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The Shepherd-King Metaphor in the Light of Interdisciplinary Research

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The aim of the article is to analyze the sources of the shepherd-king metaphor, mainly from the perspective of social-political ideas, within a broad cultural and intellectual context.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The article focuses on identifying the intellectual sources of the shepherd-king metaphor in antiquity, their anthropological and cosmological context, and the metaphor's fundamental message. Particular emphasis is placed on the socio-political aspect; thus, analyses of strictly theological significance are left aside. To achieve the research objective, the author makes use of interdisciplinary instruments, referring to archaeological, biological, and historical knowledge and especially to analyses from the field of the history of ideas.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The article's line of argument reflects the fundamental problems that need to be solved in order to determine the essence and shape of the shepherd-king metaphor. Therefore, the issues analyzed include animal domestication; ancient anthropology understood as the divine domestication of humans; and the distinctions drawn in ancient thought between the essence of the nature of animals, humans, rulers, and gods.

RESEARCH RESULTS: As a result of the analyses indicated above, it was possible to capture the main components of the shepherd-king metaphor, their

structure and essence, as well as their direct reference to, and significance for both anthropology and socio-political thought.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: The article highlights the importance of the shepherd-king metaphor to the history of political ideas, outlining the impact of both its explicit theses and its more implicit, but no less important, elements. Attention was also drawn to the need for further research, which would enable the metaphor's socio-political aspects analyzed in this article to be combined into one coherent interpretation with the religious and theological aspects.

INTRODUCTION

The metaphor of the shepherd-king, or shepherd-ruler, is one of the oldest political ideas confirmed by written records concerning the relationship between a ruler and his subjects. It is already present in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. We may presume that this metaphor goes back to pre-literate times, meaning it could well be over 5,000 years old. It appears in the culture of the ANE (Ancient Near East), in ancient Greece, and in the Hebrew Bible. The question of its functioning in Ancient Egypt or in the Hittite Empire is more controversial. The idea of kings' pastoral power characterized their attitudes toward their subjects, while their relationships with other states, rulers, and peoples was characterized, for example, by invoking the ideal of a lion-lord (see, e.g., Micah 5: 8–9). This dual nature of rulers was likely characteristic of concepts of power throughout the ancient world. As Jonathan Holslag (2019) remarks:

> people everywhere dreamt of an ideal world of harmony. In Egypt, this was embodied in Maat; in China, in the 'mandate of heaven'; in Mesopotamia, in the Code of Hammurabi; and in India, in the deities Vishnu and Lakshmi. The main task of the state and its ruler were to preserve peace internally and to provide security on the border. […] when we consider […] the evolution of thinking about the nature of world politics – the late Bronze Age already reveals a striking

> dichotomy. The ideal king was a fair-minded father to his own people, but a fearless fighter against foreign threats (p. 49–50).

Several elements are necessary for a proper reconstruction of the shepherd-king metaphor (particular emphasis is placed on the socio-political aspect; thus, analyses of strictly theological significance are left aside).

First, it is necessary to reconstruct the phenomena of domestication and pastoralism, with particular emphasis on sheep domestication and breeding, because sheep constitute such an integral part of the analyzed metaphor. In this context, it will also be worth noting the social and legal status of shepherds. Second, it is important to examine the socio-political context of the period in which the metaphor was shaped, as this period was defined by the formation of large human communities organized into structures known as city-states. Third and finally, because the metaphor of pastoral power is not a simple image, but a complex, multi-faceted narrative in which three main motifs can be distinguished:

1. the motif of human nature in relation to the gods, on the one hand, and animals, on the other;
2. the motif of the nature and position of kings in the cosmic and political order, especially their relationship with the gods;
3. the problem of human domestication, perceived by the ancients not as self-domestication, but as a result of the actions of divine forces;

it is necessary to examine each of these aspects, as omitting any one of them will distort the metaphor and prevent its full message from being revealed.

DOMESTICATION AND PASTORALISM

The domestication process was not a homogeneous process in terms of the method applied to individual species. There are two fundamental pathways to domestication, the commensal pathway and the prey pathway (Zeder, 2012, p. 227–259). The commensal pathway is domestication by way of commensalism, a long-term interaction in which one species gains benefits while the other one neither benefits

nor is harmed. The prey pathway means the domestication of animals which were previously hunted (prey). Humans likely saw greater profitability in controlling herds of animals, even at the cost of caring for them, than in the constant hunt for them, which could end in failure, injury, or even loss of life. The most spectacular example of animals domesticated via the commensal pathway are dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*), which likely self-domesticated due to the benefits associated with having easy access to an abundance of food (for more on dog domestication, see e.g., Botigué et al., 2017, Prassack et al., 2020, Arendt et al., 2016). It is presumably only later that people started to benefit from this domestication. Other animals domesticated via this pathway are cats (*Felis catus*), chickens (*Gallus domesticus*), and turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) (Zeder, 2012, p. 240). On the other hand, "a strong case can now be made that sheep, goats, and cattle all traveled a quite direct, if lengthy and slow, prey pathway to domestication in central and eastern portions of the Fertile Crescent arc that stretches from southern Iran, across northwestern eastern Iraq and southeastern Turkey, into Lebanon, Israel, and eastern Jordan," while pigs (*Sus scrofa domestica*) "may have wandered between prey and commensal pathway at different points of the journey" (p. 249).

While it is undisputed that the first animal to be domesticated (or self-domesticated) was a wolf/dog and that this probably occurred independently in various places around the world during approximately the same period, historians and archaeologists tend to assume that the oldest evidence of deliberate animal breeding can be found in the ANE region. The beginnings of the domestication of ruminants, which is of particular interest to us, date back to the end of the Stone Age. Archaeological data indicates that the first to be domesticated were the *Caprinae* – goats (bezoars – *Capra aegagrus*) and sheep (mouflons – *Ovis orientalis*). The beginnings of pastoralism, on the other hand, date back to the Early Neolithic (Arbuckle & Hammer, 2018).

Sheep were initially bred mainly for meat. Several thousand years ago, however, a kind of restructuring occurred in sheep farming. An intensive increase in wool usage is noted in the Late Chalcolithic (4000–3000 BC), as evidenced by both texts from the end of the 4th millennium from Uruk, as well as numerous artifacts associated with spinning and weaving dating from this period. The growing role of

wool production for Uruk's economy resulted in an increasing share of sheep in the breeding of all animals and a shift in the period of the culling of males – from juveniles to adults (23). According to some researchers (Adams, 1981, Lees & Bates, 1974, Porter, 2012; see Arbuckle & Hammer, 2018, p. 24), the shift in animal production from direct products, mainly meat, to secondary products (the so-called Secondary Products Revolution, or SPR) such as wool, diary and animal traction is one of the main factors behind the birth of complex societies and city-states with their unprecedented market and trade, responses to the ever-growing and ever-diversifying needs of such large human urban populations. Within this process, pastoral nomads played the role of "middlemen" (Sundsdal, 2011; Arbuckle & Hammer, 2018, p. 22–24). According to other scholars, this position overestimates to a certain degree the role of both mobile pastoralism and the pastoral nomads themselves (Emberling & Minc, 2016; Rosen, 2016; Sumner, 1989). Above all, these researchers point to strong relationships between pastoralism and agricultural settlements, as well as the fact that most of the pottery from that period was made locally, which would indicate that trade played a smaller role than is assumed by some (Arbuckle & Hammer, 2018, p. 23). It should also be emphasized that the increase in the importance of secondary products varied locally (d'Anna & Palumbi, 2017, p. 30). Sheep and goat breeding were focused on both primary products (meat) and secondary products, such as milk and wool (Vila, 1998, p. 127–128). The summoning of the sheep in the metaphor can therefore be understood as a propaganda technique. It was easiest and least controversial to indicate the benefits sheep reaped from being domesticated by humans, as compared to other farm animals – sheep gained protection against predators, providing wool and milk in return, with only a very few giving their lives to become food or a sacrificial offering.

The issue of the legal and socio-economic status of shepherds is not easy to reconstruct. Nevertheless, we have sufficient material from the Babylonian and Neo-Babylonian Empires, the Hittite Empire, the Middle Assyrian Empire, from the *poleis* of Mycenean Culture, and from the Hebrew Bible to indicate the main features of the legal framework and status of shepherding:

1. The profession was ubiquitous during the Bronze Age in the ANE and the Mediterranean basin.

2. It was essential to the economies of both palaces and private owners, but there is little evidence of any particular social position associated with it. On the contrary, there are indications that as an occupation, it was not associated with high social prestige.

3. As a rule, shepherds' wages consisted of products such as wool, milk, and a certain percentage of the lambs born under their care.

4. Shepherds' responsibility for their sheep (and for the other animals they tended) was limited. Shepherds were not expected to sacrifice their lives to protect the sheep or to abandon the entire herd to search for individual sheep that had gone missing – this would have been reckless and irresponsible.

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

It is estimated that the beginnings of *Homo sapiens'* sedentary lifestyle dates back to the period of approximately 10,000–8,000 BC. The oldest information on this topic concerns the area of the Levant and the so-called Natufian culture. It was characterized by a sedentary or semi-sedentary lifestyle, although its economy was not based on agriculture, but on hunting and gathering. The population of settlements inhabited by representatives of this cultural formation ranged between 100 and 150 inhabitants. Thus, they corresponded to the size of a typical hunter-gatherer community and did not exceed the Dunbar number (more on this below). Several thousand years later, between 6,000 and 3,000 BC, the first fortified city-states appeared populated by tens of thousands of inhabitants – it is estimated that by the end of the 4th century BC, Uruk had a population of around 40,000 people (with more than twice as many living in the surrounding areas). During these several thousand years, we are therefore dealing with a kind of revolution of urbanization: from natural hunter-gatherer communities (150) to huge human agglomerations (40,000). Evidence suggests this revolution in the way people lived and in the size and structure of societies occurred in several regions of the ancient world. Among so-called autonomous complex societies, Mesopotamia is

the oldest – it is estimated that the beginnings of this type of society were born there about 8,000 years ago. The remaining regions where complex societies arose (and which, most likely, are the sources of all social structures in the history of *Homo sapiens*) are the Harrapan culture from the Indus Valley around 7,000 years ago, and around the same time another culture in north and central China; 5,500 years ago in Egypt; 4–5,000 years ago in South America – civilizations of the Andes, and around 3,500 years ago in Central America – the Olmec culture (Tattersall, 2008, p. 120).

When I use the term "natural" to describe life in hunter-gatherer societies, I am referring to the relationship between prefrontal cortex size and a given species' social group size, which has been defined by evolutionary psychology and experimentally proven. This social group size is expressed as a numerical quantity, called the "Dunbar number" after Robin Dunbar, the British biologist and evolutionary psychologist who discovered this relationship (see e.g., Dunbar, 1992, Dunbar, 2005, Dunbar, 2014). Domestic politics, political functions, and socio-economic inequalities are all foreign to the world of hunter-gatherers. This is visible in the case of less complex hunter-gatherer societies. As Frank Marlowe (2010) put it in reference to Hadza:

> there is no higher level of organization than the camp, and people move into and out of camps with ease. Hadza do think about those within each of the four main areas of Hadzaland as sharing some affinity, and they certainly have a Hadza-wide identification, but there is no political structure of any kind, even at the camp level, much less at the tribal or ethno-linguistic level. People in a camp can organize themselves for a camp move. This does not require a leader; a consensus is usually easy to reach after a little discussion (p. 39–40).

The reality of city-states differed greatly from that of hunter-gatherer societies. To paraphrase from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1985), while the natural capabilities of human brains are sufficient to preserve the functioning of natural hunter-gatherer communities in the state of nature, preserving societies of a greater size, and especially as much greater as the ancient *poleis*, "there be somewhat else required […] to make their Agreement constant and lasting; which is a Common Power, to keep them in awe" (part II, chapter XVII, p. 107). This "Common Power," however, was not created at the

same time as the Covenant, and certainly not "by Covenant of every man with every man" (p. 108). Although we are unable to clearly reconstruct the process that led to the emergence of the first city-states, we can presume that force and coercion played an important role. This process was also indisputably accompanied by phenomena such as social, economic, and political differentiation, which manifested themselves in the taking control of individual city-states by groups of a few elites. These new socio-economic circumstances underlying the construction of political life and based on the new phenomenon of "Common Power," required a new, extraordinary, non-natural justification and legitimization. It was necessary to convince large – as compared to natural communities – masses of people to obey a ruler who, unlike in natural communities, was distant from and beyond the control of the majority of the city-states' inhabitants. Maintaining integrity and order in city-states could not be based solely on force and coercion; the structure of political entities was based on the social hierarchy and the related division of labor and of social functions – in the long run it is necessary to achieve a certain level of general acceptance of the existing order of things. In such circumstances, what was necessary, in addition to force and coercion, was a justification of the socio-political order that could gain universal acceptance. Best suited to this role was an ideological-religious justification of the power of the few, which could convince the majority of society that the few are rightly predestined to be the ruling group, having a nature better than that of others or having been chosen by the gods. In a word, what was needed was an idea that would justify social elitism, unknown to natural hunter-gatherer groups, and at the same time would legitimize rule as such, especially the rule of an individual. Appealing to the gods and their power over a world they created (shaped) was the most fruitful choice. The total subordination of people to the gods, even justifying the meaning of human life by referring to divine decision and divine choice, lay the foundations for a coherent, elitist, and authoritative conception of social life and political power. We can find similar methods of religious and ideological justification and legitimation in many regions of the ancient world, including Mesopotamia, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, the Hittite Empire, the Persian Empire, China, India, and Canaan.

Regardless of the role pastoralism and SPR played in the rise of cities and the development of trade, the fact remains that from the 4th millennium BC, the economic role of sheep begins to increase in connection with wool production. This increase in wool production coincided with the period when the first large political communities were formed. The new organization of social life, i.e., the emergence of city-states, required a sophisticated justification of the new order and legitimization of the new power. Legitimization was built on an appeal to the decisions of the gods. But it required a significant expansion of the entire narrative, which would not only refer to the legitimization of political power, but also justify the postulate of order in the world, explaining the place of humans within it and giving meaning to their lives. The shepherd-king metaphor precisely serves this purpose, combining all the necessary elements of the narrative: divine order in the world, the legitimization of elite-autocratic power, and the position of humans vis-à-vis the gods and other animals. The cited image of the shepherd, in turn, is a very clear one for all members of communities that are so economically dependent on breeding, especially sheep breeding.

THREE ASPECTS OF THE SHEPHERD-KING METAPHOR

I. Human Nature – between Animal Nature and the Divine

A characteristic feature of ANE anthropology is humans' position in the structure of the world. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is an excellent illustration of this position in the world hierarchy. The figure of Enkidu represents a wild man "in the state of nature," living outside of civilization:

> Aruru washed her hands,
> She took a pinch of clay, she threw it down in the wild.
> In the wild she created Enkidu, the hero,
> an offspring of silence (or: death), knit strong by Ninurta.
> All his body is matted with hair,

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> he is adorned with tresses like a woman:
> the locks of his hair grow as thickly as Nissaba's,
> he knows not at all a people (or: family, god, gods) nor even a country.
> He was clad in garment like Šakkan's,
> feeding on grass with the very gazelles.
> Jostling at the water-hole with the herd,
> He enjoyed (lit. "his heart grew pleased") the water with the animals.
> [...]
> [he] and his herds – he went back to his lair (lit. "he went into his house").
>
> <div align="right">(George 2003, 1:545, SB I 101–12, 117)</div>

Already in this natural state, Enkidu is the guide and protector of wild animals ("he has uprooted my snares [that I laid]"); the herd of animals with which Enkidu lives is treated as "his herd" ("his herd will be estranged from him") (1:547, SB I 158, 145). This likely means that regardless of the advantages over animals that humans gain through life in civilization, their very nature predisposes them to act as a guide for other animals, to occupy the highest place in the natural hierarchy of the animate world. Being the most perfect of animals, however, wild man remains just that – an animal. The final separation from the animal world occurs only as a result of civilized life, which produces language, teaches better manners, reduces aggression, introduces law and order compatible with the divine way of governing the world.

Therefore, it seems justified to say that a common phenomenon in the ancient cultures of our geographical area of interest was the definition of humans' position among living beings as intermediate – between the animals and the gods. Individual cultures accented different elements of this narrative, either emphasizing the animal genesis of humankind, going so far as to call human beings "animals" whose *differentia specifica* is "rationality" or "politicalness," or recognizing humans as living beings separate from the animal world, though ones who are nevertheless characterized by having a body that functions in the same way animals' bodies do. This body had a significant impact on human beings' status: it was the cause of their mortality, their physical and mental suffering, their limited ability to achieve happiness – happiness that in the case of humans must be distinguished from divine happiness, which is full, eternal, and everlasting. The body was a factor limiting the ability to function

and accomplish goals, as we spectacularly see in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, when the title character is unable to stand for a long enough time without sleep to gain immortality in this way.

II. The Nature of Kings – between Human Nature and the Divine

Rulers in the ancient world were commonly seen not as ordinary, at best, outstanding people who owed their achievements and social position to their human virtues, but as divinely elected, either due to their having a non-human nature, or to being specifically chosen by the gods to perform their socio-political functions. This aspect is found in the ANE cultures, in Egypt, in the Hittite culture, in the Hebrew Bible, and in Persian culture.

In ANE cultures, rulers are often distinguished from their subjects on the basis of their nature. The most obvious example is Gilgamesh, son of Lugalbanda the Shepherd and the goddess Ninsun, Lady of the Wild Cow, who is two-thirds divine. The problem of legitimacy is clearly visible in Gilgamesh's case. He rules cruelly over "his" Uruk, introducing, among other things, the *primae noctis* law. The only thing his subjects can do is turn with a prayerful plea to those who legitimize the king's power – to the gods, asking them for help. Whether the ruler performs his pastoral duties properly, or not, does not condition his legitimacy to exercise power – sheep have no right to object or to rebel. There is an important point to note here. Ruling in Mesopotamia was not considered "power," but "responsibility" (Scurlock, 2013, p. 175), as it is somewhat pointless to speak of "power" over sheep. We can speak of "power" in the context of relations with equals in nature. In the case of relationships with representatives of a "lower nature," where the issue of governance is by definition indisputable, responsibility comes to the fore. You must justify your decisions to equals, not to sheep.

The special nature of rulers is captured by Andrew George (2018) in reference to Enkidu's submission to the reign of Gilgamesh. He states: "the moment is again informed by mythological thought: Babylonian folklore held that *awīlum* 'human being' and *šarrum* 'king' were distinct categories, created separately" (p. 20).

It is debatable whether all references of royal power to divine power in ancient cultures should be treated only symbolically, or perhaps, at least to some extent and for certain periods and certain cultures, literally. I will not analyze this problem here. However, taking into account the popularity and durability of the idea of the relationship between the monarchy and the divine sphere in European tradition (it is enough to mention Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, written around 1630 and published in 1680 – subjects to the power of the king are the property of the king) I would not exclude the relative ubiquity of a more than symbolic understanding of the relationship between kingship and divinity.

III. The Divine Domestication of Humankind

Undoubtedly, an awareness of the domestication of animals, combined with an awareness of the proximity of humans and animals had to have raised questions about human history: did people once live in a wild, i.e., undomesticated state, like other animals? If so, how and by whom were they domesticated and for what purpose? The answer seems obvious: those who did the domesticating must be higher beings than those who were domesticated. Who is higher than humans? Gods – it was they who domesticated people; they are the first shepherds of human beings. Then the gods appointed deputies, special representatives, to carry out the pastoral care of people on the gods' behalf. These shepherds-divine representatives are kings – they are of a different nature than humans (or: other humans) – of a nature between humans and gods. This is either due to their parentage/ancestry (Gilgamesh/Achilles) or to a special selection made by the gods (Lugalbanda/Agamemnon). Kings/heros can also become full gods (Lugalbanda/Heracles). What remains to be answered is why gods domesticated humans. Again, the answer comes by way of analogy – humans domesticated animals for their own benefit, so it follows that the gods domesticated humans for *their* own benefit. This benefit lies in the tribute humans pay and sacrifices they offer up to the gods, which the gods consider so very important. This seems to indicate a certain narcissism on the part of the gods, which, perhaps, is again just the anthropomorphization of the rulers' narcissism.

The activities called "pastoral" in the broader context of Sumero-Akkadian culture include three separate but interrelated spheres of action: taming, domestication, and shepherding (herding). Important details on Sumero-Akkadian anthropology are provided in the scene in which Enkidu meets Shamhat, sent to him by Gilgamesh with the goal of "taming" and persuading Enkidu to "self-domesticate." In Enkidu's case, Shamhat was the guide in the first two stages and Gilgamesh was the shepherd.

Shamhat's conversation (or conversations, if we accept the version presented in the so-called Cornell fragment) with Enkidu presents the key arguments for domestication, simultaneously indicating what is irretrievably lost in the process of domestication. After copulating with Shamhat for a week (the taming stage), Enkidu intends to return to the animals, but they flee from him, as he is no longer "wild"; the first stage of domestication has been completed. He returns to Shamhat, who begins to speak to him, and Enkidu starts to understand human speech. Shamhat encourages Enkidu:

> You are handsome, Enkidu, you are just like a god,
> why do you roam the wild with the animals?
> Come, I will lead you to Uruk-the-Sheepfold,
> to the sacred temple, the dwelling of Anu and Ištar!
> where Gilgameš is perfect in strength,
> and lords it over the menfolk like a wild bull.
> (George, 2003, 1:551, SB I 207–212)

Enkidu responds to Shamhat's encouragement with a desire to challenge Gilgamesh: "he is intrigued to learn of the violent, bull-like figure of Gilgameš, and responds to the prostitute's suggestion that he go to Uruk by vowing to challenge the tyrant in a test of brute strength" (George 2018, 20). Although Enkidu is interested in the social context, he imposes patterns of behavior from life in the wild on it. A second week of sexual intercourse with Shamhat follows. Afterward, Shamhat presents Enkidu with the following perspective:

> I look at you, Enkidu, you are like a god,
> why with the animals do you range through the wild?
> Come, I will lead you to Uruk-Main-Street,
> to the sacred temple, the home of Anu.
> Enkidu, arise, I will take you

> To E-anna, the home of Anu.
> Where [men] are engaged in labours of skill,
> you, too, [like a] rue man, will [make a place for] yourself.
>   (George, 2003, 1:175, OB II 53–62)

Although the first week of domestication had sparked an interest in civilized life, it had not yet created in Enkidu the readiness to submit to its rules.

Only after the second week of Shamhat's efforts is Enkidu ready to enter the world of socio-political relations. Shamhat leads him to the shepherds whom Enkidu will help to guard the herds. While the shepherds are sleeping, Enkidu kills wolves attacking the herd and chases away the lions that threaten the sheep (George, 2003, 1:177, OB II 114–115). He then goes with Shamhat to Uruk, where he confronts Gilgamesh. Though the result of their fight is inconclusive, Enkidu recognizes the reign of Gilgamesh on the grounds of the son of Ninsun's divine legitimacy, stating:

> As one unique your mother bore you,
> the wild cow of the fold, Ninsunna.
> You are exalted over warriors:
> the kingship of the people Enlil fixed as your lot.
>   (George, 2003, 1:181, OB II 234–239)

To reiterate, in the human domestication presented in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, we can distinguish three stages: taming (which corresponds to animal taming), socialization (which corresponds to animal domestication), and politicization (which corresponds to shepherding animals). Taming is literally "teaching better manners," encouraging people to leave the "state of nature." Socialization is the introduction to societal life based on a division of labor. Politicization consists in submitting to the authority of a king who has been anointed or possesses a divine origin and acts as a shepherd of the people on behalf of the people's owners – the gods.

The entire multi-stage process of domestication reveals a specific hierarchical structure of the world in which domestication itself plays a key modeling role. At the head of the hierarchy are the gods who shaped the world for their glory. Their appointed shepherd kings look after the domesticated divine flock of humans. Humans, in turn,

domesticate other animals and plants. Consequently, the gods can count on sacrifices of plants and animals made by people led by kings.

CONCLUSION

All aspects of the metaphor indicated in our analyses come together to form a complete model not only of "pastoral power," but also of the "pastoral structure of the world." Concern for those under royal protection is a concern for property rather than empathetic concern for creatures equal in nature. The story of the flood from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is a good illustration of this – the attempt to destroy all humankind was a mistake because it was simply a waste, similar to Zeus' interceding on humans' behalf in the Homeric hymn to Demeter, because humans are needed to offer up sacrifices to the gods.

An excellent synthetic description of the kings' pastoral power is given by E.R. Goodenough (1929) in reference to Ashurbanipal. To quote an extensive passage:

> the case of Assurbanipal is typical. He too represented the gods to the people as the gods' obedient shepherd, whose shepherding is pleasant to the black-headed; he has the wisdom of Nabu, which he has tried to write down on his tablets (of laws), an act which he otherwise describes as a gift of the gods; he has a special ear for hearing the divine instructions; his name was made great by the gods, has indeed been specially given or altered by them. In return, he obeys the gods' commands; he is careful to be strictly just in decisions; he helps the weak against the strong; his rulership even means good crops. That is, the rulership is primarily based upon a conception of the king as the one who brings the laws of the gods to man, whether by having the divine legal wisdom implanted in himself, or by his special faculty for hearing the gods' instructions (p. 174–175).

If domestication is not self-domestication, then humans are not ends in themselves, they are merely tools for those for whom they are made to "graze." The narcissism of the gods/God, which is the source of the creation of humankind (and even the world as a whole), is a specific extrapolation of human narcissism, which is most fully manifested in the narcissism of power, both political and religious. The model of pastoral power refers to certain personality traits and

to certain socio-political and ethical tendencies that seem compatible with elitism and autocracy.

In lieu of a summary, I would like to indicate an inspiring aspect of the metaphor of pastoral power. It concerns the genesis of the state from the perspective of reflection on humans' political nature and takes into account both the findings of philosophy and the natural sciences. As mentioned, the model or metaphor of pastoral power seems to stand in opposition to both the idea of a social contract and the idea of *zoon politikon*. The history of political philosophy is primarily the history of these two models and their variations. Are humans inherently political? If not, how did the state emerge? By way of a contract? By way of conquest?

Historically, it would likewise be difficult to find arguments for a literal social contract. What remains is the state's emergence "by nature." Since our brain (and, thus, our "nature") remains at a level that supports the functioning of groups not exceeding 150 individuals (the Dunbar number), how is it that we find ourselves in a situation in which we function in communities of an immeasurably larger size? How did these overly large communities come about? Was the informed consent of the majority at the root? Or maybe the actions and ambitions of the elites and individuals who ruled the smaller communities? What could have motivated these actions? Some vision of the future? Plain old narcissism? Or maybe a bit of everything? There is no doubt that the model or metaphor of pastoral power indicates the special role played by the elite and by outstanding "superhuman" individuals. However, did this idea arise as the source of the process leading to the creation of large communities, or did it come about later, as a sort of universal founding myth legitimizing the power of the king? The latter possibility seems more probable, since one group perceiving another as belonging to a different, lower species requires a greater distance between them in their everyday functioning, which, of course, is easier in large populations where differences between classes are already established, than in small populations, where daily coexistence and closeness of all members of the community make such "dehumanization" difficult. Even if we agree with Aristotle's suggestion that such pre-state (*pre-polis*) communities were monarchical in nature, it was more (according to Aristotle) a model of a "king-head-of-the-household" monarchy

than a "king-shepherd." Therefore, it seems more likely that the idea of pastoral power arose at a time when the inhabitants of city-states were no longer seen as tribesmen, but rather as the property of rulers or property of the ruling elite. Undoubtedly, this remains an open issue, and the model or metaphor of pastoral power, although in direct contradiction to the contemporary democratic model that refers to the rights and freedoms of individuals, is historically a highly significant document of the evolution of both ideas and socio-political institutions. The aim of the model of pastoral power is, above all, to legitimize kingly power, though, for future research, it would be fruitful to add the theological perspective of pastoral power to our analysis, especially within the context of Judeo-Christian religions, in an attempt to build a coherent socio-political and theological interpretation. This model also played the role of an ideological guarantor, an ideological foundation for the integrity of the political structure of ancient city-states and ancient empires, built around the idea of a divine shepherd king, obedient to the gods and guarding the flock of sheep-people entrusted to him on the gods' behalf.

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