

## Animals in the Ancient World

In the past two decades, scholarly interest in animals in the ancient world has expanded considerably, yielding monographs and sourcebooks devoted to human-animal contact in antiquity. Examples are numerous: Podberscek, Paul, and Serpell's (2000) edited work recognizes the ability of non-human animals to act rationally and make decisions and investigates the way human-animal interactions shaped ancient life. Louise Calder's (2011) investigation uses the study of Greek attitudes toward animals to draw greater cultural conclusions. Invaluable investigative aids, the compendia of animal references in ancient literature provided by Kenneth Kitchell (2014) and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones and Sian Lewis (2018) facilitate both research and teaching and are evidence of the abundance and diverse sources available to historians in this field.

Thorsten Fögen and Edmund Thomas' edited volume (2017), highlights the use of human-animal studies, of the investigation of how humans understand and interact with animals. They introduce their work with the simple but profound recognition that unlike today, "there is hardly any area in the ancient world where animal and human lives are separated from each other" (2017, p.3). Understanding the nature and quality of this human-animal dynamic in antiquity can illuminate the past from a new angle—the fusion of the field of human-animal studies and classics represents an exciting new frontier of historical study. This proposed panel will approach the topic of human-animal interaction in the ancient world from distinct perspectives characterized by the study of (1) controlling animals, (2) forming emotional bonds with them, as well as (3) the way appropriate animal companions changed over the course of life, and finally (4) the use and misuse of foreign animals in combat.

The panel's first paper, "Controlling the Beast", investigates the mechanisms by which

domesticated companion animals and herd animals were controlled by humans. Relying largely on literary evidence and artistic depictions of things like leashes, collars, pens, and cages, this study of the physical control and restraint of animals enables the author to hypothesize what ancient animal breeding practices may have looked like. Such a study will impact scholars' understanding of ancient husbandry while also providing context for a culture of purebred dogs.

Next, "Transitional Friends" will investigate the depiction of pet dogs and small children in Athenian pottery during both waves of the Athenian Plague. The presenter will conclude that depictions of young children and their pets following the ravages of plague were intended as both an expression of mourning the children who died and celebrating those who survived through idealized depictions of their childhood. Her assessment of the ways in which human children and dogs interacted in artistic depictions uses archaeological evidence and HAS to add critical nuance to the brief literary descriptions of the plague preserved in Thucydides.

Maintaining the themes of childhood and transition, "A Boy's Best Friend" will discuss the role dogs played as companions from boyhood to manhood in classic Attic vases, highlighting the role of the canine in art not only as a companion, but as a marker of age. This paper will show that the size and breed of dog depicted was frequently in keeping with the maturity of the human it accompanied, indicating appropriate canine companionship varied throughout the stages of life.

The final paper, "A Friendly Wall" will investigate the use of elephants in ancient Macedonian combat amid the Diadoch Wars. As prior studies of animals in combat tend to objectify them, resulting in the inevitable comparisons of elephants and tanks, this paper considers natural elephant behavior and the Indian cultural context in which war elephants emerge, arguing that the animals were largely unsuited for Macedonian forms of warfare and

caused greater detriment than benefit. It concludes that elephants' significance was political rather than tactical, explaining the maintenance of war elephants by Alexander's Successors as the result of an "arms race" among men who vied not only for territory, but the perception of legitimacy.

### Bibliography

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