

CONCERNING "A MOLD FROM MARI . . ."

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Patricia Daly, Brian C. Hesse, and Dexter Perkins, Jr., have offered some interesting and useful criticism in response to "A Mold from Mari . . ." as well as some which requires reply. Their point is well taken that the term *domestication* is used too loosely, and one would hope that their concern about its usage applies to colleagues in all fields who have used this term rather freely and disseminated it throughout the available literature.¹ One would also wonder to what extent the term *semidomestication*, which is also used frequently, is useful, in the light of Bökönyi's stricter requirements concerning the conditions by which one may recognize domestication. Both of these words have been employed in the literature on animals in antiquity to imply attempts to bring animals under the control of man, often with no further explanation of the degree of control. I do not claim to be the first or the most renowned to indulge in the use of these terms.² Perhaps it should also be noted that among specialists who contributed to the symposium which resulted in *The Domestication and Exploitation of Plants and Animals* which contains the recent statements by Bökönyi, there seems to be less than total agreement about the criteria for defining and recognizing domestication from archaeological contexts.³

For the record, it should be noted that in "A Mold from Mari . . ." I state, in reference to the representations of male cervids being led: "These methods of leading . . . suggest that the stag is here treated much like the goat, as a domesticated, or at least "manageable," animal which can be led by man" (italics mine) (p. 24); and again: "Here . . . the concept of a deer being led by a man, among other similar depictions of animals which are domestic or normally wild, may represent Egyptian attempts to herd or domesticate a variety of cervids and caprids" (italics mine) (p. 25). Indeed, I consider the material which was discussed to be part of "the problem of the domestication of deer" (italics mine) (p. 30), not necessarily a declaration of complete or continuous success in so doing. If we use a word with less serious implications, such

¹E.g., F.E. Zeuner, *A History of Domesticated Animals* (London, 1963), Chap. 20 passim, and pp. 417, 425; also Ernest P. Walker, ed., *Mammals of the World*, vol. 2 (Baltimore, 1964), 1387.

²See B. Landsberger, "Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien nach der 14. Tafel der Serie *Har-ra-ḫubullu*," *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historisch Klasse der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Leipzig, 1934), 98; Paul Aström, "The Economy of Cyprus and its Development in the IInd Millennium," *Archaeologia Viva* 2, no. 3 (March-May 1969), 77; Trevor Watkins ("The First Village Settlements," *Archaeologia Viva* 2, no. 3 [1969], 35) also uses the term *semidomesticated* in relation to fallow deer as represented by extraordinary numbers of remains at Sotira and Erimi. For further discussion of the state of deer on Cyprus from the Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age, see P. Ducos, "Le daim à Chypre aux époques préhistoriques," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (1965), 1-5; see also the contribution of J. King, "Mammal Bones from Khirokitia and Erimi," in Porphyrios Dikaio, *Khirokitia* (Oxford, 1953), 432; also, F.E. Zeuner, "Animal Remains from a Late Bronze Age Sanctuary on Cyprus, and the Problem of the Domestication of Fallow Deer," *Journal of the Paleontological Society of India* 3 (1958), 131-35.

³Raymond E. Chaplin, "The Use of Non-morphological Criteria in the Study of Animal Domestication from Bones Found on Archaeological Sites," in *The Domestication and Exploitation of Plants and Animals*, ed. P.J. Ucko and G.W. Dimbleby (London, 1969), 231, 244, n. 4; also R.J. Berry, "The Genetical Implications of Domestication in Animals," *ibid.*, 214.

as *managing*, then the cultural evidence is perhaps less dependent upon the physical remains for interpretation. In stating that "we know of past and present herding and breeding of deer as evidence that these animals are *susceptible* to partial or actual domestication" (italics mine) (p. 30), it should be noted that there are references to the capturing or the keeping of herds of deer at various times in antiquity⁴ and that herding and breeding are going on at the present time. While it is true that large male deer may be extremely dangerous, particularly when they are rutting, apparently this has not made herding and breeding impossible by any means. Flerov gives various references to the breeding of *Cervus elaphus* and states: "The industry has been widely developed. A number of large governmental maral breeding farms and kolkhoz farms are in existence at the present time."⁵ Jewell also mentions that *Alces alces* (elk to Europeans, moose to Americans!) are being carefully managed in northern Russia "and show most of the attributes required of domestic animals."⁶ The three writers point out that white-tailed deer will not breed under crowded conditions; however, that is not the point of our discussion, for at no time have I implied that I know what the conditions of animal keeping or managing may have been in the past. While I am aware that reindeer, *Rangifer*, are not red deer, fallow deer, or roe deer, information points out that those deer which normally herd in their natural state are the types most easily managed by man. These include fallow deer and red deer. (Incidentally, white-tailed deer, *Odocoileus virginianus*, usually do not congregate in herds.)⁷ Apparently, fallow deer, male and female, can be led with relative ease, and even male red deer, if taken from the wild when young, can be led without excessive difficulty,⁸ although, again, large antlered herbivores can be dangerous. While an

⁴B. Landsberger, "Die Fauna," 98; see also Robert T. Hatt, *The Mammals of Iraq* (Miscellaneous Publications of the Zoological Museum, University of Michigan, no. 106 [Ann Arbor, 1959], 17), for a quotation from the records of Ashurnasirpal II; also, Henri Seyrig, "De Junon dolichénienne à Dionysos," *Antiquités syriennes*, 1 (1934), 142; Franz Cumont ("L'archevêché de Pédachtoé et le sacrifice du faon," *Byzantion* 6 [1931], 521-29) speculates on the possibility of deer being raised for sacred purposes. See also Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, *Taq-i-Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, 1969), pls. LXXIX-CII, which show many deer, mostly male, escaping from an enclosure at the time of a royal hunt. This Sassanian relief has also been discussed by Charles A. Reed ("Imperial Sassanian Hunting of Pig and Fallow-Deer, and Problems of Survival of These Animals Today in Iran," *Postilla*, no. 92 (November 5, 1965), 1-7. See also the references in note 2 above. These are not proofs of anything; however, they seem to indicate that the idea was not unknown.

⁵I refer the reader to K.K. Flerov, *Fauna of the USSR: Mammals*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Moscow-Leningrad: Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1952; published for the National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1960), 144. As a matter of interest, Mr. Richard Ryan, Director, Essex County Park Commission, informed me recently that the Russians have also succeeded in creating a dairy herd of eland. This is also mentioned by P.A. Jewell, "Wild Mammals and Their Potential for New Domestication," in *Domestication and Exploitation*, 104. We might also note that the milk of the *lu.lim* (the Sumerian word for deer) was set before the god Ningirsu; see Landsberger, "Die Fauna," 98.

⁶P.A. Jewell, "Wild Mammals," 102.

⁷Walker, *Mammals of the World*, 2:1394.

⁸Mr. Ryan has kindly supplied me with the following information: Fallow deer will breed very readily in captivity. A rough figure for the support of fallow deer in a parklike preserve under good conditions would be this: With no supplementary or artificial feeding such a preserve can support approximately 1 deer per ten acres; with artificial (i.e., man-provided) food supply, 100 fallow deer can be supported on twenty acres. Red deer will also breed in captivity. Under good conditions, with no artificial feeding, a parklike preserve can support (again, an approximation based on experience) 1 animal per twenty-five acres. With artificial feeding approximately 20 to 30 animals can be supported on one and a half acres. (Perhaps it should be mentioned that among Mr. Ryan's professional responsibilities is the management of a venerable local herd of deer in South Mountain Reservation.

Other sources indicate that both *Cervus elaphus* and *Alces alces* can be broken to harness, but only with

animal's capture "is no certain evidence for either [of Bökönyi's] criterion," the susceptibility of cervids to domestication is well known.⁹ In fact, manipulation of deer herds by man can occur rather rapidly through the use of supplementary or artificial food supplies and the placement of salt licks.¹⁰

Concerning the use of the word *stag*, I am aware that it is properly used in reference to the male of the red deer, while *buck* is the term used in reference to the male fallow deer, roe, and so forth. These terms are hunting terms rather than zoological references; however, the term *stag* enjoys common usage, and has long been in use in exactly the way I have used it.¹¹ This is but a facet of the interesting and serious problem of how language may serve varying interests quite differently.

The problem of the animal in front of the larger deer is not so simple as it seems. The animal has been described as a dog in the literature on the Mari mold.¹² The concern of the three writers may be justified to the extent that the depiction of the animal is highly ambiguous. On the other hand, the inadequacies of the artistic quality of the mold depiction raise several questions. In disagreement with the three writers, I do not see "raptorial hind feet," nor do I see a "beaklike head." The tail does have a pointed tuftlike termination (which is as far as one can go under the circumstances). In regard to the feet, one might examine the feet of a feline on another terra cotta mold from Mari which shares technical and stylistic features with the mold under discussion.¹³ The feet on the feline represented on the second mold are equally "raptorial." This emphasizes the fact that identification based on specific features is not always possible in depictions in art. In fact, in the arts of this period the schematization of feet often produces a heellike extension or a sharply angled indentation in the bottom of the foot, and these may be seen on animal figures and even on human figures.¹⁴ These cannot in any way be considered "raptorial." An examination of truly raptorial feet in the arts of this period will demonstrate the difference.¹⁵ A review of the glyptic arts of the Old Babylonian Period (within which

great expenditure of effort, and with questionable reliability; see Victor Cahalane, "Deer of the World," *National Geographic* 76, no. 4 (October 1939), 478, 496; Peter Krott, "Ueber einen Versuch, zwei Elche als Zugtiere zu benutzen," *Zeitschrift für Tierpsychologie* 11 (1954), 317-18.

⁹Jewell, "Wild Mammals," 102.

¹⁰George W. Case, "The Use of Salt in Controlling the Distribution of Game," *Journal of Wildlife Management* 2, no. 3 (July 1938), 79-81; Clark Wissler, "The Domestication of Animals," *Natural History* 54, no. 5 (May 1945), 204-6.

¹¹E.g., Max Loehr, "The Stag Image in Scythia and the Far East," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society in America*, 9 (1955), 63-76; Edward L.B. Terrace, "Some Recent Finds from Northwest Persia," *Syria* 39 (1962), 212; E. Porada, "Of Deer, Bells, and Pomegranates," *Iranica Antiqua* 7 (1967), 110, 111, 114-16; and K. Jettmar, *Art of the Steppes* (New York, 1964), see s.v. "stag" in the index. These references are but a few of the many which demonstrate that use of the term has become a convention accepted for its usefulness, especially when dealing with generalized images.

¹²André Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari II: le palais, documents et monuments* (Paris, 1959), 35; see also the review of the above by E. Porada, in *American Journal of Archaeology* 65 (1961), 313.

¹³This has been published in Parrot, *Mission archéologique*, pl. XVIII, no. 1037; for easy reference, see André Parrot, *Sumer* (New York, 1961), 295.

¹⁴E.g., E. Porada, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections*, vol. 1, *The Pierpont Morgan Library Collection*, Bollingen Series, vol. 14 (Washington, D.C., 1948), no. 430 (lion); no. 435 (animals); nos. 436, 438, 447 (human figures); note feet of dog, no. 469; of bull with thunderbolt, no. 536. I am indebted to Betty Schlossman for some of these visual references.

¹⁵E.g., the winged lion demon, in Marie-Thérèse Barrelet, *Figurines et reliefs en terre cuite de la Mésopotamie antique* (Paris, 1968), pl. LXXXIV:840; also Henri Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939; reprint, 1965), pl. XXVIII and XXVIIg; also, Anton Moortgat, *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel* (Berlin, 1940; reprint, 1966), table 57, nos. 467, 468, 470.

period the terra cotta mold falls, although its actual provenience is more accurately described as Syrian) shows that griffinlike dragons, when seen, are often large in size and winged, proportionately as large as the other main participants in a given depiction; in the Old Babylonian and Old Syrian examples of roughly the same period, griffins are often ancillary motifs, but are not found in the position of the small animal on the Mari mold. Most often the griffins are seated on their haunches or are recumbent, and their tails are curled upward.¹⁶ They are also often identified by a head crest. Thus, there seems to be little reason to exchange this animal for a griffin.¹⁷ During the period under discussion a variety of small upright animals or crouching figures are seen as filling motifs in the arts. In some cases it has been suggested that such animals are mongooses (*Herpestes ichneumon*),¹⁸ monkeys, and so forth, although it is quite possible that more than one type of animal is being depicted; the postures may be the best clue to which animal is meant, for the images are often very ambiguous. The animal on the Mari mold has a long curvaceous neck, typical of the *Viverridae*, some of which can assume an upright position. However, these animals do not have tufted tails.¹⁹ Returning to dogs, there are some dogs of less than elegant pedigree depicted in Egyptian art,²⁰ but whether such is a likelihood here we will now leave as an open question.

Concerning the stag on the electrum diadem in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the "elaborate system of artistic conventions" which I postulated was necessary *precisely because* the animal is represented as a cervid, with sharp spikes representing tines emerging front and back from the antler beams in a nonnaturalistic fashion. A trip to the Metropolitan Museum will suffice to make this point available to the three writers.

¹⁶For a variety of these creatures see the following: Briggs Buchanan, *Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum*, vol. 1, *Cylinder Seals* (Oxford, 1966), pl. 54, no. 849 (his provincial Syrian style [note griffins in lower register upside down]); no. 855, for recumbent griffin (Old Syrian style); pl. 56, no. 904, for seated griffins. For the winged "dragon" see pl. 33, no. 469, (Old Babylonian); pl. 36, no. 532, is interesting, as it shows one of the winged dragonlike creatures, with what appears to be a dog in an upright position in front of it, on an impression of the mature Babylonian style, ca. 1850-1700. Other examples may be found in H.H. von der Osten, *Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell*, Oriental Institute Publications, vol. 22 (Chicago, 1934), nos. 298, 316; no. 315 shows a griffin upright, but it is large and winged.

¹⁷For a review of griffins, griffin demons, and their role, see Henri Frankfort, "Notes on the Cretan Griffin," *Annual of the British School of Archaeology at Athens* 37 (1936-37), 106-20; also J. Leibovitch, "Le griffon dans le Moyen-Orient antique," *Atiqot* 1 (1955), 75-88.

¹⁸For examples of the small upright creatures seen on many seal representations of the period, see Porada, *Corpus*, p. 41, and, e.g., nos. 326, 315, 320, 405, 414. I owe some of these references to Betty Schlossman. Other examples may be seen in von der Osten, *Ancient Oriental Seals*, nos. 207, 215, 217.

¹⁹Walker, *Mammals of the World*, 2:1224-62; also Zeuner, *A History of Domesticated Animals*, 404.

²⁰For a review, see Max Hilzheimer, "Dogs," *Antiquity* 6, no. 24 (December 1932), 411-19, and esp. 418-19; note his fig. 14, a long-bodied Egyptian bitch from Beni Hasan, ca. 1900 B.C. (see Howard Carter et al., *Beni Hasan*, vol. 4, *Archaeological Survey of Egypt* (London, 1900), pl. IV, from tomb 3. See also Zeuner, *A History of Domesticated Animals*, 94-96, 109.