

Power and paradise

Swedish deer parks in a long-term perspective

by Åsa Ahrland

Many landscapes designated as nature reserves, Natura 2000 sites or national interest areas for nature conservation and instituted on the basis of high biodiversity and the presence of endangered species, consist of complete, or parts of, former deer parks. They are managed to maintain high natural values, but are in many ways a result of a man-made cultural landscape, often with references to a celestial paradise. However, the significance of the deer parks and their history is long forgotten. Relevant to future conservation, is the social and cultural context of these landscapes, reflecting ideas on man, animals, nature and land use through history. The parks are traces of a landscape explicitly connected to power and structures that for centuries, even thousands of years, has mirrored the mentality of the elite: its view of the world, its values and its perception of itself. The deer park is an important key to putting into perspective the cultural value of hunting, the landscapes the chase creates and the society it represents.

This article is an attempt to contextualise Swedish deer parks, which are said to have been introduced by the Vasa kings in the 16th century and expired in the early 19th century, when hunting in parks¹ supposedly went out of fashion. What did the deer parks symbolise and what purpose did they have? Can any general conclusions be drawn from applying a long-term perspective to the deer park? The concept of power and the concept of paradise are important tools for understanding and analysing deer

parks as a phenomenon. The study is based on various sources such as survey maps, legislation, journals and diaries, illustrations and literature.

Hunting – the sport of the élite

Through history, hunting has been an essential part of man's survival. It is obvious that early on, the act of hunting was not only a means to survive, but an act charged with meanings, other than those of a purely functional kind. Though the purpose of the extraordinary cave paintings in Altamira in Spain (ca 17000 BC) and Lascaux in southern France (ca 15000 BC) have been much discussed, the accurately depicted powerful wild animals such as bison, boars, aurochs, horses and stags together with dramatic hunting scenes bear witness to the complexity and symbolic role of hunting. Scandinavian Bronze Age rock carvings show hunting scenes with archers and spearmen hunting wild boar, stags, elk, wolves and bears.

The formation of societies includes groups and individuals claiming power over land and other people. If authority is to be maintained, it has to be communicated to the world, in particular to those who could question its justification. Hunting has frequently been used through history by élites to reaffirm their superiority. When the hunting of certain animals has been restricted to particular groups, it has served as a powerful symbol of dominion over land and resources. The exclusiveness and the shift from being a way to procure food to a pastime and

a sport, express its importance as a social arena of royalty and aristocracy. Despite high costs, land has been set aside, fenced and maintained, trees have been planted and animals acquired and managed. The actual hunt has required men and equipment, such as horses, dogs and various weapons.

One important aspect of high-status hunting is its parallels to warfare. Hunting has been seen as an excellent way to exercise and keep fit, to develop horsemanship and skills with weapons and tools. In his biography of the Persian Prince Cyrus the Younger, the Greek writer Xenophon (c. 400 BC) writes: “to practise his nobles in martial exercises he would lead them out to the hunt whenever he saw fit, holding the chase to be the best training for war.”² During the chase the hunter could show bravery and craft, and his skill at arms. Equally, the game mirrors the brave hunter: killing a dangerous animal has often been seen as a sign of imperial qualifications. In Mesopotamia, lion-hunting in particular was considered a sport of kings, by which they could demonstrate their superiority over the forces of nature and their ability to protect and fight for their people. The narrative sculpted reliefs for the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal’s (668–631 BC) palace at Nineveh (in present-day northern Iraq) illustrate both war and sporting exploits, like pursuing and killing lions. There is also a scene

with deer being chased into a long net and shot with arrows.³

If we are to believe Xenophon, when hunting in the wild for the first time Prince Cyrus was accompanied by his uncle and escorted by “mounted veterans at his heels, whose business it was to keep watch and ward over him in any dangerous place or against any savage beast.” When asked which animals to avoid and which to hunt, his fellow hunters replied that he must be vigilant with regard to bears, wild boars, lions and leopards as “many a man had found himself at too close quarters with these dangerous creatures, and been torn to pieces: but antelopes, they said, and deer and mountain sheep and wild asses were harmless enough. And the huntsman, they added, ought to be as careful about dangerous places as about the beasts themselves: many a time horse and rider had gone headlong down a precipice to death.”⁴ This initiation of the young ruler has similarities with the event told by the Swedish King Karl/Charles XI in his diary in 1694, when his son Karl, “11 years old, 7 months and 19 days” [the future king Karl/Charles XII] shot a bear while hunting in the woods with his father and his court. The king relates in detail how the bullet entered on the right hand side of the beast’s neck, went through the heart and exited on the left.⁵

Among game, red deer has had a particular

FIGURE 1. *Deer being chased into nets.* Wall panel, c. 645 BC, from the North Palace of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal, at Nineveh, northern Iraq, now in the British Museum, London. PHOTO: British Museum.





FIGURE 2. This Bronze Age rock carving depicting a red deer with impressive antlers was discovered some years ago at Torshamn in Blekinge, Sweden. PHOTO: Gert Magnusson.

standing.⁶ Considered the noblest among animals, by reason of its size and beauty, it has been a worthy opponent of a prominent hunter. In addition, catching and killing a stag with great antlers could be a fairly dangerous enterprise. Already a central motif in the paintings at Lascaux, the red deer has remained an iconic animal and played an important role in European and Asian mythology. In Christianity the deer is a symbol of Christ and appears in the legends of Saint Giles and Saint Eustace. Throughout history the consumption of meat, particularly game such as venison, like the act of hunting itself, has been associated with power and the social life in connection with the chase. It has been an important part of high-status dining and the hospitality of the privileged.⁷

The ancient *pairideaza*

The royal and imperial hunts of the rulers in the ancient empires in Asia were often large

and spectacular exercises in the open countryside. These more or less public events aimed to confirm the authority of the ruler and get the subjects' respect.⁸ Here hunting served as an important political instrument. However, a dynasty also needs to reaffirm its mystique, and this requires seclusion and inaccessibility. The royal hunt in Mesopotamia, Persia, China and India, was divided according to these two principles, with the public quest in the open countryside and private hunting in managed parks.⁹ The parks were walled, mysterious and opaque, and the chase more predictable and controlled.

In Persian the parks were called *pairidaeza*, meaning enclosure or fenced area, which in Greek was called *paradeisos*. The Persian *pairidaeza* appear to have been rich fertile places with many large trees. In order to create these green spaces, the water supply was crucial, and therefore streams, ponds, lakes and canals and advanced irrigation systems were common features. In addition, there would often be an artificial hill with a pavilion, from where the animals could be seen and a hunt could be followed.¹⁰ The Persian *pairidaeza* was probably a fusion of different ideas from older cultures. The Assyrian kings laid out hunting parks and gardens on the slopes along the river Tigris. In a bas-relief from 715 BC of the park of the Assyrian king Sargon II in Dur-Sharrukin (now Khorsabad in Iraq) we recognise the wooded hill, the waterworks and the small temple of a Persian *pairidaeza*.¹¹ The lushness of the park was in great contrast to the surrounding arid landscape and a demonstration of the ruler's capacity to dominate nature.¹²

Xenophon accompanied Prince Cyrus the younger to his large park in Celenae (in present-day Turkey). It was traversed by a river and contained many wild animals, which the prince used to hunt on horseback. His biography of the prince reveals a park's significant role in the education of a ruler. From the age of twelve Cyrus developed his hunting skills in the park in Media, which belonged to his grandfather Astyages, who had told him that he would have all the horses he wished to ride, and all the game in his parks and paradises, and promised to "collect more for you, and as soon as you have learnt

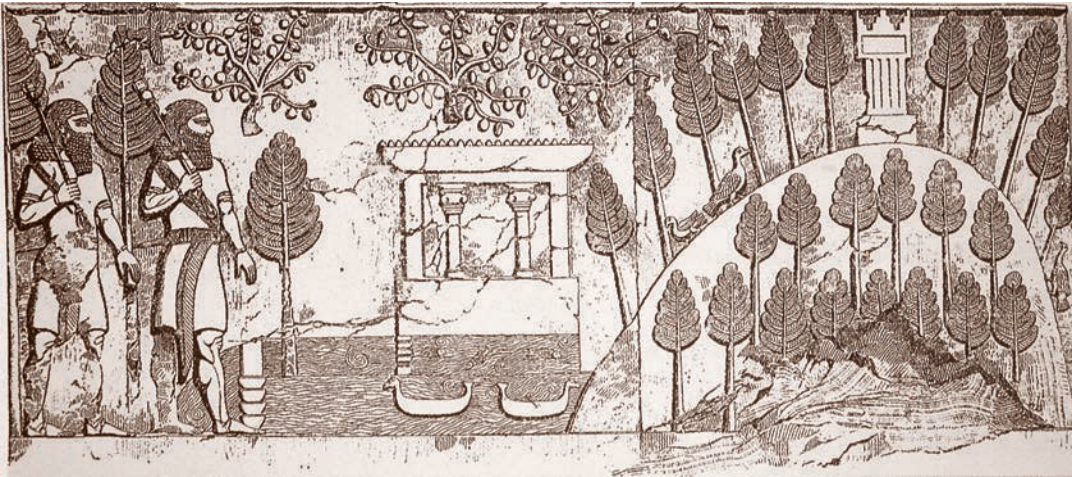


FIGURE 3. *The park of Sargon II in Dur-Sharrukin (now Khorsabad), in northern Iraq, as depicted in a relief from c. 715 BC. The small pavilion by the water, the hill and the many trees are all typical features of the Persian *pairidaeza*. PHOTO: The Stapleton Collection, London.*

to ride you shall hunt and shoot and hurl the javelin exactly like a man".¹³ If we are to believe Xenophon, Cyrus soon became an avid horseman and skilful hunter, so much so, that the animals were thinning out and the park had to be restocked. As a grown man Cyrus delighted in leading hunting parties in the wild, convinced of its role in developing self-control and as well as the discipline and perfection essential to the art of war. However, when forced to stay at home, Cyrus would hunt in his parks among the wild creatures he had reared.¹⁴ Here we have another important aspect of these enclosures, namely the accessibility of both location and game.

The Persian *pairidaeza* could vary greatly in size and have different functions. Some were apparently huge, including not only hunting grounds, but separate areas with gardens, orchards, arable land and forests, and sometimes even villages, all secluded from the outside world within the protective walls. All *pairidaeza* do not appear to have been used for hunting activities. Some contained no game at all, while others seem to have been regular zoos, where particularly appreciated animals could be reared without fear of being hunted. A description from 10th century Byzantium mentions that the Emperor preferred to hunt in the wild in order not to drain his park, and when the Byzantine

ambassador visited the so-called "park of wild animals" in Baghdad in 917, he noticed herds of domesticated animals approaching the visitors to eat from their hands.¹⁵ The fact that animals often seem to have been kept in parks, not only for the chase, but for their masters' sheer pleasure of looking at them and enjoying them is an important aspect of these enclosures.

The Asian parks were evocative to the European mind. A diversity of narratives created an image of these remote paradises: huge fenced-in parks with palaces, rivers, ponds, gardens, orchards, and forests with game. In time they became larger and more and more magical.¹⁶

The thought of a heavenly and earthly paradise

The idea of a mythical paradise garden is very old. Cuneiform tablets from 4000 BC in Mesopotamia describe how the Sumerian sun god Utu with the help of the water god Enki turned the parched land of Dilmun into a heavenly garden, a paradise, with fruit trees, green fields and meadows.¹⁷ It was long thought that man's original abode was located on earth. A common theory was that this utopian place was situated on a high mountain on a remote island in the ocean. In ancient mythology, we find the idea

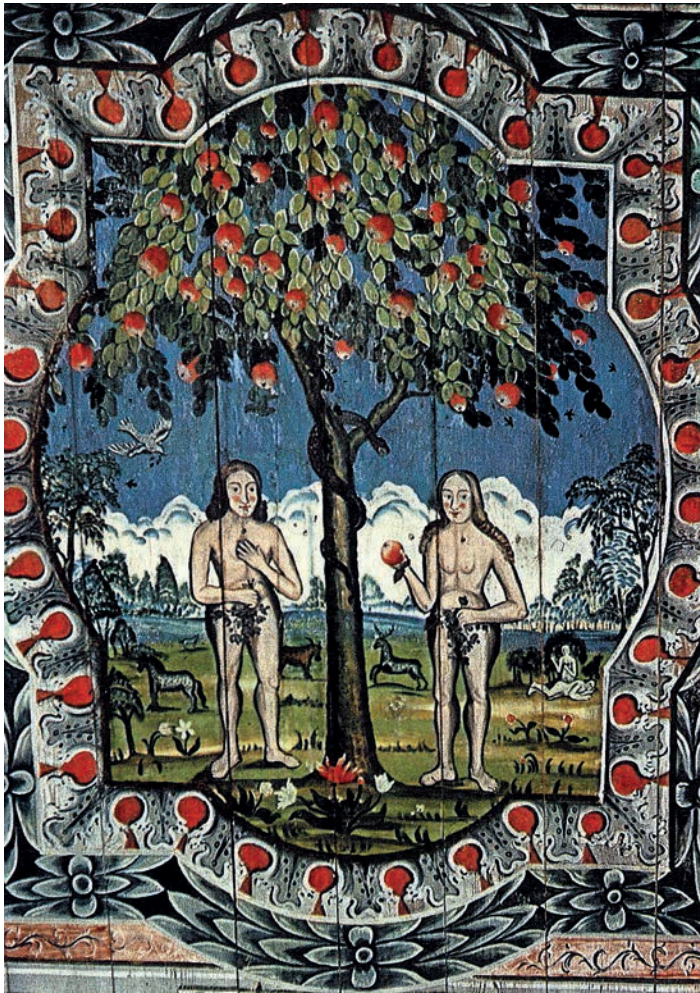


FIGURE 4. *The ceiling painting at Suntak Old Church in Västergötland, executed in 1769 by the parish clerk Anders Wetterlind, ties in with the traditional way of depicting the Biblical Paradise, with Adam and Eve beside the tree of Knowledge and a beautiful stag among the animals.* PHOTO: Carl-Filip Mannerstråle.

of a place beyond time and space, known as the Hesperides Gardens, Arcadia, Elysium or the Golden Age. In Christian tradition this mythical paradise is represented by the Garden of Eden, derived from the Hebrew *Gan* (garden) and *Edan* (sweetness). According to the biblical narrative, the garden was located in a geographical area called Eden, where it was watered by a river which then divided into four waterways: Pison, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates. The garden is not described at length, but in Genesis we are told

that it contained every tree pleasing to the eye and bearing fruit good to eat and that the tree of life was placed in the centre, as well as the tree of Knowledge.¹⁸ In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Hebrew *Gan Edan* was translated as *paradeisos*. The concept of *paradeisos*, though diverse, has evidently always been associated with fruit-bearing, leafy trees and water. The idea of a lost paradise appears in several religions, and so does the thought of a future blissful existence. The Arabs, after conquering the Sassanids, embraced the Persian tradition of gardens and parks, including the motif of four rivers (later called *chahar-bagh*), which came to represent the earthly equivalence of the heavenly paradise of the Quran.¹⁹ In the Christian faith the lost Eden could be recovered beyond death in the form of the blessed realm. In the New Testament, the word *paradise* is used for both.

Like their Asian counterparts, the deer parks of medieval Europe could be interpreted as earthly paradises. A poem by the Greek poet John Geometres from the second half of the 10th century conveys this idea when describing the park of the Byzantine Emperor's park in Sicily:

What is this beautiful [sight]? What new second creation? Who transferred the site of Eden here? (...) Rather, there are not three [graces here] but thousands. Or, four springs flowing from the old Eden water the new Eden (...) Do you see the multitude of [creatures] beasts, birds, fishes? It seems to me that [this multitude], having left every part of the world, has found this place here as its common home. Or, running together to the beauty of its lord, as formerly to the melody of Orpheus, they stay here... Everything rejoices, every kind of art of the muses gives delight, everything takes delight, everything sing to its lord and, I think, of its lord.²⁰

The idea of an area with confined animals available for hunting being compared to a paradise might be somewhat provocative, even if the parallels to the paradise of the Bible are obvious: the enclosure, the trees, the river, the assembled animals and the detachment from the outside world. However, what is probably important to this perception of a haven is that a park was much more than a hunting ground. It was a hidden place where the animals were protected from the dangers on the outside, and it was a place of beauty which could be used as a garden and

pleasure ground and where the animals could be admired close up by their owner and his guests. This also connects to many symbolic roles of the deer, one of which is *le cerf privé*, complying with the thought that in taming wild animals, seen as pure and self sufficient, status and prestige are conferred on those keeping them in parks. One way of controlling, say, a stag was by applying a collar, which, it has been argued, was thought to symbolically strengthen the likelihood of the dynasty being renewed, as deer have been associated with longevity and renewal.²¹



FIGURE 5. The Åland coat of arms is a stag with a collar, probably belonging to the deer park of the royal castle of Kastellholm in the island. From *Suecia antiqua*.

The park in medieval Europe

Though important as a social and recreational activity, in ancient Greece and Rome hunting never seems to have acquired the same political-military function as in the ancient empires of Asia. The lack of “heroic” game, dangerous animals such as lions, leopards and tigers, had

probably some bearing on this.²² However, the Roman writer Columella (4 BC–AD 70) mentions in his work on agriculture, *De Re Rustica*, that enclosed parks (*vivarium*) with fallow deer, roe deer, antelopes and wild boar, could give great enjoyment, and, if managed well, also be profitable to their owners.²³

During the Middle Ages, hunting became the ultimate form of courtly life in Europe. Kings, courtiers and bishops owned huge estates similar to the Persian *pairidaeza*. Like the Asian parks, they were often multifunctional, and would include arable land, orchards and gardens, thereby providing not only game, but also agricultural produce, fruit, fodder, building materials and fuel.²⁴ An early account of a park in medieval Europe appears in a poem attributed to Einhard, famous for his biography of the Carolingian King Charlemagne (743–814). The poem describes Charlemagne’s verdant pleasure park close to his winter capital at Aachen. It was “encircled by many walls”, within which there were meadows, streams, woods and “shady glades” with fowl, deer and “all kinds of wild beasts”. The King would often “go hunting in grassy field, as he loved to do, and give chase to the wild beasts with dogs and whistling arrows, laying low multitudes of antlered stags beneath the black trees.”²⁵ Whether accurate or not, the description indicates the significance of the park to the most powerful man in Europe at this time and is an expression of the value placed on hunting parks.

The Normans, following the Carolingian tradition, also embraced the parks. It was long thought that these enclosures were introduced to Britain after the Norman Conquest in 1066, but research in later years by Robert Liddiard, among others, has shown that the emparkment process started already during later Anglo-Saxon times. Liddiard suggests that parts of England were heavily emparked by the time of the Norman Conquest. Important to the discussion is the fact that not only the word *parcus*, used by the Normans, has been accepted as related to managing deer in enclosure, but so too have the words *haga* and *haia* used by the Anglo-Saxons. Liddiard concludes that in the *Domesday Book*

of 1086, *haia* and *parcus* are used interchangeably for pre- and post-Conquest structures, and that there was little physical difference between the English *haga* and the Norman park.²⁶ The number of parks quickly increased during the Norman régime, and England seemed to be uniquely well off for parks in medieval Europe. The landscape historian Oliver Rackham has estimated that there were around 3,200 parks in 1300 in England alone.²⁷

With the help of Arab engineers, Norman kings laid out large parks around Palermo in Sicily in the 12th century. The famous park of the royal palace in Palermo was called Genoard and celebrated throughout medieval Europe. The name derived from the Arabic word *gennat-aldard*, signifying “earthly paradise”. It had elaborate waterworks leading water to various pavilions, and when Henry VI destroyed Genoard in 1194, it was full of exotic animals and probably not used for hunting.²⁸ It is disputed among scholars whether Genoard inspired Count Robert II of Artois and the huge park by his castle in Hesdin initiated in the late 13th century, in what is now Pas de Calais in northern France. The park covered 320 ha and was divided into three main sections. A wall with eleven gates and several posterns surrounded a whole countryside with game-filled hills, pastures and woods, picturesque roads and hamlets, orchards, gardens, paddocks, fish ponds, waterworks, and a multitude of buildings such as lodges, barns, stables, aviaries and a menagerie with exotic animals.²⁹ The park was full of surprises and well suited for entertaining guests in grand style. Though the name Hesdin does not derive from Eden, as in the Garden of Eden, the park was probably an attempt by the count to create his own earthly version. As the Dutch art historian Anna Hagopian van Buren remarks in her study of Hesdin: “The park’s general loveliness, its varied fruit trees, shrubbery and game, and its menagerie of exotic animals all conformed to the medieval image of the earthly paradise”. There was actually a garden within the park, close to the count’s apartment, called *il petit Paradis*, the little Paradise.³⁰ The park was finally destroyed by Charles V in the 1550s, but its history is well-documented.³¹

Around 1400 the poet Christine de Pizan, in *Le livre de Dit du Poissy*, described the park at the prosperous convent at Poissy, where her daughter was staying together with mostly young women from noble families. Commoners were only admitted by dispensation from the King, who also would provide dowries. The abbey was founded on the site of a royal palace and enjoyed the same privileges as feudal lords. Christine was very impressed when visiting the cloister, which she considered a veritable paradise.³² Of the park she wrote:

There are antlered deer that run very fast
There are hares and rabbits in profusion
And two fish ponds running clear,
Well constructed, well protected with a strong wall
And full of fish.
And there is a plentiful supply of wild goats
What more can I say. I would never be tired, winter or
summer,
Or being in that house, if God was with me,
It is so beautiful.³³

The fashion of adorning your estate with parks and other hunting grounds was well established among the European élite during the late Middle Ages. The social and cultural importance of hunting as an expression of a privileged lifestyle is underlined by the appearance of various hunting manuals, the most famous of which, Gaston Phoebus’ richly illustrated *Le livre de Chasse* from the 15th century, describes the chase in detail with its all-important rituals in order to guide young nobles and others to perfect the manner of exercising their sport.

Early deer parks in Sweden

The archaeologist Anders Andrén has convincingly argued that deer parks existed in Scandinavia during the Middle Ages. Comparing location, size, topography, vegetation and the compartmentalisation of Dalby Hage in Skåne with English medieval deer parks, he concludes that there is strong evidence for Dalby Hage, situated near the seat of the bishop from the 11th century and a rich Augustinian monastery, having served as a deer park. With two woodland areas and a pasture in between, it covered 90 ha, including a 1,6 km long earthen rampart surrounding an area

of 18 ha with a stream, possibly a deer enclosure. The fact that structures known as *haga* and *haia* have been established as deer enclosures in medieval Britain³⁴, and that many deer parks in Swedish cadastral maps from the 17th and 18th centuries are called *djurhage*, strengthens the theory that Dalby Hage once was actually a deer park. We also know that the higher clergy all over Europe devoted themselves to hunting.³⁵ André suggests that islands with game such as red deer, fallow deer, roe deer mentioned in the cadastre of King Valdemar, compiled around 1230, can be interpreted as established royal deer parks.³⁶ Interestingly, this is coherent with the location of later deer parks in Sweden, often situated by water on peninsulas and islands.

Traditionally, deer parks are said to have been introduced as late as in the 16th century, when the Vasa dynasty came into power.³⁷ Documents such as diaries, accounts, letters and maps from the 16th and 17th centuries show that keeping deer in parks and hunting them was an appreciated pastime among the privileged, and that it played a significant part in the royal lifestyle. The earliest deer parks mentioned include (1558) the one at Borgholm castle in Öland, possibly laid out by Gustav I.³⁸ During the reign of his son Johan III, who was a keen hunter, the whole island of Öland was declared a royal hunting ground. Johan III also established a large royal deer park at his new country seat of Drottningholm, built in the 1570s and 1580s, on Lovön island, west of Stockholm. Here the King had only to step outside the door to get into the park.³⁹ Other royal parks from about the same time are Svartsjö on Färingsö island in Lake Mälaren and Gripsholm about 60 km west of Stockholm. It is unclear whether the Swedish nobility had deer parks in the 1500s. However, it is not unlikely that noble families such as Bielke, Bonde, Brahe, Oxenstierna, Sture and Tott, all part of the outmost élite, could have laid out parks by their manors at this point.

It seems to have been important to keep a variety of animals in the parks. Johan III imported fallow deer from England in 1569 for the park at Ottenby Manor at the southern tip of Öland. Deer were also transferred between the

royal parks in Sweden; in the 1570s red deer were transported from Öland to form the core of the stock in the royal park in Stockholm in the 1570s. Johan III also acquired ten reindeer for the park.⁴⁰ When in Stockholm, the German Samuel Kiechel travelling around in Sweden 1586, wrote: "On the other side of the canal or water, there is a deer park, in which there are several different kinds of wild animals, such as deer with rather wide antlers, white deer, elk, reindeer from Lapland and other kind of deer with white spots."⁴¹ Karl XI, who also was a passionate hunter, wrote in his diary that 22 red deer, 16 fallow deer, six roe deer and one boar were felled during a hunt between 4th and 10th September 1688 in Öland.⁴² There are many entries in the diary recording hunts or visits to deer parks, often strikingly detailed in an otherwise rather terse account.

The early 17th century large-scale maps (1630–1655) give a first glimpse of the royal deer parks, and provide some information on their size, location, layout and usage. Most of the parks are depicted as one homogenous enclosed area without much information on vegetation or internal organisation. There are a couple of interesting exceptions, though, namely the maps of the deer parks at the Crown estates in Skara (1636) and Höjentorp (1642), situated barely 15 kilometres apart in Västergötland.⁴³ Both maps show a large enclosed area surrounded by a high pale. In the Skara map most of the park appears to consist of wooded grassland, but there is also a rather large bog, a few enclosed fields, a couple of meadows, a barn and a homestead by which the entrance gate is located. In the Höjentorp map the park is even more complex, with several lakes, many enclosed areas with fields and meadows respectively, and roads connecting the different parts with each other. Here six gates are indicated in the pale, one of them situated by the homestead in the south, one by the meadow warden's cottage, and two by the manor itself. The fact that the manor is almost incorporated in the park, in much the same way as it was at Drottningholm, underlines the status of the park and of keeping deer.

The compartmentalisation and various buildings mirror the different functions. The animals



FIGURE 6. The map of the large deer park at Höjentorp in Västergötland, drawn in 1642, shows the complex structure of enclosed fields and meadows, wooded grassland, lakes, and roads connecting the various areas. LMV P1:75-76.

had to be provided with hay and other winter feed, and this was grown in meadows and fields within the fence. The hay was stored in a barn or a shed, where the deer also would be fed. The animals required a water supply and a habitat with woods and grassland, where they felt secure and were happy to breed. As a park needed constant care, a parker and sometimes an assistant parker, often lived and supported themselves within the enclosure. The animals had to be protected from predators and poachers and must be left undisturbed during mating and fawning, and in the winter months they had to be provided with fodder and shelter. The parker's duties would include the care of the park itself and looking after its paling.⁴⁴ Often the local farmers were obliged to build and maintain the pale surrounding the park, which could be a heavy burden. The huge park at Omberg in Västergötland, which covered nearly 3,000 ha,

was for instance surrounded by a 16 km long and four-metre-high pale. In the 18th century the farmers were protesting against the requirement to manage the upkeep of the fence and keeping watch for wolves on the ice during wintertime without compensation. However, their demands were not met until much later.⁴⁵

The parks seem to vary greatly in size, and on some estates there could be two different parks, often referred to as *Stora Diuregården* (the Great Park) and *Lilla Diuregården* (the Little Park). Sometimes they were situated side by side, separated only by a fence, like a 1640s map of Strömsholm in Västmanland shows, where the larger park is about 12 ha and the smaller about 4 ha.⁴⁶ In other cases the parks were situated wide apart. On the Crown estate of Kungsör on the opposite south side of Lake Mälaren, a map from the 1640s shows two large adjacent enclosed parks, around 70 and 25 ha respective-



FIGURE 7. Torpa Stenhus in the 1640s, with the house and the garden in the south and the Little Park in the north surrounded by a high paling with a ornamented entrance facing the manor. LMV Torpa: 2-3.

ly, at some distance from the manor. Both are simply described as the Old Park (*Gambla Diuregården*), indicating that they had been in use for a long time, and perhaps been replaced by, or complemented with, a new enclosure.⁴⁷ The Kungsör estate was built by Gustav I, and particularly appreciated by Karl XI for its hunting. A deer park such as the one at Skara mentioned earlier, covered more than 100 ha according the map from 1636.⁴⁸ The Swedish little park concept is not altogether clear. In some cases the little parks seem to conform to the idea of the pleasure parks for “kings and other illustrious and wealthy lords⁴⁹, (...) who by reason of their riches and power are able to gratify their own will in all earthly things”, as described by Pietro di Crescenzi in his influential treatise on rural life, *Liber ruralium commodorum* (c. 1304–1309). That is to say, being midway between a large park and a garden, and reserved for a variety of

semi-tame animals appreciated for their beauty and appearance. The park was on the smaller side: Crescenzi mentions that it should cover at least 5 ha, and have trees planted in rows far apart so that the animals could be easily seen from the palace in the south, but also a grove at the far end where the animals could hide.⁵⁰ This was a place where the owners could take a walk or watch the animals from the building, but would probably not hunt them.⁵¹ However, large-scale maps from the 17th and 18th centuries show that many of the little parks in Sweden were rather large and show similar features to the great parks.⁵²

Landscape planning on a grand scale

Though mostly concerned with the land belonging to the Crown and freeholders, the early 17th

century maps show that deer parks now were laid out by the nobility. One of these estates was Torpa Stenhus in Västergötland, which belonged to the Stenbock family and was closely connected to the monarchy by the marriage between the young Katarina Stenbock and Gustav I in 1552. Two maps of Torpa were produced in the 1640s. One shows a manorial landscape with the house and its farm buildings in the centre with a large adjacent garden in the south and the Little Park on the north side. The park is surrounded by a high pale with an ornamented entrance facing the manor.⁵³ The other map, dated 1648, shows a larger deer park called *Diuragården* on the peninsula opposite the manor across the water.⁵⁴ This landscape organisation is consistent with the way the Great Park and the Little Park appear in British maps, where the former can be situated further away, while the latter, often used for entertainments, was designed for aesthetic appeal and closer to the buildings. Interestingly, like many little parks in Britain,⁵⁵ the little park at Torpa is laid out on the north side

of the residence, in much the same way as Pietro di Crescenzi recommended in his 14th century treatise on rural life. In an intriguing map of Torpa from 1725, the deer park in the peninsula is depicted with an étoile, a star with six drives or avenues radiating from a central place with a pavilion. From the tower at the house an eye emits a beam of yellow light right towards the centre of the star, thereby tying the park and the manor together visually and spatially. The text on the map conveys that this wooded area used to be a deer park, but was now populated by hares, and in the autumn by foxes, often caught by nets.⁵⁶ Similar *étoiles* appear in other maps, such as the one from 1702 of the royal deer park in Stockholm, where it is called *Jägare-Banar* (the Hunting Drive) and a deer is depicted close by to indicate its purpose.⁵⁷ So we see here how the deer park became an integral part of a manorial landscape with its own grammar in terms of location and layout.

At Läckö, situated on the island of Källandsö in Lake Vänern, the Chancellor Magnus Gabriel

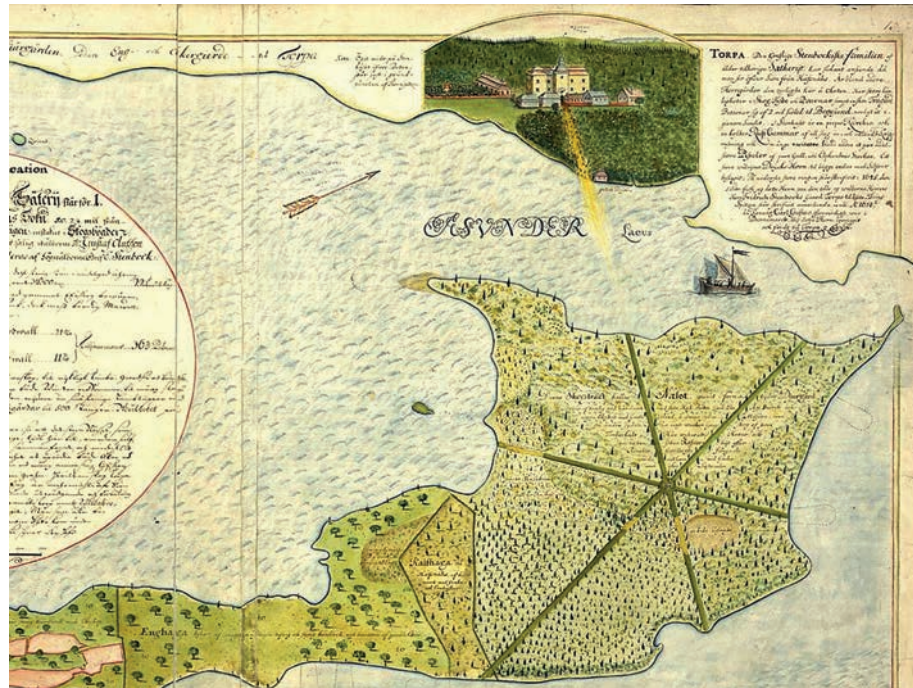


FIGURE 8. This intriguing map from 1725 (detail) of Torpa Stenhus shows a ray of yellow light from an eye in the tower of the house towards the centre of the star in the old deer park, thereby tying the park and the manor together visually and spatially. LMV O114-11:1.



FIGURE 9. *The Little Park at Läckö, situated near the castle and with decorative entrances, a star-shaped mound with a Diana statue and a small étoile among the trees, was probably used as a pleasure ground. Map from 1729 (detail). LMV P163-16:3.*

De la Gardie (1622–1686) took the notion of em-parkment even further by seemingly trying to turn the whole island into parkland and hunting grounds. The Little Park was situated close to the castle, clearly intended as a pleasure park with a festive character. The main feature was a star-shaped mound with a Diana statue surrounded by a canal.⁵⁸ A map from 1729 shows a small *étoile* along the central axis, with eight radiating avenues cutting through the trees.⁵⁹ The decorative entrances were commissioned by the architect Matthias Holl. The Great Park was situated some kilometres away on the mainland on the other side of the sound Ullersund, but was connected to the castle and the Little Park by a long straight road, along which De la Gardie built the inn called *The White Stag*.⁶⁰ In addition to the Little Park (c. 45 ha) and the Great Park (c. 175 ha),⁶¹ the 350 ha large island Stor-Eken outside Läckö was also used for hunting deer. Here the hunting was probably more similar to that in the wild, where the animal might be able to get away and hide, at least on that particular day. Being on an island, though, it would be caught

sooner or later. The hunting lodge in Stor-Eken was commissioned by Holl, and to get to the island the yacht called *The Stag* was probably used, which had a sculptured stag as figurehead and gilded crests of the count and countess and was commissioned from the Flemish sculptor Georg Baselaque in 1670.⁶² As if this was not enough, De la Gardie created drives to be used for hunting in the woods around the Traneberg estate on the west side of Källandsö, where he also very likely built yet another hunting lodge by the water.⁶³

Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna (Ancient and present Sweden), the prestigious documentation project of the late 17th century, which aimed to present Sweden as an important power to the world, depicts deer parks on many of the larger estates. A comparison between the original sketches and the engravings, however, shows that detailing such as deer and hunting scenes in some cases were added by the engraver, probably to reinforce and clarify the purpose of a particular area to the viewer, but possibly also to underline status. In the sketch of the deer park

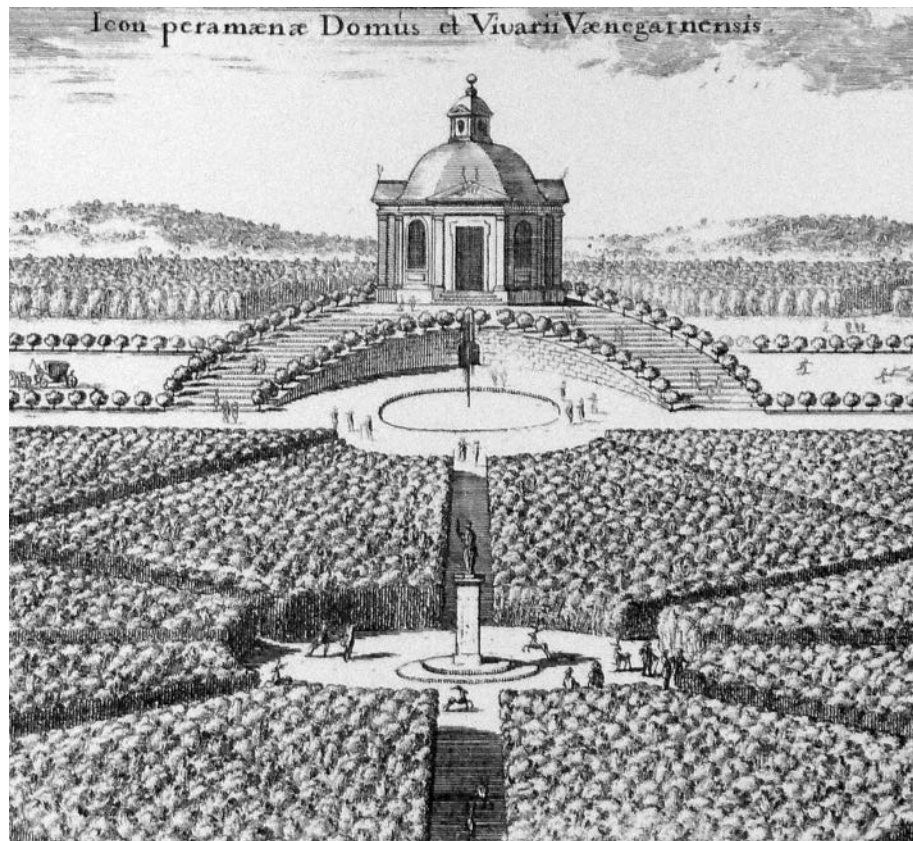


FIGURE 10. In the *Suecia antiqua* engraving of the deer park at Venngarn in Uppland, the deer seem to be tame and mix quite happily with the visitor. From *Suecia antiqua*.

at Magnus De la Gardie's Venngarn, deer are hiding everywhere in the greenery, while people are strolling in the open spaces. In the engraving they seem to mix quite happily, and such is also the case in the engraving of De la Gardie's Karlberg, where the deer are following the visitors around like dogs by the Diana temple. The scene could, of course, be interpreted as an image of an earthly paradise where man and beast live happily together. There are also estates where the two depictions are almost identical, like at Hörningsholm, belonging to the noble family Banér, where the sketch and the engraving show deer in an open rectangular area surrounded by an enclosed park accessible from the garden by an elegant gate. In the sketch the area is indicated as *Thiergartens*. In several cases hunting scenes have been added in the foreground, most certainly to underline this activity as a significant

aspect of the estate and the lifestyle of its owners. At Torpa, both the drawing by Erik Dahlbergh and the published engraving show similar hunting scenes with hunters on horseback or on their knees with guns as well as dogs chasing deer, all within a netted fence. In several cases the parks are situated adjacent to the gardens and depicted in a gardenlike manner with temples, straight avenues, *point de vues*, open places and trimmed greenery. It is of course difficult to know how accurate these illustrations are, but the parallels to gardens reappear in other sources as well. At Karlberg, for instance, there were painted backdrops in the park in the 1670s. Among the motifs were a statue of Diana, the goddess of hunting, the ruins of an arcade and a fountain, a lion, a deer and a hunter shooting a grouse in a tree, rendered by the painter Henry Köpke, partly after a draft by the owner

himself, Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie.⁶⁴ The arrangements at Karlberg indicate that the park was not only intended for hunting, but for pleasure walks, and preceded the idea of permanent backdrops with Roman ruins in gardens, suggested by the English gardener Batty Langley in his work *New Principles on Gardening* (1728), where he argues for a more natural style of garden design.⁶⁵

It can be concluded that deer parks seem to have been rather frequent on the country estates of the Swedish élite in the late 17th and 18th centuries. Hunting deer was an important expression of social status, and so was the making of parks. As an integral part of the aristocratic manifestation in the landscape, the parks were often closely associated with large country houses and increasingly decorative, rather than hunting reserves in distant places.

Monopolizing the chase

Restricting hunting rights has been a prerequisite in order to secure the hunt for kings and aristocracy, and, as William Perry Marvin has pointed out, here we see a shift in the perception of hunting rights in the early Middle Ages. While wild animals as a general principle were considered no one's property until captured or killed in Roman and Germanic antiquity,

the Frankish dynasties created and controlled enormous royal domains as hunting reserves (*forestes*), where populations of game animals were kept and watched over by gamekeepers. The Franks introduced imperial laws, whereby hunting was monopolised on their own land, and subsequently on the land of their subjects, which was considered property of the crown.⁶⁶ In the 9th century Charlemagne granted land to his subjects, but reserved the right over "vert and venison" for himself, thus splitting ownership of animals and ownership of land.⁶⁷

In the medieval empires following the Carolingians, local lords strove to monopolise the reserves and the keeping and hunting of big game within the royal forests. Perhaps this process was most successful in England, where a lot of land was declared royal forest after the Norman Conquest. Forest was in this case an administrative term, which would include not only woodland, but surrounding arable and common land, heath and moor. In these large tracts local landowners and inhabitants had no right to hunt, the land was set aside for the king alone.⁶⁸ While Anglo-Saxon law was based on the same principle as Roman law, meaning that, until captured, wild animals were no one's property, William the Conqueror argued that certain animals such as red deer, the fallow deer and the roe deer, were considered the King's property

FIGURE II. *Hunters chasing deer inside fencing at Torpa Stenhus, in Suecia antiqua.*



within his forests. Poaching was subject to severe punishments.⁶⁹ The peasantry were allowed to snare birds and smaller game outside of the forest reserves. The Norman forest laws did not include parks, which might partly explain the high number of enclosures in Medieval Britain. In time, members of the aristocracy and higher clergy would get hunting rights on their land, and in 1389 the Game law established that not only the king but the landed gentry had universal hunting rights, i.e. could hunt on anyone's land.⁷⁰

The oldest written laws in Sweden follow the Roman tradition regarding hunting rights. The law of the county of Västergötland from ca 1220, states that a hare, a fox, a wolf, a bear, an elk or an otter, belong to the person who pursues and/or kills it. By the 14th century the legislation seems to be influenced by Frankish and Norman ideas. The Östergötland county law declares that roe deer (but not foxes and hares) are royal game, and not allowed for peasants to chase.⁷¹ *Magnus Erikssons landslag*, the first law covering rural Sweden, introduced the concept of *konungx parkum*, wooded areas exclusively reserved for royal hunting.⁷² It also states that only the King is allowed to drive game towards nets when hunting, and that nobody is allowed to use traps in somebody else's woods, if not intended for bears, foxes and wolves.⁷³ Hunting elk by traps with spears was generally not allowed, except in some of the northern counties, where they were probably frequent and the King did not wish to hunt.⁷⁴ It can be concluded that the idea of hunting as an exclusive pursuit seems to be well established in Sweden in the 14th century, as well as that the notion that wild animals could be considered somebody's possession.

In the following centuries the legislation concerning hunting and protecting the property of the King became increasingly detailed and strict. In 1539 Gustav I learnt for instance that the prohibition of shooting stags, hinds and roe deer, felling beech and oak trees, as well as building crofts and farms in the forests and reserves of the Crown in Västergötland, had been violated. The King was angered and felt obliged to underline in a letter that the legislation applied

to everybody: the nobility, the clergy and the peasantry. The buildings had to be removed, and a royal game warden was instructed to keep careful watch. If the warden was suspected of conniving, he would lose his life and possessions.⁷⁵ By this time the royal forests, which were areas designated to supply the King with both utilities and recreation, were well-established in Sweden. However, the idea that the monarch owned not only the land, but the vegetation and the animals met with opposition, and had to be reinforced over and over again, and offenders severely fined and punished.

Among the privileges of the Swedish nobility, was the right, within the established hunting season, to shoot high game and birds, on their own land, as well as on commons and the land of subordinate villages.⁷⁶ A special Hunting Act, introduced in 1647 by Queen Christina, established that high game, defined as elk, deer and roe deer, were protected all over the country, and that nobody, without being privileged, was allowed to catch or shoot these animals. Interestingly, peasants in the provinces of Dal in Västergötland, Värmland, Dalarna, Norrland and Finland were exempted from this edict. Shooting birds, such as wood-grouse, black grouse, ruffed grouse, swan, wild goose and ducks, as well as hares, was also a privilege of the élite. However, for their own consumption, peasants were allowed to snare them on their own land.⁷⁷

The 1647 Hunting Act also speaks of particularly severe punishments for unlawful shooting or capturing of high game in deer parks and hunting reserves belonging to the Crown⁷⁸, or indeed, any other enclosed deer park. This was considered theft and punished accordingly. The perpetrator risked losing his life, or, if spared, being exiled.⁷⁹ The heavy penalty mirrors the symbolic power of the deer parks and the fact that hunting high game and eating venison was exclusively reserved for a privileged few.⁸⁰ This can be noticed early on, according the 14th century *Magnus Erikssons landslag*, any person hunting in hunting reserves of the King has forfeited his right to keep horses and own a cross-bow, and also has to pay a substantial fine.⁸¹ An-

other method to protect deer in the royal parks was to order the peasants to mutilate their dogs. This was used by William the Conqueror in England in the 11th century to prevent dogs from chasing deer, and by the Swedish king Johan III, who declared in 1572 that all dogs should lose one leg and all stray dogs should be shot on the island of Öland, in order to protect the game in the royal hunting reserve and deer parks.⁸²

Obviously the élite did not want any competition for quarry from man or beast. Hunting predators was an exciting pastime of Swedish monarchs, in much the same way as with the rulers of the ancient empires. Karl XI records in his diary how he particularly enjoyed chasing wolves and lynxes that managed to get inside his deer parks. In 1689, the King, Prince Karl (later Karl/Charles XII) and Prince Fredrik (Duke of Holstein-Gottorp) hunted ten wolves in the Royal deer park in Stockholm, of which two managed to escape. These wolves had killed five deer and the King describes in his diary how he and Prince Fredrik had returned the next day to see how the two wolves had eaten their way through the paling.⁸³ There was in fact, from the 13th century onwards, a constant campaign for the eradication of predators, particularly wolves, but also bears, foxes and lynxes, animals hunting the same prey as the King and the aristocracy. It was mandatory for Swedish peasants to participate in organised wolf hunts and keep the necessary equipment. According to the 1647 Hunting Act, peasants would get a reward if they caught or killed a bear or a wolf.⁸⁴ To eradicate these competitors for prey from the realm, seems to have been a goal of those in power. Their subjects were evidently not interested in having the predators around their farms, but perhaps did not care if the beasts existed in other parts of the country.

Deer parks — past and present

Though varying in size, function and location, deer parks represents a long continuum through history. A complex of ideas emerges and forms an inert structure: the idea of an enclosed and plentiful earthly paradise where flora, fauna and

man live together. The association to a garden is obvious, and as we have seen, gardens could sometimes be included in parks, but apart from this there are obvious parallels in layout and use. A reoccurring feature of deer parks is also apparent when applying a long-term perspective, namely the role of the park in the education of a ruler to develop and maintain skills important in hunting and warfare. Having continuously been an exclusive social arena of the élite and an important part of its lifestyle, parks have been carefully guarded. This has included hunting down predators, limiting the rights to hunt, thus keeping emparking to a small privileged group, and introducing severe punishments for offenders. By setting aside large tracts and devoting major resources to manage the enclosures, parks have played a significant part in manifesting the élite's power over nature. We can also see how deer-hunting has remained a high-status activity. This has entailed not only the animals being supplied with appropriate habitats where they would multiply, but also their being monitored, fed and, most importantly, protected from predators and over-hunting. Several researchers have pointed out that game such as deer would probably have been eradicated in Europe if they had not been kept in parks by monarchs and aristocracy. As they need large areas of quiet, protected woodland, a lot of valuable woodland with large trees has been preserved as well.⁸⁵

In order to understand deer parks in Sweden conceptually, as well as their materiality, function and use, I think a long-term perspective is essential. The question of their introduction in Sweden is one important issue where this perspective might be fruitful. By the 13th century Sweden had an established and well-connected élite with a lot of international contacts. The group included not only royalty and noble families, but also bishops and abbots. The higher clergy had established deer parks all over Europe by this time, so why would they, for instance, or indeed the élite as such, not do this in Sweden?

Another interesting question is the disappearance of deer parks in Sweden. Their expiration is often located to the beginning of the 19th cen-



FIGURE 12. *Fallow deer and a wild boar together in the Eriksberg park, Blekinge, in 2011. PHOTO: Åsa Ahrland.*

tury, when the royal hunting reserve in Öland was abolished by letters patent (1801) and the last deer were moved from the royal deer park in Stockholm (1829).⁸⁶ However, there seem to be working deer parks much later in Swedish manors: here is a description of the park on the Övedskloster estate in Skåne (Scania) in 1882:

A few gunshots away, the Deer Park starts, a rather large grove, with a stream, and by its green sides a number of fallow deer are grazing. Here, under the leafy tree-tops of tall beech trees, freed from all persecution, the beautiful animals spend a peaceful life. A barn, which in summer is filled with hay, provides fodder in the winter, when snow and frost prevent them from finding food outside. Nobody is allowed, without the permission of the hunter, to visit this deer park. Strangely enough, and this is supposed to be without any exception, the animals do not leave their woodland, though the fence is no higher than the agile and lively animals could easily leap over. One is tempted to believe that they realise the dangers "freedom" might bring. In this respect they are wiser than human beings. Every year the little colony is reduced, as they are swiftly multiplying, in such a way that many of the older animals are killed, until only a certain number remains. This deer park was laid out by the industrious Colonel Hans Ramel.⁸⁷

The description is almost archaic, with its references to a peaceful paradise existence, which the deer do not even wish to leave – though they can. We recognise the seclusion – nobody is allowed to enter without permission – as well as the necessary arrangements: the fencing, the barn and the stream and the park warden or hunter. We are finally told that the creator of this paradise is the former owner Hans Ramel, who had the power and the means to completely rebuild and reorganise the manorial landscape in the 18th century. The description, however, is in fact valid for the so-called safari park at Eriksberg in Blekinge, initiated in 1938, where red deer, fallow deer, European bison, wild boar and moufflon move freely within the 900 ha large enclosure and can be observed by the visitors from their cars. One of the largest parks in northern Europe, it is currently owned by a member of the financial élite, who is aiming to turn it into the most exclusive venues in Sweden in terms of hotels, restaurants and conferences.⁸⁸ The many hunting towers suggest that the owner

can offer guests exclusive hunting. Eriksberg is a designated nature reserve, like so many former deer parks. Interestingly, these old landscapes are still protected and managed, but for different reasons and with a different agenda from formerly. Eriksberg and other nature reserves give us a glimpse of a lost paradise that mankind has striven to recreate in gardens and deer parks for thousands of years.

To conclude, the study shows that deer parks formed a significant part of the manorial landscape of the outmost élite in Sweden in the 17th and 18th centuries. It demonstrates that Swedish deer parks served various purposes and were laid out and used in different ways, and that this flexibility is part of the general history of parks. Its versatility might be the very reason for the deer park remaining an important manifestation of the élite for such a long time through history. It expressed superiority and power and was at the same time a place of beauty, an earthly paradise where the animals were kept secluded and, ideally, without interference from outside. It can be concluded that parks with animals represent a *longue durée* through Eurasian history and that deer parks in Sweden deserve to be studied further within this context.

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Notes

- 1 The terms deer park and park are used interchangeably in accordance with recent years' research on British deer parks. Robert Liddiard writes: "To landscape historians parks are perhaps best known for their role in the rearing and management of deer, an activity that gave the park a specific status throughout the medieval period and was also responsible for its most popular appellation historiographically: the 'deer park' (...). In order to reflect the multiplicity of uses to which parks were put during the Middle Ages the term 'park' [will be used] rather than 'deer park'. To do so is not to downplay the importance of deer management to the economy of parkland; rather, it is to reflect the broad range of activities that took place within enclosures that, in medieval sources, are normally referred to as *parcus*, see *The medieval Park. New perspectives*, 2007 (ed. Robert Liddiard) p. 1. Griffin 2007 and S.A. Milesen 2009 apply the same principle. Tom Williamson has pointed out that the landscape parks in 18th century England were above all storehouses for game birds and that the requirements of game was carefully considered when parks were being designed, Williamson 1995, pp. 130–140.
- 2 Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book VIII, p. 158, <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/x/xenophon/x5cy/book8.html> 2011-08-08.
- 3 Curtis & Reade 1995, pp. 39–42, pp. 72–88.
- 4 Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book I, p. 12, <http://www.tripinsurancestore.com/4/cyropaedia.pdf> 2011-09-08.
- 5 Karl XI 1918, pp. 283–284.
- 6 Fletcher 2011, p. 22.
- 7 Griffin 2007, p. 44.
- 8 Allsen 2009, p. 8, p. 34.
- 9 Allsen 2009, p. 34 ff.
- 10 Allsen 2009, pp. 48–49.
- 11 Hobhouse 2002, p. 22.
- 12 Allsen 2009, p. 49.
- 13 Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book I, p. 10, <http://www.tripinsurancestore.com/4/cyropaedia.pdf> 2011-09-08.
- 14 Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book VIII, p. 158, <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/x/xenophon/x5cy/book8.html> 2011-09-08.
- 15 Ševčenko 2002, p. 82.
- 16 Allsen 2006, p. 47.
- 17 Hobhouse 2002, p. 21.
- 18 Genesis 2:8–11.
- 19 Hobhouse 2002, pp. 58–59.
- 20 Maguire 1990, p. 211.
- 21 Fletcher 2011, pp. 126–127.
- 22 Allsen 2006, p. 15.
- 23 Columella 2009, pp. 259–261.
- 24 See for instance Birrell 1992, Moorhouse 2007, Milesen 2010, p. 45ff.
- 25 Allsen 2006, p. 40.
- 26 Liddiard 2003, pp. 18–21.
- 27 Rackham 1986, p. 123.
- 28 Ševčenko 2002, p. 75.
- 29 Hagiopian van Buren 1986, p. 120.
- 30 Hagiopian van Buren 1986, pp. 120, 130.

- 31 Hagopian van Buren 1986, p. 118.
- 32 Willard 2000, pp. 210–215.
- 33 Landsberg 1995, p. 22.
- 34 Liddiard 2003. At Onsgar in Essex a *derhage* is recorded in the will of Wine son of Thurstan in 1045, which became Onsgar Great Park. Liddiard 2003, p. 6. Della Hooke defines the *haga* as “an enclosure directly linked with the reservation of land for the preservation and hunting of game”, Hooke 1989, p. 128.
- 35 See for instance Mileson 2007, p. 20. In England in the 13th century bishoprics like Winchester, Canterbury and Durham would have approximately twenty parks, lesser ones at least a small number and greater monasteries several in England.
- 36 Andrén 1997, p. 469 ff. About 30 of the islands had “houses” as well. The document is a copy, from around 1300, of a list of properties and rights of the Danish crown and the royal family from around 1230. Andrén 1997, p. 473.
- 37 See for instance Granlund 1962, Berg 1976, Bernström 1964, 1969.
- 38 Axelsson, Janzon & Rahmquist 1996, p. 106.
- 39 *Drottningholms slott* Bd I, p. 44.
- 40 In a letter 7/2 1579 Johan III, mentions that he intends to lay out a deer park in the area. Bolin, Östman & Hedberg 1925, p. 9.
- 41 Bolin, Östman & Hedberg 1925, p. 10.
- 42 Karl XI 1918, pp. 145–146.
- 43 Pt: 79–80 *Diurgården wedh Skara*, 1636, Pt: 75–76 *Diuregården wedh Högntorp*, 1642, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 44 The management of deer parks is described in the forester Magnus Hendric Brummer’s dictionary on forests and hunting in Sweden from 1789, se Brummer 2010, pp. 80–81. See also Fletcher 2011, p. 63, p. 114. In the huge Omberg park the parker had to gather hay from three meadows for the winter, and still additional fodder had sometimes to be brought in from elsewhere. The hay was kept in barns built on poles, so that the animals could get shelter underneath, see Bohman 1829, p. 51 and Hassler p. 34.
- 45 Bohman 1829, p. 50.
- 46 T4:86 *Snåwingz heralt Kolbeck sochn* (Strömsholm), 1640s, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 47 T3:201 (Kungsör) 1640s, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 48 Pt: 79–80 *Diurgården wedh Skara*, 1636, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 49 In the original Latin: *De viridariis regum et aliorum illustrium et divitum dominorum*, Bauman 2002, p. 101.
- 50 Among the animals mentioned are hares, stags, roebucks, rabbits, various garden birds and fish in a pond. Piero di Crescenzi, *Liber ruralium comodorum* (Book on rural arts) Book 8 On pleasure gardens, in Bauman 2002, pp. 101–102.
- 51 Ševčenko 2002, p. 83.
- 52 One such example is the Little park at Ultuna in Uppland, which in a map from 1732/1735 covers approximately 60 ha and includes a *opqvistat jägaregata*, a 265 m long hunting drive cleared among the woods. B7-25:1 *Geometrisk Charta öfwer Ultuna Kongsgårds och dess underliggande Dagswärkstorp...*, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 53 Torpa: 2–3, *Kindz häradt. Långhems socken*, 1648. <http://www.riksarkivet.se/default.aspx?id=21561&crefid=22519>.
- 54 Torpa: Opaginerad 2, *Geographisch affrithing öffuer Tårpa...*, 1648, <http://www.riksarkivet.se/default.aspx?id=21561&crefid=22519>.
- 55 Richardson 2007, pp. 34–42.
- 56 O114–11:1 *Geometrisk delineation af Håcksnähs...* 1710, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 57 A99–1:22, *Iconographisk afritning öfwer residens staden Stockholm...* Kungliga Djurgården Stockholm 1701, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 58 Waern 2003, p. 16.
- 59 P163–16:3 *Geometrisk Delineation uppå Läckö Kongsgård...*, 1729, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 60 Waern 2003, p. 22.
- 61 P163–16:1, *Geometrisk Delineation uppå stora diuregården under Läcköö...*, 1692, <http://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/arken/s/search.html>.
- 62 Waern 2003, pp. 11–12.
- 63 In 1762 the lodge is said to have been moved to the main square in nearby Lidköping, where it served as a town hall. The foundations are still visible on the original site, which is still called Lusthusholmen. Waern 2003 p. 22.
- 64 Wieselgren 1835, VI, p. 199. I would like to thank Dr. Catharina Nolin for having brought the layout with dropbacks in the park at Karlberg to my attention.
- 65 Olausson 1993, p. 322.
- 66 Perry Marvin p. 140
- 67 Vert meaning the right to cut down green vegetation. Griffin 2007, p. 17.
- 68 Griffin 2007, p. 16.
- 69 Griffin 2007, p. 16.
- 70 Griffin 2007, p. 62, p. 110.
- 71 *Svenska landskapslagar*, Östgötalagen, Byggningsbalken XXXVI §5.
- 72 *Magnus Erikssons landslag*, Konungsbalken XXX.
- 73 *Magnus Erikssons landslag*, Byggningsbalken XVIII §3.
- 74 The exceptions were Dal i Västergötland, Värmland, Dalarna i Västmanland, Gästrikland and Hälsingland.
- 75 Brummer 1787, p. 2.
- 76 See for instance Brummer 1787, p. 7, p. 11.
- 77 Brummer 1787, pp. 35–36.
- 78 Öland, Åland, Billingen, Kinnevik Forest, Edsmären, Hunneberg and Halleberg are particularly mentioned.
- 79 Brummer 1787, pp. 36–37.
- 80 Legislation permitting all landowners to hunt all kinds of game, including high game, on their own land, was not introduced until 1789. Previously, with the exception of the northern part of Sweden, Dalarna, Värmland, Dalsland and Finland, landowning commoners were only allowed to hunt lesser animals; see the Hunting Act of 1647.
- 81 *Magnus Erikssons landslag*, Konungsbalken XXX.

- 82 Griffin, p. 18, *Öppedt breff Belannghendes Jacten på Ölandh*, Datum Calmar thenn 10 maj Anno 1572 in Kjellberg, p. 13.
- 83 Karl XI 1918, p. 173.
- 84 See for instance *Magnus Erikssons landslag*, Byggningsbalken XVIII and the Hunting Act of 1647 in Brummer, pp. 38–39.
- 85 Griffin, p. 15, Fletcher 2011, Emanuelsson 2006, pp. 211–212.
- 86 Drejrot 2003, p. 42.
- 87 Lindblad 1877–78, p. 85.
- 88 This is described in the leaflet *Eriksberg. Nordens största safaripark*, which is handed over to all visitors to the park.

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Power and paradise. A long-term study of deer parks in Sweden

by Åsa Åhrland

Summary

Many landscapes designated as nature reserves, Natura 2000 sites or national interest areas for nature conservation, consist of former deer parks. Relevant to future conservation, is their social and cultural context. The article discusses the purpose and symbolic value of Swedish deer parks in relation to the concept of power and the concept of paradise by analysing them in a long-term perspective.

Throughout history, hunting has served as a political instrument when claiming power over land and people. In the ancient Asian empires, royal hunts could be performed publicly in the open countryside or privately in parks, in Persia *pairidaeza*, which would include hunting grounds, gardens, orchards, arable land, forests and villages. When described in Greek, they were called *paradeisos*, a term also used for the Garden of Eden in Genesis. In medieval Europe, hunting became the ultimate form of courtly life. The parks of the élite provided not only game, but agricultural produce, fodder, timber and fuel.

In Sweden the first parks mentioned in the written sources are those of the Vasa dynasty in the 16th century. Early 17th century large-scale maps (1630–1655), show parks with wooded grassland, fields, meadows, lakes, roads, barns and homesteads, mirroring the needs of the animals: water supply, fodder production for winter feed, shelter, and a habitat where they would feel secure and breed. *Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna* presents hunting as part of the lifestyle of

the nobility and, like 18th century maps, depict parks as pleasure grounds.

Restricted hunting rights have secured the hunt for the élite. In Sweden the concept of *konungx parkum* was introduced in 14th century legislation, along with the monopolisation of some of the hunting. Wild animals could now be considered be somebody's possession and hunting an exclusive pursuit. Punishments were introduced for unlawful shooting or trapping of high game in deer parks and hunting reserves, mirroring the symbolic power of the deer park, hunting high game and eating venison. There was also a campaign for the eradication of large predators.

The study shows that deer parks formed a significant part of the manorial landscape of the outmost élite in Sweden in the 17th and 18th centuries. It demonstrates that Swedish deer parks served various purposes and were laid out and used in different ways, and that this flexibility is part of the general history of parks. Its versatility might be the very reason for the deer park remaining an important manifestation of the élite for such a long time through history. It expressed superiority and power and was at the same time a place of beauty, an earthly paradise where the animals were kept secluded and, ideally, without interference from outside. It can be concluded that parks with animals represent a *longue durée* through Eurasian history and that deer parks in Sweden deserve to be studied further within this context.

Keywords: Deer parks, Hunting, Power, Paradise, Versatility