

The Emperor's Exotic and New World Animals: Hans Khevenhüller and the Habsburg Menageries in Vienna and Prague

Annemarie Jordan Gschwend

The lion and whatever other strange animals I can find will be sent at the first, best opportunity

HANS KHEVENHÜLLER TO RUDOLF II, *Madrid, 1 July 1576*



Hans Khevenhüller (1538-1606) was appointed imperial ambassador in Spain from 1574 to 1606. In addition to diplomatic functions, he assumed the role of agent and dealer for his Habsburg patrons. Always on the watch for novelties and curiosities, Khevenhüller (Fig. 3.1) was responsible for the transfer of works of art, jewellery, medicinal drugs, *naturalia*, textiles and weapons to Central Europe (Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend 2001; Jordan Gschwend and Pérez de Tudela 2003). Luxury goods were viewed as exclusive and hard to come by. Rare and unusual *objets d'art* were sought out to heighten the prestige and reputation of princely owners and their collections. Habsburg collectors were insatiable, ready to pay any price, even when funds to buy were lacking. The ambassador bridged Central European courts with Spain and Portugal and their overseas trading empires. Through Khevenhüller, Habsburg shoppers were able to source extraordinary global merchandise and commodities.

Khevenhüller's greatest accomplishment lay in his contributions to the creation of the chambers of art (*Kunstkammern*), menageries and gardens in Vienna, Prague, Innsbruck, and Graz, where he imprinted his style upon these imperial collections established in palaces, country houses and their estates (Pieper 1999; Stieglecker 1999; Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend 2007; Jordan Gschwend 2015b). His thirty-three year residency at Philip II of Spain's court transformed Habsburg collecting in the late sixteenth century. Without Khevenhüller's dedication and perseverance, Emperors Maximilian II (1527-1564), Rudolf II (1552-1612) and members of their immediate family would never have acquired superlative exotica, objects or paintings. More importantly, they would never have come by the rare wild animals acquired from all corners of the globe for their menageries. The ambassador diligently sought to



FIGURE 3.1

Anonymous, Portrait of Hans Khevenhüller. Engraving after the marble bust executed by Jacopo Trezzo in Madrid, after 1579. PRIVATE COLLECTION, SWITZERLAND PHOTO © ANNEMARIE JORDAN GSCHWEND.

fulfil endless shopping lists dispatched to Madrid. Close to 1,000 letters in the *Haus, Hof- und Staatsarchiv* in Vienna, addressed by Khevenhüller to his Habsburg clients, track his acquisitions from the 1570s until his death in 1606, in particular the flora and fauna he procured from the Americas, Brazil, West Africa and Portuguese Asia.

A true connoisseur gifted with good taste and a discerning eye, Khevenhüller bought wild and domestic animals, flowers, plants and seeds from Asia and the New World with great expertise. A cultivated man, Khevenhüller was educated at the University of Padua, residing there from 1549 to 1557. He learned Latin, perfected his Italian, and in 1558 undertook a grand tour of northern Italy to complete his education. Khevenhüller surely visited – if not for academic or scientific reasons – the botanical garden and library in Padua founded in 1545. While a student, he was often ill, suffering from frequent fevers (Khevenhüller-Metsch 1971). After his death in 1606, a medicine chest was found among Khevenhüller's goods containing a global array of drugs and commodities from bezoars and porcupine stones originating in Portuguese Asia to wonder drugs made in Peru (Jordan Gschwend forthcoming). Medicinal plants grew in the “*Orto dei semplici*” (garden of medicinal plants) in Padua, cultivated to produce natural remedies. The ambassador's familiarity with flora, cures, potions and





FIGURE 3.2
 (a, opposite) *Cantino Planisphere*,
 1502; (b, left) detail with West
 African parrots, Portugal.
 Watercolour and gouache on
 vellum. BIBLIOTECA ESTENSE
 UNIVERSITARIA, MODENA, INV.
 NO. C. G. A. 2. PHOTO: PUBLIC
 DOMAIN.

unguents surfaces in his correspondence. Aside from botany, he also developed a wide spectrum of talents during his Paduan years including a fascination for canines, the decorative arts, goldsmith's work, horses, medicine, painting, sculpture, the handling and care of wild and domestic animals – all of which later helped him better serve his Habsburg patrons in the course of his embassy.

Khevenhüller cultivated close ties with merchants in Lisbon and Seville. He relied upon paid informants in Iberia and further abroad in the Americas and Asia, while taking advantage of Fugger agents and Augsburg merchants: the speculator Konrad Rott (1530-1610) in Lisbon and Ferdinand Cron (1554-1637), who resided for thirty-seven years in Portuguese India (Jordan Gschwend and Pérez de Tudela 2003). European merchants, many relocated Portuguese New Christians, based in Goa, Cochin, Cannanore and Calicut in India, played decisive roles in the global networks he tapped into. Always short of money, the diplomat was forced on many occasions to borrow from Fugger agents in Madrid to finance the whims of his Habsburg collectors. Often not reimbursed, he paid for exotica, luxuries and wild animals from his own pocket. Khevenhüller's correspondence is peppered with complaints and pleas for funds to cover his extravagant expenses.

Shopping for Global Animals in Lisbon

Lisbon's global port offered Khevenhüller many opportunities to procure wild animals during his tenure as ambassador at the Spanish court. The crowded piers at the Tagus river were vital sites where many exotic animals from all

points of Portugal's trade empire were sold as soon as overseas fleets docked (Barclay Lloyd 1971; Ferronha, Bettencourt and Loureiro 1993; Loureiro 2008; Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga 2015). By the early sixteenth century, Portuguese captains and sailors made a profitable business selling live birds, especially grey parrots and small monkeys from West Africa. A detail from the 1502 Cantino planisphere, the oldest map to depict the Portuguese geographical discoveries along the West African coast, depicts these grey parrots sold by local natives to the Portuguese (Fig. 3.2).

A 1504-1505 account book of the Casa da Guiné (Africa) warehouse in Lisbon records the parrots, cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and civets (*Civettictis civetta*) brought to Portugal from São Tomé and Santo António islands and the high prices they sold for. A cheetah was estimated at 600 *reais*, a parrot 400 *reais* and a small civet 300 *reis*; even a mole (*topeira*) for 190 *reais* was part of the live cargo.¹ Cheetahs, *gatos de barbo* in Portuguese, earmarked as special pets for the Lisbon and other European courts, were deployed for hunting (Masseti 2009). Tame cheetahs, lions and leopards were the ultimate symbols of luxury and opulence in the sixteenth century (Fig. 3.3).

Several sixteenth-century reports in the Ajuda Library in Lisbon describe trade along the West African coast. Compiled by insiders, they tell of the abundance of African wildlife: elephants, apes or baboons (*bugios*), small simians (*monos*), gazelles and parrots.² One narrative mentions the infinite number of blue parrots in the kingdom of Loango (present day Congo), bred for consumption in aviaries teeming with birds ("*as capoeiras cheas*"), although their meat was found unpalatable ("*não é boa carne*"). Lively, talkative grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) were sourced in Mina for the Lisbon court. Parrots were cherished because of their longevity, ability to speak and entertain. King Manuel I (1469-1521) was especially eager to acquire a variety of West African birds for his aviaries at Santos palace and at his new royal residence, the Paço da Ribeira, situated on the Lisbon waterfront after 1505. These aviaries came to symbolize Manuel's global reach, notably after Vasco da Gama reached India in 1498 and Pedro Álvares Cabral landed in Brazil in 1500.

Manuel I, a politician, merchant king and entrepreneur, strategically courted favour with the Vatican. He sent an assortment of exotic animals to Rome for Pope Leo X's growing menagerie in the Belvedere garden and *cortile* in return for profitable papal concessions (Bedini 1998).³ One Portuguese account

1 Lisbon, Direção-Geral do Livro, dos Arquivos e das Bibliotecas, Torre do Tombo, Núcleo Antigo 799: Livro da Receita e despesa do tesouro da Guiné, fols 14r-14v.

2 Lisbon, Biblioteca da Ajuda, MS. 51-IX-25, fols 68-78.

3 See above, chapter 2.

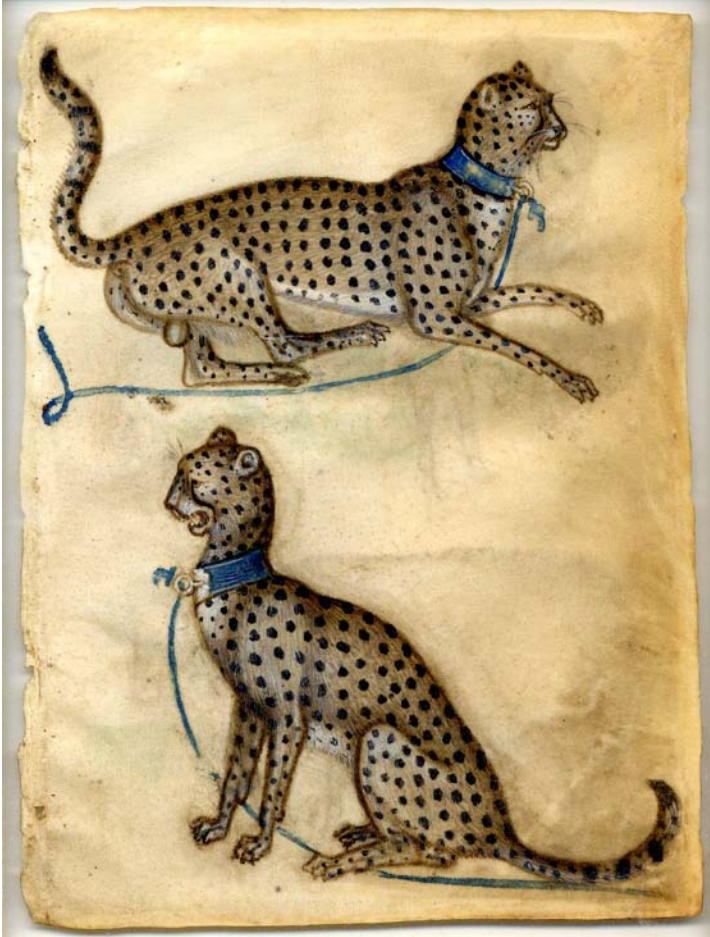


FIGURE 3.3 *Anonymous, Two cheetahs wearing collars, folio formerly in a sketch-book, c.1400-1410, Lombard School. Brush drawing in watercolour on vellum, 164 × 123 mm. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, INV. NO. 1895,1214.94 © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.*

relates the adventures of a witty African grey parrot from Mina reserved for Manuel (Jordan Gschwend 2015a). En route to Portugal, the vessel with this bird was stolen by French pirates, who ultimately returned the carrack to the Portuguese court. The brigands however kept the parrot, provoking Manuel's wrath, who "swore he would fetch it him himself". After its kidnapping, the parrot finally reached Lisbon where it was trained to speak Latin. Manuel soon dispatched this loquacious bird to Rome. One day the Pope finding the parrot

gloomy, asked what he was thinking (*quid cogitas papagaius?*). The bird feeling neglected, replied, “I am thinking of the past, the present and what is to come”. The Pontiff, shocked by this discourse, ordered the parrot to be put to death at once, thinking him possessed by the Devil⁴ – an ignoble end for a talented bird with such a royal provenance. The Lisbon court nevertheless continued to send wild animals and birds to Rome until 1578.

The discovery of Brazil – “the land of the parrots” – opened up new markets for the exportation of live American parrots to Lisbon: macaws (*Ara ararauna*) and parakeets (possibly blue-winged parrotlets, *Forpus xanthopterygius*). Parrot feathers and Amerindian featherwork from Brazil, Central America and Mexico were highly prized and reserved for élite consumers and collectors in Austria, Italy, Portugal and Spain (Russo, Wolf and Fane 2015). Wild felines (ocelots or little spotted cats, *Leopardus tigrinus*) and primates: marmosets, golden lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus rosalia*) and Marcgrave’s capuchins were equally sought after (Masseti and Veracini 2010). Brazilian animals and birds were bought by Portuguese sailors and captains from Tupinambá Indians, the Portuguese adopting Tupi names to identify these new, unknown animals and birds. For instance, *toym* or *tuí* for parakeets and *çagoym* or *saguis* for tamarins and marmosets (Papavero and Teixeira 2014). The detail given in Fig. 3.4, from the 1547 Vallard Atlas, depicts Europeans in South America trading with Amerindians, buying from them large green parrots (genus *Amazona?*) and tame monkeys with red leashes. Exotic fauna and flora (bulbs, flowers, plants and seeds) formed an important component of the cargoes brought to Portugal from Africa, Brazil and Asia.

Foreign merchants in Portugal quickly joined in this brisk trade (Gorgas 1997). Alvise Ca’ da Mosto (Cadamosto), a Venetian merchant, returned to Lisbon in 1456 with 150 parrots from West Africa, which he sold for one ducat each, making a nice profit (Jordan Gschwend 2009). Lucas Rem, an agent for the Augsburg-based Welser banking family, resided in Portugal from 1503 to 1508, briefing his patrons on the “strange, new parrots, long-tailed monkeys, and other curious and delightful things” in Lisbon (Lach 1970). As the Por-

4 Lisbon, Direção-Geral do Livro, dos Arquivos e das Bibliotecas, Torre do Tombo, mss da Livraria 1782, fols 129v-130: “A el Rey Dom Manoel trouxerão hun papagaio da Mina em hua carauela a qual tomarão os francezes no caminho, e el Rej se mandou queixar e lho tornarão a mandar E faltando nella este papagaio a tornou que se lhe não mandassem o seu papagaio que o iria elle la buscar. Tornou a carauela com elle o qual mandou ao papa ... de presente por fallar muito e hũn dia vendo o papa ao papagaio estar muito triste lhe perguntou quid cogitas papagaius E elle respondeu cogito preterita presença et futura que vem a dizer, que cuidas papagaio? Cuido as couzas passadas as presentes E as que estão por vir com o que o papa pasmado da resposta E acção o mandou mattar por lhe paresser fallava o diabo nelle.”



FIGURE 3.4 *Detail with European merchants and Amerindians in south-eastern South America.* Anonymous, Portolan Atlas (*Vallard Atlas*), “Le vrais bresil et province de Quito”, Dieppe, 1547. Ink and watercolour on parchment and paper, 390 × 280 mm. HENRY E. HUNTINGTON LIBRARY AND ART GALLERY, SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA, INV. NO. HM 29, FOL. 12. © THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, ART COLLECTIONS, AND BOTANICAL GARDENS.

tuguese court poet Diogo Velho da Chancelaria wandered through Lisbon’s streets in 1519, he observed that “ocelots, lions, elephants, monsters, talking birds, diamonds and porcelain had become quite common” (Lach 1977). Wild animals were visible at Lisbon’s docks, where work elephants loaded cargoes on to ships or pulled canons. The Flemish pilgrim Jan Taccoen dedicated several pages of his 1514 journal to the “strange animals” living in Lisbon. He described Manuel’s pachyderms walking along Lisbon’s streets: “I have seen 3 young elephants (2 bulls and 1 female) with their trainers. They are big, ugly and grey, with large wide ears, having a gentle disposition.” He watched them drinking at a Lisbon fountain, filling their trunks with water and spraying people around them. “When they were taken to see the king [Manuel I] they saluted and genuflected before him” (Stols, Fonseca and Manhaeghe 2014). Tourists, like Taccoen, could visit the Asian elephants, rhinoceros or other creatures from overseas stabled at the royal palace, the Paço dos Estaus, located at Rossio Square. A watercolour from MS *Hortus Pisanus* 514 in Pisa (Fig. 3.5) probably depicts the famous elephant, Süleyman, sent as a gift from the Kotte court in Ceylon in 1542. Ridden by his native mahout dressed in European clothes, this image demonstrates how such Asian elephants progressed through Lisbon on festive occasions.

By 1565 an array of parrots and monkeys from West Africa, Brazil and Asia were available for sale in Lisbon, as observed by the Swiss botanist, Leonhard



FIGURE 3.5 *Nicolaes de Bruyn and Daniel Fröschl*, Portrait of Süleyman the elephant with his Indian Mahout dressed in European clothes, *mid-sixteenth century*. Watercolour on paper, from the bound book of animal drawings: *Disegni di animali*, MS Hortus Pisanus 514, fol. 377r. BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSITARIA, PISA. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Thurneysser (1531-1596) (Herold and Leitão forthcoming). Thurneysser dedicated several folios of his treatise on the natural history and botany of Portugal, classifying the taxonomy of parrots and parakeets imported from Africa and Brazil. The birds are minutely described: the colour of their beaks, feathers, size, and whether they spoke or sang. Thurneysser catalogued them by country of origin: one *Psitacus Brisilicus* [*sic*] he saw was a large Brazilian parrot (ara) with a green head and body of yellow feathers (a blue and yellow macaw?). Other animals and reptiles merited his attention, among them African apes, monkeys, lions, a cobra and a zebra (*Asinus indicus*) recently arrived in Lisbon as a gift from an Indian potentate for King Sebastian of Portugal. Shopping lists poured into Lisbon as word of these curious animals and birds from newly discovered worlds spread across Europe.

Princes and rulers competed with one another, flooding the Lisbon court with requests. François I begged Manuel I in 1515 to send him a pair of elephants (male and female) for his menagerie at his château in Amboise where Leonardo da Vinci resided (Jordan Gschwend 2010; Pieragnoli 2016). Resourceful agents and intermediaries were similarly recruited. Cosimo I de' Medici solicited in 1549 the Florentine merchant-banker in Lisbon, Lucas Giraldi, to send him an elephant.⁵ The Papal Nuncio in Portugal, Pompeo Zambecari, shipped (presumably wild) animals in 1553 for Cosimo I's menageries located in and around Florence.⁶ In 1571 a monkey and a parrot arrived from Spain for Francesco I de' Medici, followed by two parrots presented in 1576 by the Spanish courtier, Antonio de Toledo.⁷ Francesco's secretary Antonio Serguidi was kept abreast by the agent Augusto Tizio of the "Indian" birds, animals and bizarre pig ("*porchetto che era il più bizzarro de tutti*"), a Peruvian peccary (Collared peccary or *Pecari tajacu*), bought for the Grand Duke in Seville in 1584 (Markey 2016).⁸ The Florentine agent Giulio Nesi based in Lisbon secured seeds, bulbs and plants from the Americas and Portuguese Asia for Ferdinando I, shipped to Florence in 1588.⁹ Portuguese ships docked at the Tuscan port of Livorno in 1571, possibly unloading live cargo.¹⁰ Livorno's well-informed port administrator Bernardo Baroncelli apprised his patron Francesco of diverse ships and their exotic cargoes arriving from the New World (via Portugal and Spain). Whenever possible Baroncelli sent the Medici court parrots and other *galanterie* (Markey 2016). Various species of parrots and exotic fauna were immediately given away as diplomatic gifts to demonstrate Medici power-broking and largesse. Live exotic animals acted as diplomatic pawns used to gain support for the family's claim to a grand-ducal title. Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria (1528-1579), Francesco's brother-in-law, received in 1572 a jerboa or *topo d'India*, three monkeys, twenty-four canaries, two hens and a capon (from Africa or India). Seven large and small parrots, one of them a red ara (macaw), were included in this transport; all could "speak well or learn languages" (Toorians 1994; Markey 2016). One large grey parrot presented to Albrecht even spoke "Indian", perhaps the now extinct Old Tupi language, or an African dialect. Collecting exotic flora and fauna at great expense from distant markets underscored the commercial reach of the Medici and their wide-flung networks after

5 Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 191, fol. 19v.

6 Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 418a, fol. 1216.

7 Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 538a, fol. 926; 693, fol. 101.

8 Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 121, fol. 712.

9 Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 4919, fol. 504.

10 Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 557, fols 84, 139.



FIGURE 3.6 *Santi di Tito*, Portrait of Lucrezia, daughter of Niccolò Gaddi, in the Gaddi palace gardens with a Brazilian macaw and Egyptian Jerboa, c.1565-1569, Florence. Oil on poplar panel, 116.2 × 90.4 cm. PHOTO COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S, LONDON.

the mid-sixteenth century (Markey 2016). Displaying these animals from Asia, Africa and the Americas in their principal palaces and gardens became a quintessential part of the political imaging of the Medici Grand Ducal court, as it would for contemporary courts in Austria, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and southern Germany.

A portrait (Fig. 3.6), possibly posthumous, of Lucrezia Gaddi in her family's garden, painted in Florence before or after 1569 by Santi di Tito, and almost certainly with the collaboration of the court artist Jacopo Ligozzi, reflects best the culture of exotic animals, flowers and plants the Medici promoted. The

girl's father Niccolò Gaddi (1537-1591) was a Florentine ambassador, senator and important collector, who acquired works of art for himself and for his patron Cosimo I, Gaddi's collection rivalling that of the Medici. The gardens of the Palazzo Gaddi were filled with antique sculptures and busts, and planted with imported flowers and fruit trees. Lucrezia's pets portrayed here, the Brazilian macaw to the right and the jerboa, a desert mouse from Egypt (*Jaculus orientalis*) to the left, may have been prestigious ducal gifts bestowed on Gaddi for his services. After a period at the Habsburg courts in Vienna and Innsbruck, where Jacopo Ligozzi executed a series of animal and fish paintings for Maximilian II and Ferdinand II of Tyrol, he arrived in Florence in 1577. He worked for Cosimo's son, Francesco I de' Medici, meeting the Bolognese naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605) with whom he collaborated. Ligozzi played a central role at the Florentine court, executing naturalistic and scientific studies of plants and animals owned by the Medici, including their Brazilian aras and jerboa (Cecchi, Conigliello and Faietti 2014). Gaddi housed exotic animals in his botanical garden, nicknamed the *Paradiso dei Gaddi*. He admired Ligozzi's work, patronized him and owned a bound album of Ligozzi's watercolours of figures from the Ottoman Empire (Forlani 1982). Gaddi no doubt commissioned Ligozzi to add these realistic images of the ara and jerboa, which replicate drawings of the same bird and Egyptian mouse executed by Ligozzi for Francesco I. Lucrezia's portrait with her "mascots" prominently displayed alongside her validates the degree to which the Medici court and Florentine aristocracy were stimulated by their acquisitions of global animals in Lisbon, the Levant, North Africa and the Americas (Markey 2016).

Animal Agents in the Service of the Habsburg Court

Hans Khevenhüller, like the Medici Grand Dukes, cultivated indispensable contacts in Iberia, especially in Portugal. The Augsburg merchant-dealer-broker, Nathanael Jung (c.1534-1578), based in Lisbon, assisted Khevenhüller for years in acquiring extraordinary bezoars, precious stones and diamonds from India, as well as an assortment of wild animals from Africa, Asia and the New World (Jordan Gschwend and Beltz 2010). The son of Ambrosius Jung (1471-1548), Augsburg's city physician, Nathanael made a niche for himself in Portugal, acting as official agent for a consortium of Augsburg merchants and bankers, including the Fuggers. Jung later assumed responsibility between 1574 and 1576 for Konrad Rott's pepper contract in Portugal, becoming head of Rott's offices in Lisbon (Malekandathil 1999). He made a successful career in Iberia, marketing himself as factor, independent agent and *cognoscente* of

global commodities, luxury goods, precious stones and wild animals. Jung travelled regularly between Lisbon, Madrid and Augsburg, connecting Southern Germany with the Portuguese and Spanish courts. Like Khevenhüller, he was a key intermediary in the transfer of cultural and material goods between Iberia and Central Europe. Jung may have been introduced to the ambassador through the Fugger office in Madrid. Not long after Khevenhüller took up his permanent diplomatic post in 1574, he recruited Jung in August of 1575, authorizing him to buy all “bizarre, strange animals from India” brought with Portuguese fleets bound for Lisbon.

Jung kept Khevenhüller apprised of vessels returning from Asia and Brazil, sending immediate news of their live cargoes. In October 1576 the ambassador wrote to Maximilian II, saying “he was expecting ships from Brazil to dock any day” in Lisbon, where he was sure to buy the same species (“*dergleichen gattungen*”) of wild felines he had recently acquired in Seville (Jordan Gschwend forthcoming). Jung and Khevenhüller corresponded so frequently that their personal couriers must have made the run between Madrid and Lisbon on a daily basis. Regrettably their correspondence has not survived. Jung collaborated closely with Khevenhüller until his death in Lisbon in 1578, supplying the ambassador with many of the exotic animals earmarked for Maximilian II’s first menagerie, Kaiser Ebersdorf, created by the emperor in Vienna (Jordan Gschwend 2015b). After Jung’s death, the ambassador relied on trusted servants in his employ whom he regularly sent to Lisbon as scouts and spies, and to buy live animals on his behalf.

Through Jung, Khevenhüller acquired an African zebra for Maximilian II, first reserved for Pope Gregory XIII’s Belvedere menagerie. In a letter dated August 1575, the ambassador informed his patron of “a very beautiful black and white striped mule (*mula*), first promised to the Pope. I hope it will please and satisfy your royal Highness» (Jordan Gschwend 2015b). Khevenhüller exerted diplomatic influence at the Lisbon court to procure it for the emperor’s newly built menagerie, Neugebäude, erected close by Kaiser Ebersdorf. When the imperial courtier Wolf Rumpf visited the Spanish and Portuguese courts in 1575 on an extraordinary diplomatic mission, Khevenhüller encouraged him to buy “new, strange animals” in Lisbon to take back to Vienna. A five-month-old tame lion was purchased in 1576, followed by four American turkeys (*indianisch rephühner*) bought in Seville (Eiche 2004), along with a small, unidentified wild feline. In 1577 Khevenhüller presented Maximilian with a lion and lioness (both one year old), a “nicely spotted” civet (*xineta*) and a “vivacious” red hunting dog from Mallorca. That same year, the diplomat purchased monkeys, wild cats and exotic birds in Seville for exorbitant prices. “I paid enough”, he remarked (“*theuer genug erkhaufft*”).

Some of the most exceptional birds sought out by male Habsburgs were falcons known as *aletos* or *aplomados* from the Americas and other species from Africa (*tagarotes* or *tazarotes*), which held a truly exotic appeal for Habsburg collectors in Iberia and Central Europe (Staudinger 1993; Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend 2001). Khevenhüller diligently supplied his patrons with falcons (*Falco femoralis*) originating from Central America, acquired not only in Lisbon, but also from agents in Mexico and Seville. One *apolomado* appears portrayed with a Habsburg prince, the teenaged Archduke Wenceslaus (1561-1578), son of Maximilian II, painted by Alonso Sánchez Coello at the Madrid court in 1574 (Fig. 3.7). Collecting such New World falcons remained a prerogative of the Habsburgs and their courts throughout the sixteenth century.

On occasion Khevenhüller competed with other imperial diplomats to please the Viennese court. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1522-1592), ambassador in Constantinople, sent Maximilian II in 1562 a civet he had bought in Turkey. Khevenhüller was quite proud to say in a letter dated March 24, 1576, that his “cat”, just acquired through Jung in Lisbon, was “quite tame, more beautiful and had more black speckles than Busbecq’s.” Possibly Khevenhüller’s civet was in reality an ocelot or a little spotted cat, *Leopardus tigrinus*, imported from Brazil. Khevenhüller had evidently seen Busbecq’s civet in Vienna or Prague where Maximilian II had been crowned King of Bohemia in November of 1562, and could therefore compare these cats with some expertise.

As trade between the Portuguese and the Far East advanced in the sixteenth century, Chinese and Japanese dogs were exported to Europe. Rudolf II received a rare, exclusive Chinese dog which Khevenhüller had sent from Lisbon – a gift from Philip II. Before the canine arrived in Prague, the diplomat sent off a letter to the emperor on 4 July 1583, commenting on how the dog – perhaps a hairless Chinese crested (Collier 1921) – was “small but peculiar because the entire body was hairless, except for fur on its tail, on top of its head and paws.”

Aside from Nathanael Jung, Khevenhüller used high-level Portuguese royal connections to source exotic animals. In 1576, the Portuguese ambassador in Spain, Duarte de Castelo Branco and Catherine of Austria (1507-1578), Queen of Portugal, were enlisted to help Khevenhüller find a small Asian bull for Maximilian II’s Indian cow in Vienna, for breeding purposes. Through Khevenhüller’s ties with the Portuguese court and with his agent Jung, a steady flow of animals left Lisbon for Vienna and Prague between 1552 and 1600: Asian elephants (Süleyman in 1552 and Emanuel in 1563) (Jordan Gschwend 2010), lions, civets, cheetahs, a zebra, assorted parrots, African and Brazilian monkeys, a cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*), even an African blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*), later prominently portrayed in 1563 with Emanuel the elephant in Giuseppe



FIGURE 3.7
 Alonso Sánchez Coello,
 Portrait of Archduke
 Wenceslaus with an
 apolomado falcon, 1574,
 Madrid. Oil on canvas,
 151 × 97 cm, signed and
 dated: A.Sanchez.F.1574.
 KUNSTHISTORISCHES
 MUSEUM, VIENNA,
 GEMÄLDEGALERIE,
 INV. NO. GG 3186.
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 MUSEUM, VIENNA.

Arcimboldo's composite head, *Terra* (Fig. 3.8), painted in Vienna after sketches made from life (Jordan Gschwend 2010).

Competition was fierce and Khevenhüller did not always get his way or the wild animals he most wanted. A female rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) arrived in Lisbon in September of 1577, sent as a gift from Goa by the Portuguese governor of India, Diogo de Menezes, for King Sebastian of Portugal. This famous beast was nicknamed the “Marvel of Lisbon” by the Florentine merchant, Filippo Sassetti (Lach 1970). Lisbon’s citizens and tourists marvelled at the sight of the beast, watching her take daily baths, as she plunged and waded



FIGURE 3.8
*Giuseppe
 Arcimboldo, Terra,
 Composite Head,
 1563-1566. Oil on
 canvas, 70 × 49
 cm. LIECHTEN-
 STEIN MUSEUM,
 VIENNA. PHOTO:
 PUBLIC DOMAIN.*

in the River Tagus (Jordan Gschwend 2015c). Shortly afterwards, a diplomatic impasse ensued as European courts vied to buy it. Khevenhüller was desperate to send this rhinoceros to Rudolf II's Prague menagerie. Drawings and watercolours of the creature by anonymous painters in Lisbon and later in Madrid circulated at European courts (Fontes da Costa 2009) (Fig. 3.9). Khevenhüller immediately sent Rudolf II an image just after it reached Lisbon (Jordan Gschwend and Beltz 2010). Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol (1529-1595) attempted in vain to acquire it for his Schloss Ambras menagerie at Innsbruck, and two watercolours of the "Marvel of Lisbon" have recently been discovered

in his former collection (Jordan Gschwend 2015b). In 1578 the beast was promised by Sebastian to Pope Gregory XIII, for his Belvedere animal park.

The conquest of Portugal in 1580 and Philip II of Spain's incorporation of the Portuguese crown finally resolved the impasse: the rhinoceros was brought to Spain as his trophy, along with an Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) sent from Goa in 1582 (Fig. 3.9). Philip purchased houses near the royal Alcázar palace in Madrid in order to create large stables, and both creatures were put on public display in 1583. By the time the Lisbon rhinoceros reached Spain, her horn had been cut off and she was blinded in the hopes of taming her, since she had killed a man one year earlier in front of the Lisbon royal palace, the Paço da Ribeira. She received the nickname, *Abada* (rhinoceros in Spanish), and a street in Madrid still bears her name. The realistic portrayal in Fig. 3.10 was executed in Madrid in 1584 by an anonymous painter, who evidently made small, quick portraits to sell as profitable souvenirs. The watercolour was purchased where the *Abada* was standing by Adam Hochreiter, a courtier of Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol's court, who pasted this unique gouache into his travel diary.

Court Painters and Royal Pets

When Maximilian II became emperor in 1564 he transformed his court into a centre of scientific study and learning, bringing together scholars from across Europe. Under his patronage, court artists, like Joris Hoefnagel (1542-1601), Giorgio Liberale (1527-c.1580) and the renowned Milanese painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527-1593) were invited to visit the emperor's hunting palace and menagerie at Kaiser Ebersdorf, just outside Vienna, in order to sketch exotic animals and birds from life (DaCosta Kaufmann 2009; Jordan Gschwend 2010). Maximilian – who was often ill, suffering from various ailments – also encouraged the observance, study and drawing of fruits, herbs and plants in his botanical gardens, planted next to the menagerie; these were processed for his medicines. The imperial ambassador was often asked to send fruit samplings and seeds from Spain: one shipment with melon and apricot fruit pips (*Opshern*) left Madrid on 26 August 1576. Exotic flora from Florida were sourced through the Spanish court in 1572. Sunflower seeds along with sassafras, a scented deciduous tree native to eastern North America used for medicinal purposes, were cultivated by Maximilian II for the first time in Austria (Fig. 3.11). Specialized animal handlers were engaged by the emperor for his expanding menagerie, while three Flemish gardeners were also hired (Giese 1962; Jordan Gschwend 2015b).



FIGURE 3.9
 Anonymous, Portrait of an
 Asian Elephant, c.1582-1584,
 Lisbon or Madrid. Watercol-
 our on paper, 40.2 × 30.1 cm,
 folio from Rudolf II's
 Bestiary. ÖSTERREICHISCHE
 NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK,
 VIENNA, COD. MIN. 129, FOL.
 8R. © ÖSTERREICHISCHE
 NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK,
 VIENNA.



FIGURE 3.10 Anonymous, Portrait of an Asian rhinoceros, the "Marvel of Lisbon", 1584. Watercolour on paper, 18.5 × 24 cm, inscribed: *in Madrid l'anno 1584, Rinoceros à L'Abada*. Folio pasted in Adam Hochreiter's diary. UNIVERSITÄTS- UND LANDESBIBLIOTHEK TIROL, INNSBRUCK, INV. NO. MS I B 42.
 © UNIVERSITÄTS- UND LANDESBIBLIOTHEK TIROL, INNSBRUCK.



FIGURE 3.11
Daniel Fröschl, Portrait of a
 Sunflower (*Helianthus*
annuus), mid-sixteenth
 century. Watercolour on
 paper, from the bound book
 of animal drawings: *Codice*
Casabona, MS Hortus
 Pisanus 513bis, fol. 45r.
 BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSITARIA,
 PISA. PHOTO: PUBLIC
 DOMAIN.

Khevenhüller, inspired by the emperor's example, commissioned unidentified painters in Lisbon, Madrid or Seville to execute drawings or watercolours of the wild animals, hunting dogs, Spanish horses, bezoar stones, plants, exotica and other commodities he purchased, such as carved Ming-period rhinoceros horn vessels or Peruvian emeralds. Khevenhüller's anonymous artists have yet to be identified. The ambassador was well acquainted with several of Philip II's court painters, in particular, Alonso Sánchez Coello (1531-1588), the Cremonese Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625) and the Flemish portraitist, Jooris van der Straeten (active 1550-1577), who painted the king's children with their exotic pets and mascots (Jordan Gschwend and Pérez de Tudela 2003; Jordan Gschwend 2010). A portrait of 1571-1572 showing Philip's daughters Isabella Clara Eugenia and Catalina Michaela (Fig. 3.12), re-attributed by the author to van der Straeten, depicts the royal *infantas* with their beloved companions: a lap dog (a now extinct toy spaniel especially bred at Philip's court)



FIGURE 3.12 *Jooris van der Straeten*, Portrait of Isabella Clara Eugenia and Catalina Michaela, 1571-1572. Oil on canvas, 134.0 × 145.8 cm. ROYAL COLLECTION, LONDON, INV. NO. RCIN 404331. ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST © HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II 2016.

and an Indian green parrot (Rose-ringed Parakeet, *Psittacula krameri*) (Jordan Gschwend 2015b). A favourite Brazilian marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*) takes centre stage in Catalina's portrait (Fig. 3.13), painted in 1573 by Sofonisba (Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend 2007; Jordan Gschwend 2010). Khevenhüller must have relied on Sánchez Coello for several animal portraits (in oil and on paper) sent to Vienna and Prague, perhaps sourcing additional painters from Coello's considerable workshop (Jordan Gschwend forthcoming).

Philip II, like Maximilian II, commissioned independent portraits of wild animals in his menageries at the palaces of Aranjuez, Casa del Campo in Madrid and El Pardo (García-Frías 2005). These portrayals, many of which have not survived, were set into frames and hung in the king's private quarters of the Escorial monastery. They included representations of lions, dogs, exotic birds, parrots, crows, wolves, chameleons, eagles, and several of the 1577 rhinoceros,



FIGURE 3.13
Sofonisba Anguissola,
 Portrait of Catalina
 Michaela with a
 Brazilian marmoset,
 1573. Oil on canvas, 56 ×
 47 cm. PRIVATE
 COLLECTION, USA.
 PHOTO COURTESY OF
 RAFAEL VALLS,
 LONDON.

the “Marvel of Lisbon”, brought to Madrid by the king in 1583. These commissions reflect not only Philip’s deep interests in natural history, science and botany, but also his need to memorialize cherished pets that had passed away.

Many of the images (*conterfäth*) ordered by Khevenhüller were appended to the letters he addressed Maximilian II and Rudolf II. A watercolour of a dappled grey Andalusian stallion at the Prague court, dating to 1584-1587 (Fig. 3.14), is comparable to the images (on paper or in oil) of horses sent by Khevenhüller to his patrons. The diplomat’s correspondence is filled with meticulous descriptions of the sizes, shapes, colours, characteristics and personalities of the wild creatures, canines or equines which he bought. In one letter dated 29 September 1598, the ambassador described two exquisite horses rarely seen before with beautiful (dappled?) coats – stallions needed by Rudolf II to enhance his stud farm (“so frembdt und schen von harn [hair] und gestalt ... dergleichen wenig gesehen ... werdens ... in ihr gestüt [gestüt] gar wol geprauchten kin”). Khevenhüller was the principal intermediary responsible for the transfer of Spanish horses bred in Andalusia (near Cordoba) to the Habsburg courts in Central Europe



FIGURE 3.14 *Anonymous*, A dappled grey stallion tethered in a landscape, c.1584-1587, *Prague School*. Watercolour and gouache, heightened with silver and gold, within gold framing lines, on vellum, 19.5 × 27.5 cm. GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES, INV. NO. 2013.57. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN.

(Jordan Gschwend 2015d). Maximilian II's brother, Archduke Karl II of Inner Austria (1540-1590), founded a stud farm in 1580 in Lipizza, now Slovenia, in the Karst region, with horses regularly supplied by Khevenhüller from Spain. The majority of Khevenhüller's "portraits" of horses, imported birds and wild animals are now lost, while some have survived, pasted into three albums – paper museums once owned by Maximilian II and Rudolf II, filled with depictions of exotic and domestic animals, birds, flowers, fruits and insects, today known as Cod. Min. 42, 129 and 130, located in the Austrian National Library in Vienna (Staudinger 2007; DaCosta Kaufmann 2009; Weiler 2011: 168-215; Jordan Gschwend forthcoming).

Master of the Horse, Pedro Fuerte

The shipments of live wild animals, birds, Andalusian horses and hunting dogs from Madrid to Central Europe were riddled with logistical problems. Animals needed not only to survive but to reach their final destinations in the best

shape possible. Creatures which had arrived in Seville after long journeys from overseas were often undernourished and unfit for further travel. Many were brought back to good health by Khevenhüller and his staff over a period of weeks, sometimes months, before leaving Iberia. Some died after reaching his residence in Madrid. Parrots were amongst the more robust, and “could endure more than the wild cats”, Khevenhüller informed Rudolf II in January of 1579. The ambassador and dedicated servants in his employ became experts in animal, canine and equine handling and care. Everything from seeds to the Asian rhinoceros, the “Marvel of Lisbon” – almost acquired by Khevenhüller for Rudolf in Lisbon in 1582 – passed his personal inspection and received his stamp of approval before departure to Central Europe via sea-routes or overland via France. The logistics involved in shipping exotic creatures, dogs and horses either by land or sea, involved planning, organization and incredible multi-tasking, not to mention baskets, cages and crates made to measure, plus carts and wagons for transportation. A veritable nightmare. Without Khevenhüller’s loyal servant and Master of the Horse, Pedro Fuerte, none of these wild animals would have survived their journey to their imperial menageries. Fuerte criss-crossed Europe a number of times, departing from Spain for Vienna, Prague, Innsbruck or Graz with caravans of live animals, Brazilian aras, dogs, exotic birds, simians and Spanish horses.

Fuerte’s precise itineraries are not known, but he surely used the most secure routes available to him along these long journeys, billeting his live protégés in trustworthy inns or aristocratic palaces whose owners had close ties to Khevenhüller and the imperial court. The ambassador and Fuerte favoured Mediterranean crossings, dispatching animals and horses from either Cartagena or Barcelona to Genoa, from where Fuerte progressed through allied Habsburg territories in northern Italy, over the Brenner pass to Innsbruck. Barges were used to continue the journey on the river Inn to Vienna. In December of 1576 a large convoy of animals destined for Rudolf II in Prague left Spain with Fuerte in command:

In order for your royal Highness [Rudolf II] to know, I have made a list of the animals I have thus far been able to obtain. Firstly, I have a tame lion and lioness, 6 Irish dogs [a gift] from Francisco Yvarra, of which I am still waiting for 2 to be sent by him, 3 Indian [probably African] partridges, a small monkey, a strange spotted animal [Brazilian ocelot or feline?], and 10 fairly large black birds from India with red beaks and fig-like growths on their foreheads [American turkeys, *Meleagris gallopavo*] which [delivery] I am awaiting daily. The two alanos [*aplomados* or *Falco femoralis*] are waiting for your royal Highness in Barcelona ... I will send portraits

[*Conterfeth*] of all in order for your Majesty to see and comprehend [what I have bought].

Khevenhüller's steward (*hofmaister*), Hannsen Hilliprandt, was sent to Portugal in 1579, just after Nathanael Jung died, in order to buy seven parrots, several wild cats and a civet from Brazil (*Presil*) and a ten-year-old black slave boy from West Africa, all destined for Prague (Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend 2001). Along with the servant boy and animals procured in Lisbon, Khevenhüller added to this transport: eight hunting dogs (*galgos*), two "portraits" of an Asian porcupine (*porco spino*), two emerald clusters, a carved Chinese rhinoceros horn cup, and a portrayal of the 1577 Asian rhinoceros, the "Wonder of Lisbon" painted in Lisbon by one of Khevenhüller's anonymous artists (Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend 2001). Again this consignment to Central Europe was entrusted to the scrupulous Pedro Fuerte. The fate of the black African boy is not documented.

Khevenhüller often acted as intermediary on behalf of the Spanish court whenever Philip II shipped luxury goods and animals to Prague as gifts for his nephew Rudolf II. The ambassador would organize the transport and transfer of the presents. In other instances, Spanish courtiers travelling to Central Europe were recruited. In 1578 Remiro Nuñez de Guzmán, on his way to the imperial court, took along with his entourage: "twenty-two marvellous ponies, a great mule, a lion, a leopard, seven monkeys, and six hunting dogs" for the emperor.¹¹

Conclusion

Khevenhüller negotiated an enviable position for himself at the Spanish court, becoming a trusted intimate of Philip II and his family. The Spanish king came to rely upon the resident diplomat to assist him on many fronts. In order to smooth often strained relations with Rudolf II, Philip frequently asked Khevenhüller to intervene in his negotiations with Rudolf. He sought out the ambassador to help him obtain rare exotica and animals to send as diplomat gifts to the Prague court. Only with such exotic bribes was Philip able to persuade his nephew to focus on urgent state matters. On one such occasion two Amerindian feather blankets from the Americas, possibly from Mexico or Brazil, were sent to Prague to animate Rudolf and obtain his response to

¹¹ Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, Avviso from Milan, 3254, fol. 427 (14 May 1578).

unanswered letters (Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend 2001). Khevenhüller's personal knowledge of the global curiosities market, and how to acquire superlative objects, granted him high standing with Philip II.

Khevenhüller bridged Iberia and its overseas empires with Central Europe, imprinting his connoisseurship and distinctive tastes upon the collections of the Austrian Habsburgs. Only today are we beginning to understand his role as art collector, dealer and agent in the formation of the great Habsburg *Kunst-kammern* in the late Renaissance. Lisbon and Seville served as the commercial marketplaces which linked east and west in the sixteenth century. The complex acquisitions network that Khevenhüller tapped into afforded his patrons access to the most exclusive items on the market, explaining how high-quality, showcase pieces of Asian, African and American exotica, personally selected and purchased by the ambassador reached Vienna, Prague, Innsbruck and Graz. The rich archival legacy, diary and correspondence left by Hans Khevenhüller underscores how this diplomat dedicated much of his career to the pursuit of the extraordinary – especially animals, birds and flora – for his Habsburg collectors.

Acknowledgements

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