

# ANIMALS AND MEN

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spines at the sight of the poisonous snakes, striated with green, red, and blue, while the giant serpents slithering in sunken terraria, the boas and anacondas of the country, must have seemed to them creatures of fable. The size of the animal park is indicated by the fact that hundreds of attendants were employed just to take care of the waterfowl, which were distributed among ten ponds. There were specially trained nurses for sick animals. Other attendants had no other task but to gather up the feathers cast by the birds; these were used for making ornamental robes. Hordes of workmen cared for the predators and the fish. Several hundred turkeys a day were used solely for feeding the raptorial birds.

There was even a buffalo kept in an enclosure, a tantalizing fact in the history of pre-Columbian civilizations. The animal had a heavy mane of shaggy hair around its huge head, and the Spaniards were told that it came from "the land toward night," that is, from the north, far beyond the borders of Montezuma's empire. The Aztec ruler did not know, any more than did the Spaniards, that millions of these animals lived in the prairies of North America as far south as Texas. How did a plains buffalo come to be in Montezuma's zoo? Unfortunately, the chronicle does not answer this question.

Along with the caged animals, however, there were human curiosities, bearded women, deformed and dwarfed men. These unfortunate beings had their food thrown into their cages just as if they were wild animals.

During the siege of Tenochtitlán in 1521, the starving defenders of this city of nearly three hundred thousand killed and ate all the animals. The buildings of the animal park were destroyed by the Spanish artillery during the street battles. The conquerors subsequently leveled the entire city to the ground. The rubble was used to fill the canals which had cut through the city. During the rebuilding of the city (now Mexico City), dwellings were put up where the animal park had been. For centuries there was no zoo in the new metropolis.

Only a few decades ago a Zoological Garden was created in the present West Side of Mexico City, the quarter called

Chapultepec. But the trees in the zoo, ancient giants, had already been there when the Aztec Emperor took his leisure in his summer palace set in the midst of its fabulous park.

When the explorers came back to their royal patrons with fantastic stories of the fauna of the new continent, the monarchs wanted very much to see these curious animals for themselves. Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile could take pride in being the first to possess some of these exotic animals: they stocked their palace garden in Toledo with Central American monkeys and various species of parrots from Cuba. King Manuel I of Portugal received for his own royal park Brazilian monkeys and macaws. From the new Portuguese settlements in Africa he obtained gray parrots and young baboons. The sailors he dispatched to India brought him six elephants, a rhinoceros, and a number of tamed cheetahs.

Manuel was a businesslike ruler and not averse to making a profit from his rare stock of animals. He sold a number of long-tailed monkeys to a merchant named Lukas Rehm. Rehm sent them to his associate, the merchant Bartholomaeus Welser, in Augsburg. He also sent a sketch of the rhinoceros which had reached Lisbon from India. This sketch fell into the hands of the Nuremberg painter Albrecht Dürer. With the help of this sketch and Rehm's description of the animal, Dürer made the woodcut which has been reproduced in many animals books and which for a long time was regarded as an authentic portrait of a rhinoceros.

During these years in which the King of Portugal controlled the market in exotic spices, monkeys, and parrots, and would try to reconcile the merchants to his ever-rising prices by entertaining them with a parade of his elephants, a modest animal park was growing up some twelve hundred miles northeast of Lisbon.

It was in the park near Potsdam, the estate of Joachim I, Elector of Brandenburg. A section of the park was very much a zoo, with bears, lynxes, and wolves kept in barred cages. Wild horses and bison were given large enclosures; pheasants ran about freely. All this was open to the public, the people of Brandenburg, but of course there were no mon-

*Dürer's  
Portrait  
of a  
Rhinoceros*

keys and parrots. The city on the Spree with its two thousand inhabitants was still a poor place; it had no rich merchants inside its walls who might have bought valuable animals and presented them to the town.

Augsburg was more prosperous. Between 1570 and 1580 the Fuggers established a relatively well-equipped animal park in the city. Since the trading connections of this great merchant family reached to remote parts of the world, the zoo contained not only European animals, but also specimens from Africa and Central America, as well as West African and South American birds.

In Italy, too, a good many of the ducal families became interested in establishing zoos. About 1585 Ferdinand I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, set up a small animal park near Florence. Among his special prizes were paradise whidah birds. Agents of his would inquire of all the ships docking in the port of Leghorn as to whether the captains had brought back any exotic animals. The Grand Duke would buy any animals for whatever was asked.

The merchant ships which used the busy ports of Antwerp and Rotterdam often brought animals from distant parts, and this gave impetus to the establishment of a number of menageries in the Netherlands. As early as 1590, when the Dutch were busy defending their independence against the Spanish who still ruled the southern part of the Low Countries, the citizens of The Hague established a zoo.

One of its prizes was a helmeted cassowary which had been brought from Java by a Captain Sellinger in 1597. Natives had captured the big bird in the Moluccas, the Spice Islands, and taken it to Java to sell to the Dutch captain. This cassowary graced the zoo at The Hague until 1608. Then it was bought by Emperor Rudolf II, who had it taken to Vienna, and placed in the Hapsburg menagerie on the outskirts of the city.

*Great Mogul  
Akbar,  
a True  
Animal-lover*

A few years later sailors from India brought stories to Amsterdam of zoological gardens on a grand scale. Akbar, the Great Mogul of India, had set up zoos in many Indian cities toward the end of the sixteenth century. These con-

tained strong cages for such animals as leopards, tigers, and rhinos. At his death in 1605 Akbar's nature preserves and zoos contained some five thousand tame elephants, and no less than one thousand dromedaries and camels, including a number of the valuable Arabian Meharis, the swift racing dromedaries.

This Mongol ruler who governed India from Delhi was thus introducing into India the tradition of the Mongol khans of Sarai and Karakorum, the tradition of love for animals which has remained a characteristic of India ever since. Akbar had a remarkable knowledge of zoological matters; in addition, historians have called him the greatest ethical teacher to rule an empire since Marcus Aurelius. In making this comparison, however, the historians have failed to note that the humanitarianism of Marcus Aurelius scarcely extended to animals. During his reign the terrible massacres of animals in the Roman arenas continued. Akbar, on the other hand, tolerated no form of animal baiting. What was more, he appointed veterinarians to provide the best medical care then available for the animals in his zoological gardens.

During the same century in which the gates of the animal parks in India were thrown open for the entire population, a European ruler also felt the impulse to display his animal collection to a larger public. Louis XIV of France was a young man, aged twenty-three, when he assumed the reins of government in 1661; two years later he converted the Jardin du Roi in Paris into a zoological garden.

This zoo contained, in addition to the customary African leopards and lions, bears from the Abruzzi and the Apennines, crocodiles, large tortoises, and many kinds of birds. To be sure, the regulations held that it could be viewed only by his nobles, courtiers, and official guests from other countries. But it turned out that most of the lower-class people attached to the retinues of princes, dukes, and counts could in practice not be prevented from seeing the animals; and a good many of the august foreign visitors took back with them the idea of setting up a zoo at home.

*The Zoo  
Gates Open*

The animal park of the Hapsburgs was, as we have noted, on the outskirts of the city of Vienna, and at first was not open to the general public. The public was admitted only to what was called the "Viennese Baiting Theater," where animals were set upon each other. However, only very occasionally were slaughters conducted on the ugly Roman model, between bears and wolves, mastiffs and bison.

The popular Prince Eugene greatly increased the stock of animals in the Vienna zoo. In 1687, after the victory of Zenta over the Turkish general Kara Mustapha, Prince Eugene took possession of a tame lion that had belonged to the sultan, and had it brought to Vienna. It was placed in the menagerie of Emperor Leopold I. In 1730 the prince set up an animal park of his own beside his Belvedere Palace. Here he had his own animals installed, including another tame lion which went freely in and out of its master's apartments. This animal was reputed to be extremely well behaved, never hurting either the prince's servants or any of the numerous visitors. In fact, the lion is said to have let anyone touch it, and even to have solicited caresses from the guests. Which is more than can be said of a good many circus lions nowadays.

Maria Theresa was a frequent visitor to the zoo which belonged to her father, Charles VI, and to the new one set up by Prince Eugene, whom she greatly admired. Quite early in her life she had the idea of establishing a larger and more beautiful zoo in Vienna; but she realized this ambition only many years later, when she was Empress of Austria. In 1752 she and her husband, Francis I, established the "Imperial Menagerie" near the palace of Schönbrunn. This zoo, the heart of which may still be seen, had little in common with the open plan and rambling character of our present-day zoological gardens. It consisted of twelve enclosures arranged around a court. The cages for predators were barred, those for game animals open at the top. All were separated from one another and from the outside by walls, so that the animals could be observed only from the central court. For the convenience of courtiers, and

later of the Vienna burghers, a garden pavilion was built seven years after the opening of the menagerie. This is still standing and now serves as a restaurant. It was not until 1884 that Emperor Francis Joseph had the surrounding wall removed, thus beginning the modernization of the Schönbrunn zoo. In Maria Theresa's time there were already monkeys in the zoo; by 1770 it had elephants, in 1828 giraffes; in 1856 it acquired a rhinoceros, in 1878 the first chimpanzees, soon thereafter a hippopotamus, and finally a gorilla.

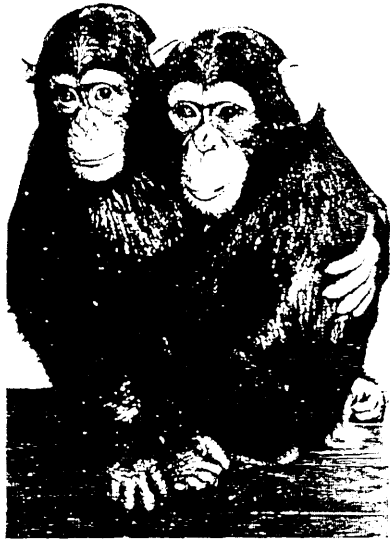
Though the zoo may have been cramped in its design, it seems to have provided good living conditions for its inmates. A griffon vulture which Prince Eugene had bought for his own collection lived on for 117 years in the Imperial Menagerie.

Maria Theresa's neighbor to the north, Electoral Prince August II of Saxony, called "the Strong," established a zoo in his capital of Dresden. In 1731 he carried out a cherished plan of his to send an expedition to Africa to observe and obtain exotic animals for Dresden. Under the leadership of an eminent zoologist, Professor Hebenstreit, this research and hunting expedition traveled to Nubia by way of Egypt. Hebenstreit hoped to bring home elephants and other African animals. Unfortunately, he did not succeed. He accomplished his major purpose, that of observing unknown animals in their natural habitat; but he returned without elephants, zebras, or giraffes. Evidently he had underestimated the hardships of such an expedition. Only a single lion and a few ostriches survived the stormy return voyage across the Mediterranean. However, the world-famous animal figurines of Meissen porcelain still testify to the impression that August the Strong's menagerie made upon the people of Dresden.

At his palace in Dresden the Elector also had several goldfish, the first to be brought from China to Europe. At first they were kept in soup tureens until the monarch ordered special spherical glass bowls made for them.

August the Strong did not live to see the arrival of the first

*Hebenstreit's  
African  
Expedition*



(A)



(B)



(C)

(A) Two chimpanzees. (B) Zoologists consider capuchin monkeys (South America) unusually alert and docile. (C) Young woolly monkeys from South America are among the most delightful of the monkeys suitable for pets; this one is a year old. Photos: Ateles Zoological Studio

rhinoceros in Saxony. There was one, however, on display in Leipzig at the time of the Leipzig Fair. It attracted great crowds, being widely advertised as a "monster." Later on it was moved in its special wagon-cage to Frankfurt, Augsburg, and a few other German cities—always billed as a "wonder of the world." The Augsburg artist Ridinger drew an excellent likeness of the rhinoceros and had a copper engraving made of it. Thus, after 232 years, Albrecht Dürer's somewhat fanciful woodcut was corrected by comparison with the real animal.

This rhinoceros ultimately passed into the possession of Empress Maria Theresa. Its previous owner brought the animal to Vienna by way of Munich and Linz. As the wagon approached the gates of Vienna, the empress sent an escort of cuirassiers as an honor guard to accompany the rare "unicorn" to Schönbrunn. Only a short time before, Maria Theresa had also obtained a large Indian elephant. With these new acquisitions, the Imperial Menagerie of Schönbrunn outshone even the Jardin du Roi in Paris.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Napoleon I was at the peak of his fame, there were many thousands of animal-lovers in Europe who kept pets in their homes, but there were still only two zoos of real importance on the entire Continent: the Jardin des Plantes in Paris and the Kaiserliche Menagerie in Vienna.

The Jardin des Plantes had evolved during the Revolution out of the Jardin du Roi. After the Revolution the great French naturalist Cuvier undertook the reorganization of the zoo. The Committee of Public Safety, which preceded the Directory, ordained that the zoo was henceforth to be open to the people. Admission to the seventy-acre zoo is still free, while only a minimal entrance fee is required for the animal houses and the aquarium.

History records a quaint experiment in animal psychology undertaken with an elephant of the Jardin des Plantes. In 1798 an orchestra played various pieces of music to observe the reaction of the animal. When march music was played, the elephant is said to have swayed in time to the

*Musical  
Elephants*