ELIZABETHAN ANIMAL LOVE AND ITS SOURCES, ILLUSTRATED
FROM THE WORKS OF SPENSER, LYLY AND SHAKESPEARE

by

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ELIZABETHAN ANIMAL LORE AND ITS SOURCES, ILLUSTRATED
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INTRODUCTION

The writers of the Elizabethan period in English literature accepted and made use of all the existing traditions and beliefs about animals and were not on the whole motivated by a scientific spirit. Their interest in animal lore was limited to finding the legends or facts which would best express what they had to say. To the modern student of the Elizabethans the value of any study of their natural history lies not in determining how much of it was founded upon fact, but rather in the explanations which such a study furnishes for many passages otherwise obscure.

I have attempted by a study of the works of natural history popular in the Elizabethan age to discover some of the beliefs concerning animals then current, and through them to determine the general sources for these beliefs as expressed by Spenser, Lyly and Shakespeare. I have chosen these three authors because I believe that they best represent the most important literary types of the period—Spenser the narrative poetry, Lyly the prose fiction, and Shakespeare the drama—and that they illustrate, therefore, most of the literary uses made of animals.
Very little has been written about Elizabethan animal lore. P. Ansell Robin, in his book *Animal Lore in English Literature*, finds more material in the Elizabethans than in the writers of any other period, but as the title of his work indicates, he does not confine himself to any one period. The extensive use of animals by Spenser has been noted by De Selincourt and Smith in the introduction to their edition of his poetical works. B. E. C. Davis, in *Edmund Spenser, A Critical Study*, comments on the vividness of the images which he drew from animal life, as does Emile Legouis in *Spenser*.

Bond's edition of the works of John Lyly contains an excellent essay, "Euphues and Euphuism," which reviews Lyly's use of natural history, and indicates the sources for his famous similes. Felix E. Schelling in *English Literature during the Lifetime of Shakespeare* also considers Lyly's natural history. Richard Morris in his introduction to *An Old English Miscellany* states that some of Lyly's animal lore came directly from the bestiaries, but Bond thinks this an obvious impossibility since the manuscript of them was not available until 1837.

Shakespeare's use of animals is competently dealt with in Caroline Spurgeon's book, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*.

An account of each animal can be found both in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th edition) and in *The New English*
I have not attempted to indicate specific sources beyond pointing out the origins of the various legends and the way in which they were changed by intermediaries between the original versions and Spenser, Lyly and Shakespeare.

The two main streams of influence upon Elizabethan natural history were classical and Christian. The classical influence was exerted chiefly through Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* and Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*; the Christian through the Scriptural writings and commentators,¹ bestiaries, and mediaeval writers who combined Christian doctrine with some knowledge of Greek and Latin natural philosophers.

The works of Aristotle were reintroduced into western Europe through Latin translations of Arabian commentaries such as that of Averroes and through Latin versions made from the original Greek in Constantinople during the thirteenth century.² By the end of the century he was accepted as one of the best zoological authorities, but no great distinction was made between the accuracy of his work and that of Pliny. The *Historia Naturalis* had never lost its original popularity, and was even

¹ l.e. Origen (c. 230), Jerome (d. 392), Augustine (d. 430).
used as a text in the schools.  

The Christian influence was the result of the combination of Hebrew folk and animal lore, made known by the Septuagint version of the Bible, with classical works of natural philosophy, and with writings attempting to explain Christian dogma. This resulted in the Physiologus, and bestiaries, as subsequent collections were called. Robin explains them thus: 4

From the second half of the second century A. D. some Christian preachers and writers employed an allegorical method in interpreting the Holy Scriptures and supporting Church doctrine, and for this purpose the current legends about animals were peculiarly adapted. The interpreters were not concerned with the truth or falsity of these legends, but only with their suitability for drawing instructive analogies with moral or religious ideas. Consequently there came into being a group of some fifty Christian allegories, the majority of which gave a description of some member of the animal kingdom as an emblem of some ethical or religious truth. This collection became known as the Physiologus ("The Naturalist").

This collection soon spread over the Christian world, and was translated into all literary languages; its ideas and symbolism passed into popular tradition. The "bestiaries" were popular in England and two have survived. The oldest (c. 800) consists of two poems on the Whale and the Panther, and a fragment of a third, the Partridge. 5 The other (c. 1150 - 1250)

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3 Attesting to its long-continued influence, Milton recommended it as the text for natural history, advising, however, that it be supplemented by personal observation.


is in prose, based on the Latin Physiologus of Thetbaldus, and contains descriptions of many beasts and birds, with appropriate morals drawn from each.  

The classical and Christian elements were combined in the mediaeval writers. In the twelfth century Alexander Neckam wrote De Natura Rerum in which he explained nature in general by a strictly Christian interpretation of the classics. The book was not popular, but it was used by Bartholomew Anglicus as one of the sources for his De Proprietatibus Rerum, in which he summed up all that was known or believed about the animal world. The primary purpose of the work was to explain the allusions to natural objects met with in the Scriptures or in the Gloss. His sources include Aristotle's Historia Animalium, Physiologus and the bestiaries. This work retained some degree of popularity well into the sixteenth century, although by that time it was beginning to be superseded by the rediscovered classics.

As a result of the union of these several streams of tradition there was produced in the Age of Elizabeth an animal lore which was a mixture of the fictitious, the semi-scientific, and the truly scientific, but Elizabethans made no attempt to discriminate between these elements.

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In any study of Elizabethan animal lore two types of animals force themselves upon the attention, the fabulous and the real with fictitious attributes. It must not be concluded, however, that there was no observation of the commonplace animals. There was, but the literary interest lies in the legendary material employed by writers of the period. I have arranged my material in three main divisions, one dealing with fabulous animals, another with the legends attached to ordinary animals, and a third summing up the different uses to which Spenser, Lyly, and Shakespeare each put his knowledge of animals.
CHAPTER I. FABULOUS ANIMALS

The Basilisk

In the sixteenth century the basilisk was believed to be one of the most terrible monsters in existence. This conception of the creature was mediaeval, for in the time of Pliny it was believed to be merely a horrible serpent of normal form. Pliny himself describes it as a snake with a white spot similar to a crown on its head, from which its name was derived (i.e., little king). It could kill vegetation or split rocks with its breath, which was also fatal to other serpents.

Alexander Neckam in the thirteenth century recorded for the first time that the basilisk was hatched by a serpent from the egg of a cook. Bartholomew Anglicus gives the following account of the basilisk:

The cockatrice hight Basilicus in Greek, and Regulus in Latin; and hath that name Regulus of a little king, for he is king of serpents, and they be afraid, and flee when they see him. For he slayeth them with his smell and with his breath; and slayeth also anything that hath life with breath and with sight. Among the Hesperies and Ethiopians is a well, that men trow is the head of Nile, and there beside is a wild beast that hight Catoblephas.

8 Historia Naturalis, ed. Charles Mayhoff (Leipzig, 1886), VIII.78.

9 P. Ansell Robin, Animal Lore in English Literature, p. 86.
and hath a little body, and nice in all its members and a great head hanging always toward the earth, and else it were great noying to mankind. For all that see his eyen, should die anon, and the same kind hath the cockatrice . . . and hath a body in length and in breadth as the cockatrice, and a tail of twelve inches long, and hath a speck in his head as a precious stone and feareth away all serpents with hissing . . . He drieth and burneth leaves and herbs, not only with touch but also by hissing and blast he rotteth and corrupteth all things about him.

The references made to the basilisk, or cockatrice, by Spenser, Lyly and Shakespeare are so numerous that the following quotations merely serve to show the kind of use made of the basilisk in Elizabethan literature.

Spenser in the Faerie Queene describes the death-causing glance of the basilisk:

For from his fearfull eyes two fierie beames, 
More sharpe than pointe of needles did pro­ceed, 
Shooting forth farre away two flaming streames, 
Full of sad powre, that poysonous bale did breede 
To all, that on him lookt without good heed, 
And secretly his enemies did slay: 
Like as the Basilisk of serpents seeds, 
From powerfull eyes close venim doth conuay 
Into the lookers hart, and killeth farre away.

Spenser here presents a variation of the usual Elizabethan version of the legend: he indicates that the basilisk is


11 For derivation of cockatrice, see New English Dictionary.

"of serpent's seede." The current idea was that the creature was only hatched by a serpent. He repeats his reference to its deadly look in Amoretti XLIX.

Payre cruel, why are ye so fierce and cruel?
Is it because your eyes have power to kill?
Then know, that mercy is the mightiest jewel,
And greater glory think to save, then spill.
But if it be your pleasure and proud will,
To shew the power of your imperious eyes,
Then not on him that never thought you ill,
But bend your force against your enemies,
Let them feel the utmost of your cruelty,
And kill with looks, as Cockatrices do:
But him that at your footstools humbled lies,
With merciful regard, give mercy too.
Such mercy shall you make admired to be,
So shall you live by giving life to me.

Lyly also dwells upon the death-producing powers of the animal.

... and with me as it doth with those that view the Basilisk, whose eyes procure delight to the looker at the first glimpse, and death at the second glance.13

Here, too, is a different conception of the powers of the basilisk. Lyly seems to have had no authority for making the second glance only fatal, nor is it recorded elsewhere that delight is the result of looking at the beast.

Shakespeare produced no new ideas of the basilisk, and all his references to it are concerned with its power of killing its victim.

It is a basilisk unto mine eye,
Kille me to look on't.14

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14Cymbeline, II. iv. 107.
Glou. Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.
Anne. Would they were basiliskes, to strike thee dead:15

A cockatrice hath thou hatch'd to the world
Whose unavoided eye is murderous.16

In Romeo and Juliet he says:

Hath Romeo slain himself? say thou but 'I',
And that bare vowel 'I' shall poison more
Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice:17

Sir Toby in Twelfth Night refers to the cockatrice:

"This will so fright them both that they will kill one another
by the look, like cockatrices."18

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15 Richard III I. ii. 151
16 Ibid, IV. i. 55
17 III. ii. 45.
18 II. ii. 215.
The Dragon

In most cases the dragon was represented as a huge and terrible monster, usually combining ophidian and crocodilian structure, with strong claws, like a beast or bird of prey, and a scaly skin; it is generally represented with wings and sometimes as breathing out fire.\(^{19}\)

No definite source can be found for this fabulous monster since it existed in the folk lore of many countries. It is referred to many times in the Bible; in most cases the word "dragon" is a translation of the Hebrew "tannin", which means any large serpent, as in Psalm 91.13: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." In Ezekiel 29.3, the dragon is a crocodile which represents Pharaoh: "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers." The dragon in Isaiah 29.13 is either a lizard, a serpent, or as the Revised Version renders it, a jackal: "and thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be a habitation of dragons, and a court for owls." In the Septuagint the word is \(\delta\rho\alpha\kappa\omega\nu\), in the Vulgate "\(\dot{a}\)\(\rho\alpha\kappa\omega\)," meaning probably a great sea or water monster, a whale, a crocodile, or a large serpent and so translated in the

\(^{19}\) New English Dictionary.
Revised and American versions.

Aristotle mentions the dragon, but says only: "The dragon, when it eats fruit, swallows endive-juice; it has been seen in the act."\(^{20}\) Pliny repeats this information.\(^{21}\) The "dragon" in both authors is usually accepted as a large python.

The dragon of the Middle Ages was more awe-inspiring. Bartholomew Anglicus describes it thus:

The Dragon is the most greatest of all serpents, and oft is he drawn out of his den, and riseth up into the air, and the air is moved by him, and also the sea swelleth against his venom, and he hath a little mouth, and draweth breath at small pipes and straight, and rearth his tongue, and hath teeth, but also in his tail, and grieveth both by biting and with stinging, and hath not so much venom as other serpents:

Between elephants and dragons is everlasting fighting . . . 22

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the dragon was an important figure in the pageants of Saint George, and it must be remembered that it was not regarded as fabulous, but as a real and terrible monster.\(^{23}\) The fact that it was always accepted as the personification of Evil does not mean that it


\(^{21}\) Historia Naturalia. VIII. 41.

\(^{22}\) Steele, Mediaeval Lore, p. 149.

\(^{23}\) Robin, Animal Lore, p. 72.
was regarded as a mythical figure. Spenser's dragon is a personification, but it conforms to popular ideas of the beast.

And over, all with brasen scales was armed,
Like plated coat of steele, so couched neare,
That nought mote pere, ne might his corse be harmed
With dint of sword, nor push of pointed speare;
Which as an Eagle, seeing pray appears,
His muyr plumes doth rouse, full rudely dight.
So shook he, that horror was to heare,
For as the clashing of an Armour bright,
Such noyse his rouzed scales did send into the knight.

His flaggy wings when forth he did display,
Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wynd
Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
And eke the penneis, that did his pinions bynde,
Were like mayne yards, with flying canuas lynd,
His huge long tayle wound vp in hundred foldes,
Does ouerspred his long bras-scaely backe.
Whose wreathed boughs when ouer he vufouldes
And thicke entangled knots adown does slake,
Bespotted as with shields of red and blacke,
It sweepeth all the land behind him farre,
And of three furlongs does but little lacke;
And at the point two stings in-fixed arre,
Both deadly sharpe, that sharpest Steele exceeden farre.

But stings and sharpest Steele did far exceed
The sharpnesse of his cruel rending clauws;
Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed,
What ever thing does touch his ravenous powes,
or that within his reach he ever drawes.
But his most hideous head my tong to tell
Does tremble: for his deepe devouring iawes
Wide gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell,
Through which into his darke abisse all ruin fell.

And that more wondrous was, in either law
Three rnanke of yron teeth enraunged were,
In which yet trickling bloody and gobbets raw
Of late devoured bodies did appeare,
That sight thereof bred cold congealed feare:
Which to increase, and all at once to kill.
A cloud of smothering smoke and sulphur seare
Out of his stinking gorge forth steamed still
That all the ayre about with smoke and stench
did fill. 24

In the Faerie Queene (6. 70. 9.) Schindia has hinder parts
like those of a dragon, Geryoneo’s monster has the tail of a
dragon (5. 11. 24. 4), and a dragon is pictured lying under
the feet of Lucifer (11. 4. 10. 5).

In An Hymne of Heauenly Beautie the dragon typifies the
Devil, as in the Apocalypse:

His scepter is the rod of Righteousnesse,
With which he bruseth all his foes to dust,
And the great Dragon strongly dost represse,
Under the rigour of his judgement just. 25

This symbolism is carried out also in passages in the
first book of The Faerie Queene other than those already
quoted. For example, in Canto 1 the dragon is described as
“horrible and stearne”; in Canto 7 he is the captor of Una’s
parents and in Canto 9 is the subject of her taunting speech to
the knight:

... Fie, Fie, faint harted knight,
Is this the battell, which thou vaunest to fight
With that fire-mouthed Dragon, horrible and bright? 26

In A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings the seven-headed
beast of Revelation partakes of the nature of a dragon.

I saw an vgly beast come from the sea
That seven heads, ten crowns, ten hornes did beare,
Hauing thereon the vile blaspheming name.

24 Faerie Queene 1. 16. 8-11.
25 1. 157 ff.
26 1. 9. 52. 6-9.
The cruelle Leopard she resembled much:
Feete of a beare, a Lions throte she had.
The mightie Dragon gau to hir his power.
One of hir heads yet there I did espie,
Still freshly bleeding of a grievous wounde.
One cried aloude. What one is like (quod he)
This honoured Dragou, or may him withstande?
And then came from the sea a savage beast,
With Dragons speche, and shewde his force by fire,
With wondrous signes to make all wights adore
The beast, in setting of hir image vp.27

In the Hymnes of Rome the legend of the sowing of the
dragon's teeth by Jason is referred to:
As that braue sonne of Aeson, which by charmes
Atoheiu'd the golden Fleece in Colchid land,
Out of the earth engendred men of armea
Of Dragon's teeth, sowne in the sacred sand.28

Lyly's most famous reference to the dragon is based on its
fabled enmity with the elephant. The dragon was supposed to
desire the cool blood of the elephant to ease his throat. He
coiled about the elephant and sucked his blood, and the elephant,
dying, fell upon his adversary and killed him. Thus Lyly applies
the fable:

Thou being clipped of thy libertie goest about
to bereave me of mine, not farre differing from
the natures of Dragons, who sucking blood out of
the Elephant kill him and with the same poyson
themselves.29

27 Sonnet 12
28 l. 10
29 Euphues and His England, p. 138.
The references to the dragon in Shakespeare are not so revealing as to the traditional nature of the beast: 30

His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings.  
My fairy lord, this must be done with haste  
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast. 31

Swift, swift, you dragons, of the night, that dawning  
May bare the raven's eye. 32

The fierceness of the dragon is referred to in King John.  

Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,  
with ladies' faces and fiery dragons' spleens. 33  
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes.  

Saint George and his dragon are twice invoked in battle cries; once by the bastard in King John, who cries:

Saint George, that swung the dragon, and e'er since  
Sits on his horse back at mine hostess' door,  
Teach us some fence. 34

King Richard makes the second appeal to Saint George:

Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,  
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons! 35

In Coriolanus are two references to the dragon: "This  
Marius is grown from man to dragon: he has wings;" 36 and:

... though I go alone,  
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen  
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen. 37

30I Henry IV. I. i. 11.  
31Midsummer Night's Dream. III. ii. 379  
32Cymbeline. II. ii. 49.  
33II. i. 68.  
34II. i. 288.  
35King Richard III. V. iii. 350.  
36V. iv. 13.  
37IV. I. 30.
The Phoenix

The phoenix was supposed to be a bird of gorgeous plumage, fabled to be the only one of its kind, and to live five or six hundred years in the Arabian desert, after which it burnt itself on a funeral pyre of aromatic twigs ignited by the sun and fanned by its own wings, but only to emerge from its ashes with renewed youth to live through another cycle of years. Two variations of the legend were that the phoenix burned itself on the altar of the temple at Heliopolis, and that a worm emerged from the ashes and became the young phoenix.

The legend is recorded by Hesiod, Herodotus, Ovid and Pliny; they agree that there is but one such bird at a time, that it is Arabian, that it burned itself, and that there arose from the remains a young phoenix; Pliny alone averred that the young bird appeared first as a worm in the ashes of the destroyed nest.

The phoenix also appeared in the Septuagint in the book of Job (29. 16): "Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the phoenix."40

38 *Historia Naturalis* X. 2; XIII. 4.
40 The Revised Version gives "sand" as an alternate reading; the American Revision gives "sand" only.
In the Physiologus the bird is the symbol of Jesus, and is used to justify His words: "I have the power to lay down my life and I have power to take it again." The interpretation is as follows:

If now this bird has the power to slay himself and come to life again, how should reasonable men complain of our Lord Jesus Christ when he said: "I have the power to lay down my life and to take it again."

For the phoenix takes on itself the image of our Lord; when, coming down from heaven he brought with him both wings full of pleasant odours, the excellent heavenly words, so that as we stretch out our hands in prayer we become filled with the pleasant scent of his mercy.

An old English poem, The Phoenix, follows the plan of the Physiologus in giving to the phoenix an allegorical interpretation.

Bartholomew Anglicus gives the following account:

Phoenix is a bird, and there is but one of that kind in all the wide world. . . . The philosopher speaketh of this bird and saith that phoenix is a bird without make, and liveth three hundred or five hundred years: when the which years are past, and he feelth his own default and feebleness, he maketh a nest of right sweet-smelling sticks, that are full dry, and in summer when the western wind blows, the sticks and the nest are set on fire with burning heat of the sun, and burn strongly. Then this bird phoenix cometh wilfully into the burning nest, and is there burnt to ashes among

41 John X. 10.
these burning sticks and within three days a little worm is gendered of the ashes, and waxeth little and little and taketh feathers and is shapen and turned to a bird.44

The following quotation from Spenser presents a different story of the death of the phoenix; here he wounds himself in the breast and dies because his customary haunts have been destroyed.

I saw a Phoenix in the wood alone,
With purple wings, and crest of golden hue;
Strange bird he was, whereby I thought anon,
That of some heavenly wight I had the view;
Untill he came unto the broken tree,
And to the spring, that late devoured was.
What say I more? each thing at last we see
Doth passe away: the Phoenix there alas
Spying the tree destroid, the water dride,
Himselfe smote with his beake, as in disdain,
And so forthwith in great despight he did.45

Lyly contributes no new variation to the legend, except that he changes the sex of the bird, which in the classical and mediaeval writers was male. He says:

As there is but one Phoenix in the world,
so there is but one tree in Arabia wherein
she buyldeth.46

Shakespeare's poem, The Phoenix and the Turtle, also makes the phoenix female and the mate of the turtle dove. Heretofore the phoenix had no mate.

Let the bird of lowdest lay
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herauld sad and trumpet be;
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

44Steele, Mediaeval Lore, p. 128.
45The Visions of Petrarch. 5.
46Euphues and His England, p. 74.
The following quotations from Shakespeare’s plays attest to the fact that the reincarnation of the phoenix was a well-known legend.

I’ll bear them hence; but from their ashes shall be rear’d
A phoenix that shall make all France afeard.47

In the foregoing passage Sir William Lucy is promising vengeance upon the French as he bears from the field of battle those English knights slain by the victorious French. The following carries out the same theme.

My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth
A bird that will revenge upon you all.48

... but as when
The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix,
Her ashes new create another heir,
As great in admiration as herself;
So shall she leave her blessedness to one.49

Shakespeare here again makes the phoenix female, but in this play it is obviously a tribute to Elizabeth.

The rarity of the bird is the theme of this Shakespearean passage:

She calls me proud, and that she could not love me,
Were men as rare as phoenix.50

47 Henry VI. IV. vii. 93.
48 Henry VI. I. iv. 35.
49 King Henry VIII. V. v. 40.
50 As You Like It. IV. iii. 16.
The Salamander

The figure of the salamander as a lizard-like animal which could live in, or was able to endure, the fire can be found in Pliny, who says of it: "Huic tantus rigor, ut ignem tactu restiguat, non alio modo quam glacies." This statement Lyly elaborates thus: "... as the salamander which, being a long space nourished in the fire, at last quencheth it."

The notion of the salamander's deriving nourishment from the fire is probably an invention of Lyly's.

The Physiologus gives as its most important characteristic its supposed ability to extinguish fire. During the dissemination of the bestiaries new ideas developed about the creature. By the sixteenth century the salamander lived in the fire, was nourished by fire, and died when taken from it.

Shakespeare applies these attributes humorously when Falstaff says of Bardolph's nose: "I have maintained that salamander of yours with fire any time this two and thirty years."
The Unicorn

Aristotle mentions two single-horned animals, the oryx and the Indian ass. Pliny gives an elaborate description of a unicorn with the body of a horse, the head of a deer, the feet of an elephant, the tail of a lion, and one black horn projecting from the middle of its forehead.

The Physiologus contains the following passage:

Physiologus relates of a Unicorn that it has the following attribute. It is a small beast like a goat; but it is very wary and the hunter cannot approach it because it possesses great cunning. It has a horn in the middle of its head.

The Elizabethan conception of the unicorn's great strength and fierceness is due to Biblical references to such characteristics.

God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind him with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great?

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55 Historia Animalium. 499b19.
56 Historia Naturalis. VIII. 31; XI. 106.
57 Epic of the Beast, p. 199.
58 Numbers. XXIII. 22.
59 Job. XXXIX. 9-10.
Spenser alludes to the enmity of the lion and the unicorn:

Like as a lyon, whose imperiall powre
A proud rebellious unicorn defyes.60

Shakespeare refers to the traditional fierceness of the animal:

Wert thou the unicorn, pride and wrath
Would confound thee and make thine own self the conquest of thy fury.61

The superstition that experienced hunters, when charged by a unicorn, would slip behind a tree, in which the fierce animal would imbed his horn, explains this passage in Julius Caesar:

I can o'er sway him, for he loves to hear
That unicorns may be betrayed with trees.62

In The Tempest doubt as to the very existence of both the unicorn and the phoenix is expressed.

Now I will believe
That there are unicorns, that in Arabia
There is one tree, the phoenix' throne,
One phoenix,
At this hour reigning there.63

60 Faerie Queene. 2. 5. 10.
61 Timon of Athens. IV. iii. 339.
62 Julius Caesar. II. i. 205.
63 The Tempest. III. iii. 22.
The Griffin

The griffin was usually represented with the head and wings of an eagle and the body and hind-quarters of a lion. In both the Septuagint and the Vulgate the creature is included in the enumeration of unclean flying things.

The legend is told by Herodotus in the *Histories* (IV. 27) that the gold of the Arimaspians was guarded by griffins. The people themselves were monsters, for they had only one eye.

According to the *Physiologue*.

The Gryphon is the largest bird of all the birds of heaven. It lives in the far East in an inlet of the ocean-stream. And, when the sun rises over the water-depths and lights the world with its beams, the Gryphon spreads out its wings and receives the rays of the sun. And another rises with it, and the two fly together towards the sunset, as it is written: "Spread thy wings, dispenser of light; give the world light."64

Bartholomew Anglicus gives still another account of it.

He says:

A griffin is accounted among flying things (Deut. xiiiij) and there the Gloss saith, that the griffin is four-footed, and like to the eagle in head and in wings, and is like to the lion in the other parts of the body. And dwelleth in those hills that are called Hyperborean, and are most enemies to horses and men, and grieveth them most, and layeth in his nest a stone that hight Smaragdus against venomous beasts of the mountain.65

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64 *Epic of the Beast*, p. 231.

It will be noticed that here are three legends about the griffin which have in common only the name of the beast they celebrate. The Elizabethan writers adopted the physiognomy and fierceness of the griffin from Herodotus and changed its traditional enemy to the dragon. Spenser does not describe the creature in detail in the following quotations, but gives no indication that his conception of it was different from that of classical authors with whom he was familiar.

The first troupe was a monstrous rablement
Of fowle misshapen wights, of which some were
Headed like Owles, with beokes vncomely bent,
Others like Dogs, others like Gryphons dreare,
And some had wings, and some had clawes to teare,
And euery one did bow and arrowes beare:
All those were lawlesse lusts, corrupt enuies,
And courteous aspects, all cruell enimies.66

Then vnto him all monstrous beasts resorted
Bred of two kindes, as Griffons, Minotaures,
Crocodiles, Dragons, Beauers, and Centaurs.67

So th'one for wrong, the other struues for right:
As when a Gryfon seized of his pray,
A Dragon fierie encountreth in his flight,
Through widest ayre making his yde way,
That would his rightfull raune rend away:
With hideous hoarour both together smight,
And souce so sore, that they the heauens affray:
The wise Soothsayer seeing so sad sight,
Th'amazed vulgar tels of warres and mortall fight.68

66Faerie queene. 2. 11. 8.
67Mother Hubbard's Tale. 1123.
68Faerie queene. 1. 5. 8.
Shakespeare uses the griffin only twice; once to indicate the strangeness of Helena pursuing Demetrius; the other time to show the strange knowledge of the elder Mortimer.

The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed, when cowardice pursues and valour flies.69

And of a dragon and a finlese fish,
A clip-wing'& griffin and a moulten raven,
A couching lion and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
As puts me from my faith.70

69 *Midsummer Night's Dream* II. i. 232.

70 *Henry IV.* III. i. 152
CHAPTER II. SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT NORMAL ANIMALS

The Ape

The ape in sixteenth century literature has remarkably few fictitious characteristics. It symbolized slavish imitation, foolish parental affection, and lasciviousness, all the result of the observation of corresponding traits in simian animals. Only one of these, lasciviousness, gave rise to any unsubstantiated belief that was perpetuated in literature. This was that any woman who rejected all suitors and died a virgin was punished for her extreme fastidiousness by being made to lead a troupe of apes for all eternity. This curious legend originated in the sixteenth century, and is used by Lyly and Shakespeare. Spenser does not refer to it.

Lyly makes one of the characters in Euphues say: "But certee I will either lead a virgin's life in earth (though I lead Apes in Hell) or els follow thee rather than thy gifts." In Euphues and His England the legend again appears: "My second daughter shall not lead Apes in Hell, though she have not a penny for the priest, because she is witty, which bindeth weake things, and looseth strong things, and worketh all things.

71p. 220.
in those that have either wit themselves, or love wit in others."72 Later in the same work he says: "I had rather thou shouldest leade a lyfe to thine owne lyking in earthe than to thy greate torments leade Apes in hell."73

Shakespeare introduces the idea in a jesting conversation between Beatrice and Leonato.

Beatrice. What should I do with him? Dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentle- women? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man: and he that is less than a man, I am not for him: therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward, and lead his apes into hell.

Leonato. Well, then, go you into hell?

Beatrice. No, but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say 'Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven; here's no place for you maids:' so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens.74

In The Taming of the Shrew Katharine complains of her unmarried state.

What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see She is your treasure, she must have a husband; I must dance bare-foot on her wedding day And for your love to her lead apes in Hell.75

Spenser made "putting the ape in Malbesso's cape" synonymous with making a fool of a jealous husband. Malbesso, a

72p. 61.
73p. 230
74Much-Ado About Nothing. II. i. 35-52.
75II. i. 31-34.
"cancred, crabbed carle", was married to the beautiful Hellesore, and like the proverbial old husband, was extremely jealous of his lovely young wife. She lulled his suspicions, however, and under his very nose made an assignation to elope with the young and handsome Paridell. And, Spenser says, "Thus was the ape, by their fair handling, put into Malbeccoee cape."76
The ideas about the panther which were accepted in the sixteenth century were in accord with the Christian traditions begun by the Physiologus and continued by the various bestiaries, by Vincent of Beauvais, Alexander Neckam and Bartholomew Anglicus. The panther in the earlier works, the Physiologus and the bestiaries, was the symbol of Christ; by the time of Bartholomew the allegorical significance had almost disappeared, but the legends of habits of the beast, which had been so appropriate for the explanation of Christian dogma, still clung to it.

The Physiologus gives the following account of the panther, which I quote in its entirety since it is interesting to note how exactly later writers followed it in describing the habits of the beast, although they dropped the figurative interpretation which was of primary importance in the Physiologus.

The prophet prophesied and said: "I will be to Ephraim as a panther." (Hos. 5, 14)

Physiologus relates of the panther that he has the following attribute: He is the friendliest of all beasts, but he is an enemy to Dragons. He is as many coloured as Joseph's coat. He is very quiet and gentle. When he has eaten and satisfied himself, he goes to sleep in his cavern. And on the third day he awakens out of his sleep, and cries with a loud voice. And the animals both far and near hear his voice. And after the cry a very pleasant odour proceeds out of his mouth, and the animals follow the pleasant odour, and run to be near him.

So also, when Christ awoke the third day and
rose from the dead. He spread a pleasant odour of peace both far and near. Very manifold is the true wisdom of God. The psalmist says: "The Queen stands at thy right hand clothed in a garment of gold and many colours" (Ps. 45, 10), which is the Church. Very manifold is Christ, because he himself is chastity, temperance, charity, faith, virtue, patience, harmony, and peace.  
Finely spake Physiologus of the Panther.  

I quote Bartholomew's version of the legend as typical of those current in the Middle Ages. It will be noted that he represents the panther as a beast of prey, while in the Physiologus it is "the friendliest of all beasts."

Physiologus speaketh of the Panther and saith that he hateth the dragon, and the dragon fleeth him: and when he hath eat enough at full, he hideth him in his den, and sleepeth continually nigh three days, and riseth after three days and crieth, and out of his mouth cometh right good air and savour, and is passing measure sweet: and for the sweetness all beasts follow him. And only the dragon is afeared when he heareth his voice, and fleeth into a den, and may not suffer the smell thereof; and faileth in himself, and looseth his comfort. For he weeneth that his smell is very venom.

All four-footed beasts have liking to behold the divers colours of the panther and tiger, but they are afeared of the horribleness of their heads, and therefore they hide their heads, and toll the beasts to them with fairness of that other-deal of the body, and take them when they come so tolled, and eat them.  

Spenser gives a similar account of the panther luring his prey.

The Panther, knowing that his spotted hyde  
Both please all beasts, but that his looks them fray

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77 Epic of the Beast, p. 190
78 Mediaeval Lore, p. 166.
within a bush his dreadfull head doth hide, to let them gaze whylest he on them may pray. 79

Lyly says, "Therefore if there be any Father that would haue his children nurtured and brought vp in honestye, let him expell these Panthers [flatterers], which haue a sweet smell but a deuouring minde."80 He repeats the idea as he compares the false beauty of a lovely face to "a sweet Panther with a deuouring paunch."81 Here Lyly has evolved a symbol of hypocrisy from the combination in the legendary panther of an alluring odor and a ravenous nature.

79 Amoretti. 53

80 Euphues, p. 262. See Bond's note on this passage, Complete works of John Lyly, Vol. I, p. 336, in which he states that Lyly borrowed the figure from Pettie's Pallace.

The Hyena

Many legends about the hyena were current in Elizabethan England. One of them was that the beast changed its sex every year. Aristotle and Pliny had both denied it vigorously, but the idea persisted in popular tradition, as may be seen from the fact that the Physiologus makes the following statement:

Physiologus relates of this animal that it is man-woman, now male now female. It is an unclean beast, because it changes its nature.82

The hyena was also reputed to rob tombs and devour the bodies of the dead. Here the legend is founded upon fact, for the hyena did feed upon carrion, and it is easily understood how this habit could be exaggerated.

Another story more frequently referred to in literature was that the hyena preyed upon men, and called its victims to it by imitating the voice of a man. Pliny tells that the animal lurked about stables to learn the speech of the men who worked in them, then called the victim by name, and after he had come a short distance from his companions killed and ate him.83

Bartholomew Anglicus says:

And herds tell that among stables, he feigneth speech of mankind, and calleth some man to him by his own name, and rendeth him when he hath

82 Epip of the Beast, p. 191.
83 Historia Naturalia, VIII. 44.
him without. And he feigneth oft the name of some man, for to make hounds run out that he may take and eat them.\textsuperscript{34}

Lyly refers to the legend thus:

Think this with thy selve, that the sweet songs of Calipso, were subtill snares to entice Vlysses, that the Crabbe then catcheth the Oyster, when the Sunne shineth, that Hiena, when he speaketh lyke a man deuise mob most mischiefe, yt women when they be most pleasaunt, pretend mob treacherie.\textsuperscript{35}

Spenser uses the hyena in a description of the witch's beast thus:

\begin{quote}
But likest it to an Hyena was, \\
That feeds on women's flesh, as others feede on gras.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

This seems to be an invention of Spenser's if it is to be taken literally, for I could find no similar statement in other authors that the hyena fed upon women's flesh in particular.

Lyly gives a curious account of the hunting of the hyena. "If I had used the polycie that Hunters doe, in catching of Hiena, it might be also, I had now won you: but coming of the right side, I am entangled myself, and had it been on ye left side, I shold have inveigled thee."\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34}Mediaeval Lore, p. 158
\textsuperscript{35}Euphues, p. 250.
\textsuperscript{36}Faerie Queene. 3. 7. 22. 6.
\textsuperscript{37}Euphues and His England, p. 66.
This is evidently a poor adaptation of Pliny's version:

When the hyaena flies before the hunter, it turns off on the right, and letting the man get before it, follows in his track; should it succeed in doing which, the man is sure to lose his senses and fall from his horse even. But if, on the other hand, it turns off to the left, it is a sign that the animal is losing strength, and that it will soon be taken.88

Shakespeare refers once to the cry of the hyena which gave to the animal its name "laughing hyena." "I will laugh like a hyen, and that when thou art inclined to sleep."89

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88 *Historia Naturalis*. XXVIII. 27, Bostock and Riley's translation.

89 *As you Like It*. IV. i. 156.
The Bear

The phrase "licking into shape" which is current even today was derived from a myth which was widely accepted in the sixteenth century. It was believed that the young of the bear were born as shapeless lumps of flesh which the mother licked into her own likeness. Aristotle first recorded the idea; Pliny repeated it. Bartholomew Anglicus gives as his source Avicenna, an Arabian commentator on Aristotle. He writes as follows:

Avicenna saith that the bear bringeth forth a piece of flesh imperfect and evil shapen, and the mother licketh the lump, and shapeth the members with licking ... For the whelp is a piece of flesh little more than a mouse, having neither eyes nor ears, and having claws some-deal bourseoning, and so this lump she licketh, and shapeth a whelp with licking.

Shakespeare employs the legend in Gaunt's hopeless description of himself.

Why, love forsook me in my mother's womb: And, for I should not deal in her soft laws, She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe, To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub; To make an envious mountain on my back, Where sits deformity to mock my body; To shape my legs of an unequal size; To disproporition me in every part, Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp That carries no impression of the dam.  

90 Mediaeval Lore, p. 169.
913 Henry VI. III. ii. 153-162.
Lyly records several instances of animals which cure themselves of sickness, among them the bear. He says,
"The filthy Sow when she is sick, eateth the Sea Crabbe and is immediately recoured: . . . the Beare readye to pine, lyketh vpp the Anta and is recoured . . . ."92

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92Euphues, p. 208.
The Eagle

The strength, keen vision, graceful and powerful flight of the eagle are proverbial, and very early gave to it the title of the king of birds. A common use of the eagle in literature is as an epithet of a prince or leader. Shakespeare so employs it when he speaks of "Our princely eagle, the imperial Caesar."\(^{93}\)

The bird was said to be able to look directly at the sun, and to test its fledglings by their ability to do so. Bartholomew Anglicus writes of this habit thus:

> Among all fowls, in the eagle the virtue of sight is most temperate and most sharp in act and deed of seeing and beholding the sun in the roundness of its circle without blemishing of eyen. And the sharpness of her sight is not rebounded again with the cleanness of light of the sun, neither disperpled. There is one manner eagle that is full sharp of sight and she taketh her own birds in her claws, and maketh them to look even on the sun, and that ere their wings be full grown and except they look stiffly and steadfastly against the sun. And if any eye of any of her birds watereth in looking on the sun she slayeth him, as though he went out of kind, or else driveth him out of the nest and despiseth him, and seteth not by him.\(^{94}\)

Spenser referred to the ability of the eagle to look at the sun as follows:

> I saw the Bird that can the Sun endure,

\(^{93}\)Cymbeline. V. v. 473.

\(^{94}\)Mediaeval Lore, p. 119.
With feeble wings assay to mount on hight,  
By more and more she gan her wings t'assure.  
Following th'enexample of her mother's sight:

Lyly also credited the eagle with power to stare at the sun. He writes of it, "No bird can looke against the Sunne but those that breede of the eagle."  

In Euphues and His England he says, however, "But as ye foolish Eagle yt seeing ye sun ooueteth to build hir nest in ye sun . . . But as ye Eagle, burneth aut hir eyes wt that proud lust . . . ."

Shakespeare likens the testing of the eaglet to a trial to prove royal parentage:

May, if thou be that princely eagle's bird  
Show thy descent by gazing 'gainst the sun.

Another legend attached to the eagle was that when it grew old and hampered by loss of vision and powerful flight, it renewed its youth by selecting a spring, flying up from it towards the sun until the heat burned its feathers and loosened the film over its eyes. It then dropped from the air into the spring, and emerged from it a young bird. This is the legend referred to in Psalm 103.5:

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Physiologus gave this account of the rejuvenation of the eagle:

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95 The Visions of Bellay. 7. 1-4
96 Euphues. p. 231.
97 3 Henry VI. II. 1. 91.
Now Physiologus says of the eagle that he has the following attribute: When he is ageing, his flight grows heavy and his eyesight dim. What does he now do? He seeks first a pure stream of water, and flies aloft to the ether of the sun, and burns off his old feathers, and loosens the film over his eyes, and flies down to the spring, and therein dives three times under and renews himself and becomes young again.  

Bartholomew Anglicus relates essentially the same legend in the following passage:

Austin saith, and Plinius also, that in age the eagle hath darkness and dimness in eyen, and heaviness in wings. And against this disadvantage she is taught by kind to see a well of springing water and then she flieth up into the air as far as she may, till she be full hot by heat of the air, and by travail of flight, and so then by heat the pores are opened and the feathers chafed, and she falleth suddenly into the well, and there the feathers are changed, and the dimness of her eyes is wiped away and purged and she taketh again her might and strength.  

The myth is thus expressed by Spenser:

At last she saw, where he vpostarted brane Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay, As Eagle fresh out of the ocean wawe, Where he hath left his plumes all hoary gray And deckt himselfe with feathers youthful gay.  

Shakespeare employed the idea in the following simile:

All furnish'd, all in arms; All plumed like estridges that in the wind Baited like eagles having lately bathed.
A common belief which the Elizabethans got from the classics and which persisted well into the seventeenth century was that the eagle died of starvation. That this legend did not agree with that which told that the eagle renewed its youth seems not to have prevented widespread acceptance of both. Aristotle stated that the eagle died from starvation.\textsuperscript{102} Pliny said: "They\textsuperscript{[the eagles]} die not through old age or sickness, but from starvation, since the upper beak grows so much that the hook cannot be opened."\textsuperscript{103}

This idea does not appear in Spenser or Shakespeare, but Lyly says, "It is like to fare with thee as with the Eagle, which dyeth neither for age nor with sickness, but with famine."\textsuperscript{104}

Many other fanciful characteristics of the eagle which cannot be found in either Spenser or Shakespeare appear in Lyly. One of them was that some eagles attacked stags. This was taken directly from Pliny, who said that the eagles rolled themselves in dust, then perched between the antlers of the stag and blinded the creature by throwing dust in his eyes until he dropped over a cliff.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{102}\textit{Historia Animalium.} 619.
\textsuperscript{103}\textit{Historia Naturalis.} X. 15.
\textsuperscript{104}\textit{Euphues.} p. 240.
\textsuperscript{105}\textit{Euphues and His England.} p. 215
Lyly adopted Pliny's statement (X. 4) that the feathers of eagles placed among those of other birds will cause them to rot; he says: "The Eagles wynge will wast the fether as well of the Phoenix, as of the Pheasant." 106
The Pelican

In Elizabethan literature the pelican is often the symbol of parental sacrifice. There are several variations of the legend, but most versions agree that the young of the pelican anger their parents by striking at them until the old birds strike back and kill the fledglings. After three days of mourning the mother bird wounds her breast with her beak and lets the blood flow upon her lifeless offspring, and so revives them.

Lyly shows his acquaintance with the legend when he says, "We are no sooner out of the shell but we resemble the Cooyx which destroyeth it selfe thorowe selfe will, or the Pelican which pearoeth a wounde in hir own breast." Bond cites Bartholomew Anglicus for this myth in Lyly, but Bartholomew tells that the pelican destroys itself to save its brood, while Lyly uses it merely as an example of self destruction. The following quotation is from Bartholomew Anglicus.

The pelican loveth too much her children. For when the children be haught, and begin to wax hoar, they smite the father and the mother in the face, wherefore the mother smiteth them again and slayeth them. And the third day, the mother smiteth herself in her side, that the blood runneth out, and sheddeth that hot blood on the bodies of her children. And by virtue of that blood, the birds that were before dead quicken again.108

107 Euphues, p. 261.
108 Mediaeval Lore, p. 130.
The foregoing passage is also supposed to be the source for the reference to the pelican which occurs in a long eulogy of Elizabeth as a ruler, from which I quote briefly:

This is she that resembling the noble Queene of Navarr, vaeth the Marigold for hir flower, which at the rising of the Sunne openeth hir leaves, and at the setting shutteth them, referring all hir actions and endeavours to Him that ruleth the Sunne. This is that Caesar that first bound the Crocodile to the Palme tree, bridling those that sought to raine her: This is that good Pelican that to feede hir people spareth not to rend hir owne personne.109

This presentation of the pelican feeding her brood with her blood is somewhat unusual, but Shakespeare also employs it.

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms; And like the kind life-rendering pelican, Repast them with my blood.110

Still another version of the legend may be found in Shakespeare. The young pelican was supposed to pierce the breast of the parent bird with its beak and drink the blood. Gaunt upbraids young King Richard with these words:

O, spare me not, my brother Edward's son, For that I was his father Edward's son; That blood already, like the pelican,

110Hamlet. IV. V. 146.
Hast thou tapp'd out and drunkenly caroused.\textsuperscript{111}

The epithet "pelican daughters" found in \textit{King Lear} again has reference to the destruction of the pelican by its young.

Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued nature To such a lowness but his unkind daughters. Is it the fashion, that discarded fathers Should have thus little mercy on their flesh? Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot Those pelican daughters.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{111}\textit{King Richard II. II. i. 126.}

\textsuperscript{112}\textit{III. iv. 72.}
The Halcyon

An ancient classical legend related that a husband and wife whose life together was broken by wars which took the man from home, by persecutions, and by strife of every sort, were changed by the gods into birds that nestled on the quiet back waters of the sea. Every year during the stormy weather of winter the gods quieted the winds and waves so that the female might lay her eggs and hatch them in peace. These birds were called "halcyon," from the Greek words meaning "brooding on the sea"; they have been identified as kingfishers.

From this story came the phrase "halcyon days" referring to a period of mild weather in the midst of the stormy season, or to any time of unusual peace or happiness.

Lyly says in "The Epistle Dedicatory" to Euphues and His England, "I have now finished both my labours, the one being hatched in the hard winter with the Alyoon, the other not daring to bud till the cold were past . . ."113 This sentence refers to the completion of Euphues at the close of the year 1578, and that of Euphues and His England, for which Bond gives as a probable date March 25 to April, 1580.

Shakespeare used "halcyon days" as La Pucelle's description of the coming good fortune of the French.

113 Euphues and His England, p. 5.
Expect Saint Martin's summer, halycon days,
Since I have entered into these wars.\textsuperscript{114}

He also makes an interesting reference to the halcyon
in \textit{King Lear}, in a scathing denunciation of parasites.

\begin{quote}
Such smelling rogues as these
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords atwain
Which are too intrinææ t'unloose; smooth every
passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters.\textsuperscript{115}
\end{quote}

This passage would appear to mean that, as the halcyon
desires peace, so do parasites, to such a degree that to avoid
the displeasure of their lord, they will pander to any mood.

\textsuperscript{114} Henry VI. I. ii. 131.

\textsuperscript{115} II. ii. 80-85
The Lapwing

In sixteenth century literature the lapwing was the symbol for both constancy and treachery. The habits of the bird were interpreted as meaning either, and it depended upon the sympathy of the writer which he chose to accept. The bird protected its young by running close to the ground until it was some distance from its nest, then appearing directly in front of its pursuers, trailing a wing as though crippled.

Lyly's whimsical comparison of himself to the lapwing shows to some extent the contempt which the bird inspired.

And in this I resemble the Lappwing, who fearing hir young ones to be destroyed by passengers, flyeth with a false cry farre from their nestes, making those that looke for them seeke where they are not: So I suspecting that Euphues would be carped of some curious Reader, thought by some false shewe to bringe them in hope of that which I meant not, leading them with a longing of a second part, that they might speake well of the first, being never farther from my study, then when they thought mee houering ouer it.116

In the following passage Shakespeare refers to the same habit, but with rather more sympathy.

Ah, but I think him better than I say,
And yet would herein other's eyes were worse.
Far from her nest the lapwing cries away:
My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.117

116 Euphues and His England, p. 4.
117 Comedy of Errors, IV. ii. 24-27.
Another Shakespearean passage shows the more common attitude toward the bird:

It is true.
I would not - though 'tis my familiar sin
With maids to seem the lapwing and to jest.
Tongue far from heart - play with all virgins so. 118

In a reference to the bird in another play the scorn is even more marked.

Now begin;
For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference. 119

In Hamlet the lapwing typifies wilfulness, as Horatio says, "This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head." 120

The following quotation from Spenser repeats a legend told by Ovid in which it is interesting to note that as early as this poet (c. 43 B.C. - A.D. 18) the cry of the lapwing was associated with parental concern.

There also those two Pandionian maides,
Calling on Itis, Itis euermore,
Whom wretched boy they slew with guiltie blades;
For whom the Thracian king lamenting sore,
Turn'd to a Lapwing, fowlie them vpbrayde,
And fluttering round about them still does sore. 121

The "two Pandionien maides" were Procne and Philomela, the daughters of Pandion, king of Athens. Procne married Tereus, the king of Thrace, and in her new home longed for her sister. Tereus obtained permission to take Philomela to Procne, but on the journey raped her and cut out her tongue.
The Chameleon

The ability of the chameleon to adopt protective coloring led quite naturally to an exaggeration of its powers. Aristotle stated that the chameleon could change from black to green.  

Pliny was probably responsible for the accepted conception of the creature, for he said that it could change at will to any color except red or white. The chameleon very early symbolized inconstancy, and in that capacity Spenser uses it as a simile with which to describe the false Duesa.

The one of them, the false Duesa hight,
That now had chang'd her former wonted new:
For she could d' on so manie shapes in sight,
As euer could Cameleon colours new.

Shakespeare's Gloucester compares himself to the chameleon.

I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.

In another reference to the chameleon's ability to change colors is a sentence which points also to the belief that the chameleon ate only air. This occurs in Two Gentlemen of Verona in a conversation between Silvia, Valentine and Thurio.

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122 Historia Animalium. 503b15 - 503b28
123 Historia Naturalis. XI. 72; XXVIII. 29; XI. 31.
124 Faerie Queene. 4. 1. 18.
125 3 Henry VI. III. 11. 191.
Sil. What, angry, Sir Thurio! do you change colour?
Val. Give him leave, madam; he is a kind of chameleon.
Thur. That had more mind to feed on your blood than live on your air. 126

In the same play Speed says, "Ay, but hearken, sir; though the chameleon Love can feed on the air, I am one that am nourished by my victuals and would fain have meat." 127

The same figure is used ironically by Hamlet in Answer to the King.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?
Ham. Excellent i'faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air, promise cram'd. 128

Lyly presents rather a peculiar version of the legend: "Cameleon that hath most guttes, draweth least breath." 129
This was adapted from Bartholomew Anglicus: "And what is in his body is but of lytell fleshe and hath but lytell blood ... And it is sayde that the Camelion lyveth only by ayre."

126II. iv. 25.
127II. iii. 178.
128Hamlet. III. ii. 98.
129Euphues, p. 194. Cf. Endimion III. iv. 129: "Love is a Camelion, which draweth nothing into the mouth but ayre."
The Crocodile

The legendary crocodile was supposed to weep over his victim either before or after eating them. Robin says that this myth arose in Egypt at about the time when the Physiologus was collected, but gives no authority for this statement. He also states: "It seems to occur first in the Physiologus quoted by Vincent of Beauvais: 'Whenever a crocodile finds a man and can overcomne him, he devours him and afterwards weeps over him.' Robin is here attempting to refute the statement of Bond that, "The fable seems due to Maundeville (c. 1400), xxviii. 288 'In that contre . . . ben gret plente of Cokadrilles . . . Theise Serpentes alen men, and thei eten hem wepynge.' Whether or not the opinion of Robin is correct, Bartholomew Anglicus in De Proprietatibus Rerum (c. 1260) recorded the superstition as follows: "If the crocodile findeth a man by the brim of the water, or by the cliff, he slayeth him if he may, and then he weepeth upon him, and swalloweth him at the last."

Spenser presents the legend in the Faerie Queene:

As when a weary traveller that strayes

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130 Animal Lore, p. 54.
132 Mediaeval Lore, p. 149.
By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile,
Vnweating of the perilous wanderling wayes,
Both meet a cruell craftie Crocodile,
Which is false griefe hyding his harmefulle guile,
Both weep full sore, and sheddeth tender teares:
The foolish man, that pities al this while
His mounrful plight, is swallowed vp vuawares,
Forgetfull of his owne, that mends anotheres cares.

Shakespeare compares the conduct of Gloucester towards
the king to that of the crocodile with his victim:

Free lords, cold snow melts with the sun's hot beams,
Henry my lord is cold in great affairs,
Too full of foolish pity, and Gloucester's show
Beguiles him as the mounrful crocodile
With sorrow snares relenting passengers,
Or as the snake roll'd in a flowering bank
With shining checker'd slough, doth sting a child
That for the beauty thinks it excellent.

From the belief that the crocodile wept while devouring a
victim developed the literary practice of referring to hypo­
critical weeping as "crocodile tears." While Shakespeare does
not employ the exact words the idea is the same in this quo­
tation from Othello.

If that the earth could teem with woman's teares
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.

Lyly has reference to a statement of Pliny's, when he says,
"The birde Trochilus lyveth by the mouth of the Crocodile and
is not spoiled." Pliny asserts that the trochilus enters

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133 \(1.5.18\).
134 \(2.\) Henry VI. III. ii. 223.
135 Othello. IV. i. 257.
the mouth of the crocodile to feed upon the leeches covering its jaws. 137

Lyly also gives this fantastic description of the crocodile, for which Bond gives Pliny (VIII. 31) as a source. 138

For in this they resemble the Crocodile, who when one approacheth neere unto him, gathereth up himself into the roundness of a ball, but running from him stretcheth himself into the length of a tree. 139

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137 Historia Naturalis. VIII. 37.


139 Euphues and His England, p. 131.
In the sixteenth century one of the most common beliefs about the toad was that it was extremely poisonous. This idea seems to have been universally accepted indeed it still persists in folk lore. In the works of Spenser, Lyly and Shakespeare the toad is almost invariably described as venomous.

Spenser in the following quotation couples the toad with Envy, using the venom of the creature to heighten the atmosphere of evil surrounding the personified sin.

And next to him malicious Enuiue rode,
Upon a raenouna wolfe, and still did chaw
Between his sankred teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his shaw;
But inwardly he chawed his owne maw
At neighbors wealth, that made him euer sad;
For death it was, when any good he saw,
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had.
But when he heard of barme, he wexed wondrous glad.140

In the descriptive passage which follows, the toad contributes to the general loathsome nature of Errour.

Therewith she spewed out of her filthy maw
A flood of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunke so wildy, that it forst him slacke
His grasping hold, and from her turns him backe:
Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toados, which eyes did lacke,
And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthy parbreake all the place defiled has.141

140 Faerie queene. 1. 4. 30.
141 Ibid. 1. 1. 20.
Spenser's other references to the toad resemble the foregoing in the extreme disgust which they show for the creature.142

The toad was supposed to be so venomous that Lyly seems to find it remarkable that anything could touch it with safety. He says, "The Sun shineth upon the dungehill, and is not corrupted, the Diamond lyeth in the fire, and is not consumed, the Christall toucheth the Toade, and is not poysoned."143 This statement he adapts from Pliny's Historia Naturalis (XXXVII. 15.).

Shakespeare also ascribes venom to the toad in the passages which follow:

    But thou are neither like thy sire nor dam;
    But like a foul mis-shapen stigmatic,
    Marked by the destinies to be avoided,
    As venom toads, or lizard's dreadful stings.144

In another reference to the creature Gloucester is the toad, Anne's spittle the poison. "Never hung poison of a fouler toad. Out of my sight! thou dost infect my eyes."145

It was also thought that in the head of the toad was a precious stone. Both Shakespeare and Lyly use this idea figuratively to indicate that good may be found where least

142See also, Faerie queene. 2. 11. 12. 5.; 3. 10. 59. 2.; Shephearde's Calender, December. 70.
143Euphues, p. 193.
1443 Henry VI. II. ii. 138.
expected. Lyly says, "The foule Toade hathe a fayre stoane in his head, the fine goulde is founde in the filthy earth." Shakespeare's famous simile in *As You Like It* is supposed to have been taken from Lyly's statement just quoted.

Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head."  

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147 II. i. 12-14.
As the embodiment of guile and deceit the serpent was an important figure in Elizabethan literature. Tradition which began with the story of the serpent in the garden of Eden made such a conception inevitable; in the third chapter of Genesis is one of the sources from which it sprang, as it is said there, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." The rod of Moses was miraculously changed to a serpent (Exodus 4. 3-4.); this happening was thought by Scriptural commentators to symbolize the wisdom which had been given to Moses by God. Jesus said to his disciples, "Be ye therefore as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves." It was, then, upon Biblical authority that the Elizabethans accepted the serpent as the symbol of wisdom. It was known to be accursed from Genesis (4. 4.): "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." This last idea made all the traits of the serpent evil, particularly its wisdom.

Spenser employed the serpent repeatedly in allegory, in every case representing it as a thing of evil. In the next
two quotations the serpent is associated with envy.

Her hands were foule and durtie, never washt
In all her life, with long mayles over raught,
Like puttock's clawes: with th'one of which she
scracht

Her cursed head, although it itchet naught:
The other held a snake of venime fraught,
On which she fed, and gnawed hungrily,
As if that long she had not eaten ought;
That round about her iaues one might descry
The bloudie gore and poysen dropping loathsomely.\textsuperscript{149}

Then from her mouth the gobbet she does take,
The which whylscare she was so greedily
Deecouring, even that half-gnawen snake,
And at him throws it most despightfully.
The cursed Serpent, though she hungrily
Eurst chewed thereon, yet was not all so dead,
But that some life remained secretly.
And as heepest afore withouten dread,
Bit him behind, that long the mark was to be read.\textsuperscript{150}

In another passage the serpent symbolizes jealousy.

O hatefull hellish Snake, what furie first
Brought thee from balefull house of Proserpine,
Where in her bosome she thee long had nurst,
And fostered vp with bitter milke of tine,
Fowle Jealousie, that tumest love divine
To ioysfull hart, and makst the loving hart.
And feed it selfe with selfe-consuming smart?
Of all the passions in the mind thou vilest art.\textsuperscript{151}

Guile attempts to turn himself into a snake (\textit{Faerie Queene}. 5. 9. 19. 1.), and false ideas are said to linger in
the mind like a snake.

High ouer hilles and ouer dales he fled,
As if the wind him on his winges had borne,
He banck nor bush could stay him, when he sped

\textsuperscript{149}\textit{Faerie Queene}. 5. 12. 30.
\textsuperscript{150}\textit{Ibid.}, 5. 12. 59.
\textsuperscript{151}\textit{Ibid.}, 3. 11. 1.
His nimble feet, as treading still on thorne:
Griefe, and despight, and gealousie, and soorne
Did all the way him follow hard behind,
And he himselfe loath'd so forloren,
So shamefully forborne of womankind;
That as a Snake, still lurked in his wounded mind.152

Lyly recorded many curious beliefs about the serpents,
one of which was that they were bred of the breath of the
elephant. In an eulogistic description of Elizabeth's
policies he says:

She hath exiled the Swallowe that sought to spoyle
the Grasshopper, and hath given bytter Almondes to
the rauonous Wolves, that endeavoured to devoure the
sily Lambes, burning even with the breath of her
mouth like ye prinoly Stag, the serpents yt wer
engendred by the breath of the huge Elephant so
that now all his enimies, are as whist as the bird
Attegen, who neuer singeth any tune after she is
taken, nor they beeing so ouertaken.153

This is a mistranslation of Pliny's statement: "Elephant-
orum anima serpentes extrahit."154 The obvious meaning is
that the breath of the elephant drove the serpents from their
holes.

The asp was believed to have weak sight. Lyly says
"I haue read that the sting of an Aspe were incurable, had not
nature given them dimme eyes."155 This sentence too is taken
from Pliny, who says, "It is impossible to say whether nature
has produced harmful things or their remedies more lavishly.

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152 Ibid., 3. 10. 55.
153 Euphues and His England, p. 215
154 Historia Naturalis. VIII. 116.
155 Euphues and His England, p. 5.
In the first place it has given this pest [the asp] dim eyes.¹⁵⁶

Both Shakespeare and Lyly refer to the legend that the young of the viper were not born but ate their way through their mother, thus killing her. Lyly says, "I should with the Viper, loose my bloud with mine own brood,"¹⁵⁷ and, "But it falleth out with those that being constant are yet full of bable, as it doth with the Serpent Iaculus and the Viper, who burst with their own broode."¹⁵⁸

In Pericles (I. i. 64.) the legend appears in the riddle read by Pericles.

I am no viper, yet I feed
On mother's flesh which did me breed.
I sought a husband, in which labour
I found that kindness in a father;
He's father, son, and husband mild;
I mother, wife, and yet his child.
How they may be, and yet in two,
As you will live, resolve it you.

Herodotus told that the female viper destroyed the male in the act of mating, but was in turn killed by her young which ate through her body.¹⁵⁹ Aristotle said that the little viper sometimes ate through the membrane which enclosed it. Pliny exaggerated this plausible statement and said that the viper gave birth to twenty offspring, one a day, until the

¹⁵⁶Historia Naturalis. VIII. 87.
¹⁵⁷Euphues and His England, p. 5.
¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 177
¹⁵⁹Histories. IV. 109.
last being impatient, ate its way out through the body of its mother.160

The belief that the adder had a double tongue was firmly fixed in popular tradition. Shakespeare mentions it in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in *Richard II*.

Could not a worm, an adder do so much? An adder did it; for with double tongue Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.161

The foregoing quotation contains an amusing implication of treachery as Hermia accuses Demetrius of killing Lysander.

And when they from thy bosom pluck a flower Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder Whose double tongue may with a mortal touch Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.162

In Shakespeare may also be found the belief that the adder became deaf as it grew old. This is mentioned in *2 Henry VI.* and in *Troilus and Cressida*.

What! Art thou, like the adder, waxen deaf? Be poisonous too and kill thy forlorn queen.163

The reasons you allege do more conduce To the hot passions of the distemper'd blood Than to make up a free determination 'Twixt right and wrong, for pleasure and revenge Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice Of any true decision.164

160*Historia Naturalis*. X. 62.
161*Midsummer Night's Dream*. III. ii. 71-73
163*2 Henry VI*. III. ii. 76-77.
164*Troilus and Cressida*. II. ii. 168-73.
The passages above by no means exhaust the references to all kinds of serpents in the works of Spenser, Lyly and Shakespeare, but are typical of the figurative use of the many superstitions regarding reptiles.
One of the most important uses of animal lore made by Spenser was in similes in which distinguishing features of beasts were used to emphasize traits in the characters or important points in physical descriptions. In the Faerie Queene (4. 8. 39) Corflambo appears more terrifying because his eyes are likened to those of the basilisk which threw out death at every glance. In the Amoretti (53) the lady is compared to the panther, for as that animal lured his victims to him by hiding his awful head, so she captured the poet's love by concealing her true nature until he was hopelessly entangled, and then destroyed him. The Red Crosse Knight regains his strength in the well of Life as the aged eagle renews his youth in the ocean.\footnote{Faerie Queene, 1. 11. 34.} Dusea grieving over the Knight is like the crocodile weeping over its victims.\footnote{Ibid., 1. 5. 17-18} In every case it is the implications of the legends attached to the beasts which lend significance to the comparison.

When Spenser employs animals in allegory to represent his contemporaries, or peculiarities of mankind in general, he...
adopts the type of characterization already employed in the marginal Gloss of the Bible and by classical writers, notably Virgil and Ovid, which mediaeval writers had taken over and adapted to Christian material. The romance of Reynard the Fox and Chaucer's "Mun's Priest's Tale" furnished the symbolism which the Spenserian characters follow in Prosopo\_paio: or Mother Hubbard's Tale. In the older fables the fox symbolizes the man who preys upon society, but escapes punishment because of his cunning; the Fox in Mother Hubbard's Tale is Burleigh, and the Ape is, at least sometimes, the Duke of Anjou, a candidate for the queen's hand. In both cases Spenser's characterization reflected public opinion, for Elizabeth's chief minister and her Catholic suitor were considered a rascal and a dangerous fool. Mother Hubbard's Tale is concerned, however, with animals which are really outside the realm of natural history; that is, they had been the symbols of the vices of mankind for so long that they had lost any resemblance to animals, and had become merely trappings with which to disguise well known persons who could not otherwise be criticized with impunity.

167 A collection of satirical fables published in France under the name of Roman de Renart (c. 1200-1500); a Latin version Isengrimus existed in the 12th century, and a German somewhat later. A Flemish version no longer extant was published by Caxton in 1481.

168 Frederick Ives Carpenter in A Reference Guide to Edmund Spenser (Chicago, 1925), p. 135, includes these works in his partial list of Spenser's sources.

169 See, Robert Greene, Short Histories of the English People (New York, n. d.), Chapter VII.
In the Faerie Queene where there is no satirical intent the symbolism follows tradition to such an extent that both the embodiment and the idea lack vitality. Every one of Spenser's legendary beasts may be said to resemble the dragon, of which Legouis says: "It is, in a way, a more pasteboard monster, one to frighten little children, but it has been transformed into a thing of art by a great master of colouring."\(^{170}\) It is the allegory which is naturally most important to Spenser, but allegory and animals suffer alike from a combination of the two. Davis speaks of Spenser's symbolism thus:

But symbolism is an insidious device, which may tempt the symbolist either to invent a system bearing no direct relation with its object or, on the other hand, to labour analogy beyond all reasonable limits . . . the latter was a besetting fault with the mediaeval allegorist and the occasion of several lapses in Spenser . . . Iron Talus and Lady Munera with her golden hands and silver feet, the dragon with the tail of three furlongs and a roar of a hundred lions are better suited to the child's story-book than to poetic allegory. But they are mere commonplaces beside the Blatant Beast with its mouth as wide as a peck, containing teeth of rusty iron and a thousand tongues of men, dogs, cats, bears, tigers and serpents. Allowing for a touch of misplaced humor, even as allegory this fails, and for good reason. While the dragon is easily recognized as an uncanny wight long established in popular belief, the Blatant Beast is no beast but merely a formula for destruction, wherein the abstract idea has completely undermined the concrete representation.\(^{171}\)


What Davies says about the Blatant Beast may be applied equally well to almost all of the animals which Spenser employs in his allegory. They are poetic figures beautifully drawn, but they are not real, and in Elizabethan England such creatures as the dragon were very real. The monsters which Spenser drew from his knowledge of the classics, i.e., from Aristotle, Theocritus, Bion and Moscus, Lucian, Hesiod, Herodotus, Virgil, Ovid, Longus and Horace, were regarded by the public as real creatures which had existed, but which belonged for the most part to the past, and were not likely to be found except, possibly, by travelers in some unexplored region. They were not in the same class with the basilisk, the dragon, the phoenix, the salamander or the griffin, which were frequently described in travel books and natural histories. Spenser treats them all in the same manner, and none of them live.

Any fair account of Spenser's use of animals must at least mention the knowledge he displays of common beasts, for the vividness of the presentation of fabulous monsters and of animals which he observed daily differs greatly. As I have indicated, the monsters are not actual animals, but the barnyard beasts and the deer and falcon are. The sketches of a bear baited by dogs, of a deer tracked by a hound, swine fat-
tended with nuts, and particularly of hunting birds and dogs. are the vivid impressions of an eye witness. Although he is not particularly noted for it, Spenser's descriptions of animals with which he was familiar show that he was a keen observer and accurate reporter of the most minute details.

174 Shephearde Calendar. February. 110.
175 Faerie Queene. 2. 7. 34. 6; 2. 3. 44. et al.
176 Ibid. 3. 10. 53. 6; 6. 5. 19. 2; 7. 6. 45. 5.
Lyly's "Unnatural" Natural History

Lyly is noted for his fictitious animal lore which is shown in similes drawn between the characters of Euphues and Euphues and His England and every imaginable bird, beast and creeping thing. The interpolation of these figures into material with which they have little connection makes them less effective, and excessive use renders them tedious and artificial. The examples cited throughout this paper have been concerned solely with the animals mentioned, but the following quotation illustrates how the similes were used.

But alas it is both common and lamentable to behold simplicitie intrapped by subtilytie, and those that have moast mighte, to be infected with moast mallice. The Spider weaueth a fine webbe to hang the Fly, the Wolfe wearoth a faire face to devoure the Lambe, the Merlin striketh at the Partridge, the Eagle ofte snappeth at the Fly, men are always laying baytes for women, which are the weaker vessels . . . I haue read yt the Bull being tyed to ye Figge tree loseth his strength, that the whole heard of Deare stands at the gaze, if they smell a sweete apple, that the Dolphin by the sound of Mysicke is brought to the shore. And then no meruaile is it that if the fierce Bull be tamed with the Figge tree, if the woman beeing as wecke as sheepe, be overcome with A Figge, if the wild Deare be caugyte with an apple, that the tame Damzell is wonne with a blossom, if the fleete Dolphin be allured with harmony, that woman be entangled with the melodie of mens speach, fayre promises and solemn protestations.177

177Euphues, p. 223.
Much of Lyly's material appears exaggerated, but he writes of very few animals which cannot be found in contemporary works of natural history. Topsell's *The historie of Four-footed beasts* describing the true and lively figure of every beast, and The *historie of Serpents, or the second book of living creatures*, appeared some years after the publication of *Euphues* in 1578, but these two books, which are nothing but a careful summary of generally accepted reports concerning animals, contain accounts of most of the fabulous animals mentioned by Lyly, as well as prosaic recording of the popular beliefs which seem so unreal in Lyly. 178 Even cautious Harrison in his *Description of England* says that he has heard reliable accounts of monsters although he has not seen them. C. T. Onions includes John Maplet's *A Green Forest* in his account of Elizabethan natural histories. He describes the book thus:

> It is divided into three books, dealing with stones and metals, trees, herbs, and shrubs, and beasts, fishes, fowls, &c., in that order. To each book is prefixed a preface of general observations on the kingdom of which it treats. The preface to the third book lays down the characters of male and female, distinguishes mild animals from fierce, the strong from the subtle, those that 'be full of blood', as the hart, the hind, and the roe, from those that 'in stead thereof have their natural humour', as the bee, the beetle, the fly, the eaters of flesh from those that 'will none of it', those 'of good memorie', as the dog, the lion, and the camel, from the forgetful, as the ostrich and the dove.

The substance of Maplet's duodecimo is taken

177 *Euphues*, p. 223.

out of the 16th, 17th, and 18th books of De Proprietatibus Rerum of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, the great mediaeval encyclopaedia. 179

Lyly undoubtedly repeats many popular beliefs, but his prime source was Pliny's Historia Naturalis. Parallels may be drawn between Pliny and Lyly in their treatment of source material, for as Pliny elaborated and exaggerated Aristotle, so Lyly mistranslated and misrepresented Pliny. It is also true that Lyly includes a great many legends which were his own inventions. The importance of Lyly's animal lore lies mainly in the influence it exerts as a part of Euphuism upon his contemporaries Kyd, Lodge, Greene and Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's Animal Lore

Perhaps no writings of this period contain such an abundance of animal lore as Shakespeare's, unless it be Lyly's Euphues, in which every few pages yield some fable or comparison drawn from animal life. If we are to set down the sources of the knowledge of Shakespeare and his fellow writers, we shall say roughly that they were the experiences of everyday life, especially in the country, the meagre resources of the Tower or other menageries, books of travel and natural history, and above all, the traditional stock of fact and fable derived from ancient sources.  

The abundance of animal lore mentioned in the foregoing quotation is, in the case of Shakespeare, drawn for the most part from the simplest everyday things seen and heard. There is much, however, which he could have learned only from books or heresay, but this does not affect the reality or effectiveness of his presentation.

Shakespeare's principal use of his knowledge of animals was in similes and metaphors, or, as Miss Spurgeon terms them collectively, "images." She describes the figure as "the little word-picture used by a writer to illustrate, illuminate and embellish his thought. It is a description or an idea, which by comparison or analogy . . . transmits to us through the emotions and associations it arouses, something of the 'wholeness', the depth and richness of the way the writer views,  

conceives or has felt what he is telling us." 181

In the plays of Shakespeare animal images are used frequently to stress character, but the interest of the reader always remains centered on the developing man or woman, not, as in Lyly, shifting from the main subject to the animal lore of the simile. Shakespeare never catalogues all his knowledge in his figures, but selects each on the basis of its pertinence to the idea he is expressing. Even the references to animals concern those whose traits make them resemble the human characters of the play. It is this conformity to the general tone which Miss Spurgeon considers the most important factor in animal imagery. 182 She points out the fact that all through any specified play one theme is emphasized by recurrent images. In Othello this imagery is of animals in action, preying upon one another, cruel or suffering, and by it the pervading sense of pain and unpleasantness is kept alive. 183

It must also be noticed that Shakespeare displays a more sympathetic attitude toward animals than most writers of the sixteenth century. This is especially evident in descriptions of game animals and birds, and in metaphorical applications of hunting and sporting terms, for example:

182 Ibid., p. 213.
183 Ibid., p. 309.
How are we park'd and bounded in a pale,
A little herd of English deer,
Mazed with a yelping kennel of French cure!
If we be English deer, be then in blood;
Not rascal-like, to fall down with a pinch,
But rather, moody-mad and desperate stag,
Turn on the bloody hounds with heads of steel
And make the cowards stand aloof at bay.164

164 [Henry VI. IV. ii. 45-52.]
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