Early in 1881, at the age of 22, Austrian Crown Prince Rudolf set out for a journey to Egypt and Palestine which lasted for more than two months, namely from Feb. 17 to April 22.  It was obviously the wish of his father, Emperor Franz Josef I, that he undertake hunting and study trip.  It was also hoped that a visit of the Holy Land would exert some positive influence on the prince in respect of his Catholic belief, which was seen endangered by his close relationship to the German zoologist Alfred Brehm, a notorious free mason and atheist. This is why they did not only send notoriously good hunters (like the Grand Duke of Tuscany) as companion in the journey, but also the court vicar Laurenz Mayer. His participation was certainly not seen as an obstacle to the intentions of His Apostolic Majesty.

Plans had been that Rudolf marry at that time. His bride was sixteen year old Princess Stephanie of Belgium. However, the wedding was delayed and the young crown prince was sent on that journey. We do not know what were Rudolf’s feelings about the delay of his wedding. However, the journey to Egypt and the Levant were certainly welcome to Rudolf, as he was highly interested in natural sciences, in particular in zoology. This is partly due to the influence of his tutor, the geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter (born 1829 in Esslingen on Neckar; died 1884 in Wien; he later became the first superintendent of the Imperial Natural History Museum in Vienna). Rudolf started a mineral collection at a very early age. He made numerous trips, first in Europe and later also in other continents, on which he repeatedly wrote reports — under his own name or anonymously. Furthermore, he suggested and furthered a magnificent encyclopedia of Austria-Hungary, the so-called Kronprinzenwerk² (of 24 volumes), and he contributed to it himself. In addition, and not least, Crown Prince Rudolf

¹ Kronprinz Rudolf, 1979; Selander, 2007.
was a renowned ornithologist. The court vicar was not the only travel companion of Rudolf, in his journey to Egypt and Palestine. Rudolf was also in the company of passionate hunters, such as his uncle, Salvator, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1839-1892); then Count Waldenburg-Zeil-Tauchburg, retired general and temporarily Lord Chamberlain; aide-de-camp lieutenant-colonel von Eschenbach; and particularly Count Josef Hoyos-Sprinzenstein, Real Secret Counselor and Chamberlain of His Majesty (1839-1899), who had joined the Crown Prince in several other hunts. The artistic documentation of the events of the journey was the task of the painter Franz-Xaver von Pausinger (1839-1915), renowned for his nature and wild life motives. Two further names of travel companions can be found: the courtier Bielohlavek; the writer and army officer Amand Baron Schweiger-Lerchenfeld (1846-1910).

In Egypt, Rudolf was accompanied and guided by the highly renowned German Egyptologist Heinrich Brugsch-Pasha, who had been the director of the newly-founded school of Egyptology in Cairo from 1970 to 1879, on invitation of the Khedive, or vice-king. He was raised in 1873 to the rank of bey, and 1881 to that of pasha. In his informative auto-biography “My Life and my Travels” (German original, „Mein Leben und mein Wandern,” Berlin 1894) he wrote on Rudolf,

… a sense for science [was] in the zeal with which he listened to my daily lectures on ancient Egyptian history, geography, mythology, architecture and so on. His remarks, which he dropped every now and then, made good sense, and comparisons with other areas of the history of the peoples of antiquity or of modern times showed the connoisseur, who was sure of his subject.³

This was the itinerary:

February 9, 1881 — Departure from Vienna by train to Trieste, Miramar Castle, Miramar harbour. Departure by boat from Miramar to Alexandria.
February 18 — Arrival in Alexandria. Subsequently four days in Cairo.
Journey to Abouksâ (“Abouksar”) in Fayyoum province for a great hunt.
Journey continues to Asyût (“Siut”); by steamer to Aswân; visit of Philae island.
Return to Cairo via Asyût, Memphis, Saqqâra.
Damietta, Port Sa’id, on the Suez canal to Isma’iliyya, back to Cairo. After four days, again to Isma’iliyya and Port Sa’id.

³ Quoting from Blaschek, 2010.

The hunts in Egypt and Palestine may seem strange to a modern reader, in particular when contrasted with the serious scientific and historical interests of Rudolf. But first of all, hunting was one of the noblest pastimes. It was the traditional prerogative of noblemen and squires. Second: even today travels for hunting are performed, though not to Egypt, a country greatly overpopulated in comparison to one hundred and thirty years ago, and largely deprived of any game that there obviously was in Rudolf’s days. And thirdly: one gains the impression that Rudolf just made the best of it: he could put his zoological knowledge to the test; and he obviously did, with great zeal.

No sooner had our caravan been composed, as hunting began. In the garden beside the factory we found the conspicuous African blue-cheeked bee-eater (“Blauwangenspinte”), a lovely green bird with a long tail and blue cheek stripes; a whole row of them was successfully shot at. These animals belong to the interior of Africa, they are frequent in Upper Egypt, though they never get as far as Cairo, a region that appears to them already too far to the north. On the fields, spurwinged lapwings (“Spornkiebitze”) were running, these lovely, typically Egyptian birds, then troops of cattle egrets (“Kuhreiher”); also here, like everywhere in Africa, a rich animal-life is concentrated in astonishing quantities in the stretches with plenty of vegetation and water...⁴

In the appendix, Rudolf’s book contains a list of all booty, and in addition, the Crown Prince’s “ornithological travelling sketches,” a professional account of all animals that could be shot. The latter is introduced by the following statements.

⁴Kronprinz Rudolf, 1885, 85.
Egypt, as far as the borders to Nubia and Palestine, is the area in which I travelled and explored, as far as possible. It is, though, not an exhaustive account of the fauna of these countries what I shall produce for my readers, but rather a report. I’ll divide the task which I have taken over in two groups. First, an enumeration and description of my perceptions concerning all birds which were bagged by me or my companions, and second, a collection of notes concerning those species which were observed, but which could not be bagged. Before I start with this let it be mentioned that the journey was at a time when many of our migratory birds had left their winter stations. This is to explain to the specialist why a number of species which are to be expected for sure in winter in Egypt are lacking. In the enumeration of the bagged species I stick to Brehm’s system and I have to insert only five species that are not contained in Brehm’s Life of Animals. We collected the measurements of nearly all bagged specimens, however I shall not quote these, in order not to occupy too much space.5

From the list of booty:

**Mammals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hyena</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African jackal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Asiatic jackal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Asiatic jackal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenek (desert fox)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert lynx</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ichneumon (mongoose)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert hare</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian hare</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping mouse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common vampire bat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazelle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild boar (Becker)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild sow</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5Kronprinz Rudolf, 1885, 341.
Mammals 39

Birds

Coccystes Glaudarius 1
Pied Kingfisher 25
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater 38
Cypselus Pallidus 3
Cypselus Parvus 8
Falco Barbarus 2
Falco Cenchris 20
Sparrow Hawk 1
Steppe Eagle 1
Booted Eagle 3
Osprey, Sea Hawk 2
Black-winged Kite 5
Black Kite (“Milan”) 15
Black Kite (“Schmarotzer-Milan”) 16
Pallid Harrier 2
Marsh Harrier 20

And so on: 109 more species follow; with the above-mentioned included, it amounts to 1023 specimens, of 125 species.

Bibliography

Kronprinz Rudolf, 1885, 339 f.