APPENDIX 4

THE TIGRIS (Ch. III, n. 60)

The inscriptions would lead us to expect tigers, but the animals represented have the spotted skin and slender build of the hunting leopard or cheetah\(^1\). In general the naming of beasts of prey in antiquity was confused\(^2\). The tiger was until recently occasionally found as far west as Armenia, but it is not mentioned before the time of Alexander the Great and may earlier have been subsumed under the fabulous Indian *manticora*, man-eater\(^3\). At all events, the tiger remained a rarity throughout the Hellenistic period. The first time a live tiger was exhibited in Rome was at the dedication of the theatre of Marcellus by Augustus\(^4\). Yet, in spite of its rarity, there are a couple of reasonably accurate early representations, i.e. in two mosaics from Delos and Pompeii, though in the last case provided with a lion’s mane, both from c. 100 B.C.\(^5\). There are, however, several cases where the name *tigris* cannot refer to the tiger. Diodorus mentions Babylonian ‘tigers’; Ptolemaeus mentions Aethiopian ‘tigers’. Heliogabalus had 51 ‘tigers’ killed in the circus in 218 A.D., together with rhinoceroses, giraffes and crocodiles, a number which would have been quite

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\(^1\) For the inscription see *IG* XIV, 1302 k; in the mosaic it is actually spelled TIGYIC but the Dal Pozzo copy gives TIGPIC; for the cheetah see Haltenorth, Diller, pl. 41,3; Steinmayer 39, fig. 10.

\(^2\) Cf. Keller I, 62, 80; Jennison 183 ff.; Rice 96; our Ch. IV, n. 7.

\(^3\) For the tiger see Keller I, 61 f.; *RE* 2. Reihe. VI, 946 ff., s.v. Tiger; Toynbee 69 ff.; and for the *manticora* see Aristotle *HA* II 1 (501, a 25–31); Pliny *HN* VIII 21, 75; Pausanias IX 21, 4; G.J.M. Bartelink, Het fabeldier martichoras of mantichora, *Hermeneus* 43 (1972) 169 ff. George and Yap 60, propose to identify the *manticora* with the cheetah because the tiger usually has a separate chapter from the *manticora* in medieval bestiaries. However, they also state, 55, that the tiger does not appear in the earlier bestiaries. The very fact that the tiger is a later addition may suggest that the name *manticora* originally did refer to the tiger and that this association was later forgotten. Besides, the cheetah was widespread and well-known and cannot have been considered a fabulous Indian animal.

\(^4\) See Pliny *NH* VIII 25, 66; Keller, *RE*, and Toynbee, *l.c.c.* in n. 3.

\(^5\) See respectively Bruneau, no. 293, figs. 248. 249, col. pl. C 2; and below Ch. VI, n. 11.
impossible to collect because the tiger is a solitary animal\(^6\). A clue to the identification of these ‘tigers’ may perhaps be found in the name. \textit{Tigris} seems originally to have been an Armenian or Persian word for arrow, and it was given to the river of that name because of the speed of its waters\(^7\). It seems unlikely that the name ‘arrow’ could have been given to the slow tiger, unless the reference was to the ‘arrow’-like stripes on its skin. The animal which would pre-eminently fit the name is the cheetah, the fastest beast of prey which hunted the plains of Asia and Africa. The Babylonian and Aethiopian tigers must have been cheetahs. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the name \textit{tigris} originally referred to the cheetah and only later came to be used for the tiger. Arrian also calls a spotted hunting dog ‘tiger’\(^8\). This may be because the cheetah not only had a spotted skin, but was also tamed and used for hunting\(^9\). So the cheetahs in the Nile Mosaic seem to be correctly represented and labelled. The confusion between the Aethiopian and the Indian tiger resulted, however, in later representations where a real tiger appears together with Aethiopian animals\(^10\). The Indian and Aethiopian animals were generally confused\(^11\). The cheetah was a common beast of prey in Africa and Asia, just like the leopard, from which it is not always clearly distinguished\(^12\). Its more common name was \textit{panther}, which originally seems to have been the name of the genet and was not given to the cheetah until later\(^13\). Cheetahs and leopards were brought to Egypt as tribute by the Nubians\(^14\). Agatharchides mentions the \textit{panther} as an Aethiopian animal, but it is not clear whether he refers to a leopard, a cheetah or a genet\(^15\). Panthers and leopards figured in the Procession and are depicted,

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{6} See Diodorus II 50,2; Ptolemaeus \textit{Geographia} IV 82; Keller 62.
  \item \textsuperscript{7} See \textit{RE} 2. Reihe. VI, 948 and 1008, s.v. Tigris; P. Chantraine, \textit{Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque} (1968) 1116 s.v.; Varro \textit{LL} V, 20, 100; Strabo XI 14, 8.
  \item \textsuperscript{8} See Arrian IX 15, 3; our Ch. III, n. 14.
  \item \textsuperscript{9} Cf. Keller I, 86.
  \item \textsuperscript{10} See \textit{e.g.} the Adana mosaic, Mielsch 1986, fig. 1; and Piazza Armerina, Carandini, figs. 124, 128, 129, 131; Dorigo, pls. VII, VIII.
  \item \textsuperscript{11} See Ch. III, n. 33.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} See Haltenorth, Diller 205 ff., pl. 41,3; Keller I, 62 f. and 86 ff.; Rice 96 f.; \textit{LÁ} II, 530, s.v. Gepard; III, 1006 f., s.v. Leopard; IV 664 f., s.v. Panther.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} See Jennison 184.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} See \textit{LÁ} VI, 762 ff., s.v. Tribut; Drenkhahn 117; \textit{e.g.} Davies, pl. XIX; Junker 1958, 269.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Cf. Woelk, fr. 70; p. 174, and in general Jennison 183 ff.
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