



Donkey (Animal)

Jill Bough

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From giving rides to children at the British seaside to pulling a plough in the poorest of countries, donkeys have served humans faithfully since the time of their domestication more than 10,000 years ago. Despite the critical role that they have played throughout human history, however, donkeys have often received little respect.

Donkey follows the story of this incredibly hard-working animal. Jill Bough reveals the animal's historic significance in Ancient Egypt where they were once highly regarded and even worshipped. However, this elevated status did not endure in Ancient Greece and Rome, where donkeys were denigrated, ridiculed and abused. Since this time, donkeys have continued to be associated with the poorest and most marginalized in human societies. Throughout the world, donkeys have been used for innumerable tasks: the main ones being as pack animals during times of peace and war, and to breed mules. Even today, donkeys are considered to be one of the best draught animals in third world countries, where they continue to make a vital contribution. Jill Bough goes beyond the practical uses of the animal by exploring a variety of social, cultural and religious meanings that the donkey has embodied, especially its symbolic representations in Western literature and art. The story of the donkey makes an important addition to the complex and contradictory history of human and non-human animal relationships. With accounts that are both fascinating and touching, this book will be ideal for anyone with an admiration of the donkey or who is interested by animals in history.

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