ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

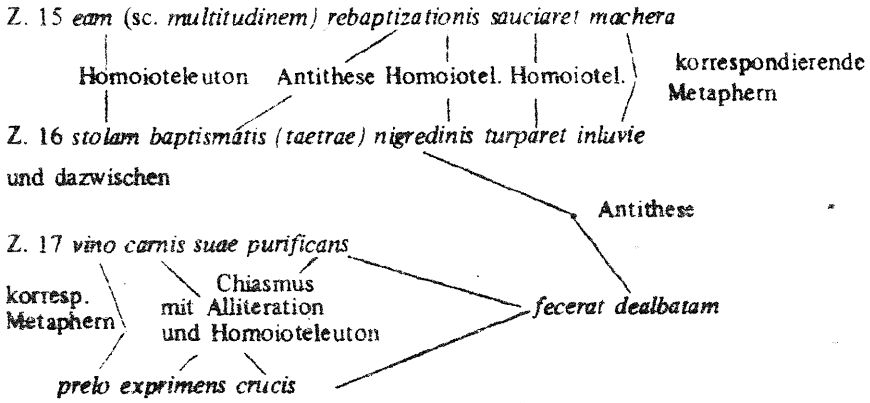
VOL. VIII

HELSINKI 1974 HELSINGFORS

INDEX

CORRIGENDA

p. 4	edentum l. edendum
p. 9 n. 2 l. 2	p. 00 l. pp. 15 f.
p. 33 n. 4 l. 4	λύγ l.λύγ'
p. 34 l. 16	p. 00 l. p. 33
p. 41 l. 12	αυδὰ[ν l. αὐδὰ[ν
p. 43 title	-s/al l. -ś/al
p. 43 l. 18	p. 00 l. p. 44
p. 74 l. 5	(Il. 8,188-190) l. (Il. 8,188-190).
p. 89 n. 3 l. 1	Vitas l. Vitae
p. 101 l. 3	τύτη l. τύμη
p. 107 n. 1	in nn. 1 and 5-6.l. p. 105 n. 1 and p. 106 nn. 4-5.
p. 110 n. 1	n. 27 below. l. p. 115 n. 1.
p. 115 n. 2	n. 25 above l. p. 112 n. 2
p. 118 l. 27	p. 109 above): l. p. 109 above);
p. 119 l. 33	$4,14:^{38}$ l. $4,14:^{1}$
p. 119 n. 38 l. 1	38 l. 1
p. 119 n. 38 l. 2	(see n. 1 above) l. (see p. 105 n. 1)
p. 122 l. 29	delete line following the quotation
p. 122 l. 32	p. 109 l. p. 108 f.
p. 123 n. 4 l. 3	p. 106 fn 2 l. p. 109 n. 3
p. 129 l. 18 ff.	l.



p. 135 n. 2	vgl. S. 00.l. vgl. S. 131.
p. 140 l. 14	99. l. 99."
p. 141 l. 3	Šammu l. šamnu
p. 141 l. 24	SIM l. ŠIM
p. 141 n. 1	transfer note to p. 142, n. 1
p. 142 l. 13	vor^{1}. l. vor^{2}.
p. 142 l. 27	1 l. 2
p. 148 l. 30	delete line following "...Zeit zu schreiben." and insert after l. 23 "die Dative <u>Grania</u>,"
p. 188 n. 1 l. 6	A. 4 l. A. 2
p. 189 n. 3 l. 2	(o. 188,2 4) l. (o. 188,2)

THERIOPHILY IN HOMER

Saara Lilja

Helmut Rahn's extensive paper "Tier und Mensch in der homerischen Auffassung der Wirklichkeit," as its explanatory subtitle "Ein Beitrag zur geisteswissenschaftlichen Selbstkritik" already suggests, deals with Homer's concept of the animal's nature as illustrating the development of man's intellectual self-criticism.[1] The superiority of Homeric men to animals, to which Rahn in the above paper refers (446ff.), implies that the animal in Homer is always seen "auf das 'Menschliche' hin" (456) or from the human point of view. This does not essentially differ from our modern psychologically toned attitude towards an animal, for we are apt to interpret the behaviour of animals, like that of other human beings, in terms of our more or less accurate knowledge of our own selves. It is a long way from Homer to Democritus and Aristotle, who, according to Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, were the first to anticipate later animalitarianism, though the true superiority of animals to men was first asserted by the Cynics and through them in the New Comedy.[2] Since Lovejoy and Boas have proposed to designate as 'animalitarianism' "the tendency to represent the beasts – on one ground or another – as creatures on the whole more admirable, more normal, or more fortunate, than the human species" (19), 'theriophily', the earlier term applied by Boas to the same phenomenon (Happy Beast 1), seems to me free to be used in a broader sense in the present paper.

In my opinion, there is one Homeric example of theriophily even in the sense in which this term was used by Boas, namely as designating the inversion

---

[1] Paideuma 5 (1950–54) 277–297 and 431–480; abbreviated by me "Tier und Mensch." See also H.Rahn, Das Tier in der homerischen Dichtung, Studium Generale 20 (1967) 90–105.

[2] See esp. the introductory section "Animalitarianism" (19–22) and Chapter XIII "The Superiority of the Animals" (389–420) in A.O. Lovejoy and G.Boas, Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity, Baltimore 1935, whereas G. Boas, The Happy Beast (Baltimore 1933), is restricted to 17th century French thought. J.E.Gill remarks that the theriophily of the Cynics may have been influenced by Pythagorean respect for animals; he also emphasizes the fact that Menander was a student of Aristotle's successor, Theophrastus (Theriophily in Antiquity, Journal of the History of Ideas 30 (1969) 401–412).

of human and animal traits and the superiority of animals to men. In the Iliad, the steeds of Achilles are described as mourning deeply for the dead Patroclus, their skilful charioteer (17,426ff.). The main idea in Homer's description, first expressed by the simple verb κλαῖον (427), is repeated more effectively with the closing words δάκρυα δέ σφι θερμὰ κατὰ βλεφάρων χαμάδις ῥέε μυρομένοισιν ἡνιόχοιο πόθῳ (437–439).[1] Feeling sorry for Achilles' horses, Zeus comforts them by deploring the sad fate of mortal men:

οὐ μὲν γάρ τί πού ἐστιν οἰζυρώτερον ἀνδρὸς
πάντων ὅσσα τε γαῖαν ἔπι πνείει τε καὶ ἕρπει (Il. 17,446f.).

It is true, as Rahn points out (Tier und Mensch 295), that Homer here lays stress on the mortality of human beings as contrasted with the immortality of Achilles' steeds (note line 444), but, though conceived of as being immortal, the horses of Achilles are still horses. In Homeric times, far from being a mean beast of burden like the mule, the horse was regarded as a remarkably noble animal, a proper status symbol for the rich and mighty. It is to be remembered that only the chief Greek and Trojan leaders rode in chariots, the horse thus being a mark of distinction.[2] In the Iliad, Homer repeatedly describes the horse's intelligent participation in human pursuits. It is, besides, well known that the human trust in this animal's sympathy has been expressed in many popular legends and romances. I think that the immortality of Achilles' steeds is simply a way to heighten their praise to the utmost and, at the same time, to allude to the half-divine origin of their master (Il. 10,402ff.).

One of Achilles' horses, Xanthus, is even temporarily endowed by Hera with the human faculty of speech, in order to give a divinely inspired prophecy about the master's impending disaster. When Achilles urges his steeds to bring him back from the fight alive, Xanthus replies: καὶ λίην σ' ἔτι νῦν γε σαώσομεν ... ἀλλά τοι ἐγγύθεν ἦμαρ ὀλέθριον (Il.19,408f.). This is an example of the belief, common in antiquity, that gods choose animals to serve as intermediate agents conveying divine decisions to human beings.[3] Such a close relationship between animals and gods is described in the Odyssey, too: when the goddess Athena revealed herself to Odysseus, the dogs were at once conscious of her presence and so deeply impressed by the uncannily divine atmosphere that they took to flight fearfully whimpering (16,162f.).[4]

1 Achilles refers to the deep sorrow of his horses in Il.23,283f.; cf. Il.23,7–9.

2 See Agnes M. Clerke, Familiar Studies in Homer (London 1892) *passim*, and Will Richter, Die Landwirtschaft im homerischen Zeitalter (Archaeologia Homerica II, Göttingen 1958) H 70–73.

3 On this belief see Rahn, Tier und Mensch 464ff.

4 All Homeric passages where dogs are mentioned will be treated in detail in S.Lilja, Dogs in Ancient Greek Poetry, which will be published in 1975 (probably in Comm.Hum.Litt.Soc.Scient.Fenn.).

What I mean by theriophily in the present paper is, broadly speaking, a kind and sympathizing attitude of men towards animals. The first part in this term, *θηρίον*, should be interpreted as denoting not only wild beasts, but also birds and insects and, more particularly in the following, domestic animals.

Human sympathy felt for wild animals is expressed in the abundant wealth of Homeric similes, which, while illustrating various characteristics of men and different situations of human life, at the same time reveal a deep insight into animal psychology. In these similes animals are credited with such virtues as bravery, industry and parental devotion.[1] The lion, the embodiment of bravery in most similes, is also described as fiercely grieving at the loss of its cubs (Il. 18,318–322), and bees, the embodiment of industry, as bravely defending their young ones (Il.12,167–170). Paternal devotion is further represented by birds, which bring all the food they can find to their fledglings, though half-starved themselves (Il.9,323f.), or lament over young ones bereft of their parents (Od. 16,216–218). The general view seems to be that animals in the Homeric similes are idealized and half-humanized, but I think that their behaviour corresponds to actual life fairly well. This is Hermann Fränkel's sound judgement: "Freilich verschob sich manchmal der Schwerpunkt zum Menschen hin; aber das machte immer den Eindruck der jüngeren Sonderentwicklung. ... Es ist eben das Wesen des Vergleiches, dass er in eine andere Welt hineingreift."[2]

Parental, and filial, devotion is also illustrated in those Homeric similes that deal with domestic animals. Homer describes a cow with her new-born firstling (Il.17,4f.) and calves eagerly frisking to meet their longed-for mothers (Od.10,410–414). The dog's bravery and fidelity are praised in shepherd and hunting similes. It is to be noted that there are about twenty similes of this kind in the Iliad, whereas in the Odyssey, instead of being employed for similes, both shepherd dogs and hunting dogs are presented in scenes from real life. Horses, on the other hand, play a conspicuous part in the intrigue of the Iliad itself, which explains the fact, at first sight surprising, that they are used for similes only a couple of times. In the Odyssey it is only seldom that horses are mentioned at all for the explicit reason given by Telemachus when he refuses

---

[1] Lovejoy and Boas remark that the later common fashion of introducing animals as exemplars of desirable human qualities may have its historic origin in early folk-stories; in literature the fable is its most effective and popular form (Primitivism 19).

[2] H. Fränkel, Die homerischen Gleichnisse (Göttingen 1921) 89. This book ought to be consulted on all details about the animal similes in Homer; for the similes illustrating parental devotion, see 91–94.

Menelaus' gift of three horses with a chariot (4,601ff.).[1] The present paper is mainly concerned with the horse and the dog.

When he vigorously urges his steeds on before fighting, Hector reminds them of Andromache's kind treatment: *ὑμῖν πὰρ προτέροισι μελίφρονα πυρὸν ἔθηκεν οἴνόν τ' ἐγκεράσασα πιεῖν, ὅτε θυμὸς ἀνώγοι, ἠ ἐμοί* ... (Il.8,188–190) Homer does not elsewhere say anything about horses having wine to drink. This detail is undoubtedly added to illustrate Andromache's special attentiveness, which is also expressed in the fact that the horses received their food and drink first, before their master. A gentle treatment of horses, of course, is to be expected for purely practical reasons, in order to make them able to withstand great exertion in fighting. This purpose is expressly mentioned by Agamemnon when he gives instructions to his men to get ready for a fight (Il.2,383–385). In a similar way Hesiod, in the Works and Days, recommends that the watchdog should be given sufficient food to make it eagerly guard the house against thieves (604f.). Another detail characterizing a careful treatment of the horse is its washing and anointing with oil (Il.23,281f.). It may have been this trait rather than the colour that gave rise to the epithets *εὐθριξ* and *καλλίθριξ* .[2]

Hector, in the above passage, even expects his steeds consciously to do their best of their own accord, for *νῦν μοι τὴν κομιδὴν ἀποτίνετον* (Il.8,186) takes as granted their rational, almost human, reaction. Another example of this general principle of *do ut des,* common in antiquity, is found in the description of the race which was arranged in honour of Patroclus. Antilochus, Nestor's son, threatens his team of horses with capital punishment if they are outdistanced: *οὐ σφῶϊν κομιδὴ παρὰ Νέστορι . . . ἔσσεται, αὐτίκα δ' ὔμμε κατακτενεῖ* (Il.23,411f.).[3] The horses, in fact, seem to understand what their young master says to them, for, to quote Homer, *μᾶλλον ἐπιδραμέτην ὀλίγον χρόνον* (418).

A passage of singular significance for one who searches Homer for his attitude towards animals is Il.5,192–203. Pandarus recalls his eleven beautiful

---

1 In the Odyssey, typically enough, Homer characterizes ships as *ἀλὸς ἵπποι* (4,708). On the most famous horse simile in the Iliad (6,506–511, repeated word for word in 15,263–268), see Fränkel, Gleichnisse 77.

2 Cf. S. Lilja, The Treatment of Odours in the Poetry of Antiquity (Helsinki 1972) 61.

3 An amusing passage in Antilochus' speech bears witness to Homer's negative attitude towards women: *μὴ σφῶϊν ἐλεγχείην καταχεύῃ Αἴθη θῆλυς ἐοῦσα* (408f.).

chariots left at home, each of them having by a team of horses, which are characterized as κρῖ λευκὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι καὶ ὀλύρας (196). Annoyed at himself for not taking his horses with him to the campaign, in spite of his father's wise exhortations, he gives the following explicit reason for leaving the horses at home:

ἵππων φειδόμενος, μή μοι δευοίατο φορβῆς
ἀνδρῶν εἰλομένων, εἰωθότες ἔδμεναι ἄδην (Il.5,202f.).

I believe that the most fervent member of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals will be amazed at finding so humane an attitude towards animals in an ancient Mediterranean country: ready to go to war himself, exposed to the greatest dangers, the gentle master does not want to take his horses with him – though they could protect him effectively – for fear that their food would not be as plentiful as normally in peace time.[1] Pandarus' psychologically fine instinct in handling the horse is revealed in his remark that Aeneas ought to drive his team himself, because the horses might suddenly shy and recoil if they did not hear their own master's familiar voice (Il.5,230–234).

In the Iliad men and horses, αὐτοί τε καὶ ἵπποι (e.g. 17,644), are repeatedly described as forming a close unity, since both were equally important for successful fighting. After giving the catalogue of the Greek leaders, Homer proceeds to declare which horses and which leaders were the paramount ones (Il.2,761ff.). In the similes of the Iliad dogs and shepherds, and dogs and hunters, also mostly appear as single entities. In the Odyssey, the dog takes the horse's place. A counterpart for Pandorus' psychological skill in handling the horse is formed by Odysseus' insight into the dog's mind. When the savage shepherd dogs run at him furiously barking on his approach to the cottage of Eumaeus, he manages the dangerous situation in the right way, sitting down and putting his stick aside (Od.14,29–31), patiently waiting until Eumaeus comes to his rescue. Later on, when the very same dogs fawning and without barking receive Telemachus, Odysseus makes another remark which reveals his insight into the dog's psychology (Od.16,8–10). The fact that these dogs were conscious of Athena's divine presence, though she only revealed herself to Odysseus (Od.16,162f.), corresponds to Achilles' immortal steed, Xanthus, being divinely inspired by Hera (see above, p. 72). The above three passages in Od. 14 and Od. 16 impress me as being an artistically intended preparation for the story of Argos, Odysseus' hunting dog, in Od.17.

[1] Achilles was not equally considerate, for he had with him in the campaign not only his famous immortal steeds, but also nine pet dogs as table companions (Il.23,173).

Rahn rightly calls the Argos episode (Od.17,290ff.)"ein Äusserstes ... was die dichterische Kraft der Sympathie aus dem mehr sachlich gesehenen Tier als lebenden Gegenstand durch menschliche 'Beseelung' zu machen vermag."[1] Homer points out that Odysseus had trained his hound for hunting purposes himself (292–295). A close relationship between master and dog is reflected in Argos' immediate recognition of its master after twenty years and in Odysseus' emotion – *ἀπομόρξατο δάκρυ* (304) – at his favourite dog's pitiful old age. Homer praises not only the power of scenting (317) and the swiftness and the prowess (315) of Argos, but also, exceptionally, its good looks (307 and 313).[2] In addition to these qualities, it is the dog's fidelity above all that forms the core of the story so as to make Argos the embodiment of fidelity. In the hunting and shepherd similes of the Iliad, too, it is the fidelity of the dog that Homer usually praises, the other point of comparison being its bravery.[3]

Homer's moving story of Argos describes in detail how miserable, abandoned by all, the old dog lay on the dunghill, with its skin teeming with dog-ticks (Od. 17,296–300). This is the only instance in Homer that I have found of, if not actual cruelty, at least entire indifference to an animal. The glaring description of Argos' sad plight implies that such unkindness towards a dog was unusual.[4] It is, of course, only natural that those dogs which had been carefully trained for hunting purposes were given sufficient food and otherwise good treatment, so that they could perform their functions well. Hesiod, as we have seen, mentions another practical purpose, when he says that good food makes a dog guard the house eagerly against thieves (Works and Days 604f.). In the Iliad, calling his *τραπεζῆας κύνας*, dogs fed from their master's own table,

1 For a detailed treatment of this episode, see Rahn, Tier und Mensch 456–461; the quotation is from 461. Walter Marg, Zur Eigenart der Odyssee, Antike und Abendland 18 (1973) 9, even says: "Die einzigartige, innige Szene mit Odysseus altem Hund Argos stellt das Tier neben den Menschen, ja über ihn. Er ist der einzige, der sofort den alten Herren erkennt, trotz Verwandlung und Verkleidung; kein Mensch kommt seiner Treue und seinem Instinkt gleich."

2 Rahn writes (Tier und Mensch 454): "Die Schönheit der Tiere wird nicht mehr ... sprachlich hervorgehoben als die anderer im Verhältnis zum Menschen gesehener belebter und unbelebter Gegenstände. Die Erwähnung beschränkt sich ... auf Haustiere, Schafe, Rinder, einmal einen Hund (Argos Od. 17,307)." It is to be added, however, that Homer describes the horse's beautiful appearance fairly often, though briefly.

3 See Manfred Faust, Die künstlerische Verwendung von *κύων* 'Hund' in den homerischen Epen, Glotta 48 (1970) 10–16, and Fränkel, Gleichnisse 63–69 and 75f.

4 It is true that an unwanted litter was cruelly disposed of by dashing the heads against the stony ground. This is the way for the Cyclops to handle Odysseus' comrades before devouring them (Od. 9,288–290), but the brutal ogre is also described as softening to make a tender speech to the old ram which used to lead the flock (447ff.).

θυραωρούς (22,69), Priam refers to the same function of watching the house. We have seen that Homer in a similar way recommends a gentle treatment of horses, so that they might be able to withstand great exertion in fighting (Il.2,383–385). Even those dogs, however, that were merely kept ἀγλαΐης ἕνεκεν (Od.17,310) must have been carefully groomed, in order to be good enough for serving as worthy status symbols. The dogs in the Homeric simile which illustrates the behaviour of the wolves and lions guarding Circe's home (in reality human beings transformed by her) may have been such useless pets:

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἀμφὶ ἄνακτα κύνες δαίτηθεν ἰόντα
σαίνωσ'· αἰεὶ γάρ τε φέρει μειλίγματα θυμοῦ (Od.10,216f.).

There is here no practical purpose – or at least Homer does not mention one explicitly – for which the dogs should have been fondled by their master.

On the other hand, it is to be noted that Homer never describes a master caressing either a dog or a horse. Hesiod's advice πρηΰνειν ἐπὶ χεῖρα τιθείς (Works and Days 797), concerning sheep, cattle and mules as well as the dog, is easily misunderstood to mean gentle caressing,[1] but the author, in fact, is dealing with superstitious measures which were taken once a month. In any case, Odysseus' emotion when he saw his dear old Argos after twenty years, as described by Homer, expresses the master's tender feeling for his favourite dog perhaps even better than caressing would have done. It is worth adding that Odysseus was not allowed for Eumaeus' sake to reveal his emotion in too conspicuous a way, since the intrigue required his anonymity.

Homer's attitude towards dogs is far from being as uniform as might be inferred from the above account. In addition to instances of friendly treatment and even deep sympathy, there are passages which show an entirely negative feeling for the dog. In order to prove the duality of authorship for the Homeric epics, Rhys Carpenter remarks that "to the poet of the Iliad dogs are unclean scavengers ... but the poet of the Odyssey is a friend and lover of the race of dogs" (Folk Tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics, Berkeley 1946, 181). It is true that dogs are mentioned as scavengers thirty times in the Iliad and only five times in the Odyssey, but the older epos is set in a camp in the territory of the enemy, the dogs being probably semi-starved by lack of provisions, whereas the Odyssey mostly describes normal peace time conditions.[2] Homer never specifies any particular race of dogs, but it seems

1 As, for example, by Otto Keller, Die antike Tierwelt I (Leipzig 1909) 129.

2 See J.A. Scott, Dogs in Homer, CW 41 (1947–48) 227. A detailed list of passages where dogs are mentioned as scavengers is given by Faust, Künstlerische Verwendung 11–24.

reasonable to suppose that the set formula about dogs devouring dead bodies is concerned with undomesticated pariahs, which have always characterized the oriental countries. This, then, would be another literary topos of earlier oriental origin, as the frequent lion similes in the Iliad possibly are.[1] The view that dogs were unclean scavengers certainly contributed to the use of κύων as a term of abuse.[2]

In conclusion, I may try a brief summary of my paper. Human sympathy felt for wild animals is expressed in Homeric similes, which illustrate various virtues, such as bravery and parental devotion. These virtues are also described in similes dealing with domestic animals, of which dogs and horses are the ones mentioned most appreciatively in the Homeric epics. With the exception of the set formula about dogs devouring dead bodies and the use of κύων as a term of abuse, Homer's attitude towards the dog is friendly and sympathizing, in the Odyssey in particular, whereas the martial atmosphere of the Iliad gives more occasion for praising the intimate relationship between the master and his noble steeds.

1 See Richter, Landwirtschaft H 80. Otto Körner, Die homerische Tierwelt (2nd ed., Munich 1930) 19, also makes a sharp distinction between domestic dogs and wild pariahs.

2 For details see Faust, Künstlerische Verwendung 11–21 and 25f., and Fränkel, Gleichnisse 85. The difference between the nineteen terms of abuse in the considerably longer Iliad and the twelve in the Odyssey is not significant.