



Produced by Public Relations Office of the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of prey IAF, Editor Gary Timbrell. Email: timbrell@iaf.org

Disclaimer

The contents of this brochure are covered by copyright laws and may not be reproduced by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise without the prior written. The opinions expressed in this brochure are not necessarily those of the IAF or its officers and IAF accepts no responsibility or liability for them. It is the responsibility of the contributor to gain permission to reproduce photographs.

Cover pictures from "Traité de Fauconnerie" by Schlegel and Wulverhorst (1845)



FALCONRY

A hunting art to unite
Humankind.

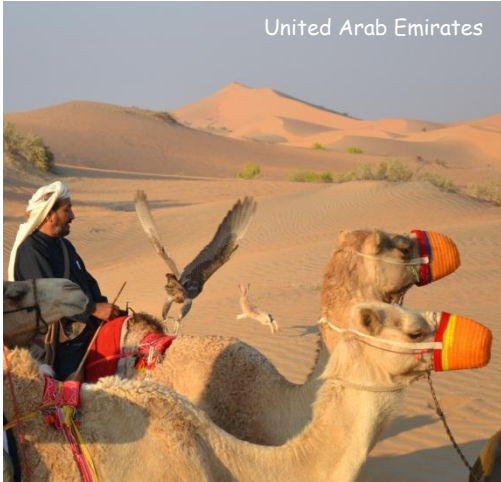
4 000 years
bridging cultural &
political divides.



*The International Association for Falconry
and Conservation of Birds of Prey*



Extracts from the File



Falconry is the art of capturing **wild quarry** in its **natural environment** with a trained bird of prey, with or without the aid of a dog. It has been with us since before the time of the pyramids and has spread and developed until now it is practiced in over 80 countries.

Originally a way of obtaining food, falconry is today more identified with camaraderie and sharing than

with a subsistence way of life. Falconers develop a spiritual bond with their birds; great commitment is required to train and handle and fly hawks and falcons. In Europe falconry is usually transmitted from generation to generation as a cultural tradition by mentoring, by learning within families or by formal training in clubs. In Middle East and in Central Asia falconers still take their children to the desert to train and handle their bird, building up the same mutual trust.

Falconers from different backgrounds all share common values, traditions and practices in training and caring for birds, in the equipment used and in the bonding between the falconer and the bird. Falconry forms the basis of a wide cultural heritage, including clothes, food, music and song, poetry and dance, all sustained by the communities practicing it.



Participants in the Initiative



The preparation of this global submission, led by the United Arab Emirates and presented by 11 nations, four of them European, inspired passion and was profoundly enriching for all parties and participants:

- | | | |
|----------|--------------|-------|
| Belgium | Morocco | Syria |
| France | Saudi Arabia | Korea |
| Mongolia | Czech Rep | UAE |
| Qatar | Spain | |

The effort united not only the falconers from the eleven nations whose governments had placed Falconry on their national list, but also falconry communities in many other countries who supported it with their time, their sweat and their attendance at supporting events.

The project inspired other falconry nations to make submissions to UNESCO to ensure the preservations of their own traditions for their own future generations - Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.....





What is Falconry?

Falconry is the art of capturing **wild quarry** in its **natural environment** with a trained bird of prey, with or without the aid of a dog.

As all hunters are, so are we.



Hunting Tradition

The 20th century's rejection of hunting was part of a cultural landscape where the space reserved for traditional values, virtues, passions and activities tended to shrink. In nature a predator hunting and killing its prey is praised as a thing of natural beauty. If a man trains the predator to do this *in his company*, modern cultural discourse condemns it as bloodthirsty. Rejecting hunting destroys those very activities that bring understanding of nature and positively shape identities friendships.



Community



It is an individualistic activity that also bears a strong sense of community. It has a spirit of independence for those who demand high standards for themselves and for those on whom they bestow their friendship, yet it has the power of creating a community across national boundaries and the boundaries of social class, ethnicity, ideology and differences in credo.



Living Tradition builds a community into which a human being can inscribe itself and from which it can draw a sense of individual existence. Falconry establishes such a community.

There is a surprising universalism attached to the down-to-earth activity of training a bird to hunt.



Spirituality



For Medieval Man the falcon became a symbol that connoted tenderness and intimacy and falconry became related to spiritual and emotional dimensions of life. Falconry was part of the the courtly elites of both the Christian and the Moslem world: a, it became a cultural tradition joining east and west.

Man is always in a hurry; this is not possible for the falconer. Training a falcon is a slow and solitary time when the falconer must strengthen the tenuous bond he has with his falcon; long hours of slowly gaining trust. It is neither fast nor easy. It is demanding. It is either complete perfection or complete failure.



The bond a falcon has with the falconer is as fine as gossamer; it is almost spiritual..

Humanity



The decline of falconry would belittle human identity. Falconry is a state of mind that falconers want to pass on to future generations. They are not trying simply to transfer an archaic technique for acquiring meat.

The preservation of falconry is crucial not just to the benefit of a handful of hobbyists, but to the benefit of whole societies. It opens a door to universalism and cross-cultural contacts. The flight of the falcon opens horizons.



Poetry



Falconry books can be scientific works, 'how-to-do' manuals, photographic records or collections of anecdotes. They are works of philosophy, always poetic, even the modern ones.

The language of falconers is romantic, many words come from Norman French or early Arabic - creance, bowse, cast, jess, to hood, to lure to bate, mews, full crop. Many have even passed into day-to-day language of those who may know nothing of falconry.

In 15th century Europe falconry became a source of poetic inspiration. In Germany the magnificently illuminated manuscript *Codex Manesse* is a collection of courtly love poetry with miniatures Commemorating knights and kings, many shown with falcons and

hawks during hunting expeditions and romantic moments. Besides books written for falconers, much poetry in English, French, Persian, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic is littered with falconry metaphors and they have been much used in mainstream literature. In the Gulf there is still a very strong tradition of recitation of falconry poems.



Diplomacy

There is no ideological gap, no difference of credo dividing people that falconry cannot put back together again. In all these domains falcons can offer a great and surprising lesson of being truly human.

In 783 the Byzantine Empress Irene offered an exquisite falconry manuscript by Archigenes of Apamea to establish a truth with the Muslim army. Already falconry was an important common point of interest, able to redirect the attention of both sides of a conflict to a loftier sphere, bringing truce.

Birds, falconry artefacts and literature have been widely used in the aftermath of conflict to re-establish order. Falconry and diplomacy went closely together all through the medieval history of Christian-Moslem conflicts. During the Crusades the time between battles was filled with hunting encounters and a falconer could reclaim a lost falcon from behind enemy lines without fear of harm to his person. There was much exchange of knowledge, artefacts and falcons.

In 986 the annual rent paid by Haakon Jarl to Harald Blåtand for a region of Norway was 100 marks and 60 hunting falcons. In fact the most significant contribution to falconry made by Scandinavian countries was in diplomatic gifts of goshawks and gyrfalcons to foreign monarchs like the Emperor of Morocco, the kings of France, the German Emperor, the kings of Portugal, kings of England, the Tsar, the Landgrave of Hesse, sultans, moguls and ambassadors.

In the 16th century Turkish occupation of Transylvania, saker falcons were sent as a tax in return for peace, the *Falco Nagium*.

After losing the Battle of Pavia in 1626 the captured French King François 1^{er} had to give his two sons as hostages to Emperor Charles V. He paid the ransom for the boys with two white gyrfalcons.

In different times and places falcons, rather than gold or precious objects have been accepted as ransoms. It is no exaggeration at all to call the falcon, rather than the dove, the true Bird of Peace.



Gender



Falconry is not based on, neither does it foster exclusion. Contrary to many other forms of what might be thought of as typically male activities, it has never been closed to women. In late Medieval and Renaissance times falconry became a sophisticated entertainment, accessible to ladies, as observed in 1410 in the well-known miniatures of *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*.

Professor Ewa Łukaszuk of Warsaw University says: "Rather than just another typically male cultural practice, falconry is once again a point of contact, a bridge over a gap, this time between masculinity and femininity."

Women currently form the fastest growing demographic in falconry.



As the sun sets on one group of falconers on one side of the world, it rises over another group on the other side.





Falconry is a Hunting Art that unites all Humankind



Acknowledgements

This leaflet was produced by the Public Relations Office of the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey who gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance of the following individuals and organisations:

- Professor Ewa Łuszyk, University of Warsaw
- Dr. Javier Ceballos, University of Madrid
- Professor Matt Gage, University of Norwich
- The Museum of Falconry, Valkenswaard, the Netherlands
- The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
- The Archives of Falconry, Boise, Idaho, United States
- The Czech Falconry Museum, Ohrada, Czech Republic
- Museum Berkutshi "Zheti Kazyna" (Eagle Falconry Museum) Almaty, Mongolia
- Dr. Keiya Nakajima, Japan Falconiformes Centre
- Dr. Bohumil Straka and the Klub Sokolníků ČMMJ - the Czech Falconers' Club
- Dr. Ladislav Molnar and the Slovensky Klub Sokoliarov - the Slovak falconers' Club
- The Irish Hawking Club
- The National Falconers' Club of Turkmenistan
- The Club Marie de Bourgogne, Belgium
- Association Nationale de Fauconniers et Autoursiers Français
- The Pakistan Falconry Association
- The Moroccan Falconers' Association Al-Noubala
- The North American Falconers' Association



All countries and individuals who participated in the UNESCO Inscription 2004-12. Also all those going forward with it and those initiating new projects.



FACE - the Federation of Associations for Hunting and conservation of the EU



The European Parliament Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity, Countryside Activities & Forestry Intergroup, led by MEP Véronique Mathieu who hosted the exhibition that led to this document.

..... and everyone else who helped with or attended the exhibition.

