

ANIMALS IN AESOP AND THE JATAKAS

The general contention as between Greece and India for an Indian origin for the similar motifs found in Aesopic fables and the Indian jatakas is that India is more the home of folk-story than is Greece. In the same breath is expressed the likelihood that Aesop was a foreigner and may have introduced this genre of story to Greece, coming from (or via) Phrygia.

The reluctance on the part of orientalists who hold this view, especially Asian orientalists, to concede anything to the opposite contention is the result of a prejudice or mistaken notion that, to do so, is to concede everything. What are involved are, however, a relatively few story-motifs which have found their way into the ocean of Indian story. Indeed, in the light of the strong and long presence of Greeks on Indian soil in the centuries that saw the production of a wealth of stories in India, and in the evidence we have of Greek influence in the art of these early centuries, it should be an absense of such literary influence that should be cause for surprise, not the opposite.

By far the strongest point in favour of India in the matter of similar fables in the two civilizations, however, is the negative one that Greece was unfamiliar with certain of the animals which participate in the Aesopic fables. This, by itself, need not award the case to India. A rival claim is now made for Babylonia, where not only would these animals be known but which also reveals in its Wisdom Books, including the *Book of Achiqar*, evidence of the evolution of fable around these very same animals. And this, when taken with that evidence, then considered hostile to the Greek case, of Aesop having come from the East - actually the Near East - would, if anything, revive the Greek claim to originality at least against India. There are those who would even account for the similarity of fable-motifs as between Greece and India by going to the extent of suggesting that India herself may have derived fable and fable-motifs from old Babylonia, or at least having drawn those comparable fable motifs into her repertoire from this source.

One of those who inclined to such a view was B.E. Perry, who, in his *Babrius and Phaedrus* says:

"In the entire Greek tradition there is not, so far as I can see, a single fable that can be said to come either directly or indirectly from an Indian source; but many fables or fable-motifs which make their first appearance in Greek or Near Eastern literature are found later in the *Pancatantra* and other Indian story-books, including the Buddhist *Jatakas*."¹

¹. Loeb Classical Library, London, Camb. Mass. (1965) p. xix.

Besides animals (including birds, fish, reptiles and insects) Aesopic fables involve as participants (a) gods and goddesses (predominantly Zeus, Hermes and Heracles), also abstract gods like Fortune and Oath (b) mythical and historical persons (c) trees, vines and shrubs (d) natural phenomena, like the Sun, the North Wind, Sea and Rivers (e) even artefacts, like pots or files, as in *Pots* (H 422) and *The Snake and the File* (H 146) respectively, (f) parts of things, such as the axle of a cart in *The Oxen and Axles* (H. 479) and parts of beings, such as the stomach and the feet in *The Belly and the Feet* (H. 197) or the tail of the snake which usurped leadership from the head and plunged the whole body in the precipice in *The Tail and Quarters of the Snake* (H. 344). These make fable between each other, but also with men and the animal world, so that the combinations of characters possible is unlimited. In the jatakas, by contrast, inanimate objects or parts of animate or inanimate do not figure as characters, think, talk or act of themselves, while even trees and ponds and such, when they need to be articulate, have it done through some resident sprite, as of air, sea, mountain, tree or even kusa-grass.

Talking animals are in the very nature of fable. Originating in man's association with animals through the course of evolution and into primitive human society, which even then remarked little difference between the basic needs and behaviour in satisfying these, it was natural to accept with animals a like intelligence, motives for conduct and even the possibility of discourse with himself or each other. This assumption survived in fable, even when society had evolved a degree of self-criticism and value-judgement which shaped the end of beast-story into beast-fable.

It is this traditional acceptance of the capacity for thinking, intelligent discourse and conduct evaluation found among human beings that finds no need for apology in Aesopic fables in general when animals, birds, reptiles, fish, and even insects do all these things in all the varied situations in which human beings find themselves. And it is by this visualizing of animal society as hardly different from human society that fable works to draw inferences from the one for the other.

It is unlikely that Aesop himself apologized for the phenomenon of his speaking animals when he narrated fables. The two well-authenticated fables from Aesop, that of *The Fox and the Hedgehog*, (H. 36) which he narrated to good effect in the Assembly of the Samians in defence of an officer charged with embezzlement,² and *The Eagle and the Dung Beetle*, (H. 7), which he used in his own defence when charged with the theft of a gold cup from the temple of Apollo in Delphi, give no evidence of his having done so.³ Aristophanes' yarn of Aesop reprimanding a bitch (*Aesop and the Bitch* (H. 20))⁴

². Aristotle *Rhetoric* ii. 20.

³. Aristotle *Constitution of the Samians* fr. 573 Rose. His source may have been Eugeon of Samos, a writer who lived before the Peloponnesian War and wrote a chronicle called *Horoi Samion*. This must be the fable referred to by

and the caricature of the fabulist on a red-figure cup dated to 460 B.C. and now in the Vatican⁵ evidence him directly addressing animals.

But an occasional fable in the collections come down to us shows an incipient discomfort on the part of the narrator with this phenomenon and so are prefaced with such statements as "Once when animals spoke the same language" when only animals, but of differing species, were involved, or "When animals spoke the same language as men," where the fable involved both animals and men, as though in apology for an absurdity. I do not contribute to the opposite view - that these were formulaistic openings in fable-narration with listeners new to fable, and dropped when the conventions of fable had gained acceptance with the people.

A mythical basis for a society in which beasts had community with men was readily available in the concept of the Golden Age. The traditional description of this imaginary age with which life began on this earth was often modified in use according to the doctrine for which it was required to provide background. In general, one of its characteristics was the friendship, based on kinship, which existed between man and beast. This was accompanied by the detail, introduced by the reincarnationist sects (beginning with Orpheus⁶ and rising to a principal feature in Empedocles - he has the Age of Cypris⁷) of the avoidance of killing living creatures and the eating of their flesh, popularly equated with the Orphic life (*Orphikos bios*⁸) while the idealistic dream of these people was to bring back peace on earth and goodwill among men and animals that

Aristophanes who, in *Wasps* vs. 1446-1449 gives the detail of the theft of the cup. The commentator *ad.loc.* improves on this by saying the cup was planted in Aesop's baggage by the Delphians themselves to incriminate him - an observation reminiscent of the Bible's story of Joseph and Benjamin (*Gen.* 44.12), but which I suggest is independent since I suspect it is reflected in the *Manicora Jataka* (No. 194). An ancient chronological reckoning recorded by Eusebius and also an inscription of 16 A.D. places Aesop's death at Delphi in 564 B.C. For the culpability of the Delphians in this, see Herodotus ii. 135.

⁴. *Wasps* vs. 1402 f.

⁵. Plate I.

⁶. See Aristophanes *Frogs* vs. 1030 - 1036, and in the light of this, Horace *Ars Poetica* 391 f.

⁷. Fr. 128 and 130; see also, for the fall of man fr. 115, and for the primal sin as killing and flesh-eating fr. 136, 137, 138 and 139. In fr. 117 he claims he had once been a bird and a fish himself.

⁸. Euripides *Hippolytus* vs. 952-954; also Plato *Laws* 728c and Horace *loc.cit.*

was thought to have been lost by perversity (usually man's) sometime afterwards in that distant antiquity.

But even in the concept of the Golden Age animals were not conceived of as endowed with thought and speech. What religion had idealized in it was the quality of peaceful coexistence and *amity*. This was what the depiction of Orpheus in art, surrounded by animals of all kinds hearkening to his songs, symbolized. The treatment of this age as a background for the Aesopic fables had necessarily to be somewhat different. For, in the world of the Aesopica, as of any beast fables, the relationship between animals is neither the realistic one in which some are in constant fear of, or hostility with one another, nor yet the relationship idealized by religion like Orpheus, in which all creatures were friends. Rather, the relationship projected upon these creatures, while keeping something of the natural order between them, could be any of those which pertain between human beings in human society. When invested with the human attributes of reasoning, speech and considered action, though animals, they display all the thoughts, emotions and feelings of mankind and act in the same deliberate and rational manner as men in society. All this is of course rendered dramatically plausible in fable (and where a degree of scepticism has crept in, it does so by reference to mythical antiquity, an age secure from the application of reality standards by its very distance from historical times and by its mythical character).

Thus we find Babrius in his prologue introducing his book of fables writing:

"It was a race of just men who first lived on earth, O Branchus, my son, the race which men call Golden. After this there came, they say, another generation, the Silver. We are the third after them, the Iron Race. In the Golden Age all other living creatures had the power of speech and understood such words as we ourselves now use in speaking to each other. Assemblies were held by these creatures in the midst of the forests. Even the pine trees talked, and the leaves of the laurel. The fish swimming about in the sea, chartered with the friendly sailor, and quite intelligibly, too, the sparrows conversed with the farmer. . . . That this was so, you may learn and fully understand from wise old Aesop, who has told us fables in the true manner of prose."

Phaedrus had interferred even more drastically with the illusion which carries us through fable when he defended the feature of talking animals poorly and snaptly by claiming to be jesting (*fictis morantur . . . fabulosa*).

"The substance of which Aesop was the author, then, I have perceived, and I have finished senior an verse. I've told in the tongue of a poet what he has said."

book; it raises laughter and it guides life with wise counsel. However, should anyone choose to ridicule it, because trees speak, not just wild beasts, let him remember that I speak in jest of stories that aren't true."

This humanization of animals by identifying in their natures, or imputing in them qualities of men renders these animals symbolic of human beings in society. This basis of reference between beast and man required of fable thus renders the animal world a copy of the human, with animals standing for broad types of human beings and human behaviour. The lion is lordly and high tempered, the wolf ravenous and unscrupulous, the fox shrewd and manipulating, the crocodile dull but pitiless, the hare timid, the tortoise slow and lugubrious, the monkey imitative and clumsy, the viper vicious and unrelenting - and so on, all standing for natures that are found among men. To quote at length from the *History of Animals* of Aristotle:

"Now here are ways in which animals differ from each other in regard to character. Some are gentle and mild-mannered, and not inclined to be aggressive, as the ox; others are ferocious, aggressive and unteachable, like the wild boar; some are intelligent and timid, as the stag, the hare; others are mean and treacherous, as the snake; others are noble and courageous and high-bred, like the lion; still others are thorough-bred, wild and scheming Again, some are villainous and crafty, as the fox; others are spirited and affectionate and fawning like the dog; some are gentle and easily domesticated, like the elephant; others fight shy and are watchful, like the goose, still others are jealous and self-conceited, like the peacock."¹¹

So that when these creatures, who are incapable of moral judgement or ethical conduct are treated as if they were, the reflection is on the human beings typified by them. At the same time the use of animals in moralistic situations comparable to those in which human beings find themselves in social life, or exemplifying human relationships makes it possible to objectify these situations so that they could be applied neatly and effectively to the human contexts which they suit at any time, any place and with anyone. And not without the quaint humour they bring - the so called *Aisopikon geleion*, when men are made to view themselves caricatured as animals.

A recognition of broad similarities of character between certain beasts, birds etc. and certain types of men was popular in ancient teaching, as it is today. We find Semonides of Amorgos (fl. 664-661 B.C.) resorting to a categorization of women on this basis - e.g. pig-woman, vixen, she-ass, weasel, mare, monkey, bee. It is also

¹¹. 488b 12 - 24.

recognizable in a simplistic concept of metempsychosis, as in the *Laws of Manu*,¹² or in the *Phaedo*,¹³ the *Phaedrus*,¹⁴ the *Republic's* 'Myth of Er'¹⁵ and the *Timaeus*,¹⁶ men who have manifested such and such character being said to find rebirth as creatures marked for similar natures - or sometimes vice-versa, as when Gratiano surmised Shylock as the rebirth of a wolf hanged for his depredations. Those averse to the idea of animal reincarnation have often therefore fallen back on the interpretation of rebirth as animals as no more than rebirth as human beings manifesting the characteristics of the respective animals - rebirth as a lion implying rebirth as a man with lion-like qualities, rebirth as an ape as a man with apish qualities, and so on, as for instance we find in the *Laws* of Plato.¹⁷

Unlike the jatakas, however, which purport to have their basis in the belief of rebirth coupled with the Buddha's phenomenal power of *anamnesis*, both of the past births of himself and of others, the Aesopic fable has no pretence to factuality. It is more in the nature of an elaborate simile or sustained metaphor, often expressible as proverb. Indeed, fables have given rise to similes and proverbs, as similes and proverbs have given rise to fable - a conscious exercise of making the one out of the other possibly having been part of the education of Greek youth aspiring in later antiquity to the art of *rhetorike*.

This of course is not to suggest that fable in the jataka collection had its origin any differently than fable anywhere else in the world - *metempsychosis* and *anamnesis* serve only to coopt these fables as jatakas, or birth-stories of the Buddha, in which the *paccuppannavatthu* is the present life circumstance in which the Buddha is claimed to have narrated the particular story of the past life, while the concluding *samodhana*

12. xii.52 f. See William Jones' translation revised by G.K. Haughton in *Institutes of Hindu Law or the Ordinances of Manu*, London (1825). Here it is told that he who steals gold will be reborn a hemacara bird, who steals grain a rat, of a yellow-mixed metal, a gander, of water a plava (or diver), of meat a vulture, of perfume a musk rat.

13. 82b.

14. 249b - e.

15. 620b - d.

16. 42a - d.

17. 904c - e. See for instance W.Y. Evans-Wentz in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* 2nd ed. London (1949) intro. p. 49 f. See also the animal-like instances in Semonides' poem referred to above, which may easily evoke this sort of identification.

identifies the characters of that past life with the characters of this one, with the Buddha assuming that of the best of them, or (if none is worthy of equation with him) playing the role of observer of the incident. But it is this very quality of the jatakas which help them to accept the feature of talking animals, since these 'births' (even if most of the times they were "when Brahmadaṭṭa ruled in Benares" - a formula equal to "once upon a time", and against a background that always remained identifiable with the life and scenario of contemporary India) belong to an unreckonable past.

Even so, in one jataka, the *Phandana Jataka* (No. 457) a brahmin carpenter is surprised when addressed by a lion and exclaims, "Lo, a miracle! I swear, I never yet saw beast that could talk like a man"; in the *Sigala* (No 113) so is a brahmin, when a jackal addresses him in a human voice, plotting to get him to carry him out of the city in his waist-cloth; in the *Parantapa Jataka* (No. 416) the Bodhisatta comprehends the language of all animals only because he had acquired a spell; otherwise no excuse is made for animals conversing with each other or with men in such past lives. On the other hand, this is hardly found in the *paccuppannavatthu*; a rare case is in the *Dalhadamma Jataka* (No, 409), where the Buddha is addressed by a she-elephant, the erstwhile royal mount of King Udena, now retired from service, destitute and forced to subsist on *ketaka* fruit (a position very similar to that to which the ageing war-horse was reduced in Aesop's *The Horse and the Miller* (H 174b)) and speaks back to him.

This feature of animals who think, speak and act like human beings does not, however, reduce fable to the level of frivolity. To present it as such, as Phaedrus does, is to ignore its instructive and evaluative potential, which made Socrates himself give fable serious consideration on the behest of Apollo in the last days of his life. Afterwards, as mentioned, it was to become a popular element of moral and political instruction in Greek rhetorical schools, as it was the case with the *Katha* literature of India, for the education of prince and pundit. What the quaintness of the fable provides, both by its participants and the situations they develop between themselves, is no more than the degree of amusement (*dulce*), which is dramatic and subtle, to relieve the lesson it holds (its element of the *utile*) from being dull and pontifical.

This unique quality of the fable, including the beast-fable, is seen in its appeal both to children as to the old, and it is not for no reason that, while Aesop was traditionally said to have been grotesque and a stammerer, he was also said to have been old and wise and brought into association with the wisest men of Greece. As observed in passing, animal fable and animal proverbs - with animals who talked - had figured extensively in the Wisdom Books of Babylonia belonging to the millenium between Old Babylonian times (1800 B.C.) and the end of the 7th century B.C. and constituted a rich vein of this ancient wisdom.

I am however as averse to the notion that the Greek fable derived from India and the reference to the animals who populate it as proof of this belief, as I am averse to the hypothesis of a Babylonian origin on the same score. The reason for this is that I find no need to look outside Greece and the wide travel experience of the Greeks in

neighbouring lands from the very earliest times to account for all the animals encountered in the so-called Aesopic fables, granting that an odd fable with an unusual animal or bird may have made its way into the collection at a later date than the bulk of them. Most of the Aesopic animals, a closer look will show, belong to farmyard as against those of jungle in the jatakas. Of the others, many belong to the Greek scene, or were popular in Greece, whether by foreign experience of the Greeks, such as the elephant, the camel and the crocodile, or were imported as pets, like the monkey and the peacock. A cursory review of the beasts, birds, reptiles and fish one meets in the Indian jatakas and the Greek fables may contribute to a settlement of this "evidence" used to argue a Greek borrowing of her reputed Aesopic fables from India - our resort to the jatakas in the Indian case being because they hold the oldest and most extensive range of animals in Indian story and are also such that could have influenced, if they did, the Aesopica.

Upon his coming into possession of the Sinhala version of the *Jataka Book*, the *Pansiya Panas Jataka Potha* in Sri Lanka, the Revd. Spence Hardy had his 'native pundit' reckon the different kinds of beings as which the Buddha had taken birth in his past lives, and the number of times as each.¹⁸ The result is, however, discrepant with the account we find in J.G. Jones' *Tales and Teachings of the Buddha*¹⁹ and cannot be wholly due to Jones' use of the Pali version, the *Jatakavannana*. Rhys-Davids reproduces Spence Hardy's list,²⁰ so that it seems to me that we should go by Jones, who supports his items with references to the respective jatakas.

Leaving aside the large number of the Buddha's incarnations as a divine being or sprite or as a human being in many and variant capacities ranging from king and courtier to low-caste man and robber, it is seen that he had had birth as the following creatures (the frequency is, if anything, only roughly indicative of their popularity among men):

Monkey (11), Lion (10), Parrot (09), Elephant (07), Pigeon (06), Bird (06), Stag (05), Golden Goose (05), Quail (05), Goose (04), Vulture (04), Horse (03), Bull (03), Crow (03), Peacock (03), Naga (03), Fish (03), Garuda King (02), Ox (02), Jackal (02), Rat (02), Lizard (02), Buffalo (01), Dog (01), Pig (01), Iguana (01), Hare (01), Sigala Bird (01), Golden Mallard (01), Cock (01), Fowl (01), Frog (01), Naga King (01).

It would be noted in passing that, notwithstanding all these several kinds of

¹⁸. *Manual of Buddhism - Its Modern Development* London (1853) p. 100.

¹⁹. London (1979) p. 18 - 19.

²⁰. *Buddhist Birth Stories* London (1897) p. 247 Table VII.

creatures as which the Buddha had taken birth, even reaching down to pig and rat, he is never a crocodile - a birth the jatakas gladly accord to his inimical cousin, Devadatta. As a serpent he assumes the life of a Naga, the hooded royal cobra venerated in Indian religion, folklore and art. But in all these former births he is always the male of the species, never a female. As Jones points out, animals held to be specifically sacred in Hindu literature, like the monkey and the elephant, are popular, with 11 and 7 births in each, but though he had assumed the life of a bull, ox and even buffalo, he was never in these births a cow, so especially revered by the Hindus. This attitude to the female, Jones observes, and correctly, is merely consistent with the general attitude towards women in the jatakas²¹ - an attitude no doubt conditioned by the threat they posed to the celibacy incumbent on the monkish life.

Also worth observing is that, while the lion is frequent enough in the jatakas - and the Buddha was himself 10 times a lion, the tiger, whose presence in the jungles of Northern India was more widespread and impressive, is a rarer occurrence, while the Buddha himself was never born as one. It is a lion-skin, found in the original Aesopic version of the story, with which its owner first draped the Indian ass, not a tiger-skin, which it afterwards enigmatically changes into in the *Pancatantra*. The wolf, notorious predator of western lands and ever so popular in the Aesopica, is a rare beast in the jatakas. It occurs once in the jataka named after it, the *Vaca* (No. 300); the only other occasion seems to be in the *Mahabodhi Jataka* (No. 528), where the wolf remarkably figures with sheep (*urabbha*) in also *their* only occurrence in the jatakas - and that too in none other than a context from Greek fable - the fable of the wolf in sheep's clothing. That this motif is still contained in verse in a larger jataka and not developed into an individual story is interesting evidence of the passage of Greek fable-motifs from Aesop into the jatakas.²² The role of the wolf is otherwise assumed by the lion in addition to

²¹. *op.cit.* p. 20.

²².
Urabbharūpena vak' āsu pubbe
asanikito ajayutham upeti
hantvā uranim ajiyam ajañ ca
citrāsayitvā yenakamam paleti

H.T. Francis, in E.B. Cowell ed. *The Jataka* vol. V., London (1905. Reprint 1957) translates:

A wolf disguised as ram of old
 Drew unsuspected nigh the fold.

The panic-stricken flock it slew,
 Then scampered off to pastures new.

In the Aesopic fable *The Shepherd and the Wolf* (H.376), the disguise

his own, as we see for instance in the *Javasakuna Jataka* (No. 308), which emulates Aesop's *The Wolf and the Heron* (H 276), in which a bird relieves a ferocious animal of a bone stuck in his throat.

Among the other animals, birds and other creatures found in the jatakas are the Ass, Mule, Goat, Wolf, the so-called Timirapingala monster-fish (possibly the Whale), Crocodile, Tortoise, Otter, Crab, Crow, Cuckoo, Heron, Owl, Mynah-bird, Water-crow, Cat, Mouse, Mosquito and Ant.

All these creatures, as which the Buddha took birth or did not take birth are indigenous to India. Be that as it may, the argument that the same cannot be said of the animals of the Aesopica for Greece is not as good as it sounded to some earlier scholars who argued upon it. For, it will be seen from fables in the Greek (as I observed earlier) that most of the animals and birds in them are farmyard creatures or familiar to the Greek countryside, the fish to the surrounding seas, the lesser creatures and insects to the trees and soil. The rest, upon which the contention must rest then, are relatively few and figure, apart from the lion, the camel and the monkey, in just one, two or three fables each, and are such as themselves were reputed among the Greeks from the lands in which the Greeks had founded colonies, or were encountered by them in familiar foreign lands, such as Egypt, Libya and in the Near East.

To go by the collection in Halm, which is considerable enough for our purpose - by far the commonest of animals in the Aesopica is the Fox; next to the Fox would come the Lion, while Wolf, Ass and Dog are equally popular. Less frequent but numerous enough are the occurrences, in this order, of Stag, Horse, Crow, Monkey, Snake, Eagle, Mouse, Frog, Cat, Goat and Jackdaw, with Cock, Bird, Sheep, Swallow, Camel, Ox, Cicada and Hare following. Other creatures encountered in the fables of Aesop are, in around five fables, the Stork and the Dolphin, in four or so, the Partridge, Dove, Raven and Ant. Bear, Swan, Bat, Crab and Beetle occur about three times each. Just a fable or two take these others - among animals, the Mule, the Wild-ass, Wild-boar, Leopard, Crocodile, Elephant, Hyena, Hedgehog, Mole, Tortoise and Bat; among birds the Ostrich, Peacock, Goose, Crane, Cuckoo, Owl, Nightingale, Halcyon, Cormorant, Lark, Crested-lark and Sparrow; among smaller creatures, the Snail, Toad, Scorpion; among Fish, the Tunny, Sprat and Shrimp; among insects, Wasp, Bee, Gnat, Flea and Louse.

Much of the problem of animals exotic to Greece in these fables would evaporate if we could date and identify the sources from which the respective fables of the Aesopica found their way into the collection. Even otherwise we are left to consider,

only brings the wolf to grief; the shepherd mistakes him for a sheep and kills him for his meal. As would be noticed, the verses in the jataka hardly constitute a fable yet, even a most elementary one like the Greek.

PLATE I



Aesop, the fabulist, in animated conversation with a fox. From a red-figure cup dated c. 460 B.C. Vatican.

among beasts, the Lion, the Monkey, Camel, Leopard, Crocodile and Hyena, among birds, the Ostrich and the Peacock. The bear, brown bear (*arktos* or *arkos*) was of course well known in Greece, being found in several regions including Arcadia and Laconia; the Taygetus, says Pausanias, was full of them and they are fairly common in recent times on Pindus.

One look at this list, and it would be evident that, even when we add to it the Elephant, which figures in two fables included in Halm, *The Elephant, the Camel and the Monkey* (H 183) and *The Elephant, the Lion and Prometheus* (H 261), it would appear to pertain more to Africa, (in the north of which the Greeks had early colonies, and to which, as Libya, Aeschylus assigns at least one fable as against none to India) than to India.²³ This hypothesis finds confirmation when we have the elephant in combination with the camel and the monkey (which, as we shall see, was tailless), and in the next, with lion. Two of the other creatures in our list are the hyena and the ostrich, again pointing to Africa, while the crocodile is in itself definitely Nilean. Elephants were known in Syria till about the 9th century B.C., and it is probably from here that the ivory came which Homer knew as *elephas*. The ox, upon whose horn a gnat alighted and then inquired whether he wished him to depart (*The Gnat and the Ox*, H.235) is in its ancient Babylonian original no less than an elephant.²⁴ On the other hand, the elephant who is challenged to battle by a dung-beetle, and with poetic justice disposed of with a clod of dung by the elephant in the Indian *Gutha Pana Jataka* (No.227) appears to me to have been a rejoinder to the humiliation the elephant in the Greek fable of *The Elephant, the Lion and Prometheus* suffers from his fear of the gnat

²³. See W.G. Rutherford *Babrius* ('Scriptores Fabularum Graecae', Volume First containing the *Mythiambics* of Babrius) London (1883) p. xxxvii. See also p. xxx-xxxvi. Rutherford acknowledged the passage of Indian stories to Europe to the "professional rhetors of degenerate Greece and their successors, the illiterate and trivial monks of the Middle Ages," but Perry *loc.cit.* observes even of these that the famous fable book, the *Stephanites and Ichnelates*, derived from the Indian *Pancatantra* via the *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, "exerted, thereafter, strange to say, not the slightest influence upon the traditional Greek *Aesop*."

²⁴. E. Ebeling. *Die Babylonische Fabel und ihre Bedeutung für die Literaturgeschichte* Leipzig (1927) p. 50 = Perry *op.cit.* p. xxxii: "When the gnat had settled on the elephant he said, 'Brother, have I been a burden to you? [If so], I will go away, over there by the pond.' Said the elephant to the gnat, 'I was not aware that you had settled on me. What are you anyhow? And if you have left, well, I didn't notice your departure either.' This is the same as Babrius 84, except that bull replaces elephant, and a river the pond."

there.²⁵ It will be recalled that the coastal regions of the Mediterranean in North Africa still had elephants, the Carthagenians building up a special corps of war elephants from animals captured in the woods of Numidia (now Algeria) which they threw against the Romans with varied success. These would no doubt have been of the sub-species *Loxodonta africana cyclotis*, the bush elephant, which the advancing desert and depleted fodder soon rendered extinct in these regions.

To turn to the lion - the lion is famed even in countries which in historic times had no lions. A case in point is our own Sri Lanka, where the lion not only dominates the foundation myth and the flag of the nation but gives the name to its people. We need not, however, go outside Greece for the lion; lions of some kind seem to have been abundant in the region between the rivers Nestus and Achelous in Northern Greece, and Aristotle, who was brought up in the north, mentions them twice. Herodotus tells us how these lions attacked the camels of Xerxes' army, going for them only and leaving the men and other animals alone - a thing which puzzled the historian.²⁶ The hero Heracles is, in mythology, accredited with the killing of a lion which ravaged the region of Nemea, the skin of which is depicted draped over his head or arm in sculpture and vase-painting - the lion-skin which Dionysus puts on himself to pretend he was Hercules in his descent to Hades in Aristophanes' excellent comedy, the *Frogs*.

Norman Douglas, in his *Birds and Beasts of the Greek Anthology* writes:²⁷

"Aristotle and Xenophon both confirm the existence of these Macedonian lions (spoken of by Herodotus). There seems to be little doubt that they also existed in Greece at an early period, on Mount Olympus, Cithaeron and Parnassus; Pausanias gives some information on this subject, and the Nemean lion's den is pointed out to this day. A well-known scholar denies that lions were ever found in the

²⁵. See my study in 'The Aesopic Constituents of the Gutha Pana Jataka' in *Kalyani*, Journal of Humanities and Social Studies of the University of Kelaniya, vols. III and IV (1984-1985) p. 119-127.

²⁶. vii. 125. See also Pausanias vi 5.4. He says the Thracian mountains up country from the river Nestos are stocked with animals, and the lions from there often range into the country round Olympus. One of these, he adds, the strongman Polydamas killed with his bare hands - a wild lion of considerable size, in his wish to rival Heracles' killing of the Nemean lion. On the other hand, Aristotle represents them as found in Europe only in the strip between the rivers Achelus and Nessus (*op.cit.* 579b 6), and elsewhere (606b 14) that here they were as numerous as in Libya. See also Xenophon *Cyneg.* xi. and Pliny viii. 17 (16): *longe viribus praestantiores iis, quos Africa et Syria gignant.*

²⁷. London (1928) p. 9 - 10.

Peloponnese: he regards the Nemean story as an importation. But if the beast inhabited Thessaly, there is no reason why it should not have spread southwards; indeed, I fail to see by what means it could have been kept out of the Morea. Dion Chrysostom speaks of it as extinct in Europe. Three hundred years later, at the tail end of antiquity, Themistius regrets Thessaly can furnish no more lions for beast-shows".

The oldest monumental sculpture of Europe, that above the portal of the palace-complex of Mycenae, depicts two rampant lions flanking a pillar (the escutcheon on the Argive shield was a lion rampant),²⁸ while another, a ravenous beast tearing the throat of an unresisting stag is among the remains of a pediment of the earlier temple of Athena on the Acropolis, which the Parthenon replaced. Lions, faced by a hero, tearing a warrior, or hunting already make their appearance in grave vases at the close of the Geometric Period heralding a new age in the art, and soon afterwards join the mythical and semi-mythical beasts of the orientализing vases of Corinth. A row of archaic lions, squatting on their haunches, lined the Sacred Road in Delos. In later times a lion, it may be recalled, surmounted the tomb of Leonidas, whose name, like a few other Greek names, incorporates *leo* or *leon* ("lion"). Lions were associated with the cult of Cybele - though then they refer us to the Orient. However, lion similes and metaphors abound in the literature of Greece from the earliest times, which reveal that a clear idea of the appearance, qualities and habits of the beast was prevalent among the people, which would have made description as gratuitous as their use was popular.²⁹

In this context the setting of Lucian's version of *The Ass in the Lion-skin* (H 336) in Cumae on the grounds that the Cumaeans were ignorant of lions would both be contradictory and self-contradictory.³⁰ For, had the Cumaeans not even a vague idea that

²⁸. Aeschylus *Agamemnon* vs. 812-815.

²⁹. Homer evidently knew the lion well; in a sustained simile in *Odyssey* vi.130 he calls it "mountain-nurtured", "fiery-eyed" defying wind and rain to hunt oxen, sheep and deer and even beseige homesteads and pens. See also *Iliad* xxiii. 161, *Odyssey* xi.611. Alcibiades is called a lion's whelp whose ways have to be tolerated if the Athenians were to have him (Aristophanes *Frogs* vs. 1431-1433) - which looks to the fable found in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (vs. 718-737), here descriptive of Helen, of a shepherd who, to his woe, reared a lion cub with his sheep. In Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (vs. 1436-1437) Philoctetes and Neoptolemus are asked by Heracles to guard each other's lives "like lions hunting together" - and so on.

³⁰. *Piscator* 32. Talking to Philosophy of the humbugs who masquerade under her name, Lucian says:

"Apes daring to pass off as heroes! emulators of the ass at Cumae, who put on a lion-skin and thought himself a lion,

a lion was, how could they have reacted to the ass in disguise as the ass expected them to do? and if it then frightened anyone, it should have been the very stranger who had seen lions, not those who had not. What they apparently should not have been able to discriminate should have been between the roar of the lion and the imitation of it by the wretched ass.

For its part the camel is clearly associated with the Arab, as is shown in the fable in Babrius (H. 68) of a crooked Arab and his camel:

An Arab, his camel full laden inquired
If high road or low road he'd take.
The camel to which with wit made retort,
"Why, is't that the straight road is barred?"

Though the fable is of late appearance, in Babrius, the camel was known to Aeschylus and Herodotus, and surely very much earlier, to Greeks, who colonized the northern coast of Africa and travelled in the lands of the Near East. As far back as the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. there is evidence of the Libyan tribes using camels, as did the Arabs of the east - though the animal is singularly absent in the art of ancient Egypt. On the other hand, we must note that no jataka mentions the camel, let alone as an incarnation of the Buddha, as a wild or domesticated, indigenous or exotic animal in India. The two-humped camel - though this is not the camel the Greeks were familiar with - was a regular beast of burden along the land routes running across the arid wastes of Central Asia, which would see silk and other rich oriental ware go by, and was connected to the regions of Northern India by passes such as the Karakoram through the mountains.

What the fables tell us of the camel is that it is the next largest animal that the Greeks knew after the elephant, with which, in *The Camel and the Elephant* it vied for kingship of the animals. (I find that the hunter and traveller, Samuel W. Baker, notorious in Sri Lanka for his massacre of elephants, measured one of his camels in Abyssinia at 7 ft. 3 1/2 inches to the top of the hump). But as the monkey in the fable here declared, it was poor-spirited. Seen for the first time by men, it was feared by all for its size, but familiarity only brought it contempt (*The Camel* (H 195)). It wanted horns like the bull, but Zeus, angered that it was not content with its bulk and strength as a defence, went so far as to even clip its ears. Quite apart from dancing (*The Monkey and the Camel* (H 365)), it was thankful if its walk itself did not draw laughter (B 80).

Like the elephant and the camel, the crocodile of the Aesopica is no Indian creature. Two fables, one *The Murderer* (H. 48) and the other, *Dogs and Crocodiles* (P. 25) given by Phaedrus, when they mention crocodiles, locate the stories on the banks

terrifying the ignorant natives with ear-splitting brays - till a stranger, who had seen a lot of both lion and ass, showed him what was what with a sound beating."

of the Nile, not anywhere in India, so that we may think too that the crocodile which vied with the fox on the nobility of their respective births in *The Fox and the Crocodile* (H. 37) was none other than an Egyptian crocodile, a creature which Herodotus troubles to describe for his hearers, having surely seen enough in his travels through that land, as no doubt would several Greeks who went for trade and other purposes to the Milesian entrepot, Naucratis (established in the 7th century B.C.), not to mention the thousands who joined the disastrous expedition against Egypt in 460 B.C. Some idea of what the Greek may have understood of the beast is to be gained from the account of the historian:

"The crocodile, during the four winter months takes no food. It is a four-footed, amphibious creature, lays and hatches its eggs on land, where it spends the greater part of the day, and stays all night in the river (Nile), where the water is warmer than the night-air and the dew. The difference in size between the young and the full-grown crocodile is greater than in any other known creature; for the crocodile's egg is hardly bigger than a goose's, and the young when hatched is small in proportion, yet it grows to a size of some twenty-three feet long or even more. It has eyes like a pig's and great fang-like teeth, and is the only animal to have no tongue and a stationary lower jaw; for when it eats it brings the upper jaw down upon the under. It has powerful claws and a scaly hide, which on its back is impenetrable. It cannot see under water, though on land its sight is remarkably quick. One result of its spending so much time in the water is that the inside of its mouth gets covered with leeches. Other animals avoid the crocodile, as do all the birds too with one exception - the sandpiper, or Egyptian plover; this bird is of service to the crocodile and lives, in consequence, in the greatest amity with him; for when the crocodile comes ashore and lies with his mouth wide open (which he generally does facing the west), the bird hops in and swallows the leeches. The crocodile enjoys this, and never, in consequence hurts the bird..... In the Egyptian language these creatures are called *champsae*. The name crocodile or 'lizard' - was given them by the Ionians, who saw they resembled the lizards commonly found on stone walls in their own country."³¹

Hyena, ostrich and leopard also point to Africa - though the fables which feature them could well be late. The two hyena fables, *The Hyena and the Fox* (H. 405) and *Hyenas* (H. 406), like the fable of *The Ostrich* (H. 391) play on the ambiguity of their natures and may share the inspiration as well as the authorship, while also being from someone who had had more direct and intimate experience of African wildlife, among

³¹. ii.68. See also Aristotle *op.cit. passim*. He has specific reference more than once to the Egyptian crocodile in his own detailed description of the beast.

which both figure, as does the leopard. Not that leopards and panthers were unknown in Greece. An epitaph of Panopeus refers to him as a lion and panther hunter, while another on a boxer says he was killed by the same leopard he slew. 'Pardalis', panther, was a Greek name, even if not a popular one.³²

Last and most important of the animals exotic to Greece that needs to be considered is the monkey - an animal that is so much associated with India, Indian art and Indian story, and as which the Buddha had, as noted before, taken birth the most number of times in the jatakas. But it has also figured in several fables of Greece, and it is upon this creature (with the exception of the jackal/fox perhaps, that much of the argument from animals for an Indian origin of the Greek fables has sprung.

It is rarely that a fable needs to explain the circumstances upon which it is constructed or a feature which it involves, without which it is neither properly comprehensible or appreciable. One such fable happens to be Aesop's *The Monkey and the Dolphin* (H 363) and tells us how a monkey came to be upon the Greek waters of the Aegean Sea. This is done with the observation that "it was a habit of sailors to take along with them Maltese lapdogs and monkeys to while away their time during a voyage." Otherwise there is nothing to imply that the fable is enacted in Greece rather than, as with the majority of the fables, in any other part of the world. And other fables involving the monkey are of this latter sort.

But what is significant is that very presence of the monkey in the Greek fables, and how it got there in such popularity, which could be a strong point in favour of India. However, the argument is vitiated by a feature of the monkey of Greek fable which distinguishes it from the monkey of the jatakas and other Indian stories. This is its taillessness, which often leads translators to render it as 'ape'. It is expressly upon this feature that the fable of *The Ape and the Fox* in Perotti's Appendix plays, where a monkey asks a fox for part of his tail to decently cover his bare buttocks but is nastily rebuffed by the fox. It may be this matter of tail - or rather, taillessness - that was largely responsible for the conversion of the dolphin in the Greek fable of *The Monkey and the Dolphin* (H 363), in which a dolphin mistakes a drowning monkey for a man, to a crocodile in the *Sumsumara Jataka* (No. 208) and the *Vanara* (No. 342). Had the monkey had a tail in the Greek fable, I am sure the dolphin would not have been misled into attempting to save him, as he did. On the other hand, the Indian crocodile never did take the monkey to be anything but a monkey - nor did the Bodhisatta get deceived when one tried to pass off as an ascetic in the *Makkata Jataka* (No. 173), even if, in the *Kacchapa* (No. 273) the similarity of the monkey there carrying the tortoise who had bitten on to his penis to a monk with begging bowl in hand did not fail to amuse him.

The monkey must then have come among the Greeks as pets (when they did),

³². For this information, see Norman Douglas *op.cit.* p. 8 and 10 - 11.

PLATE II



The fable of the Crane and the Fox,
with Aesop or the Bodhisatta as
observer. Cosmetic Tray from Sirkap.

and knowledge of the creature into circulation in Greek literature from other lands in more proximity to Greece than India and having this tailless species, more properly chimpanzee or ape. Besides, it had been known fairly widely by the Greeks as far back as the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., if they were to make anything of the poem of Archilochus of Paros, in which he had a line from a fox saying:

"O monkey, with a backside like that."³³

This, when taken together with two other fragments³⁴ from the poet, appears to look towards the fable of *The Fox and the Monkey* (H. 44), to which a very early date must then be assigned along with an admission that the monkey was no stranger to ordinary Greek folk even that far back.

There is no pretence that the monkey is indigenous to Greece at any time. The fables dealing with it as a character keep the setting, like most of the Aesopic fables, nondescript. Where however the monkey was specifically required to be in Greece, as we found in *The Monkey and the Dolphin*, explanation was given, saying it was a practice of sailors to keep Maltese lap-gods or monkeys on board ship to while away the time. To judge from the fable *Monkeys Dancing* (H. 360), it would seem that monkeys were also put on show for entertainment, in this instance typically forgetting themselves and decorum when someone threw nuts at their feet. Their dance was the Phyrrie, but their trainer, mark you, was an *Egyptian* - which points more to Africa than to India.³⁵

Matching the somatic difference of the monkey of Greek story from his India counterpart is a psychological one as well. While emulative of men like the Indian monkey, who is even a bit of a rascal in the jatakas, the Greek is shown to be quite

³³. Fr. 91. Scholiast on Aristophanes *Acharnians* vs. 120 says that the comedian parodied this, substituting *pagōn* (beard) for *pugēn* (backside, buttocks), though I find the context better suited by the latter. See also Aristotle *op.cit.* 502a 17. He makes a distinction between the ape (*pithecos* - the words used throughout in the Aesopica) and the monkey (*kēbas*) and baboon (*kunocephales*), remarking that "the monkey is an ape having a tail." (*èsti d' ho men kēbas pithēcos échōn ouran*). The Greek for the tailed monkey - *kēbos*, *kēpos*, *keipos* may indeed be etymologically linked with the Indian *kapi* (cf. Pali: *kapi*).

³⁴. Fr. 89 and 90.

³⁵. In Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, adapted from the Greek *Alazon*, (vs. 167, 189, 284, 505 etc.) the slave Sceledrus chases a pet monkey on the roof, while Juvenal (*Sat.* v. 153-155) tells of monkeys, armed like Roman soldiers and riding goats, made to throw spears to amuse spectators upon the Embankment in Rome.

stupid, with no redeeming quality except this entertaining imitateness.³⁶

Thus, we find the monkey getting himself entangled in a net by trying to emulate fishermen in *The Fishermen and the Monkey* (H. 362), foolishly attempting to found and inhabit a city like men in *Apes founding a City* (H. 361), playing king and prisoners with two captive humans in *Monkey Monarch* (P. 13) or being robbed when slavishly imitating a clever thief and shutting his eyes in *The Ape and the Merchant* (Perry B & P 643). On the other hand, in his popular occurrence the Indian is shown to be quite clever, unless on such instances as when the jataka is based on actual observation. Two such instances are in the *Arama Dusa Jataka* (No. 268), in which monkeys uproot plants and examine their roots to see how much water they will take, and the *Kalaya Mutthi Jataka* (No. 176), in which a monkey in search of a fallen pea lets a whole lot of others fall off his hand.

The three significant jatakas which, on the other hand, exemplify the intelligence of the Indian monkey are the *Nalapana* (No. 20), in which a king of monkeys (the Bodhisatta) outwits a water-demon by having his followers drink through a reed; the *Vanarinda* (No. 57), in which a monkey vaults to safety over the back of a crocodile by making him open his mouth (and consequently close his eyes), and the *Sunsumara/Vanara*, in which a monkey saves himself from a crocodile by lying that he had not brought his heart along with him, which the crocodile's wife yearned to eat. On the other hand, in the Greek version of this latter story, our fable of *The Monkey and the Dolphin*, the monkey's lie is so blatant that it causes him his death. But the best proof of the stupidity of the Greek monkey is demonstrated by no less an animal than the fox, the Greek equivalent for intelligence and craftiness. This is in the Aesopic fable of *The Fox and the Monkey* (H. 44), in which a monkey, appointed king because of his skill in dancing, is led to a trap by a fox and shown some meat, in the act of going carelessly for which he gets caught. It may be this fable in which Archilochus has monkey and fox together and in which he clearly talks of the crafty fox (*kerdalee*- "with eye to gain") and his "cunning mind," (*puknon echousa noon*) in relation to the monkey he intends to beguile. Two further allusions, in Aristophanes, show great familiarity with the fable while at the same time underlining the shrewd nature of the Aesopic fox. In the *Wasps* we have him saying:

³⁶. S.v. *pithekos* in Liddell and Scott *Greek-English Dictionary* The word is traced back to *peitho*, *pithanos* = *mimo*, from the animal's propensity to mimic; in Latin *simia* from *similis*, *simulo*. Reference was derogatory - *pithekos* = a dwarf, *pithekos* = flatterer, thus a trickster, a jackanapes Ar. *Ach.* vs. 907, *Birds* vs. 440, *Frogs* vs. 708. Thus Demosthenes (307.25) insultingly refers to Aeschines as a *pithekos autotragikos*, i.e. "an arrant tragic ape." Little wonder then that the bounder, Thersites, picks the life of an ape for his rebirth in Plato's 'Myth of Er' (*Rep.* 620). Ape, or monkey is proverbial contrast for lion; hence "to be ape instead of lion" (*Rep.* 590b) and "to send an ape in lion-skin" (Luc. *Philos.*), also the absurdity of "ape in purple" (Diogen. vii. 94).

"you can't play fox (*alopekizein*)
and be friend to both sides"³⁷

and again, in the *Peace* there is talk of

"being lions at home
but in battle foxes."³⁸

Of *alopekizein* in the former, Rutherford says it was probably coined by Aristophanes himself and "calls up a whole series of adventures in epilogue, in which double-faced craft triumphs over innocence and strength."³⁹ Correspondingly, there is, as acknowledged by translations like those of Blaydes Rogers, Dudley Fitts and David Barrett, a definite play on the word *epitekizei* (*e-pithekizei*) when the Scythian policeman in vs. 1134 of the *Thesmophoriazusae* exclaims of Mnesilochus,

"The dirty fox, he make the monkey out of me,"

an allusion once again to the old popular fable known to Archilochus. The antithesis between the hedgehog's single mode of avoiding trouble and the numerous at the fox's command, which by the time of Archilochus had become proverbial as

"the fox knows many, the hedgehog one big thing"⁴⁰

also speaks for the resourcefulness of the beast.

There is yet another fable of the Aesopica in which the fox has the opportunity to belittle the monkey. In this, also called *The Fox and the Monkey* (H. 43), a monkey, showing a number of graves to a fox, claims them to be those of the freedmen and slaves of his family. "Lie all you wish", replies the fox; "None will rise up to contradict you."

³⁷. vs. 1240.

³⁸. vs. 1289.

³⁹. *op.cit.* p. xxxv, continuation of p. xxxiv n. 1.

⁴⁰. Fr. 118 = Zenobius v. 68. "Archilochus mentions this in an epode ... it is used of the greatest of scoundrels." Rutherford (*op.cit.* p. xxxi-xxxii n.1.) thinks allusion is to the hedgehog's single mode of avenging injuries and the legion at the fox's command. But see J.M. Edwards *Elegy and Iambus* vol. II Loeb. ed., London and N.Y. (1931) p. 175 n.4 to fr. 118. He thinks the reference is to the hedgehog's defence by rolling into a ball.

Greek recognition of the shrewdness of the fox is best seen, however, when the lawgiver, Solon, refers to it when reprimanding fellow Athenians for their stupidity in not seeing that Peisistratus was deceiving them to become tyrant.

"Each of you walks with the footsteps of the fox,
But collectively your intelligence is slight.
For you look to a man's tongue and shifty speech
But see not the deed that he does."⁴¹

This fable, thought by some scholars to be the fable of *The Lion, the Fox and the Stag* (H. 243), in which a fox helps lure an unsuspecting stag to the reach of a sick lion and which I find, notwithstanding Keith,⁴² emulated in the *Putimansa Jataka* (No. 437) may not really be the one Solon is referring to, however interesting it would otherwise have been to find both the Greek pundit and the Bodhisatta using a story based on the same motif to admonish their respective audiences. The context seems rather to suggest the fable of *The Lion and the Fox* (H. 246), in which a fox escapes death from a sick and ageing lion by observing that all the footprints led to his den, but none were seen coming out.⁴³

It is undoubtedly this same cunning of this fox which in more recent times made him replace the monkey of the *Sumsumara/Vanara*, when the story made a return to the West in a Russian version heard by the translator of the *Sumsumara*, W.H.D. Rouse, from one Nestor Schnurmann, who was once told it by his nurse (about 1860).⁴⁴

Sadly, however, this quality of the fox, so amply substantiated in Aesopic fable in contrast to the jataka jackal, is overlooked in a discussion set off by Otto Keller in contending for the priority of India over Greece with respect to the animal fable on the basis of "the doctrine of logical sequence and conformity of the habits of animals as

⁴¹. Diodorus ix. 21 = Solon fr. 9. (See Diogenes Laertius 1.51).

⁴². See A.B. Keith *A History of Sanskrit Literature* London (1920) p. 357.

⁴³. See my 'In the Footsteps of the Fox' in the *Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume of the University of Kelaniya*, Kelaniya (1986) p. 232-241. This fable brings in the clue of the *nulla vestigia retrosum*, popular afterwards in the jatakas but traceable (in reverse) to the Greek myth of Hercules and Cacus, best narrated by Vergil in *Aen* vii. 190 f; see also Diog. Hal. *Ant.Rom.* i.39.2 f.

⁴⁴. See Cowell ed. *op.cit.* vol. II, p. 110 n.i. The King of the Fishes desired the heart of a fox to become intelligent. The fox was sent for and flattered, accepted the ride on the back of the whale. But when he really found out what it was that was wanted of him, he said he would gladly have given his heart, except that he had left it at home. So he is taken back, and escapes.

revealed in nature."⁴⁵ Keller observed that the jackal following the lion to feed on the remains of his kill was true to nature and would have prompted the fabulist to conceive of him as a minister of King Lion - and since in Indian politics the minister was expected to be cunning, the jackal in turn acquired this reputation. On the other hand, he conjectures, this role of the fox in Greece would go unaccounted for, for he is not a very cunning animal. This, Keith contends against him, is to ignore that it is fancy, not fact, which creates the world of intelligent beasts in fable, as well as the possibility that fable had its origin neither in India nor in Greece, but was a product of lands intermediate between these countries.⁴⁶ Weber went on to theorize that if this sort of association between jackal and lion came from India to Greece, it would have been adjusted with fox to suit the Greek scenario, while if it reached India from Greece afterwards, the jackal would have been reinstated.⁴⁷

The role of the jackal underlined by Keller, however it may be in the *Pancatantra* and folk stories in certain later works, is not to be found in any degree in the *Jatakas*. Indeed, the jackal figures more in them as a scavenger and a despised

⁴⁵. *Jahrbucher f. klass. Phil.* iv. 309-418.

⁴⁶. *op. cit.* p. 353.

⁴⁷. *Indische Studien* vol. III p. 327-373. See p. 335; he believed, and correctly, that while India was appreciative of the monkey, it did not rate the counterpart of Reynard the Fox a wise or shrewd creature, so much so that he supposes India borrowed all her fables which credit the jackal with intelligence. This conclusion on the nature of the jackal in Indian story has recently been clarified by Greta Van Damme in her study *De jekhals in de Oudindische Pancatantra* (Verhandelingen van der Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van Belgie, Kl. de Litteren, Jg. 53. 1991 No. 141) Brussels, Palais der Academien (1991). See the review by J.C. Wright in the *Bulletin of the SOAS*, University of London, vol. LVI, pt. 3 (1993) p. 645. As he says, Van Damme, making an interesting inquiry into the role and character of the jackal in the Sanskrit *Pancatantra*, source of the European beast fable, compares them summarily with the role and character of the jackal as depicted in the Pali *Jataka*, and, in an isolated instance, in the *Mahabharata*. "There is evidently some tension between a zoologically realistic and sometimes sympathetic treatment of the jackal as the epitome of gluttony and rapacity and the distinctly anthropomorphic and unsympathetic depiction of the creature vainly and ineffectively ambitious. The author expresses surprise at the extent to which the attractively raffish European Reynard Fox, though agreeing well with the original *Pancatantra*'s Damanaka framework story and reasonably well with its more constituent narratives, is diametrically opposed to the unattractive character of the jackal that prevails especially in the Buddhist *Jataka* and equally moralizing later Jain *Pancatantra*."

vermin than as the servant of the lordly lion. So much so that one could argue Keller the other way round on the matter of influence, except that in the Aesopica even that role (as the lion's servant) is but *one* of the fox's - and that too, often enough, having him use his speciality, cunning, *against* the lion. In one of these Greek lion and fox fables (H. 39), the fox, when he first met the lion, was scared to death of him; meeting him a second time, he was afraid, but not as much as before; on the third occasion he had the audacity even to approach him and talk to him. In another (H. 40) he goes up to a lion (who he sees is restrained in some way) and insults him. In yet another (H. 246), mentioned earlier on, he outwits the ageing lion by his perspicacity and saves himself from the fate of the other animals. In still another fable (H. 41) our fox tries to play lion himself - with, of course, disastrous consequences. The brilliance of the fox is, however, best seen in *The Lion, the Wolf and the Fox* (H. 255), for here he not only turns tables on the wolf but does so by using the lion for this, while in *The Lion, the Fox and the Stag* (H. 243), also mentioned earlier, he not only helps the lion to kill the stag but thereafter steals its heart and bluffs the lion that the stag did not have such a thing - else he would not have come a second time within the lion's reach.

To all this wealth of fable on the shrewdness, resourcefulness and indeed ingenuity of the fox in the Aesopica, I can only find very little in his Indian cousin, the jackal, in the jatakas, except perhaps in that single fellow who tested the brahmin's sleep by tugging at his walking stick in the *Sigala Jataka* (No. 142). But then, like the jackal of that other *Sigala Jataka* (No. 148), which is a very near version of Aesop's *The Fox with the Distended Stomach* (H. XXX), he is the Bodhisatta himself in a previous birth. Otherwise, as said before, the Indian jackal is a lowly, despised creature, a corpse-eater as in the *Mahasilava Jataka* (No. 51) or the *Ana Jataka* (No. 295) (which is an inversion of the popular Aesopic *Crow and the Fox* (H. 204)), a disgusting creature who pollutes the water from which he has drunk (*Udapana Dusaka Jataka* (No. 271)), and one whose cry, as in the *Sihakotthuka Jataka* (No. 188) is no more than an insult to the lion's roar. So that, far from the Indian jackal inspiring any concept of the fox in Greek fable, it seems to me that the very opposite, if anything, is the truth. And this would be in conformity with my other evidence from the study of the Greek fable and the Indian jatakas, of the priority of the former over the latter.

Several animal fables, both in Aesop and the jatakas, while investing creatures with such human qualities as rationality, moral-seeming conduct and speech, rest their motifs on the distinctive behaviour of the respective creature. For instance, the Aesopic fables engage such details as the crab's sideways walk, the mole's blindness, the frog's puffing up, the elephant's ear-flapping, the meddlesome and imitative nature of the monkey, the snake's viciousness, the eagle's practice of dropping hard objects from the air to break their shells, or the half-bird half-animal physical features of the bat and the ostrich. In like manner there are in the jatakas stories which play upon the tortoise's ugliness, the human appearance of the monkey, the high-flying of the vulture, the out-of-time crowing of some cocks, the owl's sullen look, the goat's frisking, the strange feature of the peacock's proud dance. The woodpecker's knocking in contrast to the crane's (or heron's) drawing action make the basic variation of the respective fables,

Indian and Greek, of the beast with the bone in his throat.

Remarkably, as observed before, the Aesopic fable, which pivots on the imitative (of men) and meddlesome nature of the monkey in *The Monkey and the Fishermen* (H. 362), has bypassed the jatakas to surface in Indian story as 'The Wedge-pulling Monkey' of the *Pancatantra*, while the jatakas have a story, the *Makkata Jataka* (No. 173), in which a monkey poses as an ascetic to warm himself at the Bodhisatta's fire, and another, the *Kacchapa* (No. 273), in which a lascivious monkey, tortoise in hands is visualized by the Bodhisatta as an arthritic monk with begging bowl uplifted. The fable of the snake which a farmer found frozen and warmed at his bosom, only to be stung to death by it (*The Farmer and the Snake* (H. 97)) was known to Theognis (fl. 544-541 B.C.) and reechoed by the *Veluka Jataka* (No. 43), with another jataka, the *Visavanta* (No. 69), in which a snake refuses, even on the threat of death by burning, to take back the poison he has once unjected. The tortoise of the *Kacchapa Jataka* (No. 215) falls to his death when being carried in the air by two wild geese because of his inability to keep quiet. But the Greek fable, of which this is a modification, has an eagle (the bird there; note that in the Southern recension of the *Pancatantra* the bird returns to eagle) itself drop the tortoise - a thing which, perhaps jocularly, is said to have caused the death of the bald Aeschylus. The tortoise's ugliness makes him the Indian substitute in the beauty contest of the *Gangeyya Jataka* (No. 205) for the monkey with his young that we had in the Aesopic fable of *The Monkey and Zeus* (H 364),⁴⁸ while the friskiness of the goat exposes the lost cleaver wanted for killing him in both the *Takkariya Jataka* (No. 481) and the Greek fable, given as if a true incident which took place in Corinth, by Zenobius.⁴⁹ In the *Nakula Jataka* (No. 165) the motif rests upon the natural enmity of mongoose and snake - and so on.

An interesting instance of how the opposite - the character of the chosen animals, modifies a detail itself, or the motif itself, of a fable is seen when woodpecker is substituted in the *Javasakuna Jataka* (No. 308) for the heron (or crane) of the respective Aesopic fable, *The Wolf and the Heron* (H. 276) (or *Crane* (H. 276 b)); for, where the heron or crane, in the Greek, draws out the bone from the wolf's throat, putting its beak down his throat, what the woodpecker does with the lion is characteristic

⁴⁸. In the *Gangeyya* two fishes dispute who is the more beautiful and ask a tortoise to decide. The tortoise grants both are beautiful, but he himself is more beautiful than either. In the Greek it is a baby-contest, with Zeus as judge, with a monkey-mother claiming that, no matter who wins, her baby is the prettiest of all. The proverbial ugliness of the monkey is found in a less popular fable, in which a man, seeing an ape hung up at a butcher's, asks how he tastes, to which the butcher replies, "He tastes as bad as he looks" (*The Butcher and the Ape* (P.4)).

⁴⁹. Prov. Cent.1.27: so Suidas. He gives the Greek expression "like the goat and the knife" as flowing from this.

of woodpeckers - it enters his mouth and taps the bone down his gullet. However, in the *Kandagalaka Jataka* (No. 209) this woodpecker's pecking at too resilient a tree breaks his beak and splits his head, providing the fable the lesson it seeks to impart.

Substitution of one of the characters - crocodile for the dolphin in *The Monkey and the Dolphin*, is accompanied also by an inversion of the motif in the afore-mentioned *Sumsumara/Vanara Jatakas*. For, where the dolphin was for saving the monkey in the Greek fable, mistaking him for a man - a thing which dolphins are reputed to have done for Taras, the founder of Tarentum,⁵⁰ and Arion, the dithyrambic poet⁵¹ - the crocodile was for drowning him, when the respective lies of the Greek and Indian monkeys resulted in their doing the contrary. With regard to this fable, it is interesting to discover that the Indian crocodile, who replaced Greek dolphin in the *jataka* and the *Pancatantra*, once again converts to dolphin or porpoise in the *Kathasaritsagara*, exploiting the ambiguity of the Sanskrit *sisumara* - before tragically turning to tortoise (*ghaliam*) in the Arabic *Kalila wa Dimna*.⁵²

Two Greek stories, one a myth, the other a historical anecdote from Herodotus, reappear with animal characters in the *jatakas* - again with interesting and appropriate ones. The first of these is the flight of Icarus, which is rendered as the flight of the high-flying vulture in the *Migalopa Jataka* (No. 381) and *Gijja Jataka* (No. 427). The young and impetuous vulture takes no heed of his father's warning, as Icarus did not, flies too high in the sky - and for variation of the melting of Icarus' artificial wings by the heat of the sun, is struck down by the *Verambha* winds. But by far the most fascinating of details of animal- (here bird-) behaviour found in the *jatakas* is one which nearly debilitated my own stance on the priority of the Greek fables and the direction of borrowing as being of India from Greece. This is the *Nacca Jataka* (No. 20), in which the peacock, dancing in joy at being selected husband by the daughter of the royal Golden Mallard, shows his posterior to the audience, resulting in his dismissal in disgrace. For, this peculiarity of the dancing peacock, proverbially known to the Indians, has also been recently authenticated and described for us by Flannery O'Conner,

⁵⁰. See the coins of Tarentum which depict Taras riding the dolphin - B.V. Head *A Guide to the Principal Coins of the Greeks*, London (1959) Plate 6 nos. 3, 4, 5; Plate 13 nos. 6, 7; Plate 25 nos. 9, 10; Plate 32 nos. 4, 5; Plate 37 nos. 7, 8. Taras, son of Poseidon, god of the sea, is said to have travelled thus from Taenarum to South Italy, where he founded Tarentum. He was worshipped as a hero there.

⁵¹. See Herodotus *Histories* i. 22.

⁵². For a study of this story-motif in Greece and India, see my article 'Two Monkey Tales' in *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* vol. XX, nos. 1 & 2. (1994) p.31-47.

who reared peacocks, but, I presume, was totally unaware of this jataka.⁵³

For, of the peacock's fanning out his tail, O'Conner says:

"The cock opens his tail by shaking himself violently until it is gradually lifted in an arch around him. Then, before anyone has had a chance to see it, he swings around so that his back faces the spectator. This has been taken by some to be an insult and by others to be a whimsy. I suggest it means that the peacock is equally well satisfied with either view of himself";⁵⁴

and describing his dance:

"The cock, his tail raised in a shimmering arch around him, will turn this way and that, and with his clay-coloured wing-feathers touching the ground, will dance forward and backward, his neck curved, his beak parted, his eyes glittering."⁵⁵

This unique and striking detail would have led me myself, notwithstanding all other considerations (as I said) to award the origin of this story without demur to India, were it not that there was an equally shameless dance among the Greeks, which Hippocleides of the corresponding Greek story - the historical anecdote of the marriage of Agariste - danced with similar consequence and was equally well affirmed by a popular saying.⁵⁶ As for the argument of R.W. Macan,⁵⁷ afterwards used by

⁵³. "The King of Birds" *Spam* vol. XXIII no. 9 (Sept. 1982). The jataka is one of those found depicted on the railing of the Bharhut Stupa. See A Cunningham *The Stupa of Bharhut*, Benares (1962) p. 69 with Plate XXVII, item 11.

⁵⁴. *op.cit.* p. 17.

⁵⁵. *op.cit.* p. 18.

⁵⁶. See A.B. Cook "Hippocleides' Dance" *Classical Review* vol. XXI no. 6 (1907) p. 169 - 170. He conjectures the offending dances were 'Theban figures', if not improvisations of Hippocleides' own. He refers to a fragment of a pella found in the site of the Kabeirion in Thebes and datable to the end of the 5th century B.C., which shows a man dancing on his hands on a three-legged table, his legs in the air, while another, seated, may be playing a flute. The saying, which became proverbial, viz. "Hippocleides doesn't care" (*ou phrontis Hippocleidē*) should already have been popular to Herodotus' audiences. Remarkably, the privilege given to the mallard's daughter to select her own husband and called in India *svayamvara* figures also in Herodotus, with a father granting his daughters a similar boon - and, of all places, immediately prior to

Winternitz,⁵⁸ that "it is more feasible for a fable to be transferred to human conditions, than for a fable to be made out of an anecdote" - quite apart from the relative dating of the Herodotean anecdote and the Indian jataka, we have the *Migalopa/Gijjha Jataka* just previous to this discussion of the *Nacca Jataka*, transforming Icarus of Minoan saga into a high-flying vulture - and nobody would give less antiquity to the myth over the jataka. Again, in quite the opposite sort of way, it was partly the presence of the human element which went to convince Rhys-Davids of the antiquity of the Indian story of *The Ass in the Lion Skin* (H. 336 and H. 333), the *Sihacamma Jataka* (No. 189) over the Greek.⁵⁹ For, in the jataka the skin is draped over the ass by his owner, whereas in the Greek the ass does this for himself. (It is enlightening to observe that the version in the Chinese Avadana, even though derived from India, follows the Greek in this detail).⁶⁰

Now that we are on the subject of the peacock, it might well be questioned whether the bird itself does not speak for India in the matter of priority of the *Nacca Jataka/Marriage of Agariste* motif. Thus, we find Macan, who rejects the possibility that the story was carried to India through Herodotus in the days of Alexander, in course of time to be transformed and degraded into a beast- (or bird-) fable, say it is "infinitely more probable" for him that this was an old Indian fable, which had reached Greece and become historicized before the days of Herodotus. And in his attempt to decide on a date for this arrival, he is led to trace the date of the introduction of the peacock there-which, to say the least, ends in a variable wild-geese chase.⁶¹

The peacock appears to have been introduced to the mainland of Greece via Samos, where the bird was sacred to Hera. Myth has it that it was the many-eyed

the story of Agariste!

⁵⁷. *Herodotus* vol. II (London (1895) append. XIV, p. 304 - 311.

⁵⁸. *A History of Indian Literature* vol. II, Calcutta (1933) p. 127 n.5. Winternitz emphasises the proverbial shamelessness of the peacock's dance in India, while S.J. Warren (in *Hermes* vol. XXIX (1894) p. 476 f.) remarks the *svayamvara*.

⁵⁹. *Buddhist Birth Stories* (1897) p. vii. As for his argument that "the fable could scarcely have originated in any country in which lions were not common" (implying Greece here), see the evidence on lions in Greece given earlier in this article. Hercules donned his lion-skin long before the jataka ass was draped in his!

⁶⁰. I have discussed this fable, Greek and Indian versions, in an article 'The Ass in the Lion Skin' appearing in *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* vol. VII (1981) p. 29 - 60.

⁶¹. *op.cit.*

PLATE III



THE TROJAN HORSE FRIEZE
Relief from Gandhara (2nd century A.D)

monster, Argos, transformed, or that Hera adorned its tail with the eyes of Argos. Though more popular in the fifth century than in the fourth, the epiphany of the peacock in Athens, as Macan found out, did not antedate Herodotus to have prompted the story of Hippocleides that the historian gives.⁶² At the same time, the evidence makes it obvious that the source of the peacock in Greece is Persia, not India. This is confirmed, if anything, by the Greek for 'peacock' i.e. *taos*, which is derived from the Persian *tavus* even to the extent of retaining the aspirate on the *o* from the foreign pronunciation.⁶³ Add to this, we have a character in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* cry in reply to the announcement of ambassadors from the King of Persia.

"King of what? I hate ambassadors
And I hate their strutting peacocks."⁶⁴

It appears that at some time tradition interposed a peacock in the incarnations of the Samian Pythagoras, into which we find Ennius, the Roman poet (also punning on his name, Quintus) claiming to be "fifth" from that Pythagorean peacock (*quintus pavone e Pythagoreo*).⁶⁵ Which, seeing that they included Homer as well, makes Tertullian sneeringly ask how sits a bird with so raucous a voice as the peacock in such a poetic lineage.⁶⁶ And he is right too, for as Flannery O'Connor describes it (and I have heard it myself) it is hardly pleasant.⁶⁷ In the circumstances, it is anything but factual when

⁶². The bird was known to his contemporaries; see Eupolis apud Athenaeus p. 397, Aristophanes *Acharnians* vs. 61 - 67, *Birds* vs. 102, 269, 885. Aristotle *op.cit.* 564a 25- 69 describes the bird, and in 488b 24 its jealous and self-conceited nature.

⁶³. According to Trypho apud Athenaeus 397e; Liddell and Scott *Greek-English Lexicon* s.v. *taos*.

⁶⁴. *loc.cit.* See also the *Codex Ravennas ad loc.*

⁶⁵. Ennius vi. 9 - 11 and schol. Pers. vi. 11. See my "Of Euphorbus, Pythagoras' Prior Incarnations" in *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* vol. XIV (1988) p. 84 - 86 for the position of the peacock in these incarnations.

⁶⁶. *Anim.* 33.8.

⁶⁷. *op.cit.* p. 18. Describing this cry of the peacock, he writes: "Frequently the cock combines the lifting of his tail with the raising of his voice. He appears to receive through his feet some shock from the centre of the earth, which travels upwards through him and is released: *Eee-coo-ii! Eee-ooo-ii!* To the melancholy this sound is melancholy and to the hysterical it is hysterical. To me it has always sounded like a cheer for an invisible parade." The hen's call O'Connor compares to a mule's bray - *heehaw, heehaw, aa-aawww*.

King Golden Mallard of the *Nacca Jataka*, disgusted with the peacock's performance, dismisses him, notwithstanding (among other things) his "pleasing note" (*rudam manunnam*). Appeal for a tuneful voice to match "the emerald glitter" of his neck and "tail bedecked with jewels and gaily painted feathers" found Juno unsympathetic, says the fable of *The Peacock to Juno on his Voice* (P. 3. 18); let the peacock be content with what it has been given, even as is the eagle with its strength, the nightingale with its melody, the raven with its prophetic ability and the crow with its unfavourable omens. Otherwise it would be deluded and relapse into self-pity.

Sometimes there appear in the Greek fables, as also in the Buddhist birth-stories, details of animal behaviour and individual qualities attributed to them that are palpably folk belief and no more; for instance, that the lion fears the crowing of the cock as in the *The Ass, the Cock and the Lion* (H. 323) and the elephant fears pigs (*The Camel and the Elephant* (H.183)), that the beaver bites off his own testicles to save himself when pursued (*The Beaver* (H. 189)), or again, that the ape bears two young at a time, one of which gets suffocated by its embrace, while the unloved one survives (*The Ape's Young* (H366)); or that the hyena changes sex from time to time, being now he-hyena, now she-hyena, which not only worries themselves (*Hyena*. (H 406)), but the fox whom one wanted for a lover (*Hyena and Fox* (H. 405)). Fable is also made of the alleged practice of bears, when hungry, of dipping their tails in the sea, to which crabs cling and are fished out by these resourceful beasts (*The Hungry Bear* in Perrotti's Appendix 22) - a fable which may have grown out of the name of a variety of crab also called *arktos* (probably the *cancer arctus*). These are in the Aesopica, while the jatakas go on to tell us of the elephant's disgust with the smell of dung and the crocodile's shutting his eyes when he opens his mouth - knowledge of which, as was said in the *Vanarinda*, saved the Bodhisatta as a monkey from falling prey to the crocodile, who was Devadatta, no less. As I suspect, this notion may have derived from the sight of crocodiles sleeping or basking in the sun with eyes closed, which I myself have observed. However, I am not as sure whether this is a habit of the tortoise as well, which led the lascivious monkey of the *Kacchapa Jataka*, who had been in the habit of copulating in the meditating Bodhisatta's ear, to try it in the mouth of a basking tortoise - of course, with disastrous, if well-deserved consequences!⁶⁸

An intriguing if devious argument is used by Rhys-Davids to reinforce his hypothesis of an Indian origin for the comparable Greek fables via the *Suvannahamsa Jataka* (No. 136). A man dies and is reborn as a golden mallard (*suvannahamsa*) and visits the house of his former wife and family. On each occasion that he does so, he gives them a feather of gold to sell and live in comfort. But the wife, fearing that he

⁶⁸. This jataka, which the translator of the Cowell edition, W.H.D. Rouse, rendered in Latin for obvious reasons, is discussed by me as "A Naughty Jataka: *Kacchapa* 273", in *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* vol. XI (1985) p. 83 - 89, together with an English translation thereof; see J.G. Jones *op.cit.* appendix p. 194 - 195.

may stop his coming, seizes him and plucks his feathers all at once - only to find that because they are taken against the mallard's wishes, they cease to be gold. Here, thought Rhys-Davids, we have "a true myth born of a word puzzle, invented to explain an expression which had lost its meaning through the progress of linguistic growth." The epithet 'golden' (*suvanna*) applied to the mallard (*hamsa*) for its beauty, he thinks, led to the idea of its yielding gold. And this, he implies, inspired the Greek fable of *The Goose that laid Golden Eggs* (H. 343b).⁶⁹ This I find rather farfetched and think instead that the Indian story is merely varying the natural product expected of a bird, eggs, to the rather unusual one, its feathers - prompted, of course by the linguistic of that bird's mythic nomenclature.

The jatakas are not as prolific as are the Aesopica in aetiological fables concerning animals which tell of why an animal is such and such, or why it behaves so and so. A detail is mentioned in the *Kaka Jataka* (No. 140), companion of the *Kapi* (No. 404), which tells why crows have no fat, thus giving the lie to a chaplain who would have them killed in numbers to get his revenge for one of them who in mischief defecated on him. But it is not the point of the story, only subsidiary to it. On the other hand, there are several Aesopic fables concerning animals and birds which are aetiological in nature - of course though not scientifically so. One of these, *The Eagle and the Beetle* (H. 7), which tells why eagles will not lay their eggs when beetles are around, is one of the two fables attributed to Aesop himself with good authority and is said to have been narrated by the fabulist in defence of himself when the Delphians accused him of the theft of a gold cup from the temple of Apollo. The fable *Asses Petition Zeus* (H. 319) seeks to explain why asses, when they see the urine of one, add their own to it; Zeus had told them they would be free from their travails only when they succeeded in making a river with their urine - meaning of course never. Finest of these aetiological fables is perhaps the fable of *Zeus and the Tortoise* (H. 154), in which Zeus invited all the creatures to his wedding. All came except the tortoise, and when asked why he did not turn up, replied, "I love my house; my house is best." The reply so angered Zeus that he saw to it that the tortoise carried his house wherever he went. The jataka parallel of this fable however destroys this aetiological basis by making a mud hole the tortoise's lodging, which he claims to have loved so dearly. This is the *Kacchapa Jataka* (No. 178), in which we have the Indian tortoise, injured in his shell by the digging implement of a potter's son (the Bodhisatta), who was digging for clay in the river bank which the tortoise had refused to quit from excessive love of home, lamenting the fact as he expired. "Kites", says another of the aetiological Aesopica, *The Kites* (H. 170), "once had as much of a singing voice as nature had given swans. But hearing the neighing of horses, they yearned for a voice similar to theirs. So, in trying to imitate them, they lost the voices they had, using which they had to learn, and ended up neither knowing how to neigh nor recalling how to sing."

⁶⁹. *op.cit.* p. 294 n. i.

The notion that swans had a beautiful voice, as we find here, and, coupled with it, that they only sang before they died (*The Swan and his Owner* (H. 216)) is purely folk belief. The swan's voice is as unpleasant as the hee-haw of the peacock, notwithstanding the stanza of the *Nacca Jataka*, which gives the latter bird also a good voice. Both false notions must owe everything to the physical beauty of these birds, and not to reality. This is comparable to the notion that the *suvannahamsa* actually has gold, or golden feathers. Other such false, usually folk, notions make their appearances in the Aesopic fables as well as in the jatakas. One such in the latter is that crocodiles close their eyes when they open their mouths, upon which knowledge the monkey of the *Vanarinda*, as we saw, escaped falling prey to one. We have also, in the *Udapana Dusaka Jataka* (No. 271) the belief that jackals habitually foul with their urine the water from which they had drunk, which, false if it is, yet recalls the brief but excellent proverb fable of old Babylonia: "All the sea is my urine", said the fox, "pissing into the sea."

Notwithstanding the enlistment of several exotic animals in the Greek fable, we hardly see the use of mythical creatures, even when a whole range of them figure in Greek and Near Eastern mythology and art. A few however occur in the Indian jatakas; for example, among animals the six-tusked Chaddanta elephant and the winged horse, among birds the Garuda, among reptiles the Naga, among fish the monster-fish several leagues long. All of whom we may well leave alone in concluding this review, lest they entice us from the reality of field and jungle to the semi-real world of myth and fantasy. At the same time, there is little or nothing that can be drawn to our notice from the several unidentified jatakas on the rails of the Bharhut and Sanchi stupas of animal life that is not already to be found in those that have been identified from the collection. What these do suggest, however, is that a whole range of animal fables, even coming within the class of jatakas, did exist in India, which had not found their way into the *Jatakathavannana*. Nearly half of such relief sculptures from the afore-mentioned topes could not be associated with any of the jatakas when Rhys-Davids wrote his *Buddhist India*⁷⁰ - and I believe still remain so after the efforts of Sir Arthur Cunningham and other early orientalist scholars and archaeologists. A toilet tray from Sirkap, which I have been able to examine in the private collection of Franco Micieli de Biase, onetime ambassador for Italy in Sri Lanka, appears to me to depict a scene from one of the popular Aesopic fables not found in the literary work. This shows an eagle-like bird eating off a flat plate, while, facing him on the opposite side is small horse-like animal watching him; between them sit a man, chin to hand, in contemplation of the scene - which, allowing for the poor art and workmanship, may suggest the fable of *The Fox and the Crane* (H. 34), the observer being either Aesop himself or, if already Indianized,

⁷⁰. India (1955) See p. 109. "Twenty-seven of the scenes have been recognized as illustrating passages in the existing Jataka Book. Twenty-three are still unidentified, and some of these latter are meant, no doubt, to illustrate Jataka stories current in the community, but not included in the canonical collection." And see the list in p. 117.

the Bodhisatta.⁷¹ If so, this little cosmetic tray should achieve as much significance as the famous Trojan Horse Frieze from Gandhara, which, interpreted in terms of Indian story, could tell of the capture of Prince Udena of Vatsa by the soldiers of King Chandapajjota of Ujjain.⁷²

Already, however, we are straying from the strict subject of our study. But the evidence here is indicative of what a greater wealth of animal-fable and story-motif from Greece must have poured into India with the arrival and sojourn of the Greeks following Alexander's invasion. It is to our good fortune that a fair quantum of these are contained in the extant literary works, led by the *Jatakathavannana*. What the rest, with the exception of the meagre archaeological pieces surviving, would have held for reviews such as mine here is thus anybody's guess.

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⁷¹. See my 'A Toilet Tray from Gandhara' *Pratidana Manjari: W.F. Gunawardhana Commemoration Volume* (1987) p. 59 - 69. For the tray, see Plate II.

⁷². See my "The Ujjain Elephant and the Trojan Horse" in *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* vol. II, no. 1 (June 1976) p. 32 - 43. For this famous frieze see Plate III.