

**Reading Topic for 10/14 to be discussed in section meetings**

*For this meeting, you are not asked to write a paper. But you will be expected to contribute to the discussion topic in sections, so you should tackle the reading thoughtfully, then be sure to **note down for yourself in advance some responses to offer and questions to raise, as well as highlighting passages that back up your points instructively.***

**Reading for the 'Biography' of Aesop**

Various animal fables were attributed to Aesop, who was supposedly a slave in archaic Greece. Much later (perhaps in the first or second century A.D.), a 'biography' of him came to be written. It is plainly a work of imaginative fiction, not of fact, but it is of interest to us today as one of the few pieces of writing from classical antiquity which centers itself around a slave, attempting to reflect his outlook and the predicaments in which he finds himself.

These features are what we shall be seeking to identify and evaluate in our discussion: **in this extract from the 'biography' (on Sakai), how does Aesop conduct himself? What are his principal concerns and why? How do the concerns of the other slaves compare with his? How do free people treat Aesop and slaves in general, and why?**

You should be aware that Aesop is considered exceptionally ugly, and that up to this point muteness has made it impossible for him to speak at all. But because he has just been very kind to a priestess of the goddess Isis (a Roman period adoption into the Graeco-Roman pantheon from Egypt), that goddess has now bestowed on him the gift of speech.