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REAL ANIMALS IN IDEAL CITIES:
THE PLACE AND USE OF ANIMALS IN RENAISSANCE UTOPIAN LITERATURE

Cecilia Muratori

Abstract

Animals populate literature dealing with ideal cities and imagined parallel worlds. In this essay Cecilia Muratori explores the place of animals in works sharing utopian traits by the Italian writers Ortensio Lando (c. 1512–53?), Francesco Patrizi (1529–97), and Anton Francesco Doni (1513–74). In particular, she investigates the ways in which the narratological device of displacing the human/animal relationship into an imaginary world enables an approach to the theoretical question about the difference between humans and animals as well as to the ethical one regarding the use of the animals. The presence of animals is a neglected aspect of such texts despite the extensive body of scholarship on utopian literature. Muratori argues that it is this specific combination of ontological issues and very practical remarks which makes these texts a particularly important case study for reconstructing Renaissance philosophical discussions on the status of animals. The problem of the human/animal divide and the question about human uniqueness thus appear alongside the discussion of topics such as how to preserve health in an ideal city or suggestions about the best diet for its citizens (a diet based on animals as food, for instance). Such concerns directly involve the assessment of the relation of humans to the world of animals, included in these imaginary cities or worlds as co-inhabitants, as sources of food, as living beings which share in various ways the same space as humans, and also as mirrors on which the definition of man as a special animal is projected.

Keywords: animal exploitation, human/animal differentiation, ideal cities, meat, utopia

In 1548 an anonymous collection of sermons in honour of dead animals was published in Venice. It contained eleven portraits of animals, and of their human owners and co-habitants, ranging from the praise of Frate Cipolla for his deceased donkey Travaglino, to Frate Puccio's ode for his best friend who passed away – a louse, with which he shared his cell. The anonymous author is Ortensio Lando (c. 1512-1553?),¹ who in the dedicatory letter to Johan Jacob Fugger explains that the light tone of the sermons is meant to bring some relief

* All translations are my own, if not stated otherwise. Quotations from Italian sources are given in English, with the exception of Ortensio Lando's Italian translation of More's *Utopia* for which both the Italian original and the English translation of *Utopia* are provided in order to allow comparison of the two versions. I wish to thank David Lines for his insightful comments on a previous version of this essay. Research for this article was supported by the ERC Starting Grant Project 335949 'Aristotle in the Italian Vernacular'

¹ On Lando's *Sermoni* see the seminal study by Letizia Chiara Vaccari, 'Un episodio nella carriera veneziana di Lando: I *Sermoni funebri*', *Studi veneziani*, 46 (2003), 69-97. Frate Cipolla is a clear allusion to the character with the same name in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (on the details of this appropriation see *ibid.*, 77).

from the worries of business and politics.² Yet, the facetious register of the writing is combined throughout with learned philosophical references, suggesting that there are moral implications to be drawn from those apparently absurd sermons.³

The sermons are reminiscent of a long tradition of funeral devotion towards animals.⁴ For instance, a main function of funeral effigies of animals was that of presenting them ‘as symbols of identity for the deceased’,⁵ especially in the case of pets, that is to say of those animals that partake in the daily life of humans. But Lando ironically overturns this tradition: the collection not only includes sermons in honour of unlikely pets, such as the louse, but ultimately ridicules the conception of a ‘pet’ altogether. A pet is, by definition, an animal kept for company and not for its usefulness;⁶ yet the portraits present the animals as companions and at the same time as useful instruments. In fact the ironic tone is produced precisely by the clash between these two views, as for instance in the case of the donkey Travaglino, who is described by Frate Cipolla as smarter than philosophers such as Socrates and Aristotle.⁷ But through a ‘virtual dismembering’ of the creature, the sermon claims that every single part and organ of donkeys appears to be useful for humans: the roasted liver of a donkey is recommended in cases of epilepsy, while the bones are perfect for making musical instruments, and that is why it is not surprising that music should be so congenial to donkeys, since they have it, so to speak, in their bones.⁸ Similarly in the funeral oration for the dog Lionzo, his owner states that his heart is heavy with sadness at the loss of his companion, but then proceeds to a general explanation that the nature of dogs is to be friendly, useful and pleasurable to humans, followed by a sudden shift to considering the medical use of the canine bodily parts for the cure of various diseases.⁹ The attachment to one particular animal is ridiculed both by hyperbolic comparisons with wise men (even Aristotle himself), and by constant references to the usefulness of parts of the specimen in question, thus shifting

² [Ortensio Lando], *Sermoni funebri de vari auctori nella morte di diversi animali* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1548), 2r.

³ On Lando’s rhetorical strategy see Chiara Zambelli, *I Sermoni funebri di Ortensio Lando e la versione francese di Thierry de Timofille*, Université Stendhal – Grenoble 3: Mémoire de Master 2 en Études italiennes, Année universitaire 2012-2013 [online], 38-39: <<http://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-00933946>> (accessed April 2015).

⁴ See Maria Cristina Figorilli, *Meglio ignorante che dotto* (Naples: Liguori, 2008), 50-59.

⁵ Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 78.

⁶ See Juliana Schiesari, *Beasts and Beauties: Animals, Gender and Domestication in the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 15: ‘the very concept of the pet [...] implies its utter uselessness, superfluity, and indolence, a body in short whose only purpose seems to be to provide pleasure’.

⁷ [Ortensio Lando], *Sermoni funebri*, 6v. Interestingly in his *Catalogo di quei che hebbero fama d’esser belli tratto da poeti, storici et oratori*, Lando includes an ironic description of himself as ugly and deformed, comparing specifically his ears to those of a donkey (see Ortensio Lando, *Sette libri de cathalogho a varie cose appartenenti [...]* (Venice: Giolito, 1552), 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3v. A similar literary strategy is employed in the *Dialogue on the Death of an Ass* by Laura Cereta (1469-1499): on the one hand the ass Asellus ‘was superior to other asses and did many things that learned men will celebrate’: yet there are remarkably ‘profitable aspects of the ass’, since almost every part and organ can be useful to humans, for instance in the cure of diseases. Cf. Laura Cereta, *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*, ed. Diana Robin (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 199-200. I wish to thank Stephen Bowd for having pointed me to this text.

⁹ [Ortensio Lando], *Sermoni funebri*, 15r.

attention from the singularity of the dead creature (often named, as in the case of the ass Travaglino or the dog Lionzo) to general anatomical and medical consideration regarding the whole animal species in question. The ironic effect is created by the clash between the recollection of the character of each of these pet animals when alive and the use of its parts as a dead body.¹⁰

In the same year 1548 Lando was involved in the publication of another book: the first Italian translation of Thomas More's *Utopia*, with the title *La Repubblica Nuovamente Ritrovata del Governo dell'Isola Eutopia* [*The Newly Rediscovered Republic of the Government of the Island Eutopia*].¹¹ Despite the fact that he did not officially acknowledge the authorship of the translation, Lando signed a few of his later publications with the pseudonym *Philaletes*,¹² referring directly to the character in More's dialogue, and showing his deep indebtedness to the ideal of a perfect republic as presented in *Utopia*. The dedication of this Italian translation to Geronimo Fava was composed by Anton Francesco Doni (1513-1574): the ideal Republic sketched in the booklet, Doni argues, perfectly reflects the 'Republic' of Fava's own house, as each is an example of virtue. Just a few years later, Doni submitted for publication a work, known as *I Mondi* [*The Worlds*] (1552-1553), that intermingled utopian traits with facetious representations not devoid of practical political content, encouraging the reader to constantly overturn and question the arguments presented, a strategy inspired by Erasmus' *Sileni of Alcibiades*: just as the outward, ridiculous shape of a Silenus statuette conceals a god inside, so serious reflections about the ideal society can be hidden within the shape of an ironic discourse.¹³ In the same year, 1553, another utopian work was also published: Francesco Patrizi's *La Città Felice* [*Happy City*], in which the Platonic philosopher presents the design of an ideal city whose citizens would be able to fulfil a happy, virtuous existence.¹⁴

In all these utopias animals have a key role to play. As in Lando's *Sermoni* [*Sermons*], this role oscillates from ironic statements about the close relationship with certain animals, to practical considerations about their usefulness, to more general reflections about the ontological distinction between human and non-human animals. Despite the difference in tone and style between them, in all cases these utopias are populated by *real* animals: the questions they address is how the relationship between humans and animals in the real world

¹⁰ The interest in such details about the use of bodily parts could derive from the fact that Lando had had medical training. On Lando's life see Ireneo Sanesi, *Il cinquecentista Ortensio Lando* (Pistoia: Bracali, 1893).

¹¹ The Italian title (*Eutopia*) obviously intends the word *Utopia* as derived from the Greek 'eu' ('good'), rather than 'ou-topos' ('nowhere'). This is the second translation in a vernacular language after the German edition of 1524. On the context of this translation see Paul F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World (1530-1560): Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco and Ortensio Lando* (Madison, Milwaukee and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 32. See also Paul F. Grendler, 'Utopia in Renaissance Italy: Doni's "New World"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 26/4 (1965), 479-494.

¹² For instance Lando signs his *Dialogo contra gli uomini letterati* with the pseudonym *Filalete cittadino di Utopia*. See Antonio Corsaro, 'Introduzione', in Ortensio Lando, *Paradossi cioè sentenze fuori del comun parere*, ed. Antonio Corsaro (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2000), 2.

¹³ See Marziano Guglielminetti, 'I Mondi e gli Inferni di Anton Francesco Doni: Guida alla lettura', in Anton Francesco Doni, *I Mondi e gli Inferni*, ed. Patrizia Pellizari (Turin: Einaudi, 1994), viii.

¹⁴ On the tight chronological succession of these utopias see Luigi Firpo, 'Political Philosophy: Renaissance Utopianism', in *The Late Italian Renaissance 1525-1630*, ed. Eric W. Cochrane (London: Macmillan, 1970), 160.

should be transposed into an ideal one, and conversely what the consequences of this thought experiment would be with regard to the ways in which animals are used in the real world.

These works are linked not only by chronological proximity (and sometimes by direct relation between the authors, as in the case of Doni and Lando), but also, more broadly, by the use of utopian narration as a tool for viewing reality through the spectacles of an ideal representation. In so doing, they are also all indebted to a model – Thomas More’s *Utopia* – which delineated precisely the problem of the place and usefulness of animals in an ideal setting. These Renaissance utopias thus focused on the relation of humans and animals between real and ideal, because, as Miriam Eliav-Feldon puts it, ‘a utopia is an invitation to perceive the distance between things as they are and things as they should be.’¹⁵

In this essay I argue that the place assigned to animals in Renaissance utopian literature of the mid sixteenth century can be analysed as such an invitation to reflect on the relationship that humans entertain with real animal – animals that are viewed not merely as symbols, but rather as actual presences in the society of men: as sources of food, as beasts of burden, and as life companions. The narratological strategy opens a distance between real and ideal ways of dealing with animals. From this standpoint, the question about human uniqueness is directly connected with the discussion of topics such as how to preserve health in an ideal city or suggestions about the best diet for the citizens. These aspects directly involve the assessment of the relation to the world of animals, included in these imaginary cities or worlds as living beings that share in various ways the same space inhabited by humans, and also as mirrors on which the definition of the human being as a special animal is projected.¹⁶

1. Killing Real Animals in Ideal Cities: The Roots of the Problem in More’s Utopia

While the dog Lionzo in Lando’s sermon is praised especially for his hunting skills, the citizens of More’s *Utopia* reject the cruelty of hunts entirely. In Lando’s translation the passage reads:

Se ti diletta veder stratiare & uccidere quell’animaletto, dovresti più tosto muoverti a pietà [misericordiam] vedendo la lepre impotente, fugitiva, timida, & innocente [innoxium] esser straciata [discerptum] dal cane gagliardo feroce e crudele.¹⁷

[But if you are attracted by the hope of slaughter and the expectation of a creature being mangled under your eyes, it ought rather to inspire pity when you behold a weak, fugitive, timid and innocent little hare torn to pieces by a strong, fierce, and cruel dog.]¹⁸

¹⁵ Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Realistic Utopias: The Ideal Imaginary Societies of the Renaissance 1516-1630* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 1.

¹⁶ This approach lays emphasis on the practical aspects involved in assessing the human/animal divide. On the key role of anatomy in this context see Benjamin Arbel’s contribution to this volume. For a general overview of the plurality of roles attributed to animals in the Renaissance see *A Cultural History of Animals in the Renaissance*, ed. Bruce Boehrer (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007).

¹⁷ Thomas More, *La Repubblica nuovamente ritrovata del governo dell’isola Eutopia [...]* (Venice: 1548), 40v.

¹⁸ Thomas More, *Utopia*, in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, ed. Edward Surzt and J. H. Hexter (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), vol. 4, 171.

Lando's choice of adjectives retains the vividness of the Latin original, and conveys the unease of the citizens of More's *Utopia* with killing animals. Are animals to be exploited by humans or not in a utopian state? This question reverberates in Italian utopian literature dealing directly with More's model, from Doni's *Mondi*, to Patrizi's *La Città Felice*. More's *Utopia* thus defines the contours of the main issue at stake: the use of animals, especially for food, poses the problem of the role of violence in an imagined state, asking whether violence in its various forms (from the issue of war to the exploitation of certain humans and of certain animals) would be necessary in an ideal state as well.¹⁹

The passage on hunting presents an instance of the way in which *Utopia* highlights how far the treatment of animals in actual human society is from that in an ideal republic. Indeed the text continues with a direct statement about the Utopians' rejection of hunting: 'Così gli Utopiensi hanno rifiutato al tutto quest'esercizio del cacciare, come arte conveniente a i beccari, la quale hanno commessa a i servi'.²⁰ ['In consequence the Utopians have imposed the whole activity of hunting, as unworthy of free men, upon their butchers – a craft [...] they exercise through their slaves.']²¹ Yet the parallel between hunting and butchering animals complicates the picture: it expresses clearly the fact that the Utopians face a radical problem when enquiring about the legitimacy of killing animals for any purpose, thus not only for sport but also, and most importantly, for food. Indeed, besides cultivating the feeling of pity for the weak creatures being torn apart by ferocious ones, as in the case of the hare hunted by the dog, a principal reason for the Utopians' refraining from hunting is the fact that killing animals, in general, is not an activity suitable to free citizens, as it involves cruel bloodshed. This is why the Utopians do not offer animals in sacrifice either, because they believe that God does not require the killing of animals: in fact, since he gave life to them, it follows that he wants them to live.²² Nevertheless, the Utopians do eat meat, and thus the killing of animals for food requires a special explanation, in order to justify how the citizens' spirit of compassion can coexist with such violent exploitation of animals.

Most importantly, the act of butchering is not performed by the citizens themselves, but by slaves ('famigli', in Lando's translation). Moreover, the killing does not take place within the boundaries of the city, but outside, and the meat is then brought to the market ready for consumption:

Evvi il mercato de i cibi, ove si portano herbe, frutti, pane, pesci, carni di ogni animale, e questo fuori di la città vicino al fiume, ove si possono lavare le immonditie. Indi portano gli animali uccisi e lavati per mano di famigli, perche non lasciano contaminare i lor cittadini ad uccidere gli animali, parendo loro che la humanità e clementia [clementiam, humanissimum naturae nostrae affectum] a l'huomo naturale, con tale uccisioni [laniatu animalium] a puoco a puoco venga meno, ne lasciano portare in la città cosa alcuna sporca o corrotta, accioche non si corrompa l'aria, & indi nasca pestilentia.²³

¹⁹ On Doni's reinterpretation of More's model of Utopia see Christian Rivoletti, *La metamorfosi dell'utopia: Anton Francesco Doni e l'immaginario utopico di metà Cinquecento* (Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 2003).

²⁰ More, *Repubblica nuovamente ritrovata*, 40v.

²¹ More, *Utopia*, 171.

²² *Ibid.*, 235 (see also More, *Repubblica nuovamente ritrovata*, 57v). It is interesting to note that in *Genesis* 9.3, God's permission to eat animals follows on from Noah's offer of animal sacrifice after the flood (*Genesis*, 8.20-21).

²³ More, *Repubblica nuovamente ritrovata*, 32r-v.

[Next to the market place that I have mentioned are the food markets. Here are brought not only different kinds of vegetables, fruit, and bread, but also fish and whatever edible of bird and four-footed beast. Outside the city are designated places where all gore and offal may be washed away in running water. From these places they transport the carcasses of the animals slaughtered and cleaned by the hands of slaves. They do not allow their citizens to accustom themselves to the butchering of animals, by the practice of which they think that mercy, the finest feeling of our human nature, is gradually killed off.]²⁴

This geographical displacement of the slaughterhouses outside *Utopia* has a twofold reason. The first is medical: diseases could spread through the dirt that results from butchering, so that the presence of running water is important, while the distance from the city also prevents any pollution of the air. The second reason, however, is ethical, and regards the role of human behaviour for the Utopians' conception of what a human being is, and how he is differentiated from animals. Killing is by necessity a cruel act, which might deprive the person performing it of his own humanity, to the point that, as a marginal comment to the text states, 'from the butchery of cattle we have learned to cut the throats even of men.'²⁵

Killing is presented as a dangerous activity, which can contaminate human nature just like the air does by spreading diseases. It is clear that its place in *Utopia* is therefore a problematic one: it must be removed from the city, and removed from the hands of its actual citizens. Still, there seems to be something unavoidable in the killing of animals for food, since meat features in the market of the ideal city, while other activities involving killing animals, such as hunting and sacrificing, can be simply eliminated as causing unnecessary harm.²⁶ Animals killed for food seem instead to present an uncomfortable puzzle. If God has created all creatures so that they should live, and if butchering encourages violence then on what grounds is meat consumption allowed and even necessary?

Meat is considered as an essential aliment for at least some citizens, namely those who require strength for performing their duties. In Lando's translation we read: 'Mangiano carni d'animali di quatro piedi, dandosi a credere, che con quel cibo si mantenghino piu robusti a le fatiche.'²⁷ ['They like flesh meat just because they think that this fare makes them stronger for any work whatsoever.']²⁸ Not all citizens, therefore, must rely on animals and on butchering: in fact there are some who lead an abstinent life and refrain from everything which encourages the bodily passions, and thus do not marry, and do not eat animals.

The consumption of meat is restricted in many ways in *Utopia* – yet it is not completely eliminated.²⁹ There is thus a clear tension between the desire to limit the 'pollution' caused by violence, and the belief that animal exploitation cannot be entirely dispensed with.³⁰ In this sense, geographical displacement and the employment of slaves,

²⁴ More, *Utopia*, 139.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Cf. More, *Utopia*, 171.

²⁷ More, *Repubblica nuovamente ritrovata*, 56r.

²⁸ More, *Utopia*, 227.

²⁹ On violence in ideal cities see Jean-Louis Fournel, 'Les guerres de l'utopie. Considérations sur Thomas More, Francesco Patrizi et Tommaso Campanella', in *Justice et armes au XVIe siècle* [online], ed. Diego Quagliani and Jean-Claude Zancarini, 129-154: <<http://laboratoireitalien.revues.org/493?lang=it>> (accessed April 2015).

³⁰ Robert Appelbaum, *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food Among the Early Moderns* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 14: 'Freshly

simply keep the potentially dangerous consequences at bay. Animals, in any case, remain essential for human society, even an ideal one. If read in the light of the treatment of animals in *Utopia*, Lando's own *Sermoni* can be seen as a celebration of the animals' usefulness for humans, sharpening with caustic irony this contradiction between exploiting them and imagining a harmonious, non-violent relationship with them. And indeed this same tension surfaces in Renaissance utopian writings which take More's imagined island as a starting point.

2. *Beasts of Burden: Animal Exploitation in Anton Francesco Doni's Mondi*

It is no coincidence that agriculture constitutes a major part of the citizens' work in *Utopia*: cultivating plants does not involve the problems associated with animal husbandry, or does so to a far lesser extent than in the case of slaughtering animals. Indirectly, the emphasis on work in the fields thus softens the importance of butchering animals, too. In the first of Doni's imagined 'new worlds', *Mondo piccolo* [*The Small World*], the key role of agriculture is even ironically thematised through the invention of an academy of learned men called Accademia della Vigna (the academy of the vineyard).³¹ The members, called vignaiuoli, not only have vegetable nicknames, such as Carrot or Fig, but engage in the study of all the properties of herbs and plants, and 'the whole of agriculture', including the translation of ancient writings on the topic.³²

In *Mondo savio et pazzo* two 'academici' are granted a vision of a new world, shown to them by Jove and Momus. In Doni's collection of *mondi* this is the one which is most indebted to More and the idea of utopia, as the two academicians view a city 'built on a most perfect circle, like a star'. Here, too, the cultivation of the earth plays a crucial role, as 'each allotment bore fruit according to its nature', and the inhabitants have deep knowledge of the characteristics and growth of each vegetable and plant. But just like for More, this city also relies on animals for various tasks, not least as a source of food.³³ The ironic context of the discussion, constructed as a dialogue between *savio* and *pazzo* (the sane and the mad one), is designed to convey the sense of a constant reversal of perspective, and this directly affects the way in which the relationship with animals is presented. While beasts of burden – donkeys, mules, horses – are mentioned as essential for organising the supply of goods to the city, the words 'animal' and 'beast' are employed to refer to humans as well, blurring the line of division between the user and the used. For instance a discussion of the many ways in which men can go mad is introduced by the character *pazzo* claiming that one can live fully as a human being in certain respects, and as a beast in others, and even as half beast and half humans in still others.³⁴

slaughtered meat, the staple of Utopia's urban citizens, is actually a problem, both in terms of processing it and in terms of consuming it. The requirements of hygiene and nutrition contend with democracy and piety'.

³¹ Doni was certainly inspired by real academies (for instance the one of the Accademici Ortolani in Piacenza), but he reinterpreted real details and figures in an ironic framework. See on this Guglielminetti, 'I *Mondi* e gli *Inferni*: Guida alla lettura', xii-xiii.

³² Doni, *I Mondi e gli Inferni*, 20-1.

³³ See *ibid.*, 167.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

Statements about the practical use of animals, congruent with More's *Utopia*, thus overlap with the topic of the bestiality of humans, which develops throughout Doni's work. The figure of Momus is the emblem of this approach: as personification of irony and censure, Momus repeatedly overturns in his speeches the hierarchy of humans and beasts, intertwining the discussion of the ideal world with remarks about the deep perversity of real human societies. He is thus the god who turns humans into beasts by pointing out the bestiality of human beings. In *Mondo misto* Doni inserts a dialogue between Momus and a soul, which recollects its previous lives: it spent a life as a horse, as well as one as a cock and another as a frog, and the dialogue dwells upon the treatment these animals received. As a horse, it was repeatedly mistreated, to the point that it decided to commit suicide by drowning in a river (called 'fiume bestiale'), carrying with it the knight who had 'used [it] roughly for about a year'.³⁵ Momus comments that Jove will not allow those who 'have been or will be beasts'³⁶ to ascend high up in the afterlife of the souls, leaving it unclear whether it is the past as a real animal, or the beastly suicidal act that made that soul unworthy of further ascent. In fact, Momus adds that he would have wrung the cock's neck and fried the frog in whose bodies that soul had reincarnated. The boundary between humans and beasts becomes fluid: the soul even claims to have lived a previous life as the philosopher Pythagoras, who believed in the transmigration of all souls into human and animal bodies.³⁷ Furthermore, Momus ultimately offers to the soul of Pythagoras the possibility to be reincarnated into any body it likes, crossing once more the border dividing men from beasts.³⁸

The source for the story of the animal past of Pythagoras is Lucian's of Samosata *The Dream, or the Cock*, in which a cock reveals to its owner, the cobbler Micyllus, that in a previous life it had been the philosopher from Samos, called by Micyllus himself a 'sophist, the quack, who made laws against tasting meat, and eating beans, banishing from the table the food that I for my part like best of all'.³⁹ Indeed ironic discussions of the Pythagorean diet are plentiful in Lucian's work, but the reference to Pythagoras and the treatment of animals could also have been inspired by Seneca's letters, of which Doni published an Italian translation in 1549 (notably shortly after the publication of Lando's *Sermoni* and of the Italian translation of *Utopia*).⁴⁰ Indeed in a famous letter Seneca had explained his (temporary) choice of a vegetarian diet with his enthusiasm for Pythagorean philosophy and the belief in the transmigration of souls. Doni was thus familiar with Seneca's strongly ethical interpretation of Pythagoras' diet, based on the rejection of slaughter as an unnecessary cruelty:

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Lucian, *Works*, English transl. by A. M. Harmon (London and New York: Heinemann and Putnam, 1919), vol. II, 179. On these references to Lucian in Doni cf. Guglielminetti, 'I *Mondi* e gli *Inferni*: Guida alla lettura', xxiii., pp. 178-181. See also the reference to eating frogs in Lucian, *A True Story*, in *ibid.*, vol. 1 (London and New York: Heinemann and Macmillan, 1913), 276-7.

⁴⁰ Doni in fact reissued, without acknowledgement, a previous Italian translation by Sebastiano Manilio, published in Venice in 1494. On Doni's 'plagiarism' see Lucia Gualdo Rosa, *Seneca nelle biografie umanistiche*, in *Syntagmata: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Honor of Monique Mund-Dopchie and Gilbert Tournoy*, ed. Dirk Sacré and Jan Papy (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), 29-30.

I will not be ashamed to admit the love which Pythagoras generated in me. [...] Sextius believed man had enough nourishment without shedding blood, and that the practice of cruelty began when dismembering had developed into pleasure. He added that the material of luxury ought to be reduced; he inferred that mixed foodstuffs foreign to our bodies were detrimental to good health. But Pythagoras said there was kinship with each other among all creatures, and an exchange of souls passing successively into different forms. If you believe him, no soul perishes, in fact it is not even interrupted except for a very short time, while it is being poured into another body. We shall see how it passes through shifts of time and when, after wandering through several dwellings, it returns into human form.⁴¹

Abstinence from meat-eating is here regarded as an ideal diet for humans, one that does not rely on killing animals, and at the same time proves beneficial both for the spirit (by limiting lust and greed) and the body (which does not suffer from being deprived of an aliment, but is rather strengthened by vegetable food). The discussion of the souls' transmigration in *Mondi* gives an ironic turn to the ethical question of the choice of food, rooted in Seneca's discussion of Pythagorean philosophy.

But Momus' dialogue with the soul, and especially the scene about the difficult past as a horse owned by careless humans, could also point to another source of Doni's *Mondi*, one that used irony to disclose the shortcomings of human society, also with regard to the treatment of animals: Leon Battista Alberti's *Momus* (written 1443-1450). Sent to the earth to report on the state of human affairs, Momus is a keen observer of the role of animals as well. Alberti creates a particularly ironic twist by making Momus comment upon the relationship of a beast of burden with its carer, a servant, pointing out once again the same important distinction at the basis of meat-eating in More's *Utopia*, namely the one between those humans who directly deal with animals (the slaves) and those whose lives profit indirectly from exploiting animals.

He [Momus] happened to meet a young peasant slave just out of the workhouse, who was beating a stubborn and recalcitrant donkey with a stick. At first he had laughed at the fellow who was so carried away with anger, but then he began to reflect how much the tribe of paupers owed to beasts of burden: for if by chance there weren't any, then the rich would want to be carried on the shoulders of the poor. Angered by this thought, Momus started to rebuke the slave, shouting, 'You savage biped, you servile beast, why don't you give up this rage of yours. Don't you understand what we owe to this breed of animal? Don't you know that if they didn't exist, you and people like you would be carrying bundles and burdens in the place of pack-horses?' These were Momus' words. But the slave, who was savage, abandoned the donkey and lunged at his critic, saying, 'Oh,

⁴¹ Seneca, *Selected Letters*, ed. Elaine Fantham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 233. Cf. Seneca, *L'Epistole di Seneca tradotte nella Lingua Toscana per Anton Francesco Doni Fiorentino* (Venice: 1549), 580-1: 'Non mi vergognerò di confessare, in quanto amore di Filosofia Pitthagora m'inducesse: ma Sotione diceva perche Pitthagora si astenessi di mangiare animali. [...] Costui [Sestio] diceva che l'huomo haveva assai cose da nutrire senza spargere sangue, per il quale l'huomo si avvezza a crudeltà, quando il dismembrare de gl'animali si riducesse a piacere: poi aggiungeva che si doveva togliere la materia della lussuria; provava poiche la varietà de' nutrimenti era contraria alla sanità, & aliena dalli nostri corpi. Ma Pittagora diceva che di tutte le cose ogni cosa haveva fra se una certa congiuntione, & che le anime si convertivano in diverse forme. Niuna anima (se tu credi a quello) muore ne cessa dalla sua operatione, se non un brevissimo spatio di tempo, fino a tanto che si rinfonde in un'altro corpo. Vederà poi per quanti spatij di tempo, & essendosi trasformata in tanti habitacoli, come ritorni nell'huomo.' The translation corresponds to Manilio's (see Seneca, *Le morale epistole* (Venice: 1494), 149r).

indeed, why won't you bear for the ass?' And with the same stick he had been using to beat the donkey he belabored Momus.⁴²

At first sight, Momus' bitter comment about the brutality of the slave points to the crucial function of animals in supporting human life: without the animals' work, and without exploiting them, humans would have to resort to exploiting each other. Momus thus presents the slave with a thought experiment, imagining what a society without the help supplied by the animals would look like. While relying on animals might thus seem essential for human life, compassion and care towards such exploited creatures are a necessary sign of gratitude, since these beasts of burden are the very foundation of human existence. But the brutish reaction of the slave demonstrates that the donkey and the slave himself in fact belong to the same category: that of those who labour to provide basic sustenance for the whole of human society. The scene has the effect of reinterpreting the difference between (certain) humans and the animals they employ in their work: the portrayal of a relationship with working animals leads to a reformulation of what distinguishes humans from brutes. Alberti's *Momus* thus focuses on the place of animals in order to reach a bitter conclusion with regard to the nature of the human being, a creature that Momus defines as contemptuous like no other, but also 'readily tamed and handled', just like the donkey beaten by the slave.⁴³

Indeed the classification of certain human beings as less human than others is evident in More's *Utopia* as well, and the question about the nature of the slaves who are in charge of butchering continues to be discussed in later utopias. Thus butchery emerges as a particularly controversial issue regarding animals in ideal cities: does performing the task of killing animals degrade those humans to something less worthy than the rest of humanity? This question has an afterlife in later utopian literature, as late as the seventeenth century.

For instance the German Lutheran theologian Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654)⁴⁴ has this problem in mind when he argues in his plan for a Christian ideal city, *Christianopolis* (1619), that 'the men assigned to labour are not made bestial, but are thoroughly cultured'. It is interesting to note that in *Christianopolis*, too, there are areas dedicated specifically to slaughtering animals, yet Andreae is careful to point out that in fact 'there is nothing bestial' about that part of the city, despite the violent handling of animal bodies that goes on there.⁴⁵ One hundred years after *Utopia*, Andreae replies to More by claiming that killing animals is not a brutal act suitable only for slaves, even if he does acknowledge that there remain dangers connected with handling animal parts and fluids: 'I have seen many men being brutalised elsewhere, however, by the pollution of handling blood, flesh, fat, hides and

⁴² Leon Battista Alberti, *Momus*, ed. Virginia Brown and Sarah Knight (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 145 (translation slightly modified).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴⁴ Andreae was famously involved in the creation of the myth of the Rosicrucians (see especially *Cimelia Rhodostaurótica: Die Rosenkreuzer im Spiegel der zwischen 1610 und 1660 entstandenen Handschriften und Drucke*, ed. Carlos Gilly (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 1995). On *Christianopolis*, one of the 'first German utopias' see the useful discussion in Dirk Werle, *Copia librorum: Problemgeschichte imaginierter Bibliotheken 1580/1630* (De Gruyter: Berlin, 2007), 223ff.

⁴⁵ Johann Valentin Andreae, *Christianopolis*, ed. Edward H. Thompson (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 166: 'Now the area on the north side has nothing bestial about it, even though is provided with fourteen other buildings which are for slaughtering animals, and related activities.'

similar things. Here too you can see kitchens intended for cleaning, roasting and stewing meat, though they know nothing of delicacies and Epicurean dainties.⁴⁶

Once again, meat features on the menu of an ideal city,⁴⁷ and the architectural design of the city shows that the use of animals is considered to be necessary for and integral to human society, as the areas where animal bodies are handled are carefully planned. Ultimately, the treatment of animals affects the definition of humanity, a topic which both Alberti and Doni address by employing the figure of Momus as an ironic filter: whether the human being is a beast himself, as the god Momus implies, or whether the beasts are the working force on which the society of humans is built, the question of the place of animals in the ideal city inevitably leads to the issue of what makes up humanity itself, especially in its best, ideal form.

3. *Food for Happiness: Patrizi's La Città Felice*

The aim of the ideal city is to allow human happiness to blossom. The definition of human happiness plays a key role in *Utopia*, whose citizens believe that to be happy means to possess freedom of the mind, without being subjected to bodily pleasures. Similarly in Doni's *Mondo misto* [*The Mixed World*], Momus and a soul discuss the requisites of happiness.⁴⁸ In this dialogue in which the difference between the lives of humans and of the animals is the backdrop, given the role of the soul's transmigration from animal into human bodies. In fact transmigration and happiness are intertwined already in *Utopia*, where More writes that there is a group of citizens who believe the souls of animals to be immortal, and yet not to be destined to experience the same happiness to which humans can aspire.⁴⁹ Moreover, Doni was familiar with the work of Giovan Battista Gelli,⁵⁰ who in 1549 published a re-elaboration of Plutarch's *Gryllos* in which the life of animals is directly compared with human life with regard to the specific problem of happiness. Re-elaborating Plutarch's fable, Gelli had staged a discussion between Ulysses and several animals, who – with the solitary exception of the elephant – claim the animal condition to be happier and more desirable than the human one.⁵¹ The utopian traits in Doni's *Mondi* can thus be interpreted in the framework of the broader sixteenth-century debate on imagining a happy human society. From this point of view,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Campanella's *Città del Sole* is another example of ideal city whose inhabitants choose to eat meat. I have discussed this issue in Cecilia Muratori, 'Eating (Rational) Animals: Campanella on the Rationality of Animals and the Impossibility of Vegetarianism', in *Ethical Perspectives on Animals in the Renaissance and Early Modern Period*, ed. Cecilia Muratori and Burkhard Dohm (Florence: SISMELE, 2013 = *Micrologus' Library*, LV), 139-166.

⁴⁸ Here, too, Doni draws on Lucian of Samosata: Doni, *I Mondi e gli Inferni*, 110.

⁴⁹ More, *Utopia*, 223 (More, *Repubblica nuovamente ritrovata*, 55r).

⁵⁰ In fact Doni even published illegally Gelli's *Capricci del bottaio* (cf. Doni, *I Mondi e gli Inferni*, lxxv).

⁵¹ Giovan Battista Gelli, *La Circe* (Florence: Torrentino, 1549), 255-62. As Karen Raber (*Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 6) puts it: 'Gelli's dialogue summarizes a larger debate in the Renaissance over the relative felicity, morality, and physical superiority of animals versus humans.' Raber stresses the contribution of Gelli's *Circe* to the broader problem of the 'shared embodiment' of humans and animals (*ibid.*, 5; on the elephant in particular see *ibid.*, 181).

animals are not only essential instruments in the ideal city, but also work as the constant term of comparison in the analysis of the actual aim of utopian representations: human happiness.

La Città Felice by Francesco Patrizi (1529-1597) combines both these aspects: the discussion of the necessary use of animals in an ideal city, and the philosophical question of the human/animal distinction with regard to the problem of how to achieve happiness. First of all, animals, as in *Utopia*, feature in the happy city's market place as a source of food, since bodily sustenance is nothing less than the foundation of happiness. Patrizi writes: 'My city shall have to eat and drink if it wants to live and be happy', and meat features as one of the necessary aliments, alongside vegetables and fruit, bread and beverages.⁵²

The role of food provision in the happy city follows from a twofold consideration. The first regards the constitution of human beings: Patrizi writes that all philosophers agree on the fact that the human being is made of two parts, an immortal soul and a mortal body, and that the former governs the latter. The human being as such exists as long as the conjunction of those two parts persists, for as soon as their tie ('vincolo') is dissolved death occurs.⁵³ The second consideration follows directly from the idea that the care of the body plays a crucial role in this context: Patrizi draws a parallel between the human body and the body of the city, sliding from the philosophical idea of the body-soul compound into the territory of medicine and the question of how to keep both the human body and the body of the city healthy. Just as eating and drinking are the foundation for the preservation of the human body, so the body of the city must be properly nourished.

Patrizi claims that plants and animals, that is to say agriculture and pastoral farming, are both necessary in order to keep the body healthy. Indeed a relevant part of the organisation of this ideal society consists in the transformation of the products of the earth, and of the animals, into suitable food that can be safely consumed. Man cannot consume raw meat, or grains picked directly from the fields, and this is why millers, shepherds, butchers and cooks are needed.⁵⁴ Human beings must thus come together and share their skills in order to guarantee the production of food that will nourish the entire happy city. This also includes handling the bodies of animals, which are presented as a pillar for the sustenance of the civic body. Just like the island Utopia, Patrizi's city relies heavily on agriculture, because the fields must be ploughed, if they are to yield crops and fruit. Such transformation of both plants and animals into food is made possible by a strict division between free citizens and servants, which recalls the organisation of Utopia. In *La Città Felice*, the servants are required to perform all hard physical tasks, and indeed they must be powerful and robust enough to sustain this job.⁵⁵

⁵² Francesco Patrizi, *La città felice* (Venice: 1553), 6v: 'Habbia adunque da mangiare e da bere la mia città se desidera vivere e esser beata. E conciosia cosa, che l'huomo comunemente, o di pane, o di legumi, o di frutte, o di carne, usa di cibarsi, e bee, o vino, o acqua, o bevande composte dall'arte, accioche egli viva, e viva senza impedimento, gli si ricercano tutte queste sette cose, e [...] necessariamente ci vuole, di territorio e di terra tanto, quanto sia bastante a produrre, et a mantenere queste cose, in si grande abondanza, che possa senza impedimento alcuno nutrire tutta la città.'

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3v-4r.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 7r.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Such a differentiation within humankind implies a grouping of certain humans (the servants) together with the animals they handle, and in fact such a subdivision of humanity was the target of the ironic scene with the slave and the beast of burden in Alberti's *Momus*. Yet the idea of a radical difference between humans and all other animals is fundamental in *La Città Felice*, and Patrizi repeatedly delineates the ways in which human lives are different from all other lives. To begin with, humans are different in that they construct connections which give shape to a society, and at the basis of this organisation lies a practical consideration: humans like being together, so much so, in fact, that the lack of such natural tendency would be a deprivation of humanity itself: 'whoever does not like to be with and entertain oneself with other human beings must be something more or something less than a human being, and as the old proverb says, he must be either God or a beast'.⁵⁶

But Patrizi also employs a more radical separation of humans from animals, based on the metaphysical conception that humans have received a unique nature from God. Indeed the reason for designing a 'happy city' is to show that, despite the fact that divine goodness flows into innumerable rivers of 'supercelestial water', the human being has been blessed with a more abundant river than any other creature. But his thirst is greater, too, because he is the only corrupted, fallen creature, and this is why it is necessary to find the path that leads back to that divine river. The idea of a happy city has its roots in this metaphysical representation: 'I resolved to show, to those who will be able to see and want to follow me, the path to find again that stream, and to build on it a City'.⁵⁷ This unveils the real purpose of the ideal city, and by encouraging humanity to find the lost divine river, Patrizi shows that his utopian city is indirectly anchored on the human/animal differentiation: man was made unique by God, and the search for happiness in an ideal society is nothing other than a way to regain consciousness of this radical difference. The ultimate purpose of imagining an ideal city is thus that of bringing human beings back to what is properly human, drafting rules for living together in an organised society which is at the same time founded on the use of animals, and on the impulse of leaving behind the brutality of animal life.

Patrizi's definition of happiness shows this dual presence of animals in the happy city. Happiness is not possible without care for the citizens' individual bodies, and for the body of the city, as both need to be nourished and strengthened. Animals are, from this point of view, an essential resource. But this is only the prerequisite for achieving the happiness which derives from the nourishment provided by the celestial waters, and attainable by exercising virtue and intellectual powers:

Of the three parts of which, as we saw, the definition of happiness consists, I have until now considered only the first two, that is to say the things with which our life is maintained over a long period of time, and those which allow us to lead a comfortable life without impediments. Now we come to the third one and we see how the citizen can excel in moral and intellectual virtues to such an extent that he achieves happiness thanks to them, and drink from the waters of the celestial fountain. Therefore if happiness consists, for the major part and in its

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4v: 'chiunque non ama di essere & conversare insieme con altri huomini, o da più che huomo è necessario che sia, o da meno'.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: 'mi sono deliberato di voler mostrare, a quelli che haveranno occhio & voglia di seguirmi, la strada di ritrovare questo rivo, & di edificarvi una Città'.

accomplished form, in the operations of virtue it is necessary that our citizens should be first of all virtuous if they are to be happy.⁵⁸

From collaborative organisation in order to provide nutrition, Patrizi proceeds to identifying moral education as the proper basis of human happiness. Thus the focus of attention has also shifted from the issue of dealing with real animals to taming the animal nature of man, in order to make him fully human. The narratological frame of the ideal city is employed by Patrizi to set in motion this transition: animals are thus a matter of concern only inasmuch as they indirectly enable the fulfilment of a human aim, that is to say achieving happiness in all its facets, both bodily and spiritual.

Conclusion: Rescuing the Real Animals in Ideal Cities?

“You will save men and beasts”, said the Prophet, that is to say those who often live like brutes’:⁵⁹ this interpretation of Psalm 35.7 (‘Homines et iumenta salvabis, Domine’) in Doni’s *Mondo piccolo* fittingly describes the dual role of real animals in the ideal cities I have considered.⁶⁰ The use of animals for human purposes requires a specific justification, in order to explain whether and how the exploitation of the animals that takes place in actual human societies is admissible and even necessary in an imagined ideal state. But the reference to the Biblical passage stresses the fact that there is a metaphysical and theological side to the problem, too. As Patrizi notes as well, by using the metaphor of the ascent to the divine waters, the human being is the only creature who strives toward God, while being at the same time the only fallen one, in need of reconciliation. It is clear that it is humans who are here the real centre of concern – that is to say, in the language of the psalm, that only humans are rescued, or, in other words, that the real animals are left behind, replaced by man’s own, internal animality.

The animals are here human beings in disguise: Doni points to the danger of humans behaving like animals, a danger that Ortensio Lando had himself acknowledged in his collection of *Paradossi* [*Paradoxes*] where he had jokingly remarked that the hunters become savage and bestial by spending their time in the woods with the animals.⁶¹ The device of imagining an ideal city functioned, then, as an instrument to manage this distance between humans and animals. On the one hand, the characteristics of animals are projected onto the

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 14v-15r: ‘Hora delle tre parti che noi vedemmo havere la diffinitione della felicità, dell’ultime due solamente fino a qui si è ragionato, ciò è delle cose con le quali la vita nostra lungamente si mantiene, & di quelle che in agio e senza impedimento veruno la ci fanno menare. Hora alla terza veniamo, & veggiamo come il cittadino possa farsi, nelle virtù morali & intellettuali, eccellente tanto che possa per aiuto di quelle esser felice, & bere dell’acque del celeste gorgo. Consistendo adunque la felicità, per la miglior parte & compimento suo, nell’operation della virtù, bisogna, se i nostri cittadini vogliono esser beati, che sieno in prima virtuosi.’

⁵⁹ Doni, *I Mondi e gli Inferni*, 13.

⁶⁰ See Francesco Zorzi’s interpretation of the same verse in *Harmonia mundi* (*L’armonia del mondo*, ed. Saverio Campanini (Milan: Bompiani, 2010), 970).

⁶¹ Ortensio Lando, *Paradossi cioè Sentenze fuori del comun parere*, ed. Antonio Corsaro (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2000), 91. Lando is also alluding to the fact that while the hunter is busy in the woods, he is replaced in his marital bed by another man, thus becoming himself the deer (that is to say, metaphorically, the cheated husband) he is hunting.

interiority of humans, prompting the question of the real distinction between them, especially in the setting of an ideal, reformed human state. On the other, sixteenth-century Italian utopias approach the topic of the human/animal differentiation from a strictly practical point of view: by drafting the prerequisites of a utopian city, questions about the borders of the legitimate use of animals are also asked, comparing the real state of things with the imagined, ideal one.

Following in the steps of Erasmus' *Sileni*, irony is an essential feature of such utopian narratives: it functions as a reminder of the importance of animals, and of their close relationship with humans in the discussion of ideal forms of society. As it occurs with all 'things truly worth having', 'what is most valuable about them is hidden away and concealed'.⁶² Indeed Erasmus focused specifically on the practical worth of that which awaits discovery: for instance, the practical application of the distinction between the outside appearance and the inward essence is disclosed in the case of those bishops who in fact behave like warmongers, business men, or tyrants. Even Christ's behaviour is considered through the lens of the Silenic technique of inversion, since Erasmus claims that what distinguished his teaching from all other philosophies was the way in which he showed a path to achieving happiness.⁶³ The animals feature in Erasmus' *Sileni*, too: the prophets, who lived in the wilderness surrounded by wild beasts, are Silenic figures because their lives in companionship with the animals did not make them beastly, but rather elevated them above all other human beings.⁶⁴

Animals are at the centre of a similar Silenic dynamic in the utopian literature I have discussed, from More to Lando, Doni and Patrizi: their place is marginal only at first sight. By drawing attention to the relatively limited space inhabited by animals it becomes possible to shed light on broader Renaissance discourses on the place of humans in the world as well. Analysing the function of animals in the ideal cities reveals that the relationship with real animals has an impact on the definition of what a human being is, and shows the way this changes through the transposition in the ideal world. As food, animals project onto the utopian society the violence of exploitation that they suffer in this world; as backdrop for the conception of happiness, they prompt a re-assessment of human uniqueness.⁶⁵ But a further effect of this change of perspective is that the topic of the human-animal relation can function as a battering ram to challenge existing historiographical constructions. New research has not only demonstrated the pervasiveness of animals in Renaissance culture – from their presence as pets and beasts of burden at court, to their crucial role in Renaissance material culture.⁶⁶

⁶² Thomas More, *Utopia. With Erasmus's The Sileni of Alcibiades*, ed. David Wootton (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999) (cf. also Erasmus, *Adages*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, in Id., *Collected Works*, vol. 34 (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press), 264).

⁶³ More, *Utopia. With Erasmus's The Sileni of Alcibiades*, 171-2; Erasmus, *Adages*, 264-5.

⁶⁴ More, *Utopia. With Erasmus's The Sileni of Alcibiades*, 172; Erasmus, *Adages*, 265.

⁶⁵ I have further explored this issue in 'From Animal Happiness to Human Unhappiness: Cardano, Vanini, *Theophrastus redivivus* (1659)', in *Early Modern Philosophers and the Renaissance Legacy*, ed. Cecilia Muratori and Gianni Paganini (Berlin and New York: Springer, 2016. Series: *International Archives of the History of Ideas*), 185-200.

⁶⁶ See for instance the new volume *Animals and Early Modern Identity*, ed. Pia F. Cuneo (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014). Sarah Kay has investigated the ubiquity of animals as the material substratum of books: 'Legible Skins:

most importantly, it has proven that the rise of ethical considerations on the relationship with and treatment of animals is not to be considered a later, early modern development, as it had been long assumed.⁶⁷ Instead, focussing on the role of animals in Renaissance works at the crossroads of philosophy and literature, such as those I have discussed in this chapter, shows that ethical reflections were an integral part of the more well-known Renaissance debates on the ontological difference between humans and animals. From this perspective, considering the place of animals in ideal cities is a first step and an appeal to regain the animals' centrality not only as objects of philosophical speculation, but also as troubling presences prompting ethical engagement as well.

Even if in the end the animals as such will not be saved, as Doni's reading of the psalm suggests, the role they play in ideal cities is thus a reminder that the redemption of humanity in an imagined better world has its roots in the relationship with real animals in this world – and that the connection of humans and animals on ethical grounds was an essential feature of Renaissance discourses on animality.

Animals and the Ethics of Medieval Reading', *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 2 (2011), 13–32.

⁶⁷ I have considered the interplay of ethics and ontology in 'Animals in the Renaissance: You Eat What You Are', in *Oxford Philosophical Concepts: Animals*, ed. Peter Adamson and Fay Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); and in 'Pitagora tra i cannibali: dieta e ordine dei viventi a partire dalla letteratura rinascimentale sul nuovo mondo', in *Bestie, filosofi e altri animali*, ed. Felice Cimatti, Stefano Gensini and Sandra Plastina (Milan: Mimesis, 2016), 143-160.