bianchi, 1856), 297-298.

²⁷ Nannucci (244-245) notes Lapo Gianni (*Gentil donna, cortese, e di bon are*), Richart de Berbezilh (*Aissi col cers que, quan a faich lonc cors, / Torna murir al crit dels cassadors, / Aissi torn ieu, domn', en vostra merce*) Amorozzo da Firenze (*Così m'avven col cervio per usanza;*) Meo Abbracciavacca (*Hammi si preso che fo come 'l cervo,*) Petrarch (*Corre alla morte come in caccia cervo*).

the previous poems, abused or runaway, this one has a good nurturing relationship with its owner that results in its staying gladly on its owner's glove. The mental state of the lover is again illustrated by the hawk/owner relationship, but here, that state is a positive one.

The master/servant relationship between the lady and the poet, which is so clearly present in the work of its courtly Provençal originators, still latently exists in the Sicilian and Siculo-Tuscan poets discussed above, in which the poet is often in the possession of the lady. This type of love relationship, which lends itself well to illustration by the equally courtly pastime of falconry, disappears from the poetry of the *Dolce Stil Novo*, in which the lady is regarded differently: the poet exalts her to the heavens, and analyzes how he is affected by her, but he does not serve her in the courtly sense. The falconer/falcon relationship therefore loses its relevance, and there are very few falconry images to be found. Indeed, bestiary-derived animal comparisons in general fall almost entirely out of favor with this group of poets. The sparrowhawk does appear in one canzone that has been attributed to Guido Guinizelli.²⁸ If it is his, it is surely an early work; it contains many animal similes in the style of the *Mare amoroso* or of some of Chiaro Davanzati's more ambitious poems. This canzone, which begins *Madonna, dimostrare*, elaborates the ways in which the poet suffers while waiting for his loved one to capitulate. He compares himself to a salamander,²⁹ then to a man who is doomed by listening to the siren at sea, then to a sparrowhawk, and finally to the deer that returns to

²⁸ Found in Tommaso Casini, *Le rime dei poeti bolognesi del secolo XIII* (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1968, reprint of 1881), 56-58, under the heading "Rime incertamente attribuite a M. Guido Guinizelli."

²⁹ The salamander's peculiar bestiary-derived trait of being able to live in fire made it very useful to poets trying to describe their suffering in love; Giacomo da Lentini and other Sicilian poets were particularly fond of the image.

the hunter. In the stanza in which the sparrowhawk occurs, the poet complains that he was deceived into falling in love with the lady.

Et eo per affidare,
 oi lasso, semplicemente
 son feruto d'uno dardo intero;
 ciò è il vostro guardare.
 che sì amorosamente
 me dimostraste, ch'ora m' è guerrero;
 e sì come sparvero
 posso dir veramente
 ch'eo son pres' malamente,
 quando l'ausello vede cibellare.³⁰

The meaning of these verses is a bit obscure. The hawk to which he compares himself is fooled into being caught by the offer of food. This may be meant to be the capture of a wild hawk from its natural environment, or, if a tame hawk, its repeated return to its owner when called by the lure. However, the use of the lure was practiced with falcons, not with hawks. Unfortunately, there is no way to know if the poet would have been aware of this difference. If he knows his predators, he is comparing himself to a wild hawk that has been fooled into losing its freedom. If not, he establishes himself and his beloved in the old courtly falconry relationship, in which he, the hawk, returns to her.

Guinizzelli also mention the *nibbio* in a sonnet in which he piles abuse on an old woman in a typical poetic conceit in which old crones are insulted:

Volvol te levi, vecchia rabbiosa
 e sturbignon te fera in su la testa:
 perché dimor' ha' in te tanto nascosa,
 che non te vèn ancider la tempesta?

Arco da cielo te mandi angosciosa
 saetta che te fenda, e sia presta:
 che se fenisse tua vita noiosa,
 avrei, senz' altr' aver, gran gio' e festa.

³⁰ Vv. 31-40. In 40, I see *cibellare* as a variant of *cibare*, meaning here, the opportunity to eat, i.e., the food on the lure, or if a wild hawk, bait that causes it to be caught.

Ché non fanno lamento li avoltori,
 nibbi e corbi a l'alto Dio sovrano,
 che lor te renda? Già se' lor ragione.

Ma tant' ha' tu sugose carni e dure,
 che non se curano averti tra mano:
 però romane, e quest' è la cagione.³¹

Once again, the kite has a negative reputation, mentioned in the same breath with crows and vultures. The old woman is inferior even to these birds; her flesh is unfit to be eaten by them. It is quite the exaggeration, since kites and crows are not carrion eaters.

In later love poetry of the *Dolce Stil Novo* the falcon and hawk are essentially nowhere to be found. A mention is made by Cino da Pistoia in a sonnet, *Meuccio, i' fece una vista d'amante*, in which he lists the falcon as one of the animals that his beloved supersedes in pride.³² That is as far as the falcon goes in lyric poetry of this school. In his Comedy, Dante lends much deeper meaning to the image of the tame falcon, as might be expected, and as we will see in Chapter 3.

It seems worthwhile at this point to examine briefly the place of falconry in other types of poetry: *poesia realistica* and *didattica*, to be precise. When one thinks of hunting in poetry of this period, the most well-known example is surely the *corona dei mesi* of Folgore di San Gimignano. He celebrates falconry as a joyful leisure activity in *Di settembre*, and also in his other cycle of poetry of days of the week, in *Sabato*. In these, falconry is present in reality, in the absolute, and enjoyed on its own merits, rather than representing any sort of human relationship. This is not to say, however, that the

³¹ From Contini.

³² Vv. 5-8, from Contini, p. 654:

Ed ancor più, che 'n ogni su' sembiante
 passa avante—d'orgoglio ogn'altra fera:
 aguila o falcone o cosa altera
 a sua maniera—non è simigliante.

practice of falconry does not carry certain connotations on its own in a poem—wealth, leisure time, nobility. After examining Folgore’s use of this pastime, it will be interesting to note its similarity, if not its point of view, with a much earlier condemnation of the trappings of wealth, written by Ugucione da Lodi.

The *corona dei mesi* hearkens back to the tradition of the Provençal *plazer*, and is aimed at a *brigata*, whose description in the introductory sonnet paints them as typical carefree young wealthy folk. The *corona della settimana* describes the life and pastimes of a young man of the nobility. Both sets of poems offer a survey of medieval recreational pastimes for the nobility, and encourage liberality with money.

*Di settembre:*³³

Di settembre vi do diletti tanti:
falconi, astori, smerletti e sparvieri,
lunghe, gherbegli, geti con carnieri,
bracchetti con sonagli, pasti e guanti;

bolz’ e balestre dritt’ e ben portanti,
archi, strali, pallotte e pallottieri;
sianvi mudati girfalchi ed astieri
nidaci e di tutt’ altri ucce’ volanti,

che fosser buoni da snidar e prendere;
e l’un all’altro tuttavia donando,
e possasi rubare e non contendere;

quando con altra gente rincontrando,
le vostre borse sempre aconce a spendere,
e tutti abbiate l’avarizia in bando.

The hunting birds that Folgore lists are those seen commonly elsewhere in literary references, and evokes the hunting scene by mentioning accoutrements of the sport—leashes, jesses. He emphasizes the joy to be found in all types of hunting birds, “mudati,” caught after their first moult, or “nidaci,” raised in captivity. Associated with the courtly

³³ From Contini, 414.

sport of falconry is the concept of courtesy described in the last *terzina*, which urges his audience to spend their money freely, one of the traits by which aristocracy can be gauged.

Cenne da la Chitarra writes a series of sonnets in parodic response to the *Corona dei mesi*. In his sonnet for September, he answers Folgore's description of a hunt with one in which birds are used that are pointless or useless for falconry: bats, owls, and lanner kites:

Di settembre vi do gioielli alquanti,
 agore fusa cumino et aslieri,
 nottole, chieppe con nibbi lanieri,
 archi da lana bistorti e pesanti;

assiuoli barbagiani alocchi tanti
 quanti ne son de qui Monpeslieri,
 guanti di lana, borse da braghieri,
 stando così a vostra donna davanti.

E sempre questo comparar e vendere
 con tali mercadanti il più usando,
 e di settembre tal diletto prendere,

e per Siena entro gir alto gridando:
 moia chi cortesia vole defendere,
 ch'i Salimbeni antichi li dier bando.³⁴

To Folgore's conception of generosity among the *brigata*, in which all goods are given freely, Cenne opposes a money-based economy in which the nobles, rather than sharing among themselves, deal continually with merchants. He concludes by declaring that the Salimbeni, in ruling Siena, have outlawed *cortesia*, a way of life of which generosity, as well as falconry, are integral components. It is this *cortesia* that Folgore

³⁴ Contini.

celebrates throughout his corona—in *Settembre* with the practice of falconry—and that Cenne denigrates in particular.

The sonnets in Folgore's cycle of days of the week are largely interchangeable in subject with those of the months, and here, too, a sonnet is all about pursuit of winged game.

Sabato:³⁵

E 'l sabato diletto ed allegrezza
in uccellar e volar di falconi,
e percuotere grue, ed alghironi
iscendere e salire grand'altezza;

ed a l'ocche ferir per tal fortezza,
che perdan l'ale, le cosce e' gropponi;
corsier e palafren mettere a sproni,
ed isgridar per gloria e per baldezza.

E po' tornar a casa, e dir al cuoco:
— To' queste cose e acconcia per dimane,
e pela, taglia, assetta e metti a fuoco;

ed abbie fino vino e bianco pane,
ch' e' s'apparecchia di far festa e giuoco;
fa' che le tue cucine non sian vane! —

A difference between this sonnet and that of *Settembre* are that this one seems more focused on the happenings of a particular hunting excursion, rather than celebrating hunting with birds in general. The *terzine* instruct the young gentleman addressed as to how to increase his social reputation by hosting a good feast with the fruits of his hunting.³⁶ Also, great emphasis is placed here on the strength and power of the falcons:

³⁵ From Aldo Massera, *Sonetti burleschi e realistici dei primi due secoli* (Bari: Gius. Laterza e figli, 1920), 167.

³⁶ Dino Compagni has a long work in which he instructs people of many different social statuses in how to increase their reputations; his advice to barons includes the keeping and flying of hunting birds, and again, generous outlays of money. *Amor mi sforza e mi sprona valere*, vv. 40-51. In Giuseppe Corsi, *Rimatori del Trecento* (Torino: UTET, 1969), 629-637.

one must consider the effect they have on the geese, whom they hit with such force that the geese are, remarkably, dismembered on contact.³⁷

Both sets of poems evoke an idealistic courtly setting, in which hawking, hunting, tournaments, feasting and ostentatious display all play important roles in defining what it means to belong to the aristocracy. The whole concept of these poems is steeped in nostalgia; even in Folgore's time, the early fourteenth century, this sort of life was disappearing in reality as the old nobility was replaced by the rising bourgeoisie.

However, when Ugucione da Lodi was writing his didactic poetry in the late twelfth century, this way of life, while carrying exactly the same connotations of wealth and birth, held currency as well. He is therefore able to hold up these recreations as emblematic of the decadence of the leisure class, and worthy of condemnation. The practice of falconry again has a concrete rather than a metaphorical presence in the work of Ugucione da Lodi. He begins his *Libro* by painting a picture of hell in which diversions such as falconry will be absent. His list of pleasant things that sinners will lack in hell includes their favorite hunting birds:

Là no se trovarà	nul bon albergaor,
leto ni banca	qe s'ia da onor,
vairi ni armelin,	coltra né cuvertor;
no à desduto	de sparver ni d'aostor;
né so se cerne	qual s'ia lo peçor:
tuti son pleni	d'ira e de furor
et è pl[u]i nigri	de corvı ni d'avoltor. ³⁸

³⁷ A similar, though less graphic, description of the result of a falcon's attack can be found in the *Spagna minore*, ottava 15, in which Orlando attacks King Marzarise:

E come fa 'l girfalco su un grue,
quando de l'aria inver di lui fa mossa,
che 'l fende tutto, simelmente fue
quando Orlando el percosse cun sua possa.

From Giuseppe Ferrero, *Poemi cavallereschi del Trecento*, 388.

³⁸ Vv. 10-16. *Il Libro* is found in Contini pages 600-624.

These crows and vultures, disagreeable birds, while at once serving to evoke the color of hell's inhabitants—black, the usual color of devils found in most medieval paintings of hell—also trigger comparison between themselves, appropriate to hell in their unpleasantness, and the pleasant hunting hawks enjoyed in life that the poet remarks on earlier. These hawks are mentioned in the same breath as other accoutrements of luxury that the well-heeled ungodly will also miss such as ermine and fine fabrics.³⁹

Later, Ugucione condemns those who lack charity towards the unfortunate, preferring to revel in the trappings of their material wealth. Included in his list of the joys of the medieval hedonist are of course hawks and falcons:

Mo me bisogna dir	de quig malaguradhi
q'ili no vol veder	quig q'è desasiadhi,
nisun pover de Deu	n'avogol né sidhradhi,
mai grassi palafreni	e destrier seçornadhi,
de belle vestimente	spesso esser mudhadhi,
aostor ao sparaveri	vol, e falcon mudhadhi ⁴⁰

The list carries on with armor, weapons of war, hounds, palaces, and such—the usual, one might say. The flying of hawks and falcons is one aspect among many of the pleasures typical of the wealthy, and is included by Ugucione wherever he condemns obsession with worldly goods in his *Libro*. He condemns exactly the same pleasures of life that Folgore will celebrate more than a century later. Quite beside the fact that these are different genres of poetry, this contrast is evidence of the growing acceptance of worldly happiness as a valid goal as the Renaissance approaches.

³⁹ Ugucione returns to his portrayal of hell again, leaving out the hawks but including many of nobility's favorite pastimes:

Là no se trovarà	bela cavalcadhura,
destrier ni palafren	cum soaf ambladura,
né norbia vestimenta,	né rica flibadhura,
palasïo ni tor,	ni negun' armadhura. (158-161)

⁴⁰ Vv. 357-362.

After their near-disappearance in the poetry of the *Dolce Stil Novo*, birds of prey continue to diminish in number in aulic poetry in the Trecento. Of particular note is their absence from the poetry of Petrarch. This absence is in a way surprising when one considers the ample exposure he would have had to falconry both as an aspect of courtly life and as an image in the poetry native to his adopted home. It would be reasonable to assume that Petrarch had some experience of falconry in Avignon, since he is said to have participated in hunting expeditions in his younger days.⁴¹ At the very least, he would have often seen the frescoes of Simone Martini at the Papal Palace, which include a falconry scene, and he would have heard stories of falconry expeditions there and in the courts that he visited in Italy, perhaps even seeing cardinals and courtiers sauntering with hawks on wrists. Likewise, his familiarity with the poetry of his place of residence might have prompted him to include the falcon or hawk as a metaphor for love, as it is often used in Provençal poetry.

Petrarch does adopt some animal imagery from his predecessors, in common use by Provençal and Italian poets alike—the salamander, the butterfly, the swan and others⁴²—but falcons seem to appear nowhere in either the *Canzoniere* or his other works. Petrarch certainly does not shy away from the metaphor of the hunt of love; images of venery are not rare: he compares himself to the hunted deer or the fish on the hook, and he is often shot by Cupid's arrows. However, while he often portrays himself as pursued or caught by Love in various guises, he is never hunted by a predatory bird. Nor is Laura ever to be found flattered by such comparisons; unlike the eyes of countless

⁴¹ Volpi, Guglielmo, *Storia letteraria d'Italia--Il Trecento* (Milano: Vallardi, 1907), 41.

⁴² Nicola Scarano provides many examples in "Fonti provenzali e italiane della lirica petrarchesca." In *Francesco Petrarca* (Napoli: Ercolano, 1971), 240-243.

previous ladies who inspired poets, hers are never described as being like those of a goshawk or a peregrine falcon.

Petrarch often portrays himself as Love's victim, and in doing so occasionally uses hunting images, though not from falconry. In the following sonnet, for example, he compares himself to a fleeing deer with a poisoned arrow:

I dolci colli ov' io lasciai me stesso,
partendo onde partir già mai non posso,
mi vanno innanzi, et emmi ogni or a dosso
quel caro peso ch'Amor m' à commesso.

Meco di me mi meraviglio spesso,
ch' i' pur vo sempre e non son ancor mosso
dal bel giogo più volte indarno scosso,
ma com' più me n' allungo e più m'appresso.

E qual cervo ferito di saetta
col ferro avelenato dentr' al fianco
fugge, e più duolsi quanto più s'affretta,

tal io con quello stral dal lato manco,
che mi consuma e parte mi diletta,
di duol mi struggo e di fuggir mi stanco.⁴³

Regardless of how far he wanders, his love for Laura stays with him like a poisoned arrow in a deer, and he knows escape is useless. Petrarch imbues this simile with his characteristic psychological self-analysis, thus giving it more depth and making it more personal than did his Provençal predecessors.

Petrarch also portrays himself, in a single sonnet, as love's victim both with the image of a fish on a hook and with that of the bird caught in lime:

In quel bel viso ch' i' sospiro e bramo,
fermi eran li occhi desiosi e 'ntensi,
quando Amor porse, quasi a dir: "Che pensi?"
quella onorata man che second' amo.

⁴³ CCIX, from *Rime, Trionfi e poesie latine* (Milano-Napoli: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1951).

Il cor preso ivi come pesce a l' amo,
 onde a ben far per vivo esempio viensi,
 al ver non volse li occupati sensi,
 o come novo augello al visco in ramo.

Ma la vista privata del suo obietto,
 quasi sognando, si facea far via
 senza la qual è 'l suo bene imperfetto;

l' alma, tra l' una e l'altra gloria mia,
 qual celeste non so novo diletto
 e qual strania dolcezza si sentia.⁴⁴

Petrarch's heart is "hooked" like a fish, and caught like a bird. These are both images common in Provençal and Italian as well as in classical poetry.⁴⁵ Perhaps, in accordance with his taste for Ovidian myths and metamorphoses, he is more attuned to such classical images for the hunt of love than to those that correspond only to his contemporary culture. Also, Petrarch seems to share the attitude of the Stilnovistic poets towards animal imagery; like them, he shies away from including such similes simply for their own sake. Regardless of the reason why, Petrarch makes a conscious decision to omit the world of falconry from his poetry.

In the Trecento, love in poetry is increasingly sensual and earthbound. Falcons and hawks in poetry consequently are appropriated for this point of view, and come to populate the world of the *poesia popolareggiante*, particularly that set to music. Though they are found in a handful of sonnets, most references to falcons and their sport are found in madrigals and *cacce*. In these poems, the joys of hunting, while still used to illustrate the chase of love, reflect an alteration in the poets' concept of love and ladies. This change is easily seen by comparing two *plazers*, one by Matteo Correggiaio and one

⁴⁴ Ibid., CCVII.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 1, notes 16 and 17, for Ovid's use of the hooked fish and the deer referring to love as a hunt in the *Ars Amatoria*.

by Guido Cavalcanti. Matteo Correggiaio's sonnet mentions the hunting pleasure to be had from flying several different kinds of falcons and hawks, including goshawks and merlins (a very small type of falcon).

Falcon volar sopra rivere a guazo,
 correr mastini, levrieri e brachetti,
 gitar astori, sparvieri e smerletti
 e di campagna ogn'altro bel sollazo,

se del tuto non son tenuto pazo,
 dico ch'ensemble tutti esti dilette
 tanto piacer non danno a gl'intelletti
 come tenere una sua donna in brazo.

Però me piase l'amorose veste,
 cantar d'amore per sole o per pioza
 e done remirar vaghe e oneste.

Di ciò dolce salute al cor s'apoza:
 donca chi vol si vada a le foreste,
 ché io mi vo' vestire a questa foza.⁴⁶

Comparing this to a similar *plazer* of Guido Cavalcanti conveys the change in perspective of love poetry that occurs in the Trecento:

Beltà di donna, e di piagente core,
 e cavalieri armati che sian genti,
 cantar d'augelli, e ragionar d'amore,
 adorni legni in mar forte correnti;

aire sereno quand'appar l'albore,
 e bianca neve scender senza venti,
 rivera d'acqua e prato d'ogni fiore,
 oro, argento, azzurro in ornamenti.

Passa la gran beltate e la piagenza
 de la mia donna e 'l suo gentil coraggio
 sì che rassembra vile a chi ciò guarda;

e tanto è più d'ogni altra canoscenza

⁴⁶ From Giuseppe Corsi, *Rimatori del Trecento*, 151.

quanto lo cielo de la terra è maggio:
a simil di natura ben non tarda.⁴⁷

The attitude towards loving a lady in the first sonnet, though retaining some stilnovistic language, is very different. From distantly exalting the lady, it becomes physical and erotic: “tenere una sua donna in brazo,” which gives pleasure to Matteo’s “intelletti,” no less. While Guido praises a specific lady in a typically stilnovistic way, Matteo Correggiaio boasts of his love for women in general: he speaks of embracing “una sua donna,” not “la sua donna,” the one and only. Guido mentions his enjoyment of “ragionar d’amore;” Matteo likes to sing about it—and watch the ladies, whose “dolce salute” nonetheless still affects the poet as one might expect.

This shift in perspective to a more erotic kind of love turns the hunt of love from a metaphor for emotional relationships to one for physical relationships that, usually, exist in the mind of the poet rather than in reality. Most falcons and hawks are found in madrigals and *cacce*; these poems set to music for public entertainment lend themselves to the narrative point of view. Hunting also meshes well with narrative, so that it is natural that the poet’s telling of hunting stories, in which he chases, and occasionally catches, his love, are commonly put in madrigals and *cacce*: the chase of love becomes an erotic narrative.⁴⁸

The progression of the majority of these narratives in which falcons are involved, and the poet’s related success with the lady, can develop in general along one of two lines. The poet, out hunting, follows his bird and happens to find a lady along the way,

⁴⁷ From Neri, *Folgore di San Gimignano: i sonetti*, p. 86.

⁴⁸ Although she does not treat the Trecento’s *poesia popolareggiante* in her book, Boccassini makes a similar observation regarding the evolution of visual art involving falcons in the Trecento (259): “...nell’iconografia trecentesca la similitudine falconaria tende a perdere la carica simbolica e ideale originaria, e a farsi più narrativa; i principi stessi della *fin’ amors* e della falconeria vengono ad essere dirottati verso letture che tendono ad accentuare la carica erotica dell’incontro degli amanti.”

who far from being beyond the reach of the poet, is an erotic fantasy that can be attained: a shepherdess, a high-class lady disguised as a shepherdess, a nude bathing beauty. Or, the poet sees a falcon or hawk that appeals to him, symbolizing a lady, and chases it for the rest of the poem; usually he is unable to attain this goal, and his poem conveys his frustration. In the hunt, the hawk or falcon may lead serendipitously to the lady, who thus becomes the prey, or the lady may be the bird itself, who also becomes prey, in a way, with the poet as its covetous potential owner.

In the following anonymous *caccia*, hunting leads to love in a very straightforward way; the chase for game is presented as a humorous episode and is not a metaphor for chasing a woman; however, the hunt leads directly to love, through the intervention of the elements.

Con bracchi assai e con molti sparveri
 ucellavam su per la riva d'Ada.
 E qual dicea: – Dà, dà –
 e qual: – Va', cià, Varin; torna, Picciolo, –
 e qual predea le quaglie a volo a volo,
 quando con gran tempesta un'aqua giunse.

Né corser mai per campagna levrieri
 come facea ciascun per fuggir l'aqua.
 E qual dicea: – Da' qua,
 dammi 'l mantello –, e tal, – Dammi 'l cappello –,
 quand'io ricoverai col mio uccello
 dove una pasturella il cor mi punse.

Perch'era sola in fra me dico e rido:
 – Ecco la pioggia, il bosco, Enea e Dido. –⁴⁹

In the above, the hunting scene is conveyed with great immediacy through direct discourse, and fleeing the rain leads the poet to a woman. Usually, however, the woman is found by following a hawk, as in the following madrigal.

⁴⁹ Corsi, *Rimatori del Trecento*, 1089.

Seguendo un me' sparver, che me menava
de bosco en bosco, a la stasion più bella,
restiti ad una voce che cantava.

E presso a me vidi una pastorella:
per guardar de soe pecore, filava
la lana lor, per farse una gonella.

Questa cantando più me vaghezava
e io lassiai e stientime cum ella,
che più che lo sparver me deletava.

perché con l'una man e cum la boca
disse – Vien qua – zitando via la roca.⁵⁰

The madrigal form lends itself well to erotic male fantasies. By following a hawk one may find not only a shepherdess, but an entire voyeuristic feast:⁵¹

Di riva in riva mi guidava Amore:
cercando un mio sparver, a piè d' un monte
trovai bagnar più donne ad una fonte.

Eravi di biltà nomata Elèna,
lo cui piacer mi faceva gir pensoso
e poi mi fe' di lei veder gioioso.

Poi chinai gli occhi per l'onesto andare
e temeroso mi scostai da l'acque,
ch'era ciascuna come prima nacque.

Cantando di riviera intorno a l'acque
tutte si mosson per un verde piano
e trovai lo sparvero a mano a mano.

A madrigal by Alesso di Guido Donati indulges another male fantasy—the high-class lady, disguised as a shepherdess, who offers himself to him. In this scene, the lady has already been found as a result of the poet being out hunting. The madrigal essentially tells what happens next, something that is simply implied in most other madrigals.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1051.

⁵¹ Ibid., 1032.

– I’ mi son qui selvaggia pasturella
che tendo in queste selve reti al varco,
come colei che volentieri uccella.

Altrove son figliuola d’un de’ conti
e ‘n mie compagna son più damigelle
con grossi uccelli e can per gli alti monti.

Se ti piacesse in me cogliere il fiore,
apparecchiata son, come colei
che certamento t’ha donato il core. –

I’, ciò sentendo, a volo un mio sparviero
presto gittai, e divenni maniero.⁵²

This madrigal is interesting because of the direct discourse of the lady, who tells of her situation, and also because of the change in her method of bird-hunting that she assumes as part of her new identity. As a count’s daughter, she usually hunts with other ladies, on the mountains, in open land, with dogs and “grossi uccelli.” In her disguise, she hunts as peasants do: not with falcons, but with nets, to catch birds in the woods.

Madrigals in which the pursuit of the lady is represented by the poet following a falcon or hawk that he desires are similarly popular. A few of these are written by poets who can be named, such as this, by Cino Rinuccini, in which the substitution of the falcon for the lady is clear in his detailed and enthusiastic description of its beauty. It is also a good example of the general progression of madrigals of this theme:

Un falcon pellegrin dal ciel discese
con largo petto e con sí bianca piuma,
che chi ‘l guarda innamora e me consuma.

Mirando io gli occhi neri e sfavillanti,
la vaga penna e ‘l suo alto volare,
mi disposi lui sempre seguitare.

Sí dolcemente straccando mi mena,
ch’altro non choggio se non forza e lena.⁵³

⁵² Ibid., 542.

In this instance, the outcome of the chase is not seen; Cino gives the impression that he will continue to chase the falcon indefinitely. Usually, however, the audience is told of the end of the chase. Occasionally, the poet is successful, as in the following, put to music by Jacopo da Bologna, in which the poet is coached in his actions by Love:⁵⁴

Un bel sparver zentil de pena bianca
volando sopra l'aire s'aponde
in un bel prato verde pien de fronde.

Amor, che de servirmi non s'asconde,
me dice: – Va seguendo quel spaviero
che rivirà gentil, tant'è mainero. –

Sisi del mont'e tuto el zorno intiero
l'andai chiamando in fin a meza notte;
poi me colcai in mezo de due grotte.

A l'alba el zorno aparv'ed io tornava
e quel in pugno allora me volava.

More often, however, the chase is unsuccessful: the lady is uninterested, or she belongs to someone else. Here is a very bitter anonymous version of the quest for the hawk:⁵⁵

Vola el bel sparver di ramo in ramo
e i' vo per lo bosco
cacciando lui e quanto posso 'l chiamo.

Que' par che dica: – I' non ti cognosco;
se tu me, più non t'amo. –
E così provo l'amoroso toscò.

Per gran dispetto giuro e per disdegno:
– Ben te ne pagherò, se mai ti tegno. –

⁵³ Ibid., 583.

⁵⁴ Corsi, *Poesie musicali del Trecento*, 49-50.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 52.

The lady/falcon is much less hostile in a madrigal by Niccolò Soldanieri, who finds that his falcon already belongs to another:⁵⁶

Un bel girfalco scese a le mie grida:
de l'aria in braccio a piombo giù mi venne
com'Amor volle e 'l destro di sue penne.

In piè gli misi e, fatto ch'ebbe gorga,
alzò piú assai che non fu la caduta,
onde giocando il perde' di veduta:

e che ritorni non mi dice il core,
che credo che se 'l tenga altro signore.

Soldanieri seems to be telling of a lady who loves him and then leaves him. Love brought her to him, and, after being “fed,” she disappears. This is a less painful outcome than the tale of a love affair gone sour in the following, anonymous, madrigal:⁵⁷

Girand'un bel falcon gentile e bianco
per l'ari', al mie chiamar lento s'artenne
e com'uman in pugno mi rivenne.

Diventò corbo poi fellon e fero:
cro cro grachiando e non dicendo vero,
con meco stette in fin che venne manco

la speranza del frutto e con lo 'ngegno
mancò la fede, simulando sdegno.

On the whole, a falcon that eats and leaves is less unpleasant than one that turns into a crow and stays for a while. The image of the falcon is clearly quite versatile in representing a beloved lady in various aspects of love.

The idea of the pursuit of the bird of prey as a metaphor for seeking the beloved is implied even in the early-to-mid Trecento cantare of *Fiorio e Biancifiore*. It comes into play when Fiorio, searching for Biancifiore, hears that she is being kept in a castle, and

⁵⁶ *Rimatori del Trecento*, 745.

⁵⁷ *Poesie musicali del Trecento*, 334.

that death awaits any who dare to approach it. When he does, and is confronted by the castle's owner, he makes the following excuse for himself:

... – I' sono d'oltre 'l mare,
 che veni per veder questo castello,
 che in verità un altro ne vo' far fare
 a questa simiglianza e così bello;
 e uno isparvieri su mi ci è fugito:
 se vo' giuocare a scachi, io te ne 'nvito. —⁵⁸

Fiorio finds that flattery and a mention of the man's favorite pastime, chess, make him a welcome guest, while he masks his true intention, to rescue Biancifiore, with a tale of a lost hawk. The meaning behind the inclusion of his search for his hawk would be obvious to anyone familiar with the convention that pursuing a bird means pursuing a woman.

This convention seems related to the chivalric theme of the quest for the sparrowhawk, in which a lover needs to literally win or capture a particular hawk in order to win his lady. It is found as a plot element in various French, Provençal and Italian texts, including the *Vida* of the Monge de Montaudon, and the *Novellino*, as well as in Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide*. These are explored in further detail in Chapter 4. Here, it is worth mentioning a short *cantare* called *Bruto di Brettagna*,⁵⁹ in which Bruto is sent on a quest by his beloved, who asks for a sparrowhawk that lives at the court of King Arthur as a condition for giving him her love. Her request is as follows:

Disse la donna: – or vedi, cavaliere,
 là dove fa lo re Artù dimoro,
 ha nella sala un nobile sparviere
 che sta legato ad una stanga d'oro.
 Appresso quell'uccel, ch'è si maniere,
 due bracchi stan che vaglion un tesoro,

⁵⁸ Ottava 105, from *Cantari del Trecento*, ed. Armando Balduino (Milano: Marzorati, 1970), 63.

⁵⁹ In Ezio Levi, ed., *Fiore di leggende* (Bari: Laterza, 1914), 201-212.

la carta de le regole d'amore,
dove son scritte 'n dorato colore.⁶⁰

In accordance with the chivalric tradition, after meeting another lady who helps him in his quest, he fights knights and a giant, liberates the requested items from King Arthur's court, and returns to his beloved with the hawk, the dogs, and the rules of love.

Clearly, hawks and falcons, and the practice of falconry, are valid points of reference when Italian poets speak of love. An association fostered directly by their Provençal forebears as well as indirectly by the trappings of chivalric love in common parlance throughout western Europe, the poets adapt the relationship between falconer and falcon, and the view of love as a hunt, to illustrate whatever their personal conception of love and love relationships may be. These birds work best as metaphors when the love relationship has a *fin' amors* feudal connotation, or when love as a hunt becomes eroticized rather than expressed as spiritual or transcendent. Unless, of course, the poet under discussion is Dante.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, ottava 5, p. 202.

CHAPTER 3: Falconry and cranes in Dante.

Although they scarcely appear in the rest of his *opus*, Dante includes falcons and hawks throughout his *Commedia*, primarily in hunting images used as metaphors for the spiritual quest for God. However, this is not the only type of bird that he uses in this way. The repeated use he makes of crane images throughout his work parallels that of the falcons. To examine the falcons that appear in the *Commedia* alongside these cranes will provide a greater understanding of the patterns of bird imagery that Dante uses.¹

Falcons and cranes both have characteristics that make them suitable to illustrate the divine order and the education of the soul.² The falcon in training, long seen as a symbol of secular lovers in lyric poetry, adapts well to being used to illustrate the orienting of the soul towards the divine, an image used earlier by Hugh de Fouilloy in his *Aviarium* in speaking of the education of his lay-brothers.³ The characteristics of the crane that make it an apt participant in afterlife education are the fact that cranes migrate, their habit of appearing to dance in circles on the ground after having fed, the tendency for a group of migrating cranes to form letters in flight, and their system of rotating leadership in flight, which suggests vigilance and a care for one another.⁴

¹ For an extensive treatment of cranes in the *Commedia*, see my work, "Dante's Cranes and the Pilgrimage of Poetic Inspiration," *Rivista di studi italiani* 13, 1: 1995, 1-13.

² In *Il volo della mente*, Boccassini provides a discussion of the spiritual role Dante gives to domesticated birds of prey and its contrast with Dante's negative attitude toward the general sport of hunting, with or without birds, in her chapter, "La falconeria nell'opera di Dante."

³ See Chapter 1 for more details on the *Aviarium*.

⁴ Dante's friend and teacher, Brunetto Latini, describes cranes thus in *Li Livres dou Tresor*:
 Grues sont oisiau qui volent à eschieles, en maniere de chevaliers qui vont en bataille; et tozjors va li uns devant l'autre [...] et les maine et conduit et chastie de sa voiz, et trestuit li autre ensuient celui et obeissent à sa loi. Et quant la chevetaine est enroée et sa voiz es auques defaillie, ele n'a pas honte que une autre soit mise en son leu, et ele va par derriere avec les autres [...] entre toutes, la disime veille et garde les autres qui se dorment [...] d'un leu, toutefoiz veille l'une une pierre dedans le pié qui ne la laisse pas endormir. Les autres vont environ [...] et quant eles apercoivent chose où il ait paril,

The ways in which falcons and cranes appear in each canticle illustrate divine order: those in *Inferno* have an element of chaos, the souls compared to them in *Purgatorio* are training and on pilgrimage, while those in *Paradiso* are enlightened, and have reached their goal. A distinction is made between the wild falcons and hawks of *Inferno* and those domesticated in training in *Purgatorio*, or finished training in *Paradiso*. Likewise, the cranes of *Inferno* fly in a disorderly fashion, while those in *Purgatorio* are migrating, like the souls in transit, and those in *Paradiso* are feeding and rejoicing, like the souls enjoying full divine love.

maintenant crient et font esveillier leg autres por eschaper à sauveté. (Brunetto Latini, *Li livres dou Tresor*, I.V.165, ed. P. Chabaille (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1863), pp. 215-16.)

Translation: "Cranes are birds that fly in formation, like armed knights who are going to battle [...] and the first one leads and guides and instructs with its voice, and all the others follow it and obey its instructions. When the chieftain has grown hoarse and its voice is somewhat weak it has no sense of shame at being replaced by another, and it goes back to join the others which are following [...] one out of twelve [sic] of them watches over and protects the others as they sleep [...] all the while they hold a stone in their claw which does not let them fall asleep [...]. When something dangerous arises, they immediately cry out and awaken the others so they can escape to safety." (Trans. Paul Barrette and Spurgeon Baldwin, Brunetto Latini, *The Book of the Treasure [Li Livres dou Tresor]* [New York-London: Garland Publishing, 1993], 122.)

Also, Hugh de Fouilloy expounds on the view of cranes as symbols of divine order and monastic living: *Grues dum pergunt, unam sequuntur ordine litterato [...]. Illos autem significant, qui ad hoc student, ut ordinate vivant. Grues enim ordine litterato volantes designant ordinate viventes. Cum autem ordinate volando procedunt, ex se litteras in volatu fingunt. Illos autem designant, qui in se praecepta Scripturae bene vivendo formant. Una earum reliquas antecedit, quae clamare non desinit, quia praelatus, qui primum locum regiminis obtinet, suos sequaces moribus et vita praeire debet, ita tamen ut semper clamet, et viam bonae operationis sequacibus suis praedicando demonstret. Quae autem alias antecedit, si rauca facta fuerit, tunc alia succedit, quia praelatus si verbum Dei subjectis non praedicet, vel praedicare nesciat, cum raucus fuit, necesse est ut alius succedat.*

Translation: "While cranes are flying they follow one of their number in lettered order [...]. They symbolize, moreover, those who strive to live by the Rule. Moreover, when they fly in formation they fashion letters with their bodies as they fly: further, they denote moreover those who by righteous living form within themselves the teachings of Scripture. A certain one of the cranes precedes the others, one which cries continually, because a priest, who occupies a prime position in the care of souls, should lead his followers by his manner and way of life, so that he still continually cries out and in his sermons demonstrates to his followers the path of good behaviour. If (the bird) which leads the others, however, should become hoarse, then another takes its place, because if one priest should not preach the Word of God to those in his care, or cannot preach because he becomes hoarse, it is necessary that another take his place," from *The Medieval Book of Birds: Hugh of Fouilloy's Aviary*, trans. Willene B. Clark (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992), 203-5.

These birds are not used solely to represent the residents of the afterlife; Dante uses them self-referentially as well. He compares himself to a falcon in training in *Purgatorio*,⁵ while his concern for his own writing and its aims prompts many of the crane similes. The ability of cranes to form letters in flight has long since been seen as the origin of the alphabet and thence as a metaphor for the act of writing itself.⁶ Allegorically, if cranes in migration are to be viewed as Christians seeking divine inspiration, then the "writing" that the cranes perform in the sky is also like divinely-inspired human writing: at the very least, it has as its goal and inspiration divine love, and at most, it is writing that is no longer divinely-inspired and composed by humans, but is actually divinely-dictated and recorded by humans. To act as the scribe of this last sort of writing is precisely the role that Dante wishes to play and which he is able to accomplish in *Paradiso* XVIII:

Messo t'ho innanzi: omai per te ti ciba;
ché a sé torce tutta la mia cura
quella materia ond'io son fatto scriba.

(*Paradiso* X, 25-7)

In this light, cranes, besides symbolizing good Christians, become for Dante the image of the correctly-inspired writer of poetry, that is, the poet that he himself is striving to become. Moreover, in their system of rotating leadership, cranes always take care that their leader in migration is sound of mind and purpose. As a "lead

⁵ Boccassini (257-259) sees another reference to Dante as a falcon in training in *Inferno*, in the reference to "pasto" in Canto XIV, when he asks Virgil for an explanation of the source of infernal rivers: "per ch'io pregai che mi largesse 'l pasto / di cui largito m'avèa il disio" (91-93).

⁶ See Martial, *Epigrammata*, ed. A. J. Valpy (London: A. J. Valpy, 1822), Vol. 2, XIII.75: "Turbabis versus, nec litera tota volabit, / Unam perdidideris si Palamedis avem." ("You will confuse the lines and the writing will not fly complete, if you lose one of Palamedes' birds." *Epigrams*, trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993], p. 203.)

crane” among poets, Dante feels a further responsibility to be sure his poetry is pure and sound of purpose.⁷

Dante’s descriptions of the behavior and appearance of birds of prey demonstrate a certain amount of detailed knowledge of the sport on his part, whether gleaned through books or through first hand experience. The particular birds that appear in the *Commedia* are the *astore*, *sparviero*, *falcone*, *girfalco*, and *sparvier grifagno*. This list of birds of prey corresponds to those in common use in poetry in his time. Unlike most poets, he makes distinctions between the hunting styles of the different birds, and uses the appropriate one for each image. Those that he uses most often are the falcons. This choice may reflect their use in hunting: falcons, rather than hawks, are typically used to hunt cranes. While falcons and cranes are used similarly throughout the *Commedia*, in *Paradiso* XVIII and XIX, their association culminates when they meld into the formation of a single image, the divine imperial eagle, thus rising above their earthly predator/prey relationship.

In *Inferno* we find two instances of a simple metaphor of a “sparvier grifagno.” These have been noted in chapter 1 in the comments about Brunetto Latini’s *Tresor*. In *Inferno*, Canto IV, he sees Julius Caesar as “Cesare armato con gli occhi grifagni” (123) among other virtuous pagans, and the comedy of the devils fighting in Canto XXII finds one of them described as a “sparvier grifagno”: “ma l’altro fu bene sparvier grifagno / ad artigliar ben lui, ed amendue / cadder nel mezzo del bollente stagno.” (139-141) While

⁷ See also Kenneth Knoespel, “When the Sky Was Paper: Dante’s Cranes and Reading as Migration,” in *Lectura Dantis Newberryana*, Vol. 2 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), pp. 121-46. Knoespel argues that Dante uses the image of the crane to instruct readers how to proceed in negotiating their way through his text, and “to view the very process of their reading as a migration toward illumination” (123).

Caesar's hawkishness has already been discussed in chapter 1, that of the fighting devils will be discussed according to its chronological place in *Inferno*, after that of Geryon.

Canto XVII finds Dante's description of his infernal ride on Geryon's back. In this canto he compares Geryon to many different things, appropriate to Geryon's mixed nature—a boat, a beaver, an eel, another boat, and then a falcon and an arrow loosed from a bow. The falcon simile is very extensive:

Come 'l falcon ch'è stato assai su l'ali,
 che senza veder logoro o uccello
 fa dire al falconiere 'Ohimé, tu cali!'
 discende lasso onde si move snello,
 per cento rote, e da lunge si pone
 dal suo maestro, disdegnoso e fello;
 così ne puose al fondo Gerione
 al piè al piè de la stagliata rocca
 e, discarcate le nostre persone,
 si dileguò come da corda cocca.

(*Inferno* XVII, 127-136)

This is a hunting scene, but it is the description of a failed hunt. The master is disappointed that the falcon has caught nothing and in his turn the falcon is betrayed by the master in that he has not been shown the lure that would have called him back (one may recall that lures are used particularly with falcons rather than hawks). In this simile Geryon, the discouraged falcon, has been neglected by his falconer, who allows him to simply keep flying until he descends in circles exhausted. Yet Geryon makes this flight by divine command—even in *Inferno*, God is the falconer, though the falcon here is flown with neither lure nor bird in sight: it is a hunt with no goal, appropriate to *Inferno* where any journey or endeavor that the inhabitants undertake is effectively pointless and

fruitless.⁸ Like the other servants of hell that are forced to cooperate with Dante and Virgil by the will of God, Geryon gets nothing out of it. Indeed, Geryon is, appropriately, a falcon sent on a fraudulent flight. As the falcon, he is used, fatigued (*lasso*), and unrewarded, unworthy of the divine lure. It might be suggested, however, that Geryon *is* shown a lure: when Virgil throws Dante's cord-belt down into the abyss at the end of the previous canto to summon him. It is not a proper lure, swung in a circle with food on the end of it; it is a hellish lure, with no reward, and no caring falconer holding on to the other end of it. When Geryon responds, he finds no reward, only the humiliating work of letting Dante and Virgil ride on his back. A true lure is to be found in the *Commedia*, but it is in heaven, being shown by God to his faithful.

The motif of frustrated hunts continues, and in a real rather than metaphorical manner, in the episode of the devils that runs from Cantos XXI to XXIII which starts with the hunting of sinners in the pitch and ends with the enraged devils hunting Virgil and Dante. At the end of Canto XXII is the fight between Alichino and Calcabrina which begins when the Navarrese sinner escapes the devils and plunges back in the pitch like a duck escaping a falcon:

...quelli andò sotto,
 e quei drizzò volando suso il petto:
 non altrimenti l'anitra di botto,
 quando 'l falcon s'appressa, giù s'attuffa,
 ed ei ritorna su crucciato e rotto.

(*Inferno* XXII, 128-132)

Richard Holbrook has described what happens here from a falconry point of view:⁹

Though a hungry falcon might stoop for a swimming duck, her action would be a misdemeanour, for it was a rule of falconry not to fly the falcon until her quarry

⁸ Boccassini (359-360) sees Geryon as the opposite of Dante, both of them in a hunt for knowledge, one infernal and one heavenly.

⁹ Richard Thayer Holbrook, *Dante and the Animal Kingdom* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 251-252.

was running or on the wing. The situation in this instance is plainly that the duck makes for the water pursued by the falcon, which fails to give the duck a deadly clutch. In the tussle the falcon rumples her plumage; then, unable to pursue her quarry into the water, she sweeps up wrathfully.

This is indeed an unsuccessful hunt which only gets worse and more fruitless.

Calcabrina is now looking to pick a fight with Alichino and the *sparvier grifagno* is referenced:

così volse gli artigli al suo compagno,
e fu con lui sopra 'l fosso ghermito.
Ma l'altro fu bene sparvier grifagno
ad artigliar ben lui, e amendue
cadder nel mezzo del bogliente stagno. (139-151)

As has been previously remarked, the *sparvier grifagno* is a particularly fierce sort of falcon. In addition, hunting manuals remark that sparrowhawks more than other falcons are noted for fighting with each other over prey.¹⁰ It is also noted that sparrowhawks should never be flown over water because it is very harmful for them to fall in. Falling in the pitch is, no doubt, a great deal worse. Here we have hawks and falcons that are wild or poorly trained. They turn on each other and pursue prey that is already swimming away. The devils, supposedly guarding the sinners and preventing chaos, instead contribute to the chaos by acting like misbehaving birds of prey.

The crane simile found in *Inferno* is also used to show a fruitless journey. The lustful, buffeted by the wind, are compared to several birds, including cranes. The crane imagery in *Inferno* V comprises the second half of a two-step simile. The first half compares the entire population of this circle to starlings, small, noisy birds which fly in confused groups buffeted by the wind. Then a certain segment of this group is introduced and compared to cranes. The crane, known for its exemplary sense of

responsibility and order, is, however, used to describe the lustful both in *Inferno*, and in *Purgatorio* XXVI.¹¹

E come li stornei ne portan l'ali
 nel freddo tempo a schiera larga e piena,
 così quel fiato li spiriti mali
 di qua, di là, di giù, di su li mena;
 nulla speranza li conforta mai,
 non che di posa, ma di minor pena.
 E come i gru van cantando lor lai,
 facendo in aere di sé lunga riga,
 così vidi venir, traendo guai,
 ombre portate dalla detta briga: [...].

(*Inferno* V, 40-9)

The duality possible in the nature of cranes is reflected in the personages that are compared to them—people who ought to have been of exemplary moral character because of their status as leaders in life but were overcome and damned by their lust. Those who are mentioned by name in this group are Semiramis, Dido, Cleopatra, Helen, Achilles, Paris, and Tristan—all figures who met tragic deaths because of their licentiousness. These souls, important figures of their times, leaders, in fact, caused because of their lustful habits the downfall of the socio-political order in which they lived: Cleopatra's dalliance caused the death of Antony, leader of one-third of the known world, Tristan and Yseult caused strife in the royal household of Cornwall, Helen and Paris started a ten-year war that caused the fall of Troy. While they should have been models of exemplary behavior, their leadership promoted sin and social chaos instead.

¹⁰ Holbrook remarks this as well, 252.

¹¹ Alongside this favorable view of cranes is a tradition that describes them as being, in fact, very lustful birds. L'Ottimo describes the cranes in *Inferno* with the comment, "Questi uccelli [...] sono molto lussuriosi," elaborating further, "e nota che generalmente ogni uccello è lussurioso; e però la loro carne accende lo fuoco della lussuria e della libidine." *La Divina Commedia nella figurazione artistica e nel secolare commento*, ed. G. Biagi et al., 3 Vols. (Torino: UTET, 1924, 1931, 1939). Vol. 1, 147.

In addition to being corrupted leaders of their own time, these souls form a series of tragic figures from literature. Just as their behavior in life made them bad leaders, likewise, the literature written about them, if taken as a model for living, can only lead to tragedy. The fate of Paolo and Francesca exemplifies the mistake of choosing this wrong sort of guide. Their imitation of the illicit love of the literary figures about whom they had read, Lancelot and Guinevere, resulted in their deaths. These souls are in fact literary and historical models *not* to be followed: a line of false leaders.

It is significant that in *Inferno*, Dante fails to mention any goal for the flight of the cranes that he describes. The goalless state of these birds reflects the pointless flight of the sinners: they fly in a sort of order, presenting the appearance of migration, or the human equivalent, pilgrimage, yet eternally have no destination, physically or spiritually. The lustful are, like all the other inhabitants of *Inferno*, eternally incomplete. Not only do these souls fly in a line like cranes but they also wail as they fly, imitating the warning call that cranes make to each other in flight. However, while the cries of cranes in nature are intended to keep order within the flock, the cries of sinners are useless lamentations that simply contribute to the cacophony of hell. The line of wailing famous figures stands in ironic relationship to the line of cranes: instead of vigilant birds on a quest, they are a line of false leaders, wailing vainly, on a meaningless course. Comparatively, the lustful in *Purgatorio*, who are also portrayed as cranes, are part of a straight line that constantly changes leaders, as migrating cranes would do.

Unlike the birds in *Inferno*, the falcons in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* obey their divine falconer, either as emissaries or pilgrim souls, and the cranes participate in divine order. In contrast to the hawk/devils of *Inferno*, the goshawk/angels that Dante encounters in Canto VIII of *Purgatorio* do their job as they are bid, chasing away the serpent in Antepurgatory. Dante, Sordello, and Virgil watch them in action:

Io non vidi, e però dicer non posso,
 come mosser li astor celestiali;
 ma vidi ben l'uno e l'altro mosso.
 Sentendo fender l'aere a le verdi ali,
 fuggi 'l serpente e li angeli dier volta,
 suso a le poste rivolando iguali.

(*Purgatorio* VIII, 102-108)

The goshawk was considered one of the most noble falcons and one of the largest, thus a very appropriate bird for heavenly guardians. They also tend to hunt prey that is near the ground or earthbound, so again it is an appropriate species to be chasing a serpent. Here in Antepurgatory, there are goshawks that are trained by divine love to hunt for God, unlike in Hell, where Geryon obeyed divine will only by force, and the devils attacked their prey and each other contrary to the rules of civilized falconry.

The other two clear falconry references in *Purgatorio* relate to training the falcon or hawk. They refer in both cases to people who are in the process of improving themselves, being retrained to love God as their only goal. In Canto XIII, the situation of the envious is akin to that of a technique used by falconers to keep their wild new birds from being distracted. The envious have their eyes sewn up with wire, much like the wild sparrowhawks who as part of their training have their eyelids seeled.

E come a li orbi non approda il sole,
 così a l'ombre quivi ond'io parlo ora
 luce del ciel di sé largir non vole:

ché a tutti un fil di ferro i cigli fora
 e cuce si, come a sparvier selvaggio
 si fa però che queto non dimora.

(*Purgatorio* XIII, 67-72)

Envy is a sin related to the eyes, therefore it is appropriate that the sinners lose their sight. The contrapasso of this method of correction is often seen in the false cognate of the word *invidia* with the Latin *in video*. However, its appropriateness goes well past that simple explanation. As a falconry reference, the wild sparrowhawk is an apt image, for it is an animal whose sight is very keen, but which needs to be trained in order to use its sight in the proper way, to have a singleness of purpose in hunting, and not pay attention to random distractions. The sinners are learning to use their sight properly as well, to gain the singleness of purpose to crave only God, rather than the goods of their neighbors. The sewing of the eyelids adds a dimension of attitude adjustment for the souls in which, without sight, they are learning to be motivated by forces outside themselves that they cannot see, the dictates of God rather than their own whims.

Throughout the *Commedia*, Dante is like a falcon under instruction; in his entire progression through the afterlife, he is learning to pay attention to what he ought, learning to direct his mind to the greatest good, and learning to be a servant of God. In Canto XIX of *Purgatorio*, Dante the pilgrim is overtly identified for the first time as a falcon. Having just been bemused by his dream of the Siren, he keeps his eyes on the ground. Virgil reminds him where he ought to direct his eyes—to his divine master, who is luring him:

“Vedesti” disse “quell’antica strega
 che sola sovra noi omai si piagne;
 vedesti come l’uom da lei si slega.

Bastiti, e batti a terra le calcagne:
 li occhi rivolgi al logoro che gira
 lo rege eterno con le rote magne.”

(*Purgatorio* XIX, 58-63)

The lure that God uses is indeed impressive—the celestial spheres. Dante responds as a properly trained falcon ought:

Quale il falcon, che prima a' piè si mira,
 indi si volge al grido e si protende
 per lo disio del pasto che là il tira;
 tal mi fec'io. (64-67)

The way to train a falcon to go after live prey was to first drag meat over its feet, while making a yelling or a whistling noise. When the falcon connected the idea of food with the sound, the trainer would use the lure in the air to attract the bird, still yelling, and get it to fly after prey. Its reward would be a portion of what it caught. Here we have Dante being instructed to watch the heavenly lure, the ultimate lure in the universe, the spheres swinging around him, giving him the desire for God. Virgil reminds him that as a falcon and as a pilgrim he is past looking at his feet; he has gone beyond that phase of training and is ready to hear the *grido* which leads him to the *pasto* of heaven. God is the ultimate falconer, he spins the ultimate lure to which all pilgrims must attend.

The spiritual journey of penitents in *Purgatorio* is twice described with crane imagery as well, as is Dante's concern with his own writing. The souls found in Purgatory display many laudable features of cranes: communal feeling, migrations, and shared responsibility of leadership. The penitents are characterized by a sense of community, lacking among the damned, which they express by the harmonious singing of hymns. The crane similes in *Purgatorio*, appropriately, describe cranes that

are actively journeying towards a goal. Like cranes, the pilgrim souls in Cantos XXIV and XXVI are characterized by eager, purposeful, orderly movement:

Come li augei che vernan lungo 'l Nilo,
 alcuna volta in aere fanno schiera,
 poi volan piú a fretta e vanno in filo;
 cosí tutta la gente che li era,
 volgendo 'l viso, raffrettò suo passo,
 e per magrezza e per voler leggera.

(*Purgatorio*, XXIV, 64-9)

In this canto, Dante is also concerned for his responsibility as a poet, and his own quest for greater poetic inspiration, as is seen in his conversation with Bonagiunta da Lucca. When Bonagiunta meets Dante, he hails him as an innovator and worthy leader in poetic style: the one who "fuori trasse le nove rime." Dante responds self-deprecatingly, not acknowledging himself as a leader but instead crediting his success to that which inspires and leads him: "'I' mi son un che quando / amor mi spira, noto, e a quel modo / ch'e' ditta dentro, vo significando'." He is inspired and even dictated to by the highest possible love. The *canzone* that Bonagiunta mentions—"Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore"—is Dante's first poetic manifestation of such inspiration. Bonagiunta not only recognized Dante's allusion to love as divine inspiration, but he is quick to point out, in bird imagery, that the difference between his and Dante's poetry is due only to Dante's higher inspiration:

"O frate, issa vegg'io," diss'elli, "il nodo
 che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne
 di qua dal dolce stil novo ch'i' odo!
 Io veggio ben come le vostre penne
 di retro al dittator sen vanno strette,
 che delle nostre certo non avvenne;
 e qual piú a riguardare oltre si mette
 non vede piú dall'uno all'altro stilo."

(*Purgatorio* XXIV, 55-62)

Bonagiunta portrays Dante's being inspired by divine love as a bird/writer who follows a dictator, an image very similar, as shall be seen, to the dancing souls of the blessed in Canto XVIII of *Paradiso* who spell out a divine dictate with their spiritual bodies. Bonagiunta now realizes the value of following the proper poetic leader, and recognizes that, like the cranelike souls of *Paradiso* XVIII, Dante is an instrument of ordered divine writing.

It has been said, by Lino Pertile,¹² that there is a falconry reference in this scene that is not at first apparent. In his attempt to clear up the meaning of the above passage, he has said that the “nodo” that holds back Bonagiunta da Lucca, Guittone, and Giacomo da Lentini is that of the leash that threads through the rings on the end of a falcon's jesses. The knot on the leash keeps it from slipping out of the jesses, and keeps the falcon tied to its perch. Pertile reads the “vostre penne” of which Bonagiunta speaks as the feathers of Dante and his Stilnovistic colleagues; they are birds following the *dittator*, as the other group of poets was unable to do, because of their leashes.¹³ He points out further that it would have been appropriate for Bonagiunta to use falcon imagery, as a Siculo-Tuscan poet. In essence, as falcons, the old poets were tied down, while the new ones were able to fly. Pertile adds further that Dante adds insult to injury by following this passage immediately by comparing the poets who live in that part of Purgatory to

¹² Lino Pertile, “Il nodo di Bonagiunta, le penne di Dante e il Dolce Stil Novo,” *Lettere italiane* 46 (1994): 44-75.

¹³ For a different view, that yet still sees “vostre penne” as feathers on bird/poets, see Mark Musa, *Advent at the Gates: Dante's 'Comedy,'* Chapter VI: “The 'Sweet New Style' that I Hear” (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974). Musa speaks of “the great gulf that separates a poet who has Dante's conception of love from one who does not” (163). He elaborates that Bonagiunta's poetry was hindered by a sort of spiritual gluttony: “his former inability to transcend completely his desires for the pleasures of this world [...] his self-centered conception of happiness and of love was detrimental also to his art” (p. 121). Musa concludes, “the initiation of upward flight announced in ‘Donne ch'avete [...]’ was to lead to the complete spiritualization of love, becoming indistinguishable from the love of God” (p. 127).

cranes, as seen above, a preferred food of falcons. I do not believe that the combination of the falcon, if it is such, and the crane in this canto is in the nature of a predator/ prey relationship. Bonagiunta and the other gluttons are cranes because they are migrating, and learning to wait to be nourished by the proper food, which they will find in heaven, just as the envious are like hawks, also learning to attune their desires.

The lustful in *Purgatorio* are similarly compared to cranes, however, unlike those in *Inferno*, they are cranes with a definite goal, and acting with the vigilance for which cranes are noted.

Canto XXVI, on the terrace of the lustfully incontinent, is populated by poets and others that were inspired by a more earthly sort of love. Here Dante meets two poetic leaders, in the persons of Guido Guinizelli and Arnaut Daniel. The humility that these souls show by acting as a line of migrating cranes that constantly changes leaders distinguishes them from the circling cranes of *Inferno*, souls who blame others for their predicament. Dante speaks with Guido, honoring him as his own poetic "father," since his poetry showed Dante how to write love verses and first led Dante to write poetry to a higher sort of love. Guido reacts to Dante's praise with great humility, pointing out to Dante a poet who was more skillful than himself technically: Arnaut Daniel, who is the present leader of the line of shades, like the temporary leader of a line of cranes. Guido takes leave of Dante by falling back and making way for others, as Forese Donati did before him, in the manner of a lead crane ceding his post:

Poi, forse per dar luogo altrui secondo
 che presso avea disparve per lo foco
 come per l'acqua il pesce andando al fondo.

(Purgatorio XXVI, 133-5)

The crane simile itself that appears in *Purgatorio XXVI* describes two groups of cranes migrating in opposite directions.

Poi come grue ch'alle montagne Rife
 volasser parte e parte inver l'arene,
 queste del gel, quelle del sole schife,
 l'una gente sen va, l'altra sen vene;
 e tornan, lacrimando, a' primi canti
 e al gridar che piú lor si convene. (43-8)

Half of them are migrating in the traditional fashion, seeking warmer weather, while the other half are flying contrary to nature: their goal is the cold, northern Rhiphaean mountains. The location of this legendary chain is glossed variously as being either very north, in Germany, or very northeast, in Russia. Regardless, flight to these legendary, unreachable mountains, spurning the sun, symbol of God, indicates an attempt to cross boundaries not only of space but of knowledge that were never meant to be crossed. Migrating to these mountains is an unnatural act that reflects the sin against nature committed by the homosexual lustful and the purgation they suffer in which they run to the left.¹⁴

In *Paradiso*, the falcon and the crane unite in the heavenly eagle made of the souls of the just leaders. Just prior to its appearance, in *Paradiso XVIII*, in the sphere of Mars, Dante is shown by Cacciaguida the glowing souls of military leaders on the cross, such as Charlemagne and Roland. He watches them as if he is a falconer tracking his falcons: "com'occhio segue suo falcon volando." (v. 45) As has been previously noted, the falcon is a symbol of nobility and knighthood and thus is most appropriate for these martial heroes, most of whom are crusaders. The path that some of these souls take is

very falconlike as well, circular: “vidi movesi un altro roteando, e letizia era ferza del paleo.” (41) It is joy that causes these falcons to fly in circles. They contrast sharply with another circling falcon, Geryon in *Inferno*, who was circling in defeat, falling, with no lure and no purpose. He makes quite a contrast with these heavenly falcons who live in the ultimate lure, the heavenly spheres.

The heavenly eagle of the just rulers that follows these knightly souls is intertwined with both falcons and cranes. It transforms from spelling out a divine message to earthly rulers, as cranes write while flying, into an imperial eagle, and thence to an eagle that acts like an unhooded falcon.

In Canto XVIII of *Paradiso*, Dante finally and literally encounters direct divine writing in action. He acknowledges the limits of his own poetic ability, which, though divinely inspired, is still written by a mere human: in order to simply retell what he sees here he needs to invoke the aid of all the muses. The direct prompting of divine love causes the souls in the heaven of Jupiter to form the letters that spell DILIGITE IUSTITIAM QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM. These spirits inspire the last of the four crane similes:

E come augelli surti di riviera
 quasi congratulando a lor pasture,
 fanno di sé or tonda or altra schiera,
 sí dentro ai lumi sante creature
 volitando cantavano, e faciensi
 or D, or I, or L in sue figure.

(*Paradiso* XVIII, 73-8)

Here is emphasized the ability of cranes to form letters. However, the cranes involved are no longer forming letters on a migratory flight. These are cranes that have reached their destination, have fed, and are fulfilled. Likewise, the souls

¹⁴ Knoespel, 134.

compared to them have reached the goal of their pilgrimage, have fed on divine love, and now dance in joy because of love. The cranes in the simile are fulfilled, yet they retain their connotations of responsible leadership: Dante calls them, "milizia del ciel," a phrase that could as easily describe the militant cranes, who guard each other and fly in formation "en maniere de chevaliers qui vent en bataille" (Latini). The completed, celebratory souls of this last simile are far from the incomplete damned of Inferno: here, heavenly cranes form an eagle, in contrast to infernal cranes, that can only manage to be like starlings: disorderly, dirty birds with no redeeming qualities.

The final M that the cranelike souls create in the sky transforms into a lily and then an imperial eagle, a bird that is both a symbol of the Roman Empire (i.e., good government) and of Christ. The eagle then, as a prelude to launching into its discussion of divine justice in Canto XIX, acts like a falcon that has just been unhooded, prior to being flown:

Quasi falcone ch' esce del cappello,
 move la testa e con l'ali si plaude,
 voglia mostrando e faccendosi bello,
 vid'io farsi quel segno, che di laude
 de la divina grazia era contesto,
 con canti quai si sa chi là su gaude.

(*Paradiso* XIX, 34-39)

It is appropriate that finally in *Paradiso* falcons are unhooded and flying; the goal of their hunt—divine love—is ever present here. The aim of this unhooded falcon is to expand the knowledge of the divine by explaining divine justice to Dante. The speech on divine justice concentrates much on the poor sight of mortals who should not try to see and understand more than they can with mortal eyes. The eyes of the divine eagle/falcon

are of course excellent. Dante has used the birds with the best possible eyesight as a symbol of these divine beings who deliver a speech on vision.

The attitude of the souls that Dante encounters here in *Paradiso* is one of cooperation and union. This is shown by their continual coordinated movement and by their acting, in concord, like different sorts of birds that have very positive connotations but in reality ought not to get along. As in the previous canto, where the souls spell out “DILIGITE IUSTITIAM QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM,” like cranes flying in formation, the souls here are again engaged in a group endeavor, representing an eagle that is acting like a falcon.

Dante's journey records his quest both for the enlightenment of his soul and for the highest possible guide for poetic inspiration. He progressively develops the images of falcons and cranes, respectively, to illustrate these processes. In *Inferno* he finds wild, unruly, goalless falcons and hawks that reflect the state of the damned, and his own previous mental state, lost in the *selva*. He also finds the lost souls enacting a static parody of the migration/pilgrimage of cranes, affected by lustful writing; he ponders the effects of the earthly-inspired writings of his youth. The pilgrims of *Purgatorio*, like himself, are, as are the falcons and cranes to whom they are compared, actively seeking a goal, participating in a quest for fulfillment. The saved souls of *Paradiso* act like a heavenly falcon whose goal is clear, and they rejoice like satisfied birds; their pilgrimage is complete. Their dance imitates the most perfect crane dance possible: they directly spell out the Word of God. Dante's poetic powers have risen by this point to be able to record such an experience and such a message. Dante thus enacts the role of scribe of God. God, the ultimate

source of the formation of letters, is the ultimate source of writing itself. Dante's own pilgrimage is almost complete; he is able to respond to the divine love which moves the cranelike souls to write and feel its influence as it moves him as well. He then is able to not only see the souls of the imperial eagle write as one, but speak as one. The eagle, like cranes in its writing, is like a falcon who has just been given sight in its speech—it has been trained to turn towards the right prey: knowledge of the divine, which it spreads to Dante, who is now ready to understand.

CHAPTER 4: Falconry in Duecento and Trecento prose.

The situation of falconry in prose of the late Duecento and Trecento reflects a changing social environment. The old aristocracy that ruled by birthright gives way to a new type of aristocracy, that based on *guadagno*. As a totem for the old nobility, hawks and falcons can no longer be taken at face value as symbols of the courtly society in literature that takes place in the contemporary society.

On the other hand, the chivalric romance genre, set in this old society in a nostalgic way, uses falcon imagery unequivocally in the conventional manner. For instance, Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, that takes place in Ancient Troy, has characters that are all portrayed as if they are medieval nobility. They have typically medieval pastimes including falconry. Falconry is such a typical pastime that it is practiced during times of truce in Troy. If a character participates gladly, it is a sign that all is well with him. Troiolo's mental state can be gauged throughout the book by whether he enjoys flying his hawk, or whether it fails to interest him. When he is happy in his affair with Criseida, his hunting improves: he flies the largest birds: falcons, gyrfalcons, and eagles (III, 91).¹ When she does not return from the Greek camp, he writes to her telling his fears that she has betrayed him, and tells her the effects of the worry: he cannot function as a nobleman. He cannot eat, sleep, make war, or enjoy music, his friends, or hunting (VII, 59). Boccaccio's Madonna Fiammetta has the identical problem in her story of betrayed love. Her husband tries to cheer her by taking her hunting and hawking, but to no avail. She is too depressed by the rumors she has heard that her Panfilo has married: "non una volta, ma molte, nel più spesso uccellare quando uccello si fu a ciò convenevole, quasi essendo

¹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Filostrato*, ed. Vincenzo Pernicone (New York and London: Garland, 1986), 180.

a me medesima uscita di mente, non lasciandolo io, si levò volando delle mie mani; di che io, già in ciò studiosissima, quasi niente curava.”²

Novelle from the late Duecento in archaic settings are also able to retain the traditional associations between hawks and humans. In the *Novellino* the stories that involve hawks take place in courtly settings: two involve Frederick II, and one takes place at a Provençal court. Other *novelle* in other collections, however, demonstrate a questionable relationship between hawks and nobility. This trend culminates with Boccaccio’s story of Federigo degli Alberighi (V, 9), in which the fate of Federigo’s hawk is emblematic of the old nobility’s need to take a practical, non-courtly view of life.

There are other genres, too, that show the unease of the new society’s attitudes towards the old guard. In fables, hawks and falcons are symbols of powerful people. In the Tuscan world on the cusp of the Renaissance in the fourteenth century, an anonymous author produced a collection of fables, based on Aesop, whose morals he adapted to suit the society he knew: that of the mendicants (he had some Dominican affiliation) and the successful merchants and artisans. The *Esopo toscano* presents philosophies by which to approach life in this world.³ The animal protagonists are all but human in their actions. Birds of prey, anthropomorphized in northern feudal societies to represent the hunt of love in courtly settings, here lose their association with nobility in a positive sense, and are reduced to symbolizing nobility as those with excessive power and greed.

Sparrowhawks and kites show up in several of these tales. The kite retains its negative connotations, but they are enhanced by its portrayal as an evildoer, not simply,

² Boccaccio, *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, ed. M. Mussini Sacchi (Milano: Mursia, 1987), chapter V (129-130).

³ *Esopo toscano dei frati e dei mercanti trecenteschi*, ed. Vittore Branca (Venezia: Marsilio Editore, 1989). Branca’s introduction to his edition is highly informative.

as seen before, ineffective. The sparrowhawk, also, is seen as evil, rapacious, a tyrant. In one example,⁴ some doves, who fear for their lives because a kite has taken to hanging around and menacing them, elect a sparrowhawk as their king, to protect them. When the hawk comes to dinner, he finds that the doves' food does not suit him. He tells the dove who had come to tell him of his promotion,

“Dolcie amica mia, quando m’elegiesti in questa signoria, dovevi considerare il modo e il mio vivere, e dovevi pensare ch’io non ero usato di mangiare in terra senza tovaglia a modo di poltrone, né vivere di cibi di spilonche. E per prezzo del tuo sindacato e mala provedenza ti dò questo pagamento:”

and he eats the dove. The author’s moral explains:

Temporalmente possiamo intendere per queste colombe coloro che hanno amistà con gl’uomini del mondo i quali, per potere contastare loro pari nimici, si sottomettono alle signorie de’ grandi e per poterle mantenere ne vengono in grande povertà; e per lo sparviere s’intende essi possenti e signori.

The human attitudes of these birds are extreme and humorous: the hawk, above, complains about eating without a tablecloth, and the doves, when they are afraid of the *nibbio*, are so scared that they do not even go into town to have a shave, but are forced to have the barber make a house call.

The sparrowhawk is portrayed similarly in another story, in which the nightingale, having made her nest and children, begs the hawk not to eat them.⁵ The hawk says he will refrain from eating her children if she will sing for him. She sings her heart out, and the “rapace e malvagio sparviere” says: “Io non ti udi’ mai più sozzamente cantare.” And he starts to eat her babies. The story continues, emphasizing the emotional pain of the mother to make her as sympathetic as possible and the sparrowhawk seem as cruel as possible:

⁴ Ibid., story XXIII, pp. 135-137.

⁵ Ibid., XLVI, pp. 201-202.

E la madre questo vedendo vuole morire a dolore...e duolsi il cuore della madre con maggiore angoscia che gli squarciati figliuoli, el cuore della madre è fesso da uno mortale dolore più che fusse da una tagliente spada.

The hawk gets what's coming to him when he ends his life by being caught in bird-lime.

The author concludes, "il malvagio che piglia i piccolini si duole quando è preso con ingiegno." The moral interpretation is as follows:

Per lo sparviere s'intende gli malvagi uomini li quali, con tutto che il servizio de' piccolini sia loro grazioso, non considerano il continuo utile e diletto, ma come golosi e giotti solo in una ora gli dimagrono e consumano che mai non si possono rilevare.

There is an obvious class conflict here: the greed of the powerful causes them to abuse the lower classes that serve them. Here there is no gracious courtly courtesy towards those less fortunate.

In these and other tales,⁶ the sparrowhawk and the kite represent the upper classes, but their significance has changed. True, the kite has always been viewed negatively, but here it represents a person who is truly evil. The sparrowhawk has none of the positive gentle noble connotations, nor does it represent love of any kind, as is so common. Here the birds represent powerful people as cruel tyrants, ready to victimize the classes at which the stories are aimed.

In the *novelle*, falcons and hawks define the upper class in a more favorable way, but even here, the symbolism gains some ambivalence as to who is an appropriate owner of one, and as to what happens to a lover's falcon when he takes the rules of love too literally. The stories in the *Novellino*, however, take place in an idealized past, and have no ambivalence about what hawks signify and to whom they should belong.

⁶ Ibid., XIX and LXII.

The *Novellino* is a work of the late Duecento, by an anonymous Florentine. The hawk appears in a few of its stories, and carries what is by now conventional symbolism. It represents the knightly class or the nobility in general, and, in love, is part of the trappings of *fin' amors*. The stories here have a variety of sources; Joseph Consoli calls it a “narrative Noah’s Ark of the short story tradition,”⁷ including stories whose sources and whose characters come from a wide range of countries and a variety of types of people. Indeed, this innovative collection boasts the introduction of a new historical literary character, who, though previously unseen in fiction, is the protagonist of no fewer than nine stories here: the Emperor Frederick II. It should come as no surprise that two of these stories include Frederick’s favorite hobby and obsession, falconry. These *novelle* are XXII, *Come allo ’mperadore Federigo fuggì un Astore dentro in Melano*, and XC, *Qui conta come lo ’mperadore Federigo uccise un suo falcone*. Both tales center on the characters’ view of the birds as representative of humans in the feudal hierarchy. The ranking of rapacious birds according to their “nobility” mirrors the hierarchy in human society. Eagles are the “noblest,” while hawks and falcons are generally symbols for fierce knights and/or noble lovers, as we have seen.

In Novella XXII,⁸ we find the emperor laying siege to Milan, when one of his goshawks escapes into the city. He sends ambassadors to retrieve it, and the podestà calls a meeting to decide the bird’s fate. The consensus is that the bird should be returned: “Tutti dicieano ke cortesia era arrimandarlo più k’a tenerlo.” The sole objector is an old man, who comments, “Come ci è l’Astore così ci fosse lo ’mperadore, kennoi lo faremmo disentire di quello k’elli fa al distretto di Melano. Perk’io consiglio kennon lissi mandì.”

⁷ *The Novellino or One Hundred Ancient Tales*, ed. Joseph Consoli (New York, London: Garland Publishing, 1997), xvi.

⁸Ibid., 44.

Upon hearing that it was an old man who had said this, Frederick's first reaction is, "Ciò non può essere...ke uomo vecchio diciesse sì gran villania." Then he asks for a description of the old man and is told that he was wearing stripes. The emperor responds, "Ben può essere...da ke è vestito di vergato k'elli è un matto."⁹ Rather than having the wisdom to be expected from his age, the old man displays a lack of judgment, in Frederick's view, reinforced by the striped clothing. The old man makes two errors, one proceeding from the other, that prove his misunderstanding of the social rules of his world: first, his mistaken idea that the hawk stands for the emperor causes him to recommend keeping and abusing it; second, such actions would go against the rules of *cortesia*, as understood by everyone else at the hearing.

The *vecchio matto* clearly misinterprets the symbolism of the hawk: it does not represent the emperor; such is the role of the eagle, according to Frederick himself in *Novella XC*, the text of which is as follows:¹⁰

Lo'mperadore Federigo andava una volta a falcone et avevane uno molto sovrano kell'avea caro più d'una cittade. Lasciollo a una Grua quella montò alta. Il falcone si mise alto molto sopra lei. Videssi sotto una Guglia giovane percossella a terra e tanto la tenne kell'uccise. Lo'mperadore corse credendo ke fosse una Grua trovò come era. Allora con ira chiamò il Giustitiere e comandò kal falcone fosse tagliato il capo perkè avea morto lo suo Singniore.

Instead of seizing the crane, as expected, the falcon attacks the eagle. To Frederick, who views both raptors according to their figurative significance, the eagle outranks the hawk. The bird hierarchy mirrors that in his own society, in which he himself is of the highest rank, like the eagle. He carries the image logically to its most extreme conclusion, executing the falcon as if it were a human traitor to its lord. Frederick uses the episode as

⁹ Consoli (140): "Frederick is alluding to the fact that, 'when almshouses raised funds by sending their inmates on begging rounds, authorities supplemented but also regulated this practice by supplying uniforms (Dictionary of the Middle Ages, V. 6, 490).'"

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 116. Note the similarity to an anecdote of Alexander Neckam, in chapter 1.

an opportunity to provide an example of the sort of treatment those who betray him might expect.

The *Novellino* boasts one more novella, number LXIII,¹¹ in which a hawk is involved. Entitled, *D'una Novella k'avenne in Provenza alla Corte del Po*, it is a novella with connections to Provençal poetry. The main plot tells of a knight, Messer Alamanno, at the court of Puy, who is tricked into boasting about his lady, Madonna Grigia. Angered, she dismisses him, and he, grief-stricken, becomes a hermit. Some squires encounter him later, not recognizing him, and bemoan the loss of this “fior de' cavalieri.” They tell the hermit that a tournament will soon be held, and that they hope that the absent knight will return. Messer Alamanno secretly arranges to attend. At the tournament, he is recognized, and asked to sing. He responds, “Io non canteroe mai se io non o pacie da mia Dama.” She agrees to forgive him, but only if “ciento Baroni ...ciento Dame et...ciento Donzelle...tutti gridino a una bocie mercie, e non sappiano a cui lassi chiedere.” He answers the challenge by composing verse for the “festa della candellara” (Candlemas) and recites his new poem in church. Upon hearing it, everyone in the church cries out for mercy, and Messer Alamanno is forgiven. The text of the poem, which is an incomplete rendition of a *canso* by Rigault de Berbezilh, is as follows:¹²

Altresi come il Leo fante, Quando cade non si può levare, E li altri allor gridare, Di lor vocie il levan suso, E io voglio seguir quell'uso, kel mio misfatto è tan' greve e pesante, Kella corte del Po n'a gran burbanza. Esse il pregio di leali amanti, Non mi rilevan già mai non sarò suso, Ke dengniasser per me chiamar mercie, Là 've poggiarsi con ragion non val ren.

Esse io per li fini amanti, non posso ma gioia ricobrar, Per tos temps las mon cantar, Que de mi mon atent, Plus e vivrai sì con reclus, Sol senza solaz, Car

¹¹ Ibid., 84-88.

¹² It is reproduced here just as it is presented in Consoli's edition, based on the 1525 Gualteruzzi *editio princeps*.

tal es mon talens, Ke m'inervia d'onor e plager, Kar'ei non sui della maniere
d'ors, Ke qui batte non tien vile, Se mercie adorne engras, Et muluira or ven.

Ab rot le mon sui clautz, De mi trop parlar, Ess'io poghes finis contrefar,
Ke non es mai c'uns que s'art, E poi resurte sus ieu m'arserei, Car sui tan
malannaz, E mis fais dig, Messongier turanz, E sortir con spire et con plor, La
giovenz e bietaz e valor, Es que non deu fallir un pauo di merses, La udieuaisis
tutt'altri bon.

Mia canzone e mio lamento, Va' là u ieu non os annar, De' miei occhi
sguardar, Tanto sono forfatto e fallente. Ia ie non me n'escus, Nè nul fu miei di
donna, Ke fu'n dietro du an, Or torno a voi doloroso e piangente, Sì come cierbo
k'a fatto su lungo cors, Torn'al morir al grido delli cacciatori, Et io così torno alla
vostra mercie, Ma voi non cal se d'amor no soven.

The poem appears in an interesting mix of Italian and Provençal; it is an
adaptation of a canso by Richart de Berbezilh, written entirely in Provençal. It is of
interest to note the the use of bestiary images that is typical of Rigaut de Berbezilh, and
its several links in subject matter to the novella.

It has been argued that the story itself is an adaptation of the *razo* that prefaces the
Provençal version of this poem, in the collection of *razos* written possibly by Uc de Saint
Circ.¹³ Indeed, the two stories share many similarities, not least the poem, and are
undoubtedly related in some way. However, the *Novellino* tale is more detailed than the
razo; it includes a long, rich description of life at the court of Po, of “nostra donna in
Provenza”, where the events take place. Because of this setting, the *Novellino* tale
includes a sparrowhawk, with very courtly connotations, while the *razo* does not.

The tale in the *Novellino* begins with this background story, totally absent from
the *razo*, of a great court that was held for the knighting of the son of “Conte Raimondo.”
Elements of the description of the court suggest that it remains in existence for a very

¹³ See Guido Favati, La novella LXIV del “Novellino” e Uc de Saint Circ,” *Lettere italiane* XI, no. 2
(1959): 133-73, and Alberto Varvaro, *Rigaut de Berbezilh, Liriche*, 23-28 for discussion of the question of
sources, and a comparison of these two versions. Favati argues for a common source, while Varvaro
disagrees.

long time.¹⁴ So many people gather that money and provisions for the court run short and Raimondo has to take them from his own knights to fund his guests. Some of the knights agree but some object, so he finds another solution to his money problem. He causes to be placed on a post a *sparviere di muda*, a moulted sparrowhawk; whoever may feel brave and rich enough to do so should lift it onto his own wrist, thereby signifying his willingness to finance the court for the entire year.¹⁵ Varvaro explains further: “Il falcone veniva preso dal cavaliere che si sentisse tanto forte da poter difendere la superiorità della sua dama su quelle degli altri cavalieri. Nel Novellino il tema è riassorbito nel quadro di liberalità cui è improntato l’inizio della novella.”¹⁶ The taking or the awarding of the sparrowhawk is a chivalric tradition that proves the bravery of the man who does it, since typically one has to fight others for it, and the beauty of the lady to whom it is given. It is central to the plot in the *cantare* of *Bruto de Bretagna*, as seen in chapter 2, and, in Chretien de Troyes’ *Erec et Enide*, Erec enters a tournament to capture one. The sparrowhawk is not restricted to being awarded for feats of arms: the *vida* of the Monge de Montaudon mentions that the Monge was in charge of a long-running poetry contest, possibly in the same court that is the setting of the *Novellino* story, at which it was his duty to award a sparrowhawk for the best poetry.¹⁷

There are not many falcons to be found in *novelle* of the Trecento. They figure largely in only one story each in the works of Franco Sacchetti and Giovanni Sercambi. The action in both stories stems from the behavior of certain characters when their

¹⁴ See Favati, (145-146) and Varvaro (22-23, 50) for textual evidence for a long-running court at Puy at which both tournaments and poetry contests were held.

¹⁵ The *vida* of the Monge de Montaudon suggests that he was also involved in this gathering, as an integral part of the awarding of the sparrowhawk (Varvaro 50, Boutière, J. and A.-H. Schutz, ed, *Biographies des troubadours* (Paris: A. G. Nizet, 1964), 216.)

¹⁶ Varvaro, 26 n. 54.

¹⁷ In Boutiere-Schutz, 1964, 309-310.

expectation of the class status of particular persons in possession of falcons is not met. Sacchetti's novella, CXCIV,¹⁸ tells of the cleverness of a farmer who foils a greedy *maestro usciere*, or retainer, of the king of France. As the story goes, the King of France, Filippo di Valois, goes hunting one day with his sparrowhawk and loses it. He is very upset by this loss, and sets a reward/penalty by which whoever finds and returns the hawk will receive two hundred Francs, but if one were to find it and not return it, he would be hanged. One day, of course, the hawk is found by the farmer. Sacchetti makes much of the farmer's roughness and uneasiness in handling such a noble bird, but also celebrates his resourcefulness:

...là dove essendo su uno arbore, e 'l contadino narrato di sopra, lavorando ne' campi appiè di quello, ebbe sentito e' sonagli, e accostandosi quasi per scede, e mostrando la callosa e rozza mano, con uno allettare assai disusato, lo sparviere gli venne in mano. Al contadino, altro al ghermire degli artigli, parv'essere impacciato; ma veduti i sonagli col segno reale, e avendo due fanciulle da marito, perché avea inteso la fama del bando, come uomo poco sperto a questa faccenda, gli parve essere mezzo impacciato; ma pur, presi i geti e lasciata la zappa, s'avviò verso la sua casa, e tagliata una cordella da un basto d'uno asino, l'attacò a' geti, e legollo su una stanga. E considerando chi egli era, e come era adatto a portarlo a Parigi innanzi la presenza del re, tutto veniva meno.

At this point, the "mastro usciere" shows up, and tries his best to cheat the farmer out of his reward, trying to convince him to hand over the bird, playing first on the farmer's incapability in handling such a noble pet: "Tu lo guasteresti, se tu lo portassi; dallo a me." When this tack, and the threats that follow, are ineffective, the retainer emphasizes his own status with the king, saying he can be of help to the farmer, and asks him to give him half the reward the farmer expects. The farmer agrees, and the two make their way, uncomfortably,¹⁹ to the king in Paris. The king is very pleased to have his hawk back and

¹⁸ *Trecentonovelle*, ed. Aldo Borlenghi (Milano: Rizzoli, 1957), 663-667.

¹⁹ The farmer, at least, is uncomfortable, for reasons akin to those that Sacchetti stated earlier: "per portare cosa non mai usata, e perché villano avea preso gentile."

greatly amused to see “quanto stava bene in mano al contadino.” For his reward, the farmer asks for “cinquanta o bastonate o scoreggiate.”²⁰ The king asks why, and the farmer explains the deal he made with the *mastro usciere*, to which he had agreed so that the retainer would get the sort of reward he deserved. The king recognizes the *usciere*'s avarice and the *contadino*'s cleverness, and orders that the *usciere* be given his half of the prize requested, twenty-five lashes. When this is done, the king tells the farmer, “hotti cavato d'obbligo che l'avei promesso a questo rubaldo; l'avanzo non voglio seguire di dare a te.” He gives the farmer the promised two hundred francs, and tells him to come back whenever he needs help. Sacchetti sums up, “Grande fu la justizia e la discrezione di questo re; ma non fu minore cosa, uscire del petto d'uno villano, anzi d'un animo gentile, si potrebbe dire, tanto degna domanda, per pagare la cupidigia di colui che mai non fu in grazia dello re Filippo, come era prima.” He emphasizes the greed of the retainer, who had hoped to take advantage of the farmer by playing upon his insecurities in dealing with a high-class object. Sacchetti shows the wisdom of the king, but equally the inner nobility of the farmer, who shows by his request that possession of the quality of *gentilezza* can be unrelated to one's birth status.

Giovanni Sercambi also provides a tale that centers on a sparrowhawk and involves beatings. While Sacchetti's tale, despite its setting in France, has an immediacy derived largely from the author's introductory statement that implies his acquaintance with its protagonist,²¹ Sercambi's story is set far from his audience's experience both in space and time: “Lungo tempo fu che lo 'mperadore di Gostantinopoli nomato Cesari

²⁰ This term, not used here in its modern sense, is defined by Borlenghi as “whippings.”

²¹ “Uno contadino di Francia mi si fa innanzi a volere che io lo descriva in suo sottile accorgimento, il quale usò contro a una maestro uscier del re Filippo di Valos...”

Ardito avendo uno suo figliuolo nomato Ottaviano già grande d'età di anni XIII...²²

However, as it turns out, most of the story takes place in Genoa. It is a story of the prodigal son, who returns home because of an unpleasant encounter between himself and an arrogant gentleman regarding a sparrowhawk. The teenage boy Ottaviano runs off and, taking the name Borra, supports himself by gambling, rather than by working, “perché non avea arte impreso e anco perché non si volea invilire.” He stays in Genoa, quite poor, for three years. After a windfall, he buys himself a beautiful sparrowhawk. One *arte* Borra does know is that of caring for a hawk, and as a consequence, it becomes the best looking hawk in Genoa. Soon a gentleman named Spinetta da Fiesco admires the hawk and asks to buy it from Borra. Borra refuses, saying the hawk is not for sale, but that he will willingly give it to Spinetta as a gift. Spinetta takes offense: “Come, non ho io tanti denari che cotesto sparvieri possa comprare?” Upon Borra’s insistence that the hawk is available to Spinetta only as a gift, but not for *denari*, Spinetta shows his arrogance and his feelings of self-consequence in his high social position: “Deh, gaglioffo e ribaldo che mi rispondi e dici che per denari cotesto sparvieri non arei: e pensi che io voglia che si possa dire che uno ribaldo abia fatto dono a Spinetta dal Fiesco?” He then beats Borra and the hawk, which dies, in quite a violent sequence:

E di rabbia le li strappò di mano e per le guance ne li dié tanti colpi che lo sparvieri e le guance di Borra tutte si fracassonno. E morto lo sparvieri e gittatolo via, disse: “Ora, ghiottone, hai donato lo sparvieri!”;²³ e lassòlo forte piangendo. Era questo Spinetta sí potente in Genoa che neuno osò dire niente mentre che Borra battea, ma cheti stanno.

Having had to withstand such treatment, Borra realizes how low he has fallen and how much more respect he had at home as the son of the emperor, and decides to go

²² Giovanni Sercambi, *Novelle*, ed. Giovanni Sinicropi (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1995), *novella* LXV, *De dishonestate viri*, 562-568.

²³ This may be a sardonic reference to the custom referred to in the previous tale from the *Novellino*.

home. He is received joyously by his father, and in time, succeeds him and receives legates from Genoa, among whom is the same Spinetta. Spinetta, upon prompting, confesses the harm he did to the owner of the hawk and that he had acted discourteously; he should have accepted the gift and given the owner clothing, “perch’era nudo.” Ottaviano/Borra explains that it was he, and thanks Spinetta for giving him the impetus to return home. The story concludes that in consequence, in Genoa it was decided to address all people as *messere*, since, by Borra’s example, shabby clothing was not an accurate indication of status.

Both of these *novelle* show a blurring of the lines of nobility, in that they concentrate on defining who is an appropriate person to associate with hawks relative to people’s actions and appearances rather than their birth. The antagonists in these tales judge wrongly by appearance; in Sacchetti’s story the inner nobility of the farmer is proven, while in Sercambi’s, Borra’s outer appearance belies his true nobility of birth and consequent gracious behavior and knowledge of hawks. The old perceptions of people with hawks can no longer be trusted.

In his *Decameron*, Boccaccio often uses birds in relation to love as a plot device. The most memorable of these instances is of course the central role that the nightingale plays in the love story of Caterina and Ricciardo, story four of day five, in which the nightingale and the practice of “ucellare” are good-humored sexual euphemisms. To meet with her lover, Caterina arranges to sleep outside; she argues to her mother for this arrangement because, she says, it is too warm inside, and in this way the nightingale can sing her to sleep. She and her Ricciardo are caught the next morning by her father, who tells her mother that Caterina, in her sleep, has held on to her favorite part of Ricciardo:

“tua figliuola è stata sí vaga dell’usignuolo, che ella l’ha preso e tienlosi in mano.”²⁴

After a proper wedding, the audience is told, Ricciardo has a fulfilling life with Caterina: “con lei lungamente in pace e in consolazione ucellò agli usignuoli e di dí e di notte quanto gli piacque.”

Hawks and falcons, too, play roles in the *Decameron*. They appear in various *novelle*, not always love stories— for example, IX, 2, in which Messer Torello’s skill in falconry is one aspect of the *gentilezza* he displays to Saladin, his incognito guest. Messer Torello’s expertise in this area allows him to be recognized by Saladin and assisted in returning home after having been captured on crusade.

However, in Boccaccio’s ninth story of the fifth day, the noble and love connotations of the falcon unite in a story that explores what happens when a gentleman tries to live and woo his beloved by the rules of courtly love in a money-based society. The story of Federigo degli Alberighi and his falcon is told by the queen of the day, Fiammetta. It is truly appropriate that Fiammetta is the narrator of this story, as her namesake understands well the pitfalls of courtly love, as the tragic heroine of one of Boccaccio’s earlier works, the *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, in which she takes part in courtly society and suffers from her lover’s betrayal of her. Moreover, Fiammetta, the character in the *Decameron*, also has an affinity with falcons. In the conclusion to day four, when Fiammetta is awarded the crown for the next day, Boccaccio, in his description of her, pays her eyes a typical courtly compliment: “due occhi in testa che parean d’un falcon pellegrino.” She tells Federigo’s story in very courtly language, beginning right away with her advice to the ladies in her audience to eschew practical considerations when choosing a lover. She says she is going to tell a love story “non

²⁴ The sources for the *Decameron* are from the edition by Cesare Segre (Milano: Mursia, 1966).

acciò solamente che conosciate quanto la vostra vaghezza possa ne' cuor gentili, ma perché apprendiate d'essere voi medesime, dove si conviene, donatrici de' vostri guiderdoni senza lasciarne sempre esser la fortuna guidatrice." Mixing stilnovistic and courtly language, she encourages her female listeners to treat love affairs in the old manner, not financially but according to the more ineffable merits of the lover and his *cuor gentile*. Such an idealistic attitude drives the entire plot of the story she tells, while at the same time showing the ultimate triumph of the new, monetary society over the old because of the latter's impracticality.

Federigo degli Alberighi is a gentleman of the old nobility²⁵ whose courtly behavior causes his ruin and embarrassment when trying to impress a lady, Monna Giovanna. In his youth, while he is courting her in the *fin' amors* tradition (she is married), he lives in a manner that would have made Folgore di San Gimignano proud: "acciò che egli l'amor di lei acquistar potesse, giostrava, armeggiava, faceva feste e donava, e il suo senza alcuno ritegno spendeva."²⁶ As she is a *donna onesta*, his efforts gain him nothing, but ruin him financially. This, then, is the unfortunate, practical reality of living like a courtly lover, that Boccaccio is unusual in emphasizing.²⁷ Federigo leaves town to go live on the piece of land he has left; his only valuable possession remaining is his falcon, "de' migliori del mondo." Penniless, he now depends on it not merely for sport but for catching his food.

²⁵ Luigi Russo points out that Dante says Federigo belonged to a family that was already in decline in the days of Dante's great great grandfather, Cacciaguida. *Lecture critiche del Decameron* (Bari: Laterza, 1967), 186.

²⁶ G. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Cesare Segre (Milano: Mursia, 1966), 368.

²⁷ He mentions in other *novelle* men left penniless by the practice of "cortesia": in III, 10 we meet Neerbale, who, "avendo in cortesia tutte le sue facultà spese," decides to marry Alibech, she who was taught "come si rimette il diavolo nel ninferno."

Monna Giovanna re-enters his life when, after her husband dies, she takes her son in the summer to an estate near where Federigo lives, and the son becomes friends with him through their shared love of hunting and of Federigo's falcon. Then, her son falls gravely ill, and declares that he'd recuperate if his mother would get him Federigo's falcon. Monna Giovanna is embarrassed to ask this, knowing Federigo's feelings for her and also how fond he is of the falcon and how he depends on it for his livelihood. For the sake of her son, she visits Federigo to ask. The reason she gives for her visit is that she invites herself to dine with him to make up for the trouble he's had from loving her: "io son venuta a ristorarti de' danni li quali tu hai già avuti per me."²⁸ When he tries to find something to feed her that is worthy of honoring her, he finally realizes how poor he is, and serves her at table the only good thing he has left to eat: his beloved falcon.

Afterwards, she asks the favor of him for which she had come: "non per lo amore che tu mi porti, al quale tu di niente se' tenuto, ma per la tua nobiltà, la quale in usar cortesia s'è maggiore che in alcuno altro mostrata." She appeals to his chivalric nature: his courtesy and nobility. Federigo bursts into tears at his inability to help her and explains why, showing her the remaining beak, feet and feathers. She is touched by this gesture of his, which comes out of the fact that not even poverty could shake his belief in courtesy and generosity: "la grandezza dello animo suo, la quale la povertà non avea potuto né potea rintuzzare, molto seco medesima commendò."

Monna Giovanna's son passes away, and her brothers urge her to remarry. Federigo's "grandezza d'animo" prompts her to declare her intention to marry him and none other. And they live happily ever after; Federigo, "il quale così fatta donna e cui

²⁸ While, in the immediate sense, in lying about her motives, she causes him great trouble, in the long run she does as she says, albeit in a way she had not planned.

egli cotanto amata avea, per moglie vedendosi, e oltre a ciò ricchissimo, in letizia con lei, miglior massaiò fatto, terminò gli anni suoi.”

The desperate situation in which Federigo finds himself when Monna Giovanna comes to visit is entirely due to his attempts to live the courtly ideal. He has already begun to break the rules of his society at this point: he is using his falcon not for recreational hunting as he ought, but as a lower-class hunter would, primarily in order to provide food for his table. In fact, in following the dictates of courtliness when she visits, he not only destroys the only courtly thing he still owned, but he breaks the rules of hunting etiquette even further: not only is he dependent on the falcon for his food in general, he is literally reduced to eating the provider of the food, and his pet.

The way Federigo had lived was completely impractical, caring nothing for money, but only honor and courtesy in the old fashion. Boccaccio makes it clear at the end, however, that the value of this attitude toward life is not completely discredited by the windfall he gets by marrying Giovanna. It is in fact his unbridled courteous behavior that wins him the lady he desires, and the money he needs. In serving his falcon for dinner he makes the ultimate sacrifice for his lady, and she is impressed enough to decide that, idealistically, she herself will marry a man who can give her nothing in a practical sense. At the same time, however, it is demonstrated that living by the rules of *fin amors* in reality is an impossibility in the money-oriented culture in which he finds himself. Having sacrificed to his lady every last scrap of courtly trappings that he possessed, down to his last falcon,²⁹ he surrenders to the exigencies of his situation and starts a new life as

²⁹ Sergio Zatti finds this to be a necessary condition of the outcome: “Il falcone rappresenta... l’ultimo segno di nobiltà di cui l’aristocratico dovrà spogliarsi per soddisfare il desiderio e avviare il suo nuovo corso ‘borghese’.” In “Federigo e la metamorfosi del desiderio,” *Strumenti critici* XII (1978): 243-4.

a “miglior massaiò” in a society controlled by *guadagno*. Mario Baratto has commented on the outcome for Federigo thus:

Nelle due fasi della sua esistenza è adombrato il passaggio da una vecchia classe cavalleresca, cortese, dissipatrice e generosa, a una nuova classe aristocratico-borghese, ben più saggia nell'amministrazione dei propri beni. Ma è un passaggio che non distrugge, per il Boccaccio, il valore esemplare di un costume aristocratico: lo corregge, piuttosto, e lo rende più accessibile a un *élite* cittadina.³⁰

Thus, while Boccaccio pokes fun at the practical application of courtly love, he does not devalue it completely: it can produce a happy ending in spite of itself.

In the above *novelle* and fables, the characters are forced to question the role and symbolism of birds of prey in their society. In this period in history, the exclusivity of the hobby of flying falcons has vanished; the emerging middle class adopts this habit of the upper class among many others. The association between courtly love and status and birds of prey is a fossil in the society of the Italian *comune*. The role of these falcons and hawks has been redefined in parallel with the roles and composition of the upper class. In chivalric or archaizing stories, falcons are represented in a straightforward manner and are indicative of the normal activities of the upper class. However, in the real society based on *guadagno*, acting like a noble lover causes problems that can only be fixed by a rescue from the world of money.

³⁰Mario Baratto, *Realtà e stile nel "Decameron"* (Roma: Riuniti, 1984), 26.

CONCLUSION

From a Middle Eastern pastime and a way of catching one's supper practiced worldwide, falconry becomes an obsession in the ruling classes of Western Europe in the Middle Ages. The birds involved in this hunt were revered since ancient times and considered representatives of gods in Egypt, Greece, and the North for their fierceness. The practice of hunting with falcons, popularized by Arab contact during the Crusades, becomes more of a craze than a pastime in the later Middle Ages in Europe. The symbolism of falcons and hawks changes accordingly at this time. Rather than representing, as they did in ancient literature, rapaciousness and cruelty, falcons and hawks in medieval literature become, not simply fierce predators, but symbols of those nobles that practice the hunt and the lifestyle of which the birds are now a part—a courtly, idealized world in which knights pursue ladies by showing off with lavish spending, good manners, feats of arms, and writing poetry. All the connotations of courtly nobility are transferred to these falcons and hawks, to such a point that their mere appearance in literature or art evokes the entire world to which they belong.

This hunting obsession spawns its own literary genre—practical manuals or falconry treatises with information on medicating, identifying, raising, and flying one's bird of prey—and this genre influences others until falconry insinuates itself throughout literature, from didactic or moralizing texts to poetry about pastoral erotic encounters.

The chivalric way of life that revolves around hunting and loving often combines the two, resulting in a particularly apt adaptation of birds of prey to the hunt of love; in poetry they may represent the lover, the lady, or merciless Love itself. In addition, the

domestication or training of the falcon is an image used to symbolize many different levels and types of love, from sublimated courtly love, to erotic carnal love, to divine love and spiritual enlightenment, worthy of a synchronized flying demonstration in heaven.

In early Italian poetry we find remnants of how falcons and hawks were portrayed in Provençal poetry: the trained falcon, integral to courtly life in itself, symbolizes a participant in the love relationship, while, in Italy, the birds' fierceness is adapted to describe the psychology of the suffering of the poet in love. Nostalgic poets, such as Folgore da San Gimignano, exalt the practice of falconry and the courtly world that it evokes in an uncomplicated manner. Changes in poetic style with the advent of the *Dolce Stil Novo* cause falconry images to seemingly fall out of favor, along with other animal imagery that was used extensively in previous poetry. At the same time, and through the rest of the Trecento, falcons hold their ground in the sensual and narrative poetry of madrigals.

Meanwhile, Dante uses the falcon's symbolic potential quite differently in his *Commedia*. The concept of training and domesticating falcons to do the bidding of humans, seen previously in representations of secular love, can be extended to encompass the idea of training the human mind and the soul to search for the highest love, not simply secular but divine. The falconer in charge of both the falcons in training and those who are fully trained and joyful in Paradise is, of course, God, the divine falconer who spins the ultimate lure, the heavenly spheres. This use of falcons to illustrate the journey and education of the soul is akin to Dante's use of cranes to illustrate his quest to write the

highest type of poetry, as well as the spiritual quest of all souls who journey to God like migrating birds.

As the Renaissance approaches in Italy and the composition and priorities of society change, the conventionalized courtly significance of falcons and hawks loses its validity. The symbolic role of these falcons and hawks is revised in parallel with the redefinition of the sort of people who practice the sport, and the old chivalric values are looked back upon with nostalgia. The portrayals of falcons and hawks in *novelle* of the Trecento reflect these changes. Appropriated by the rising middle class, the falcon falls off its pedestal.

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