

The Forge
Winter 2015



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Greeting!

As the editor of the Forge I would like to invite anyone who is interested to please submit to me any stories, pictures, artwork, and articles that you would like to have published in the Shire of Smythkepe's "Forge".

THL Aveline Frazer

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Chronicler

Editor note: Greetings and salutations Shire-mates! This edition contains first part in a series about medieval zoos and animals.

Exotic Animal Collections

Part 1

Zoos or Animal Menageries were often kept by enthusiastic collectors during medieval and earlier periods of history. A **menagerie** is a collection of captive animals, frequently exotic, kept for display; or the place where such a collection is kept, a precursor to the modern zoological park.

This article is going to cover the Emperor Charlemagne who was an avid collector. He actually had three separate menageries spread throughout German and Holland.

Charlemagne was particularly fond of exotic birds and falcons. He also kept lions, bears, monkey and camels. Many of these animals were gifts from other monarchs or people of importance and given for the wonderment of their exoticness.

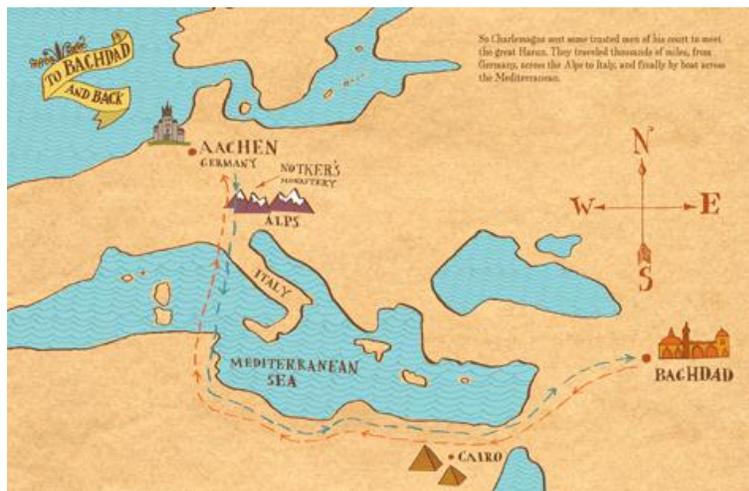
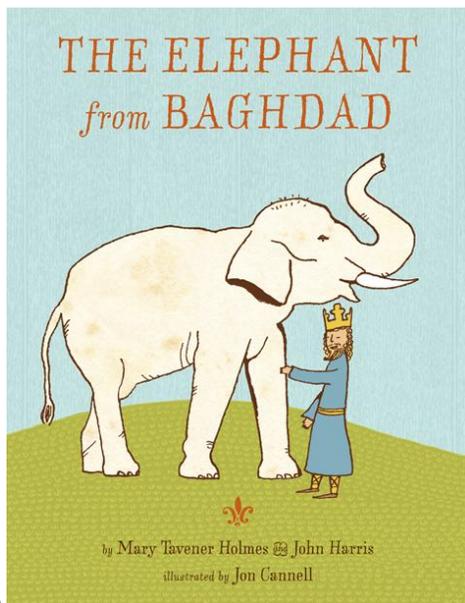
The most amazing animal Charlemagne was given thought was his Elephant. This was the first elephant in Europe since the Roman Empire and he was given by the Caliph of Baghdad, Harun al-Rashid. And to make it even more spectacular, he was an Albino Elephant. He was named Abul-Abbus and reached Charlemagne in July or 802. It actually took three years to deliver the elephant to Charlemagne. It started with crossing the Mediterranean Sea by ship and included marking the animal over the Alps.

Charlemagne was said to have loved the animal very much. There were coins, portraits and tapestries created with Abu's image on them. He was exhibited on various occasions when court was assembled and was housed in Augsburg in Bavaria. When Charlemagne went to war against the Danes; he

mobilized troops and also sent the Elephant to join in the battle. I would think that the Danes thought they were being attacked by a monster.

It is said that Charlemagne was saddened when the elephant dies of pneumonia in the year 810. Some accounts blame a cold water crossing of the Rhine causing the pneumonia. It would be 400 years before another elephant is brought to Europe. (the Cremona Elephant)

A children's book has even been written about Charlemagne and his pet elephant called "The Elephant from Baghdad." Written by Mary Tavener Holmes and John Harris



Illustrations from book. The book was published by Marshall Cavendish Children and is available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).



A picture of a white war elephant from 11th century Spain

Renaissance Magazine, issue 94, Exotic animal collections, by Brian Burfield.

<http://lillarogers.com/tag/jon-cannell/>

www.elephant.se/database2.php?elephant-id=1814

<http://www.history.com/news/history-lists/10-famous-elephants-from-history>