ISSN 0258-0802. LITERATŪRA 2017 59 (3)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.15388/Litera.2017.3.11833

REFLECTIONS ON DOMESTICATION: "TAME" AND "WILD" IN THE AESOPIC ANIMAL FABLES

Tua Korhonen
Department of Languages (Greek and Latin)
University of Helsinki

Abstract. *The focus of this paper is a complex literary genre – the Aesopic fables – where animals are portrayed as agents, and the basic question rests on how "the animal's point of view" and the "animality" of its depiction of animals are manifested. By using philosopher Clare Palmer's conceptualizations, it is to be shown that although the Aesopic animal fables function as moral allegories, they may also explicate and reveal differing kinds of views on domestication and of such categories as "tame" and "wild" – especially the versions that are told by Babrius. Domestic animals can be depicted as a part of the household with different roles and different statuses, but domestication can also be represented as a form of slavery for animals in contrast to the human-free existence of the wild animals, and the reason for domestication is that humans have more or less cheated animals into working for them (as an aetiology of domestication).*

Keywords: *fables, the Aesopic fables, domestication, domestic animals, wild animals.*

In her *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction*, Marian Scholtmeijer claims that modern literature implies that "nonhuman animals are devoid of experience worthy of human consideration."[1] Obviously, this is due to the simple fact that as humans, we are mainly interested in what happens to other humans, in our human experience. Humans are our kind. Furthermore, one needs not to be a biologist or an ethologist to understand our limits in comprehending the experiences of other species, even other mammals or other great apes. Human language may also create obstacles to understanding other species' way of life and their way of experiencing their *Umwelt*.[2]

However, there are also cultural pressures on anthropocentrism – how strongly one focuses only on human affairs. Greek anthropomorphic gods suggest that the Greeks were mostly interested in human experience (and perhaps only in Greek experience).[3] How interested do the Greeks appear to be in the animal's standpoint from the evidence of Greek literature? Even animals in such animal-centered

[1] Scholtmeijer 1993, 229.

[2] *Umwelt* is the famous concept used by the Estonian biosemiotician Jacob von Uexküll (d. 1944), by which he refers to the supposition that all living organisms live in their own, self-centered worlds. Although living beings can live in the same environment, they experience the environment differently due, for instance, to their sensory organs. On human language as an obstacle to perceiving other beings, see Ruonakoski 2017, 34: "Even the language we speak refers to human embodiment."

[3] However, see Heath 2005, 20–22 on the Greek interest in the "barbarian" Other.

literature as the Aesopic animal fables seem to be depicted as heavily humanized – that is, as reasoning and talking like humans.[4] Different species of animals in fables mirror fixed human character types, often in a stereotyped way. Fables are anecdotal tales, often comical, having some common topics, like failure in knowing one's limits or in understanding the basic status quo of power relationships and the hierarchy of things. As Hubert Zwart has stressed, fables are highly dependent on observer biases and cultural traditions.[5] Thus, the aim of (modern) fables is not to correspond in a recognizable manner to actual animal behavior or basic zoological knowledge. For instance, one folkloresque motif of fables is how an odd couple or triplet of animals (for instance, a lion, fox and donkey) form a cooperative unit. It seems to be a pseudo-animal kingdom that mirrors the human world and conforms to its social structures and hierarchies. It is argued that ancient fables manage, however, to represent the point of view of abject humans, the underdogs too, because "Aesop" and the Roman fable-writer Phaedrus were former slaves.[6]

Although fables are nearly the only literary genre in antiquity where animals, although humanized, were the protagonists, actual animals seem to be the "absent referent" to use Carol Adams' famous phrase.[7] Animal fables are therefore nothing more than allegories. However, along with the so-called Animal Turn (questions of human-animal relations, animal ethics) in the Classics, some scholars have recently posed the question of "animality" in the Aesopic animal fables: to what extent are animals non-humanized animals in the fables?[8] At least the animals in the Aesopic animal fables are seldom depicted in man-made environments, acting exactly like humans (like the Disney cartoon characters).[9]

In this paper, I analyze the animality of animals in the Aesopic fables, concentrating on the representations of "tame" and "wild" animals in the context of domestication and human dominion over animals. I will show how animal fables explicate animal categories like "wild" and "tame" but also expose ambiguities in these categories. I argue that in the light of fables, the Greeks were aware that our care of domestic animal is ambivalent. Although animals in fables are surely reduced with regard to their animality in many ways, the

4 The term "*animal* fables" underlines that the Aesopic fables include stories that contain only humans or humans and gods. In this paper, I use the concepts "fable" and "the Aesopic animal fables" interchangeably. The Aesopic fables refer to the totality of Graeco-Roman fables including both prose collections (like the earliest one preserved to us, the *Augustana* from the 2nd and 3rd c., in the Perry index numbers 1–273) and poetic adaptations (like those of Babrius and Phaedrus). Except for fables found in literature (like the earliest one, Hes. *Op*. 202–12), fable collections circulated already at the end of the Classical period. I use the Perry index (see Perry 1952), adding sometimes a reference to Chambry (Chambry 1925-6). For a good, short introduction to the challenging topics of the dating of the fable collections and their Middle Eastern roots, see Adrados 1999, 287–306.

5 Zwart 2010, 51–64.

6 On fables as a surrogate speaker on ancient slavery, see Lefkowitz 2014, 18–19. The *locus classicus* of this theme is Phaedrus' prologue (lines 33–37) to his third book of fables.

7 Adams 1990, 40–42; the context here is meat eating: "Live animals are thus the absent referents in the concept of meat." There are fables that depict human-animal relationship quite realistically, like the one on the shepherd who has accustomed his puppy to eat dying sheep (Perry 206). The puppy does not speak, but the shepherd interprets its behavior in a typically humanized way.

8 See Lefkowitz 2014, Charpentier 2012 and Harel 2009.

9 However, see, e.g., Phaedrus 1.17.

zooethical problem of human dominion over other animals could be seen as one of the "animal" topics in fables.

Domesticated Animals

The root of the word domestication is *domus* ("house, home"). The Greek equivalent is οἶκος and the phrase ἐνοικίδια ζῷα, which was not in common use, stresses the impression that domesticated animals – or some of them – were thought to be an essential part of the οἶκος or *domu*s, the "inside" of the household. To be domesticated thus meant to be part of and participate in a human household. As is well known, Aristotle treats slaves and therefore also domestic animals as living commodities, as tools (ὄργανον) in the *Politics*.[10] The mere instrumental value of household animals was stressed *in extremis* by the Stoics: not only that pigs live to be slaughtered and sheep to be converted into clothing for humans but that the function of the soul of pigs – with all its sensory abilities – is to keep the flesh fresh (SVF 2.722).[11] But the Greeks – and Aristotle as well – have many other kinds of ideas concerning livestock.

The literary genre of pastoral or bucolic poetry with its images of tranquil, idyllic landscapes implies that the relationship between humans and the animals kept by them is more than mere maintenance of living machines. Pastoral comes from *pascere* (*pastor*, "shepherd, goatherd") and its Greek equivalent is ποιμαίνειν, which is the tending and caring of small cattle: flocks of sheep and goats. For instance, both Homer and Plato likened state leaders with shepherds or goatherds.[12] Thus, ποιμαίνειν and *pascere* are associated with care and tending, and a shepherd acts in the best interests of his herd (not to mention Christian imagery, which equates Christ and the priest (*pastor*) with shepherds and the congregation with the herd). Another word for tending or caring for flocks or herds is βουκολεῖν, which means "to tend cattle" (*bous*, "cattle," "bull" or "cow").[13] However, βουκολεῖν has a second, metaphorical meaning – "to delude" and "to cheat" – as if implying that the caring for and tending of human-dependent animals is, in a way, cheating them: we act as "good shepherds" but have our own sinister agenda for them.[14]

Philosopher Clare Palmer has pointed out the moral responsibility that results from the fact that we have made domesticated animals vulnerable and dependent on humans. Palmer has analyzed three kinds of categories for domestic animals: (A) the mastery over animals which also includes their breeding and nowadays even their genetics, (B) treating animals almost as part of the household and (C) the ideas of co-operation and exchange.[15] I will concentrate on the first and the last ones, namely that domesticated animals were used as slaves and servants of the household and that domesticated animals were seen as profiteers, too, in their relationship and dependence of man.

[10] Ar. *Pol*. 1.4.1253b32; 1.13.1259b23 (slaves); *Pol.* 1.2.1252b12 (an ox is a poor man's slave).

[11] On the drastic Stoic opinions on animals, see, e.g., Gilhus 2006, 54. However, Seneca, for instance, was a vegetarian for a short time, see *Moral letters to Lucillius* 108.

[12] See, for instance, Hom. *Il.* 19.385: ποιμένα λαῶν: Pl. *Resp*. 1.343b, 345c–d; 4.440d.

[13] In the passive voice, the verb can be used of the cattle themselves, that the cattle (cows, bulls) are grazing.

[14] McInerney 2010, 212.

[15] Palmer 2011, 702–4.

Domestication – Wild Animals Entering the Human *Oikos*

There are some fables that can be viewed as aetiologies of domestication. They explain why we have domesticated animals. The idea of cheating occurs in the fable *The Horse and the Hunter* or *The Stag, the Horse and the Man*,[16] which Aristotle relates in his *Rhetoric* (20.1393b8-22) attributing it to Stesichorus (see also Perry 269).[17] The horse is seeking help from a man to protect its meadow against the stag. The man promises to help but instead subjugates the horse and thus betrays its trust. Aristotle explains the fable purely allegorically: the man refers to Phalaris, the tyrant of Acragas (or Gela) and the horse is the innocent people of Acragas who gave power to the tyrant. However, Georg Thiele (already in 1908) interprets it as an aetiology of the domestication of the horse. It explains why such a big animal as the horse submits to man.[18]

The theme of cheating – even unsuccessful cheating – is common as such in fables. Predators try to cheat prey animals and sometimes hunted animals manage to cheat predators. It is a question of life, of eating and being eaten. In Babrius' fable (97), it is not a man but a lion who is trying to cheat a wild bull by inviting him to participate in a sacrifice. But the bull becomes suspicious, seeing many cauldrons full of hot water and newly polished meat cleavers and knives for cutting bulls (βουδόροι) but nothing to offer other than "a chicken tied captive by the door."[19] So, the bull flees to the mountains (εἰς ὄρος φεύγων, l. 9). The lion is thus only pretending that he is going to make a sacrifice to the Mother of Gods (προσποιηθεὶς μητρὶ τῶν θεῶν θύειν, 2). The lion represents "culture," having cauldrons and other kitchen utensils and an institution of sacrifice (sacrificial knives and a living animal, a chicken, ready to be killed). The bull represents "nature": it is a wild bull (ἄγριος ταῦρος) that escapes into the mountains – the traditional place for wild animals to roam. The point of the story is that the bull is clever enough to conclude that he will not be a participant in the sacrifice except as the sacrificial victim (especially since some of the knives are for flaying bulls, βουδόροι). But from the animal point of view or perspective, one may question the premises of the fable: why did the bull accept the lion's invitation in the first place? There is no food for herbivores, like bulls, in the lion's kitchen. The fable might play with the ideas hovering over sacrificial meal: the ritual killing required a formal "consent" from the victim – and the bull is far from consenting, manifesting a normal reaction to an imminent killing, especially his own.[20]

[16] The same fable may have many titles depending on manuscripts but also on modern editions and translations.

[17] Stesichorean scholar Malcolm Davies argues that the attribution to Stesichorus is based on anecdotes of the choral lyric that circulated in Aristotle's time. See Davies and Finglass 2014, 231. However, Francisco Rodríguez Adrados, a scholar on ancient fables, reconstructs it as Stesichorus' fable (Adrados 2000, 300). In another version that Phaedrus used (4.4), the injurious animal is not a stag (ἔλαφος) but a wild boar (*aper*), which is not creating havoc in a meadow but muddying water where the horse was accustomed to drink. A boar instead of a stag appears in the version of the fable derived from the Augustana collection (Perry 269).

[18] Thiele 1908, 380. See also Adrados 2000, 299.

[19] Babrius 97.6–9: θερμοῦ πολλὰ χαλκία πλήρη, / σφαγίδας μαχαίρας βουδόρους νεοσμήκτους, / πρὸς τῇ θύρῃ δὲ μηδὲν ἀλλὰ δεσμώτην / ἀλεκτορίσκον.

[20] However, sacrificial animals were usually domesticated animals. The connection between meat con-

Another fable of Babrius where animals are discussing sacrifice is the fable of a sheep who runs away from a wolf into a (man's) sheepfold (Babrius 132). The wolf, without going inside, points to the altar covered with blood and advises the sheep to run away in order not to be sacrificed (θύεσθαι): τὸν βωμὸν αἵματος πλήρη / ἔξελθε, μή τις συλλάβῃ σε καὶ θύσῃ (ll. 6–7). But the sheep prefers to be an offering for the god (θεοῦ σφάγιον, l. 10) than a meal for a wolf (λύκου θοίνη, l. 10). The short prose version of the fable (Perry 261) is nearly identical to Babrius' version. It tells of a lamb that takes refuge inside a temple (ἱερόν). The lamb prefers to be an offering to the god than to be destroyed by the wolf, by "you" (ὑπὸ σοῦ διαφθαρῆναι).[21] Thus, the lamb expresses the consent necessary for a sacrificial victim. The story parenthetically justifies ritual killing and sacrifice as an institution.[22]

Furthermore, domesticated, herbivorous animals are seen as better off than wild prey animals because sacrifice is claimed to be humane killing. In the fable, which is found only in Babrius, bulls decided to band together against butchers (Babrius 21). The story is told in the once-upon-time mode, in the past tense with the adverb ποτέ. The reason for killing all butchers (μάγειροι) is obvious: the butcher's profession is hostile to oxen (πολεμίη ἐπιστήμη). The united bulls were prepared for the coming battle with sharpened horns. But an old ox prevented it from happening. Its age is expressed from the "ox's perspective": it "had ploughed a great deal of earth" (πολλὰ γῆν ἀροτρεύσας, l. 5). According to this experienced ox, the butchers are skilled slaughterers and they kill without torment (χερσὶν ἐμπείροις, σφάζουσι καὶ κτείνουσι χωρὶς αἰκίης, ll. 7–8). But if one is killed by someone who lacks butchery skills, death will be twice over (διπλοῦς τότ᾽ ἔσται θάνατος, l. 9). Moreover, the old ox argues that there will always be someone to slaughter oxen – an ox never escapes being slaughtered (οὐ γὰρ ἐλλείψει / τὸν βοῦν ὁ θύσων, ll. 10–1), even if there were no butchers any more. The fate of domesticated oxen is thus to be slaughtered in any case. Babrius uses the verb θύειν, which refers, in its original usage, strictly to sacrifice – not mere slaughter. The moral of the story is thus that if one is going to be killed, it is better to choose the best (that is, the swiftest) killer.[23]

Maximus of Tyre, a Middle Platonist from the 2nd c. CE, tells a fable where a lamb makes a decision between a shepherd and a butcher. The fable can be Maximus' own invention, or it may originate from a fable collection unknown to us (*Or.* 19.2 = Perry 465):

> ποιμὴν ἀνὴρ καὶ μάγειρος ἐβάδιζον ἄμφω
> κοινὴν ὁδόν. ἰδόντες δὲ ἐκ ποίμνης ἄρνα
> εὐτραφῆ πλανώμενον, ἀπολειφθέντα

sumption and ritual killings was quite flexible in later periods of Greek history (Roman Greece).

[21] Cf. Perry 76 (*The Deer and the Lion in the Cave*), in which a deer runs away from men to the den of a lion. As her last words, the deer moans that the lion is a bigger danger (κίνδυνος) than man.

[22] Butchers occur in the late fable *The Butcher and the Flock* (Perry 575), where the sheep admit that they themselves "deserve to be slaughtered" because they, one after another, pretended not to see the butcher. There are also fables about the butcher's shop; see Perry 66 and 254 and Syntipas 33.

[23] The *epimythion* of this fable is "He who is bent on escaping the calamity at hand ought to watch out lest he fall in with something worse" (trans. B.E. Perry).

τῶν συννόμων, ὥσαντο ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἄμφω. ἦν ἄρα τότε ὁμόφωνα καὶ τὰ θηρία τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· ἐρωτᾷ ὁ ἀμνός, τίς ὢν ἑκάτερος ἐθέλει αὐτὸν μεταχειρίσασθαι καὶ ἄγειν. ὡς δὲ ἐπύθετο τἀληθῆ αὐτά, τὴν ἀμφοῖν τέχνην, φέρων ἑαυτὸν ἐπιτρέπει τῷ ποιμένι· σὺ μὲν γὰρ δήμιός τις εἶ καὶ μιαιφόνος τῆς ἀρνῶν ποίμνης, τούτῳ δὲ ἐξαρκέσει ἂν καλῶς τὰ ἡμέτερα ἔχῃ.

A shepherd and a butcher were walking along the road together. They saw a plump little lamb who had wandered away from the flock and had been left behind by his fellow sheep. The shepherd and the butcher both rushed to grab the lamb. This was back in the days when animals spoke the same language as people, so the lamb asked the two men why they wanted to grab him and carry him off. After the lamb found out what they both did, he turned and offered himself to the shepherd. "You are nothing but a public executioner," he said to the butcher, "and you are stained with the blood of the flock! To this man, on the other hand, it is more than enough if we thrive and prosper."[24]

Maximus explains the wandering lamb as a young student, the shepherd, ποιμὴν ἀνήρ, as Socrates and the butcher, μάγειρος, as older men who have bad intentions toward young men. Young men need to choose Socrates (like the wandering lamb chooses the [good] shepherd) and not the immoral older men, as they are the corrupters of youth (symbolized by the butcher). However, this is exploring the animal condition with the same irony as in the previously mentioned fable of the united bulls. Namely, in the end, it is all the same what the lamb chooses, because despite the different *technai* of the two men, it will (eventually) be butchered. The lamb is only postponing its fate by choosing the shepherd.

Fables may depict animals as seeking help from humans, being then impressed as workers for humans and eventually eaten, which is depicted as good because humans are better killers than, for instance, lions. Timid animals (like the sheep against wolf above) are seen as seeking help from humans or human-made shelters against the aggressive or destructive wild animals. Another reason for domestication depicted in fables is that animals seek care from man. This equates with the idea that domesticated animals have, supposedly, a better life than animals living in the wild (e.g., a longer and even healthier life). In the fable *The Man, the Horse, the Ox and the Dog*, which occurs both in the Augustana collection (Perry 105) and in Babrius (74),[25] it is the co-operation or mutual benefit that is stressed. The Augustana version of the fable (in prose) begins with the statement that Zeus has made man short-lived. Using his cleverness (τῇ ἑαυτοῦ συνέσει χρώμενος), man was able to build himself a shelter. In winter, the horse, ox and dog all came in turn and asked for shelter, which the man promised on certain conditions. In Babrius' lyric version, the fable begins with the animals (ll. 1–9):

Ἵππος τε καὶ βοῦς καὶ κύων ὑπὸ ψύχους
κάμνοντες ἦλθον οἰκίην ἐς ἀνθρώπου.
κἀκεῖνος αὐτοῖς τὰς θύρας ἀναπλώσας
παρῆγεν ἔνδον καὶ παρ' ἑστίῃ θάλψας 5
πυρὸς γεμούσῃ παρετίθει τι τῶν ὄντων,
κριθὰς μὲν ἵππῳ, λάθυρα δ' ἐργάτῃ ταύρῳ·

[24] Trans. M.B. Trapp, slightly modified.

[25] There are different titles for this fable depending on the edition: *Horse, Ox, Dog, Man* (Hausrath 107), *Man's years* (Perry). Here I am using Babrius' title, *The Man, the Horse, the Ox and the Dog*.

ὁ κύων γὰρ αὐτῷ συντράπεζος είστήκει.
ξενίης δ' ἀμοιβὴν ἀντέδωκαν ἀνθρώπῳ
μερίσαντες αὐτῷ τῶν ἐτῶν ἐφ' ὧν ἔζων [...]

A horse, an ox, and a dog, suffering from the cold, came to a man's house. He opened his doors to them and took them in. He warmed them by his hearth, filled with abundant fire, and set before them what he had on hand for them to eat. He gave barley to the horse and vetch to the labouring ox, but the dog stood beside him at the table as a fellow-diner. In return for his hospitality they gave to the man each a portion of the years allotted them to live [...].[26]

The basic meaning of the fable is revealed in the rest of the story: in exchange for man's hospitality (ξενία), the animals give him their best years as working animals. Human ages are equated with the characteristics of animals – the horse years are the years of youth (man is proud and haughty), ox years are the years of middle age (toil and patience) and the dog years that of old age (man is ill-tempered, hating strangers but fawning on those who grant him sustenance).[27] It is noteworthy that Babrius describes the man's generosity in more detail (suitable food for different animals) in contrast to the Augustana version (Perry 105), which almost describes the exploitation of creatures in need. In the Augustana version, there is no portrayal of true generosity or specific care: because man is short-lived, he takes the years from these three animals in exchange for the shelter given.

Obviously, the fable is an aetiological one, explaining why temperament differs with age – why old men, for instance, are often surly. However, one may also read it as an aetiology of domestication. Life in the wild is uncomfortably cold; animals seek shelter; they had to pay for the shelter – they become work animals. In the Babrius version, the ox inside the house (οἰκίη, l. 2) immediately becomes a laboring ox (ἐργάτης ταῦρος, 7).

Fables portray domestication as service or even enslavement as in the previously mentioned *The Horse and the Hunter* (αὐτὸς ἐδούλευσε τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, Ar. *Rhet.* 20.1393b22). It reflects the everyday observation of the restricted freedom of domesticated animals as the opposite of free-roaming wild ones. In the fable belonging to the Augustana collection, *The Flea and the Ox* (Perry 273 and Chambry 359),[28] a flea wonders why such a large and strong animal like the ox is man's slave (δουλεύειν) day after day. The ox answers that it cannot be ungrateful (ἄχαρις) to the human race, since "I am cherished (στέργεσθαι) and loved excessively (φιλεῖσθαι ἐκτόπως) by them."[29] The proof of man's deep affection is that men often rub the ox's forehead and shoulders. The point of the story is the comical contrast between the animals' experience of people: the one is getting benefit from man (sucking blood), the other is of use to man; the expression of love for the one (rubbing) is an expression of violence for

[26] Trans. B.E. Perry (1965).

[27] As working animals, dogs are guardians of flocks, oxen – draught animals, but horses are also objects of mere pride (racehorses).

[28] On the Sumerian model for this fable (*The Elephant and the Gnat*), see, for instance, Perry 1965, xxxii–xxxiii and Adrados 1999, 323.

[29] Perry 273: Οὐκ ἄχαρίς ἔσται μερόπων γένει· στέργομαι γὰρ παρ' αὐτῶν καὶ φιλοῦμαι [ἐκτόπως]. Hausrath 359 has a slightly different reading: not the future but present tense of εἰμι, no elision (παρὰ αὐτῶν) and ἐκτόπως without brackets.

the other (hitting).[30] That the ox is convinced that its master, man, also loves it "excessively" (ἐκτόπως) may make the ox seem like a credulous fool. However, there are traces of the tradition of respecting "a working ox" around the Mediterranean, as, for instance, in ancient Zoroastrianism.[31] Examples of this topic are also found in fables and in the Graeco-Roman literature in general.[32]

Working animals' lives could be described as gruelling. The fable *The Playful Donkey and the Master*, which has been preserved in the Augustana collection (Perry 91) and as Babrius' version (129), is a variant of the theme of the different treatment of household animals (a pet dog and a working donkey). Babrius describes the donkey's life as consisting of grinding wheat and hauling wood from the hills and, even as it is eating, it is not free but tied up to the manger, a prisoner (δεσμώτης, l. 8).[33] In *The Goat and the Donkey*, a fable that is preserved as a short prose version (Perry 279) and as a late lyric version (Chambry 16),[34] the goat wonders about the treatment of a donkey in the same vein. In the late lyric version of the fable (Chambry 16), the goat even expresses pity for the donkey: "You are always being punished, constantly having to turn the millstone or carry burdens on your back. I feel so much pity for you. Why do you suffer so, why the unlucky life?"[35] The donkey then asks what else it can do – it knows only this kind of life (οὐ γὰρ δύναμαι τὴν ζωὴν ἄλλως ἔχειν, Chambry 16.10). In fact, the topic here is that of the grass being greener on the other side of the fence: the goat is not pitying but envying the donkey on account of its better food and is planning to displace the donkey.[36]

That different kinds of domesticated animals argue with each other on their care is not an uncommon motif of fables. Xenophon tells the fable about sheep complaining of not gaining anything from their master; he obtains wool, yeanlings and cheese but does not even give them food in return, because "we sheep" can obtain food "from the earth" (ἐκ τῆς γῆς λάβωμεν). In contrast, the dog is given the same food as the master (Xenophon, *Mem*. 2.7.13). Babrius' versified version of the same fable has more details and some differences: not the master (δεσπότης) but a shepherd is the object of complaint, and it is one sheep speaking on behalf of all others, of "us." The sheep complains that the shepherd shears and keep the fleece, milks and makes cheese and that it is

[30] The flea admitted: "Woe is me! This rubbing of which you are so fond is the worst thing that can happen to me: when they do that, I die." (Trans. Laura Gibbs 2002). The *epimythion*, the moral of the story, does not quite hit the mark: "This fable shows that braggarts can be easily exposed."

[31] Smolak 2008, 212–3.

[32] For positive attitudes to working oxen, see *The Bulls and the Wagon* (Perry 45 [Augustana collection] and Babrius 52) and *The Farmer and his Dogs* (Perry 52 [συνεργαζόμενοι βόες] and Chambry 80). Often, the topic was combined with the ambivalence felt about sacrificing work oxen. See Aratus (*Phaen*. 131–5), Ovid (*Met.* 15.120–142) and one less-known epigrammatist in the *Greek Anthology* (*AP* 6.228).

[33] However, the donkey in this fable (Perry 91 and especially in Babrius 129) is a comical character. It envies the comfortable life of the house puppy and tries to imitate its behavior.

[34] Perry 279 (in prose, based on Babrius or imitation of Babrius) and Chambry 16 (a late lyric version).

[35] Chambry 16, ll. 4–6, 8: ἄπειρα κολάζῃ / ποτὲ μὲν ἀλήθουσα ἐν τῷ μυλῶνι / ποτὲ δὲ πάλιν ἀχθοφοροῦσα μάλα· / λοιπὸν ἐν τούτῳ λίαν σε ἐλεοῦμαι. / Πῶς ταῦτα πάσχεις καὶ ἀτυχὴς τυγχάνεις;

[36] The goat advises the donkey to pretend to have an epileptic seizure and to throw himself into the ditch. The donkey is seriously injured; the owner summons a doctor, who then orders the goat's lungs for the sick donkey.

"our children" (ἡμῶν τέκνα) that make the shepherd's flock prosper. Instead, they gain nothing: the sheep graze on the mountains on meagre vegetation (Babrius 128, ll. 5–7).[37] The fable suggests that the dog's guardianship is, however, the gain which the sheep get: they are almost self-sufficiently roaming free and are protected against predators.[38]

A variant of this motif is that the way of life of a wild animal and a domesticated animal (not two domesticated animals of different species) is juxtaposed. In the fable of a chained dog and a wolf, *The Wolf and the Dog* (Chambry 226), the wolf asks who has been able to chain so huge a dog. The hunter answers for the big dog and assures the wolf that the chain does not matter, as hunger is heavier than any chain. In Babrius' more elaborate version (*The Wolf, the Dog and the Collar,* Babrius 100), the wolf encounters a *fat* dog and wonders where the dog had found enough food to get so fat. The dog says that a rich man has given him luxurious food in abundance. Next, the wolf wonders about the bare spot on the dog's neck. The dog explains that his neck has been rubbed bare by the iron collar which his keeper (ὁ τροφεύς) has forged and put upon his neck (κλοιῷ τέτριπται σάρκα τῷ σιδηρείῳ, / ὃν ὁ τροφεύς μοι περιτέθεικε χαλκεύσας, ll. 6–7). After hearing this, the wolf rejects the luxury (τρυφή, l. 9) – with a pun – because the dog's way of life will chafe (τρίψει, l. 10) his neck. The wild animal and the household animal thus espouse two views of domestication, namely that it is slavery from the point of view of a wild creature and that it equates to a secure and plentiful food supply given by some τροφεύς from the point of view of a domesticated animal. The moral of the story is not simply that what is good for one is bad for another (of course, the wolf would have wanted an abundance of food, too). Like the country-mice in *The City-Mouse and the Country-Mouse*, the wolf is tempted by luxury, but, like the country-mice, the wolf refuses to pay its price, namely his freedom.[39]

The Category of Wild Animals

Besides the concept of domestication, Clare Palmer has analyzed ideas concerning wild animals. She defines three conceptions of wildness. (1) A locational wildness, which means that we understand wild animals to be animals that are *out there*, outside the human domain and often outside human effect or influence. They are rarely seen, therefore exotic and sometimes even iconic creatures (like lions and eagles). (2) A dispositional wildness means that we assume, with reason, that wild animals have a different disposition toward humans than tame animals – that they are aggressive and/or are afraid of humans; they shun people, that is. Palmer also speaks of (3) the constitutional uses of wildness by which she means that wild animals are simply defined as not-tame, not being bred in particular ways,

[37] Lines 5–7: [...] χὴ τροφὴ γαίης ἅπασ᾽· / ἐν ὄρεσι δ᾽ εὐθαλὲς τί γεννᾶται; / βοτάνη γ᾽ ἀραιὴ καὶ δρόσου γεμισθεῖσα.

[38] In both versions, the dog argues that he protects the sheep so that they can continue living their life and eating without fear. In Babrius' version, the dog claims to protect sheep not only from wolves but also from thieves.

[39] See Horatius *Sat.* 2.6.80–117, Phaedrus 2.108 and Babrius 108. For the country-mouse, luxury is equated with an insecure life, a life in man's frequently visited food store.

not manipulated as hunting animals (like managing a prey population).[40] In modern urban environments, the animals that we encounter, with an exception for pets, are mainly not-domestic but not by disposition very "wild" either (namely squirrels and pigeons, perhaps rats, foxes even). They are not "out there" in the wild but living with us in the cities. Sometimes, their disposition may remind us of that of domesticated animals (squirrels coming to eat from a person's hand, for example). Aristotle, who was the first Greek to differentiate categories between "tame" (ἥμερα ζῷα) and "wild" (ἄγρια ζῷα) in his *Historia Animalium,* speaks of those animals that live near humans or with humans as συνανθρωπευόμενα [ζῷα] ("living with people," *HA* 7.599a21) meaning both domesticated animals, like dogs and pigs, and some wild animals, like insects living with humans in houses.[41] The critic Aristophanes of Byzantium (died c. 180 BCE), in his summary of Aristotle's zoology, uses this term of dogs. For him, it is a disposition characterizing only certain domestic animals (like dogs). Instead, swine are an example of animals "hot-tempered and ignorant" (τὰ δὲ θυμοειδῆ καὶ ἀμαθῆ, καθάπερ ὗς), whereas wild animals are, for instance, "free and noble as a lion" (τὰ δὲ ἐλευθέρια καὶ γενναῖα, ὡς λέων) or "clever and malefactors, as a fox" (τὰ δὲ φρόνιμα καὶ κακοῦργα, ὡς ἀλώπηξ).[42] These classifications recall the way in which animals are stereotyped in fables (and as animal metaphors in literature).

For Aristotle, the difference between "tame" and "wild" animals lies in the general disposition – the former ones are inherently tame. Both Plato and Aristotle considered taming as making animals even more favorable to humans, while both also referred to human beings as tame (ἥμερος), which then refers to socialized humans who embody social virtues.[43] Thus, domestication did not mean just that naturally mild animals were made more useful for humans so that they are easier to dominate and manage, but tameness was, as such, an achievable quality, a kind of class, which makes both human and domesticated animals somehow different from wild animals (θηρία).

Many fables reflect the idea that wild animals have an inherently different disposition toward humans than domestic animals do (Palmer's dispositional wildness), including the fact that wild animals do not endure captivity. In the fable belonging to the Augustana collection, *The Fugitive Jackdaw* (Perry 131),[44] a man caught a jackdaw and tied the bird's foot with a piece of linen string and gave the bird to his children as a present. The jackdaw, however, "could not stand to live in human society" (ὁ δὲ οὐχ ὑπομείνας τὴν μετ᾽ ἀνθρώπων δίαιταν), so when it happens to be let loose for just a moment, it flies away. But when it gets back to its nest, the linen string becomes entangled in the branches, so that the jackdaw cannot move. As it is dying,

[40] Palmer 2011, 715–17.

[41] See Ar. *HA* 5.542a27 (the longevity of domesticated animals); 6.572a7 (many litters by sows and dogs by year as typical of domesticated animals). See also Theoph. *HP* 2.11.4; 3.2.2.

[42] Ar. Byz. 25 (Reimer). The name of the work in Latin is *Historiae animalium epitome.*

[43] Pl. *Leg*. 6.766a, *Soph*. 222c-d; Arist. *Top*. 138a. See also *Pol*. 1.2.1253a36–7. For the Greek, the disposition of animals toward humans did matter. They have many stories of animals falling in love with humans, especially beautiful young boys and girls – but seldom vice versa. Korhonen 2017a, 89.

[44] Another name is *The Jackdaw and the String*. A later version of this fable is in Chambry (Chambry 164).

it regrets its decision: "How wretched my lot! Because I could not endure living in servitude with men (τὴν παρὰ ἀνθρώπων δουλείαν μὴ ὑπομείνας), I have deprived myself, all unwittingly, of life itself."[45] The way of living (δίαιτα) with people is, for the jackdaw, servitude or slavery (δουλεία). The wild bird became a living toy for children, a pet, an amusement.[46]

Wild animals (θηρία) had their positive connotations as icons of freedom, living their human-independent life in the wilderness, outside the *polis* (cf. Palmer's locational wildness). The wilderness as a place is created already in Homeric epics, especially in its animal similes. In the *Iliad*, Idomeneus is compared with "a boar in the mountains" (τις σῦς οὔρεσιν) that "stands firm against a great troop of men attacking it / in a solitary place" (ὅς τε μένει κολοσυρτὸν ἐπερχόμενον πολὺν ἀνδρῶν / χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ, 13.472–3). A mountainous environment is thus οἰοπόλος ("lonely, solitary, remote"). But the wilderness is a space of the gods, too. Many sanctuaries were placed in the wilderness – in the mountains, in caves, on the uncultivated shores.[47] When Aristotle says in his *Politics* (1.1.1253a29) that man is between (wild) animals (θηρία) and gods, he points to the self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) of both gods and wild animals.[48] The idea of self-sufficiency connects the gods and wild animals.

However, although the adjective ἄγριος ("wild") may be quite neutral – referring only to an animal that is not-tame (constitutional wildness), as, for example, ἄγριος ταῦρος (a "wild bull"), in contrast to a domesticated one, it also means "cruel, savage." True, fables often tell about killing – animals eating and being eaten – the background of which is fundamentally the question of why some animals need to kill other animals in order to survive.[49] However, there seldom is any strong emphasis on the repulsive cruelty of predators. Instead, wild animals rewarding the good treatment they have received (as in the story of Androcles and the lion) was a quite common topic.[50]

Conversely, there are fables in which well-treated wild animals repay the care with biting or with even worse treatment, as in the fable named *The Wanderer and The Snake* or *The Farmer and the Frozen Viper* (Perry 176 and Babrius 143). Babrius tells how a farmer (γεωργός) finds a snake half dead with cold, takes it home and lays it near the fire. But after warming, the snake attacks people, biting the farmer's wife and children. The man takes an axe and kills the snake. The version in the Augustana collection (Perry 176) tells how a wanderer (ὁδοιπόρος) finds a snake half stiff with cold, rescues it and is then bitten by it and eventually dies regretting his good deed. The idea of wild animals as ungrateful puts them in opposition to the gratitude of domestic animals, which the ox in the abovementioned fable shows (*The Flea and the Ox*, Perry 273). Another example of dispositional wildness is that

[45] Trans. B.E. Perry in Perry 1965, 447.

[46] Singing birds were common household wild pets kept in cages or with wings clipped. Jackdaws were popular pets (see Korhonen 2017a, 88).

[47] Buxton 1994, 96. Of course, there were sanctuaries inside the walls of the *polis*, too.

[48] Both θήρ and θηρίον could be used as referring to animals in a general sense.

[49] On this theme, see Korhonen 2017b.

[50] On animals repaying man's help or kindness, see Perry 295 and Perry 395.

wild animals cannot be nurtured to be completely tame – a wolf reared among sheep dogs is still a wolf (Perry 267).[51]

As said, wild animals are not depicted as spectacularly aggressive, like lions and wolves in some Homeric animal similes.[52] However, in *The Stag without a Heart*, which is an unusually long fable by Babrius (102 lines), an old and sick lion plans to eat a stag and orders a fox to persuade the stag to come to his den. After many complications, the stag is eventually at the lion's den and the lion devours it (Babrius 95, ll. 89–92):

> ἐπεὶ δὲ λόχμης εἰς μυχὸν κατεκλείσθη
> λέων μὲν αὐτὸς εἶχε δαῖτα πανθοίνην, 90
> σάρκας λαφύσσων, μυελὸν ὀστέων πίνων,
> καὶ σπλάγχνα δάπτων· [...]

> After shutting himself within the utmost reaches of his lair, the lion had, all by himself, a banquet most complete. He gorged the flesh, he sucked the marrow from the bones, devoured the inner parts.[53]

The "beastly" devouring would be even more striking if the stag had been described as innocent and vulnerable (as the victim could be depicted in the Homeric simile). But, the fox's coaxing reveals the stag to be quite conceited, so, in a way, its fate can be seen as a consequence of its own foolish agency.[54]

Concluding Words: Animal Fables, Animal Perspectives

At first glance, animals seem to be humanized in fables to the extent that they have become humans. In fact, there is one fable where this truly happens – an animal becomes a human being (and not vice versa as was common in metamorphic myths).[55] But animals in fables are not humans even if they are not too far from us humans. They are depicted as intelligent beings living their own life, making decisions, fighting for their life and sustenance.

If understanding other animals' experience of the world is not possible for us, at least we can – with the help of poetry and stories – be acquainted with the perspective of a fictional animal character. We are accustomed – we are habituated – to read fables as allegories. Also, the "moral of the story" – the ancient *promythia* or *epimythia* – may guide the reader to interpret the story more anthropocentrically than perhaps was the story's original meaning (if one ever dares to speak of the original meaning of any story). This is most evident in a fable told by Aulus Gellius (130–180) in his *Attic Nights* (2.29 = Perry 325). It is a lengthy story of a lark and her chicks whose nest is inside a crop field. Because the crop is nearly ripened, the bird family needs to move away before the reapers come. But the chicks are not yet able to fly. Aulus Gellius describes skillfully the anxiety of the little chicks and the caution of the mother bird without humanizing the birds excessively. Luckily, the farmer is

---

51 The idea is expressed in the Homeric simile on lion cubs, too. Hom. *Il.* 5.554–558.

52 On predators' blood-smeared way of eating: Hom. *Il.* 17.541–42 (lion); 16.157–163 (wolves).

53 Trans. B.E. Perry (1965).

54 The name of the fable comes from the ending: the lion wants to eat the stag's heart (καρδία), but the fox has managed to catch it. The fox assures the lion that the stag had no heart, meaning that so stupid a stag has no heart, it being the seat of intelligence. The same kind of motif is found in a late fable *Sus sine corde* by Avianus (Perry 583). For the reference to the heart as the seat of intelligence, cf. also Perry 254.

55 A female weasel (γαλῆ) falls in love with a handsome young man; Aphrodite changes her into a woman (Perry 50).

waiting for his relatives to come and help him, so he needs to postpone the reaping. This postponement rescues the birds: the chicks learn to fly just before the farmer decides not to wait for his relatives any longer. What is then the moral of the story? Aulus refers to Ennius' lost work, which included the fable and its *epimythion*: one should never trust one's relatives. The carefully depicted animal perspective is thus discarded completely. However, despite the senseless *epimythion*, the fable provides an opportunity to empathize with the birds, to see the situation from their (imagined) perspective.

All in all, fables may give us clues to ancient human-animal relationships, to the need to justify domestication, among other things, by stories like fables. Fables can be seen to imply such questions as what are domestic animals, what is their status, and why are they treated the way they are? Why do different species of animals (humans included) eat each other (why do both humans and wolves eat bulls)? How does the human eating of other animals differ from the nonhuman way of eating? The ambivalence toward domestic animals – as if part of the household but with no control over their life and death – can be clarified and nullified by stories. It is the task of further research to explain why the explicit animal point of view can most easily be detected in Babrius' fables.

REFERENCES

Adams, Carol J. 1990. *The sexual politics of meat*. Cambridge: Polity.

Adrados, Francisco Rodríguez. 1999. *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable. Volume One: Introduction and from the Origins to the Hellenistic Age*. Translated by Leslie A. Ray. This edition has been revised and updated by the author and Gert-Jan van Dijk. Translated by Leslie A. Ray. Leiden: Brill.

Adrados, Francisco Rodríguez. 2000. *History of the Graeco-Latin fable: Volume Two: The fable during the Roman Empire and in the Middle Ages*. This edition has been revised and updated by the author and Gert-Jan van Dijk. Translated by Leslie A. Ray. Leiden: Brill.

Buxton, Richard G.A. 1994. *Imaginary Greece: the context of mythology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chambry, E. 1925-1926. *Aesopi fabulae*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Charpentier, Marie-Claude. L'animal dans les fables d'Ésope: modèle, anti-modèle ou contre-modèle? *L'idéalisation de l'autre. Faire un modèle d'un anti-modèle.Actes du 2ème colloque SoPHiA – Société, Politique, Histoire de l'Antiquité tenu à Besançon les 26–28 novembre 2012*. Antonio Gonzales & Maria Teresa Schettino, eds. Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté. 99–113.

Davies, Malcolm and Patrick Finglass, eds. 2014. *Stesichorus. The Poems*. Edited with introduction, translation, and commentary (Cambridge classical texts and commentaries 54). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gibbs, Laura = *Aesop's Fables*. 2002. Translated by Gibbs Laura (Oxford World's Classics). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gilhus, Ingvild Saelid. 2006. *Animals, gods and humans. Changing attitudes to animals in Greek, Roman and early Christian ideas*. London: Routledge.

Harel, Naama. 2009. The animal voice behind the animal fable. *Critical Animal Studies* 7, 9–21.

Heath. John. 2005. *The talking Greeks: speech, animals, and the Other in Homer, Aeschylus, and Plato*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Korhonen, Tua. 2017a. The spectrum of human-animal relationships. *Human and Animal in Ancient Greece: Empathy and Encounter in Classical Literature*. Tua Korhonen and Erika Ruonakoski. London: I.B. Tauris, 73–105.

Korhonen, Tua. 2017b. A Question of Life and Death: Aesopic Animal Fables on Why not to Kill. *Humanitas 6:2. Special theme: Animal narratology*, 29. doi:10.3390/h6020029

McInerney, Jeremy. 2010. *The Cattle of the sun. Cows and culture in the world of the ancient Greeks*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Palmer, Clare. 2011. The moral relevance of the distinction between domesticated and wild animals. *Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*. Zamir Tzachi, ed. Oxford: OUP. 701–723.

Perry, Ben Edwin. 1952. *Aesopica A series of texts relating to Aesop or ascribed to him. Vol. 1: Greek and Latin texts.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Perry, Ben Edwin. 1965. Babrius and Phaedrus. *Newly edited and newly translated into English, together with historical introduction and a comprehensive survey of Greek and Latin fables in the Aesopic tradition* (Loeb Classical Library, 436). London: Heinemann and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ruonakoski, Erika. 2017. Reading ancient Greek literature through phenomenology. *Human and Animal in Ancient Greece: Empathy and Encounter in Classical Literature.* Tua Korhonen and Erika Ruonakoski. London: I.B. Tauris, 9–41.

Scholtmeijer, Marion. 1993. *Animal victims in modern fiction: from sanctity to sacrifice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smolak, Kurt. 2008. Das Opfertiere als Ankläger. *Mensch und Tier in der Antike:Grenzziehung und Grenzüberschreitung.* Alexandridis, Annetta, Markus Wild and Lorenz Winkler-Horacˇek, eds. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 205–215.

SVF = *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta, vol. 2*, ed. Johannes von Arnim. 1903–1905. Leipzig: Teubner.

Thiele, Georg. 1908. Die Vorliterarische Fabel der Griechen. *Neue Jahrbücher für klassische Altertum* 1:6, 377–400.

Zwart, Hub. 2005. Animal epistemology. On the truthfulness of scientific and literary sources. *The Human-Animal Relationship. Series: Animals in Philosophy & Science 5*. R. V.D. Bos & F. De Jonge, eds. Assen: Van Gorcum, 2005, 51–61.

APMĄSTYMAI APIE PRIJAUKINIMĄ: NAMINIAI IR LAUKINIAI GYVŪNAI EZOPINĖSE PASAKĖČIOSE

Tua Korhonen

Santrauka

Dažnai teigiama, kad senovės Graikijos kultūra yra antropocentriška. Tai atskleidžia antropocentriškas dievų vaizdavimas. Kyla klausimas, kiek graikai domėjosi gyvūnais ir kaip tai paliudyta graikų literatūroje?

Šie klausimai straipsnyje analizuojami ezopinės pasakėčios žanro kontekste, į kurį įeina įvairios tų pačių pasakėčių versijos, esančios skirtinguose rinkiniuose ir parašytos skirtingų autorių. Nors tarp ezopinių pasakėčių esama ir istorijų be gyvūnų, pasakėčia yra vienas iš retų senovinių „gyvūninių“ žanrų. Čia gyvūnai, nors ir supanašėję su žmonėmis, vaizduojami kaip pagrindiniai veikėjai, o ne tik kaip su žmonėmis susijusios figūros. „Gyvūniškas“ požiūris atsiskleidžia, pavyzdžiui, pasakėčioje apie vieversę ir jos paukščiukus, kurių lizdui, susuktam javų lauke, gresia pavojus dėl besiartinančios pjūties (Perry 325). Nors šios istorijos moralu parodoma, kad reikia veikti tinkamu laiku, pasakėčioje meistriškai vaizduojama gyvūno perspektyva.

Pagrindinis straipsnyje nagrinėjamas klausimas – kaip ezopinėse pasakėčiose apie gyvūnus, ypač prijaukinimo ir žmonių dominavimo kontekste, vaizduojamos naminių ir laukinių gyvūnų kategorijos. Analizei pasitelkiamos filosofės Klerės Palmer (Clare Palmer) aptartos prijaukinimo ir laukinės gamtos konceptualizacijos.

Gauta: 2017-09-17
Priimta publikuoti: 2017-12-05

Autorės adresas:
Tua Korhonen
University of Helsinki
Unioninkatu 40A 212 (P.O. Box 24),
FIN-00014 Helsinki, Finland
El. paštas tua.korhonen@helsinki.fi