Wonder dogs of Byzantium from an animal point of view

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This article looks at Byzantine dogs for the first time from the animal's point of view, i.e. not for what our textual sources tell us about their contribution to Byzantine human history, society, and culture, but for what they may enable us to trace regarding the dogs' own sensory and emotional experience, reactions and dispositions, individuality and agency. Methodologically this is made possible by using methods and insights from Animal Studies, especially by exploiting the benefits of a modern biological and ethological understanding of the nature of dogs, and of posthumanistic approaches that collapse the human–animal divide.

Dogs had a ubiquitous and often ambivalent presence in the Byzantines' daily lives, thoughts, and imagination. They were hunting and tracking companions, protectors of the flock and the household. They were also kept as pets, providing companionship and entertainment; and though traditionally valued for their loyalty and closeness to humankind, they tended, in religious works and texts of dream interpretation, to be depicted in a negative light as symbols of evil, abjection, and enmity.[1] Drawing its

I would like to thank the two anonymous readers for *BMGS* for their constructive feedback, Petros Bouras-Vallianatos for commenting on an earlier version of this article, and Ingela Nilsson, Baukje van den Berg, and David Ricks for the careful and timely editorial process. The open access fees of this publication have been generously covered by HEAL-Link (Hellenic Academic Libraries Link).

1 On the ambiguous status and symbolism of dogs in Byzantium, see A. Rhoby, 'Hunde in Byzanz', in J. Drauschke et al. (eds), *Lebenswelten zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte: Festschrift für Falko Daim zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Mainz 2018) 807–20; T. Schmidt, 'Noble hounds for aristocrats, stray dogs for heretics', in J. Pahlitzsch and T. Schmidt (eds), *Impious Dogs, Haughty Foxes and Exquisite Fish: evaluative perception and interpretation of animals in ancient and medieval Mediterranean thought* (Berlin 2019) 103–31; D. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius's Life and the Late Antique city* (Berkeley 1996) 85–7, 90, 100–17; N. Metzger, 'Kynanthropy: canine madness in Byzantine Late Antiquity', *History of Psychiatry* 26.3 (2015) 318–31. See too D. Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford 2000) 115–23 and K. Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Dogs* (London 2013).

DOI: 10.1017/byz.2025.8

inspiration from the thriving field of multidisciplinary inquiry known as Human–Animal Studies (HAS), this article looks at Byzantine dogs for the first time from an animal point of view; that is, not for what our sources tell us about their contribution to Byzantine human culture, but for what we may read between the lines concerning the dogs' own sensory and emotional experiences, their reactions and dispositions, individuality, and intentions. It thus seeks to reveal the potentialities of taking a zoocentric perspective on Byzantine literature – an approach that is still at an embryonic stage –[2] by rehabilitating the status of animals from instrumental subordinate beings to actors in their own right. Dogs were constitutive in the functioning of Byzantine society, which can now be assessed more holistically as a hybrid community inhabited by both humans and non-humans.

More specifically, this article explores Byzantine dogs that attracted attention or praise, or caused astonishment on account of their extraordinary skills and marvellous deeds. By displacing this anthropocentric assessment and putting the animal itself centre stage, I seek to show that what seems bizarre to human readers in canine performance is for the animal no more than a revelation of its natural instincts and talents. Methodologically, this will be made possible by drawing on the modern biological and ethological understanding of the nature of dogs. In examining premodern animals, the lens of the animal turn is critical: we need to approach non-humans as living beings in their irreducible specificity by giving a natural grounding to their actions, behaviour, and agency, independent of or in tandem with their role in human activity.[3]

The texts chosen for this study are diverse, encompassing a time span from the sixth to the fifteenth century and different genres (chronicles, encomia, philosophical accounts), thus showing that throughout Byzantine literature there was a heightened focus on the non-human other in its otherwise anthropocentric remit, irrespective of differences in the human narrative agendas of each text.

The performing dog in Malalas' *Chronicle*: three canine tricks in the light of animal embodiment

My first case study comes from the chronicle of John Malalas (*c.* 490–570s) for the year 530. Here we find a report of a show dog that travelled around with his owner, an itinerant entertainer from Italy, and performed three tricks that enthralled onlookers:

2 To my knowledge, only two articles have focused on the animal perspective in Byzantium to date: M. Perisanidi, 'Byzantine parades of infamy through an animal lens', *History Workshop Journal* 90 (2020) 1–24 and, rather differently, D. Stathakopoulos, 'Invisible protagonists: the Justinianic plague from a zoocentric point of view', in I. Anagnostakis, T. Kolias, and E. Papadopoulou (eds), *Animals and Environment in Byzantium (7th–12th c.)* (Athens 2011) 87–95.

3 Recent studies include C. Mengozzi (ed.), *Outside the Anthropological Machine: crossing the human–animal divide and other exit strategies* (New York 2021); E. Fudge, 'What was it like to be a cow? History and Animal Studies', in L. Kalof (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Studies* (Oxford 2017) 258–78; M. DeKoven, 'Why animals now?', *PMLA* 124 (2009) 361–9; C. Wolfe, 'Moving forward, kicking back: the Animal Turn', *Postmedieval* 2 (2011) 1–12.

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> In that year a travelling showman from the region of Italy <by the name of Andreas>[4] made his appearance. He had with him a tawny-coloured <and blind> dog which, upon instructions from his master, would perform various remarkable tricks. His master would stand in the marketplace and, when a crowd had collected to watch, he used to take from the bystanders <gold, silver, and iron> rings – without the dog's knowledge – and would put them on the ground, covering them with earth. Then he would order the dog to pick up and return their rings to each of them. The dog would hunt around and then, with his mouth, would give his ring back to each person as he recognized it. The dog would also give back coins of different emperors, which had been mixed together, according to the emperors' names. When a crowd of men and women were standing round, he would, when asked, point out pregnant women, brothel keepers, adulterers, misers, and the magnanimous. He always picked them out correctly, and so many people said that he had the spirit of Pytho.[5]

This passage has been examined from three anthropocentric angles: as evidence for how dogs amused Byzantine spectators attracted by (street) performances; for the identity of the dog's master (a tradesman?); and for the role of the dog scene in Malalas' broader narrative of mystery that consisted of a series of reports on unusual events and phenomena.[6] Can we move beyond the human, by paying attention to animal phenomenality in the natural world and getting to grips with the insights that this extract can give us on dog knowledge in early Byzantium?

It is true that the passage's initial emphasis is on the dog's carer (τοῦ ἀναθρεψαμένου, ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀναθρεψάμενος) and his role in orchestrating a sequence of scenes that stress his effective staging of the show: the way he marks his presence (ἀνεφάνη) in Constantinople, positions himself in the marketplace (ἑστὼς ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ), waits for the crowd to come and enjoy the show (εἰς τὸ θεάσασθαι), hides the rings without the dog noticing, gives orders to the animal, and waits for him to execute his commands (κελευόμενος, ἐπέτρεπε) so as to surprise spectators and win them over for his own financial benefit. Still, the protagonist here is no doubt the dog: without him, there is no show. The narrative itself marks this shift in perspective at precisely the point where the dog is turned from the entertainer's exploited prop to an active performer, an embodied autonomous investigator, who hunts around (ἐρευνῶν ὁ κύων), equipped with the cognitive capacity not only to search and identify the owner of each hidden

4 Words or phrases within angle brackets indicate additions found in other sources for the same story, which do not feature in the manuscripts preserving Malalas' version.

5 John Malalas, *Chronographia* 18.51 (381.1–25, ed. I. Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia* [Berlin 2000]); tr. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, R. Scott, et al., *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (Melbourne 1986) 266, with minor alterations.

6 J. Duffy, 'Mondo cane: some comments on two performing dog scenes from Byzantium', in S. Kotzabassi and G. Mavromatis (eds), *Realia Byzantina* (Berlin 2009) 35–41 (35–8).

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

object (τὸ γνωριζόμενον), but also to return it in his mouth (τῷ στόματι ἐπεδίδου ἑκάστῳ). This dog is here presented as a reflective subject.

Can we explain the dog's first trick in light of canine biology? While the human brain is governed by a large visual cortex so that we humans process our surroundings predominantly through vision, the dog's brain is dominated by a large olfactory cortex, which means that, unlike us, dogs *smell* the world around them. Scientific analyses have found that dogs have roughly forty times more smell-sensitive receptors than humans, which enables them to identify an impressive range of odours that we can never smell.[7] Evolution has equipped canines with such olfactory acuity as a natural defence mechanism, allowing them to detect even chemical changes in their surroundings and the direction a scent is coming from.[8] Not only do dogs have special whiskers known as vibrissae, which have a huge number of receptor cells that allow them to pinpoint air currents, elusive vibrations, and objects in the dark; they also have not one but two olfactory tools, their nose (the main olfactory epithelium) and the additional smelling organ called Jacobson's (or vomeronasal) organ located on the roof of their mouth. Interestingly, the nerve cells of this extremely efficient smelling machine do not respond to normal odours but to a vast variety of substances 'undetectable' to us, notably pheromones and other low-volatile substances.[9]

Given that dogs can use these olfactory powers to attribute objects to their human possessors,[10] we may safely assume that it is through scent detection that the dog in Malalas' passage is able to associate each ring with its owner, something that a human could never do, hence the feat is worthy of note (θαύματος ἄξια). In approaching the dog in the text, it is important to counter-focalize and be attentive to the fact that what defines canids is the efficacy and depth of their sensory communication through scent. Further knowledge of the function of the dog's odour detection system helps us supplement the written evidence further: we may visualize the dog in Malalas curling back his lips and flaring his nostrils to open up his nose and the Jacobson's organ to increase the exposure of his nasal cavity to delicate aromatic molecules. That, in combination with the vibrissae below his jaw and on his muzzle, would increase the effectiveness of his scenting clues and interpreting sensory data, and allow him to locate the rings and return them to their owners. The human narrative encapsulates this entire activity through the participle ἐρευνῶν, but the untold story in this Byzantine text, which we can potentially recover by knowing the structure and functions of the dog's body, is more multi-layered. There are many Byzantine sources, technical and literary, that recognize a canine's ability to sniff and locate objects and

7 S. Coren, *How Dogs Think: understanding the canine mind* (New York 2004) 62–101.

8 A. Kokocińska-Kusiak et al., 'Canine olfaction: physiology, behavior, and possibilities for practical applications', *Animals* 11.8 (2021): https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/11/8/2463.

9 Á. Miklósi, *Dog Behaviour, Evolution, and Cognition* (Oxford 2007) 144–50; B. V. Beaver, *Canine Behavior: insights and answers* (St Louis MO 2009) 54–9.

10 Kokocińska-Kusiak et al., 'Canine olfaction'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

living beings.[11] These texts can be better appreciated with a modern understanding of animal biology.

It is in the same light that we should decipher the third trick in the extract from Malalas: the dog's ability to recognize pregnant women, pimps, adulterers, misers, and nobles. This incident too has a natural background in the dog's biological ability to detect hormones and odours. The smell we emit stimulates dogs to be alert to our physical and emotional condition. Experience shows that dogs can detect pregnancy in humans, often becoming very caring towards their pregnant friends and even protective of the baby immediately after its arrival. Modern behaviourists have suggested that through their remarkable superfluity of olfactory senses, dogs can even predict death, often barking when someone in their environment is about to die to warn us. This behaviour results from their awareness of the special smell that the dying body emits. We harness the ability of dogs to smell so effectively (often more accurately than most modern instruments and scanners) by training them to find missing people or bodies, track drugs and explosives, and detect human cell metabolism on our breath and through our skin in illnesses such as cancer and diabetes and infectious diseases such as COVID-19. This passage from Malalas became so popular in Byzantium that it survives in other historical sources, including Theophanes the Confessor's (*c.* 760–817/8) *Chronicle*.[12] In the most elaborate form of Theophanes' version in Parisinus gr. 1710 (Diktyon 51334), we read that the dog was able to predict whether the pregnant women were carrying a male or a female child. This detail may be a narrative embellishment on Theophanes' part to make the story more appealing, but we need not assume that he completely made it up: the possibility that people at the time knew that dogs can identify gender cannot be excluded.

Nowadays we can confirm that the canine nose can identify gender, just as it can identify mood.[13] With a quick sniff, dogs interpret humans approaching them and determine whether they are happy and friendly or apprehensive and aggressive, while also examining our body language. They can likewise decipher the condition and intents of other dogs by simply smelling the amines and acids emanating from their bodies. Their scent memory is equally well developed and allows them to identify people they have not sniffed for years (the archetypal example being Argus in the *Odyssey*). So when the dog in Malalas differentiates between moral and immoral people, we can assume this to be a result of canines' ability to interpret a body and tell its disposition by the way it smells, just as with a single sniff of a visitor's clothes or shoes dogs get an impression of where and how the visitor lives. However, the distinct character types that Malalas has the dog recognize – brothel keepers, adulterers,

11 E.g. *Geoponika* 19.2, ed. H. Beckh (Leipzig 1895); 'Manganeios' Prodromos, *Poem* 26, 762.30–4, ed. E. Miller, *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, II (Paris 1881).

12 C. de Boor (ed.), *Theophanis chronographia*, I (Leipzig 1883) 224.

13 C. M. Cusack, *Criminal Justice Handbook on Masculinity, Male Aggression and Sexuality* (Springfield IL 2015) 229–30.

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

misers, and the magnanimous – seem too subtle to correspond to reality. Our author exploits the well-known fact that dogs have an unparalleled sense of smell and can identify people (and potentially gender), and takes it one step further by adding different human characters this dog can detect to strengthen the moral overtones of the story and possibly the dog's ethical standing, as we will see in the examples below. The ethical aspect of this story is supported by George the Monk's (ninth-century) version (*Chronicle*, p. 644 de Boor), which also notes the ability of the dog to distinguish between illegitimate and legitimate embryos and between those of good intent (τοὺς εὐπροαιρέτους) and the promiscuous (τοὺς ἀδιακρίτους).

It has been suggested that '[t]he dog's sense of olfaction is so adept that a blind dog has much less difficulty adjusting to the loss of vision than a human does.'[14] In Theophanes' version of the story, the clever dog is said to be blind.[15] If this detail is a narrative embellishment, its function is to render the dog's ability to perform feats of identification all the more astonishing to the crowd. But from an animal point of view and considering canine scent-based interaction, even if the blindness had a basis in fact, this disability should be assumed to have had little impact on the dog's capacity to understand his *Umwelt*. The canine universe is explored through the nose (not the eyes), so blindness in dogs is not as serious a condition as human blindness is. The idea that a dog's nose was more potent than his eyes was not unknown in Byzantium. In Nikephoros Basilakes' *Encomium to the Dog* (twelfth c.), the fact that the hunting dog is not impeded from tracking his prey in settings that block his vision, such as amid a thicket or dense forests, is explained by his not having to depend on his eyesight but on his formidable sense of smell (ἐνεργοῦσαν ἔχει τὴν ὄσφρησιν), something considered most surprising (καινότατον) by human standards.[16]

Medieval texts also show an awareness of the dog's ability to smell human emotions and moral behaviour, and respond accordingly. In the twelfth century, the German Benedictine abbess and polymath Hildegard von Bingen (d. 1179) in her *Physica* (section 20) gives examples of this animal phenomenon at some length, considering this canine skill the reason the Devil hates the dog, since it enables him to warn humans of potentially dangerous types that they might not recognize themselves (the treacherous, the angry, thieves, etc.). It is in the same spirit that we should understand Manuel Philes' (*c.* 1275–1345) acknowledgement that the fawning dog can track down malicious people.[17] Similar realizations feature in an interesting vignette from Eustathios of Thessaloniki's account of the Norman conquest of his hometown in 1185. A passage describing how violently the attackers abused the animals in the city

14 https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/how-dogs-use-smell-to-perceive-the-world#:~:text=to%20identify%20us.,The%20dog's%20sense%20of%20smell%20is%20so%20adept%20that%20a,we%20can%20not%20smell%20it (accessed 22/11/2024).

15 The dog is also blind in Manuel Glykas, *Annales* 501, ed. I. Bekker, *Michaelis Glycae Annales* (Bonn 1836) and George the Monk, *Chronicle* 644, ed. de Boor.

16 *Encomium* 133.21–134.26, ed. A. Pignani, *Nicephoro Basilace, Progimnasmi e monodie* (Naples 1983).

17 *Poem* 208.1–2, ed. E. Miller, *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, 2 vols (Paris 1855–7).

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

mentions that they brutally killed the smaller dogs that barked and ran after them (καὶ μάλιστα κυναρίων, ὡς καθυλακτούντων καὶ ἐπιτρεχόντων) to the point of causing their mass extinction.[18] The narrative goes on to stress that those dogs that managed to escape death had developed a survival mechanism: they no longer barked at the enemy but distinguished them from Byzantines and reacted differently to the two groups, yapping and chasing after the Byzantines (ἀνδρὸς μὲν Ῥωμαίου κατεβάϋσεν ἂν καὶ κατέδραμε) but shrinking away from the Latins whimpering (Λατίνῳ δὲ ὑπεξεχώρει κνυζώμενον). The text explains that they learned their lesson after realizing the gravity of the situation in which they found themselves (Κατέγνω γὰρ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα οἷ κακοῦ ἦσαν). Dogs are here presented as sapient and sentient beings, not automata. Eustathios uses the canine ability to distinguish between friends and enemies to denigrate the Normans, suggesting that even 'dumb animals' can 'scent' their evil nature. Like the previous examples, this text offers a dynamic combination of actual dog behaviour that Byzantine authors had experienced in reality or were aware of through earlier accounts and literary elaboration that reconfigures animal materiality to serve its narrative aims.

The last trick performed by the dog in Malalas is the grouping of coins featuring the portraits of different emperors according to their names. Modern researchers have conducted tests with dogs to determine the extent to which they can perceive information, retain it as knowledge, and apply it in the context of problem-solving; two studies have shown that dogs can learn by inference (moving from premises to logical conclusions). A study conducted by the animal psychologist Juliane Kaminski with the Border Collie Rico documented that Rico knew the names of over two hundred different items and could retrieve them when randomly exposed to them.[19] Another study with the Border Collie Chaser similarly concluded that he had learned the names of objects and could associate them on a verbal command with over one thousand words.[20] These studies stress how rapidly a dog can acquire the ability to respond correctly to a new word at a single exposure, probably by using the canine equivalent of the fast mapping mechanism used by humans, as observed during language acquisition in young children. This skill makes dogs comparable to other highly intelligent, language-trained animals, notably chimpanzees, dolphins, and parrots.

That dogs indeed think, forming syllogistic arguments, was to some extent observed in the ancient world. A central thinker here is Plutarch (*c.* 45–120), whose discussions of animal intelligence were influential in Byzantium, although it remains an important

18 *Capture of Thessaloniki* 114, ed. S. Kyriakidis, *Eustazio di Tessalonica, La espugnazione di Tessalonica* (Palermo 1961).

19 J. Kaminski et al., 'Word learning in a domestic dog: evidence for "fast mapping"', *Science* 304.5677 (2004) 1682–3.

20 J. W. Pilley and A. K. Reid, 'Border Collie comprehends object names as verbal referents', *Behavioural Processes* 86.2 (2011) 184–95.

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

desideratum to assess the impact of his *On the Intelligence of Animals*, *On Eating Meat*, and *Whether Beasts are Rational* (also known as *Gryllus*) – antiquity's seminal works on animal superiority – on the Byzantine understanding of animals. A starting point is provided here. The dog's potential to think by inferential reasoning, acknowledge the right time to respond to external stimuli, process relevant information, and recognize people and objects is attested in these Plutarchan texts.[21] An incident that Plutarch mentions as an impressive example of canine learning which he witnessed in Rome is of particular importance. It is the story of an actor dog who appeared in a pantomime and conformed in his acting role to all points of the script so that everyone was amazed (*On the Intelligence of Animals* 973E–974A). In light of the above, we can extrapolate from Malalas' text by assuming that the dog's owner would have spent many hours with his dog prior to this show, training him to recognize the different images of the emperors on the coins and to group them together, presumably by assigning them a particular label using the names of the emperors and giving him commands to fetch all the coins bearing the same name. That this specific dog is said to be blind tends to speak against the historical accuracy of this feat: it would be impossible for a blind dog to distinguish between the signs and images the coins bore, although in general sighted dogs can do so. Beyond any issues of historicity, what remains important is that Malalas was intrigued by the evolved intelligence of dogs, as previously discussed in Plutarch, and made it the focus of a passage that relies heavily on the animal's materiality and embodiment.

Dogs as co-partners in cross-species engagement in Basilakes' *Encomium to the Dog*

Our next case study on notable dogs focuses on the earliest surviving encomium to the dog in Greek, which dates to the twelfth century and was penned by Nikephoros Basilakes.[22] The overarching aim of this work is to argue that the dog is the finest of all living beings after humans and to outline the species' merits for their service to humanity, especially as hunting companions. Basilakes is keen to astonish his readers, warning them in advance not to be disturbed by his two novel announcements about the dog's usefulness, both of which will strike them as amazing (θάμβος τοῖς

21 See e.g. *Gryllus* 992A (puppies learn to track and dogs to jump through revolving hoops), *On the Intelligence of Animals* 969B–C (hunting dogs make use of disjunctive and copulative propositions to decide where their prey has fled), *On the Intelligence of Animals* 967A (Plutarch is amazed by a dog putting pebbles into a half empty jar of oil and knowing that lighter substances are forced upward while heavier ones settle on the bottom).

22 There is no encomium of a dog surviving from Graeco-Roman antiquity, though Aristotle, Plutarch, Lucian, Basil of Caesarea, and Quintilian all allude to the subject; see C. A. Gibson, 'In praise of dogs: an encomium theme from classical Greece to Renaissance Italy', in L. D. Gelfand (ed.), *Our Dogs, Our Selves: dogs in medieval and early modern art, literature, and society* (Turnhout 2017) 19–40 (20–2). All references in this section are to the edition of A. Pignani, *Nicephoro Basilace, Progimnasmi e monodie* (Naples 1983).

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ἀκροωμένοις προσεπαφήσε, 135.75–6). The first is the dog's natural kind-heartedness to humans, illustrated in his role as a guide for the blind; the second is his ability to vocalize meaningful speech in his role as a protector of his master and his property. We shall explore each of these abilities for what they may tell us about the animal itself, beyond or in parallel to its assistance to humans.

From the beginning of the encomium, when discussing the dog's participation in the hunt, Basilakes does not present the animal as inferior to human hunters: they share the same qualities when chasing their quarry, notably that both get exhausted being in the sun all day but still enjoy the experience (134.30–3). Basilakes' source for this point is the proem to Oppian's *Halieutika* (1.28) (second c. AD). In this intertext, it is obvious that the θηρευτής is a human agent, since he is juxtaposed to fishermen. Yet, Basilakes' concept of the θηρευτής remains deliberately vague, blurring the boundaries between the human and the non-human in a way that allows us to introduce a post-humanistic perspective into the interpretation of the hunting scenes that follow: Byzantine hunters were not alone in this fascinating experience; they had active collaborators without whom hunting expeditions could not have been effectively performed. In reality, hunters would follow the hounds along the tracks; and once the prey was spotted, it was only when the hound was permitted to act autonomously that human hunters would be able to catch it or enjoy it cooked, if the dogs could catch it for them.[23] This idea is captured in Theodore Gazes' *Encomium to the Dog* (fifteenth c.) examined below, in his emphatic statement that in hunting, dogs battle alongside and in support of humans (μάχονται μεθ' ἡμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ch. 4, *PG* 16, 989), showing that the hunter–dog pair is 'an empowered more-than-human entity that couples animal and human skills in order to pool resources and accomplish augmented performances'.[24]

The suggestion concerning interspecies synergetic cooperation is buttressed by the fact that in the ensuing exposition, Basilakes constructs a captivating *ekphrasis* of hunting, which he accompanies with an *ethopoeia* (speech in character) for the hunting dog, both of these elements being non-standard components of the encomium in premodern rhetorical theory, as Craig Gibson has pointed out.[25] In the narrative frame of the *ekphrasis* and the *ethopoeia*, the dog is foregrounded as an agent and indispensable partner to the human. Although in the description of the hunt, the human hunter is no doubt in charge of events, the three scenes that punctuate the hunter's authoritative role all highlight the canine specificities in his connection with the human, making them speak to readers' everyday familiarity with them – both physical and literary. One dog is said to roll around the hunter's feet, whining in a fawning manner (*Encomium*

23 See C. Franco, 'Dogs and humans in ancient Greece and Rome: towards a definition of extended appropriate interaction', in J. Sorenson and A. Matsuoka (eds), *Dog's Best Friend? Rethinking canid–human relations* (Montreal 2019) 33–58 (54).

24 Franco, 'Dogs and humans', 35. See similar observations made by Schmidt ('Noble hounds', 111–12) with regard to other Byzantine texts on hunting.

25 Gibson, 'In praise of dogs', 26 and 28.

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

134.38–9). This is a precious insight into the animal's inner world and sensory experience with a focus on this particular posture of the canine body as indicating excitement. Another dog in the same setting is depicted as exercising his legs and eagerly competing in a race (ἀνθαμιλλᾶσθαι φιλοτιμούμενον, 134.39–41). This is a window on the animal's elevated agency manifested in his deliberate choice to participate in a contest and excel through exhibitions of *philotimia*, an important factor of social esteem in the ancient and medieval Greek human universe that is anthropomorphized here to help further bridge the gap between dogs and humans. Another dog is presented as glorying in his collar, revelling in its gems and taking pride in the golden leash (134.41–3).[26] By depicting the dog as priding himself on the human technologies of his exploitation, Basilakes does not seek to project the dog's submissiveness to humans or his existential inferiority, as might at first seem. Rather he is subtly preparing his readers to accept the dog's critical role in the two incidents of human dependency on the dog that follow, both of which show that the leash is there because the dog willingly accepts it, not because the human forces it on him. At this juncture, the text turns the spotlight away from the human-centred narrative of the dog as man's hunting companion to the dog himself with his advantageous attributes that humans lack. Note the dense wording indicating the dog's rational advantages (προτερήμασιν 135.73, πλεονεκτῶν 135.79, τὰ τοῦ κυνὸς προτερήματα 136.91), which Basilakes reassures his hearers need not disturb them (ἀλλὰ μὴ ταραχθῇς πρὸς τὴν ἀκοήν 135.78), recognizing that the dog's more-than-human potential must have been shocking for his audience.

Moreover, although Basilakes adopts the traditional Aristotelian and Judaeo-Christian thesis that non-human animals are irrational (*aloga*), being 'cursed with an absolutely irreconcilable inability to reason' (135.76–7), he assigns rationality and speech to the dog alone among non-human animals:

> For when a horse neighs and an ox bellows and a ram bleats, we believe that they are senselessly striking the air with unintelligible and superfluous sounds. But when a dog barks, the sound has an additional underlying meaning; it reveals the presence of strangers, just as if the dog were able to use articulate speech, and perhaps he is also asking each visitor, 'Who are you? Where did you come from?' He would utter words along the following lines, I suppose, to the master himself: 'Why are you so diligent in putting up these fences all around you, master? Why are you so attentive to the gates and so concerned over the locks, and why do you spend so much money on all this? Let none

26 The same image features in the *Entertaining Tale of Quadrupeds* 249–54, ed. M. Papathomopoulos, *Διογένους Παιδιόφραστος διήγησις τῶν ζώων τῶν τετραπόδων* (Athens 2010), where the dog praises himself for being well treated by humans, as attested by the ostentatious collars they have given him. Like in Basilakes, the leash is a symbol of the dog's recognition by humans, not of his degradation; the same applies to the horse in its own speech of self-praise on account of the ornamented saddles, bridles, and halters humans have given it (ll. 753–67).

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> of these things concern you. I will guard you like a gatekeeper and protect you on all sides like a bodyguard.'[27]

In antiquity, the Stoics were key proponents of the language-based distinction between humans and animals, while the opposition between human speech and animal voice was already entrenched in Aristotle's *Politics* 1253a10–19. There it is stated that speech (*logos*) is 'the special property of man as distinct from the other animals', which means he alone has an understanding of moral qualities, unlike other animals, which have only a voice (*phōnē*) restricted to communicating pleasure and pain. This opposition was not uncontested in the ancient world, as can be seen in the cases we have encountered in Plutarch, but also in certain Church Fathers such as Basil of Caesarea, who refers to the dog's power as being equal to *logos* (*Homily* 9, 153.21–2),[28] and in pagan thinkers such as Sextus Empiricus, who talks about dogs' powers of reasoning in both thought and speech (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism* I, 65–76).[29] The passage cited from Basilakes situates itself in the latter camp. By stating that the dog alone has a meaningful voice (τὸ φώνημα) communicated through structured speech (διηρθρωμένα λέγειν ἠδύνατο), while all other animals merely make unintelligible and superfluous noise (here called *phōnē*), Basilakes removes the dog from his epistemological subordination and endows him with eloquence in his natural role as a protector of the human in warding off marauders.[30] He also introduces the language of learning (οὐκ ἀμαθής...οὐκ ἀπαίδευτος, 'the dog is not ignorant'...'he is not untrained', 136.94) to make the dog's reflective ability to convey speech more acceptable; and he has the dog articulate speech in the human communicative mode to collapse the rigid boundaries between human and animal cognition.[31]

27 *Encomium to the Dog* 135.79–136.90; tr. J. Beneker and C. A. Gibson (eds), *The Rhetorical Exercises of Nikephoros Basilakes: progymnasmata from twelfth-century Byzantium* (Cambridge MA 2016).

28 On dog intelligence in the Christian tradition, see C. Franco, 'Quorum postremo naturae est extra homines esse non posse: appraisals of canine ethology in Early Christian writers', in O. Hellmann and A. Zucker (eds), *On the Diffusion of Zoological Knowledge in Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Period* (Trier 2023) 117–35 (127–31).

29 On animal rationality in ancient philosophy, see S. Newmyer, 'Animals in ancient philosophy: conceptions and misconceptions', in L. Kalof (ed.), *A Cultural History of Animals in Antiquity* (Oxford 2007) 151–74. On Byzantium, see T. Schmidt, '"Because I don't speak human": literary concepts of verbal and nonverbal human–animal communication up to the Middle Byzantine Period', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 117.3 (2024) 841–76 (844–51); H. Schneider, 'Michael Italikos' "Monodie auf ein totes Steinhuhn": ein byzantinischer Text im Fokus moderner "Human–Animal Studies"', *Das Mittelalter* 28.2 (2023) 429–47.

30 Cf. Arrian, *On Hunting* 5.1–6, an unusual case of an author describing how his female hound verbally expressed her needs.

31 On the role of animal language in destabilizing the human–animal distinction in modernist canine narratives, see J. Jacobs, 'The grammar of zoopoetics: human and canine language play', in K. Driscoll and E. Hoffman (eds), *What is Zoopoetics? Texts, bodies, entanglement* (Cham 2018) 63–79. On the subtleness and complexity of canine language, see S. Coren, *How to Speak Dog: mastering the art of dog–human communication* (New York 2000). Cynologists know that dogs have tonal imitation skills,

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Although the passage's source has not been identified, I propose that Plutarch's *On Eating Meat* ch. 4 (994E) is in the background, because Basilakes' rational dog closely resembles Plutarch's intelligent animals, and because both passages focus on the debate as to whether animal voices are to be judged inarticulate noises or structured speech. (It is possible that νομίζονται τῷ τῆς φωνῆς...διηρθρωμένα in Basilakes reflects Plutarch's φωνὰς ἀνάρθρους εἶναι δοκοῦμεν, 994E.) The overall hypothesis gains in credibility when we bear in mind that both authors make animals possess meaningful sound communication, and more generally in light of Basilakes' close familiarity with Plutarch, as I have shown in another study.[32]

The questions that Basilakes puts into the dog's mouth all expose humans' lack of awareness of the dog's special abilities, thereby aiming to promote the alternative (canine) viewpoint as imagined by Basilakes that if dogs' skills were properly credited by humans, their lives would be less troublesome ('Why are you so diligent in...? Why are you so attentive to...? Let none of these things concern you'). The ecological statement Basilakes strives to put across is that his fellow Byzantines should be open to counter-focalizing (just as we should when reading primary sources on dogs), no longer viewing dogs as creatures only distantly related, but trusting them as co-partners in productive cross-species engagement, given that they contribute to human life by performing tasks humans cannot do alone. Thus, human existence is being viewed from a new angle – by Byzantine standards – that is, not as self-contained but as relational and bound up with the earth's non-human inhabitants.

The same ecological/post-humanistic message *in ovo* is evident in the other unusual advantage of the dog mentioned in Basilakes' *Encomium*: his role as a guide for the blind. In what has been regarded as the earliest literary record of a guide dog, Basilakes is quick to stress that in this role the dog becomes new eyes for the blind (ὀφθαλμὸς ἐκείνοις ἕτερος γίνεται). Meritorious aspects of the Seeing Eye dog are foregrounded: he has a special sense of compassion for human weakness that human beings do not generally have for their fellow men; he has the empathetic awareness to keep in step so as not to look as if he is dragging the blind person along, thereby protecting the disabled person's dignity, and, more importantly, he abases himself while being fully aware that he could bark at his master, break his leash, and run away if he wanted (136.94–106). The natural goodwill of the dog, his traditional *eunoia*, transcends any wild instincts he may have, so that even when beaten, the animal tolerates the abuse and does not for a moment consider abandoning his owner (136.106–9).[33] The dog acts humbly of his own accord, conscious that in escorting blind beggars requesting bread from door

explaining the phenomenon of Don the Talking Dog, who could even utter human words; see J. Bondeson, *Amazing Dogs: a cabinet of canine curiosities* (Amberley 2011) 63–80.

32 S. Xenophontos, 'Resorting to rare sources of antiquity: Nikephoros Basilakes and the popularity of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* in twelfth-century Byzantium', *Parekbolai* 4 (2014) 1–12.

33 Some of these ideas appear in a poem by 'Manganeios' Prodromos for the *Sebastokratorissa* Eirini found in Marcianus gr. 524 (Diktyon 69995), discussed by Schmidt, 'Noble hounds', 108. See also the famous fable of the dog protecting his owner's baby from a snake but being killed by his owner when the latter mistakenly

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to door, he is not merely assisting this disadvantaged group in Byzantine society but positively keeping them alive. The dog's civility and unconditional love of his master (τὸ φιλοδέσποτον) and his moral superiority make him a 'most benevolent soul, lacking no part of virtue at all' (οὕτω φιλανθρωποτάτης ψυχῆς τὸ ζῶον καὶ μηδέν τι τῆς <ἀρετῆς ἀ>ποδεούσης ἐστί, 137.117–24).

Once again, a possible source of inspiration for Basilakes' concept of the dog's higher morality is Plutarch, where we find references to the dog's civil and superior disposition (ἡμέρου μὲν ἔμφασιν ὁμοῦ καὶ ὑψηλοῦ φρονήματος ποιοῦσιν οἱ κύνες, *On the Intelligence of Animals* 970E): the dog stops attacking humans who have thrown themselves to the ground; hounds do not tear to pieces exhausted and desperate hares (*On the Intelligence of Animals* 971A). In such cases, dogs are concerned with lofty ideals (in this case the honour of winning) rather than base motives (food).[34] A more general influence may have been positive views on dogs articulated by patristic authors with whom Basilakes and his audience would have been familiar; for example, the idea that the weaknesses of the human body are compensated for by the natural powers of animals, in the case of the dog by his teeth and speed that make him a 'live sword for man' (Gregory of Nyssa, *Making of Man* 7.3), or the notion that a dog is grateful and faithful in his friendships (Basil, *Homily* 9.3–4). These theses challenge the strict anthropocentrism that we find in many Byzantine sources; as can also be seen in Maximos the Confessor, at the heart of whose theology lies an invitation to respect all elements of nature, including animals, for revealing the sanctity and purposefulness of God's creation.[35]

What can the disability narrative in Basilakes tell us about human and animal agency in particular? Recently, historical (animal) studies have tended to focus on assembled agencies, namely the kind of agency which shows that the roles of human and non-human animals coexist and cooperate and there can be no action unless the two partners execute their respective duties/agencies.[36] In this type of joint agency, the agency of animals is no longer judged by anthropocentric criteria; the animal's potency in conjunction with humans is established. This is the kind of joint agency that we find in the Seeing Eye dog and the blind person, although in this case we may also use the more specialized term 'dependent agency' used in disability studies to indicate that the role of the dog goes far beyond that of a tool – a cane – to be that of a purposeful and trustworthy moral being

assumes that the dog has killed the baby; *Byzantine Sinbad* 60–1, ed. V. Jernstedt and P. Nikitin, *Mich. Andeopuli Liber Syntipae* (St Petersburg 1912).

34 See Plutarch, *On the Intelligence of Animals* 969C and 969F, as mentioned below.

35 R. Bordeianu, 'Maximus and ecology: the relevance of Maximus the Confessor's theology of Creation for the present ecological crisis', *The Downside Review* 127 (2009) 103–26.

36 P. Howell, 'Animals, agency, and history', in H. Kean and P. Howell (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Animal–Human History* (London 2018) 197–221; S. R. Scott, 'The racehorse as protagonist: agency, independence, and improvisation', in S. E. McFarland and R. Hediger (eds), *Animals and Agency: an interdisciplinary exploration* (Leiden 2009) 45–65. Specifically on dog agency, see C. Pearson, 'Dogs, history and agency', *History and Theory* 52.4 (2013) 128–45.

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with whom the human is trained in collaborative acts of communication.[37] The service dog is efficient only if dog and human work collaboratively; this is an entangled agency, where the two agents must be attuned to one another.

The dog as philosophical and moral agent in Theodore Gazes' *Encomium to the Dog*

That the dog is a philosophical spirit with a profound inclination to morality is an idea developed in another encomium to the dog produced by Theodore Gazes probably sometime before 1470. Although this is a rhetorical piece with a different content and outlook, what unites the two encomia is their focus on the dog's superiority to other animals which brings him closer to humans. Gazes starts by emphasizing the dog's inherent protectiveness towards his human owner by relating the story of the watchdog of the temple of Asclepius, who, when no human being could catch a temple-robber, was able to identify him.[38] This reminds us of modern tracker dogs used in law enforcement. Once again the narrative is informed by canine behaviour and talents the Byzantines would have been familiar with. Yet the episode also stresses that the dog should not be seen as a mere instrument but as a social agent imposing civic ethics, in this case combating sacrilege and restoring justice, which is why in the story the dog eventually receives public honours and maintenance at state expense. While this story also features in Aelian's *On the Properties of Animals* 7.13 (first c. AD), it is obvious that Gazes took it from Plutarch (*On the Intelligence of Animals* 969E–970B), since both authors mention the name of the dog (Capparus) as well as two additional details absent from Aelian: that the dog took pride in his achievement and that he was entrusted a ration and taken under the care of the temple's priests.[39]

Gazes was no doubt also inspired by Plato's *Republic* to negotiate a notion of the philosophical dog congruent with his endorsement of canine moral agency. That Gazes discusses the dog for his philosophical credentials and function is seen from the beginning of the work, where the role of the dog in hunting (*kynēgesia*, 'dog-leading') is stressed as a didactic way of making men more resilient and braver. It is in this context that he praises Plato for his perceptiveness in comparing the best guardians of his ideal state with dogs (rather than horses, elephants, or oxen). Drawing on *Republic* 375a and 375d–376c, Gazes outlines the attributes dogs bring to state security: they have keen perception, are quick in pursuit of what they seek to apprehend, are strong and high-spirited. By far their most wonderful aspect, however, according to both Plato and Gazes, is that dogs are gentle

37 S. Donaldson and W. Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: a political theory of animal rights* (Oxford 2011) 104–8. See also Donna Haraway's proposal that species influence one another in a 'dance of relating', where dogs are 'actors and not just recipients of action': *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis 2008) 25 and 134.

38 Similar stories are found in Manuel Glykas' *Annales* 97 and 529, ed. Bekker.

39 On Gazes' sources in the *Encomium to the Dog*, see J. F. Kindstrand, 'Notes on Theodorus Gaza's *Canis Laudatio*', *Eranos* 91 (1993) 93–105.

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towards their companions, even if they have done them no good, but inimical to those they do not know, even if they have done them no wrong. This corroborates their affinity for justice: they determine sympathies and antipathies only by the test of knowledge.[40]

This philosophical virtue explains the dog's self-abasement in his relationship with his master, especially his genuine friendship and affection (φιλικώτατος ὁ αὐτός ἐστι καὶ φιλοστοργότατος), which according to Gazes apply comprehensively, at home and outside, in war and peace, and even on tricky journeys and in adverse weather:

> When his master is at home, the dog stays home, but if the master departs from home, the dog departs alongside him, and he is not impeded from following his master in all places irrespective of the long trip, the rough ground, thirst, winter, or summer...When his master calls him in, the dog comes, when his master threatens him, the dog humbles himself, when his master beats him, the dog does not get angry.[41]

This passage can be decentred: not everything should be seen from a human perspective, as if the dog has no will of his own and always submits himself to his human handler. Rather, a more cynocentric reading would suggest that the dog acts in line with his natural tendencies and moods, which incline him to act as an associate of the human in the context of a mutually beneficial relationship as known from coevolutionary processes. In fact, the agreeable coexistence between the human and the animal is ensured precisely because the dog effects it through the stability of his character, his sturdy love of men, and a philosophical control that the human agent often fails to achieve, thus making the dog 'a real component of human society'.[42] This recalls similar ideas found in the introduction to the late Byzantine work *On Breeding Dogs* (*Kynosophion*) most probably written by Demetrios Pepagomenos (fl. first half of the fifteenth c.), where the medical treatment of dogs is necessitated by the animals' self-sacrifice and devotion to a master unto death (proem, lines 1–10), and in the suggestion that humans should sleep with dogs beside them (τοὺς κύνας ἀνθρώποις συγκοιτάζεσθαι) to maintain this emotional bond and smooth communication (ch. 5).[43]

The singing dog in [Psellos]' *Poem* 53

The dog is described not only as a philosophical being in Byzantine sources but as one open to aesthetic experience. My final case study focuses on dogs' aesthetic

40 T. Adkins, 'On recognition, or why dogs make great philosophers', *Fractal Ontology: refracting theory: politics, cybernetics, philosophy* 2008, accessible at: https://fractalontology.wordpress.com/2008/08/28/on-recognition-or-why-dogs-make-great-philosophers/.

41 Ch. 7, *PG* 16, 993; tr. mine.

42 S. Menache, 'Netherworld envoy or man's best friend? Attitudes toward dogs in the ancient world', in G. Marvin and S. McHugh (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Human–Animal Studies* (London 2014) 114–23 (114).

43 Ed. R. Hercher, *Claudii Aeliani de natura animalium libri xvii, varia historia, epistolae, fragmenta*, II (Leipzig 1866).

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propensities. It comes from *Poem* 53 entitled 'Introduction to the Psalms' in Michael Psellos' collection of poems (eleventh c.), although on chronological grounds it cannot have been written by him, since it draws on a prose 'Introduction to the Psalms' composed by the theologian Euthymios Zigabenos in the twelfth century.[44] Praising the benefits of music for humans and animals and closely following Zigabenos' prose text, the anonymous poet (pseudo-Psellos) disrupts his source to describe his personal experience of bears dancing to music in marketplaces, and immediately after that of a Maltese dog, who at the sound of music, abandoned his food and seemingly sang along:

> Now I, the author of these lines, will tell you something further (and it concerns) a Maltese dog that I witnessed one day. There was one of those flute players from the marketplace and he was playing tunes on his instruments to the accompaniment of a *kithara*. As soon as the man began to blow into the flute, that little dog, if he happened to be eating, interrupted his meal and tossed the food to one side. Then quietly approaching he stood beside the musician and, looking up at him earnestly and wagging his tail, he accompanied the tune, as it were, with a very light barking noise (ἐκ λεπτοτάτης ὑλακῆς ὥσπερ ἀντεμελῴδει). But when the man stopped playing, the dog returned to what was left of the food. And again, when the musician struck up once more on the flute, the dog, as before, pushed away what he was eating and, raising a gentle howl (γαληνῶς προσυλακτοῦν), he created the impression of singing in unison (ἀντάδειν πως ἐῴκει). Simply told, every time he heard the flutist begin to play, the dog lost interest in all else and turned his whole attention to the music.[45]

As with the dog scene in Malalas, scholarship has focused on the human actors, in this case the flutist and his *kithara* companion,[46] thus missing the ways in which the animal can speak to us through his biology and behaviour. Research carried out by the animal ethologist Deborah Wells has documented that dogs are attracted to music and have a preference for classical music, which they find relaxing.[47] This is why it has become standard practice in many rescue centres and veterinary establishments to play soothing music to kennelled dogs. Dogs, however, are not only consumers but competent producers of music. YouTube is filled with videos of dogs howling to music played or sung,[48] and judges in *America's Got Talent* have been finding it increasingly difficult to decide which dog is the most talented singer.[49] We should consider the

44 Duffy, 'Mondo cane', 39.

45 [Michael Psellos], *Poem* 53, ed. L. G. Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli poemata* (Stuttgart 1992); tr. Duffy, 'Mondo cane', 40.

46 Duffy, 'Mondo cane', 40–1.

47 D. L. Wells et al., 'The influence of auditory stimulation on the behaviour of dogs housed in a rescue shelter', *Animal Welfare* 11.4 (2002) 385–93.

48 E.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ht-O8vZn6Y (from 1.15 mins onwards).

49 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRE5vktwg-w.

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Maltese dog in the Byzantine passage above to be one such talented singer who attracted admiration for his vocal prowess.

The dog howls – what the anonymous Byzantine author describes as a gentle barking in time to the music – because of a genetic make-up that links him to his ancestor, the grey wolf. The wolf howls to communicate with other wolves in the wild, when assembling the pack and upholding group identity, or to warn other animals of the need to flee. Yet, more detailed studies suggest that howling is not just a real-life mechanism for canids but reveals a musical sense. Howling dogs, like wolves, can change their tone and join in at a completely different pitch or on a different note from that of the human singer or chorus just to individualize their own register.[50] Interestingly, wind instruments have been shown to produce the sort of human music that most frequently prompts dogs to howl; and long notes played on stringed instruments like the violin produce a similar reaction, as in the Byzantine scene in which the Maltese dog is said to howl to the flute accompanied by a *kithara*.

Many experts tend to believe that dogs have definite musical tastes.[51] The extract from pseudo-Psellos exploits the rhetoric of the dog's subtle and discerning musical aptitude (ἀντεμελῴδει, ἀντᾴδειν, ἐκ λεπτοτάτης ὑλακῆς, γαληνῶς προσυλακτοῦν), affirming that the medieval dog too had an aesthetic appreciation of music and that this was observable by humans in the Middle Ages. Likewise, modern organists and composers such as Elgar and Wagner relied on the musical taste of dogs, realizing that dogs attending choir practice growled at choristers who sang out of tune or reacted to musical phrases which, according to their taste, did not constitute good music.[52]

Finally, pseudo-Psellos' poem repeatedly stresses that the Maltese dog lost interest in his food and turned his attention to music instead. Why? Ancient sources already suggest that the dog is a superior animal, who places his biological needs below his commitment to lofty ideals. For example, when the thief at the temple of Asclepius discussed above offered the canine guardian of the temple food to distract him, the dog refused to eat it and concentrated on catching the thief (Plutarch, *On the Intelligence of Animals* 969F). Likewise, King Pyrrhus admired a dog who went without food for three days to guard the body of a murdered man (*On the Intelligence of Animals* 969C).[53] This phenomenon in canine behaviour can be elucidated by modern research, which has argued that dogs can respond more positively to social rewards than to food, music presumably being one such reward.[54] That would also explain why the Byzantine

50 https://moderndogmagazine.com/articles/perfect-pitch-dogs-in-music/ (accessed 20/09/2024) based on Wells' study cited in note 47.

51 Based on Wells' experiments, which showed that dogs have musical preferences and respond differently to different types of music.

52 https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/canine-corner/201204/do-dogs-have-musical-sense (accessed 20/09/2024).

53 Remember also the passage from *On the Intelligence of Animals* 971A discussed above.

54 P. F. Cook et al., 'Awake canine fMRI predicts dogs' preference for praise vs food', *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 11.12 (2016) 1853–62.

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source presents the dog wagging his tail between hearing the music and rejecting food, as a way of communicating his natural proclivity for the former.[55]

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This study has illustrated the potential of using the lens of the animal turn in our interpretation of Byzantine sources on dogs. Delving into the animal's anatomy, morphology, and behaviour with the help of modern canine research can be an effective strategy of counter-focalization, a means of decentring our narratives from human agents and launching ourselves into the unrecorded or not fully recorded stories of the animal agents found in Byzantine works. Another key finding from this analysis is that Byzantine authors concerned with dogs mined Plutarch in particular, whose ideas they reworked in ways that helped them underscore the distinctiveness of the canine species, thereby pointing to a Byzantine contribution to the development of ancient notions on animal superiority. Byzantium's textual production is jam-packed with other animals, as yet unheard and unseen. How do these animals augment, nuance, or provide a commentary on the human stories they accompany? A wealth of compelling zoohistories from Byzantium awaits recovery.

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55 https://www.earth.com/news/study-explores-the-mystery-of-why-dogs-wag-their-tails/ (accessed 20/09/2024).

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