

KENNETH CLARK

# Animals and Men

*Their relationship as reflected in Western art  
from prehistory to the present day*

*With 55 illustrations, 7 in colour*

*Edited with notes by*

MASAIE MATSUMURA

THE SIGN OF



A GOOD BOOK

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## まえがき

本書は Kenneth Clark の *Animals and Men* (Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1977) の全文と、56 点の図版を含む。原著には約 210 点の図版が収められているが、テキスト版としての制約に伴って、いずれも捨て難いそれらの図版の全部を再録するわけにはいかず、本文の理解に不可欠と思われるものを精選して、結局この数にしぼることになった。とはいえ、原著の持ち味の大部分は十分に生かし得たことに、私はひそかな喜びを感じている。

Kenneth Clark (1903- ) に関しては、今さらあらためて紹介するまでもない。すでに *Leonardo da Vinci* (1939), *Landscape into Art* (1949), *The Nude* (1956), *Civilisation* (1967), *Another Part of the Wood: A Self-Portrait* (1974) 等が邦訳されており、またテキスト用として編纂された作品も少なくない。思えば私が *The Listener* を通して、BBC で放映されていた *Civilisation* を最初に読んだのは、今から 15 年くらいも前のことであつた。その後 BBC 製作のそのフィルムが、日本でも NHK 教育テレビを通して全国に紹介されるようになったのは、偶然にもちょうど私が同僚の金城盛紀氏と組んで、この作品をテキスト用として編纂し、英宝社から出版しかけた頃ではなかったかと思う。その後昭和 50 年夏に、ロンドンの Albany House で 1 時間余りにわたって、直接に Kenneth Clark と語り合う機会を持ち得たのも、私にとってはなつかしい限りである。

*Animals and Men* は、Kenneth Clark が今まで出した多くの著作の中でも、全く独自のものだといってよい。実にユニークな感じをあたえてくれる本である。著者の「まえがき」によれば、本書出現のそもそもの動機は、International Trustee of the World Animals の Fleur Cowles から「芸術における動物」に関する執筆を依頼されたことであつた。主題としての適否を考えた末、「動物と人間との関係」という全くの未開拓の問題を論じることになった、ということである。これは一見きわめて身近な問題ではある。しかしエジプトやギリシアに始まる西欧文明の歴史という長い時代

#### 4 まえがき

の流れの中で、動物と人間との関係が、実際にどのような変遷をたどったかについて、真剣に考えられたためしがあっただろうか。人間の生活とあまりにも密接な関係にあって、しかも多くの謎を含んだ問題であるだけに、Kenneth Clark がページを追って打ち出す事実の解明に、驚きを感じずにはいられない。彼は周知のとおり博覧強記である。この斬新な問題を語る彼の態度には、まことに面目躍如たるものがあり、また読者にとって興味しんしんたるものがある。

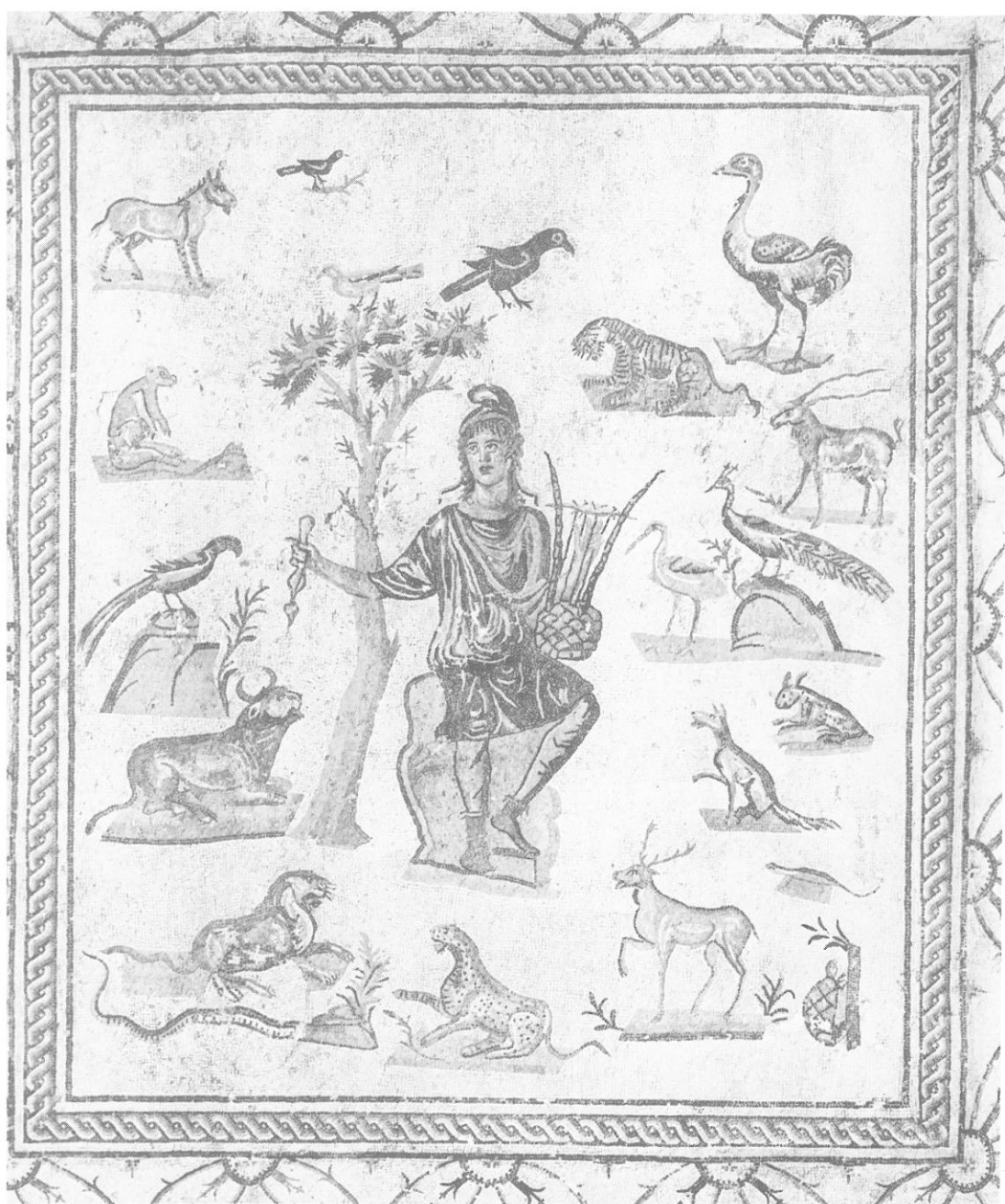
とはいうものの、本文に注をつけるに当たっては、一方ならぬ苦労があったことも、告白しておかねばならない。著者の縦横無尽の資料の取り扱い方と、広汎該博な知識の駆使の前で、菲才を痛感したのは一再ではなかった。なお不備な点に関しては諸賢のご叱正を仰ぎたい。しかしそれだけにまた、あとの充足感もひとしおであったのも、偽りのないところである。本書をお読みになる学生諸君も、私と同様の実感を味わって下さるものと確信する。と同時に、本書が、Kenneth Clark が最後のところで述べているように、人間ととも「はらから」の関係にあった動物たちに対して、新たな感動を喚び起こすほうに少しでも役に立つなら、編注者の大きな喜びとするところである。

1980年8月

松 村 昌 家

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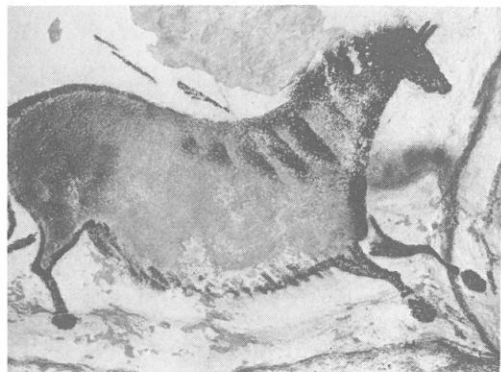
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1 Orpheus charming the Animals  
Roman, 1st half of 3rd cent.  
Mosaic pavement, 614 × 555  
Museo Nazionale Archeologico, Palermo

## *Sacred and Symbolic Animals*

THERE IS in the Florentine Bargello a leaf of an ivory diptych which shows Adam accompanied by the animals. He sits a little apart from them, but smiles down at them with a dreamy expression on his face, and the animals seem perfectly at their ease. It must date from the fourth century, when representations of 5 Orpheus were still common. The Golden Age, Orpheus singing to the beasts (pl. 1), the Garden of Eden, even Noah's entry into the Ark, these are necessary allegories of times when men and animals lived together in harmony. They filled an imaginative need; but, alas, they were no more than myths. Through- 10 out recorded history man's feelings about animals have been complex, changeable and contradictory, made up of fear, admiration, greed, cruelty and love. But why did the harmony of the Golden Age never exist? The answer lies in that faculty which was once considered man's highest attainment, a gradual realiza- 15 tion that the sounds he uttered could be so articulated as to describe experience. He discovered words, he could communicate with other men; and so when it came to satisfying his hunger, he could outwit the inarticulate animals. He could tell his fellow men how to dig pits and sharpen spears. We have no 20 verbal evidence of this early stage in man's history, except for some traditions repeated by the African Bushmen and the Australian aboriginals. But we have a quantity of visual evidence,

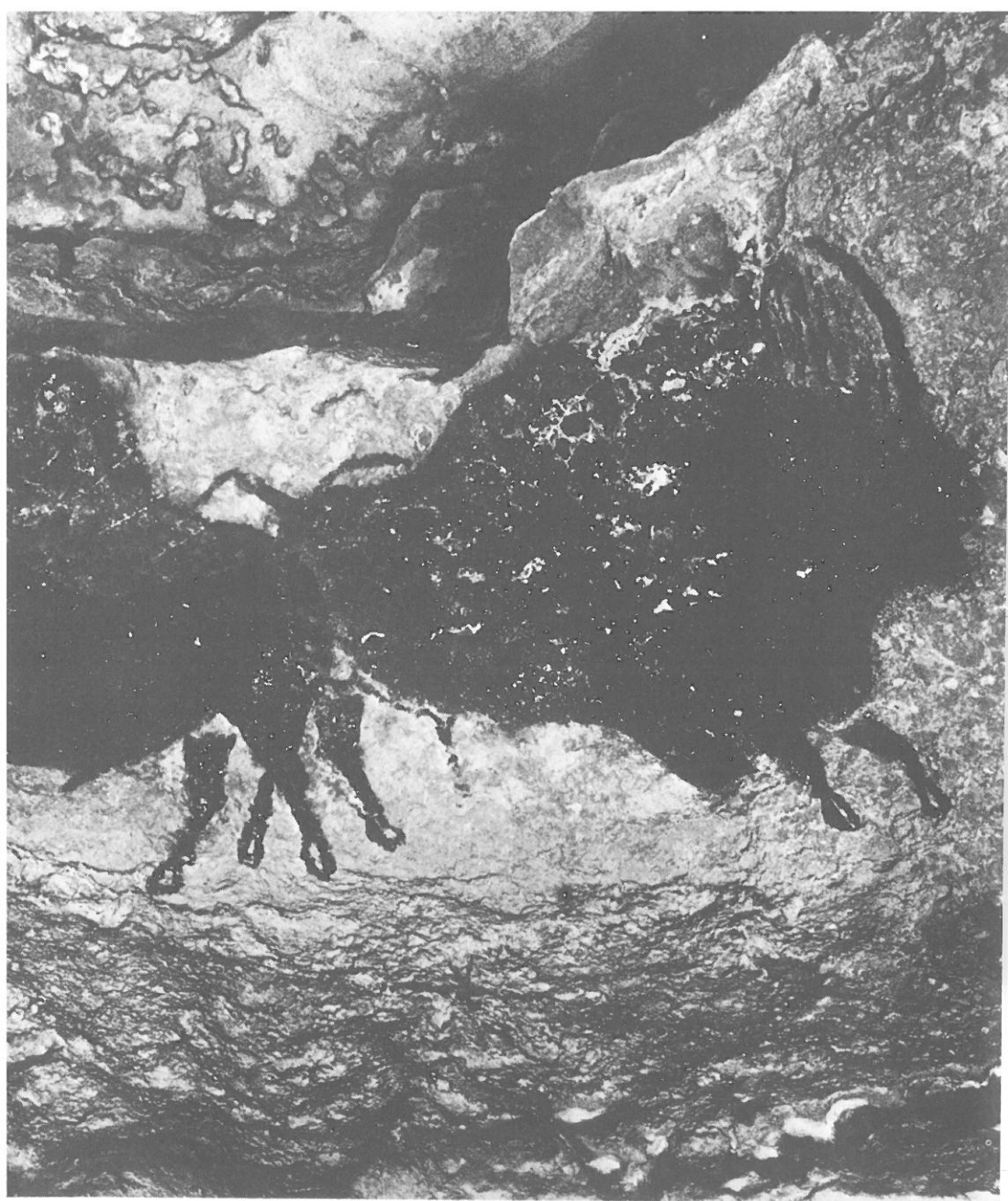


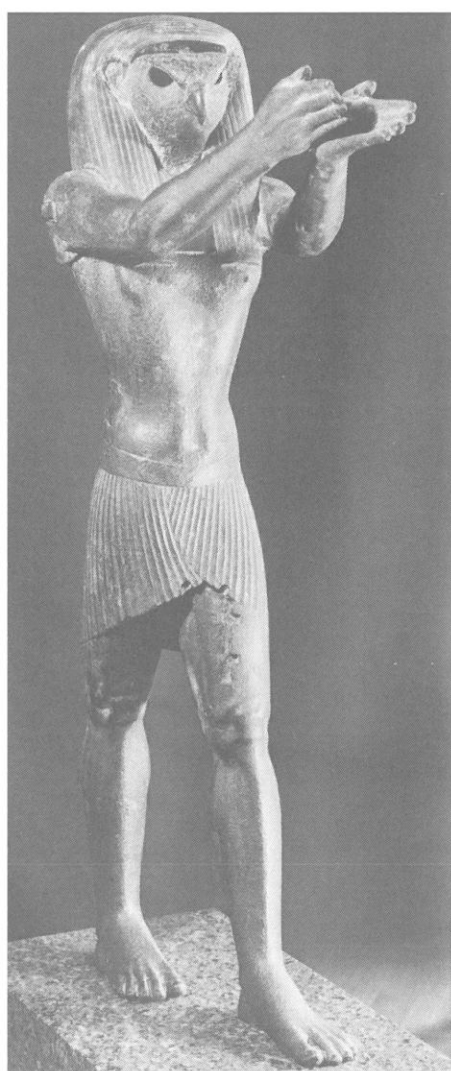
2 Horses  
Upper Palaeolithic cave  
painting, c. 20,000 BC  
Lascaux, Dordogne



3 Two bison  
Upper Palaeolithic cave  
painting, c. 20,000 BC  
Lascaux, Dordogne

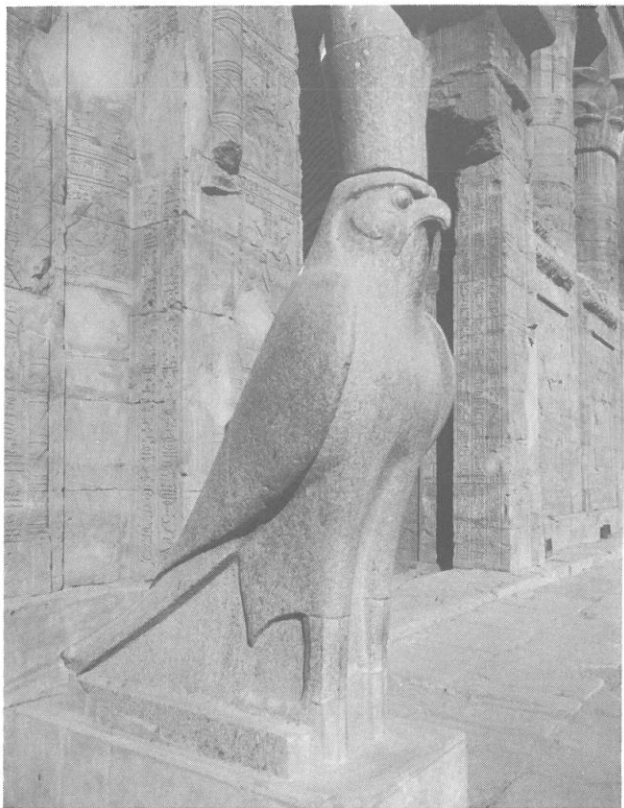






5 Horus making a libation  
 Egyptian, 19th Dynasty, 1587–1375 BC  
 Bronze, h. 94  
 Louvre, Paris

4 Horus as a Falcon  
 Egyptian, 26th Dynasty, 672–525 BC  
 Granite, h. c. 305  
 Courtyard of temple, Edfu



going back to the stone age, in the remains of painting on caves like those at Lascaux and Altamira (pls. 2 & 3). These are popularly known through dishonest reconstructions by archaeologists, which give an entirely false impression of them. In fact they are little more than blots and scratches; but amongst them 5 are undeniable likenesses of bison and other animals. We may ask what induced man, who lived by hunting, to cover the walls of his caves with these most vivid and accurate depictions of his antagonists. Prehistorians give different explanations, usually based on material arguments. These paintings, they say, 10 were intended to give men power over the animals, and so increase their success in hunting. That the representation of a creature may be treated as a substitute for that creature, and confer magical powers, was, and has remained, true. Witches and witch doctors transfix models of the person they would 15 destroy, and in at least one of the early caves, known as the Trois Frères, the animals are shown pierced with spears. But can this be true of the lively, energetic animals that can be dimly discerned on the uneven walls of Altamira? The few men who appear in Lascaux cut very poor figures compared to the 20 vigorous animals. Can we seriously believe that they thought they were gaining power over their magnificent companions? Are they not rather expressing their envy and admiration? We must suppose, and Bushmen within living memory confirm it, that in prehistoric times the relationship between men and 25 animals was closer than we can imagine. Man had barely learnt the use of tools, and his speech was rudimentary. Animals were in the ascendant, and distinguished from man less by their intellectual limitations than by their greater strength and speed. Personally I believe that the animals in the cave paintings are

records of admiration. 'This is what we want to be like,' they say, in unmistakable accents; 'these are the most admirable of our kinsmen'; and my guess seems to be confirmed by the next stage in man's relationship with animals: the choice of an animal  
 5 as the sacred symbol of their group: what is loosely called totemism. Hunting for their necessary food, and admiring to the point of worship a life-endowment greater than their own, from the earliest times there was established this dual relationship that has persisted to the present day.

10 Totemism has existed, perhaps spontaneously, all over the world. But it was strongest and most complex in Africa; and, in so far as the early Egyptians must have been in large part of African descent, it is in Egypt that we first see totemism turning into what we may call religion. So strong were the vestiges of  
 15 totemism that in their art the Egyptians continually attempted to integrate man and animal. Men, whose bodies are models of human perfection, retain the heads of birds and animals throughout Egyptian history. These animal heads, especially that of the wolf Anubis, are an obstacle to our admiration of Egyptian  
 20 art: the reverse process of the Greeks, which produced the centaur and the harpy, seems both biologically and aesthetically a more acceptable form of integration. But at a very early date the Egyptians evolved the idea of the sacred animal, the equal and protector of the god-king; and sacred animals are the sub-  
 25 ject of the first pieces of sculpture that can, in the highest sense of the word, be described as works of art.

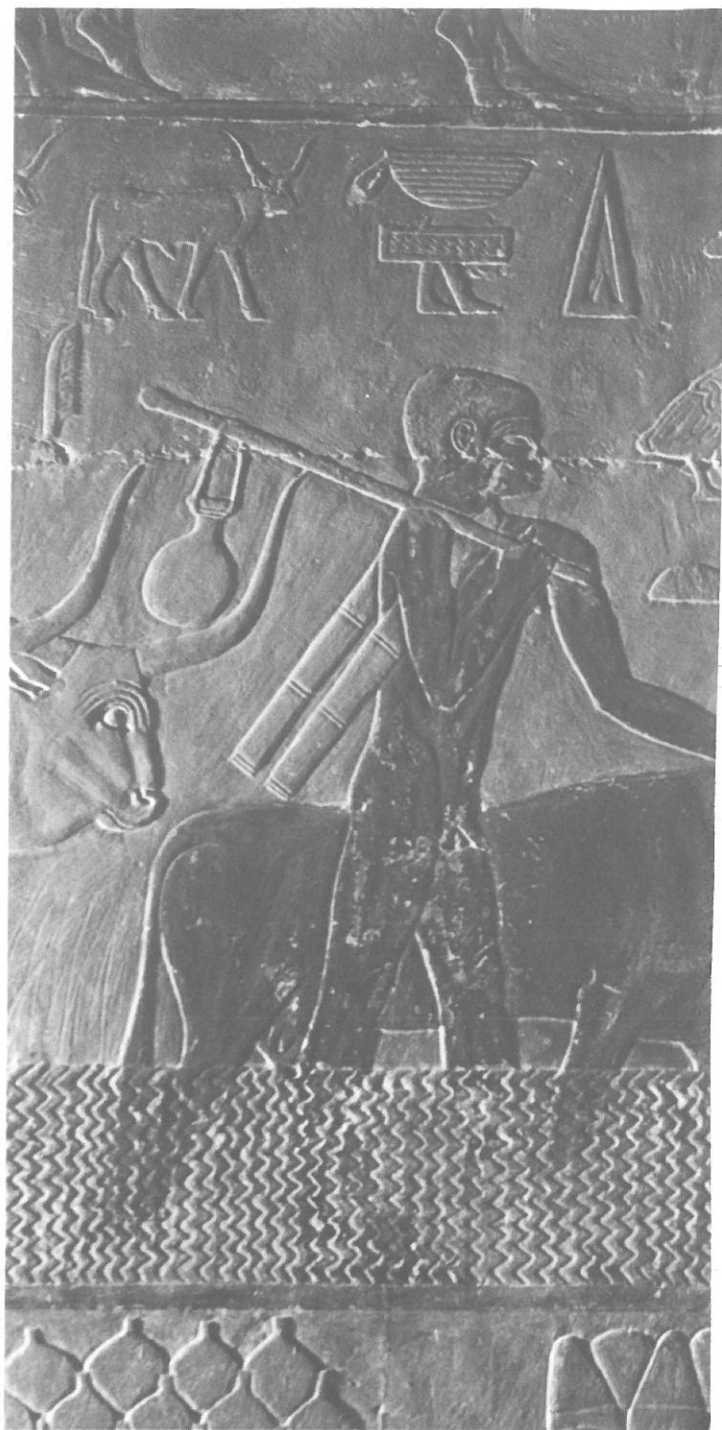
Of all sacred animals Horus (pl. 4) was the most absolutely a god; the Horus relief in the Louvre (pl. 5) has the air of finality, the commanding simplicity, of a great religious image. The other sacred animals of Egyptian art pass down a diminishing

scale of sanctity. Hathor, the cow, was particularly favoured by certain pharaohs like Hatshepsut; the ram was sacred to Amun, as all visitors to Karnak will be painfully aware. Toth, the ape, was sacred but, so to say, localized, without the universal power of Horus; the same is true of the ibis, and of a much later arrival 5 in the animal pantheon, also an incarnation of Toth, the cat.

We may easily feel that there are too many sacred animals in Egyptian art. Yet all of them produced images of great sculptural beauty which gain some of their power from the sacrosanct 10 uniformity of the original idea. Small variations, which may have passed unnoticed by the believer, were due to the fact that these images were made by artists—the Egyptian artist was far from being the self-effacing craftsman of other early civilizations, and knew how to give a prototype the life-giving force of variety.

Apart from this greater life-endowment, there was another 15 reason why animals were held sacred. Their inability to speak made them mysterious. All gods should be inscrutable. 'I am that I am.' If the Horus could have answered the questions addressed to him or Hathor commented on the sudden rise in her status in the Middle Kingdom, they would have lost some 20 of their authority.

But beyond these godlike attributes the quantity of semi-sacred animals in ancient Egypt owes something to a state of mind that by no means always accompanies religious feeling: love. The Egyptians loved animals. This statement will be 25 dismissed by anthropologists as sentimental modern nonsense; but it is evident that the Egyptian feeling for animals was far closer to our own than that of any other ancient people. We can see this in the reliefs that decorate tombs around Sakkara (pl. 6). High officials, like Ti and Mereruka, took so seriously the care of



6 Return of the herd  
Egyptian, c. 2300 BC  
Limestone relief with  
traces of painting  
Tomb of Ti, Sakkara





their flocks and herds that they covered the walls of their tombs with scenes of husbandry. These reliefs show that the Egyptians tried to domesticate animals of all sorts, but succeeded only with those which are our companions today, dogs and cats, and  
 5 those which still occupy our farmyards. What a strange operation of nature that for five thousand years man has been able to domesticate sheep and cattle, and not roe deer? Cats were pets a thousand years before they were considered sacred, and the story in Herodotus that when a house is on fire the first thought  
 10 of an Egyptian household is to save the cats—‘they pass them from one to another, while the house burns down’—is as much a reflection of love as of totemism. The reliefs of animal life in Old Kingdom tombs are inexhaustibly informative and touching. One of the most familiar shows a farmer carrying a calf on his  
 15 back with the mother cow following and licking it. Where in the Graeco-Roman or the Semitic world could such an incident have been sympathetically observed and recorded?

Such were the feelings of harmony that could be developed in the secure, continuous pastoral life on the banks of the Nile.  
 20 In the harsher conditions of that other early civilization which for convenience we may call Mesopotamian such sentiments could not exist. The two great achievements of Mesopotamia, from Ur onwards, were the creation of cities and the invention of a written language. The cities accumulated wealth, traded and  
 25 fought with one another, but, in so far as animals entered the Mesopotamian mind, they were symbols of strength and ferocity. This is how they appear in the earliest cylinder seals, and they continue to confront one another in a manner that we have come to call ‘heraldic’. In later Mesopotamian art lions are the chief subject of sculptured friezes, and appear as guardians outside

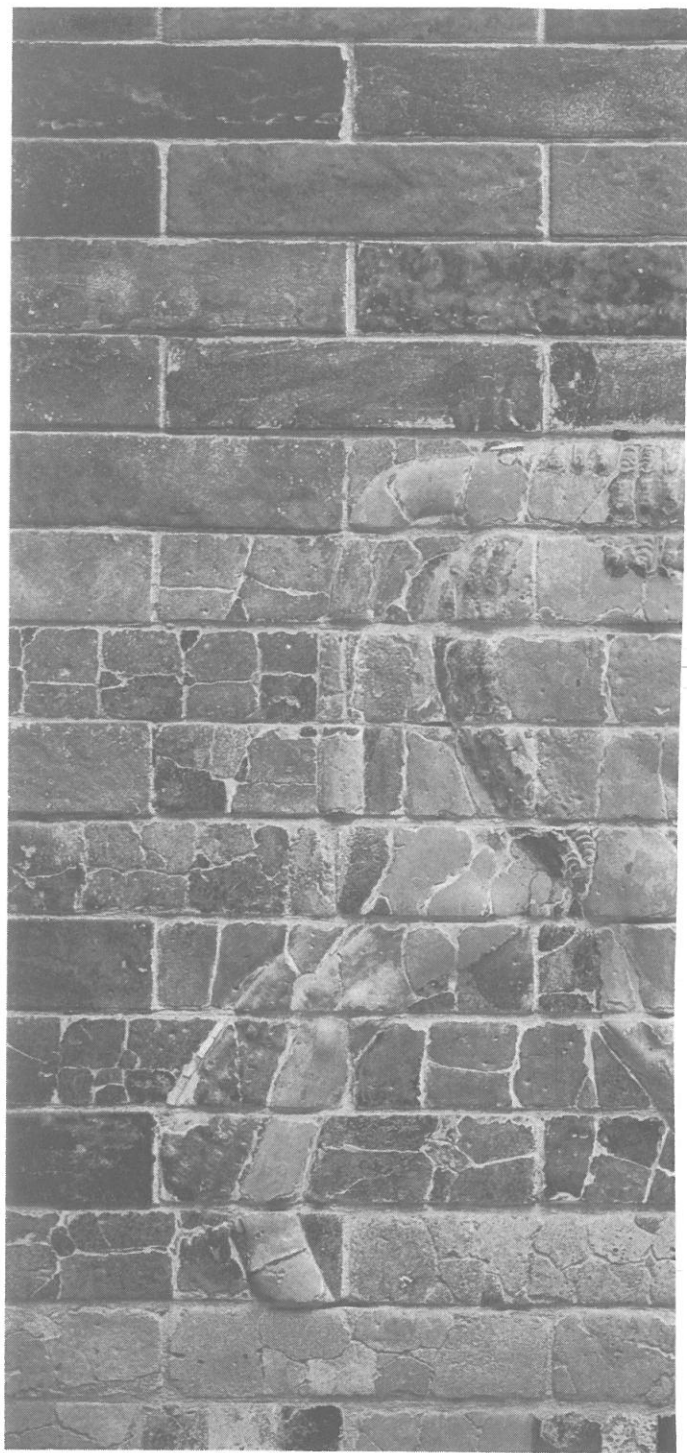


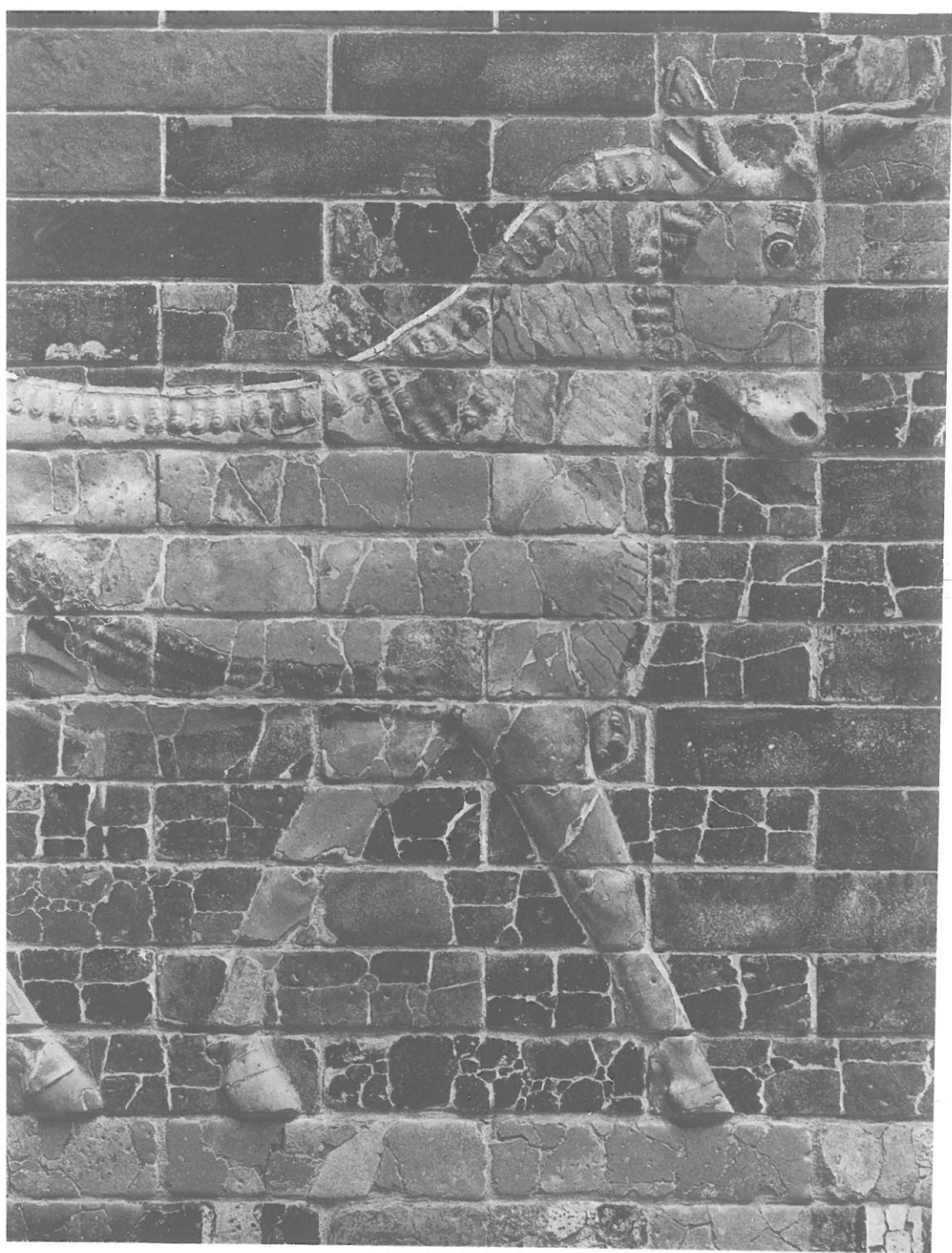
the doors of palaces and temples. The sense of kinship with animals has been superseded by an overawed recognition of their strength, which can be used to symbolize the terrible power of the king. Love has changed into an exploitation of fear.

5

There is no need to explain why lions and bulls were the semi-sacred animals of the Middle East. Their strength and potency made them the obvious symbols for a succession of war-like kingdoms. The bull illustrated in pl. 7 is Babylonian. In Persia they might have had wings which would have made them 10 supernatural, but hardly more awe-inspiring. But it is worth recording two curious episodes in the history of the bull as a symbol of power, the first quite early in the history of the ancient world, the other very late. The first is the introduction of the bull as a spectacle in Knossos, in about the year 1500 BC. 15 Of this, of course, we have no information except what is provided by scanty, and often suspect, visual images. But there is no doubt that a bull was let loose in an arena, where athletes, both male and female, teased it with extraordinary agility. Anthropologists would no doubt wish to interpret this as some kind of religious 20 ceremony; but the Cretans of the second millennium seem to have been less religiously minded than their contemporaries on the mainland, and, in spite of the legend of the Minotaur, I incline to think that this was simply a form of entertainment. If this be so the bull-ring at Knossos was something unique in the 25 ancient world, and the forerunner of the Roman amphitheatre and the Spanish bull-ring, with the difference that we have no representation of the bull being killed, or, for that matter, one of the athletes being gored, although it is almost unthinkable that all of them survived. Perhaps the Cretan bulls were more formi-

- 7 Bull from the Ishtar Gate, Babylon  
Babylonian, c. 580 BC  
Colour-glazed brick relief, h. c. 100  
Vorderasiatisches  
Museum, Staatliche  
Museen, Berlin (East)





dable than the fragmentary representations of them in the frescoes from Knossos would indicate, for almost the most magnificent bulls in art are on a work of Cretan inspiration, although actually made in Greece: the superb gold cups (known as the  
 5 Vaphio Cups) found near Sparta.

The humanizing spirit of Greece treated bulls very differently. It was their potency rather than their ferocity that impressed the Greeks, and thus the bull became a favourite embodiment of Zeus, eloping with the not unwilling Europa, as we see him on  
 10 a Greek vase, and in Titian's masterpiece. Finally we must consider the confusing part played by a bull in the legend of Mithras. At first a god, he becomes a man, a barbarian soldier in a Phrygian cap, who is represented as killing a bull with his sword. The sacred animal has become the victim of sacrifice.  
 15 The importance of this concept is obvious. Although we have no written records of Mithraism, for it was an all-male freemasonry sworn to secrecy, there is no doubt that it was the most formidable rival to Christianity up to the time of Constantine. The sacrifice of the bull as the symbol of redemption and new life  
 20 shows how profound were the spiritual needs of the late antique world, which were answered so differently by the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.

Men had sacrificed animals for thousands of years. It seems to have been one of the most ancient human instincts. As we do  
 25 not feel a trace of it today it is difficult for us to see why the practice became a necessity all over the ancient world. Many books have been written about the subject, in which the arguments are like vast bundles of thread beginning nowhere, ending nowhere, and practically impossible to unravel. But out of this confusing, and often contradictory, evidence a few skeins may

be extracted: propitiation, atonement, the need to assert kinship. While men still felt a kinship with animals, to eat them was a crime against the group, and expiation could be achieved only by a ritual feast in which all were involved. Communion was the first basis of sacrifice. But quite soon the belief grew up that the gods were pleased by sacrifice, particularly by the smell of burnt offerings, in which the food was given solely to them. The more the gods had to be propitiated to avert disaster or secure the success of some enterprise, the more sacrifices they required. *Les dieux ont soif*. Finally, sacrifices could become an assertion of royal or priestly authority. The priest is seen as the visible mediator between the people and the god. Thus in the relationship of animals and men what had at first been an act of atonement and an assertion of kinship becomes an act of pure destruction, in which animals feed the supposed appetites of a greedy god. And yet when we look at the sacrificial cow from the Parthenon frieze, the 'heifer lowing to the skies' of Keats' ode, we are conscious of a certain solemnity.

There will be more to say about the destruction of animals by men later in this introduction; no doubt the massacre of animals in the Roman arena simply to gratify the cruel instincts of the spectators was the most revolting of all these destructions before the nineteenth century. But the long history of animal sacrifice, stretching over more than two thousand years, is a depressing aspect of animals' relationship with men.

In Europe animal sacrifice ended with the establishment of Christianity; and nothing could show more vividly the absolute newness of the Christian religion than the choice of its symbolic animal. After the lions and bulls of Mithras and Mesopotamia came the lamb and the sheep. Innocent, gentle and docile, they



are either the symbol of sacrifice, or exist to follow the will of the Good Shepherd, and to enjoy His protection. In the same spirit the dove takes the place of the eagle or falcon. Although the lamb is alluded to as a symbol of Christian humility in early Christian texts, it does not appear in art till it can safely be substituted for the hermetic fish. The sheep are the chief symbolic animals of the evolved Christianity of the late fifth century, and inhabit the mosaics of Ravenna, beginning with the beautiful representation of the Good Shepherd in the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia.

10

But ancient symbolic images are not easily suppressed. The symbols of the bull, the lion and the eagle make their way back into Christian iconography by a curiously roundabout route. The first vision of the Prophet Ezekiel describes an image in terms which are almost incomprehensible, both visually and philosophically, but which mention four faces, those of a lion, an ox, an eagle and a man. About six hundred years later the author of the Apocalypse, who was so frequently indebted to Ezekiel, speaks of the four beasts that are before the Throne of God. 'The first beast was like a lion, and the second beast was like a calf, and the third beast had the face of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle.' So here they are; our ancient symbolic animals, in a sacred book believed to have been written by one of the Evangelists, a book that had an overwhelming influence in the early Middle Ages; and what could be done with them? The question, like so many in early Christian doctrine, was solved by St Jerome. In his famous commentary on Ezekiel he lays it down that these animals are the proper symbols of the four Evangelists, the eagle for St John, the lion for St Mark, the bull for St Luke and the man for St Matthew. Why spend time

10 GIOVANNI PISANO (c. 1245/50–after 1314)  
Bull of St Luke, 1285–95  
Made for Siena Cathedral façade,  
original in cathedral museum





12 Lion of St Mark, 1490s  
Clock tower, Venice



on a theological fantasy in a book on animals? Because for over seven hundred years almost the only animals in art were representations of the Evangelists. They pass from the extreme (but marvellously beautiful) stylization of the Echternach Gospels (pl. 8 in colour section) and the Books of Kells (pl. 9 in colour section) to the magnificent realism of the bull on the façade of Siena Cathedral (pl. 10), and on Donatello's altar of the Santo in Padua (pl. 11 in colour section) to the lion of St Mark on the Piazzetta (pl. 12), or Donatello's *Marzocco* in Florence.

Three other categories of what may be loosely classed as symbolic animals occupied the attention of the Middle Ages, early and late. First, there were the monsters who appear frequently in Romanesque sculpture. They are represented biting and tearing their victims and symbolize with irresistible power the energy of evil. Then, at the opposite pole, is the series of MSS. known as bestiaries. The sources of the bestiaries are unknown. The entries often quote the authority of a writer known as the Physiologus (which may mean no more than 'the natural historian'), about whom we may conjecture from internal evidence that he lived in late Antiquity, although probably in Christian times. The bestiary claimed to give information, and some of it did in fact go back to Pliny. But the greater part was based on legend and folklore. For example, a beautiful drawing in a MS. in the University Library in Cambridge shows the eagle flying up to the sun in order to burn away its old plumage and the film over its eyes, after which it can take a rejuvenating plunge into the sea. No bestiary is complete without the famous scene of sailors anchoring on the back of a whale which they had mistaken for an island (pl. 13). Another example of the fabulous shows the dog seeing the reflection of its cake in

mu. p. est equi fluctuat. De balena.



- 13 Whale from a bestiary  
English, late 12th cent.  
Bodleian Library, Oxford,  
Ms. Ashmole 1511, f. 86v.

- 14 FRANCIS BARLOW (c. 1626–1702)  
Aesop surrounded by the Animals  
Engraved frontispiece to Barlow's  
*Aesop's Fables with his life*, 1665



the water, and losing it in his greedy attempt to get two.

This leads us on into Aesop. He is a figure almost as legendary as the Physiologus. The fables associated with his name grow naturally out of the moralizing element of the bestiaries; but they were addressed at first to a more popular audience, and 5 illustrated with drawings and woodcuts much humbler than the decorative and imaginative illuminations of the earlier MSS. The concept that man can learn from the wisdom of animals has a widespread, almost a humorous appeal, and revives in a new form the sense of kinship; and fables continued to be 10 popular till the mid nineteenth century. In the work of La Fontaine they even inspired great literature. The engraving on pl. 14 of Aesop (who was reputed to have been a hunchback) surrounded by the animals and drawing wisdom from them—a sort of inverted Orpheus—is from an English book of 1665. 15 Its illustrations stand mid-way between the earlier and the later Aesops. The illustrator, Francis Barlow, used motifs already circulated in European prints and books, and in turn his designs became the basis of the last symbolic animals to gain currency, the animals on old-fashioned inn signs. Here, of course, there is 20 also a heraldic origin; the exquisite White Hart of Richard II was never forgotten. I do not know how many of these encouraging symbols have survived the 'takeover' of the big brewers, so have illustrated them by three admirable drawings for inn signs in an album by a pupil of Wootton that must have served 25 as the sample book of some itinerant painter.

Finally, I must mention three pictures of animals done after the age of symbolic art was over, but which make their effect as symbols with unforgettable power. The first represents an enraged swan, and is the masterpiece of a relatively obscure

Netherlandish painter, Jan Asselijn. It stands out from the ordinary bird and animal pictures of the seventeenth century—a somewhat monotonous genre at the best of times—by its heroic ferocity; and we at once recognize it as a symbol of the defiance  
 5 of tyranny. The second, painted at the high noon of naturalism, is Landseer's *Monarch of the Glen* (pl. 15). Nothing in Victorian literature expresses so completely the commanding self-satisfaction of the period. This was no doubt the sentiment of a vast majority. But a small minority, the Pre-Raphaelites, took the  
 10 opposite view, and one of their number, Holman Hunt, expressed it in what is one of the few religious pictures of the age, *The Scapegoat* (pl. 16). It was painted with incredible difficulty, on the shores of the Dead Sea, and Holman Hunt described in detail how he wished to make his goat a symbol of sacrifice, using  
 15 both the Bible and the Talmud as his sources of inspiration. When it was exhibited a few critics were disturbed by the expression of Christlike resignation on the goat's face. The majority thought it was just a silly old goat, and could not imagine why Mr Hunt had gone all that way to paint it. Men had ceased to think  
 20 symbolically, and their feelings about animals had changed from veneration to curiosity. It was a loss to the human imagination. Whether it will ultimately be a gain to the understanding of animals remains to be seen.

15 EDWIN LANDSEER (1802–73)

Monarch of the Glen, 1851

Canvas, 163.8 × 168.9

Messrs. John Dewar and Sons Ltd.



16 WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT (1827–1919)

Scapegoat, 1854

Canvas, 85.7 × 138.5

The Trustees of The Lady Lever

Art Gallery, Port Sunlight





Greek bronze of a cow found at Herculaneum  
2nd half of the 5th cent. / l. 53  
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

## *Animals Observed*

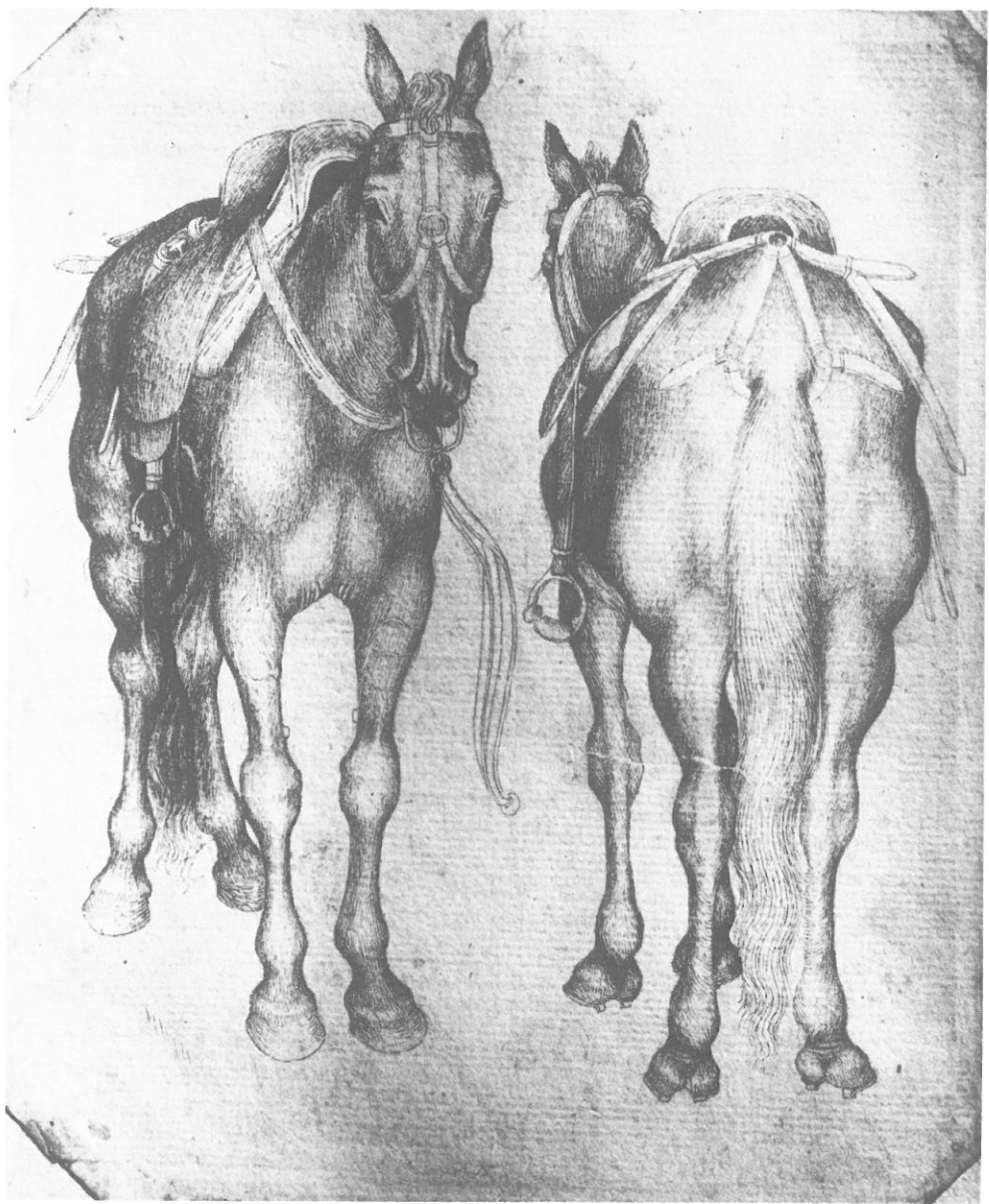
IN REPRESENTING their fellow men and women artists have tended to idealize them. Style, fashion, status and the need to flatter have intervened, and the works of art in which men have been observed impartially are relatively rare. Perhaps the fact that men and women have to be represented clothed is partly 5 responsible, for the head is insensibly adapted to the fashionable character of the dress; and the most penetrating observations of human beings are those like Roman busts, in which the head is shown in isolation. None of this applies to the representation of animals. They do not need to be flattered or conform to the 10 dictates of fashion. The artist can indulge his curiosity with so little regard for style that a bird by Giovannino de' Grassi of the late fourteenth century can be almost identical with one by Thomas Bewick of the late eighteenth.

The impulse to represent animals as accurately as possible was 15 widespread in Hellenistic art, and dates back to earlier Greek times if, as is usually supposed, the admirable bronze of a cow (opposite) in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris is really fifth-century BC. Animals were amongst the most popular examples of antique sculpture simply because their realism came as a 20 pleasant change from the monotonous idealism of Hellenistic figure sculpture; and the great collectors of the Renaissance competed for them. The Grand Duke of Tuscany won the prize

with his enormous dog, which still greets the exhausted sightseer who has climbed the stairs of the Uffizi. But the Vatican won on numbers, and could present a complete Sala degli Animali, where I confess I linger with more amusement than in some of  
 5 the corridors of idealized humanity. I even enjoy those aesthetically disreputable works of Renaissance craftsmanship, the small bronzes which are casts of an actual animal.

The first attempt to represent an unusual animal (the naïve precursor of Dürer) is Matthew Paris's drawing of the elephant  
 10 given by St Louis to Henry III, in which he has been sufficiently curious to draw a detail of the trunk. But in the mid-thirteenth century a painter was not capable of very accurate representation, and it is only in the late fourteenth century that one finds real precision. It appears chiefly in the representation of birds.  
 15 They had an inexhaustible fascination for the medieval mind and eye, because they were free, decorative and relatively unencumbered by symbolic associations. They were simply objects of delight. Birds abound in the margins of fourteenth-century MSS., the most beautiful being in the Sherborne Missal; and  
 20 amongst the source-books which were circulated to the various scriptoria were drawings of the various birds and beasts that might be thought appropriate to the margin of a book, or on a piece of *opus Anglicanum* embroidery. At least two of these so-called sketch books have survived. The first is in the Pepysian  
 25 Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, apparently English and datable before 1400, and is itself clearly a compilation from other source-books. The most accomplished pages it contains are covered higgledy-piggledy with representations of birds. They were probably not drawn from life, but were derived from life drawings done with great accuracy and power of observation.





17 PISANELLO (c. 1395–c. 1455)  
Horse with slit nostrils, front and back views  
Pen, traces of black chalk on white paper, 20 × 16.5  
Louvre, Paris

The variety of birds is astonishing. Clearly there existed in the Middle Ages a number of bird-watchers almost as patient and observant as those of today.

The birds in the Pepysian MS. are not copied by a very skilful hand. But a few years later an artist of much greater distinction set himself to the same task. This was Giovannino de' Grassi, whose 'sketch book' is in the Communal Library of Bergamo. As before, I think we have to do with a compilation, but one done with such taste and precision that the drawings qualify as works of art. Giovannino de' Grassi also includes a number of other animals—lions, leopards, hares—which occupied man's curiosity at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and it was from this fashion, centring on Verona, that conjunction of Gothic and Italian culture, that there emerged the first great observer of animals of the Renaissance, Pisanello.

Pisanello's eye rested impartially on animals and human beings. The portraits on his wonderful medals leave us in no doubt that they are exact likenesses, done with sharp human insight. But on the versos of the medals there is, in practically every case, an animal. By some instinctive sympathy Pisanello seems to have felt that they must be made complementary to the men and women on the obverse. So it is not surprising to find among his drawings in his sketch book in the Louvre studies of animals more accurate than any which had preceded, or than most that were to follow, them. He looks without prejudice. His drawings of horses (pl. 17) are far from the proud rotundities of Antiquity or the Baroque. They are tired, thin and knobbly, and their heads show an almost human resignation. His other animals—the seated cow, most delicately observed, the dog, the fox—are drawn with an equal detachment. Yet we cannot avoid

the feeling that this tireless observation of animals expresses a deep conviction, and this feeling is supported by the fact that several of the drawings were used in a picture of St Eustace in the National Gallery, London (pl. 18 in colour section). St Eustace, as we learn from the *Golden Legend*, was a Roman soldier passionately devoted to hunting. One day, when following a splendid stag, it turned to face him, and 'when he looked upon it carefully he saw between its antlers a holy cross, that shone more brightly than the sun, and on it the image of Jesus Christ'. In the *Golden Legend* this is made the instrument of his conversion to Christianity<sup>10</sup> but Pisanello has transformed it into a parable of the unity of God's creatures. He has filled his small panel with other animals, so that the whole scene has the character of a Garden of Eden.

How little we know about the art of the fifteenth century! By chance one or two sketch books have survived, including that of<sup>15</sup> Pisanello in the Louvre. But what about Paolo Uccello, whose very name commemorates his love of birds? Hardly an animal by Uccello survives except for his powerfully stylized horses in the *Rout of San Romano* pictures (pl. 19), and in an engraving which must unquestionably derive from him. The enchanting<sup>20</sup> arabesque of hounds and deer prancing through a dark wood in the Oxford picture shows us how much we have lost. But by the end of the century painters were more conscious of their personalities, and ready to exploit their gifts; and none more so than Albrecht Dürer. His skill in setting down exactly what he<sup>25</sup> saw was at the command of an insatiable curiosity. He was like the amassers of those early collections of curiosities that were to grow into our modern museums; only he did not need to keep them, only to draw them. From his early period comes a monumental crab, a meticulous beetle and a rhinoceros in full



19 PAOLO UCCELLO (c. 1397–1475)  
Rout of San Romano, 1450s  
Wood, 183 × 319.5  
National Gallery, London