

Doctoral Dissertation

The Beast between Us

The Construction of Identity and Alterity through Animal Symbolism in Late Antique Jewish and Christian Tradition

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I. Introduction

I.I. Animal symbolism and the study of Jewish-Christian interrelations

Animal symbolism knows no boundaries: it can be observed in cultures distant both in time and space. Its ubiquity led the English novelist and artist, John Berger to claim that animal symbolism is rooted in a primordial experience of humankind, as animals “interceded between man and their origin because they were both like and unlike man.”¹ Perhaps the most obvious function of animal symbolism is creating difference between a presumed humanity and a status or behavior that lacks something fundamentally human, something animalistic. The exclamation “you are a beast” grasps this situation in a clear fashion. By claiming that someone is beastlike, we ultimately states that the given person or behavior is alien to or below human standards, driven by instincts and not by reason. If the same idea is projected upon a group of people, we might end up with dehumanized communities like “Jewish pigs”, “black monkeys” or most recently “hordes of migrants”. The force of such expressions is captured imaginatively in Heinrich Heine’s *Romanzero*, which also happens to be an episode of Jewish-Gentile relations. In this poem, the imagined words of a medieval Franciscan friar describe Jews as all sorts of animals irrespective of their value in European zoological traditions:

O ye Jews! ye are hyenas,
Wolves and jackals burrowing foul
In the graves; ye search for corpses
For whose blood with greed ye howl.

Ye are hogs, O Jews! and monkeys,
Ye are beasts with snout and horn,
Yes, rhinoceroses, vampires,
Ye are crocodiles, mud-born.

Ye are owls and ye are ravens,
Ye are bats that fear the light,
Ye are cockatrices, screech-owls,
And the gallows-birds of night.

Ye are rattlesnakes and blindworms,
Toads envenomed, vipers dread;
Ye are asps and ye are adders —

¹ John Berger, *Why Look at Animals* (New York: Penguin, 2009) 18.

Christ will crush your cursèd head.²

Such expressions have a long history and are present in all human communities regardless of language, culture, or religion.³ Thus, it would seem that animal symbolism serves the purpose of naturalizing difference. By identifying the other or the outgroup with an animal, one is capable of strengthening and defining community-boundaries by establishing an imaginary superiority between culture and nature, humanity and a form of non-human existence.

Animal symbolism, however, appears in many other schemes, and these imply divergent overtones. The difference between “you are a beast” and “you are my little dove” is enormous. Those who use the second expression do not wish to dehumanize their addressees, but compliment them in a way that exploits features of thinking about animals. Due to the vagueness of human-animal relationship, a boundary that is very elusive on its own,⁴ animal symbolism is an ambiguous domain of metaphorical language. This vagueness, in turn, results from the fact that the criteria of what a human and what an animal is⁵ are often unclear, and to an extent dependent upon each other: from the antique notion of “humans are reasoning animals”⁶ to Ernst Cassirer’s *animal symbolicum*⁷ and Desmond Morris’ *The Naked Ape*,⁸ one encounters a variety of definitions describing humanity in relation to animals.

Elusiveness can be a rather appealing trait in a symbolical image. If one moves from the individual to the communal level, this charm becomes even more obvious. As anthropologists have noted since the beginning of the 19th century, human communities often use animals as symbols of their own communal identity (as symbols of ingroup), and very often as representations of a respective other (as symbols of outgroup).⁹ Despite the often-perceived ambiguity of human-animal boundary, such

² Heinrich Heine, “Disputation”, in *The Works of Heinrich Heine*, vol. XII, trl. by Margaret Armour (London: William Heinemann, 1905) 55-56.

³ The most detailed analysis of this process can be found in the writings of Agamben. See Giorgio Agamben, *L’aperto: L’uomo e l’animale* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002) ch. 1-3. See also Mark S. Roberts, *The Mark of the Beast. Animality and Human Oppression* (West Lafayette IN: Purdue University Press, 2008) 1-33.

⁴ See Richard Tapper, “Animality, humanity, morality, society,” in *What Is an Animal?*, ed. Tim Ingold, 47-62 (London: Unwyn Hyman, 1988) here 51

⁵ The biologist’s definition, namely that animals are multicellular, eukaryotic organisms although accurate, is based on microscopic distinctions and, therefore, often impractical.

⁶ The most well-known phrasing of this idea is that of Aristotle: “ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον” (Aristotle, *Politica* 1:1253a).

⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Culture* (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1944).

⁸ Desmond Morris, *The Naked Ape: A Zoologist’s Study of the Human Animal* (London: J. Cape, 1967)

⁹ On the use of the terms ingroup and outgroup in sociological research, cf. Shinobu Kitayama and Dov Cohen, *Handbook of Cultural Psychology* (New York: Guilford Press, 2007) 317-318.

animal symbolism is present in all cultures.¹⁰ The advantage of using animals as symbolic representations in this way become obvious if one considers that many times the boundary between ingroup and outgroup is itself traversable and insecure. Thus, communities interested in delineating clear boundaries are prone to use animal symbolism in such cases for describing both the ingroup and the outgroup. Just such a pair of communities is that of Judaism and Christianity. Beyond the many parallels between the two traditions, there was a disturbing and recurring realization by members of these two communities that similarities are not accidental but result from a shared past, shared aims, and shared authoritative texts.¹¹ This situation is a form of “proximate otherness”.¹² And since proximity is never an absolute, but always a relative term, the difference from groups far enough could be irrelevant, but a group that is similar enough that either the ingroup or a third entity might be unable to tell the difference presents a serious threat.¹³

The ambiguous nature of human-animal boundary is peculiarly similar to that of Jewish-Christian interrelations, inasmuch as the ambiguity that results from an inherent beastliness in humans, and an equally perplexing similarity of many animals to humans has a parallel in the way representatives of both Jewish and Christian traditions regarded themselves and the respective other. The comparison between human-animal and Jewish-Christian relations is all the more reasonable, as the insecurity of the boundary between humans and animals is a topic in the literature of both traditions, and there is ample evidence of a fear of getting dangerously close to animals as a theme both in rabbinic and in patristic literature.¹⁴ And even though the Biblical corpus did not deal with animal myths in a way similar to contemporary cultures of Mesopotamia and the Graeco-Roman world, there are several Biblical stories depicting human-animal interactions or expressed through the medium of animal symbolism.¹⁵ Some of these passages are crucial due to their theological importance in later periods or have even influenced traditions on a terminological and linguistic level.¹⁶ Therefore, several key

¹⁰ See Dan Sperber, “Pourquoi les animaux parfaits, les hybrides et les monstres sont-ils bons à penser symboliquement?” *L’Homme* 15 (1975): 5-34, here 5-11

¹¹ On this struggle in both traditions during the course of the third century, see Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: the Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 37-44 and 69-73 respectively.

¹² A term coined by Smith. Cf. Jonathan Z. Smith *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 26-7.

¹³ Cf. Jonathan Z. Smith, “What a Difference a Difference Makes,” in *“To See Ourselves as Others See Us”: Christians, Jews, “Others” in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs, 3-48 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985).

¹⁴ This theme is discussed in detail in chapter 1.

¹⁵ As an example for the former, one could quote the narrative of the first sin, and the serpent’s role therein (Gn 3:1-15), while the latter can perhaps be best exemplified by Daniel’s vision of the four animals (Dn 7:3-12) Cf. also Ez 1:10-22; Jl 1:4-18; Mi 1:8-16; Hos 13:2-8; Prv 26:2-13; Eccl 10:1-17; Phi 3:2 etc.

¹⁶ It is instructive, for example, to consider the far-reaching influence of apocalyptic scenarios described in animalistic terminology. Cf. Rivka Ulmer, “The Culture of Apocalypticism: Is the Rabbinic Work *Pesiqta Rabbati* Intertextually

topics as well as some key passages of the Biblical corpus were phrased in a way that the implementation or interpretation of animal symbolism was unavoidable in their exegesis.

It is important to note that animal symbolism occupies a special place among metaphorical *figurae* expressing identity and alterity. The precarious relationship between Jews and Christians could and was expressed through a number of alternatives. Among these, there are metaphors of familial relationships¹⁷ (brothers, father and son) gendered descriptions¹⁸ (competing wives) and the world of the flora¹⁹ (the root and the branches). While these also fit the problematic nature of the interrelation between the two communities, they lack the ambiguity animality is imbued with. By being at the same time objects acted upon and agents capable of interacting with their environment, animals are uniquely apt to express the dynamism of an ongoing process of defining and negotiating identity and alterity, and through them the boundaries between the two communities. Therefore, by analyzing a variety of themes and topics proposed by both traditions in which animals feature in an emphatic role as the representation of “us” or the respective “other”, I hope to significantly contribute to our understanding of the nature of Jewish-Christian relations in Late Antiquity.

I.I.II. Research questions, sources and methodology

Despite its controversial nature, animal symbolism stands at the very frontier between ingroup and outgroup in a huge number of narratives²⁰ produced by both Jewish and Christian Biblical interpreters. As such it is itself an important tool of negotiating these borders. My primary research question is aimed at describing the exact way animal symbolism functions in the two traditions:

1. How does the identification of ingroup and outgroup with animal symbols in exegetical materials serves the process of defining and negotiating borders between Jewish and Christian communities?

Related to the New Testament Book The Revelation to John,” *The Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 14 (2011): 37-70, here 40-45. See also Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem against Rome* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005) 474-477.

¹⁷ A discussion of these can be found in Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1999) 1-16.

¹⁸ The notion of the two wives of Abraham, as metaphors of the two subsequent communities has its basis in the *New Testament* (Gal 4:20-31).

¹⁹ The origin of such metaphors is also from the *New Testament* (Rom 11:17-21).

²⁰ As for the term “narrative”, I rely upon the Introduction in the translation of Gérard Genette’s highly influential study (Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1980) 25-26), and take its narrowest sense. Thus, under narrative, I understand a sequence of meaningful events and their interrelations in a story. Symbol, in turn, is a much smaller element in my mind, referring to one constituent part of a narrative, that albeit has a meaning on its own, does not form a discourse alone.

Due to its own ambiguous character, animal symbolism is a component that can have diverse influences. On the one hand, the identification of the outgroup with a given animal species (and a complementary identification of the ingroup with a different animal or as a human) might imply a solidification of the borders. On the other hand, certain arrangements of animal symbolism can be used to construct a channel through which the two identified communities (ingroup and outgroup) are not seen as generically different, but partly similar, also enabling their interaction. This opportunity is an important one even in polemic situations, for it includes the possibility of interaction even with an entity that is considered hostile by the ingroup. In light of this, a secondary research question is in order:

2. Does animal symbolism serve only as a means of creating hierarchy or is it used also as a tool of conceptualizing the other on an equal level?

In the present the dissertation I will answer these two research questions through the analysis of textual sources focusing on Biblical exegesis from Jewish rabbinic and Christian patristic tradition. I do not treat specific treatises and commentary-compilations comprehensively, but instead discuss a variety of textual sources from diverse geographical and historical contexts and representing a wide range of genres and themes. The major criterion for my selection is the individual texts' relevance to the themes of constructing identity and alterity through animal symbolism. Therefore, I am less interested in non-metaphorical passages dealing with natural historical observations, animal husbandry, sacrificing, ritual slaughtering, purity laws, and the like.

The analysis of these texts helps me draw a comprehensive image of Jewish and Christian tradition from a specific angle and enables the location of major similarities and differences between the ways the two traditions treat animal symbolism. Since I am primarily interested in the dichotomic relationship between these two traditions, I will focus on textual sources composed prior to the advance of a major third party, Islam. The chronological limits of sources I consider are defined by the beginnings and constitution of the rabbinic and patristic doctrinal corpora (1st to 7th century CE). In case of the patristic tradition, most sources I consider fall to the first and second third of this period, ending with Augustine and John Chrysostom. In case of the rabbinic tradition, in turn, most source collections I consider range to the second and third half of the same timeframe. The chronological discrepancy between the source corpora is mitigated to an extent by the fact that rabbinic sources are collections of earlier material, and are often attributed to earlier authorities. Another difference between the two source corpora is that of genres. In the rabbinic tradition, most sources in consideration are haggadic passages from the *Mishna*, the *Talmud*, and midrashic compilations.

Therefore, they serve the rabbis' mythopoetic and theological expression.²¹ They address the Jewish community and are not interested in persuading disinterested parties. As for the Christian tradition, the sources are more variegated in purpose. Although there are theological treatises serving similar aims as the rabbinic midrashim, I also analyze passages from homilies and orations addressing neophytes, pagans, or similar audiences with a less comprehensive understanding of Biblical passages.²² These sources aim both at legitimizing theological statements, and at convincing and converting members outside of the community.

In the patristic domain, my focus lies primarily on authors writing in Greek or Latin. To a much more limited extent, I will also consider Syriac sources. From the rabbinic tradition, the sources considered are in Hebrew and Aramaic. As the brunt of my argumentation relies on analyzing these texts within the context of their theological and exegetical implications, I focus on how the authors of selected passages of Jewish or Christian tradition used animal symbolism in order to construct identity and alterity and how these approaches relate to each other and to similar passages of the respective other. Occasionally, however, I also make philological argumentations (on the basis of critical editions). Consequently, unless otherwise indicated, I present my own translations (in the main text), but also provide the originals (in footnotes).

I.I.III. State of the art and hypothesis

My research project lies at the intersection of two disciplines: that of the study of Jewish-Christian interrelations and that of animal studies. Both of these fields have been subject to major transformations in recent decades, challenging some of the most widespread assumptions. My dissertation aims at contributing to both fields in a substantial manner, by revealing and studying their intersection, which is without any comprehensive overview as of yet.

The study of Jewish-Christian relations is the study of two communities laying claims to a number of shared goods, traditions, rituals and scriptures. Representatives of both communities have coexisted for almost two millennia, and their interrelations have significant influence on the ways scholars regarded previous modes of interaction. This is most evident if one compares the scholarly consensus preceding the second world war and the one emerging soon after the end of the war. The events of the Shoah and their dependence on how societies with a Christian majority treated Jewish minorities,

²¹ In this opinion, I rely on Fishbane's understanding of midrashim. See Michael A Fishbane, "The Holy One Sits and Roars': Mythopoesis and the Midrashic Imagination," in *The Midrashic Imagination Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*, ed. Michael A. Fishbane, 60-78 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

²² For individual case studies on Late Antique authors, see *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics*, ed. Mary B. Cunningham and Pauline Allen (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

opened the eyes of many to the power-relations and hierarchies endemic to interrelations between the two communities. Moreover, it became emphatic that Judaism was not a non-existent entity on the verge of extinction, but a community persisting despite on and off conflicts with Christian majorities in Europe and parts of Asia. If nothing else, the enduring presence of antijudaic and antisemitic notions in European cultures that was transformed into a mass genocide with a few years of determined propaganda and rhetorical activity revealed that despite its continuous majority status in most of Europe, Christianity was still preoccupied with the existence of Judaism.

In light of such events, the revision of Adolf von Harnack's concept of a Judaism moribund in Late Antiquity²³ became largely unavoidable. The most comprehensive criticism expressed to this view came in the form of Marcel Simon's doctoral dissertation (1948),²⁴ which reached the general public more than a decade later, when it was republished in French in 1964,²⁵ and that of the international community only after its English publication in 1986.²⁶ Simon was influenced to a great extent by his experiences of the war, when – in contrast to Harnack – he presented Late Antique Judaism as not only a very active and living religious community, but also a rival and strong opponent of the emerging Christian Church. Thus, as Taylor pointed out, despite his criticism, he still agreed with Harnack that the relationship of the two communities can be best described as a conflict.²⁷

By 1986, however, the layout of the two communities had changed significantly, and Simon's perspective of a conflict-ridden interrelation was challenged by more irenic alternatives emphasizing rather the similarity between the two communities. Thus, Alan F. Segal's study,²⁸ published in the same year, argued that the two communities should be seen as sisters, not as a mother and daughter, as they emerge from a shared Hellenistic cultural environment, reacting to the same crises and challenges. Since the present-day perception of two separate communities diverges from the perspective of initial similarity, the reader is driven to ask how and when the two communities grew apart. And although Segal himself addressed this question to an extent in the last chapter of his book

²³ This view was presented most comprehensively in Harnack's work on Christian dogma. See Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* 1-3 (Freiburg: Mohr, 1886-1890).

²⁴ Marcel Simon, "Verus Israel: Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'empire romain (135-425)," (PhD diss., University of Strassbourg, 1948).

²⁵ Marcel Simon, "Verus Israel: Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'empire romain (135-425)," PhD dissertation (Paris: Boccard, 1964).

²⁶ Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: a study of the relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire, 135-425* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

²⁷ See Miriam S. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 9-11.

²⁸ Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

(entitled *The Ways Divide*),²⁹ the question was only turned into a full-fledged theory in James Dunn's *Parting of the Ways* in 1991.³⁰ Dunn gives a comprehensive overview about various versions of Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity, arguing that the view of two separate and defined religions at the outset of their tenuous relationship is a retrojection. Dunn argues that it took centuries for both communities to assert themselves over their respective domains and even after such internal developments it was largely due to external influences (such as taxation) that the two communities ultimately separated.

Dunn has a lasting effect on the study of Jewish-Christian interrelations. And although his concept was criticized by many scholars of the field, these criticisms mostly addressed details of his conclusion and not the entire concept itself. Moreover, some of the counterarguments were expressed in a volume edited by Dunn himself.³¹ For more than a decade, Dunn's view was accepted by most of the scholarly community, and challenged only by a few.³² One attempt at deconstructing Dunn's argumentation was manifest already in the title of a volume edited by Becker and Reed, *The Ways that Never Parted*.³³ However, despite its ambitious title, this compilation of essays did not achieve the goal it set. Contributors did present some valuable criticism over the model of the parting of the ways, by pointing out the continuation of meaningful connections between the two communities beyond the period of Late Antiquity in specific fields and cases, but they failed in arguing for a substitute model. Additionally, as more recent publications show,³⁴ the majority of the scholarly community, even some of the contributors of the volume, still works within the framework provided by Dunn.

The most profound challenge to Dunn's view was offered by Daniel Boyarin. In a series of books and articles culminating in his *Border Lines* published in 2004,³⁵ Boyarin deconstructs the concepts of

²⁹ See *ibid.* 163-183.

³⁰ James D. Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991).

³¹ James D. Dunn (ed.), *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70 to 135: second Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992).

³² One of the most notable examples was that of Horbury, who – adopting the conceptual framework offered by Dunn – argued that the parting of the ways was a phenomenon of the first century (see William Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998)).

³³ Adam H. Becker, Annette Yoshiko Reed (eds.), *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002).

³⁴ See e.g. Adiel Schremer, *Brothers Estranged: Heresy, Christianity, and Jewish Identity in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); F. J. E. Boddens Hosang, *Establishing boundaries Christian-Jewish relations in early council texts and the writings of Church Fathers* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

³⁵ Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: the Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2004).

Judaism and Christianity, pointing out that their anachronistic use would only lead the scholar of Antiquity toward searching for and recognizing difference along community borderlines. Instead, Boyarin emphasizes the importance of notions such as heresy and *minut* (its rabbinic counterpiece), and their important role in crystallizing community boundaries. Boyarin's view of a constant flux of ideas and theological conceptions between rival groups assumes, rather than a definitive moment of parting of the ways, a long process of negotiating the borders that would ultimately serve as boundaries between the two communities. Boyarin's understanding is, thus, not so much an overarching criticism of Dunn's view, but rather a shift in emphasis, drawing the reader's attention to the question of how the division was achieved and perceived from within the two communities. Nevertheless, by this shift, he might be paving the way for the establishment of a new model of Jewish-Christian relations.

Since animal symbolism, as an exegetical tool, is also a shared commodity between communities and one is hard-pressed to pinpoint major shifts in its use, it is an appropriate theme through which the nature of the interrelation between Jewish and Christian communities, and its perception by the parties can be studied. More importantly, due to its constant implied reference to an elusive human-animal difference, animal symbolism is in itself an example of continuous boundary-negotiations. Thus, by analyzing this theme, I wish to contribute to the formation of a novel model of seeing Jewish-Christian interrelations. To a lesser extent, this dissertation also draws upon developments in the emerging discipline of animal studies. Therefore, I also wish to give a brief overview of research in this field, and point out where and how my findings could contribute to it.

Animal studies is deeply intertwined with the study of Judaism and Christianity. One of the major forces that triggered the emergence of animal studies as an independent field of studies during the seventies and the eighties was the conviction that the Biblical tradition, and the Judeo-Christian worldview based upon it, was responsible for millennia of exploitation and mishandling of animals, since it included the notion that the requirement of morality and non-violent interaction between individuals only applies to humankind. This idea was expressed by an article of Lynn White in 1967.³⁶ The article, and fierce responses to it have defined the study of animals and human-animal relations for decades. And although White's view was refuted by many, the writing itself had the advantageous effect of raising awareness to the fact that non-human entities are largely disregarded in the humanities and more particularly in historical research. This observation guided scholars in

³⁶ Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-1207.

subsequent decades to reevaluate not only the role animals play in the history of humankind, but also to reflect on the historicity of the division between humankind and animals. One of the most notable contributions to this field was Mary Midgley's *Beast and Man*.³⁷ In this seminal work, Midgley describes and analyzes the double standards we employ in interpreting actions by humans and by animals. Moreover, she points out the ambiguous position of animals in the western perspective, and with this, she paved the way for the formation of a new discipline focusing on animals themselves. The emergence of this research initiative was marked by the publication of a number of influential books, among them Ritvo's *Animal Estate*,³⁸ and Ingold's *What is an Animal*.³⁹ The latter (an edited volume) attributes agency and awareness to animals just as much as to humans. This volume is exceptionally relevant for my dissertation as it was Ingold who also argued (in the introduction to the volume) that metaphors involving animals call attention not only to their difference from humankind but also to similarities. Along the same lines, Willis' *Signifying Animals*⁴⁰ proposes a dyadic view of human culture, in which animals play the role of otherness on a general level, but at the same time, humans live in continuous unity with animals. This view of ambiguous relationship between humans and animals (called "duality-unity" by Willis) is a core observation of the emerging discipline, and remains a major path in the study of animals ever since. More recently, Cary Wolfe's *Zoontologies*⁴¹ went one step further and claimed that if awareness and agency can be attributed to animals, one can very well claim that animals are subjects. A similar argument is proposed by Donna Haraway,⁴² who argues for a reevaluation of humankind's place within a large network of interdependent species. One of the best-known contributions to animal studies was a collection of lectures by Jacques Derrida, published under the title *L'Animal que donc je suis*.⁴³ In this volume, Derrida proposes a broad criticism of previous philosophical traditions, showing the problematic nature of the concept of animality (namely that we humans tend to place a wide variety of species under one term, while equating with it only one species, that of our own). Derrida offers an approach that he calls *limitrophie*, to study the nature of the divide between humans and "what we call animals". Derrida's

³⁷ Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: the Roots of Human Nature* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1978).

³⁸ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate. The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

³⁹ *What is an Animal?*, ed. Tim Ingold (London: Unwin Hyman: 1988).

⁴⁰ Roy G. Willis, *Signifying Animals: Human Meaning in the Natural World* (London: Unwin Hyman: 1990).

⁴¹ Cary Wolfe, *Zoontologies: the Question of the Animal* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

⁴² Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs People and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2003) and also Eadem, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *L'Animal que donc je suis* (Paris: Galilée, 2006).

contribution exemplifies the fact that the emergence of animal studies as an independent field is accompanied by a shift of interest toward the study of animality, an animal turn⁴⁴ in many other disciplines as well.

As for the intersection of animal studies and the study of Jewish-Christian relations, there are only a handful of shorter publications to date, none of them dedicated in its entirety to the topic in question. From among studies dealing with the zoological perspective of Judaism⁴⁵ or with rabbinic zoology in particular, Elijah Judah Schochet's *Animal Life in Jewish Tradition*⁴⁶ is of importance, for its detailed study of rabbinic tradition. However, even this volume does not discuss the use of animal symbolism beyond a brief comment. Closest to my approach is a chapter in Sacha Stern's *Jewish Identity*,⁴⁷ that argues for a tendency in early rabbinic tradition to relegate animality to non-Jews. Stern's observation is an important one, but it disregards the many narratives in which animality is not opposed to humanity. Another publication with important contribution to the topic in question is Gilhus' *Animals, Gods and Humans*,⁴⁸ which discusses both the early Christian and the Graeco-Roman approach to animals and even engages into discussion about the symbolic value of animals in certain narratives.⁴⁹ My dissertation is different from these studies in its comparative nature, and in the fact that its perspective is formulated in light of findings from animal studies.

The view emerging from this overview of the two disciplines and their intersection is that of two fields of study undergoing significant changes. Attempts at reevaluating the Jewish-Christian relationship in Late Antiquity are gaining momentum in recent years, and animal studies has just recently reached the broader public as a major force of influence. By studying how animal symbols expressed identity and alterity and how they contributed to respective views of interrelations, my dissertation can contribute to the development of both disciplines.

My hypothesis is based upon the above discussed consensus of the two fields and can be outlined as follows: the language of animal symbolism was uniquely appropriate to describe the precarious

⁴⁴ The term was coined by Ritvo. See Harriet Ritvo, "On the Animal Turn," *Daedalus. Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 136, no 4. (2007): 118-122.

⁴⁵ See also Ronald H. Isaacs, *Animals in Jewish Thought* (New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 2000).

⁴⁶ Elijah Judah Schochet, *Animal Life in Jewish Tradition: Attitudes and Relationships* (New York: Ktav, 1984)

⁴⁷ Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 33-42.

⁴⁸ Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans, Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and early Christian Ideas* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁴⁹ One recent addition to this list is Mira Beth Wasserman's *Jews, Gentiles and Other Animals. The Talmud after the Humanities* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). Unfortunately, this book was published only weeks before I submitted my dissertation, and – apart from cursory descriptions – I had no chance to consult it.

interrelation in which Jewish and Christian communities were bound. Rabbis and Church fathers, who were interested in finding ways of not only describing their ambiguous situation, but also facilitating the process of defining and negotiating borders could rely on animal symbolism. By calling to mind the recent consensus of animal studies that animals can not only fulfill the role of objects, but also that of interacting subjects, my hypothesis is that the subjectification of animals is not a modern invention but a constant possibility and part of both Jewish and Christian tradition. Therefore, animal symbols as representations of ingroup and outgroup did have a twofold effect. On the one hand, they could be used as tools of distancing and dehumanizing otherness. On the other, animal symbols of the outgroup could be interpreted in light of and in contrast to animal symbols of the ingroup. In this use, the animalization of the other was not a way of depriving the outgroup of humanity, but rather a way to exploit the possibility of subjectifying animality and, thus, creating a narrative in which the outgroup can be interacted with.

I.II. Animal symbolism and human communities

I.II.I. The Darwinian turn

Due to the fact that our current culture is just as much burdened with the presence of animal symbolism as earlier cultural oecumenes, the study of previous systems of symbolic uses of animals as representations can only start with a contemplation of our own biases and restrictions. For only after reflecting on our current way of thinking about animals and their relation to and distance from humans, can we hope to be able to discuss the borders and defining structures of other structures.

The most evident proof of the presence of the same pressing questions is that despite an ever-growing distance from regular interaction with animals in our present-day urbanized societies, we exhibit the same type of fear of becoming too animalistic as our patristic and rabbinic predecessors did.⁵⁰ Complemented by an increasing drive in a globalized society to establish the principle that to all members of humankind regardless of race, ethnicity, or physical appearance the same rights should be bestowed (precisely because of their kindred origin), the issue of human-animal relations has become even more essential in our culture.

It is first necessary to analyze the differences between our cognitive framework concerning human-animal relations and that of Jewish and Christian interpreters of Late Antiquity. This will, on the one hand, enable the reader to recognize the historical changes in our perception of animal symbolism, and on the other, it will lead to a clearer understanding of the concept used by earlier exegetes.

The scientific milieu from which our zoological perspective originates was first established in 18th century enlightenment, with the publication of Linné's *Systema Naturae* (1758)⁵¹, but reached its climax a century later, with the birth of the concept of the evolution of species. The formulation of this notion in Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and his *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*,⁵² brought about a fundamental shift in the perception of human-animal relations. Contrary to the perspective of a strict boundary between humans as the 'crown of creation' and the rest of the fauna, a concept which dominated Christian culture for almost two millennia, Darwin's

⁵⁰ Cf. Raymond Corbey, *The Metaphysics of Apes: Negotiating the Animal-Human Boundary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 5-7.

⁵¹ Although the first edition was published as early as 1735, it is generally held that the most important and influential edition was the tenth, published in 1758. Cf. Marston Bates, *The nature of natural history* (New York: Scribner, 1950) 11-12.

⁵² The originals were published as follows: Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859); Id., *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871)

idea of evolution and subsequent developments to his theory⁵³ claimed that humans belong to a sequence of species sharing common ancestry.⁵⁴ Consequently, humans and animals could no longer be seen as belonging to fundamentally different dimensions of nature, just as representatives of various courses of development. Thus, Darwin's phrasing of the evolutionary relationship among all existing species indicates the existence of a phylogenic framework, contradicting and partly deconstructing centuries of zoological thinking.

The pre-Darwinian model dominating every discourse of thinking about animals, humankind and their interrelation was based on the ancient concept⁵⁵ of the chain of beings,⁵⁶ which posits that the existence of all species is a result of a divine scenario which, in turn, necessitates that all species integrate into one overarching structure of hierarchy. Their proximity to the upper, more elevated levels of hierarchy is determined by their respective degree of perfection. Also, according to this perspective, humans – as it is expressed in the Biblical tradition – form a unit separate from the rest of the natural world. Thus, every animal species – regardless of their ranking in the chain of beings – is ultimately and irrevocably separate from the entirety of humankind.

Although the *Darwinian turn* aimed – partly – at amending this model of thinking,⁵⁷ its success was far from complete.⁵⁸ Or so it would seem, if we consider non-scholarly discourses of present times.⁵⁹ It appears that the medieval model of chain of beings apparently pervades our way of thinking to such an extent that one can hardly disregard it. Although the once clear-cut correspondence between *specific* human features and *specific* animals lost some of its charm,⁶⁰ the precise implications of

⁵³ Gillian Beer, "Introduction" in Charles Darwin, *On the origin of species* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) xxii-xxv.

⁵⁴ Darwin, *On the origin of species*, 9-16.

⁵⁵ Dominic J. O'Meara, "The Chain of Being in the Light of Recent Work on Platonic Hierarchies" in Marion Leathers Kuntz, and Paul Grimley Kuntz, *Jacob's Ladder and the Tree of Life: Concepts of Hierarchy and the Great Chain of Being* (New York: P. Lang, 1987) 15-30.

⁵⁶ Livingstone, *Less than Human*, 39.

⁵⁷ However, even Darwin was so much influenced by the model of expressing interspecies relations in a tree-model that in the famous diagram of the *Origin of Species*, he borrowed both the visual layout and the structure of the model in order to outline his theory of interrelations. Cf. Mark A Ragan, "Trees and Networks before and after Darwin" *BioMed Central* 38, (2009). Available online at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2793248/>. Last accessed 21. 10. 2015.

⁵⁸ Cf. Alexander Rosenberg, and Daniel W. McShea, *Philosophy of Biology a Contemporary Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 127-128.

⁵⁹ See Smith, *Less than Human*, 103-132 and also Paul G. Bain, Jeroen Vaes and Jacques-Philippe Leyens (ed.), *Humanness and Dehumanization* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁶⁰ Naturally, I do not wish to claim that animal symbolism is no longer present in our culture. Even with the partial success of the spread of Darwin's evolutionary model (or perhaps partly because it was only partially successful in deconstructing long held beliefs), exploring the variety of the fauna in a symbolic fashion is still an important and integral part of our cultures. See Steve Baker, *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity, and Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) 33-120.

Darwin's theoretical considerations could not fully be apprehended by the wider public. The model of genetic diversity and adaptation ultimately implies that no "lower" or "higher" species exist and that the fauna – including humans – should be regarded as lacking any meritocratic hierarchy. But despite the immensely powerful argument of the theory of evolution, our discourses of human-animal relations still reflect a hierarchical framework of thinking. In fact, our perspective is rather an amalgamation of the phylogenic concept and the hierarchy-based taxonomy of pre-Darwinian times. Therefore, the thesis of the chain of beings was not substituted with the Darwinian antithesis of constant adaptation, but rather synthetized into a popular understanding of Darwinism, in which mutation is understood teleologically. Change is not seen as a contingency that happens to advance certain groups, but as a reaction that aims at improvement. Therefore, the post-Darwinian history of animal symbolism is replete with examples of denigrating others⁶¹ in the form of calling them apes and monkeys.⁶²

Seeing the limited success of the Darwinian perspective, one is led to believe that using animality to dehumanize otherness is in some way inherent to our cognitive process. And there is indeed evidence pointing toward such an understanding. Recently a heightened number of sociological and cognitive science-oriented research initiatives called attention to the prevalence of animal symbolism as a form of describing the other in inter-religious and intercultural discourses from diverse cultures and time periods. Subsequently, a number of studies investigated on the origins, characteristics and aims of this meta-linguistic tool.⁶³ These research initiatives – first of all – attempt to reveal whether identifying members of the *outgroup* with animals has any prevalence compared to labeling members of the *ingroup* in this way. Here, one distinguishes between the process of dehumanization and that of animalization. The differences are not only chronological but also structural. The first one consists

⁶¹ Even though this impression is entirely contradictory to the Darwinian concept of evolution, in which neither excellence, nor value is attributed to different species. In fact, the brilliance of the Darwinian theory of evolution lies partly in the observation that, in spite of all human inclinations of attributing different values to different layers of taxonomy, the drive behind evolution is random mutation. Cf. Smith, *Less than Human*, 41-42.

⁶² A special case is that of the representation of African-Americans in the United States. As several studies indicate, despite its gradual disappearance from public discourse, the concept of an intrinsic relationship between African-Americans and simians continue to linger often unconsciously in the mindset of the majority of US population. Cf. Goff, Eberhardt, Williams and Jackson "Not yet Human: Implicit Knowledge, Historical Dehumanization, and Contemporary Consequences," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 94, 2 (2008): 292-306, here 292-293. But not even Charles Darwin himself could avoid being compared to an ape. See Jonathan Smith, *Charles Darwin and Victorian visual culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 234-235.

⁶³ Cf. the studies conducted by Leyens and his colleagues. Jacques-Philippe Leyens, Maria Paola Paladino, Rodriguez, Jeroen Vaes, Stéphanie Demoulin, Rodriguez et al., "The emotional side of prejudice: The Attribution of Secondary Emotions to Ingroups and Outgroups," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4 (2000): 186-197.; Leyens, Rodriguez, Rodriguez, Gaunt, Paladino, Vaes et al., "Psychological Essentialism and the Differential Attribution of Uniquely Human Emotions to Ingroups and Outgroups," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 31 (2001): 395-41.

of the denial of certain human attributes, whereas the second adds the element of establishing new similarities.⁶⁴ As one will see, these questions are fundamental to my research as well.

As for the core question of whether dehumanization and animalization of otherness is culturally constructed or an anthropological constant, the findings are not fully consistent. There are minor hints suggesting a cultural origin of animalization,⁶⁵ yet the balance rather tilts toward the scenario that animalizing the other belongs to the most basic cognitive structures of humankind. The fact that analogous experiments were conducted with members of different societal layers as well as with representatives of different nationalities, genders and ethnic groups with similar results,⁶⁶ as well as the fact that similar forms of differentiation occur in the dimension of humans vs. automata,⁶⁷ and more importantly, that the same asymmetry between the perception of members from the ingroup and outgroup occurred both between groups of hostile and non-hostile interrelations⁶⁸ implies that the cognitive strategy is rather a standard human way for establishing and maintaining distinctions between ingroup and outgroup than a social construct which happens to be existent in all investigated cultures.⁶⁹

This, however, is in itself no satisfactory explanation of the animal symbolism present in Jewish and Christian tradition. Primarily, because the symbolic identification of the other with different species is just as ubiquitous in the writings of both the rabbis and the Church fathers as the identification of the respective ingroup. Thus, recognizing only the dehumanizing aspect of the topic would be an undesirable case of simplification. Consequently, I wish to propose two additional perspectives for the study of animal symbolism, which – together with the concept of dehumanization – enable a more versatile and suitable understanding of the use of animal symbols in the two religious traditions.

⁶⁴ S. Loughnan, N. Haslam, and Y. Kashima. “Understanding the Relationship between Attribute-Based and Metaphor-Based Dehumanization,” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*. 12, 6 (2009): 747-762, here 747-748.

⁶⁵ Certain studies indicate that the rate of intergroup animosity can be significantly mitigated by emphasizing human-animal similarity, thus influencing the primordial system of animal-identification. Cf. Kimberly Costello and Gordon Hodson, “Exploring the Roots of Dehumanization: The Role of Animal—Human Similarity in Promoting Immigrant Humanization,” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*. 13/1 (2010): 3-22, here 4-5.

⁶⁶ Cf. Giulio Boccatto, Dora Capozza, Rossella Falvo and Federica Durante, “The Missing Link: Ingroup, Outgroup and the Human Species,” *Social Cognition*. 26, 2 (2008): 224-234, here 226-227.

⁶⁷ Cf. Stephen Loughnan and Nick Haslam, “Animals and Androids: Implicit Associations Between Social Categories and Nonhumans,” *Psychological Science*. 18, 2 (2007): 116-121, here 116-117.

⁶⁸ Id., 121.

⁶⁹ The existence of propagandistic animalization most notably in the recent past (see Baker, *Picturing the Beast*, 89-116; Smith, *Less than Human*, 146-148) and the fact that several of its most gruesome manifestations continue to haunt both our public discourses (Cf. Nick Haslam, Steve Loughnan, and Pamela Sun “Beastly: What Makes Animal Metaphors Offensive?” *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 30, 3 (2011): 311-325, here 322) and our related perceptions of the interrelation between religious, ethnic and political communities, demonstrates the perpetual importance of the subject.

I.II.II. Animals describing reality

Due to the variety of its comparisons, animal symbolism reflects not only the constructions of human-animal hierarchies, but also the variety and intricate interrelations between animals themselves. This observation received its classic expression in the fabled saying of Claude Lévi-Strauss: *les espèces sont choisis ... comme bonnes à penser*.⁷⁰ According to him, animal symbolism is a device to bring order into chaos. By referring to the pre-existent (or so it is perceived) taxonomic order of animals, the otherwise convoluted relationships of the human world can suddenly be perceived in an organized manner. Although Lévi-Strauss attributed this concept originally to animal totems, I see no reason to refrain from extending it to animal symbolism in a broader sense.⁷¹ And by regarding the linguistic device of animal symbolism from Lévi-Strauss' structuralist perspective,⁷² a profound characteristic of this tool becomes apparent: namely, that the content of a culture's animal symbolism as well as the exact structure of interrelations expressed through it are largely defined by the culture in question.⁷³ And, in turn, a culture's perception of its zoological surroundings and the values and meanings attributed to animal species depend on a *mentalité*,⁷⁴ and is, thus, culturally constructed in its entirety. Thus, animal symbolism is a meta-language determined primarily by an accumulated cultural *mentalité*,⁷⁵ in which various species are identified with certain characteristics and traits. Such a view

⁷⁰ The original French expression is from Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui* (Paris: PUF, 1962) 128. The more widely known English version ("animals are good to think [with]") is the translation of Edmund Leach, who was amply criticized for his choice of words (see Edmund Leach, *Lévi-Strauss* (London: Fontana Press, 1996 [originally 1970]) 44-45, and fn. 8 at 141).

⁷¹ As for the question of applying Lévi-Strauss' conception to the issue of symbolism in general, see Stéphane Breton, "De l'illusion totémique à la fiction sociale," *L'Homme* 151 (1999): 123-149, here 124-128.

⁷² As for the position of Lévi structuralist' views in light of contemporary positions, see Marcel Hénaff, "Claude Lévi-Strauss: une anthropologie «bonne à penser»," *Esprit* 301 (2004): 145-168.

⁷³ Clearly, the animals with which members of a culture interact, habits of eating and clothing as well as religious considerations are culturally constructed. Cf. Laura Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs and Asses: Animals in the Christian Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008) 13-15.

⁷⁴ The term *mentalité* I am borrowing from such representatives of the French Annales-tradition as Duby or Le Goff (for the role "mentalité" plays within their vocabulary, see André Burguière, *L'école des Annales: Une histoire intellectuelle* (Paris: O. Jacob, 2006) 71-101). By *mentalité*, I refer to the ways in which members of a given culture "make sense of the world around them" (Baker quoting Darnton in *Picturing the Beast*, 6). Similarly to Steve Baker, I believe that the term is particularly applicable to the study of a culture's relation to animals, as it encompasses not only knowledge that is codified in writing, but also the entirety of the beliefs, representations and the ways in which human-animal relations are envisaged (for an excellent explanation of the usage of the expression in contrast to other terms, see Peter Schöttler, "Mentalitäten, Ideologien, Diskurse. Zur sozialgeschichtlichen Thematisierung der 'dritten Ebene'" "In *Alltagsgeschichte. Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen*, ed. Alf Lüdtke, 85-136 (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 1989) here 95-107). I restrict my usage of the term to the more general questions of human-animal relation and the limits of using animal symbolism (thus to the first and second chapter of the present dissertation), as I feel that such an overarching term is not the most appropriate for the detailed description of how a given culture dealt with individual animal species or themes of constructing animal taxonomies.

⁷⁵ Baker, *Picturing the Beast*, 5-9.

not only enables the identification of a community with certain animals, but positively encourages it in the case of animals regarded as bearers of positive traits. The self-professed identification of both Jewish and Christian communities with lions as symbols of royalty, power, or even ferocity,⁷⁶ for example, falls into this category. From this perspective, animal symbolism clearly does not serve the goal of dehumanizing their referent (so much the more, since there is often no clear distinction between the concepts of humanity and animality in such a totemistic paradigm), but to imbue communities or their members with desirable traits. Such views also enable thinkers to label other communities with undesirable characteristics, if the selected animal symbol is taken to represent such features, but even in such cases, an aim of dehumanization is not always palpable.⁷⁷

Alongside the dehumanizing and the totemic semantic patterns, the third major possibility to view animal symbolism is the one proposed from an anthropocentric perspective, according to which human uniqueness and superiority defines any approach to the rest of the natural world. Such a notion might be based on a belief of ontological differences (as is the case in many Greek philosophical traditions), but also on an accidental decision of the divine, as presented in the Biblical tradition. In its incipient pages, the Creation story suggests such a perspective of the world. A clear and impassable boundary is drawn between humans and animals. Humans can explore the fauna and make a prolific use of its members without ever running the risk of falling victim to the process of either self-divinization or dehumanizing animalization. Since this anthropocentric-creationist view operates a clear distinction between all members of the fauna on the one hand, and humans on the other hand, the relationship between the two can only be constructed in the linguistic field of metaphors and symbols. Animals, subjugated to human use and exploitation⁷⁸ can either serve as objects of consumption or of knowledge. This creationist perspective is different from a totemistic one, for here, animals are not bearers of characteristics, but representatives of them. And it is also different from that of dehumanization, as it implies no hierarchy and no possibility of traversing boundaries. Thus, unlike the totemistic or the hierarchical perspective, it does not allow the notion that descending from a lion or having any familial relationship with it would make one courageous or fierce. In such a view,

⁷⁶ On this, see more in chapter 5.3.1.

⁷⁷ See, for example, *bSanhedrin* 105a, in which Israel is compared – by implication – to a wolf, as opposed to canine enemies of the people. As for a discussion of this passage, see chapter 5.3.3.

⁷⁸ Such a concept of human superiority is, however, not equal with an unlimited power to exploit the animal world. See Ferdinand Ahius, “Behemot, Leviatan und der Mensch in Hiob 38-42,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 123 (2011): 72-91, here 72-77. This is a distinction that is well-preserved in Jewish tradition (See David Banon, “Le Statut de l’animal dans la tradition juive,” *Le Portique* 23-24 (2009): 2-7.) and somewhat forgotten in Christian exegesis (as pointed out in Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-1207).

lion can only be a symbol of such characteristics. As a result of this demarcation, no animal is left out from the taxonomy. Moreover, whereas in a totemistic approach, certain animals are naturally more relevant to a community and there is no systemic attempt of interpreting the entirety of the fauna with reference to humans, the vantage point of this anthropocentric-creationist view requires the observer to find meaning behind the existence and behavior of each and every animal species. And since animals are regarded primarily from a perspective of theist anthropocentrism, they can either represent divine forces and divine will and its validity all around the world or they necessarily have to be seen from various human perspectives (such as usefulness, the danger they pose, their appearance, their use in religious rituals etc.). The importance of each of these aspects differs from animal to animal, but animal symbolism of this kind serves the major goal of interpreting the entirety of the fauna with relation to human existence, and values, morals or vices. The resulting observation and interpretation of minute differences and similarities between different species (e.g. the contradiction between the morphological similarity between wolves and dogs on the one hand, and their substantial difference with regards to domestication (from human perspective) on the other) is often the major content of narratives involving animal symbolism of this kind. It is important to point out that these approaches (dehumanization, the totemic perspective, and the creationist anthropocentric view) are not mutually exclusive, but rather describe – together – the way in which cultures might present animals in a symbolic fashion. Applying this observation to the case at hand, the Jewish and Christian interpretations implementing animal symbolism to describe identity and alterity, one can trace aspects and major features of all three approaches.

The pre-Darwinian cognitive framework of Jewish and Christian tradition was defined in the *Old Testament* by an anthropocentric-creationist narrative, maintaining a strict boundary between humans and animals. However, this layout of the creation was emphatically presented as a result of an arbitrary divine decision. And it was, therefore, fathomable that the boundary between humans and animals can become weak again, enabling transgressions and also dehumanizing narratives. This opportunity was seized by both traditions, when they regarded otherness in certain cases as animality, in contrast to the humanity of one's own community. Such narratives will be presented and analyzed in chapter one. There are also narratives in which the totemistic perspective comes to the foreground, and the relationship between ingroup and outgroup is regarded through perceived dichotomies between members of the fauna. Such oppositions are most visible in the treatment of two important dichotomies: the one between pure and impure species and the one between animals of the wilderness

and savage beasts on the one hand, and domesticated species on the other. These topics will be treated in chapter three and four respectively.

I.III. The Animal Symbolism of Jewish and Christian Traditions

I.III.I. Animal symbolism in the Hebrew Bible

Many scholarly approaches – which (perhaps unknowingly) base their inquiries on the supposition that the Hebrew Bible is the beginning of the history of Judaism and Christianity – regard the corpus of the Israelite scripture as the ultimate point of reference. Thus, all too often the external influence so obviously present in Hebrew Biblical literature is ignored. As an alternative to this approach, I regard in the present introduction the textual tradition of the Hebrew Bible as only a station in a historical process. The Hebrew Bible's zoological tradition is defined, first and foremost, by the fact that in three respects it reacts to or differs from cultural conglomerates of Egyptian and Mesopotamian religion, literature and animal representation.

1. A crucial point in this tradition, as expressed most clearly in the account of the creation, is that humankind was ordered by God to be the master of the entirety of the created world. This is not a simple case of *speciesism*,⁷⁹ but rather a theocentric vision,⁸⁰ in which a tripartite hierarchy of the universe is presented. God is stationed at the top, humankind – shaped in the image of God – right beneath it, ruling over the third major entity, plants and animals.⁸¹ This worldview contains the notion that humans – as a species – occupy a place different from the rest of the living world. This creationist-anthropocentrism should be regarded in contrasts and comparison with the partially shared religious worldview of Egypt and Mesopotamia. In the latter, humans not only have no dominion over animals, but are forced to share the world with creatures possessing both magical and natural powers that enable them to easily overcome them.⁸² In comparison, the Hebrew Bible presents animals, even the most ferocious beasts⁸³ as subjects to and acting on behalf of the divine will and humankind, its ordained viceroys of Earth.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Cf. Paul Waldau, *The Specter of Speciesism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 202-211.

⁸⁰ See Ronald A. Simkins, "The Bible and Anthropocentrism: putting humans in their place," *Dialectical Anthropology* 38 (2014): 397-413.

⁸¹ Peter Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere: Studien zum Verhältnis von Mensch und Tier im alten Israel* (Freiburg Schweiz: Universitätsverlag) 220-221.

⁸² Peter T. Vogt, *Interpreting the Pentateuch: an exegetical handbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 115-116.

⁸³ E.g. Jon 1:17-2:10; 1Kgs 13:24-30

⁸⁴ Cf. Joshua M. Moritz, "Animals and the Image of God in the Bible and Beyond," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*. 48 (2009): 134-146, here 135.

2. A second issue is also based partly on the account of creation (although it is frequently corroborated by other accounts),⁸⁵ and argues that the God of Israel and of the entire world is himself anthropomorphic and puts every living thing under his sway.⁸⁶ Again, a comparison with Egyptian and Mesopotamian models is in order, for the Hebrew Bible's hostility to animal-shaped representations of the divine⁸⁷ and its refusal of attributing any magical powers directly to animals⁸⁸ can be best understood as a response to the threat posed by the influence of dissimilar Near Eastern traditions on the economy of the Israelite religion. In most Ancient Near Eastern lore, gods can not only take human form, but some of them are constantly and compulsorily presented in the shape of animals or of human-animal hybrids.⁸⁹ The problem of such theriomorphic divinities is encapsulated in the Hebrew Bible's apparent anxiety concerning totemic thinking.

And although any totem would openly contradict the second commandment of the Decalogue, and probably even the first one,⁹⁰ there are references to such forms of animal representations in the Hebrew Bible.⁹¹ One of these "idols" is the Bronze Serpent, erected by Moses, who followed divine orders. Another one is the Golden Calf, detested by both God and Moses. The Golden Calf is renounced on the spot, therefore, it is not presented as an acceptable practice, but rather as a result of a corrupting, exterior influence on Israelite religion. The Bronze Serpent is apparently more problematic, as it serves as a form of serpent taboo. Nevertheless, it is also condemned (2 Kgs 18:4) in subsequent tradition.⁹² In contrast to other Ancient Near Eastern traditions, where animal representations together with animal-centered taboos were often understood to originate in the animals' own magical or divine power,⁹³ the Hebrew Bible maintains that animals themselves do not possess any divine power. They are not the source of power, and their participation in magical and

⁸⁵ Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 9-10.

⁸⁶ Jeanne Kay, "Human dominion over nature in the Hebrew Bible," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 79 (1989): 214-232, here 217-218.

⁸⁷ Billie Jean Collins, *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 410-411.

⁸⁸ Giuseppe Veltri, "The Rabbis and Pliny the Elder: Jewish and Greco-Roman Attitudes toward Magic and Empirical Knowledge," *Poetics Today: International Journal for Theory and Analysis of Literature and Communication*. 19 (1998): 63-89, here 66-67.

⁸⁹ Collins, *A History of the Animal World*, 336-337, 368-369.

⁹⁰ Cf. F. S Bodenheimer, *Animal and man in Bible lands* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960) 186-7.

⁹¹ Collins, *A History of the Animal World*, 411-412.

⁹² Bernd U. Schipper, "Die eherne Schlange: Zur Religionsgeschichte und Theologie von Num 21,4-9," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 121 (2009): 369-387, here 370-372.

⁹³ Collins, *A History of the Animal World*, 351-355.

religious performances is only that of agency.⁹⁴ A similar argument can be formed concerning animal-based magical practices.⁹⁵

It is important to note that the fear of external cultural influences is twofold in the Hebrew Bible. On the one hand, there is a realization in almost all layers of the corpus that contemporaries of the Israelites, namely Egyptians, Assyrians, Syrians, Canaanites, Persians etc. venerate idols, among them animal images, animal-shaped Gods and participate in animal-based magical practices.⁹⁶ On the other hand, the constant presence of such threats is complemented with the notion that the ancestors of Jews participated in similar animal-based idolatrous veneration and in cultural practices of magic related to animals.⁹⁷ Thus, the fight against such worldviews is not only a constant struggle against external influences – at least on a theoretical and theological-political level – but also a fight against a historical projection of the self. This second aspect makes the struggle more desperate, but also more intimate.

3. Any cultural *mentalité* with a zoological perspective requires a framework for classification, for it enables participants of the given culture to deal with everyday encounters with animals. However, it also creates a cognitive structure for recognizing the relationship between humankind and animals and reflecting on human-animal relations. The Hebrew Bible has a strong and well-reflected zoological perspective and framework of classification, which is partly different from Ancient Near Eastern counterparts.

Biblical zoology is interested primarily in the habitats of animals, distinguishing between three major options (land, air, and water).⁹⁸ An elaboration of this major tripartite system was to set apart species living in domesticated environments and those living in the “wild nature”.⁹⁹ This distinction gives further detail primarily – but not exclusively – to the class of land animals, and it is most prominent in prophetic narratives,¹⁰⁰ where the invasion of wild nature (jackals, hyenas, ostriches, serpents etc.) into the human domain is a recurrent topos. Moreover, it is also present in wisdom literature¹⁰¹ and

⁹⁴ Schochet, *Animal Life* 28-34.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 26-28

⁹⁶ Cf Eccl 3:21, 1Sm 6:4, Is 2:20, Is 41:6, Dt 9:16, 2Kgs 23:11.

⁹⁷ Wisdom 12:24, 15:18-19

⁹⁸ See Benjamin R. Foster, “Animals in Mesopotamian Literature,” in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Billie Jean Collins, 271-288 (Leiden: Brill, 2002) here 272. See Gn 1:20-25, Ez 29:5; Ez 38:20; Dn 2:38; Hos 2:20 etc.

⁹⁹ See Chikako Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia: a Contextual Approach* (Wien: Institut für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 2002), 170-172.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. Is 13:21-22.

¹⁰¹ Jb 24:5.

even in quasi-historical texts.¹⁰² In contrast to the wilderness, places occupied by humans are marked by the presence of more irenic or actually domesticated species¹⁰³ (cattle, birds etc.). The classification of animals into those of human context and those of the wilderness is partly specific to Israelite culture. It hints at the agricultural nature of Israelite society, since it is a by-product of a constant struggle for properly irrigating the fields and maintaining the increasing of the cattle.¹⁰⁴ Thus, in the Israelite scenario, the animals of the wilderness indicate – with their presence – that a certain venue is neither inhabited nor cultivated. In certain passages implementing such a distinction, the emphasis is rather on the behavior expected from each species and the comparison is between violent and vulnerable animals. The description of Isaiah 11:6-9, for example, brings together animals that are known to be preys to predators (cattle, sheep, goat etc.) and predators themselves (lion, wolf, bear). It is, however, noteworthy that even in that scenario of ultimate reconciliation, the distinction of habitats is palpable. Vulnerable animals are all domesticated ones (there is, for example, no deer or gazelle in the eschatological scenery of Isaiah), and the predators also represent the non-inhabited regions. Dogs, for instance, a well-known example of domesticated predators,¹⁰⁵ are not mentioned. A tertiary concept of classification is based on the concept of purity and sacrifices.¹⁰⁶ Through this addition animals are not only categorized in accordance with their relationship with humankind but also with the divine. Most prominently, the legal parts of the Mosaic corpus (and the non-legal or non-Mosaic texts influenced by them)¹⁰⁷ represent this perspective of thinking about animals. In many cases, the ritual purity of a given species is in accordance with its prominent role in sacrifices.¹⁰⁸ It is noteworthy that according to the Hebrew Bible, the alimentary regulations are not an inherent part of world order but specific conditions set in a temporal, and later on, in a religious/ethnic framework. This religious/ethnic framework is elaborated by the Mosaic legal tradition,¹⁰⁹ whereas the temporal

¹⁰² Cf. Dt 8:15.

¹⁰³ Jer 9:10.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Rod Preece and David Fraser. “The Status of Animals in Biblical and Christian Thought: A Study in Colliding Values,” *Society & Animals*. 8 (2000): 245-263, here 246-247.

¹⁰⁵ Vilhelm Møller-Christensen, H. Brockmann, Kay Eduard Jordt Jørgensen *Biblisches Tierlexikon* (Konstanz: Christl. Verl.-Anst., 1969) 38-39.

¹⁰⁶ On the interrelation of the two, see J. W. Rogerson, “What was the Meaning of Animal Sacrifice?” in Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto, ed. *Animals on the Agenda: Questions about Animals for Theology and Ethics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998): 8-18.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. Gn 7:1-4; Gn 32:32; Nm 6:3-4. As for the first, see Gn 7:1-4; Gn 32:32; Nm 6:3-4. As for the second, see Jd 13:6-7; 1Kgs 13:15-18; Is 65:4.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man*, 211.

¹⁰⁹ The Leviticus commences the introduction of dietary regulations with emphasizing the fact that it is for the people of Israel (“Speak to the people of Israel, saying...” Lv 11:2). But the relationship between the people of Israel and the dietary laws is even more emphatically stated in Deuteronomy (“You are children of the Lord your God. You must not lacerate yourselves or shave your forelocks for the dead. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; it is you the Lord has

aspect is indicated by the fact that the first narrative in which the notion of pure/impure animals features is the story of the deluge. Remarkably, God's command to Noah¹¹⁰ to bring to the ark different numbers of pairs from pure and from impure animals¹¹¹ is not the only peculiarity. At the end of the myth of the flood, God permits, for the first time in history, the consumption of meat (with an accompanying restriction of that of blood).¹¹² This is a marked departure from the paradisiacal scenario of vegetarianism. And there is an indication that the validity of dietary regulations also has a *terminus ante quem*. In the Hebrew Bible's eschatological topos of peaceful coexistence of carnivores and herbivores, poisonous animals and humans,¹¹³ the latter will not consume meat.¹¹⁴ Readers must be careful not to apply the prominent role of this notion of Christian and Jewish traditions retrospectively, as the classificatory system of the Hebrew Bible is – primarily – defined by different considerations, and the question of purity and impurity functions only as a supplement to the two more elementary aspects of categorization.

This threefold system of zoological perspective forms the basis for two related but separate courses of development. These, the rabbinic Jewish and the patristic Christian view of animals both originate from an intricate web of cultural interrelations. The major factors of these interrelations are, firstly, the Hebrew Biblical tradition proper (together with overt and covert residues of Ancient Near Eastern traditions) and influences of Greek philosophical traditions. The encounter and one of the first amalgamations of these two traditions is available in the form of a textual tradition closely related to the Hebrew Bible, namely the *New Testament*. Since the *New Testament* is a textual witness of various first and second century CE tendencies of formulating Jewish and Christian constructions, I am going to give a brief analysis of its zoological perspective.

I.III.II. Animal symbolism in the *New Testament*

The *New Testament's* zoological perspective is in many respects similar to that of the Hebrew Bible. Like its predecessor, its corpus can also be understood as a reaction to an ever-present threat of

chosen out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. You shall not eat any abhorrent thing... (Dt 14:1-3)"

¹¹⁰ It is worth mentioning that the according to representatives of the source critical approach, the different perspectives (habitat and purity) belong to different sources. On this question see Joshua A. Berman, *Inconsistency in the Torah: Ancient Literary Convention and the Limits of Source Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 262-263.

¹¹¹ Gn 7:1-4

¹¹² Gn 9:3-6

¹¹³ E.g. Is 11:6

¹¹⁴ E.g. Joel 3:18 (4:18 in the BH); Amos 9:14. Cf. Schochet, *Animal Life*, 50.

theriomorphic concepts.¹¹⁵ In this case, it is a palpable awareness of Graeco-Roman mythology, literature and folk tales, in which magical and often all-too human animals feature, that gives rise to such a concern. In the mind of its authors, the source of threat is thus relocated, as the provenance of “hostile” cultural influence invading the mind of late antique Israelites is no longer Mesopotamia, but Egyptian religion and most notably Graeco-Roman cults.¹¹⁶

Unlike the Hebrew Bible, the *New Testament* does not offer a unified zoological perspective. The *Gospel* traditions, on the one hand, seem to be under the influence of the Hebrew Bible’s perspective of kinship between humans and animals as pre-ordained by divine will.¹¹⁷ In the mission of Jesus, animals are notably often presented as beings toward which humans need to show compassion,¹¹⁸ and in accordance with the Hebrew Bible’s model of messianic kingdom, the ultimate goal of Jesus’ ministry was to abolish the twisted world order in which animals preyed on one another.¹¹⁹

The Pauline epistles,¹²⁰ on the other hand, seem to operate under the influence of Stoic tradition, most notably its concept of distinguishing between rational humans and irrational animals.¹²¹ And although the issue of restoring the paradisiacal status of peace in the world is also raised in this corpus,¹²² the emphasis is not on restoring the harmony between humans and animals, but on a much broader anthropological level aiming at transforming the entirety of creation.¹²³

A significant further difference between the *Gospels*, on the one hand, and the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles, on the other, is the partial¹²⁴ abolition of dietary and purity considerations in the latter.¹²⁵ The most noteworthy episode of this development is presented in *Acts* 10, where Peter is told that Jewish dietary laws have been abrogated.¹²⁶ The issue of the abrogation of the dietary laws

¹¹⁵ Cf. Rv 14:11; Rv 16:2 etc.

¹¹⁶ Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs and Asses*, 29-35.

¹¹⁷ Moritz, “Animals and the Image of God,” 138.

¹¹⁸ Lk 14:5; Mt 6:29 etc.

¹¹⁹ Richard Bauckham, “Jesus and Animals II: What did he Practise?” in Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto, ed. *Animals on the agenda: questions about animals for theology and ethics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998): 49-61, here 54-56.

¹²⁰ E.g. 1Cor 9:9-12;

¹²¹ Moritz, “Animals and the Image of God,” 142.

¹²² Rom 8:21-24.

¹²³ E.g. Col. 1:15-20.

¹²⁴ Cf. Acts 15:29, also David Biale, *Blood and Belief: The Circulation of a Symbol between Jews and Christians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) 44-81.

¹²⁵ Cf. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 166.

¹²⁶ An addendum to the abrogation of dietary laws, is the ensuing decrease in the significance of sacrificial considerations. Although the end of Temple sacrifices, as a historical reality does not manifest itself in the *New Testament*, the drive for its wane is already hinted at. For a comprehensive outlook on the topic, cf. Maria-Zoe Petroupoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC – AD200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 213-216.

in the *Acts of the Apostles* is rather an indication of an existing situation (that dietary laws were not regarded by most)¹²⁷ than an argument in favor of the annulling of differentiation between Jews and Gentiles.¹²⁸

However, as for the zoological perspective presented by the *New Testament*, the abrogation of dietary laws has a fundamental effect. By denying the internal distinction between various species of animals, their overall difference from humans is increasingly emphasized.¹²⁹ This direction goes hand in hand with a process of growing interest in humans, and a decreasing interest in animals *per se*.¹³⁰ This change seems to have facilitated an increase in the use of the latter in a metaphorical fashion. Unlike the tradition of the Hebrew Bible, where many of the animals featured appear in a non-figurative way (as possession, food, other realia or as descriptions of nature), *New Testament* authors rather treated them as symbolical agents. This became possible due to a general move in toward allegorical interpretation,¹³¹ promoted by its authors and subsequent Christian exegetes at the expense of literal understanding. And although the use of allegory and symbolism aimed at enabling the claim and appropriation of authoritative texts, it also had an effect on the use of animal symbols. Despite a decreased variety of animals used in *New Testament* narratives, as the example of the *Book of Revelations*¹³² and its numerous *epigones* in early Christian literature¹³³ indicates, it also opened up a hitherto unknown richness in integrating animal symbolism into mainstream religious discourses. The consequences of the shift from the Hebrew Bible to the *New Testament* are widespread. The most obvious among them is an inclination among authors of the latter to advocate essential differentiations concerning the nature of animal species and to interpret them in a moral fashion. In the zoological symbolism of the Hebrew Bible, one hardly ever encounters essential roles. No animal is imbued with an irrevocable cloak of good or evil, not even the snake.¹³⁴ That is to say, the meaning of individual animal symbols – due to the animal’s ambiguous nature – is not always the same. In the *New*

¹²⁷ David M. Freidenreich, *Foreigners and their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011) 87-101.

¹²⁸ Cf. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 165.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 161-2.

¹³¹ Cf. Jon Whitman, *Interpretation and allegory antiquity to the modern period* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 37-45. On the general influence of allegorization on animal symbols, see Jan M. Ziolkowski “Literary Genre and Animal Symbolism,” in *Animals and the Symbolic in Mediaeval Art and Literature*, ed L. A. J. R. Houwen (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997): 1-23, here 15.

¹³² Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 176-8.

¹³³ Cf. Jürgen Roloff, *The Revelation of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 1-6.

¹³⁴ Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978) 85-89.

Testament, however,¹³⁵ essential identifications are present (e.g. the demonization of the desert by such species as scorpions or snakes).¹³⁶ This change results in a landscape in which representatives of Jewish and Christian interpretative traditions would be able to turn the once simpler, demythologized language of the Hebrew Bible into a source of a great variety of animal symbolical narratives.

Although Jewish and Christian exegetical tradition shared only parts of its corpus, and there are notable differences with regard to interest in certain species and in the symbolic interpretation of them, the directions of exegesis are quite similar in the two communities. Interpreters are interested in both traditions in the order of creation and humankind's place in it in comparison with both God and animals. Moreover, despite their different views concerning the validity of sacrifices and the distinction between pure and impure animals, these topics provided similar major frameworks of presenting animal symbolism in both traditions. Finally, there is a shared interest in the relationship between savage, wild animals and their vulnerable, domesticated counterparts.

I.III.III. The Church fathers' animal symbolism

In contrast to the Hebrew Bible's preoccupation with habitats, Christian thinkers focus predominantly on the question of purity and impurity, a topic that is amply – if sometimes negatively – reflected in the *New Testament*, although Church fathers themselves consciously and explicitly disregard most dietary laws.¹³⁷ Despite the fact, for example, that a pig is no longer considered to be ritually impure, and that it is widely consumed by Christians, the notion that it might symbolize immorality and/or wicked peoples, is clearly present in patristic tradition.¹³⁸ However, despite its reliance on previous models, early Christianity also offers an innovative, new classificatory model. The changes occurring in societal, religious and political/cultural structures which enabled the creation of this classificatory system, are the following:

1. The emergence of visual artistic experience, which is not only characteristic of Christianity,¹³⁹ but – with the introduction of large numbers of Gentiles to the Christian community – becomes

¹³⁵ John Muddiman, "A New Testament Doctrine of Creation?" in Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto, ed. *Animals on the agenda: questions about animals for theology and ethics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998): 25-33.

¹³⁶ Cf. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 170.

¹³⁷ Except for the refusal of blood-consumption, which is preserved for some centuries after the famous council of Jerusalem (Cf. Acts 15) in which it was decreed (Cf. Veronika E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting, the Evolution of a Sin: Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1996) 109, 136.

¹³⁸ E.g. Lactantius: *Divinae Institutiones* 4:17; *Epistle of Barnabas* 10; Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manicheum* 6:7.

¹³⁹ Cf. Jaś Elsner, "Archaeologies and Agendas: Reflections on Late Ancient Jewish Art and Early Christian Art" *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 93 (2003): 114-128, here 114-117.

increasingly important in this community, and the demand for reproducible and recognizable symbols is significantly increased. Visual expression requires concise and clear symbols, and in the case of animal representation, implements a system of classification that must be based on visually recognizable features.

2. The Christian substitution of animal sacrifices with other practices, and the accompanying refusal of consuming meat that was sacrificed,¹⁴⁰ constitutes a major break with the rest of Late Antique cultural conglomerates, in which animal sacrifices play a crucial role in religious life. By this decision, Christians seemingly rejected the idea that animals can play any mediating role in human-divine communication.¹⁴¹ And although this position is not maintained for long, as is evident from the role animals often play in hagiographic literature,¹⁴² the mere disapproval of sacrificial practices corroborates the view of distinction between animals and humans. Moreover, strange as it may seem, this also facilitates the acceptance of a model in which animals can harmlessly play the role of symbols, for there is no apparent possibility for a blurring of boundaries with humans.¹⁴³

3. The hermeneutic principles of various forms of early Christian exegesis are almost exclusively based on a non-literal reading of both legal and prophetic materials from the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴⁴ The advent of this allegorically based exegesis requires a disentanglement from emphasizing the involvement of actual physical animals in the history of salvation and necessitates the interpretation of animals appearing in such discourses within a metaphorical terminology.¹⁴⁵

4. And finally, the influence of “Hellenistic thinking” and cultural constructions was increasing within the Jewish community whence Christianity originates. One element of this “Hellenism” is the advent of the classification of beings proposed by Stoic tradition. In this model, humans are not only the closest to God, but also different from all other species, since animals are all destitute of reason and serve the exclusive purpose of entertaining, nourishing, clothing etc. humans. This Stoic principle is present already in the *New Testament*, but it is significantly elaborated by the Alexandrian Christian tradition, which followed in the footsteps of Philo of Alexandria.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Acts 15:29.

¹⁴¹ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 148-9.

¹⁴² Cf. Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs and Asses*, 63-65.

¹⁴³ Cf. Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 4-6.

¹⁴⁴ Frances M. Young, *Biblical exegesis and the formation of Christian culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 169-174.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. David Grumett, “Animals in Christian Theology” *Religion Compass* 5 (2011): 579-588, here 584-5.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. David Clough, “Angels, Beasts, Machines, and Men: Configuring the Human and Nonhuman in Judaeo-Christian Tradition,” In *Eating and Believing*, ed. Rachel Muers and David Grumett (London, T&T Clark, 2011) 63-66.

In accordance with this Stoic view of animals, the Graeco-Roman tradition of Natural histories was also gaining momentum in Christian tradition. This perspective of the fauna became prevalent through the agency of natural historians, such as Pliny the Elder, Aelian and Oppian.¹⁴⁷ Their tradition argues that nature is providing for humans, and its species should be regarded in accordance with the extent of their support to human life.¹⁴⁸ This idea enables a classificatory tradition in which different species are not only recognized for their favorable or detrimental effect on human life, but are also identified with the given effect and its assessment.¹⁴⁹ This serves as a basis for the innovative, Christian system of classification, the kernel of which is already discernible in the *New Testament*, but it is elaborated only in early Christian literature, first and foremost by Augustine.¹⁵⁰

The early Christian classificatory system is very well exemplified and also further supported by the 2nd century appearance of the *Physiologus* and subsequent bestiary traditions, in which animals serve as symbols of individual human vices and virtues.¹⁵¹ Although the *Physiologus* originates from Graeco-Roman natural historical tradition,¹⁵² its taxonomy goes way beyond Pliny's notion of useful and harmful animals. Beyond understanding animals on a physical and on a metaphorical level, the *Physiologus* also argues that certain species are in essence evil and therefore represent inimical forces to Christians, while others are non-violent, virtuous or supportive, and thus represent positive agents in one's concept of history. This notion is not an invention of the author of the *Physiologus*, but a rather eloquent summary of the classificatory system present in many layers of Christian literary tradition, including Biblical exegesis.

Despite the absence of a practical-ritual outlook (that of the dietary and purity-structure of the Hebrew Bible) in everyday life,¹⁵³ the interest in animals has not waned. And in accordance with the allegorical interpretation of the human environment, so prevalent in Early Christian tradition, animals and their role in human life were subject to a process of reinterpretation. This enabled the inception

¹⁴⁷ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 68-78.

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Pliny the Elder and Man's Unnatural History," *Greece & Rome*. 37 (1990): 80-96, here 83.

¹⁴⁹ E.g. Basil, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron* 9:3.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Gillian Clark, "The Fathers and the Animals: the Rule of Reason," in Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto, ed. *Animals on the Agenda: Questions about Animals for Theology and Ethics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998):67-80, here 68-71.

¹⁵¹ E.g. Augustine, *Contra Mendacium*, 28.

¹⁵² T. Nicklas, "Staunen über Natur – Wunder des Glaubens: die Welten des Physiologus," in *Credible, Incredible: the Miraculous in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. J.E Spittler, and T. Nicklas, 228-251 (Tübingen: Mohr, 2014).

¹⁵³ Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 3-4.

of an interpretative tradition in which they symbolized various messages relevant to human morality.¹⁵⁴

I.III.IV. The rabbis' animal symbolism

Although Stoic concepts about the fauna have much less influence on rabbinic exegesis, the same cannot be said about Graeco-Roman natural histories and their approach. Several similarities concerning zoology have been observed between the narratives of Pliny, Aelian, Oppian, Aristotle etc. on the one hand, and rabbinic authors on the other.¹⁵⁵ And although Graeco-Roman authors of natural history were not authorities to which any Jewish interpreter of Late Antiquity would refer directly, it is an established consensus of scholars dealing with rabbinic zoology that one of the three major sources of rabbinic accounts was natural historical tradition.¹⁵⁶ The remaining two were, on the one hand, personal observations¹⁵⁷ and experiments with animals, and, on the other, second-hand accounts, stories and tales of sailors, travelers etc.¹⁵⁸ Thus, it is not only the content of rabbinic zoological knowledge that is shared with their Greek and Roman colleagues, but also its approach. This means that the rabbinic knowledge was also based on personal, empirical observations or observations of others (whether established writers of the Graeco-Roman oecumene or ordinary men with whom the rabbis had direct contact).¹⁵⁹ A further similarity was that – just like Graeco-Roman scholars – rabbis often did not verify or even question their findings. Thus, credible, even proto-scientific descriptions of animals, their features and behavior could regularly mingle¹⁶⁰ with fictional and mythological tales.¹⁶¹

But there is a major difference between the aims of Graeco-Roman and rabbinic zoology. While the former was inspired by a desire to discover and recount the many wonders of nature, the rabbis were driven by a different motivation. It was never their aim to give a comprehensive picture of the animal world, as is the case in the Hebrew Bible. Instead, they wished to answer certain halakhic questions and interpret Biblical passages featuring animals. In approaching natural phenomena, their framework

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Grumett, "Animals in Christian Theology," 582-3.

¹⁵⁵ Abraham Ofir Shemesh, "Biology in Rabbinic Literature: Realistic and Folkloristic Aspects," in *The literature of the sages*, edited by Shemuel Safrai (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1987): 507-517, here 507-8.

¹⁵⁶ E.g. *bHullin* 127a; *bShabbat* 77b etc.

¹⁵⁷ E.g. *bHullin* 59a; *bGit* 69b; *bYebamot* 121a-b etc.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Shemesh, "Biology in Rabbinic Literature" 507-508.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Schochet, *Animal Life*, 97.

¹⁶⁰ Shemesh, "Biology in Rabbinic Literature," 507.

¹⁶¹ E.g. *bHullin* 127a; *Sifra* Shemini 5:7; *Genesis Rabbah* 7:4

was largely restricted by their principal, halakhic interest.¹⁶² Their pre-occupation with this framework was so emphatic, that it often became a key element in their discourse even about fictional creatures.¹⁶³ It has been rightfully raised by many scholars this was a reaction to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the ensuing disruption of the traditional, cult-based way of life.¹⁶⁴ And since certain animal species played a crucial role in sacrificial tradition, it stands to reason that the disappearance of the sacrificial cult also had a major effect on the rabbinic approach to zoology. With the transformation of the actual sacrificial cult into a theoretical framework of observing a complex system of dietary, purity, ritual and daily regulations, a new system of classification was bound to emerge. And in this system of halakha, the key role was ultimately given to the issues of ritual purity.¹⁶⁵ This halakhic perspective of the fauna was constructed and developed by the rabbis, and in many respect, it took the symbolic functions of the former system of sacrifices.

Similarly to its Christian counterpart, the formation of a new religious discourse brought a set of new principles of zoological classification. While the Hebrew Bible classified animals mostly according to their habitat, rabbinic literature witnesses a previously unknown dominance of purity considerations. This includes not only the issue of selecting edible and sacrificial animals according to their ritual purity. Even the use of animal parts for magical and medical purposes and the ritual status of imaginary animals were discussed in this framework.¹⁶⁶ The gradual and sometimes controversial acceptance of the use of animal parts in medical treatment and magical rituals was also based on principles similar to those of Pliny and his colleagues in the Graeco-Roman natural historical tradition.¹⁶⁷ Their observation-based, experimental approach also applied to the rabbinic distinction between techniques that were considered acceptable and others that were deemed “ways of the Amorite” and prohibited. Similarly, to Pliny, rabbis often argued on the basis of experiments

¹⁶² Lieberman, Saul, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962), 181-182.

¹⁶³ Ibid 183. E.g. *Mishna Hulin* 9:6; *Leviticus Rabbah* 13:3; *Sifra Shemini* 3:7 etc.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Esther G. Chazon “Liturgy Before and After the Temple’s Destruction: Change or Continuity?”, in *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History?: on Jews and Judaism Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple*, ed. Schwartz, Daniel R., and Zeev Weiss, 371-393 (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

¹⁶⁵ Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard, “Creation and Classification in Judaism: From Priestly to Rabbinic Conceptions,” *History of Religions*. 26 (1987): 357-381, here 363.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. *Tosefta Shabbat* 6:8-11. Cf. Giuseppe Veltri, “The Rabbis and Pliny the Elder: Jewish and Greco-Roman attitudes toward magic and empirical knowledge,” *Poetics Today: International Journal for Theory and Analysis of Literature and Communication*. 19 (1998) 63-89, here 79-81.

¹⁶⁷ Schochet, *Animal Life*, 100-103.

conducted by themselves or by trustworthy witnesses.¹⁶⁸ If these experiments proved that the technique in question was useful, the rabbis allowed it.¹⁶⁹

Unlike the corpus of the Hebrew Bible, which – compared to contemporaneous literary productions of the Mediterranean region – contains relatively little mythological material,¹⁷⁰ rabbinic literature is replete with understanding and interpreting natural phenomena, God, events of history etc. in a mythological fashion.¹⁷¹ Among the entities considered on a mythological level, a peculiar role is assigned to animals. Their disappearance from sacrificial rituals must have reduced the threat posed and maintained by the possibility of animal veneration related to their cultic presence. Thus, the mythologization – or more accurately – remythologization¹⁷² of the animal world could take place through a reconsideration of human-animal relations. This process not only affected creatures which were already considered mythological on the Biblical level,¹⁷³ but also those that were depicted in the Hebrew Bible as ordinary beings.¹⁷⁴ In some cases, even early specimens of humankind were endowed with zoomorphic features.¹⁷⁵ A peculiarly rich mode of imbuing animals with personality and integrating them into the stories and histories of the rabbinic world was that of folklore. In the literature and folk tales of the rabbis, these are often used to convey messages that the author could not transmit directly. In this process, animals were used as interlocutors or representatives of delicate points of view.¹⁷⁶ Their didactic role in the fables further corroborated their novel position as active agents. Certain notable rabbis were even famous for their mastery and knowledge of these animal fables.¹⁷⁷

Similarly to patristic literature, the Hebrew Bible's clear distinction of the human and animal realms remained at the core of rabbinic literature.¹⁷⁸ As a consequence, the concept of animals' inferiority

¹⁶⁸ Cf. e.g. *jShabbat* 8c.

¹⁶⁹ Veltri, "The Rabbis and Pliny the Elder," 68, 81-82.

¹⁷⁰ Fishbane, Michael A, *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993) 60-61.

¹⁷¹ Niehoff, M. R, "The Phoenix in Rabbinic Literature," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (3) (1996): 245-266, here 248-249. Cf. also Schochet, *Animal Life*, 83-96. E.g. *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 31, *bShabbat* 28b

¹⁷² Cf. Schochet, *Animal Life*, 83-96.

¹⁷³ Cf. Gn 1:21 and the accompanying commentary in *Genesis Rabbah* 7:4, as well as *Genesis Rabbah* 19:5, *Leviticus Rabbah* 22:10, for the peculiar case of the mythologization of the phoenix.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Niehoff "The Phoenix," 249. Schochet, *Animal Life*, 88-89. E.g. *Midrash Tanhuma* Mavo 79b, *bSanhedrin* 106a etc.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. *bEruvin* 18a; *Genesis Rabbah* 23:6 etc.

¹⁷⁶ Schochet, *Animal Life*, 115. *Genesis Rabbah* 64:10

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. 115. *bSot* 38b-39a; *Leviticus Rabbah* 28:2-3.

¹⁷⁸ Niehoff, "The Phoenix in Rabbinic Literature," 248; David Stern, "Imitatio Hominis: Anthropomorphism and the Character(s) of God in Rabbinic Literature," *Prooftexts*. 12, 2 (1992): 151-174.

compared to humankind was preserved.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, the idea that humans and animals can intermingle (through such processes as metempsychosis or the existence of human-animal hybrids) is often categorically refused.¹⁸⁰ It is tremendously important, however, that the distinction between animals and humans is not based on the animals' irrationality or the qualitative difference between their souls and the souls of humans, but on an incidental divine decision during the creation of man. Therefore, rabbinic tradition is only cautiously integrating animals in the symbolical language of expressing identity beyond what is already established in Biblical tradition.¹⁸¹ Unlike their Christian contemporaries, who gladly implemented animals as symbols of identity in their exegetical literature,¹⁸² one encounters a sort of reluctance among the rabbis to identify even with animals that are used as symbols of Jews or certain Jewish heroes or human virtues in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁸³ Instead, rabbis tended to emphasize the similarity between Jews or the Jewish community and angelic beings. This angelic identification of the community was – often, but not in general – complemented by using animal comparisons for describing essential features of the Other, Gentile communities.¹⁸⁴ The hierarchy of beings implied by the duality of this system of identification is clear: angels are closer to God and – to an extent – participate in creation.¹⁸⁵ Meanwhile, animals are below humans for various reasons, not last among them is that at the creation they were ordained to be so.¹⁸⁶ Humans stand in the middle. They are part of God's material creation, but they also possess intellect, soul and, most importantly, the free will that enables them to strive for spiritual purity and grandeur. An implication of such rabbinic distinctions between angel-like Jews and animalistic Gentiles is that the latter did not use their spiritual capabilities properly and should, consequently, be held responsible of their similarity to animals.

¹⁷⁹ Schochet, *Animal Life*, 90. E.g. *Genesis Rabbah* 8:11; *bHagigah* 16a. See further chapter 2.2.1.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 101.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Sacha Stern's thorough overview of the hesitancy of rabbis to identify the community of Israel with animals: Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 33-35.

¹⁸² Niehoff, "The Phoenix in Rabbinic Literature," 246.

¹⁸³ Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 35-36. E.g. *bBerakhot* 25b

¹⁸⁴ E.g. *bHagigah* 16a.

¹⁸⁵ E.g. *Genesis Rabbah* 8:11

¹⁸⁶ Schochet, *Animal Life*, 186-187

I.IV. The frameworks of the dissertation

The frameworks in which animal symbols can be used for delineating communities are all constructed in a dichotomic manner, and they contain not only an expression of the self, but also a point of reference of alterity. In the literary representation of animal symbolism, there are three possible actors: animals, humans and the divine. These define three basic frameworks in which animal symbols can operate: human-animal, animal-animal, and divine-animal relationships. In what is to follow, I will give a brief analytical overview of each possibility, accompanied by a few examples.

1) In light of my introductory overview of the history of animal symbolism and the apparently inherent human tendency of animalization in all cultures and all times, human-animal comparisons are rightfully expected to be the prevalent ways of implementing animal symbolism. In this scenario, one's community is represented in the form of humans, whereas the other is identified with an animal species. The reasons for implementing such a framework are in accordance with the apparently universal cognitive strategy of distinguishing between ingroup and outgroup with the help of naturalizing borders by recourse to a distinction between nature and culture. Numerous opportunities are provided for such a representation in the corpus of both the Hebrew Bible and the *New Testament*.¹⁸⁷

The framework of "human us vs. beastly other" is occasionally a possibility to expound difficult Biblical passages or difficulties arising from comparing them;¹⁸⁸ but the major gain of using this framework within the polemic discourses of Antiquity lies in dehumanizing the other. The speaker does not only imply a systemic difference between one's community and the respective other, but also legitimizes techniques and legal argumentations depriving the other from being treated as a human. On the basis of Mat 15:26, where the Jews are compared to children and pagans to puppies of the dog, John Chrysostom expresses such an argument:

"Beware of the dogs" (Phil 3:2) ... Whom does he call dogs? There were some there, whom he allegorically referred to in all his epistles, namely filthy and abominable Jews, always greedy and ambitious, who wanted to divert the mass of pious people, heralding both Christianity and Judaism, subverting the *Gospel*. And since they were difficult to recognize, he says "beware of the dogs". Jews are no longer children. Once, he called the Gentiles that [as dogs], but now he calls them [the Jews] this way. Why? Just as the Gentiles were strangers both to God

¹⁸⁷ E.g. Jer 50:44; Is 30:6; Rv 13:8 etc.

¹⁸⁸ Such as the difficulty arising from the contradictory role of the lion as a symbol. While in some cases, it directly refers to the community, often it denotes the enemies of the community (e.g. 2Tm 4:17 and Rv 5:5)

and to Christ, so have these [the Jews] become these now. And he reveals their shamelessness and recklessness here and their separation from being children. Concerning the fact that once the Gentiles were called dogs, listen to the Canaanite woman speaking: “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table” (Mt 15:27).¹⁸⁹

Chrysostom’s claim is that the “other,” the Jews have lost their humanity by failing to comprehend the divine message. At the same time, he argues that Christians evolved from their previous animality and became humans. In both cases, the human-animal dichotomy is an original creation of the Late Antique exegetes: confronted with the threatening animal-us of the biblical imagery, they struggle to give it a new meaning based on the animalization of the other. The passage dedicates an important role to reason and proper belief in God, which are – in patristic tradition – important aspects of distinction between humans and animals.¹⁹⁰

2) Animal-animal comparisons are presented in the framework of a human moral order organized into a hierarchic taxonomy.¹⁹¹ Moreover, despite significant developments in zoological perspectives, the Biblical points of reference for animal taxonomies were preserved throughout the formation of exegetical traditions. And despite the addition of further factors in exegesis, habitat (1), the primary relation to humankind (2) and status with regard to rituals (3) remained at the center of interest. The first and second aspects, habitat and the danger that animals from non-human domains pose are closely related. This aspect is usually evoked in reference to carnivores and poisonous beasts of the wilderness threatening presumably docile and often domesticated animals. In such narratives, the community is represented by domesticated animals (e.g. sheep, goat, dove etc.) which – by virtue of their domestication – also imply that they belong to the same habitat as humans. In turn, most animal symbols which represent threatening otherness in this narrative framework (wolf, snake, scorpion etc.), function at the same time as representatives of a non-human domain and as opposites to domesticated herbivores, namely wild carnivores. The most prevalent of such narratives is the

¹⁸⁹ (John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam ad Philipenses*, 10) *Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας ... Τίνας δέ φησι κύνας; Ἐνταῦθα ἦσαν τινες, οὓς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς αἰνίττεται, Ἰουδαῖοι μιανοὶ καὶ κατὰ πτωστοὶ, αἰσχροκερδεῖς καὶ φίλαρχοι, οἱ βουλόμενοι τῶν πιστῶν πολλοὺς παρασπάσαι, ἐκήρυττον καὶ τὸν Χριστιανισμὸν, καὶ τὸν Ἰουδαϊσμὸν, παραφθείροντες τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον. Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἦσαν δυσδιάγνωστοι, διὰ τοῦτο φησι· Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας. Οὐκέτι τέκνα Ἰουδαῖοι. Ποτὲ οἱ ἐθνικοὶ τοῦτο ἐκαλοῦντο, νῦν δὲ ἐκεῖνοι. Διὰ τί; Ὅτι ὥσπερ οἱ ἐθνικοὶ καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀλλότριοι ἦσαν, οὕτω καὶ οὗτοι γεγόνασι νῦν, καὶ τὸ ἀναιδὲς αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ ἱταμὸν ἐντεῦθεν παρίστησι, καὶ τὴν πολλὴν πρὸς τέκνα διάστασιν. Ὅτι γὰρ οἱ ἐθνικοὶ ποτε κύνες ἐκαλοῦντο, ἄκουσον τῆς Χαναanaίας, τί φησι· *Ναὶ, Κύριε· καὶ γὰρ τὰ κυνάρια ἐσθίει ἀπὸ τῶν ψιγίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν.**

¹⁹⁰ The question and the broader context of the passage is treated in chapter 2.3.3.

¹⁹¹ Haslam, “Beastly: What Makes Animal Metaphors Offensive?” 312.

opposition of the flock of the community and the wolves threatening it, as it is exemplified by Cyprian:

Evade wolves, that separate the sheep from the shepherd. Evade their poisonous tongue of the devil, who has always been a deceiver and trickster, lies in order to deceive, deludes in order to injure, promises good and gives evil, betoken life and kills.¹⁹²

I believe that there are two major rhetorical gains to be considered in such narratives. On the one hand, both major sources of Jewish and Christian animal symbolism: Biblical and Graeco-Roman zoological tradition asserted that the universally acknowledged features with which animals are identified in a symbolic description, can define their respective species. Therefore, animals – even as symbols of the ingroup – offered the possibility of attributing universally comprehensible features to members of one's own community. As such, a Christian community depicted in a symbolic manner as sheep could be claimed to be obedient, gentle and innocent. On the other hand, animal features are always described from an anthropocentric perspective. Consequently, through an identification of the other with a dangerous, impure etc. animal, one makes a widely comprehensible point based on a universally acknowledged anthropocentric hierarchy of animals.

3) The third framework of representing identity in animal symbolism is to construct an image of the relationship between the community and the divine through the use of animal symbols. There are two major possibilities within this approach. One can construct the human community as opposed to an animalistic (theriomorphic) God. Alternatively, one can construct the community in the form of an animal as relating to a non-animalistic divinity. The first option is understandably very problematic in both Jewish and Christian traditions. It is, however, notably present in the Bible as well as in both exegetical literatures.¹⁹³ The second one is present in sacrificial narratives where the community is symbolized by an animal representing purity on a ritual level, and innocence on a moral level.

I.IV.I. The structure of the dissertation

The aim of the present dissertation is to analyze how animal symbolism functions in the definition of ingroup and outgroup, the establishment of the border between them, and how it is implemented as a

¹⁹² (Cyprian, *Epistulae* 43:6) Vitae lupos qui oves a pastore discernunt, vitae linguam diaboli uenenatam qui ab initio mundi fallax semper et mendax mentitur ut fallat, blanditur ut noceat, bona promittit ut malum tribuat, uitam pollicetur ut perimat.

¹⁹³ Frequently, this is present in the Biblical tradition (e.g. lion in Is 31:4; Jb 10:16; eagle in Dt 32:11-12, Jr 49:22, Hos 8:1; lamb in Rv 5:6). More importantly for this study, such notions remain present in the two exegetical traditions. See e.g. Augustine, *Expositio Psalmorum* 103:28; *bSanhedrin* 106a.

tool in the negotiation of these borders. As the above exploration of the possible frameworks in which animal symbols can be implemented raised several general questions concerning the feasibility of animal symbolism in a primarily anthropocentric-creationist tradition, it stands to reason to first discuss this issue in detail. Therefore, chapter one of the dissertation analyzes the limits and boundaries of using animal symbolism. It asks the question whether humans are seen as systematically different from animals in Jewish and Christian tradition and whether the assumption of such a systemic difference between these two entities influenced the way in which animal symbolism was implemented with regards to the formation of ingroup and outgroup.

Chapter two discusses one of the primary triggers to the Late Antique change in the status of animals in the two traditions: the end of animal sacrifices. Through the analysis of exegetical narratives describing animal sacrifices, I will comment on the way the role of animals shifted from a predominantly objectifying to a subjectifying vision. In this chapter, I point out a similar shift in the understanding of sheep in the pastoral context and show how an accompanying modification in the understanding of shepherding toward spiritual leadership could both take over the concept of self-devotion and complement the new notion of conscious animality.

In chapter three, I investigate one of the primary classificatory schemes of both rabbinic and patristic animal symbolism, the dichotomy of impure and pure animals. I will discuss how the identification of an outgroup represented in the form of an impure animal added to the notion of subject-animality the element of active agency. Furthermore, I will analyze how the concept of impurity, and the moralizing interpretation of its way of spreading, contagion, contributed to the two communities' interpretation of animality.

Finally, in chapter four, I will discuss the dichotomy of animals inhabiting two opposing domains: the human lands and the land of the wilderness. I will analyze how the concept of wild and domesticated animals was understood within a dynamic framework of taming and its opposite, *Verwilderung*, and I will argue that the future change from one status to another, envisioned in an educational, political and apocalyptic horizon, was seen as the final prospect of a subjectified model of animality.

2. The animal that is too close

In the introduction, I described the difficulty of finding one overarching analytical model accounting for all aspects of animal symbolism. I argued that there are at least two more perspectives to be considered besides the anthropological constant of dehumanizing otherness¹⁹⁴: that of a totemistic thinking and that of a creationist-anthropocentrism. I also claimed that these perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but function side by side in both Jewish and Christian exegetical traditions. The present chapter, dealing with the limits of animalization and the border between humans and animals bears excellent witness to this claim. Even though its major concern pertains seemingly to the first model, that of dehumanization, the issue of an exact boundary between animals and humans relates to both the narrative of totemistic thinking and that of a creationist-anthropocentric perspective.

It is beyond doubt that antique interpreters who read individual Biblical passages *via* a creationist lens (as offered by such texts as Genesis 1 and Ps 104¹⁹⁵), showed a marked preference for the notion of an exceptional importance of humans among created beings.¹⁹⁶ In light of this, the huge amount of narratives depicting ingroup through animal symbols merits one's attention, especially so, since a number of such passages reflect upon a permeability of the boundary between humans and animals. Only through close examination of the anthropological convictions of the two traditions, and especially of such passages, can we get a clearer picture of the two traditions' respective view of human-animal relations and of its applicability to intercommunal connections. Only after establishing the general view that representatives of the two traditions expressed with regards to the human-animal boundary and asking whether it was traversable at all in their eyes, will it be possible to present – in

¹⁹⁴ This phenomenon can be approached from the direction of cognitive science. It was recently pointed out in a number of studies that there is an anthropologically constant, palpable inclination toward animalizing otherness. Cf. e.g. Boccato, "The Missing Link," 224-234 and Leyens, "Psychological Essentialism," 395-41. There are of course more traditional approaches to this issue. In the wake of the Jungian anthropological perspective (see Carl Gustav Jung, *Der Mensch und Seine Symbole* (Freiburg: Walter, 1968) 2-21), Steve Baker argued that by animalizing the other, one is constantly downplaying the inherent and well-reflected animalistic urges and features, one is forced to recognize in himself or herself. See Baker, *Picturing the Beast*, 33-34. and also Mary Douglas "Beasts, Brutes and Monsters," in *What is an Animal?*, ed. Tim Ingold, 35-46 (London: Routledge, 1994), here 35-38.

¹⁹⁵ As for the value and importance of the creation narrative for setting the tradition on the track of anthropocentrism, there is an ongoing debate among scholars dealing with environmental studies, Biblical studies etc. This debate was unleashed by a short article of White in 1967 ("The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,"). See Gary Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents: the Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010) 112-116. For a detailed critique, see Ronald A. Simkins, "The Bible and Anthropocentrism: putting humans in their place," *Dialectical Anthropology* 38 (2014): 397-413, here 397-400 and for a recent reconsideration of arguments, Annette Mosher, "Christianity, Covenant and Nature," *Baptistic Theologies* 8, no. 1. (2016): 62-72 here 62-67

¹⁹⁶ This holds true even if one argues – as Simkins convincingly does – that the appropriate term for the Hebrew Bible's perspective is not anthropocentric, but theocentric. See Simkins, "The Bible and Anthropocentrism," 403-409.

subsequent chapters – the reasons for differences in the two traditions in dealing with animal symbols and its major themes.

A prerequisite of historicizing the contrast and difference between humans and animals is to classify the ancient terminology distinguishing the two groups. In all three major source languages under the scope of the present dissertation, one encounters a variety of terms referring to animals. And although these expressions are not always implemented with faultless precision by authors of passages, one can notice a system behind their use. In the Hebrew Biblical tradition, there are three major terms. The most generic one (חיה) originates from the verbal root “to live” and denotes every living entity except plants.¹⁹⁷ Two further terms (בהמה) on the one hand and (חיה) on the other refer specifically to two subgroups, domesticated mammals and wild mammals respectively (which according to certain passages,¹⁹⁸ are distinct from birds and insects). While the latter of the terms (חיה) is never used in relation to household animals, the former (בהמה) is occasionally used as a general term meaning any animal regardless of its domestication.¹⁹⁹ In the two languages of the patristic tradition under scrutiny here, one can observe a similar terminological uncertainty with regards to the human-animal divide. Both languages have a generic term for animals (ζῷον and *animal*). However, these expressions are not only used to denote members of the fauna. The Greek term, which – similarly to the Hebrew – originates from the verbal root “to live” can refer to any moving being, whereas the Latin expression (which stems from *anima*, meaning soul, spirit or the vital principle) can also theoretically stand for a much broader group of entities, albeit the textual sources I investigated are quite consistent in using this term in reference to animals only. Similarly to the rabbinic tradition, both languages can and often do differentiate between domesticated and wild beasts. The former is designated by the terms κτήν and *iumentum*, whereas the latter is θηρίον and *bestia* respectively. In case of the Latin, one can note an inconsistency similar to the one in Hebrew inasmuch as *bestia* is occasionally used rather generally as a term for animals regardless of their status of domestication. Thus, both the rabbinic and the patristic tradition lacks a clear terminology capable of distinguishing between humans and animals. The terms they implement can either include humans, or refer to only a part of the animal kingdom. I believe that the vagueness of this terminological inconsistency is a clear indication of the overall ambiguity of human-animal divide both exegetical traditions struggle with.

¹⁹⁷ Various phrases, such as נפש חיה (Gn 1:24) indicate such a broad understanding of the expression.

¹⁹⁸ See Ps 148:10.

¹⁹⁹ E.g. Gn 7:23, where the flood destroys not only domesticated mammals.

2.1. The Graeco-Roman context

The view that there was a difference between humankind and the rest of the animal world was not only warranted by the Creation-story, but also proposed by many representatives of Greek philosophical traditions. And although this was always a disputed position, the majority of thinkers deemed animals to possess a somewhat inferior soul, which qualified them not only below humankind, but – according to some – even legitimized their exploitation by humans.

It is enticing to look at philosophical traditions dealing with this question from a historical perspective and try to establish a narrative of gradual development, starting with pre-Socratic tradition, that regarded animals and humans to be in material unity,²⁰⁰ and concluding with Stoicism, according to which animals lack a rational soul and are, thus, inferior to humans.²⁰¹ This is, however, a misleading perspective. On the one hand, the profoundly anthropocentric nature of the Greek *Weltanschauung*²⁰² – which is perhaps not as evident in contrast to Biblical tradition as to contemporary Mesopotamian and Egyptian cultures²⁰³ – guaranteed that notions of a primary distinction between humans and animals have always existed. On the other hand, even after the acme of Stoicism, there were influential thinkers (such as Plutarch and Porphyry),²⁰⁴ who claimed that the distinction between humans and animals is rather arbitrary and that the souls of the two groups do not differ in a qualitative only in a quantitative way.²⁰⁵

If there is any process of development to be perceived, it is regarding the conceptualization of difference among those who believe that humans and animals are dissimilar. We can find traces of a strong conviction concerning this question already in the philosophy of Protagoras, who famously described the creation of mortal beings in the tale of Prometheus and Epimetheus.²⁰⁶ According to this account, humans were left out from Epimetheus' distribution of useful qualities (thus being

²⁰⁰ See Stephen T. Newmyer, "Being the One and Becoming the Other," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, ed. Gordon Lindsay Campbell, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁰¹ A recent, although very learned example of this is Newmyer, "Being the One."

²⁰² Steven H. Lonsdale, "Attitudes towards Animals in Ancient Greece," *Greece & Rome* 26, no. 2 (1979): 146-159, here 152-154.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 157-159.

²⁰⁴ See Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 44-50.

²⁰⁵ See Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 9-12. See also Robert Renehan, "The Greek Anthropocentric View of Man," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 85 (1981): 239-259, here 245-246. They could do so, since there was considerable debate even concerning the exact definition of reason and what it entailed. Plato for example included desires and intentions, whereas Aristotle refused that they would be part of reason. See Sorabji, *Animal Minds*, 50-62.

²⁰⁶ See Plato, *Protagoras*, 320b-323a

different from all the animals), and in attempt to help them survive, Prometheus stole the technical arts (ἔντεχνος σοφία) and the fire from the Gods, and gave them to humankind. Although Plato's views are somewhat unclear in this regard, it is generally held that he contributed to the formulation of the view that animals are inferior to humans. The lion's share of elaborating this idea was, however, done by Aristotle, who devised a perspective, in which humans are the most "evolved"²⁰⁷ creatures, and all animals occupy places below them on a *scala naturae*.²⁰⁸ In his concept of a gradual transition,²⁰⁹ somewhat similarly to Plato,²¹⁰ Aristotle does not only refer to mental capabilities, but also to morphological heterogeneity and differences in habitat. And although his approach is extensive and focuses on finding differences between animal species, and thus, he establishes a taxonomy,²¹¹ he still does not question humankind's exceptional position at the top of the *scala naturae*. Observing that the erect stature of humans is uniquely necessary for rational thinking,²¹² and that human stature is different from that of all other animals ("all the rest of the animals are like dwarves beside the human"),²¹³ he focuses on relative perfection.²¹⁴ But even he did not claim that the lacking character of animals had anything to do with their inferior moral status.²¹⁵

This was a novelty instituted by later Stoic tradition, which argued that rational thinking is necessary in order to achieve morality. Elaborating on this idea, it was added that animals also lacked free will and that the entirety of the world was created for the sake of humans, who were supposed to use every living entity to their avail.²¹⁶ This position was perhaps most clearly expressed in the design of Pliny's

²⁰⁷ As for the question of whether Aristotle argued a higher moral status to the qualities of more complex faculties, see Catherine Osborne, *Dumb Beasts and Dead Philosophers, Humanity & the Humane in Ancient Philosophy & Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007) 98-133.

²⁰⁸ See Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Beings, a Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001 [originally 1936]) 55-67.

²⁰⁹ (Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* 588b 5) Οὕτω δ' ἐκ τῶν ἀνύχων εἰς τὰ ζῷα μεταβαίνει κατὰ μικρὸν ἢ φύσις, ὥστε τῇ συνεχείᾳ λανθάνει τὸ μεθόριον αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ μέσον ποτέρων ἐστίν.

²¹⁰ On the similarities and differences between Plato's and Aristotle's view on human and animal morphology and its consequences on the differences between the two groups, see Pavel Gregorić, "Plato's and Aristotle's Explanation of Human Posture," *Rhizai* 2, no. 2 (2005): 183-196.

²¹¹ As has been noted by some, this was perhaps not the primary aim of Aristotle, who focused on giving an etiology on different parts of animals rather than clarifying the exact relationship between species. See Pierre Pellegrin, *La Classification des animaux chez Aristote. Statut de la biologie ete unité de l'aristotélisme* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1982).

²¹² See Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium* 686a and passim. see also Gregorić, "Plato's and Aristotle's Explanation," 193-195.

²¹³ See Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium* 686b: Πάντα γάρ ἐστι τὰ ζῷα νανώδη τᾶλλα παρὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

²¹⁴ See Roger French, *Ancient Natural History. Histories of Nature* (Routledge: New York, 1994) 48-50.

²¹⁵ See Newmyer, "Being the One."

²¹⁶ See See Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 40-41 and Gary Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents*, 119-120.

Historia Naturalis, describing the *flora*, the *fauna* and all inanimate natural objects of the known world from a clearly utilitarian perspective.²¹⁷

Thus, the Greek philosophical tradition – if not unanimously – offered a perspective of hierarchical relationship between humans and animals. And although the exact location of the boundary and a list of *differentia specifica* was subject to disputes, rabbinic and Christian thinkers approaching the question of human-animal relations, could still rely on a consensus according to which the notion of a human superiority was beyond doubt.

²¹⁷ See Wallace-Hadrill, “Pliny the Elder,” *Greece & Rome* 37, no. 1 (1990): 80-86, here 82-85.

2.2. Rabbis define humankind

2.2.1. Humans in between

The boundary between humans and animals is similar to any sort of theoretical border inasmuch as it provokes *transgression*.²¹⁸ In this case, transgression refers to lifeforms that do not coincide either with the category of ‘humans’ or that of ‘animals’. Human-animal hybrids, as subjects featuring both human and animalistic characteristics,²¹⁹ theriomorphic divinities, and the notion of the transmigration of souls²²⁰ all imply such a possibility of transgression, which can be countered only with clearly delineated characteristics, destining animals to be treated differently (such as those present in the Stoic philosophical tradition).²²¹

We will see that the rabbis did not choose either the first or the second option. Instead, they insisted – on the basis of the creation-narrative²²² – on a perspective, according to which no ontological division exists, but there is – instead – an arbitrary divine decision, establishing a boundary between humans on the one side, and all the rest of the animal kingdom on the other. This choice helped excluding the problem of hybrids, but also lifted the burden of categorization from the shoulders of the rabbis.

One might assume that from the three perspectives of animal symbolism, the rabbis would opt for the creationist-anthropocentric one. But, as I pointed out above, these three options are not mutually exclusive. And just as the literary elite of the Graeco-Roman world was convinced of the exceptional nature of humans,²²³ despite cherishing literary productions and myths proposing that hybrids do

²¹⁸ See Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 2-4.

²¹⁹ As for the peculiar appeal of hybrids in symbolic thinking, see Sperber Dan: “Pourquoi les animaux parfaits, les hybrides et les monstres sont-ils bons à penser symboliquement?” *L’Homme* 15 (2) 1975:5-34.

²²⁰ See Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 65-69, 86-92. See also A. Smith, “Did Porphyry Reject the Transmigration of Human Souls into Animals?” *Rheinisches Museum* 127, (1984): 276–84.

²²¹ See Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, “Animals in Late Antiquity and Early Christianity,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, ed. Gordon Lindsay Campbell, 355-366 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) here 360-366.

While occasionally one encounters hybrids and theriomorphic descriptions of the divine already in the rabbinic tradition, the notion of transmigrating souls is entirely missing from this tradition. And although it would become influential in Kabbalistic circles in the Middle Ages (see Gershom Scholem, “*Gilgul*: the Transmigration of Souls,” in id. *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 197-250 (New York: Schocken, 1991)), it seems to emerge first in Jewish communities in the 8th century. The earliest sources attesting to such a notion among karaites are the polemic writings of Saadia (Emunot veDeot 6:7). On the context of these writings, see Haggai Ben-Shammai, “גלגול נשמות בהגות היהודית במזרח במאה” [Transmigration of Souls in Tenth Century Jewish Thought in the Orient], ספונות: מחקרים ומקורות לתולדות קהילת [Sefunot: Studies and Sources of the History of Jewish Communities in the East] 5 (1991):117-136.

²²² Schochet, *Animal Life*, 10-12.

²²³ Renehan, “The Greek Anthropocentric View of Man,” 246-258.

exist, the rabbinic tradition was also characterized by wide-ranging possibilities of human-animal relations. Despite accepting the perspective of the creation-narrative, a spectral view of existence is presented by the rabbis, in which each being is somewhere between the two extremes of being fully celestial or fully animalistic.²²⁴

2.2.2. Haggada and the hybrid human

According to the rabbis, man is a creation of oppositions and transitions.²²⁵ Unlike the monistic Biblical and early Tannaitic model,²²⁶ the anthropology of later rabbinic tradition depicts humans as composite beings, hybrids themselves, consisting of both spiritual and corporeal components.²²⁷ A telling representation of this concept is the way *Genesis Rabba* treats the story of the creation of humankind. Here, one encounters a great diversity of literary traditions discussing humans as torn between two possibilities as hermaphrodites, as androgyns²²⁸ but even beyond sexuality, as constantly being forced to choose between good and evil inclinations.²²⁹ And according to *Genesis Rabbah*, this duality is also characteristic of the way humankind is envisaged in the order of creation:

R. Yehoshua b. Nehemiah said in the name of R. Hanina b. Isaac and the [rest of] the rabbis in the name of R. Eleazar: [God] created in him [man] four characteristics from above and four from below. He eats and drinks like animals. He procreates like animals. He excretes like an animal and dies like an animal²³⁰. From above: he stands like the

²²⁴ In structure, this perspective is in accordance with Darwinist evolutionary biology. In the *Descent of Man*, Darwin famously argued that the difference between human and animal minds is “one of degree and not of kind” (Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, retrieved from http://darwin-online.org.uk/EditorialIntroductions/Freeman_TheDescentofMan.html). See also Joshua M. Moritz, “Evolution, the End of Human Uniqueness, and the Election of the *Imago Dei*,” *Theology and Science*, 9, no. 3 (2011): 307-339, here 315-317. On a possible harmonization between the current scholarly view of a gradual relationship and the Biblical tradition see Anna Case-Winters, “Rethinking the Image of God,” *Zygon* 39, 4 (2004): 813-826.

²²⁵ The lack of an absolute definition of humankind is palpable in Halakhic discussions concerning liminal cases, such as embryos. See Matthias Morgenstern, “Der ganze Mensch der Tora, Anmerkungen zur Anthropologie des rabbinischen Judentums” in *Der ganze Mensch: Zur Anthropologie der Antike und ihrer europäischen Nachgeschichte*, 235-266 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012), here 246-250.

²²⁶ Ephraim Elimelech Urbach, *The Sages: their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magness Press, 1975) 214-216.

²²⁷ See Urbach, *The Sages*, 216-224.

²²⁸ Apparently, this was a well-known concept not only in Greek tradition (cf. Plato’s *Symposium* 189c-193d), but also among Jews with hellenic education (cf. Philo, *De Opificio Mundi* 151-152). Cf. Claudia Losekam, *Die Sünde der Engel. Die Engelfalltradition in frühjüdischen und gnostischen Texten* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2004) 216-217. See also Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* vol 1. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013 [orig. 1909]) 67. See also Judith R. Baskin, “Rabbinic Judaism and the Creation of Woman,” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 14, 1 (1995): 66-71, here 67-68.

²²⁹ See Johanan Cook, “The Origin of the Tradition of the יצר הרע and יצר הטוב,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007) 80-91, here 81-82.

²³⁰ The mortality of animals, which is commented upon already in the Hebrew Bible (see Christoph Brenner, “Evil and Death in the Book of Qohelet,” in *Evil and Death: Conceptions of the Human in Biblical, Early Jewish, Graeco-Roman and Egyptian Literature*, eds. Beate Ego and Ulrike Mittmann, 57-75 (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2015) here 63. See also

ministering angels, speaks like the ministering angels. And there is knowledge in him like [in] the ministering angels and he sees like the ministering angels. So, does an animal not see? Of course, it does! But it sees from the sides.²³¹

The opening statement of an equal number of similarities with angels and with animals alike serves to demonstrate the transitional position of humankind, but it also reveals the ambivalent nature of the separation between humans and animals. Being between the two groups²³² of ‘angels’ and ‘animals’, humankind is depicted as a liminal being, not identical with occupants of the celestial sphere, but not as lowly as animals either.²³³

A caveat is in order here: one should not assume that these two groups represent spirituality and corporeality respectively, as a retrospective reading of influential Christian interpretations might suggest.²³⁴ Although the idea exists in Jewish tradition (as exemplified by Philo, for example, who claims that the component of divine spirit in humans is an incorporeal entity),²³⁵ the rabbis do not

Schochet, *Animal Life*, 52-53) became truly problematic with the emergence of the notion of original sin, which claimed that mortality was the sin of taking the fruit of the tree of life. As a solution to this, the rabbis suggested that Eve did not only offer the fruit to Adam but also to the animals (except from the Phoenix), see *Genesis Rabbah* 19:5.

²³¹ רבי יהושע בר נחמיה בשם רבי חנינא בר יצחק ורבנן בשם ר"א אמרי ברא בו ארבע בריות מלמעלה וארבעה (Genesis Rabbah, 8:11) מלמטן, אוכל ושותה כבהמה, פרה ורבה כבהמה, ומטיל גללים כבהמה, ומת כבהמה, מלמעלה, עומד כמלאכי השרת, מדבר כמלאכי השרת, יש בו דעת כמלאכי השרת, ורואה כמלאכי השרת, ובהמה אינו רואה, אתמהא, אלא זה מצדד

²³² The clear separation of these two groups in the rabbinic mindset is perhaps most succinctly expressed in the various accounts of the creation of humankind, which emphasize the angels', concerns, dislike or even straightforward refusal of participation (e.g. *bSanhedrin* 38b, *Genesis Rabbah* 8:3-4). See Peter Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen: Untersuchungen zur rabbinischen Engelvorstellung*, *Studia Judaica* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975) 75-108: esp. 90-92, 220-223. See also Bill Reiger, "Angels in Rabbinic Literature," in *Angels: the Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*. Deuterocanonical and cognate literature yearbook, ed. Friedrich Vinzenz Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, Karin Schöpflin, 629-644 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007) here 631.

[illegible]

²³⁴ On the significantly later idea of incorporeal angels in Medieval philosophy, see the chapters on angelic location in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz, Ashgate Studies in Medieval Philosophy (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2008) 63-131.

²³⁵ See Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, 134-135. Cf. Urbach, *The Sages*, 221-222. The Christian notion of humans being corporeal due to their animalistic body and spiritual due to their divine spirit is a notion first expressed by Philo. Basing his arguments on Platonic tradition, Philo expressed precisely such an opposition between beings of earthly and of heavenly origin. But Philo or better the Hellenistic Jewish philosophical tradition he represented was largely disregarded in Jewish tradition. His views, however, survived in the writings of the Church fathers, many of whom presented humankind precisely as a being *inheriting* body from exclusively corporeal animals and their spiritual part from an exclusively non-corporeal divine entity. This aspect of Christian tradition will be treated below in chapter 2.3.2.

deny corporeality to heavenly beings (or some sort of spirituality to animals²³⁶). This is clearly stated in *Sifre Deuteronomy*:

R. Simai said: all creatures that were created from heaven, have a heavenly soul and body.²³⁷ And all creatures that were created from the ground, have an earthly soul and body, except for humankind, the soul of which is from heaven, and the body from the earth.²³⁸

Similarly to R. Simai's opinion, the above midrash from *Genesis Rabbah* depicts angels as corporeal: two of the features they share with humans (having binocular vision and walking erect) likely relate to their body.²³⁹ Thus, even if the other two (the ability of speech and the ability of comprehension) implies at least a partial influence of Greek philosophical traditions,²⁴⁰ in which these capabilities are usually interrelated (if not exactly the same) and form a major difference between humankind and animals,²⁴¹ by and large the rabbis do not operate here with the gnostic idea of contradistinction of spiritual and corporeal beings.²⁴² And even though there is evidence of the existence of such views in

²³⁶ E.g. the snake at the grave of R. Kahana in *bBaba Kama*, 117a-b and in *bBaba Metzia*, 84b.

²³⁷ The idea of a heavenly body that implies a distinction between two types of materiality: that of earthly and that of non-earthly. Such a distinction was voiced by the 3rd century philosopher, Plotinus. In his 2nd Ennead (2:4) he distinguishes between two types of matter, a sensible and an intelligible type. This idea found its way into the thinking of Augustine, and later on to Thomist philosophy. See Christian Tornau, "Intelligible Matter and the Genesis of Intellect: The Metamorphosis of a Plotinian Theme in Confessions 12-13," in *Augustine's Confessions: Philosophy in Autobiography*, ed. William E. Mann, no page numbers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) As for the exact definition of what intelligible matter means, see Paul O'Reilly, "What is Intelligible Matter," *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 53, no. 1 (1989): 74-90.

²³⁸ (Sifre Deuteronomy, Haazinu 306) ר' סימאי אומר כל בריות שנבראו מן השמים נפשם וגופם מן השמים וכל בריות שנבראו מן הארץ נפשם וגופם מן הארץ זה שנפשו מן השמים וגופו מן הארץ

²³⁹ Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that the second one was meant in a metaphorical fashion, and did not relate to binocular vision, but rather to some sense of rational sense perception. A comparison with 4th century Christian sources reveal that in the writings of the Church fathers, a generic difference between humans and animals (namely that animals do not recognize the existence of heavenly powers and of ethics and virtues) is expressed by the statement that the latter "look down to the ground, with bodies bending forward, because they have not received reason" by Lactantius (*Institutiones*, 2:1) and some of his successors. However, the treatment of the argument in *Genesis Rabbah* 8:11, where the anonymous objection raised interprets the statement in a physical way, suggests that the rabbis indeed understood "seeing" in the literal sense.

²⁴⁰ For a very detailed overview of the various viewpoints of Greek philosophical schools concerning this specific boundary, see Sorabji, *Animal Minds*, 1-31.

²⁴¹ Despite the diverse nature of approaches in Greek philosophy, the debate between these schools perpetually revolves around the interrelated questions of whether animals have a logos, and what the term "logos" exactly entails. Cf. Urs Dierauer, *Tier und Mensch im Denken der Antike: Studien zur Tierpsychologie, Anthropologie und Ethik* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1977) 253-273. See also Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, Humans*, 38-41. See also below chapter 2.3.1. and 2.3.3.

²⁴² The dualistic idea is hardly a uniquely gnostic phenomenon. As Gruenwald points out, it can be inferred from any number of cultural traditions of the Ancient Near East (including Christians, Gnostics, Zoroastrians etc.). Nevertheless, the rabbis were clearly keen on refuting the idea as much as it was possible without further promoting it by repeating it in a detailed fashion. See Ithamar Gruenwald, "The Problem of the Anti-Gnostic Polemic in Rabbinic Literature," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions, presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. R. Van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren, 171-190 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), here 186-188.

the rabbinic tradition,²⁴³ the gist of humankind's intermediary station between angels and animals is not so much due to the assumption that they would be partly spiritual, partly corporeal, but rather that they have the opportunity to advance toward both groups in ethical terms. This possibility is discussed in the *Babylonian Talmud*:

R. Nahman b. R. Hisda asked the following in his interpretation: why is the term “God formed man” (Gn 2:7) written with two “yods”? [He answered:] because God, praised be he, created two inclinations in man: a good one a bad one. R. Nahman b. Rav Isaac disagreed: ‘so according to this, beasts, which were not created thus [with two yods] do not have two inclinations! But we can indeed see that they cause injuries, they bite and they kick.’²⁴⁴

The philological argument relates to the scene of the creation of humankind, where – to the apparent surprise of the rabbis – an orthographic anomaly can be observed. This anomaly (the presence of an additional *yod* in the word “to create”) gives room to the claim that humankind was created with a dual core: it has both good and evil inclinations. The question concerning animals²⁴⁵ reveals that R. Nahman b. Hisda intended to draw a comparison here, arguing that humankind has both drives. Since further commentaries also prove what is only implied here (namely that angels have no evil inclination),²⁴⁶ it is logical to assume that the argument behind the statement of R. Nahman b. Hisda is that humankind is uniquely endowed with free will. Free will is thus the kernel of its special position among created beings. It is important to note that the position taken by R. Nahman (an amora of the late fourth century), is shared by a large number of contemporary Church fathers, most notably by Gregory of Nyssa and Nemesius of Emesa. The rabbinic phrasing of the notion is elaborately expressed in *Genesis Rabbah* as well, although in this compilation, it is attributed to a much earlier authority, R. Akiva:

²⁴³ (*Genesis Rabbah* 12:8) בשני ברא מן העילונים ויאמר אלהים יהי רקיע וגו', בשלישי ברא מן התחתונים, ויאמר אלהים תדשא הארץ וגו', ברביעי ברא מן העילונים, יהי מאורות, בחמישי ברא מן התחתונים, ישרצו המים, בששי בא לבראות את אדם אמר אם בורא אני אותו מן העילונים, עילונים רבים על התחתונים בריה אחת ואין שלום בעולם, ואם מן התחתונים כן, אלא הרי אני בורא אותו מן העילונים ומן התחתונים בשביל שלום. דרש רב נחמן בר רב חסדא: מאי דכתיב וייצר ה' אלהים את האדם בשני יודין - שני יצרים ברא הקדוש ברוך הוא, אחד (*bBerakhot* 61a) יצר טוב ואחד יצר רע. מתקיף לה רב נחמן בר יצחק: אלא מעתה, בהמה דלא כתיב בה וייצר - לית לה יצרא? והא קא חזינן דמזקא ונשכא ובעטא!

²⁴⁵ As for the question of whether animals have an evil inclination at all, *bBerachot* provides no answer. Instinctively, one could argue that if angels have only good inclination (יצר הטוב), then humans, who are apparently a composite between angels and animals would draw their evil inclination (יצר הרע) from the animals. However, R. Nahman b. Hisda's opinion is refuted in *Genesis Rabbah* 14:4, where it is categorically stated by an anonymous source that animals have no evil inclination (כיון שהיתה רואה סכין ביד אדם לשוחטה היתה מושחרת ומתה וייצר שתי יצירות יצר טוב ויצר רע, שאילו היה לבהמה שני יצרים). See also *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* A 16. Cf. Ishay Rosen-Zvi, “Two Rabbinic Inclinations? Rethinking a Scholarly Dogma,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 39 (2008): 513-539, here 533-534.

²⁴⁶ Cf. *Leviticus Rabbah* 26:5, *Genesis Rabbah* 48:11, *Sifre Num* 42, *bShabbat* 88b-89a etc. See Rebigier, “Angels in Rabbinic Literature,” 632, 640.

R. Pappos interpreted: “‘man has become like one of us” (Gn 3:22). Of whom? Of the angels of service.’ R. Akiva retorted: ‘Enough of this, Pappos!’ To which Pappos said: ‘So how do you understand the term, “like one of us”?’ ‘It means that God gave them two ways: the way of life and the way of death. And humankind chose the second one.’²⁴⁷

R. Akiva’s reply is based on the conviction that in the passage, God speaks in the *pluralis maiestatis*.²⁴⁸ Consequently, it is to him that humans are similar – inasmuch as they know good and evil, but not inasmuch as God would have similarly chosen the wrong way – and not to angels, who – unlike humans – are not endowed with free will.²⁴⁹

It is useful to take a closer look at the particular elements of the dual comparison of humankind with animals and angels. Each group of (three or) four characteristics (walking erect, the faculty of speech, comprehension, two forward looking eyes, consumption and excretion, procreation and mortality) defines not only one set of beings, but also its complement. Thus, we can learn that according to the rabbis, angels do not eat, drink or excrete, neither do they die or procreate.²⁵⁰ More interesting (and also more problematic) are the knowledge one gathers about animals. On the one hand, they name physical features (forward-looking eyes and walking erect) that do characterize some animals. And although one might suppose that the rabbis were ignorant of the rare existence²⁵¹ of bipedal locomotion among mammals and mostly primates,²⁵² it is hardly possible that they would have been unaware of the fact that binocular vision is a common trait among various (and among them many

²⁴⁷ (Genesis Rabbah 21:5) דרש ר' פפייס הן האדם היה כאחד ממנו כאחד ממלאכי השרת, אמר לו ר' עקיבה דיין פפייס, אמר לו מה את מקיים (Genesis Rabbah 21:5) ממנו, אמר לו שנתן הקדוש ברוך הוא מלפניו שתי דרכים חיים ומות וברר לו דרך אחרת

²⁴⁸ This is a crucial element of the rabbinic critique of the idea of “many powers in heaven”, the notion that God required, requested or even accepted any help in the process of creation, which – according to the rabbis – was a dangerous, heretic idea. See Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven. Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 121-134 and especially 130-131.

²⁴⁹ The same idea is present in Christian tradition of the first centuries. See e.g. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 2:8. There is however, a tradition both in rabbinic and in patristic circles, according to which fallen angels did possess free will. In a limited way, this is argued in Pirke DeRabbi Eliezer 22, where two angels (cast down by God) are incapable of resisting the charms of human women, and take them as wives (Cf. Gn 6:2). In the Christian tradition, the idea is much more elaborated by Justin Martyr. See Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: the Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 174-180.

²⁵⁰ See Genesis Rabbah 78:1, Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer 22 etc. See also Rebiger, “Angels in Rabbinic Literature,” 631.

²⁵¹ It is clear that the two major modes of locomotion (bipedal and quadrupedal) are not easily separated on a species by species basis, as various primates habitually alternate between the two. See K. D. Août et al., “Locomotion in bonobos (*Pan paniscus*): differences and similarities between bipedal and quadrupedal terrestrial walking, and a comparison with other locomotor modes,” *Journal of Anatomy* 204, no. 5 (2004): 353-361.

²⁵² As for the importance of regular observation of primates and their similarity to humans in establishing and maintaining human-animal boundary, see Nerissa Russell, “Navigating the Human-Animal Boundary,” *Reviews in Anthropology* 39, 1 (2010): 3-24, here 4-7.

carnivorous) mammals.²⁵³ Thus, I would propose to understand these two statements rather as elements of a metaphorical argument (namely that the posture and eyes of humans are directed toward the sky) than as natural-historical observations.

The non-physical features on the other hand (comprehension and speech), are attributed to various animals both in Biblical tradition and in rabbinic lore. And it is not only the serpent of the Garden of Eden that needs to be considered here, but also the ass of Balaam.²⁵⁴ Although the serpent was problematic enough on its own to force the rabbis to proceed with caution,²⁵⁵ it was not the only threat for the boundary.²⁵⁶ In the Second Temple period text of the *Book of Jubilees* for example, speech is not even an ontological difference between ordinary animals and humankind, as – before the fall of humankind – all animals were able to speak “with one tongue”.²⁵⁷ In rabbinic tradition, there are further instances of animals speaking with humans (e.g. *bGittin* 45a). But – of course – it is always the humans, who are capable of understanding the animals and not the other way around. Solomon is even considered a wise man for his knowledge of the language of birds and other animals.²⁵⁸ Importantly, except for the snake,²⁵⁹ animals do not speak Hebrew, but their own languages.²⁶⁰

²⁵³ For an overview of the wide-spread nature of this phenomenon in the animal kingdom, see Thomas W. Cronin, “The Visual Ecology of Predator-Prey Interactions,” In *Ecology of Predator-Prey Interactions*, ed. Pedro Barbosa and Ignacio Castellanos, 105-139 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) and esp. 109-110.

²⁵⁴ The *Old Testament* knows of only two animals capable of speech, but both of them: Balaam’s ass (Num 22:28-30) and the snake in the Garden of Eden (Gn 3:4-5), play a major role in the Bible and pose serious problems for the rabbis (see e.g. the discussion of the inevitability of the demise of Balaam’s ass following the exchange with Balaam (NumR 20:14-15). An excellent discussion of this text can be found in Schochet, *Animal Life*, 127-128.

²⁵⁵ The tradition in *Genesis Rabbah* that claims that the serpent was intended to be similar to the human in almost all respects and that it planned to kill Adam and takes his wife is – in my view – a rabbinic attempt at explaining away the concerning rivalry posed by the serpent’s almost human intellect. (*Genesis Rabbah* 20:5) ר' אסי ורבי הושעיא בשם ר' אחא (Gen 3:4-5) אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא אני עשיתיך מלך על הבהמה ועל החיה ואתה לא בקשת אני עשיתיך שיהא מהלך קוממיות כאדם ואתה לא בקשת, על גחונך תלך, אני עשיתיך שיהא אוכל מאכלות כאדם ואתה לא בקשת, ועפר תאכל כל ימי חייך, אתה בקשת להרוג את האדם ולישא את חוה, ואיבה אשית בינך וביין האשה, הוי מה שבקש לא ניתן לו, ומה שבירדו ניטל ממנו

²⁵⁶ *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (ch. 21) presents a version of the fall, in which the fallen angel, Samel takes the form of the serpent and seduces Eve. The following sexual intercourse resulted in the conception of Cain. In this narrative, the serpent is not only an intellectual rival of humankind, but also capable of being a sexual partner, and becoming, thus, a source of material corruption. See Ryan S. Dulkan, “The Devil Within: A Rabbinic Traditions-History of the Sammael Story in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 21 (2014): 153-175. Interestingly, however, the possibility of such human-animal intercourse is not restricted to the admittedly unique case of the serpent. In another locus (*bYebamot* 63a), the rabbis even discuss general human-animal crossbreeding, arguing that Adam chose Eve only after having intercourse with all the animals and finding out that none of them could become an appropriate partner.

²⁵⁷ Jub 3:28. See Robert Hayward, *Targums and the Transmission of Scripture into Judaism and Christianity* (Brill: Leiden, 2010)

²⁵⁸ See e.g. *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 1:11.

²⁵⁹ I believe the solitary exception to this rule is the Serpent in the Garden of Eden, who truly spoke Hebrew with Eve (See Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 70, f. 58).

²⁶⁰ See Willem F. Smelik, *Rabbis, Language and Translation in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 14-15).

Interestingly, in the shorter variant of the midrash, and in some of the halakhic materials presented below, the distinction between human and animal is projected onto the distinction between Jewish and Gentile.²⁶¹ In these versions, it is not simply the faculty of speech, but the capability to speak the holy language (לשון הקודש), namely Hebrew that makes angels similar to “humans”. So, the variant’s reading of humankind (בני אדם) should be read in a more restrictive sense as Jews.²⁶² This solution is appealing, and it is exploited in rabbinic tradition. A tradition likely based on this is in *Tanhuma*, where Rabbi Akiva makes a comparison between the Roman governor Turnus Rufus and dogs:

It happened with Turnus Rufus that he asked R. Akiva: ‘Why does God hate us that he says: ‘But I have hated Esau’ (Mal 1:3)’ R. Akiva said: ‘I will answer you tomorrow’. On the morrow, he asked him what he dreamt about the night and what he saw. He said: ‘tonight, in my dreams, I had two dogs. One was named Rufus, while the other was called Rufina.’ Turnus Rufus got angry immediately and said: ‘You did not say the names of your dogs, but my name and that of my wife. This is a *lèse-majesté*.’²⁶³ To which R. Akiva responded: ‘and what is [the difference] between you and them [the dogs]? You eat and drink, and they eat and drink. You reproduce and they reproduce. You die and they also die. And then you got angry that I called them by your name.’²⁶⁴

In this midrash, R. Akiva is not only calling his frequent interlocutor and proverbial “enemy”²⁶⁵ a dog, but he defends his argument by reducing Rufus’ and his wife’s activity to three aspects of life: alimentation, reproduction and mortality. It is not by accident that his definition corresponds to the above analyzed midrash-tradition that defines the animalistic elements of humankind by precisely the

²⁶¹ (*bHagigah* 16a) ששה דברים נאמרו בבני אדם שלשה כמלאכי השרת שלשה כבהמה שלשה כמלאכי השרת יש להם דעת כמלאכי השרת (*bHagigah* 16a) ומהלכין בקומה זקופה כמלאכי השרת ומספרים בלשון הקדש כמלאכי השרת שלשה כבהמה אוכלין ושותין כבהמה ופרין ורבין כבהמה ומוציאין רעי כבהמה.

ששה דברים נאמרו בבני אדם שלשה כבהמה ושלושה כמלאכי השרת: שלשה כבהמה אוכלין ושותין כבהמה (Abot de Rabbi Nathan A 37:4) פריין ורבין כבהמה ומוציאין ריעי כבהמה: ג' כמלאכי השרת יש בהן בינה כמלאכי השרת ומהלכין בקומה זקופה כמלאכי השרת ומספרין בלשון הקודש כמלאכי השרת.

²⁶² Sons of Adam (בני אדם) is an ambivalent term. In certain instances, it is an appellation exclusively defining Jews (e.g. *bBaba Metzia*, 114b), while in other passages it clearly refers to Gentiles (e.g. *bGittin*, 47a). There is a post-Talmudic locus, in which this problem is explicitly addressed, namely *Tosafot Yevamot* 61a. See Josef S. Bloch, *Israel und die Völker nach Jüdischer Lehre* (Berlin: Benjamin Harz, 1922) 273-274.

²⁶³ Turnus Rufus was a governor of Judaea in the 2nd century CE. See Ranon Katzoff, "Roman Edicts of Ta'anit 29a," *Classical Philology* 88, no. 2. (1993): 141-144, here 142.

מעשה בטורנסורופוס ששאל את רבי עקיבא א"ל למה הקדוש ברוך הוא שונא אותנו שכתב ואת עשו שנאתי, א"ל (Tanhuma, Teruma 3)²⁶⁴ למחר אני משיבך, למחר א"ל רבי עקיבא מה חלמתי זה הלילה ומה ראיתי א"ל בחלומי היה לי הלילה שני כלבים אחד שמו רופוס ואחד שמו רופינא, מיד כעס א"ל לא קראת שם כלביך אלא על שמי ושם אשתי נתחייבת הריגה למלכות, א"ל רבי עקיבא ומה בינך לביניהם אתה אוכל ושותה והן אוכלין ושותין אתה פרה ורבה והן פרין ורביין אתה מת והן מתים ועל שקראתי שמם בשמך כעסת

²⁶⁵ Turnus (or Tineius) Rufus is often depicted in rabbinic sources as not only R. Akiva's Gentile interlocutor, but also his nemesis. See Paul Mandel, "Was Rabbi Akiva a Martyr? Palestinian and Babylonian Influences in the Development of a Legend," in *Rabbinic Traditions between Palestine and Babylonia*, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, ed. Ronit Nikolsky and Tal Ilan, 306-355 (Brill: Leiden, 2014) here 313-314.

same three characteristics. Outwardly, R. Akiva claims that Rufus does no more than a mere animal, therefore, he has no reason to protest the statement that God regarded him as inferior to the Jews. Unfortunately, it is not disclosed, which angelic qualities Rufus and his wife lacked, so that they could not be counted among the humans. Still, the passage fits a rabbinic attempt to establish a general difference between Jews and Gentiles, along the lines of human-animal difference, or perhaps, more accurately: the rabbinic attempt of redrawing Jewish-Gentile boundary by implementing a seemingly natural human-animal difference.

2.2.3. Halakha and animalization

The assumption of Gentiles' relative proximity to animals (as opposed to Jews, who are more akin to angels)²⁶⁶ is a recurrent topic of halakhic traditions as well. But unlike the case of Akiva and similar haggadic material,²⁶⁷ halakhic texts work within the framework of legal argumentation. By recourse to the creational difference between humans and animals (however unstable it might be), they exploit the fact that the claim of animality can be an efficient measure to limit, severe or prohibit interrelations with certain people. Since the halakhic tradition is interested in establishing a taxonomy of the world based on ritual and purity-considerations,²⁶⁸ animalizing certain – not necessarily Gentile – groups is a way of organizing life. By virtue of the essential nature of human-animal difference, the rabbis could represent communal boundaries as essential.²⁶⁹ In a discussion on the legal status of places inhabited by Gentiles, it was – for example – stated:

Abaye asked them: 'So does rabbi Meir argue that the house of a Gentile is a proper house? Did we not learn that the court of a Gentile is like the stable of cattle?'²⁷⁰

Similar arguments are expressed elsewhere²⁷¹ The argument here is of course rather related to the rabbis' interest in preventing interactions, defining and maintaining intercommunal boundaries than

²⁶⁶ See Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 33-41.

²⁶⁷ Another similar exception is that of *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 3:18, which claims that the prophets of the Gentiles (as Gentiles themselves) are not humans, but animals.

²⁶⁸ See Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 3-8.

²⁶⁹ Although in some cases, the rabbis even reflected on the fact that purity/impurity were not natural categories (cf. *mYad* 4:6).

²⁷⁰ אמר להו אביי: וסבר רבי מאיר דירת נכרי שמה דירה? והתניא: חצירו של נכרי - הרי הוא כדיר של בהמה (*bEruvin* 62a)

²⁷¹ *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* claims, for example, in a narrative of purity-interpretations that the corpses of Gentiles are like animal carrion: (*Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 28), וכל הרוחץ עם הערל כאילו רוחץ עם הנבלה, וכל מי שאוכל עם ערל כאילו אוכל בשר שקץ, וכל הרוחץ עם הערל כאילו רוחץ עם הנבלה, וכל הנוגע בערל כאילו נוגע במת, שהם בחייהם כמתים ובמיתתם כנבלת בהמה.

to expressing their views of bodily difference between Gentiles and Jews. This is most evident from a well-known text from the *Babylonian Talmud*:

Thus, R. Simeon b. Yohai says: the graves of Gentiles do not render someone impure by standing above it²⁷², for it is said: “You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, [you are men]²⁷³” (Ez 34:31). You are called men, and the Gentiles are not called men.²⁷⁴

R. Simeon’s words have been taken by numerous antisemitic writers as proofs for the supposed *Talmudic* contempt for Gentiles and an assumption of a general concept of animality of non-Jewish people in rabbinic tradition.²⁷⁵ As it has been proven,²⁷⁶ however, this was not his intention. On the one hand, he does not disclose what he thinks about Gentiles, only that Israelites are called men. On the other hand, the argument is clearly not of a taxonomic nature, but rather an issue of purity, wishing to establish the notion that Gentiles are exempt from its laws. How much it was not the rabbinic aim to claim a general animality to Gentiles is clear from a tradition that argues for precisely the opposite:

Rab Judah said: the Gentile is naked. It is forbidden to say the shema in his or her presence. Why do you say: ‘a ‘Gentile’, if the same rule applies to Israelites as well?’ ‘Because it is clear concerning Israelites that it is forbidden. But concerning Gentiles, we needed to establish the principle.’ What is the argument here? It is written concerning them, that their ‘whose members were like those of donkeys’ (Ez 23:20). So, they are like donkeys. Therefore, we had to learn that their flesh is also regarded as naked.²⁷⁷

The argument revolves around the halakhic principle of the prohibition of prayers and benedictions in the presence of nakedness.²⁷⁸ R. Judah explains to his interlocutor that the clarification “in face of a naked heathen” was necessary because Gentiles might halakhically be understood as animals, in which case their nudity would be inoffensive. Ez 23:20 is here (as elsewhere) used in arguing for the

²⁷² Lit. “in one tent”.

²⁷³ In the NRSV, this part is missing.

²⁷⁴ (bYebamot 60b-61a) וכן היה ר"ש בן יוחאי אומר קברי נכרים אינן מטמאין באהל, שנא': ואתן צאני צאן מרעיתי אדם אתם, אתם קרויין (bYebamot 60b-61a) אדם, ואין הנכרים קרויין אדם

²⁷⁵ See Bloch, *Israel und die Völker*, 269-272.

²⁷⁶ See Elias Grünebaum and Carsten Wilke, *Die Sittenlehre des Judenthums andern Bekenntnissen gegenüber: Nebst dem geschichtlichen Nachweise über Entstehung und Bedeutung des Pharisaismus und dessen Verhältnis zum Stifter der christlichen Religion; synoptische Edition der Ausgaben von 1867 und 1878* (Köln: Böhlau, 2010) 255.

²⁷⁷ (bBerakhot 25b) אמר רב יהודה: נכרי ערום - אסור לקרות קריאת שמע כנגדו. מאי איריא נכרי, אפילו ישראל נמי! - ישראל - פשיטא ליה (bBerakhot 25b) דאסור, אלא נכרי אצטריכא ליה; מהו דתימא: הואיל וכתוב בהו אשר בשר חמורים בשרם, אימא כחמור בעלמא הוא - קמשמע לן: דאינהו נמי איקרו ערוה, דכתיב וערות אביהם לא ראו

²⁷⁸ Cf. jBerakhot 2:3.

animality of Gentiles.²⁷⁹ The Biblical verse condemns the political alliance with them by comparing it to the mating of animals. Israel (as a lecherous woman) is aroused by the stallion (of Pharaonic Egypt). By degendering the allegory and extrapolating from Egyptians to all Gentiles, the rabbis project animality into the other. However, Rab Judah makes it clear to his audience that although Gentile bodies are compared to those of animals, they are nevertheless considered to be similar to the bodies of Jews with respect to nakedness and shame. Thus, by subjecting a passage to legal analysis that was clearly written in a metaphorical fashion,²⁸⁰ and which was – moreover – interpreted as such by the rabbis,²⁸¹ R. Judah made a distinction between the physical state of Gentiles (they are humans) and their legal status (they are animals).

The recurrent comparison of animals and Gentiles (whatever the intention was), coupled with the apparently insecure and porous boundary between the two (but on a much broader scale: between humans and animals). This could and did lead to judicial excesses or at least allowed an inconsistent application of legal principles. Such an event is recorded a couple of pages later in tractate *Berachot*.²⁸²

R. Shila sentenced a man that had intercourse with a foreign woman to a punishment. The man went and told this to the Governor, saying there is a Jew, who gives sentences without permission from the governor. So, they sent an inspector to him, who – upon arrival – asked: ‘why did you sentence this man?’ ‘I did, since he had intercourse with a donkey.’ He asked: ‘do you have witnesses?’ He [R. Shila] responded: ‘I do.’ And Elijah came in the form of a man and testified. So, they told him [R. Shila]: ‘but then he needs to be executed.’ He [R. Shila] answered: ‘since we are banished from our land, we do not have the authority to sentence anyone to death’ ... The other man said to R. Shila: ‘does God perform miracles for those who lie?’ He [R. Shila] responded: ‘you wicked one! Are they not called donkeys, as it is written: “whose members were like those of donkeys”’ (Ez 23:20)?²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Cf. *bBerachot* 58a.

²⁸⁰ See Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

²⁸¹ Cf. e.g. *Genesis Rabbah* 96:5; *Leviticus Rabbah* 23:7 etc.

²⁸² Another interesting instance is that the graves of Gentiles are not considered ritually impure on accounts of them not being humans: (*bBaba Metzia* 114b) אדם - אתם קרויין אדם, ואין נכרים קרויין אדם

²⁸³ (*bBerachot* 58a) רבי שילא נגדיה לההוא גברא דבעל נכרית. אזל אכל ביה קורצי בי מלכא, אמר: איכא חד גברא ביהודאי דקא דיין דינא בלא (אמר להו: הרמנא דמלכא. שדר עליה פריסתקא, כי אתא אמרי ליה: מה טעמא נגדתיה להאי? אמר להו: דבא על חמרתא. אמרי ליה: אית לך סהדי? אמר להו: אין. אתא אליהו, אדמי ליה כאיניש, ואסהיד. אמרי ליה: אי הכי בר קטלא הוא! - אמר להו: אנן מיומא דגלינן מארעין לית לן רשותא למקטל... יהבי ליה קולפא, אמרו ליה: דון דינא. כי הוה נפיק, אמר ליה ההוא גברא: עביד רחמנא ניסא לשקרי הכי? - אמר ליה: רשע! לאו חמרי איקרו? דכתיב. אשר בשר חמורים בשרם.

The story relates how R. Shila passed judgement on a Jew, who engaged in sexual intercourse with a Gentile. In lack of a Biblical ground for punishing such intercourses, R. Shila claims before the authorities²⁸⁴ that the crime was that of fornication with an animal. This, he achieves by relying on a verbatim reading of Ez 23:19-20, according to which the virility of Egyptians is compared (!) to that of donkeys. The rabbi reads this passage as a corroboration of his implied statement, that Gentiles are comparable to animals with respect to the fact that they are unfit for sexual interaction with Jews. Since sexual intercourse with an animal is punishable by death in Mosaic law,²⁸⁵ R. Shila could even be considered a lenient judge, sentencing the “offender” only to flogging. The point here, as in previous passages is not to declare an essentialist judgement concerning the nature of all Gentiles, but to regulate activities by recourse to legal means. In lack of a Biblical law that forbids *expressis verbis* Jewish-Gentile sexual intercourses,²⁸⁶ R. Shila implements human-animal comparison as a legal device.

Rabbis used animal comparisons as tool for strengthening and securing an otherwise porous boundary between Gentiles and Jews. By virtue of such comparisons, Gentile otherness could be safely kept at a distance. Most of the time, one encounters such halakhic arguments, in passages dealing with matters of ritual purity (although this, in turn, encompasses a variety of topics from commensality to intermarriages and sexual relations in general)²⁸⁷

However, in a limited number of cases, such halakhic arguments even serve the construction of societal boundaries within the Jewish community. An example of this can be found in the *Babylonian Talmud*:

The rabbis taught: men always sell what they possess and marry the daughters of the wise men. If they do not find such daughters, they would marry the daughters of the leaders of a generation. If they do not

²⁸⁴ The story contains words indicating a Persian environment. But there is a strong belief that it was originally envisaged in a Roman context, and was only changed by medieval censors so as to play out in Sassanian territories. See Jason Sion Mokhtarian, *Rabbis, Sorcerers, Kings and Priests: The Culture of the Talmud in Ancient Iran* (Oakland, CA: California University Press, 2015) 114-115. In any case, the authorities are clearly willing to regard R. Shila’s argument in light of Jewish legal tradition, for intercourse with an animal would not even be a crime according to Roman law (See Joseph Méléze-Modrzejewski, “Hommes libres et bêtes dans les droits antiques,” in *Hommes et bêtes. Entretiens sur le racisme; Actes du colloque tenu du 12 au 15 mai 1973 au Centre Culturel International de Cerisy-La-Salle, Le Savoir Historique* 11, ed. Léon Poliakov, 75-102 (Paris: Mouton, 1975) here 92-93.)

²⁸⁵ Although this is not stated so in Lv 18:23, both Ex 22:19 and Lv 20:15 etc deems such acts worthy of capital punishment.

²⁸⁶ See the rabbinic discussion in bKiddushin 68b

²⁸⁷ A primary example of this strategy can be found in Sifre Num 131, where the refusal of commensality is in fact a way to avoid intermarriages and ultimately the prospect of idolatry. On this, see the analysis of Stemberger. Günter Stemberger, “Forbidden Gentile Food in Early Rabbinic Writings,” In *Jewish Identity and Politics between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba: Groups, Nomrativity, and Rituals*, ed. Benedikt Eckhardt, 209-225 (Leiden: Brill, 2012) here 219-224.

find such daughters, they would marry the daughters of the magistrates. If they do not find such daughters, they would marry the daughters of the charity treasurers. If they do not find such daughters, they would marry the daughter of the teachers. But they should not marry the daughters of *ammei ha-aretz*, for these are detestable and their wives are vermin, and it is about their daughters that it is said: “Cursed be anyone who lies with any animal” (Deu27:21).²⁸⁸

This *baraita* is part of a longer sequence, in which “*ammei ha-aretz*” a term with various connotations in the rabbinic tradition,²⁸⁹ is identified with a variety of living beings (thorn bush, vermin, beast etc.). Although the animal comparison is not the only one in this literary unit, it is certainly the most emphatic. The sequence of professions leads from high ranking members of society to less important officeholders, and it is concluded with the addition of the fauna, serving as a contrast to all previous items of the list. The fact that animalization can even serve as a societal boundary-marker indicates that even in the legal context of halakha, animality and humanity were not considered to be two securely delineated categories, but rather a set of opposites between which all humans were situated. Just as much as a Gentile could be human in certain respects, but animalistic from a legal point of view, an *am ha-aretz* could also be less human than a rabbi, but certainly human enough to be considered as a wife.

2.2.4. The crisis of animalization

The notion of such a transitional nature of humans was phrased not only in religious, societal and moral, but also in temporal dimensions, describing chronological decline in the human constitution. The rabbinic tradition of a decline of generations (ירידת הדורות/נתקטנו הדורות), has been framed in such a discourse in the *Babylonian Talmud*:

R. Zera said in the name of R. b. Zimuna: if the earlier [people] were the sons of angels, then we are the sons of men, and if the earlier were the sons of men, then we are like donkeys, and not like the donkey of R: Hanina b. Dosa and R. Pinhas b. Yair, but like ordinary donkeys.²⁹⁰

This Baraita measures intellectual capacity on a scale moving from angels to humans. And although it is only concerned with Jews, there is a rabbinic tradition in which the entirety of humankind is

²⁸⁸ תנו רבנן: לעולם ימכור אדם כל מה שיש לו וישא בת תלמיד חכם. לא מצא בת תלמיד חכם - ישא בת גדולי הדור. לא מצא (bPesahim 49b) בת גדולי הדור - ישא בת ראשי כנסיות, לא מצא בת ראשי כנסיות - ישא בת גבאי צדקה. לא מצא בת גבאי צדקה - ישא בת מלמדי תינוקות. ולא ישא בת עמי הארץ, מפני שהן שקץ, ונשותיהן שרץ, ועל בנותיהן הוא אומר ארור שכב עם כל בהמה

²⁸⁹ Tracy Ames, “Fellowship, Pharisees and the Common People in Early Rabbinic Tradition,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 34, no. 3-4 (2005): 339-356, here 342-348.

²⁹⁰ אמר רבי זירא אמר רבא בר זימנא: אם ראשונים בני מלאכים - אנו בני אנשים, ואם ראשונים בני אנשים - אנו כחמורים, (bShabbat 112b) ולא כחמורו של רבי חנינא בן דוסא ושל רבי פנחס בן יאיר, אלא כשאר חמורים

presented in such a manner (without the rabbinic discourse of diminishing knowledge in each subsequent generation).²⁹¹ An example to this can be found in *Genesis Rabbah*:

“To Seth also a son was born, and he named him Enosh” (Gn 4:26). They asked Aba Cohen Bardela: ‘Why does it say Adam, then Seth, then Enosh, and then nothing more?’ He answered to them: ‘Up until this point, they were created in his image and likeness’, but from that point the generations degraded and Centaurs came to be created. For four things happened in the days of Enosh, son of Seth: the mountains became rocky, the dead started to rot [lit. began to feel], and the faces [of men] became like the faces of apes, and they became feeble to destruction.²⁹²

The concept of gradual deterioration in the human condition was already hinted at in the *Old Testament*, inasmuch as the decline of the lifespan of generations following Adam indicates a recession in human *physis* (if not morality²⁹³), but – apart from a minor comment on this tendency²⁹⁴ – the idea is not elaborated in the Hebrew Bible. In the writings of the Second Temple period,²⁹⁵ however, declining lifespans of the patriarchs are clearly related to the concept of growing sinfulness,²⁹⁶ and to the increased distance from the moment of creation,²⁹⁷ a notion also expressed by Philo of Alexandria.²⁹⁸ However, neither *Jubilees* and *2Esdras*, nor Philo include animals in their

²⁹¹ For a general overview about the notion of the decline of generations (which did not consider creation or the entirety of humankind, only rabbis and their respective intellectual capabilities), see Menachem Marc Kellner, *Maimonides on the "Decline of the Generations" and the Nature of Rabbinic Authority* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) 8-12. It must be noted that in some cases this concept enveloped more than the rabbis and that it was not necessarily restricted to halakhic expertise. See Abraham M. Fuss, "The Study of Science and Philosophy Justified by Jewish Tradition," *The Torah U-Madda Journal* 5 (1994): 101-104, here 101-102.

292 ולשת גם הוא יולד בן ויקרא את שמו אנוש בעון קומי אבא כהן [בר דלא] אדם שת אנוש ושת, אמר להם עד כאן (Genesis Rabbah 23:26) בדמות וצלם, מכאן ואילך קינטורין. ארבעה דברים נשתנו בימי אנוש, ההרים נעשו טרשים התחיל המת מרחיש ונעשו פניהם כקופות ונעשו חולין למזיקים.

²⁹³ See Hanneke Reuling, *After Eden. Church Fathers and Rabbis on Genesis 3:16-21* (Brill: Leiden, 2006) 267-268.

²⁹⁴ See Gn 47:9, where Joseph answers to the Pharaoh, see also David Brooks, "The Idea of the Decay of the World in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the Pseudepigrapha," *The Light of Nature: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Science Presented to A. C. Crombie*, ed. J. D. North and J. J. Roche, 383-405 (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985) here 391-392.

²⁹⁵ As for the status of these writings in the Rabbinic tradition, see See Günter Stemberger, “Entstehung und Auffassung des Kanons in rabbinischen Denken,” in *Ibid. Judaica Minora* 1 (2010): 69-87, here 78-80, 82-83. Specifically on the position of these two writings in Jewish tradition see also Timothy H. Lim, “A Theory of the Majority Canon,” *The Expository Times*, 124, no. 8 (2013): 365-373, here 370-371.

²⁹⁶ See Jubilees 23:9-12. Also see James M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven. The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees* (Brill: Leiden, 2005) 113-119

²⁹⁷ See 2Esdras 5:50-55 Brooks, "The Idea of the Decay," 397-400.

²⁹⁸ Philo, *De Opificio Mundi* 140: τοιοῦτος μὲν ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ... γεγενῆσθαι μοι δοκεῖ, τοὺς τε νῦν ὄντας καὶ τοὺς πρὸ ἡμῶν διενεγκῶν ἅπαντας· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἡμετέρα γένεσις ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, τὸν δὲ θεὸς ἐδημιούργησεν ἐφ' ὅσον δὲ κρείττων ὁ ποιῶν, ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον καὶ τὸ γινόμενον ἄμεινον ... οὕτως ἔοικεν ὁ μὲν πρῶτος διαπλασθεὶς ἄνθρωπος ἀκμὴ τοῦ ἡμετέρου παντός ὑπάρξει γένους, οἱ δ' ἔπειτα μηκέθ' ὁμοίως ἐπακμάσαι, τῶν κατὰ γενεὰν ἀμαυροτέρας ἀεὶ τὰς τε μορφὰς καὶ τὰς δυνάμεις λαμβανόντων.

comparison of earlier and later generations. Since the latter is embedded in Stoic tradition,²⁹⁹ where a clearer boundary between humans and animals is securely established,³⁰⁰ it was inconceivable that any member of the human species would gravitate toward animality in its external form. However, the above midrash of *Genesis Rabbah* was presented from the vantage point of rabbinic tradition, where no secure human-animal boundary exists. In this tradition, spiritual and moral inferiority is regularly presented as a state of lessened humanity. Here, following the generation of Enosh, the race of centaurs come to being. These hybrids are traditionally identified in Graeco-Roman culture as beings driven by their base, animalistic instincts.³⁰¹ Thus, the concept of gradual decline of human stature was aptly presented in a form of increased animalization, reflecting less human (and more animalistic) forms both externally and internally. According to an early tradition of rabbinic literature, this fundamental change in human form will continue to afflict the entirety of humankind until the arrival of the Messiah.³⁰² The *Mishna* writes:

The elderly will stand up before youngsters ... and the face of this generation will be like the muzzle [lit. face] of dogs. And the son will not be ashamed before their fathers.³⁰³

According to Rabbi Eliezer, the author of this passage, in the generation preceding the Messiah, sinfulness will peak. As a visual evidence of this internal deterioration, people of the generation will have faces like the muzzle of a dog. And it is only with the advent of the Messiah that this situation is repaired and the paradisiacal status is restored.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁹ On Philo's Stoic inclination in this respect see Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, Humans*, 61-62. The idea of the gradual decline of humankind is wide-spread in Stoic tradition (e.g. Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 5:925-930) and closely related to its cosmology and concept of physics (see Pierre, Boyancé, *Lucrece et l'épicurisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963) 133-134, 220-221).

³⁰⁰ See chapter 2.3.1.

³⁰¹ E.g. the centaur Eurytion, who was invited to a wedding feast in the house Peirithous became enraged and beastly after drinking too much wine (see Homer, *Odyssey*, 21:295-300). See also Jan N. Bremmer, "Greek Demons of the Wilderness: the Case of the Centaurs," in *Wilderness in Mythology and Religion Approaching Religious Spatialities, Cosmologies, and Ideas of Wild Nature*, ed. Laura Feldt, 25-53 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012).

³⁰² Naturally, this is not the only possibility for the Jewish mindset. According to another concept, the continuous decline in humanity's stature is reversed by Abraham (see Reuling, *After Eden* 267-268). The Christian tradition, which emphasized that the decline was in fact a direct result of the fall of humankind – was based on a messianic, Pauline re-reading of creation and argued that the decline could and was only overturned by Christ. See Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) 83-109 and in general, Peter Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2008) 7-9.

³⁰³ זקנים יעמדו מפני קטנים ... פני הדור כפני הכלב, הבן אינו מתבייש מאביו (*mSotah* 9:15)

³⁰⁴ See Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Theology and Israelite Prophecy* (Lanham MA: University Press of America, 2008) 72-74.

Thus, despite secure and clear boundaries between humankind and animals in the Hebrew Bible, the rabbis operated with a less clear border. It was not only transgressed by speaking, thinking and devising animals, but also by humans, who themselves degraded to animalistic *niveaux*. In this respect, the rabbinic tradition is gravitating toward a different direction than its Christian counterpart, where the boundary of the Hebrew Bible was even strengthened to some extent in post-Biblical tradition.

2.3. Church Fathers define humankind

Church Fathers, similarly to their Jewish contemporaries, exhibited a profound interest in defining humankind and its relation to animals. Stakes were, however, much higher for them than for the rabbis, since in the Christian tradition, the exact definition of what it is to be a human became one of the most important cornerstones of theological ruminations. Inheriting not only the *Old Testament*, but also the *New Testament* – and by it, the continuous requirement³⁰⁵ to read the former through the latter – Christian interpreters could not evade discussing the nature of human existence in contrast to other “lifeforms”.³⁰⁶ The *Gospels’* interest in Christ’s nature,³⁰⁷ the debates emerging in subsequent centuries³⁰⁸ concerning the relationship of the divine and the human in Christ, as well as the notion of a deteriorating human status following the sin of Adam and Eve,³⁰⁹ guaranteed that the question of humanity and the defining of the boundaries of humankind became not only natural historical questions, but also essential concerns of theology.³¹⁰ By the theme of the Gentile mission, and the recurring notion³¹¹ of a universal divine message to the entirety of humanity, the Pauline letters conceptualized a generic definition of humankind.³¹² As a result of this, a framework of basic principles concerning humanity soon emerged, mustering the support of most (if not all) Church Fathers.

³⁰⁵ See Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 9-29.

³⁰⁶ As for the *New Testament’s* emphasis on the centrality of humankind in contrast to animals and the novelties of this view compared to the *Old Testament* precursor, see Richard Bauckham, “Jesus and Animals I: What did he Teach?” In *Animals on the Agenda, Questions about Animals for Theology and Ethics*, ed. Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto, 33-48 (London: SCM Press, 1998), here 38-43.

³⁰⁷ As for a quite recent overview of the scholarly consensus concerning the beginnings of Christology in the *New Testament*, see Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Der messianische Anspruch Jesu und die Anfänge der Christologie*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2001).

³⁰⁸ See Karl-Heinz Uthemann, “History of Christology to the Seventh Century,” *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Constantine to c. 600*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris, 460-500 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and Christopher A. Beeley, “The Early Christological Controversy: Apollinarius, Diodore, and Gregory Nazianzen,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011): 367-407.

³⁰⁹

³¹⁰ See N. Vorster, “Die *Imago Dei* in protologiese, Christologiese en eskatologiese perspektief,” *Skriflig* 45, no. 2-3 (2011): 591-612, here 604-609.

³¹¹ The notion is returning inasmuch as an all-encompassing message toward humanity has been already uttered in the *Old Testament*, as part of the story of the deluge (Gn 9:8-13). Interestingly, in this first instance a lasting settlement of human-animal relations was a key issue (See Jean-Pierre Albert, “Les Animaux, les hommes et l’alliance,” *L’Homme* 1, no 189 (2009): 81-114, here 93-97). As for the intricate interrelation of the Noahide covenant with the salvation history of the *New Testament*, see Aaron Chalmers, “The Importance of the Noahic Covenant to Biblical Theology,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 60, no. 2 (2009): 207-216.

³¹² See Emma Wasserman, “Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide? The Case of Pauline Anthropology in Romans and 2 Corinthians 4-5,” In *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism, Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, 259-283 (Brill: Leiden, 2013).

2.3.1. The influence of Stoic tradition

The advent of Christianity coincided with a recurring interest within Graeco-Roman society at large and particularly in Hellenistic philosophy in human-animal relations.³¹³ Philosophers of the first and second century CE rallied to two camps, opposing each other in such questions rather distinctly. As analyzed above,³¹⁴ one of them, following in the footsteps of Aristotle,³¹⁵ claimed that animals lack reason and the faculty of speech. This was, most notably argued by representatives of the Stoic tradition. The other camp, including Neo-Platonic and Pythagorean thinkers³¹⁶ who also claimed reliance on Plato in this matter,³¹⁷ argued that although there was a dissimilarity between human and animal cognition, the difference was rather quantitative than qualitative. They claimed – on the basis of Plato’s writings – that metempsychosis involving human-animal leaps was a possibility³¹⁸ (and by this, explicitly contradicting Aristotle).³¹⁹ Representatives of this camp also believed that humans had no right to whimsically exploit the natural world. The fierceness of the opposition between the two philosophical traditions is foreshadowed by a treatise of Philo of Alexandria, dedicated in its entirety to the question whether animals possess reason.³²⁰ In this text, Philo, argues with a certain Alexander (probably his nephew)³²¹ taking up a Stoic perspective for himself while relegating³²² an imagined Platonic point of view to his interlocutor. His unyielding refusal of even the mere possibility that animals could have *logos* is all the more remarkable, as – quite in contrast to his regular way of reasoning – he does not base his arguments on Biblical *loci*,³²³ but on an *a priori* conviction that

³¹³ See Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, Humans*, 37-41.

³¹⁴ See chapter 2.1.

³¹⁵ See Sorabji, *Animal Minds*, 10-16, and Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, Humans*, 38.

³¹⁶ See Max Pohlenz, *Die Stoa. Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1948-1949) 39-40.

³¹⁷ Although this claim was far from unproblematic. Plato’s views on the exact nature of animal cognition are inconsistent at best. Although he does not use the term so popular among Stoics that animals are without *logos* (ἄλογα ζῷα), but neither does Aristotle. Nevertheless, what is emerging from Plato’s copious writing, is a division between animals and humans based – at least in part – on some difference in cognitive capabilities. See Renehan, “The Greek Anthropocentric View of Man,” 240-241.

³¹⁸ See Plato, *Phaedo* 81e-82b, *Republic*, 620a

³¹⁹ On the Aristotelian refusal of metempsychosis, see Gabriele Cornelli, *In Search of Pythagoreanism, Pythagoreanism as an Historical Category* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013) 131-133.

³²⁰ The text survived only in Armenian translation. An English translation was published in 1981. See Abraham Terian, *Philonis Alexandrini De Animalibus: The Armenian Text* (Chico CA: Scholars Press, 1981) 65-108.

³²¹ As for the identity of his interlocutor, see Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962) 50.

³²² See Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, Humans*, 42-43.

³²³ As for Philo’s use of Biblical quotations in establishing arguments, see Folker Siegert, “Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic Style,” In *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament The History of Its Interpretation I/1: Antiquity*, ed. Magne Saebø, 130-199 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999) here 168-178.

humankind is superior to animals.³²⁴ And although Philo's choice of neglecting scriptural "evidence" for his discussion is not repeated by his Christian successors, his argumentation heralds later exegetical traditions inasmuch as it exhibits the tremendous influence that Stoic philosophy exerted on the discussion of human-animal relations.

Such influence is quite apparent in a passage from Origen's *Contra Celsum*. This text is an appropriate patristic parallel to that of Philo, as its author, similarly to his Alexandrian predecessor, treated the question of human-animal relations in the form of a debate. In his *Contra Celsum*, Origen argues with Celsus, a Neoplatonic, pagan philosopher.³²⁵ Origen's opus is quite extensive, encompassing a broad variety of topics crucial for Christian self-representation and debates against pagan opponents. At the end of the fourth book, the Church father treats Celsus' opinion about animals and provides a summary view of Christian tradition. According to him, Celsus argued against the centrality of humankind in creation, when he said:

If someone told us that we were the leaders of the irrational beings, since we hunt for the irrational animals and feasted on them, we would ask, if we are not rather created for their sake, since they hunt and eat us. But we also need nets and weapons and a multitude of helpers and dogs, when we hunt. For them [the animals] nature immediately and evidently gave weapons, with which they can easily subjugate us.³²⁶

Unfortunately, we have no access to the original writing of Celsus. But even if Origen misrepresented the arguments of his opponent to some extent,³²⁷ one can still recognize an otherwise known direction of argumentation,³²⁸ according to which humankind is not at the center of the entire world and the world was not created exclusively for the benefit of humans.³²⁹ As the response of Origen shows, this

³²⁴ P. Borgen, "Man's Sovereignty over Animals and Nature," in *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts*, ed. T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm, 369-389 (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995) here 376-377.

³²⁵ As for Celsus' person, see Celsus and R. Joseph Hoffman (transl.), *On the True Doctrine, a Discourse against the Christians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) 29-44.

³²⁶ (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 4:78) εἴ τις ἡμᾶς λέγοι ἄρχοντας τῶν ζῴων, ἐπεὶ ἡμεῖς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα θηρῶμέν τε καὶ δαινύμεθα, φήσομεν ὅτι τί δ' οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς δι' ἐκεῖνα γεγόναμεν, ἐπεὶ ἐκεῖνα θηρᾶται ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐσθίει; Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμῖν μὲν ἄρκυων καὶ ὀπλῶν δεῖ καὶ ἀνθρώπων πλείονων βοηθῶν καὶ κυνῶν κατὰ τῶν θηρευομένων· ἐκείνοις δ' αὐτίκα καὶ καθ' αὐτὰ ἡ φύσις ὅπλα δέδωκεν, εὐχερῶς ἡμᾶς ὑπάγουσα ἐκείνοις.

³²⁷ This is however an unlikely scenario. By misquoting or misrepresenting Celsus' original text and arguments, Origen would have risked part of his audience, the prospective, literate convert of pagan origins. Consequently, there is widespread consensus among scholars that Origen's quotes are accurate. See Origen and Henry Chadwick (transl.), *Contra Celsum* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1953), xxii-xxiv.

³²⁸ As for the wide-spread nature of this perception, see Reimar Müller, "Zur Anthropologie der Spätantike," *Sitzungsberichte der Leibniz-Sozietät* 18, 3 (1997): 121-133, here 125-127.

³²⁹ That Origen believes Celsus to hold such an opinion is clear from *Contra Celsum*, 4:74-75. Critical stances towards anthropocentric views of creation and the world were known in Greek philosophical tradition, the most notable among them (at least until Origen's lifetime) was of course Plutarch. See Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents*, 94-103.

seemingly harmless assertion threatens the entire construct of an anthropocentric model of creation and – with it – also the concept of a clear boundary between humans and animals:

So, you can see here how comprehension, a great gift, better than all the weapons animals seem to possess was given to us. We, who are indeed weaker and much smaller than some animals, can still overcome them with the help of our understanding, and hunt even the mighty elephants. Those that can be domesticated, we subdue to our will. Concerning those that are impossible to tame, or that do not seem to be useful for us in such a state, we first establish measures of protection. And then, if we wish, we can shut them away, or when we are in need of food, we take flesh from their bodies, just like we do with domesticated animals. And thus, the Creator subjugates everything as a servant to the rational animal and its natural understanding.³³⁰

Assuming that the argument of his opponent is not based on natural-historical observations, and is in fact only a *façade* for the underlying conviction of a non-anthropocentric worldview and a possible attack on the perspective of a decisive human-animal boundary, Origen also reveals his philosophical creed, a straightforward acceptance of the Stoic concept: a clear border between rational humans and irrational animals. Notably, he does not only reveal his leaning toward a Stoic worldview, but makes an argument, which implies a strong commitment to this philosophical tradition: namely that rational beings rightfully rule over irrational ones. This is a peculiar interpretation of human-animal relations, based on a literal reading of Gn 1:26.³³¹ Although Origen does not refer to this particular verse in his argumentation, he clearly relates dominion over animals and the right to rule over them to the possession of rationality. By the end of his fourth book against Celsus, he even comes to the point that the entirety of the world was created for the benefit of rational beings:

All things were created for the sake of humankind and all the rational beings.³³² And primarily on behalf of the rational being was everything formed. Although Celsus might say that things were made just as much for the sake of humans as for the sake of lions, or whatever [being] he might name, but we shall answer to that that the creator did not make

³³⁰ (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 4:78) Καὶ ἐνταῦθα δὲ ὁρᾷς, τίνα τρόπον ἡ σύνεσις μέγα βοήθημα ἡμῖν δέδοται καὶ παντὸς ὄπλου κρεῖττον, οὗ δοκεῖ ἔχειν τὰ θηρία. Ἡμεῖς γοῦν οἱ πολλῶν τῷ σώματι τῶν ζῴων ἀσθενέστεροι τινῶν δὲ καὶ εἰς ὑπερβολὴν βραχύτεροι κρατοῦμεν διὰ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν θηρίων καὶ τοὺς τηλικούτους ἐλέφαντας θηρεύομεν, τὰ μὲν πεφυκότα τιθασσεύεσθαι ὑποτάσσοντες τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ἡμερότητι, κατὰ δὲ τῶν μὴ πεφυκότων ἢ μὴ δοκούντων ἡμῖν χρεῖαν παρέχειν ἐκ τῆς τιθασσεύσεως οὕτω μετὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἰστάμεθα ἀσφαλείας, ὥστε, ὅτε μὲν βουλόμεθα, ἔχομεν τὰ τηλικαῦτα θηρία κατακεκλεισμένα, ὅτε δὲ χρῆζομεν τροφῆς τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων αὐτῶν, οὕτως αὐτὰ ἀναιροῦμεν ὥς καὶ τὰ μὴ ἄγρια τῶν ζῴων. Δοῦλα οὖν πάντα τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῴου καὶ τῆς φυσικῆς αὐτοῦ συνέσεως κατεσκεύασεν ὁ δημιουργός.

³³¹ ... and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth.

³³² Interestingly, Origen here acts as if he had not only humans, but also further rational creatures in mind, an notion held by Origen, as evidenced by *In Iohannem*, 1:210-219.

everything for a lion, an eagle or a dolphin, but all for the sake of the rational being ... Providence will never disregard the entirety of creation. He regulates it in a way, so that even if due to the sins of some rational part of it, it might become wicked, he purifies it and – with the passage of time – he takes back the whole to himself.³³³

In the context of a debate between well-educated philosophers, Origen not only refrained from arguing solely on the basis of Biblical texts, but even his concluding argument is a Stoic one,³³⁴ although reformulated from a Biblical perspective.³³⁵ The finesse of his argumentation is matched by that of Augustine in the Latin tradition (whose pertinent claims I will discuss below), but the arguments themselves, namely that humans are rational, whereas animals are not and that this gives the former the right to rule over the latter can be encountered all over the exegetical writings of the Church fathers.³³⁶

Basil the Great, composer of a set of homilies on the topic of the six days of creation, restricts himself to concise claims in this respect. In his seventh homily, for example, he makes the off-hand remark:

There is so much evil in those that do not partake of either reason or speech.³³⁷

And even in the ninth homily, which deals extensively with the question of the creation of humans and their dominion over the world, the concept of the irrationality of animals is not so much discussed and analyzed, but rather taken as a starting point:

Irrational beasts have only one soul. It has only one aspect, namely that it is irrational. But each of the animals is different due to specific characteristics. The bull is steady, the donkey is lazy, the horse is hasty in its desire for the female, the wolf cannot be domesticated, and the fox is deceitful, the deer is timid, the ant is hardworking, the dog is grateful and remembers its friends.³³⁸

³³³ (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 4:99) ἀνθρώπων καὶ παντὶ λογικῶν τὰ πάντα πεποιήται· προηγουμένως γὰρ διὰ τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον τὰ πάντα δεδημιούργηται. Κέλσος μὲν οὖν λεγέτω ὅτι οὕτως οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ὡς οὐδὲ λέοντι οὐδ' οἷς ὀνομάζει· ἡμεῖς δ' ἐροῦμεν· οὐ λέοντι ὁ δημιουργὸς οὐδ' ἀετῶ οὐδὲ δελφίνι ταῦτα πεποίηκεν, ἀλλὰ πάντα διὰ τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον ... Καὶ οὐδέποτε ἀπολείπει πρόνοια τὸ ὅλον· οἰκονομεῖ γάρ, κἂν κάκιον γίνηται διὰ τὸ λογικὸν ἁμαρτάνον μέρος τι τοῦ ὅλου, καθάρσιον αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν καὶ διὰ χρόνου ἐπιστρέφειν τὸ ὅλον πρὸς ἑαυτόν.

³³⁴ See Gary Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents*, 119-123.

³³⁵ On the Biblical, and especially *New Testament* notion of divine providence toward humankind, see Bauckham, “Jesus and Animals II”, 55-60.

³³⁶ See also Karla Pollman, “Wann ist der Mensch ein Mensch? Anthropologie und Kulturentstehung in spätantiken Autoren,” in *Körper und Seele: Aspekte Spätantiker Anthropologie*, Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 215, ed. Barbara Feichtinger, Stephen Lake, Helmut Seng, 181-206 (München: Saur, 2006), here 186-192.

³³⁷ (Basil, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 7:3) Αὕτη ἡ κακία τῶν μήτε λόγου μήτε φωνῆς μετεχόντων.

³³⁸ (Basil, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 9:3) Μία δὲ ψυχὴ τῶν ἀλόγων. Ἐν γὰρ αὐτῇ τὸ χαρακτηρίζον ἐστίν, ἡ ἀλογία. Ἰδιώμασι δὲ διαφόροις ἕκαστον τῶν ζώων κέκριται. Εὐσταθὴς μὲν γὰρ ὁ βοῦς, νοθής δὲ ὁ ὄνος· θερμὸς δὲ ὁ ἵππος πρὸς

Arguments of similar sorts can be found in the writings of almost all Church fathers. The Stoic notion of an impassable barrier between humans and animals was apparently wide-spread and almost certainly uncontested among them.

2.3.2. The dualistic human

Reason, as a governing principle in humans implies that they are composite beings, consisting of at least two if not three elements.³³⁹ As examples of the rabbinic tradition already showed, the idea that the body was separate from and governed by the rational soul, offers an appealing explanation for any similarities between the appearance of men and that of animals, but more importantly also for similarities in their behaviors. Applying the argument of reason governing over the body to the question of human-animal boundary almost inevitably results in the claim that the external similarities and those regarding activities are due to their shared corporeality. This concept was expressed by Church fathers. Lactantius, for example, claimed:

Although other animals look toward the ground with a bent body, for they did not receive reason and wisdom, we are – by God – given an erect stature and an exalted face, it is clear that the cults of the Gods do not originate from human reason, as they bend the heavenly creature to venerate earthly things.³⁴⁰

Lactantius' anthropology – most probably based on a Philonic precursor³⁴¹ – has a physiognomic perspective, arguing that the direction of animal eyes is indicative of their lack of reason, as compared to humans. In this commentary, one can recognize a curious merge of two physiognomic arguments separating animals (in fact only quadrupeds) from humankind: walking on four feet lacking forward looking eyes.³⁴² In a subsequent part of the same work, Lactantius enumerates further proofs of

ἐπιθυμίαν τοῦ θήλεος· ἀπιθάσσευτος ὁ λύκος, καὶ δολερὸν ἢ ἀλώπηξ· δειλὸν ἢ ἔλαφος· ὁ μύρμηξ φιλόπονος· εὐχάριστον ὁ κύων καὶ πρὸς φιλίαν μνημονικόν.

³³⁹ The concept of a tripartite humankind was a subject of significant debates among Church Fathers. Some believed it to be an almost heretical view (see Gregory of Nyssa, *De Opificio Homini* 14:2), while others claimed it to be a valid position (Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5:6:1) as for the opposition of the views see Anders Christian Lund Jacobsen, "The Constitution of Man according to Irenaeus and Origen," *Aspekte Spätantiker Anthropologie*, ed. Barbara Feichtinger, Stephen Lake and Helmut Seng, 67-94 (München: Saur, 2006)

³⁴⁰ (Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, 2:1:13) Nam cum ceterae animantes pronis corporibus in humum spectent, quia rationem ac sapientiam non acceperunt, nobis autem status rectus, sublimis uultus ab artifice deo datus sit, apparet istas religiones deorum non esse rationis humanae, quia curvant caeleste animal ad ueneranda terrena.

³⁴¹ See Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, 135. See also Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 49, fn 6.

³⁴² The similarity of this idea to the rabbis' choice of walking erect and forward-looking eyes merits attention. Lactantius' understanding of the term as eyes looking upward (instead of forward) is possibly an answer to the contrafactual rabbinic statement that only humans have forward-looking eyes. As Lactantius' writing precedes that of the rabbis, it is reasonable to argue that both traditions originate from a general notion of the period that distinguished between those beings (sometimes including animals) that looked upward and those that looked toward the ground. See e.g. Julian's distinction

humankind's superiority: he claims that its erected stance is an indication of the fact that the world was created for the sake of humans;³⁴³ in contrast to animals' bent position that shows the lack of faculty necessary to recognize morality and divine principles.³⁴⁴ He adds that – unlike animals – humans are immortal. While elaborating on the latter idea, he also formulates the kernel of an argument fully developed only by subsequent exegetes, namely that the two parts (the bodily and the spiritual) of the composite human being are not only different in their origins, but they are at odds in human life:

Therefore, he gave us the present [life], so that we can either merit the other, true and perpetual one through virtues, or lose it through vices ... The rest of the animals incline toward the ground, not receiving immortality, which is given from the heavens. But humankind, which is erect looks toward the sky, for immortality is offered to him. But it does not come unless God presents it to him. For if every person would be born immortal, there would be nothing [no difference] between righteous and unrighteous ones. Thus, immortality is not an evident gift, but something that can be received through virtues. Just like humans do not walk erect right after their birth, but first on all four, since the nature and this present life of us is similar to that of the mute animals. And only after strengths are confirmed and his language becomes eloquent, does he cease to be a mute animal.³⁴⁵

Here, human-animal difference is grasped through an analysis of the maturing process, consisting of both external and internal aspects. As humans gradually learn to walk on two feet, they develop reason and learn to distinguish between good and bad. The perceived opposition between the origins of corporeal and spiritual parts could even nourish the notion that following corporeal desires and subjecting themselves to corporeal needs will let humans be ruled by their animalistic part. Although this is not claimed explicitly by Lactantius, the idea must have been appealing to nascent Christianity, a tradition increasingly preoccupied with ascetic practices and the importance of furthering spiritual

between animals fit for sacrifice and consumption along such a distinction in *To the Mother of Gods* 177 b-c. See also Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 147.

³⁴³ See Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, 7:5.

³⁴⁴ See Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, 7:9.

³⁴⁵ (Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, 7:5) Idcirco hanc praesentem dedit, ut illam ueram et perpetuam aut uitae amittamus aut uirtute mereamur ... cetera namque animalia in humum uergunt, quia terrena sunt, nec capiunt immortalitatem, quae de caelo est, homo autem rectus in caelum spectat, quia proposita est illi immortalitas, nec tamen uenit, nisi tribuatur homini a deo: nam nihil interesset inter iustum et iniustum, siquidem omnis homo natus immortalis fieret. ergo immortalitas non sequella naturae, sed merces praemiumque uirtutis est. denique homo non statim quam natus est rectus ingreditur, sed quadrupes primo, quia ratio corporis et huius praesentis uitae communis est nobis cum mutis animalibus: post deinde confirmatis uiribus erigitur et lingua eius in eloquium soluitur et mutum animal esse desinit.

development, even at the expense of bodily desires and needs.³⁴⁶ And indeed, later representatives of Christian exegesis come to the same or very similar conclusions in their commentaries. In the *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, for example, Basil argues:

The cattle are terrestrial animals and are inclined toward the ground. But man is a creature of the sky, both due to the shape of its corporeal formation and elevated by the worth of his soul. How does the form of the four-footed beasts [look like]? Their head is inclined toward the ground, staring at their bellies, chasing constantly after their desires. Man, your head is elevated toward the sky, your eyes look upward! So, when you dishonor yourself through the passions of the flesh, serving your belly and the things below it, you come near to the unreasonable cattle and become similar to it.³⁴⁷

The metaphorical reading of the difference between human and animal physiognomy recalls (although covertly) the argumentation concerning animal-irrationality. The idea of fleshly passions (πάθος τῆς σαρκὸς)³⁴⁸ and the notion that they are located not only physically but also hierarchically (γαστρὶ δουλεύων) below rationality, recalls the conceptual opposites of self-restraint and the lack of command, a widely discussed topic of Greek philosophy.³⁴⁹ By depicting animals as lustful and governed only by passions, Basil adds an additional brick to the wall between humans and animals. The idea is accepted and further cultivated by Ambrose, who repeated many of Basil's arguments in his *Hexameron*. The otherwise almost word-for-word rephrasing of Basil's statement contains an interesting addition: the notion of free will:

³⁴⁶ The long tradition that Late Antique thinking and especially Christianity was infused with an unrelenting disdain for the physical world, as presented e.g. by Dodds (See E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety, Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965) 10-24) was repeatedly refused, e.g. by Wallace-Hadrill (see D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Greek Patristic View of Nature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968) 66-80) See also Patricia Cox, "Origen and the Bestial Soul," *Vigiliae Christianae* 36 (1982): 115-140, here 117-121. Nevertheless a clearly established hierarchy in which the physical aspects of life play a less important role than spiritual ones is apparently expressed in Christian literature (and expressly not in a more materialistic rabbinic tradition (See Morgenstern, "Der ganze Mensch der Tora," 235-244)) by centuries of ascetic tradition. See Gavin Flood, *The Ascetic Self, Subjectivity, Memory and Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 145-150.

³⁴⁷ (Basil, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 9:2) Τὰ κτήνη γῆϊνα καὶ πρὸς γῆν νενευκότα, ἀλλὰ τὸ οὐράνιον φυτὸν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὅσον τῷ σχήματι τῆς σωματικῆς διαπλάσεως, τοσοῦτον καὶ τῷ ἀξιώματι τῆς ψυχῆς διενήνοχε. Τῶν τετραπόδων τὸ σχῆμα ποταπὸν· Ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ γῆν προσνέενκεν, ἐπὶ γαστέρα βλέπει, καὶ τὸ ταύτης ἡδὺ ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου διώκει. Ἡ σὴ κεφαλὴ πρὸς οὐρανὸν διανέστηκεν· οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ σου τὰ ἄνω βλέπουσιν, ὥς ἐάν ποτε καὶ σὺ τοῖς πάθεσι τῆς σαρκὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀτιμάσῃς, γαστρὶ δουλεύων καὶ τοῖς ὑπὸ γαστέρα, παρασυνεβλήθῃς τοῖς κτήνεσι τοῖς ἀνοήτοις, καὶ ὁμοιωθῇς αὐτοῖς.

³⁴⁸ The concept that basic desires originate from the corporeal element of the composite human being was also expressed by Gregory of Nyssa (*De Opificio Hominis*, 18:1-4).

³⁴⁹ The opposites of self-restraint (ἐγκράτεια) and its lack (ἀκρασία) derive from Plato's writings, and was one of the major topics of discussion especially in the ethical writings of Aristotle, the Stoics and Plotinus. See Louis-André Dorion, "Plato and Enkrateia," in *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy*, ed. Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destrée, 119-139 (Leiden: Brill, 2007) and Pierre Destrée, "Aristotle on the Causes of Akrasia," *Ibid*, 139-167.

Do you want to drive those that have been created to serve humankind? Then, you should not deny the truth that every creature has its own nature. Thus, you will much more accommodate them to human needs. First, because all created beings of flocks, beasts, and fish has a protruding belly. And while some animals actually creep on their bellies, even those that are erected by feet, are pushed closer down to the ground due to the four-footed motion of their bodies. You may rather regard them as if they were attached to the ground than [consider them] being free, perhaps even lacking the faculty to rise higher. It is from the ground that they require the nourishment of their bellies, toward which they lean, and the desires of which they only pursue.³⁵⁰

Ambrose apparently argues that animals lack free will, as indicated by their four-footed locomotion. Bound to such an extent to the ground,³⁵¹ they are forced to strive only to follow their irrational desires. And although here this is not developed into a full-fledged theory of free will (as an issue of difference between animals and humans), Ambrose clearly states in his treatment of the topic of the “image of God” that – as opposed to the spiritual component – the corporeal part of humans is bound to follow corporeal desires.³⁵² I argue that by the phrasing “than being free” (*quam libera*) Ambrose is referring to free will, arguing that animals lack the possibility of distancing themselves from corporeal desires and fulfilling them. Humankind – in contrast – has not only a corporeal part, but also a spiritual element, and is, thus, free to choose between inclining toward its corporeal desires or to strive for ascension toward celestial ones. Ambrose does not elaborate on this idea. But the notion that human-animal difference might be defined by the latter’s lack of free will is neither far from views of contemporary Church fathers, nor from those of the rabbis, who often depict humans as being able to choose between becoming more animalistic or more angelic. Most notable among the former in this respect is Nemesius, the fourth century bishop of Emesa. In his treatise on human nature, he devotes significant efforts to outlining the situation of human-animal difference. He writes:

Man was indeed placed on the border between irrational and rational natures, so that if he turns toward the body, and loves more the things that are of the body, then he will greet the life of irrational beings and he will be counted among them. This is what Paul calls earthly (cf. 1Cor 15:47-49). And he will be told: “you are dust, and to dust you shall

³⁵⁰ (Ambrose, *Hexameron*, 6:3:10) Sed uis ad usum hominis deriuare quae genita sunt? Noli ueritatem unicuique generi naturae propriae denegare, et multo magis ea ad gratiam aptabis humanam, primum quia omnia genera pecorum, bestiarum ac piscium in alium natura prostrauit, ut alia uentre repant, alia quae pedibus sustentantur demersa magis quadripedi corporis gressu et uelut adfixa terris uideas esse quam libera, siquidem, cum erigendi se non habeant facultatem, de terra uictum requirunt et uentris, in quem deflectuntur, solas sequuntur uoluptates.

³⁵¹ On the Philonic origins of this idea, see Enzo Lucchesi, *L’usage de Philon dans l’oeuvre Exégétique de saint Ambroise – une “Quellenforschung” relative aux commentaires d’Ambroise sur la Genèse* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 24-31

³⁵² See Ambrose, *Hexameron*, 8:44-45.

return” (Gn 3:19); and also: “they are like the animals that perish” (Ps 49:12). If he turns towards reason and looks down upon all the bodily pleasures, he will partake in a godly life beloved by God, in a human form. And he will be like a heavenly being, as it is said: “As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.” (1Cor 15:48).³⁵³

The anthropological theory that is expressed by Nemesius’ words is the result of a centuries-long development. In it, the – supposedly unique – human features of having reason and having free will are interrelated and form – together – the border between humankind and animals. Those humans, who choose to incline to the rational, that is non-corporeal (!) element, will be similar to heavenly beings, whereas those, who leave it to corporeal desires to govern them, will be more akin to animals. The concept bears remarkable similarity to the anthropological understanding of the rabbis, inasmuch as humans are presented to be on the boundary between two extremes, fully corporeal and fully spiritual existence. Nemesius’ view can, thus, be taken as the expression of a popular belief in the period. A further example of such views is the concise treatment of the topic in a work of Nemesius’ contemporary, Gregory of Nyssa’s *De Opificio Hominis*:

I believe that a great and elevated lesson is transmitted through the divine writings. And this lesson is the following: although the two natures – that of divine and incorporeal nature and that of irrational and beastly life – are distanced from each other in the most extreme way, humankind is in the middle.³⁵⁴

The two traditions have a similar approach to anthropology. There is, however, a major difference between them: their definitions of what it is to be rational are quite divergent. As I have pointed out, the rabbinic traditions are ambiguous with regard to this question. In the writings of the Church fathers, however, there is ample discussion concerning the meaning of reason and rational capability.

2.3.3. The role of reason

By the time, Nemesius of Emesa wrote his treatise, Greek philosophers had been coping with the question of an exact definition of reason and rationality for centuries. The difficulty of this issue is

³⁵³ (Nemesius of Emesa, *De Natura Hominis*, 1:5) ἐν μεθορίοις οὖν τῆς ἀλόγου καὶ λογικῆς φύσεως ὁ ἄνθρωπος ταχθεὶς, ἐὰν μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ σῶμα ῥέψῃ καὶ τὰ τοῦ σώματος πλέον ἀγαπήσῃ, τὸν τῶν ἀλόγων ἀσπάζεται βίον καὶ τούτοις συναριθμηθήσεται καὶ χοϊκὸς κληθήσεται κατὰ Παῦλον καὶ ἀκούσεται· γῆ εἴ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύσῃ, καὶ παρασυνεβλήθη τοῖς κτήνεσι τοῖς ἀνοήτοις καὶ ὁμοιωθῇ αὐτοῖς· ἐὰν δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ λογικὸν χωρήσῃ καταφρονήσας τῶν σωματικῶν πασῶν ἡδονῶν, τὴν θεῖαν τε καὶ θεοφιλεστάτην ζωὴν μετέρχεται καὶ τὴν ὡς ἀνθρώπου προηγουμένως, καὶ ἔσται οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον· οἷος ὁ χοϊκὸς τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι.

³⁵⁴ (Gregory of Nyssa, *De Opificio Hominis*, 16:9) Οἶμαι γὰρ ἐγὼ δόγμα τι μέγα καὶ ὑψηλὸν διὰ τῶν εἰρημένων ὑπὸ τῆς θείας Γραφῆς παραδίδοσθαι. Τὸ δὲ δόγμα τοιοῦτόν ἐστι· Δύο τινῶν κατὰ τὸ ἀκρότατον πρὸς ἄλληλα διεστηκότων, μέσον ἐστὶ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, τῆς τε θείας καὶ ἀσωμάτου φύσεως, καὶ τῆς ἀλόγου καὶ κτηνώδους ζωῆς.

quite evident from the fact that despite the large amount of texts dedicated to this topic, no general consensus was achieved and many of the influential philosophers are not even consistent in their language. Sorabji outlines, for example, the internal problems of the Platonic tradition, in which animals were often said to have some form of rational faculty, but a close reading and contrast of different passages reveals contradictions as well as terminological inconsistencies.³⁵⁵ The general difficulty results of course from the fact that reason is a collective term for various aspects of human intelligence (memory, perception, sensation etc.), the quantitative measuring of which is still subject to debates in scientific thought.³⁵⁶ However, unlike their Greek predecessors, Church fathers were not approaching the topic exclusively from a scientific viewpoint. Their inquiry was often not directed at analyzing experiences with animals from a neutral standpoint and then establishing theories consistent with findings (as Plato, Aristotle and various other representatives of philosophical schools usually did) but rather at expounding a corpus of sacred writings in accordance with *a priori* accepted and unquestionable theological dogmas. Therefore, the burden of coming to a precise and legitimate description of the natural world was not a difficulty they had to face.

The first creation-narrative clearly delineated the hierarchical relationship between humankind and animals. Moreover, certain *New Testament* passages established humans as unique possessors of intelligent souls and declared animals destitute of reason.³⁵⁷ For Church fathers, these textual traditions were above scrutiny, and the task was rather forming them into a comprehensive picture of the world. Nevertheless, different patristic commentaries in which the irrational nature of animals is discussed, reveal certain differences in the understanding of reason as *differentia specifica* between humankind and the fauna.

We have seen how Basil the Great, Ambrose and Nemesius of Emesa linked the irrationality of animals to their physiology and earthbound nature. Implied in their understanding is the idea that the primary difference between the two entities would be that the latter was incapable of recognizing the existence and providence of God. This is, however only voiced explicitly by Augustine:

“Young ravens, when they cry” (Ps 147:9). We could perhaps think that the ravens call God, so that he gives them their food. But do not think that irrational animals invoke God, for – unlike rational ones, their soul

³⁵⁵ See Sorabji, *Animal Minds*, 9-12.

³⁵⁶ See James R. Flynn, *What is Intelligence, Beyond the Flynn Effect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 48-83.

³⁵⁷ See e.g. 2Pet 2:12; Jgs 1:10. Furthermore, Paul even states that animals have flesh different from that of any humans (1Cor 15:39), by which he creates a notion of generic difference between the two types of entities.. As for Stoic background of such *New Testament* passages see Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, Humans*, 175-176 and Idem, “Animals in Late Antiquity,” 355-6.

does not know how to do that. Take it as a metaphor and do not think, as some wicked people say, that human souls transmigrate into the flocks, the dogs, the swine and the ravens. Expel this idea from your hearts and from your faith. The human soul is made in the image of God, but God will not give his image to dogs or swine.³⁵⁸

The presentation of animals incapable of recognizing God unfolds – as we have seen – naturally from the accommodation of Stoic principles on the one hand (their irrationality and their irremediable corporeality) and from the *New Testament*’s Pauline anthropology, in which true faith is presented as the spiritual evolvment of humans in contrast to their partly corporeal nature.³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, it contradicts several *Old Testament* passages, in some of which animals are not only presented as acknowledging and praising God,³⁶⁰ but even as recognizing spiritual entities in contrast with “blind” humans.³⁶¹ Augustine, fully aware of this problem (especially so, since the verse he is commenting upon – if read literally – exemplifies just such a case) had to resolve the tension between the Biblical tradition and his own commentary, by claiming that it can only be understood symbolically:

So, what are the “young ravens” who cry to him? Who are the young ravens? The Jews claimed that they were the only righteous ones, since they received laws, and said that all the rest of the nations are sinners. And indeed, all nations were sinful, practicing idolatry, the veneration of stones and trees, but did they remain as such? So even if our fathers, the ravens did not, we, the sons of ravens do invoke God ... the young ravens – who seemed to venerate the idols of their fathers – turned toward God.³⁶²

The young of the ravens, calling to God are no longer understood as animals, but as symbolical representations of humans, who recognize God and venerate him properly: “Israelites from among

³⁵⁸ (Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 146:18) Et pullis coruorum qui inuocant eum. Hoc forte putabimus, quia corui deum inuocant, ut det illis escam? ne hoc cogitetis, irrationalem animam inuocare deum; non nouit anima inuocare deum, nisi sola rationalis. in figura accipite dictum, ne putetis, sicut impii quidam dicunt, reuolui animas humanas ad pecora, ad canes, ad porcos, ad coruos. Hoc a cordibus uestris excludite, et a fide uestra. anima humana facta est ad imaginem dei: non dabit imaginem suam cani et porco.

³⁵⁹ See Jacob Thiessen, “Paulinische versus jüdische und hellenistische Anthropologie? Zur Frage nach dem Verständnis von Römer 7,7-25,” *European Journal of Theology* 21, no 1 (2012): 17-34, here 24-26.

³⁶⁰ There are several Biblical examples (Jb 12:7-10, Is 43:20 etc.) and a long-standing tradition of hagiographic literature. See Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs*, 63-73.

³⁶¹ The Biblical example of the ass of Balaam (Num 24:23-33) is most likely the founding example for a long series of tradition, in which animals recognize holiness as it presents itself around them, often in contrast to humans who fail to do so. See Hobgood-Oster, *Holy Dogs and Asses*, 1-3.

³⁶² (Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 146:18) Qui sunt pulli coruorum? israelitae se solos iustos dicebant, quia legem acceperant; ceteros omnes omnium gentium homines peccatores dicebant. et uere omnes gentes in peccato, in idololatria, in adoratione lapidum atque lignorum erant; sed numquid sic remanserunt? etsi non ipsi corui patres nostri, tamen pulli coruorum nos ipsi inuocamus deum ... proficientes enim pulli coruorum qui simulacra colere uidebantur parentum suorum, conuersi sunt ad deum.

the nations”, that is to say: Christians. By implementing an allegorical reading, the animal-narrative is reversed: Augustine represents Christians as humans capable of turning away from their fathers’ mistake and recognizing the true God. By interpreting these animals as metaphorical representations of the Christians, Augustine leaves behind the issue of the irrationality of animals.

The problem is, however, treated extensively in the Christian traditions. The second century Irenaeus believed – for example – that failing to obey God would bring someone closer to becoming an animal. In doing so, similarly to Ambrose and Basil, he thought along the lines of relating carnality to animality:

Thus, the Apostle is correct calling all those spiritual, who have the symbol of spirit, and do not serve the desires of the flesh, but subject themselves to the Spirit and live in all things rationally. ... And those, who indeed refuse the counsel of the Spirit, and serve the delights of the flesh and live irrationally and who savagely jump into its lusts, as if they had no desire for the divine spirit, but live in the way of swine and dogs, are accurately called by the Apostle carnal. They understand nothing but carnal things. It is also because of this that prophets compare them to irrational animals. They behave irrationally, they say: “They were well-fed lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor's wife” (Jer 5:8). And in another place: “Mortals cannot abide in their pomp; they are like the animals that perish.” (Ps 49:12). This means that it was because of his own fault that he was compared to cattle, for he was mimicking their irrational life.³⁶³

By proposing a correspondence between the oppositions of rational-lewd and human-animal differences, Irenaeus subscribes to the claim that human rationality constitutes in proper devotion to God. The scriptural evidence he musters, describes unworthy humans as driven only by carnal desires. As author of a treatise on the various forms heretical views take, Irenaeus is relying on a Pauline notion,³⁶⁴ according to which corporeality and the reign of fleshy desires characterize those who fail to acknowledge the proper, spiritual meaning of the divine laws. In Irenaeus’ work, the tradition which was originally intended against advocates of a strict and exclusive observation of Mosaic

³⁶³ (Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 5:8:2) Qui ergo pignus Spiritus habent et non concupiscentiis carnis serviunt, sed subijciunt semetipsos Spiritui et rationabiliter conversantur in omnibus ... Eos autem qui abjiciunt quidem Spiritus consilium, carnis autem voluptatibus serviunt et irrationabiliter vivunt et ineffrenati dejiciuntur in sua desideria, quippe nullam habentes aspirationem divini spiritus, sed porcorum et canum more vivunt, hos iuste Apostolus carnales vocat, quoniam nihil aliud quam carnalia sentiunt. Et prophetae autem propter hanc eandem causam irrationabilibus animalibus assimilant eos, propter irrationalem conversationem ipsorum dicentes: Equi furentes ad feminas facti sunt, unusquisque eorum hinniens ad uxorem proximi sui, et rursus: Homo cum in honore esset assimilatus est jumentis, hoc quoniam secundum suam causam assimilatur iumentis, irrationabilem aemulans vitam.

³⁶⁴ On the Pauline tradition of carnality, and its incorporation into the exegesis of the Church Fathers, especially concerning heretics and Jews, see Susanna Drake, *Slandering the Jew, Sexuality and Difference in Early Christian Texts* (Philadelphia PE: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) 19-38.

laws,³⁶⁵ becomes the description of carnal people. His notion of irrational, animalistic humans threatening the theological purity of the Christian community helped solidifying the boundary between them and others at a naturalized human-animal division. It is important to observe that the identification of animalistic irrationality with perceived enemies of Christianity does not only help claiming that these heretics are incapable of recognizing theological truths, but also in depicting them as threatening, alien forces, whom members of the community were encouraged to avoid. The threat the irrational behavior of animalistic others posed to Christianity was a theme that became very influential in later tradition. For example, in his second theological oration, Gregory of Nazianzus offers a more detailed description of its manifold forms:

If there is a wicked and savage beast truly incapable of receiving the contemplation and theology of the Logos, it should not lurk among the trees causing harm maliciously, hoping to grasp at some dogma or saying. They jump up suddenly and tear healthy teachings apart by misinterpreting them. Let them stand in the distance, away from the mountain, or they will be stoned and crushed and die in immorality. For the true words are hard rocks for those of a beastly nature. He can be a leopard, dying together with its spots (Cf. Jer 13:23). He can be a lion, that preys and roars in search of a game from our souls or our words (1 Pt 5:8). Or he can be a wild boar trampling over the beautiful shining pearls of truth (Mt 7:6).³⁶⁶

Although he starts by emphasizing that irrationality prevents animalistic humans from contemplating the truth of theology, Gregory's description moves well beyond claiming a simple cognitive failure. The corporeality of animals (and by extension humans who are compared to them) becomes a concise reference to various forms of threatening behaviors (including a desire to destroy, but also one to distort truth). The common denominator among these forms is no longer the lack of understanding, but rather the capability of destruction. Thus, the identification of otherness with animality through claiming their utter corporeality, becomes a tool to describe external and internal threats.

2.3.4. Animalization and its consequences

³⁶⁵ See Thiessen, "Paulinische versus jüdische," 24-25.

³⁶⁶ (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orationes*, 28:2) εἰ δέ τις θηρίον ἐστὶ πονηρὸν καὶ ἀνήμερον καὶ ἀνεπίδεκτον πάντη λόγων θεωρίας καὶ θεολογίας, μὴ ἐμφωλευέτω ταῖς ὕλαις κακούργως καὶ κακοηθῶς, ἵνα τινὸς λάβηται δόγματος ἢ ῥήματος, ἀθρώως προσπηδῇσαν, καὶ σπαράξῃ τοὺς ὑγιαίνοντας λόγους ταῖς ἐπηρείαις, ἀλλ' ἔτι πόρρωθεν στηκέτω, καὶ ἀποχωρεῖτω τοῦ ὄρους, ἢ λιθοβοληθήσεται, καὶ συντριβήσεται, καὶ ἀπολεῖται κακῶς κακός· λίθοι γὰρ τοῖς θηριώδεσιν οἱ ἀληθεῖς λόγοι καὶ στεργοί. εἴτε πάρδαλις εἴη, συναποθνησκέτω τοῖς ποικίλμασιν. εἴτε λέων ἀρπάζων καὶ ὠρυόμενος καὶ ζητῶν ἥντινα βρῶσιν ποιήσεται τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν ἢ λέξεων· εἴτε σὺς καταπατῶν τοὺς καλοὺς τε καὶ διαυγεῖς μαργαρίτας τῆς ἀληθείας.

By the time Chrysostom starts preaching his anti-Jewish homilies, a major collection of animal-imagery in the service of identity-formation, animality is already a legitimate tool for describing those who do not simply appear irrational, but who are actually beyond the borders of the Christian community. Chrysostom, who subscribes to the Stoic notions his patristic predecessors claimed (e.g. that the entirety of creation was for the sake of humans³⁶⁷; the major difference between the two groups is the lack and possession of reason³⁶⁸) formulates a comprehensive theory accounting not only for the identification of others (in this specific case: Jews) with animals, but also defines it as a result of losing reason, as expressed by false beliefs:

And these Jews have been asked to adopt the Son. But they rather took the dogs as relatives. We, who had been dogs, on the other hand, were strengthened through divine grace to break off with previous irrationality, and to take up the honor of sons. Whence is it evident? He said: “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs” (Mt 15:26). Christ said this to the Canaanite woman. And he called the Jews sons, and those from the nations dogs. But look how the whole thing reversed afterwards: these are becoming dogs, and we are becoming sons. Paul said about them [Jews]: “Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers. Beware of those who mutilate the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision” (Phil 3:2-3). Can you see how those who were sons, became dogs? Do you want to know how we who had been dogs became sons? “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12).”³⁶⁹

In this description, the border between animals and humans – at least in its metaphoric use – is very much traversable. The decline of Jews to animality, as evidenced by their failure to recognize Christ,³⁷⁰ is balanced by a reverse process of Christians gaining reason, and becoming humans. The claim of a childlike nature is perhaps an allusion to Dt 14:1 or to Gal 3:26, in both of which, the

³⁶⁷ See John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Genesim*, 8:4.

³⁶⁸ See John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos*, 1:6:8.

³⁶⁹ (John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos*, 1:2:1-2) Κάκεῖνοι μὲν εἰς υἱοθεσίαν καλούμενοι, πρὸς τὴν τῶν κυνῶν συγγένειαν ἐξέπεσον· ἡμεῖς δὲ κύνες ὄντες ἰσχύσαμεν διὰ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριν ἀποθέσθαι τὴν προτέραν ἀλογίαν, καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῶν υἱῶν ἀναβῆναι τιμὴν. Πόθεν τοῦτο δῆλον; Οὐκ ἔστι καλὸν, φησὶ, λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων, καὶ βαλεῖν τοῖς κυναρίοις· πρὸς τὴν Χαναanaίαν ὁ Χριστὸς ἔλεγεν, ἐκείνους μὲν τέκνα καλῶν, κύνας δὲ τοὺς ἐξ ἐθνῶν. Ἄλλ' ὅρα πῶς ἀντεστράφη μετὰ ταῦτα ἡ τάξις, κάκεῖνοι μὲν ἐγένοντο κύνες, τέκνα δὲ ἡμεῖς. Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας, Παῦλός φησι περὶ αὐτῶν, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν· ἡμεῖς γάρ ἐσμεν ἡ περιτομή. Εἶδες πῶς κύνες ἐγένοντο οἱ πρότερον ὄντες τέκνα; Βούλει μαθεῖν πῶς οἱ πρότερον ὄντες κύνες ἡμεῖς ἐγενόμεθα τέκνα; Ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτὸν, φησὶν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι.

³⁷⁰ The Jewish refusal of Jesus’ messiahship was recognized a point of divergence in both traditions. See Philip S. Alexander, “The Parting of the Ways’ from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism,” *Jews and Christians, the Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James G. Dunn, 1-27 (Eerdmans: Cambridge, 1992), here 15-17. For Chrysostom’s presentation of the issue as a stumbling block for Jews, see Robert Louis Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the late 4th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 153-156.

respective believers are called “sons of God”. If it is a *homage* to the former, Chrysostom might be trying to counter the rabbinic claim, recorded in the *Mishna* distinguishing between ordinary humans (אדם) and sons (בנים),³⁷¹ arguing that the latter is a more specific designation, referring to the elected status of Israel.³⁷²

The apparent equation of reason with proper belief is far removed from the way Stoic tradition described the irrationality of animals, but not from Chrysostom’s Christian predecessors. He could rely on a strong tradition of defining lasciviousness and irrationality as indications of one’s animality, and he could use this narrative as a theological tool to formulate Christian identity. However, by doing so, he also inadvertently weakened the stability of said border. If evolution is possible, then borders between the two groups can be traversed. Thus, by implementing a narrative of (at least in the Christian tradition) naturalized difference to the still undefined border between Jewish and Christian communities,³⁷³ Chrysostom unleashed a twofold process: He managed to distance his own community, and in general, Christianity from Judaism. But by virtue of the unclarified and disputed border between the two, he also emasculated the concept of a fundamental difference between animals and humans. A similar uncertainty of the boundary can be observed in some of his further writings. In a homily on the *Acts of the Apostles*, he claims:

And if someone called us condescendingly a dog, we get angry, and yet we do not think that it is any problem that we treat ourselves condescendingly, not in words, but in deeds and do not pay as much heed to our souls as to dogs. Can you see the darkness enveloping everything? How much people care that their dogs are not fed with more food than needed, so that they are ready for hunting, driven by starvation and hunger. At the same time, they do not care to avoid living a luxurious lifestyle. And they teach the irrational creatures to philosophize, but they immerse into the brutish style of the irrational beings.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Cf. *mAvot* 3:14.

³⁷² See also Bloch, *Israel und die Völker*, 275-276.

³⁷³ See Paula Fredriksen, “What ‘Parting of the Ways’? Jews, Gentiles and the Ancient Mediterranean City,” In *The Ways that Never Parted, Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker, Annette Yoshiko Reed, 35-65 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013) here 51-60.

³⁷⁴ (John Chrysostom, *In Acta Apostolorum Homiliae*, 34) Καὶ μὲν τις ἡμᾶς ὑβρίζων εἶπη, κύων, ἀλγοῦμεν· ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ὑβρίζοντες οὐ λόγῳ, ἀλλ’ ἔργῳ, καὶ μὴδὲ τοσαύτης μεταδιδόντες ἐπιμελείας τῇ ψυχῇ ὅσης τοῖς κυσὶν, οὐδὲν ἡγούμεθα πάσχειν δεινόν. Ὁρᾷτε ὅσου σκότους τὰ πάντα ἐμπέπλησται; Πόσοι φροντίζουν τῶν κυνῶν, ὥστε μὴ πλεον τοῦ δέοντος ἐμπλησθῆναι, ὥστε ὅξεῖς εἶναι καὶ θηρατικούς ὑπὸ τοῦ λιμοῦ καὶ τῆς πείνης ὠθουμένους· ἑαυτῶν δὲ οὐκ ἐπιμελοῦνται οὐδὲ ἐπιτάττουσιν ὥστε μὴ τρυφᾶν· καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄλογα φιλοσοφεῖν διδάσκουσιν, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν τῶν ἀλόγων θηριωδίαν ἀνέχονται καταγόμενοι.

Here, it is no longer a fundamental historical change, a shift of salvation history³⁷⁵ that is under scrutiny. Talking about ordinary people's pursuit of pleasure, Chrysostom warns about a danger of becoming animalistic. And although he points out that actual animals are not rational³⁷⁶, he uses the training of animals as a comparison to the education of humans. Thus, even in this interpretation, he operates with a notion of a possible change within animal nature. However, Chrysostom's examples remain isolated, and – to my knowledge – no other representative of the patristic tradition subscribes to such a concept of change between human and animal status. This leads one to assume that even these arguments were rather intended as rhetorical tools and not as confessions of a belief in the possibility of traversing the human-animal boundary.

2.3.5. Stable borders

The tradition separating humans and animals is ultimately codified for more than a millennium by Chrysostom's younger contemporary, Augustine, who presents a variety of fundamental differences between the two groups. Although, as I have showed, he also starts from the Stoic tradition of denying reason to animals,³⁷⁷ he goes far beyond it, claiming that the lack of rationality in animals makes reason the highest-ranking element of the composite³⁷⁸ human psyche:

Therefore, a dissimilar nature (one that does not understand, but lives, like that of an animal) precedes the other type of nature (one that does not live, or understand, like that of an inanimate body). In turn, this is preceded by a nature that lives and also understands (like the rational spirit of men). And now you should consider whether it would be possible to find anything more prestigious in us among things that make us human, than the thing that we listed as the third one [understanding]! It is manifest that we have a body and a soul that animates and feeds this body. These two, we also observed in beasts. But the third, so to say the head and eyes of our soul, or whatever more congruent term you want to label reason and intelligence with, cannot be found in the nature

³⁷⁵ In the previous case, Chrysostom talks about the mission of Christ and its effect on the history of humankind by bringing about the conversion of the masses and their eventual redemption. In Paul's understanding this process was in fact a form of new creation. Relying on a – in late Second Temple Judaism – popular theme, Paul argued that the first parousia of Christ was inseparably bound with a renewed creation (see e.g. Gal 6.15). See Moyer V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought*, Society for New Testament Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 238-241. Such a change could very well include a fundamental shift in the behavior of animals (See Ryan Patrick McLaughlin, "Evidencing the Eschaton: Progressive-Transformative Animal Welfare in the Church Fathers," *Modern Theology* 27, no. 1. (2011): 121-146), and perhaps even in their ontological nature.

³⁷⁶ (John Chrysostom, *In Acta Apostolorum Homiliae*, 34:5) Ἀλόγῳ φύσει δυνηθεὶς ἐνθελῖναι οὔτε φεγγαγομένη οὔτε λογισμὸν ἐχούσῃ τοσαύτην φιλοσοφίαν

³⁷⁷ See e.g. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 19:14

³⁷⁸ On the composite nature of the soul and its partitions in Augustine's writings, see Marie-Anne Vannier, "L'Anthropologie de S. Augustin," *Körper und Seele: Aspekte spätantiker Anthropologie*, ed. Barbara Feichtinger, Stephen Lake and Helmut Seng, 207-236 (München: Saur, 2006), here 208-211.

of beasts. So, I ask you: how could you find anything else that is more sublime in the human nature than understanding?³⁷⁹

In another *locus*, Augustine claims that the human-animal distinction is so evident, that it should not need any further proof. Yet he provides his own comment to the issue:³⁸⁰

What is the proof that humans excel over beasts? Among others, which can show that humans outdo beasts in matters of intelligence, one is manifest to all: beasts can be domesticated and tamed by men, but men can never be domesticated and tamed by beasts.³⁸¹

By pointing out that the sole reason for the existence of animals is to provide nourishment, help and edifying examples for human development,³⁸² Augustine brings the fusion of the Stoic perspective and Christian anthropocentrism to its full potential.³⁸³ In this merging, the principle of providence for humankind blends with the Biblical narrative of an anthropocentric creationism:

This is required by the order of nature. So, has God established humankind? For it is said: “have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gn 1:28). He did not want anything that was created rational and in his likeness to be dominated by irrational beings, such as men by other men. But he wanted humankind to dominate the beasts. Therefore, the first just men were made rather shepherds of flocks than kings of the people. So, did God wish to teach us what the order of created things is.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁹ (Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, 2:13) Cum ergo eam naturam quae tantum est, nec vivit nec intelligit, sicuti est corpus exanime, praecedat ea natura quae non tantum est, sed etiam vivit, nec intelligit, sicuti est anima bestiarum: et rursus hanc praecedat ea quae simul et est et vivit et intelligit, sicut in homine mens rationalis: num arbitraris in nobis, id est in iis quibus natura nostra completur ut homines simus, aliquid inveniri posse praestantius, quam hoc quod in his tribus tertio loco posnimus? Nam et corpus nos habere manifestum est, et vitae quamdam qua ipsum corpus animator atque vegetatur, quae duo etiam in bestiis agnoscimus, et tertium quiddam quasi animae nostrae caput aut oculum aut si quid congruentius de ratione atque intelligentia dici potest, quam non habet natura bestiarum. Quare vide, obsecro, utrum aliquid invenire possis, quod sit in natura hominis ratione sublimius. E. Nihil omnino melius video.

³⁸⁰ Augustine’s argument is going back to a long tradition of defining human excellence through humankind’s capability of domesticating animals. The Letter of James (3:3) already claims that every animal can be tamed by humans (“For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species”) and Origen says (*Contra Celsum*, 4:78) that humans make up for their lack of natural protection and weapons by domesticating the fauna around them. Origen’s idea is, then paraphrased by Ambrose (*Hexameron*, 6:5:36). See also Gregory of Nyssa, *De Opificio Hominis*, 7:3. But – to my knowledge – it is only Augustine who makes a full-fledged argument out of this observation.

³⁸¹ (Augustine, *De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus*, 13) Quo documento constet homines bestiis excellere. Inter multa quibus ostendi potest hominem ratione bestiis antecellere hoc omnibus manifestum est, quod beluae ab hominibus domari et mansuefieri possunt, homines a beluis nullo modo.

³⁸² This idea was first Clark, “The Fathers and the Animals,” 71-78.

³⁸³ Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents*, 119-123.

³⁸⁴ (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 19:15) Hoc naturalis ordo praescribit, ita deus hominem condidit. nam: dominetur, inquit, piscium maris et uolatilium caeli et omnium repentium, quae repunt super terram. rationalem factum ad imaginem suam

This overview of the patristic tradition shows that the writings of the Church fathers were impregnated with a strong belief of an *a priori* difference between humans and animals. The fact that despite the diverse nature of their arguments and the Biblical loci they choose to prove their point with, patristic authors come to the same conclusion, namely that animals lack reason (using often even the same terminology) and that therefore humans are entitled to rule over them, shows that it was not so much the Biblical tradition that directed their steps but rather a *carte blanche* acceptance of the validity of the Stoic argument. And although Augustine was the one who codified this line of thinking for the Western tradition, the notion was apparently present already in the earliest layers of patristic tradition. In this regard, the Christian approach was different from its rabbinic counterpart. In the latter, the distinction between humans and animals was not always clear and the boundary between them was much less secure than in the Christian tradition. Consequently, the identification of otherness with animality had different overtones in the two traditions. Christian interpreters relied on a stronger belief of a universal division between all of humanity and the entirety of the fauna. Therefore, it was easier for them to implement even harsher terminologies of animalizing otherness, without really risking that rhetorical tools would be understood in a literal sense. Rabbis had to be more careful. In their case, the possibility of less than human others drawing close to animality was not always a mere metaphor, but often a statement with legal consequences. Fully aware of the implications of such a situation, rabbis were careful to map out the limits of implementing animalizing language in their symbolic representations of identity and alterity. However, as the example of Chrysostom shows, it was even possible for Church fathers, to entertain the possibility of traversable boundaries between human and animal realm. In light of this finding, it seems unpractical to uphold the perspective of a stable division between animals and humans in pre-Darwinic Late Antiquity, and the scholar is driven to further investigate how animals served in the two traditions' construction of identity and alterity. Thus, in chapters to follow, I invite the reader to an analysis of specific themes and narratives in which animality and the systemic view human-made animal taxonomy provides was implemented for this purpose.

noluit nisi inrationabilibus dominari; non hominem homini, sed hominem pecori. inde primi iusti pastores pecorum magis quam reges hominum constituti sunt, ut etiam sic insinaret deus, quid postulet ordo creaturarum.

3. The animal that thinks

3.1. Whatever happened to sacrifices?

In 70 CE, the Second Temple was destroyed. With it a formative element of Israelite tradition and one of the cornerstones of its understanding of human-animal relations, animal sacrifices were also gone.³⁸⁵ This was a major blow to almost all forms of Second Temple Judaism, which – even if only *in absentia*³⁸⁶ – defined themselves in relation to the Mosaic tradition, an important part of which revolved around animal sacrifices.³⁸⁷ Thus, with the end of the sacrificial system not only the economy of divine-human and human-animal interrelations were disrupted, but various forms of Jewish self-definition were also shaken to their core.

One of the broader frameworks in which the destruction of the Temple (and the fundamental changes it unleashed in nascent rabbinic and Christian traditions) can be studied is that of the end of sacrifices.³⁸⁸ The term encompasses a major shift that can be observed within and to some extent around the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity, and which entails at its beginning a variety of religious traditions centering around rites of animal sacrifices and at its end a total disappearance of the sacrificial killing of animals from both public and private spheres.³⁸⁹ The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple can be seen as one, although for rabbinic Judaism and Christianity fundamental, step in this rather long process.

The importance of this overall shift in the Graeco-Roman oecumene cannot be overemphasized as the notion of sacrifice is not only central to Judaism and Christianity, but – as some argue – it is at the core of human culture, and thus, all religious traditions. Perhaps, the most well-known such argument

³⁸⁵ Following Clark (Kenneth W. Clark, “Worship in the Jerusalem Temple after 70 AD,” *New Testament Studies* 6, no. 4 (1960): 269-280, esp. 275-280), a number of scholars have repeatedly proposed the idea that sacrifices were continued even after the destruction of the Second Temple, and ceased finally only after 135, the defeat of the Bar Kochba revolt and the subsequent expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem. Though the question remains undecided due to the scarcity of sources on the matter, it is not unreasonable to suppose that *Mishnaic* texts, such as *Eduyot* 8:6 (אמר רבי יהושע שמעתי) attest to some form of continued offerings, known to the rabbis. As for a recent discussion of scholarly debates on the issue, see Petroupoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 147-149.

³⁸⁶ See Michael D. Schwartz, “Liturgy, Poetry, and the Persistence of Sacrifice,” in *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History?: On Jews and Judaism before and after the Destruction of the Second Temple*, ed. Daniel R. Schwartz and Zeev Weiss, 393-415 (Brill: Leiden, 2012) here 406-410.

³⁸⁷ See primarily Lv 1-7. Cf. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, The Anchor Bible (Toronto: Doubleday, 1991).

³⁸⁸ This is the title of Guy Stroumsa’s seminal publication, a collection of lectures given at the Collège de France (Guy G. Stroumsa, *The End of Sacrifice: Religious Transformations in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009)).

³⁸⁹ See primarily Stroumsa, *The End of Sacrifice*, 84-110.

is that of René Girard. His *La Violence et le sacré*³⁹⁰ aims overtly at the formation of a grand theory about the role of sacrifices in religions, and argues that sacrificing is the codification and deflection of the violence endemic to every human community. Girard believes sacrifice to be a ritualized form commemorating a previous act of violence that – in his terminology – results from the *désir mimétique*, a primary force driving humans on a societal level. Similarly grandiose is the theory of Walter Burkert. In *Homo Necans*,³⁹¹ the seminal book he published the same year as Girard, Burkert proposes an understanding of sacrifice as a ritual solidification of primordial hunting activities. According to Burkert, sacrifice is, thus, not only a means of deflecting violence from members of one's own community, but also an act of constructing and maintaining communal identity. The third major theory, Vernant's *La Cuisine du Sacrifice*³⁹² regards sacrifice as the preparation of a non-vegetarian meal, by which the sacrificer does not only communicate with the divine, but also with members of his or her own community.

These theories still define the scholarly approach to sacrifices.³⁹³ And since all three argue for their endemic position in human culture, it is important to ask how exactly it could ever have ended. Although Girard proposes an interesting answer to this question by arguing that it was the establishment of a judicial system that brought an end to sacrifices, this – in my eyes – is not a satisfactory argument in the case of the *Old Testament*, where the codification of sacrificial laws is proposed at the same moment a judicial system is established. In any case, neither his, nor Burkert's or Vernant's approach discusses the elimination of sacrifices in its rabbinic Jewish and Christian contexts. Thus, in scholarly discussions about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple within the narrative of the end of sacrifices, one of the major questions is indeed: 1) when did animal sacrifices wane within the Graeco-Roman oecumene and how important a role did the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple play in this process? And in light of the ensuing situation in which animal sacrifices actually disappear in their material form, one further question might be raised, namely: 2) how exactly did Jewish and Christian tradition deal with and influence this process?

3.1.2. The end of sacrifices in Graeco-Roman context

³⁹⁰ René Girard, *La Violence et le sacré* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1972)

³⁹¹ Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972)

³⁹² Marcel Détienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979)

³⁹³ As for the position these three theories occupy in current scholarship, see Fritz Graf, "One Generation after Burkert and Girard: Where are the Great Theories," in *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice*, ed. A. Faraone and F. S. Naiden, 32-55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

A close look at the corpus of the *New Testament*³⁹⁴ and the earliest strata of both Christian and rabbinic literature reveals that despite the destruction of the Temple, one encounters a baffling preoccupation with the minute details of sacrificial rituals in the earliest layers of rabbinic literature,³⁹⁵ and early Christian writings are also replete with narratives elaborating on the notion of sacrifice, sacrificial animals and rituals. Moreover, both in Jewish and in Christian tradition, there are a number of practices surviving to this day, which recall, imitate, or even explicitly claim to sustain sacrificial traditions.³⁹⁶ These are of course not identical with the practice of animal sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple, but their continuous presence, and even more importantly, the immense literary output referring to animal sacrifices, using its discourses and discussing its details in both traditions in Late Antiquity show the complexity of the two religions' reaction to the overall change concerning sacrifices.

As for the interrelation between the end of animal sacrifices in the Jewish tradition, and the refusal in participating in them by Christian communities on the one hand and the broader Graeco-Roman context of the end of sacrifices on the other, current scholarship focuses on two major topics. The first one is the debate by Greek and Roman philosophers about the validity of animal sacrifices and the ritual of sacrificing itself. The topic was analyzed by a number of scholars, most recently by Ingvild Sælid Gilhus,³⁹⁷ who distinguished between two major positions: the Neo-Platonists who argued for the validity of sacrifices, and their Pythagorean disputants. Gilhus argues that the criticism of sacrifices was mounted in the elite of the society of the Empire,³⁹⁸ and it addressed the relationship between the spiritual meaning of sacrifice and the purificatory influence of the ritual itself. Despite the diversity of philosophical schools and philosophers contributing to this discussion, there was widespread consensus about the discrepancy between the internal and external aspects of purity with regard to sacrifices. Even Stoic thinkers, who cannot be accused of partiality toward and empathy

³⁹⁴ E.g. The *Letter to the Hebrews* or the *Gospel of Matthew*. Cf. Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 284 and 309 respectively.

³⁹⁵ As a good example of this tendency, see how *mBaba Kama* 7:7 prohibits the raising of certain animals on the basis that they could render – an otherwise non-existent – sacrifice impure.

³⁹⁶ See e.g. the linguistic and practical connection between eucharist and bread-sacrifice. See further Mary Douglas, "The Eucharist: Its Continuity with the Bread Sacrifice of Leviticus," *Modern Theology* 15, no. 2 (1999): 209-224, here 209-214.

³⁹⁷ See Gilhus, *Animals Gods and Humans*, 114-137.

³⁹⁸ See also Laura Nasrallah, "The Embarrassment of Blood: Early Christians and Others on Sacrifice, War and Rational Worship," In *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, 142-167 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 151-155.

concerning animals, such as Seneca³⁹⁹ or Epictetus⁴⁰⁰ argued that sacrifices done with impure hearts are less worthy than those – non-bloody – ones, which are executed with impeccable morality. With the repeated rise of Pythagoreanism, and an accompanying tradition of vegetarian diet in the first century BCE,⁴⁰¹ harsher voices arose, including that of Apollonius of Tyana, who famously claimed that Gods do not need sacrifices.⁴⁰²

The second core issue, the disappearance of sacrifices from Greek urban lifestyle is subject to ardent debates among scholars. One opinion was taken most recently by Maria-Zoe Petroupoulou,⁴⁰³ who argues that the Greek sacrificial tradition endured uninterrupted until the advent of Christianity, and it was largely the effort of Christian thinkers that brought an end to it. The opposite argument was expressed influentially by Martin P. Nilsson.⁴⁰⁴ According to him, one can observe a decrease in sacrificing even before the advent of Christianity and the Christian refusal of participating in them is not so much a novel position taken and championed by early Christian thinkers, but a major shift *dans le vent* in Late Antique Roman society which early Christians could relate to. And although this view was formulated almost eighty years ago, it still has significant supporters, among them Gilhus, who argues that the way Christianity contributed to the end of sacrifices was not by formulating a standpoint of refusing them, but rather taking up this idea of Greek philosophers and disseminating it among members of a much broader non-elite audience.⁴⁰⁵ Gilhus points to a number of social changes⁴⁰⁶ during the period in question, such as the secularization of meat consumption and the disappearance of the agricultural basis necessary for maintaining animal sacrifices as well as the monetary means to finance largescale public offerings. In light of these observations, Gilhus' view of Christianity as a conduit to a process resulting in the end of sacrifices (rather than as its trigger) seems plausible to me.

³⁹⁹ (See e.g. Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 1:6:3) ... sicut ne in victimis quidem, licet opimae sint auro que praefulgeant, deorum est honor, sed recta ac pia voluntate venerantium.

⁴⁰⁰ (See e.g. Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 31:5) ... σπένδειν δὲ καὶ θύειν καὶ ἀπάρχεσθαι κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ἐκάστοτε προσήκει καθαρῶς καὶ μὴ ἐπισεσυρμένως μηδὲ ἀμελῶς μηδὲ γε γλίσχρως μηδὲ ὑπὲρ δύναμιν.

⁴⁰¹ Vegetarianism has always been and is still closely related to the way human-animal relation is conceived. Thus, behind the rise of Late Antique philosophical traditions proposing a vegetarian diet (such as Porphyry's *De Abstinencia*), one can always detect broader discussions on human morality and the animals' cognitive capabilities. Cf. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 64-70.

⁴⁰² (Apollonius, *Epistulae*, 26) Θεοὶ θυσίων οὐ δέονται.

⁴⁰³ Petroupoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion*.

⁴⁰⁴ See Martin P. Nilsson and H. J. Rose (transl.), *Greek Piety* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1948) 67-91. See also Idem. Martin P. Nilsson, "Pagan Divine Service in Late Antiquity," *Harvard Theological Review* 38, no 1. (1945): 63-69.

⁴⁰⁵ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 155.

⁴⁰⁶ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 154-160.

3.1.3. The spiritualization of sacrifices

There is a similarly intense discussion within academic circles about the ways nascent Judaism and Christianity influenced the shift in understanding sacrifices. In 1980, Everett Ferguson published a lengthy article⁴⁰⁷ in which he systematically compared Jewish rabbinic and early Christian opinions and interpretations concerning the validity and ritual of animal sacrifices. His analysis distinguished between various periods of patristic literature as well as between the corpus of the *New Testament* and subsequent interpretations. With this approach, Ferguson was able to make two important observations. On the one hand, he showed that the allegorical interpretation of sacrifices is not a novelty of Christianity, but an interpretative tradition present within Judaism even before the rise of Christianity.⁴⁰⁸ On the other hand, he was able to show the importance of not retrojecting patristic refusal of the validity of sacrifices to the *New Testament*, in certain texts of which one even encounters their tacit acknowledgment.

The continuing relevance of Ferguson's observations are evident in light of the recent debate around the question of the spiritualization of sacrifices. The term is criticized most harshly by Jonathan Klawans, who pointed out repeatedly that a non-spiritual reading of sacrifices was never in existence.⁴⁰⁹ In his view, the eucharist and the *Gospel*-narrative of the last supper are not steps in a process of spiritualizing the meaning of sacrifices, but the borrowing of a terminology and a metaphorization of an activity with the help of the sacrificial discourse. He argues that by contrasting sacrificial ritual (as an exclusively material process) and the metaphorical use of sacrificial language within early Christian communities, one proposes a false opposition, and accepts the supersessionist interpretation that was offered by early representatives of the Christian tradition.⁴¹⁰ Interpreting the Christian understanding of sacrifices as part of a much older process of metaphorization and noticing that metaphorization is in itself not a refusal of sacrifices forms the basis for Daniel Ullucci's contribution as well. By pointing out similarities between *Old Testament* passages emphasizing the moral aspect of sacrifices and similar *New Testament* texts as well as patristic arguments in a book

⁴⁰⁷ Everett Ferguson, "Spiritual Sacrifice in Early Christianity and its Environment," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* 23, no. 2 (1980): 1156-1189

⁴⁰⁸ See Ferguson, "Spiritual Sacrifice," 1156-1162.

⁴⁰⁹ Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁴¹⁰ One of the earliest authors to voice such an opinion was Tertullian (*Adversus Iudaeos*, 5), but the notion continued to be a cornerstone in the polemical tractates of various Church fathers in later centuries (see John Chrysostom, *Contra Iudaeos* 1:7; Ephraem, *Adversus Iudaeos*, 8 etc.) See also David Rokéah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 100.

published in 2012,⁴¹¹ Ullucci argued that instead of interpreting it as criticism, the Christian approach to sacrifices can be better understood as arguments in a debate about the meaning of sacrifices. Related to this line of argumentation is Ullucci's objection to viewing Christian refusal of sacrifices in an evolutionary scheme, in which the earlier, bloodier ritual is substituted by a purer, spiritual worship.⁴¹² A contrary opinion to Klawans' (and implicitly Ullucci's) contention was expressed by Stephen Finlan,⁴¹³ who distinguishes between various types of spiritualizing (substitution, moralization, interiorization, metaphorization etc.) and argues that one may claim that some of these were invented and propagated first in the *New Testament* and by early Christianity. Furthermore, Finlan also notes that metaphorical usage of a terminology does not necessarily mean the acknowledgement of the original context. Thus, the fact that Paul borrowed sacrificial discourse in a metaphorical sense does not mean that he accepted the validity of sacrificing itself.

An alternative to the views expressed by Finlan, Gilhus and Ullucci who – despite their differences – all focus on pinpointing the contribution of early Christianity to the transformation of sacrifices is presented by Guy G. Stroumsa. In his seminal book published in 2009,⁴¹⁴ Stroumsa points to the destruction of the Temple as the major cause for the Late Antique transformation of sacrifices and argues that the major contributor of this change was rabbinic Judaism and not early Christianity. Stroumsa claims that the spiritualization and individualization of Jewish tradition were the major forces behind the transformation of sacrifices and their substitution with prayer, learning the Torah, and martyrdom. He comes to the important conclusion that at the end of Late Antiquity, Christianity is a sacrificial religion, albeit without material sacrifices. As we will see, this observation fits very well into my analysis concerning the transformation of animality with the decline of animal sacrifices. However, there is another important aspect of Stroumsa's work that needs to be highlighted: the context he takes into consideration analyzing the process of declining sacrifices. Unlike most scholars dealing with the theme, Stroumsa interprets the phenomenon within a broader framework of changes in Late Antique religion, such as the turn from public to private religiosity, the rise of book-based traditions as well as the inversion between the meanings of sacred and profane spheres with regards to privacy. Stroumsa's approach shows that the transformation of sacrifices and their substitution with

⁴¹¹ Daniel Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)

⁴¹² Daniel Ullucci, "Contesting the Meaning of Animal Sacrifice," in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, 57-74 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

⁴¹³ Stephen Finlan, "Spiritualization of Sacrifice in Paul and Hebrews," in *Ritual and Metaphor, Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Christian A. Eberhart, 83-99 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011).

⁴¹⁴ Stroumsa, *The End of Sacrifice*.

other ritual and non-ritual practices is a lengthy and variegated process in both rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. As the analysis presented in this chapter shows, Stroumsa's view concerning the transformation of sacrifices can be accommodated to the changes occurring in the understanding of animals themselves.

I am, however, more hesitant to accept his view on the destruction of the Temple as a major force behind this shift. As the analysis of my example, the change in the interpretation of sacrificial animals shows, metaphorization of the sacrificial victim is present already in *New Testament* texts produced before the destruction of the Temple. Moreover, rabbis exhibit both allegorical interpretations of sacrificial animals similar to those offered by patristic exegetes, and also a deep interest in sacrificial rituals. Their insistence is perhaps most visible in the fact that the second century⁴¹⁵ corpus of the *Mishna* contains an entire order (*Kodashim*) that deals with sacrifices.⁴¹⁶ And even if one argued that the *Mishna* represents traditions dating back to earlier centuries, when meticulous regulation of the sacrificial practices was still more than an intellectual journey into the realm of theory, the same cannot be said about the amoraic traditions of the Babylonian and Palestinian gemaras. Moreover, liturgical texts,⁴¹⁷ and haggadic as well as halakhic⁴¹⁸ materials from various *corpora* (including the *Mishna*⁴¹⁹) express the rabbis' strong hope that sacrifice will one day be restored in a re-built Temple of Jerusalem.

As for the question of spiritualization, I think that a consensus can be achieved. Klawans is certainly right in arguing that a spiritual meaning has always been attached to sacrifices. As anthropologists since Durkheim have noted several times and from various perspectives, no ritual ever exists without human participants attributing – by virtue of communal consensus – a meaning, an interpretation beyond the material aspects.⁴²⁰ In the case of the *Biblical* sacrifices, the scholar has an easy task, since interpretations prioritizing morality to ritual are even present in the corpus of the *Old Testament*. A

⁴¹⁵ As for opinions on the exact date of the redaction of the *Mishna*, see Stemmerger, *Introduction to the Talmud*, 133-139.

⁴¹⁶ The *Kodashim* is, moreover, not the only tractate to be dedicated (in part) to the question of sacrifices. See Kraemer, *Responses to Suffering*, 53-56.

⁴¹⁷ See Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and Temple*, 199. On the general relationship between sacrifices and the texts of prayers, see Stefan C. Reif, "Approaches to Sacrifice in Early Jewish Prayer," in *Studies in Jewish Prayer*, ed. Robert Hayward and Brad Embry, 135-150 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴¹⁸ See Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and Temple*, 199-201.

⁴¹⁹ *mTa'anit* 4:8, *mTamid* 7:3, *bBerakhot* 29a, *Sifre Num* 92,

⁴²⁰ As for sacrifices, see Émile Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1990 [originally 1912]) 480-500. A brief but excellent summary of the history of anthropological and psychological thinking about the meaning of sacrifices can be found in Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, "Introduction, Images, Acts Meanings and Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice," in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, 3-31 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), here 5-9.

verse from *Psalms* claims that true sacrifice is equal to good morals: “The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart.”⁴²¹ And although these interpretations are not as profusely recorded as the laws and rules concerning the execution of sacrifices, they nevertheless attest to the claim that a non-material interpretation of sacrifice was not a novel concept, when it appeared *en masse* with the rise of Christianity. However, Finlan, Ullucci and Stroumsa are also correct in pointing out that the first century CE was a particular turning-point inasmuch as it witnessed a systematic treatment of the relationship between metaphorical interpretations and ritual practice, most notably in the writings of Philo and in those of Paul. Relying on Finlan’s distinction between various types of spiritualization, one can differentiate between the *Old Testament* hierarchization between various aspects of sacrifice; the allegorization present in the writings of Philo and in certain *New Testament* passages; the supersessionist view of Church fathers; and the metaphorization of rabbinic tradition. In the present chapter, I will present these alternatives and analyze how the change in the interpretation of sacrifice instigated a fundamental shift in the understanding of sacrificial animals and animality in general.

3.1.4. The allegorization of sacrifices

The idea that material sacrifice is void, if it is not accompanied by some inner, moral form of purity of the sacrificer becomes more prevalent in the literature of the 3rd to the 1st centuries BCE.⁴²² Nevertheless it is difficult to organize these, still sporadic occurrences into a clear structure of development. Moral purity is itself a problematic notion, as it applies a term (purity) referring to physical objects originally in a ritualistic-ceremonial setting to a framework of human subjects. This shift from objects to subjects implies a fundamental shift in anthropological perspective as well. If purity can be a feature of one’s approach to ritual, then its antipode, impurity can no longer be an inherent characteristic of certain objects that – upon contact – may contaminate the individual. Impurity then becomes a status resulting from an individual’s inappropriate approach toward ritual. The implications of such a moral impurity can be various: it might refer to an individual’s transgression of sacrificial rules, wrong intentions etc. Common to all these options is that they all represent impurity (and purity as well) as a dynamic force resulting from one’s intentions. Thus, by the notion of the sacrificer’s moral purity, these sources introduce a major shift from an object-bound

⁴²¹ Ps 51:17. See also Ps 141:2.

⁴²² See e.g. Sir 34:18-35:11; the *Letter of Aristeeas*, 234 etc. As for a list of such sources, see Ferguson, “Spiritual Sacrifice,” 1157-1159. For an item of broader discussion of the context of these traditions, see Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and Temple*, 111-144.

notion of purity to one that is related to subjects. The implications of this shift are immense, and they are treated in the subsequent chapter.

In the writings of Philo one encounters a full-fledged allegorization of sacrificial rituals. And since before him, no similarly overarching treatment of the entirety of the topic is available in the literature of Second Temple Judaism,⁴²³ one might suspect external influences behind this interest, most notably that of Greek philosophical traditions, in which a criticism of the technique of animal sacrifices was notably expressed in the first and second centuries CE.⁴²⁴ Writing in such a philosophical environment,⁴²⁵ and channeling into it both the Mosaic tradition of sacrificial requirements and its contrast with morality and the condemnation of sacrifices offered by unjust individuals, as present, in the *Book of Psalms* and in various prophetic passages,⁴²⁶ Philo argues that the true meaning of sacrifice lies in the moral teachings it instills through physical activities. In his *De specialibus legibus*, the Alexandrian thinker harmonizes the ritual of sacrifices and morality in a Platonic manner, claiming that:

God designed to teach the Jews by these figures, whenever they went up to the altars, when there to pray or to give thanks, never to bring with them any weakness or evil passion in their soul, but to endeavor to make it wholly and entirely bright and clean, without any blemish, so that God might not turn away with aversion from the sight of it.⁴²⁷

In a further passage of the same composition, Philo argues that

Let the man, therefore, who is adorned with these qualities go forth in cheerful confidence to the temple which most nearly belongs to him, the most excellent of all abodes to offer himself as a sacrifice.⁴²⁸

Philo presents an interpretation of sacrifices according to which the two meanings of sacrifices complement each other. He does not claim that the material execution of the ritual is void, but on the

⁴²³ William K. Gilders, “Jewish Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function (According to Philo),” in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, 94-106 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴²⁴ As for an excellent summary of these traditions, see Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 138-147.

⁴²⁵ As for Philo’s understanding of the Psalms, see David T. Runia, “Philo’s Reading of the Psalms,” in *In the Spirit of Faith: Studies on Philo and Early Christianity in Honor of David Hay* (The Studia Philonica Annual) 13, ed. David T. Runia and Gregory E. Sterling, 102-121 (Providence RI: Brown Judaic Series, 2001).

⁴²⁶ See e.g. Am 5:21-24.

⁴²⁷ (Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus*, 1:167) βούλεται γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἀναδιδάξαι διὰ συμβόλων, ὅποτε προσέρχονται βομοῖς ἢ εὐξόμενοι ἢ εὐχαριστήσοντες μηδὲν ἁρρώστημα ἢ νόσημα ἢ πάθος ἐπιφέρεισθαι τῇ ψυχῇ, πειρᾶσθαι δ’ ὅλην δι’ ὅλων ἀκηλίδωτον ἀγιάζειν, ὡς ἰδόντα μὴ ἀποστραφῆναι θεόν. The translation is from Philon 7. *On the Decalogue; On the Special Laws Books I-III*. Ed. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker. Loeb Classical Library 320. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1937.

⁴²⁸ (Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus*, 1:270) ὁ μὲν οὖν τοῦτοις διακεκοσμημένος ἴτω θαρρῶν εἰς οἰκειότατον αὐτῷ τὸν νεών, ἐνδιαίτημα πάντων ἄριστον, ἱερεῖον ἐπιδειξόμενος αὐτόν. The translation is from Philon 7. *On the Decalogue*.

contrary, that it expresses a deeper layer of meta-sacrificial regulations. Without this superficial aspect, the deeper sense would not reach the intended audience. Here, one can see a major point of distinction between the understanding of Philo and later Church fathers arguing for the abrogation of material sacrifices. Philo's ideas are not only helpful in interpreting later patristic tradition, which borrowed a lot from them, but also represent a movement of first century Judaism influenced by Hellenistic tendencies. In light of similarities and the well-known interrelation of the two,⁴²⁹ I suggest to regard and analyze the *New Testament's* various takes on sacrificial culture with the contemporary tradition of Philo in mind, for it enables the reader to make a clearer distinction between the approach of the *New Testament* and that of subsequent Church fathers.⁴³⁰

Similarly to Philo, most *New Testament* passages do not argue that the sacrificial practice of the Jews would be void or corrupt in its entirety.⁴³¹ Paul, the only author of the corpus who was already writing before the destruction of the Second Temple, distinguishes between Graeco-Roman and Jewish sacrifices,⁴³² condemning the former (e.g. 1Cor 8:1-11), but never disputing the validity of the latter. Furthermore, sacrificial language remained central in the *New Testament* and was a major discourse of religion in the period.⁴³³ It was not only used to discuss the death of Jesus (in 1Cor 5:7)⁴³⁴, but also implemented as a metaphorical language to describe communal meals or proper worship.⁴³⁵ Paul uses it, when arguing for the legitimacy of the eucharist by comparing it to the consumption of sacrificial meat in the Jerusalem Temple (1 Cor 10:14-18). He even relies on this language when he refers to the apostolic mission (Phil 2:17) and the Gentile believers (Rom 12:1).⁴³⁶ Since Paul is depicted as someone participating in purity rituals necessary for sacrificing (Acts 24:8), it is reasonable to suppose that similarly to Philo, his borrowing of the sacrificial discourse is based on an acceptance

⁴²⁹ For a recent analysis of this relation, see Folker Siegert, "Philo and the New Testament," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar, 175-209 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁴³⁰ See Daniel Ullucci, *Sacrifice in the New Testament* (at <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/resource/sacrifice nt.xhtml>).

⁴³¹ See Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and Temple*, 238-245.

⁴³² See Ullucci, *Sacrifice in the New Testament*. See also Mark Taylor, *The New American Commentary an Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, 1 Corinthians* (Nashville TE: B&H, 2014) 243.

⁴³³ Ra'anan Boustán, "Confounding Blood: Jewish Narratives of Sacrifice and Violence in Late Antiquity," In *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, 265-287 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) here 265-268.

⁴³⁴ As for the sacrificial nature of Paul's linguistic formulations, see Richard Rubenstein, "What was at Stake in the Parting of the Ways between Judaism and Christianity?" *Shofar* 28, no. 3 (2010): 78-102, here 87-93.

⁴³⁵ See 1 Pt 2:4-5

⁴³⁶ See Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and Temple*, 217-221. Cf. also Jonathan Klawans, "Interpreting the Last Supper: Sacrifice, Spiritualization and Anti-Sacrifice," *New Testament Studies* 48, no. 1 (2002): 1-17, here 16-17 and also Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and Temple*, 220-221.

of the validity of animal sacrifices,⁴³⁷ and his stance toward the meaning of the animal sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple is allegorical, not supersessionist. Even in the case of sources written after the destruction of the Second Temple, such as the *Gospels* or the *Acts of the Apostles*,⁴³⁸ one is hard pressed to find any explicit claim concerning the annulling of Temple sacrifices. Instead – even *in absentia* – they testify to their validity by depicting Jesus partaking in a sacrificial menu (e.g. Lk 22:7-8), and acknowledging that not only Paul, but other disciples participated in sacrificial rituals as well (e.g. Acts 21:24).⁴³⁹ I believe that even practices that mimic Temple sacrifices,⁴⁴⁰ most notably the eucharist of early Christianity and its archetype in the *Gospels*,⁴⁴¹ cannot be clearly identified as refusals of more traditional forms of sacrificing,⁴⁴² since the eucharist of the last supper is just as far from a condemnation of Temple sacrifice as any instance of believers practicing sacrificial rituals outside the boundaries of a cult center⁴⁴³ (a practice rebuked – and thus attested – by a great number of *Old Testament* prophets).⁴⁴⁴ But similarly to the rabbis, who imitate sacrifices by prayer,⁴⁴⁵ the Evangelist's intention was not to argue that sacrifices were vain, but if anything, only that the exclusive validity of the Jerusalem Temple needs to be challenged.⁴⁴⁶

The only explicit refusal of animal sacrifices in the *New Testament* can be found in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.⁴⁴⁷ This text advertises the credo of a new community by relying on the strong and influential discourse of an accepted religious tradition,⁴⁴⁸ but its author expresses clear doubt concerning the

⁴³⁷ Nevertheless, Finlan is right in pointing out that metaphorical usage does not necessarily affirm one's belief in the efficacy of a practice (See Finlan, "Spiritualization of Sacrifice," 90-92).

⁴³⁸ See N. Eugene Boring, *An Introduction to the New Testament: History, Literature, Theology* (Louisville KY: John Knox, 2012) 577-588.

⁴³⁹ Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and Temple*, 213-216.

⁴⁴⁰ See Rubenstein, "What was at Stake," 98-100.

⁴⁴¹ As for the eucharist as a quasi-sacrificial narrative in the Gospels, see Jerome Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament* (Collegeville MI: The Liturgical Press, 1988) 64-67. It is worth pointing out that according to the alternative view of Mary Douglas, the eucharist was not a symbolic representation of animal sacrifices, but a continuation of bread sacrifices of the *Old Testament* (see Douglas, "The Eucharist," 214-219.).

⁴⁴² E.g. the prefiguration of the eucharist in the feeding narrative of the *Gospel of John* (Jn 6:1-13) moves beyond sacrifice inasmuch as the core of the idea here is that of consumption and (material) satisfaction. See Marteen J. J. Menken, "John 6:51c-58: Eucharist or Christology," in *Critical Readings of John 6*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper, 183-204 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁴⁴³ As required by Dt 12:1-32, esp. 5. Cf. 1 Kgs 3:2. See also Benjamin Uffenheimer, "לשאלת ריכוז הפולחן בישראל" [Lesheelat rikhuz hapulhan bayisrael], *Tabriz* 1, no. 1 (1959): 138-153.

⁴⁴⁴ See e.g. 2 Kgs 17:29; Ez 6:3; Hos 4:13 etc.

⁴⁴⁵ See Ferguson, "Spiritual Sacrifice," 1160-1162.

⁴⁴⁶ See Peter W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City, New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1996) 198-206.

⁴⁴⁷ As for a detailed analysis concerning the view on animal sacrifices, as presented by the Epistle, see James W. Thompson, "Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 4 (1979): 567-578, here 567-570.

⁴⁴⁸ Heb 9:23-10:15. See Richard D. Nelson, "'He Offered Himself' Sacrifice in Hebrews," *Interpretation* 57, no. 3 (2003): 251-265, here 251-252.

lasting effect of Temple sacrifices (e.g. 10:1; 10:4 etc.), and even condemns its participants (e.g. 7:27). Its call to a “better sacrifice” (9:23), executed by Jesus on himself shows that the Jerusalem sacrifices lost their appeal to the disciples of Jesus. By comparing the sacrifices practiced in the Jerusalem Temple to that of Jesus, the author argues for the exclusive validity of the latter. But even in this case of substitution, certain aspects of material sacrifices (killing, sprinkling of the blood) remained at the core of the narrative. In fact, these aspects are even emphasized in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.⁴⁴⁹ By reinterpreting Jesus’ death as a valid sacrifice, the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* distances himself or herself from the discourse of animal sacrifices, and contributes to its substitution with a new understanding. However, the abolition of material sacrifices is still not claimed. This arduous task as well as explaining why participating in sacrifices were discontinued, fell to the Church fathers.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ See Nelson, “ ‘He Offered Himself’, ” 251-252.

⁴⁵⁰ Daniel Ullucci, “Contesting the Meaning,” 67-69.

3.2. Church fathers and animal sacrifices

The destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and the fact that it was never restored afterwards was much to the avail of the Church fathers in their endeavor. In the milieu of a discontinued Temple-practice, the idea of its definitive abrogation was supported by the then emerging argument that claimed an exclusively allegorical understanding of the Mosaic legal tradition.⁴⁵¹ Such an interpretative line is already present in the earliest patristic writings. In his treatise against Marcion, for example, Tertullian says:

We talked about the rational institution of the sacrifices, namely that they turn people away from idols and toward the service of God. This, in turn, he expressed by saying: “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?” (Is 1:11). By this he means that he did not specifically demand [sacrifices]. ‘For’ – he says – ‘I do not drink the blood of bulls’ (cf. Ps. 49:13⁴⁵²). And in another place, he also says: ‘the everlasting God does not get hungry nor does he thirst’ (cf. Jn 6:35).⁴⁵³

Relying on the widespread argument from Greek philosophical tradition, namely that “Gods do not need sacrifices”,⁴⁵⁴ Tertullian succinctly argues that even in the Hebrew Bible, sacrifices were not intended to be a permanent way of communication between the believers and God. And although he does not explain the reason for their institution in the first place, his implicit argument might be the notion present in other contemporary sources.⁴⁵⁵ The *Didascalia Apostolorum* argues, for example, that if sacrifices were not introduced out of divine necessity, then they must have been established as a result of human need, namely that of the Israelites:

As it is said: “If you need, make for me only an altar of earth”.⁴⁵⁶ It does not say: “make me!”, but “If you need.” For it was not prescribed, but

⁴⁵¹ See Michael Pettem, “Torah and Early Christian Groups,” in *Law in Religious Communities in the Roman Period, The Debate over the Torah and Nomos in Post-Biblical Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Peter Richardson, Stephen Westerholm et al., 93-109 (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier, 1991).

⁴⁵² 50:13 in BH.

⁴⁵³ (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 2:22) Diximus de sacrificiorum rationali institutione, auocante scilicet ab idolis ad deum officia ea, quae si rursus eiecerat dicens: quo mihi multitudinem sacrificiorum uestrorum? hoc ipsum uoluit intellegi, quod non sibi ea proprie exegisset. Non enim bibam, inquit, sanguinem taurorum, quia et alibi ait: deus aeternus non esuriet nec sitiet.

⁴⁵⁴ See e.g. Apollonius of Tyana’s 26th Epistle: “Θεοὶ θυσιαῶν οὐ δέονται”. See also Ullucci, “Contesting the Meaning,” 63. See also Ferguson, “Spiritual Sacrifice,” 1155-1156.

⁴⁵⁵ As for the scholarly consensus on the dating of the *Didascalia*, see Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, “The Didascalia Apostolorum: A Mishnah for the Disciples of Jesus,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9, no. 4 (2001): 483-509, here 488.

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. Ex. 20:24-25. The NRSV does not contain the conjunction “if”, neither does Rahlfs’ LXX in the first sentence. However, in the second verse (20:25), the clause is introduced with such a conjunction (“ἐὰν δὲ...”). Thus the author of

left to their will, if they wished so, since God does not need sacrifices, as he exists without need ... Now he allowed the Hebrews [to offer sacrifices]. He did not command, but [let them], if they wanted. Conceding that if they offer with a right mind, he would approve of their sacrifices.⁴⁵⁷

The author of this passage describes sacrifice as a temporary way of communication, hinting that with the passage of time a more permanent solution was bound to emerge. In a subsequent passage, the *Constitutio* states:

If even before his advent [i.e. the incarnation], God spoke about a pure heart and a broken spirit⁴⁵⁸ concerning sacrifices, how much more did he abrogate these, by which I refer to those of blood, when he came. He abrogated them by fulfilling them first. And since he was both circumcised and sprinkled, and he brought sacrifices and burnt-offerings and participated in the rest of their customs, and being both the lawgiver and the fulfillment of laws, he abrogated – if not fully – those laws that were established, while at the same time did not annul the natural laws.⁴⁵⁹

Here, one encounters a strategy of distinction that was applied to other aspects of the legal tradition (e.g. the distinction between pure and impure, circumcision etc.⁴⁶⁰). This argumentation claims that certain laws were only instituted in the first place as temporal, pedagogical solutions⁴⁶¹ due to the fact that Israelites were uncomprehending of higher truths. Christians, who were granted a more elevated understanding, were therefore not required to follow these rules in a literal sense. According to this interpretation, with the advent of Christ, sacrifices became obsolete.

the *Didascalia* either mixes the verses up, has a different Greek version before him, or simply takes the sentence structure of the second verse and applies it to the first verse as well.

⁴⁵⁷ (*Constitutio Apostolorum*, 6:20:1) Ἐὰν δὲ ποιήσης μοι θυσιαστήριον, ἐκ γῆς ποιήσεις μοι αὐτό. Οὐκ εἶπεν· Ποίησον, ἀλλ'· Ἐὰν ποιήσης· οὐκ ἀνάγκην περιέθηκεν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ἐπέτρεψεν ἅτε ἐλευθέρα. Οὐ γὰρ θυσίων δέεται ὁ Θεός, ἀνενδεής ὑπάρχων τῇ φύσει· ... ἐπιτρέπει καὶ νῦν Ἑβραίοις, οὐ προστάσων, ἀλλ', εἰ βουληθῶσιν, συγχωρῶν καί, εἰ ἀπὸ ὀρθῆς προσοίσουσι γνώμης, εὐδοκῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς θυσίαις αὐτῶν.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Ps. 51:17 (51:19 in BH)

⁴⁵⁹ (*Constitutio Apostolorum*, 6:22:2) Εἰ οὖν καὶ πρὸ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ ὑπὲρ θυσίας καρδίαν καθαρὰν ἐπεζήτει καὶ πνεῦμα συντετριμμένον, πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐλθὼν ἔπαυσεν ταύτας, φαρμὰ δὴ τὰς δι' αἱμάτων. Ἐπαύσε δὲ αὐτὰς διὰ τοῦ πρότερον πληρῶσαι· καὶ γὰρ καὶ περιετμήθη καὶ ἐρραντίσθη, θυσίας τε προσήνεγκεν καὶ ὀλοκαυτώσεις καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐθισμοῖς ἐχρήσατο, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ νομοθέτης αὐτὸς πλήρωμα τοῦ νόμου, οὐκ ἀνελὼν τὸν φυσικὸν νόμον, ἀλλὰ παύσας τὰ διὰ τῆς δευτερώσεως ἐπέισακτα, εἰ καὶ μὴ πάντα.

⁴⁶⁰ See chapter 4.2.1. As for this direction of argumentation in the Epistle of Barnabas in general, see James N. Rhodes, *The Epistle of Barnabas and the Deuteronomic Tradition*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 89-91.

⁴⁶¹ See also Marcel Poorthuis, "Sacrifice as Concession in Christian and Jewish Sources: the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and Rabbinic Literature," in *The Actuality of Sacrifice: Past and Present*, ed. Alberdina Houtman et al., Jewish and Christian Perspective Series, 170-192 (Leiden: Brill, 2014) here 177-184.

The practice of sacrificing was going out of fashion; the discourse of sacrificing, however, remained appealing. This duality is the core of the patristic and rabbinic reaction to the end of sacrifices. In case of the Church fathers, proposing new interpretations to the sacrificial passages of both the *Old* and the *New Testament*, helped the appropriation of the discourse of sacrifices for the legitimization of their theological and political arguments. Refusing the literal reading of the Mosaic legal tradition enabled a free use of the potency of these discourses. The most useful interpretation was to argue for a supersessionist relationship between the practice of animal sacrifices and their typological interpretation in the nascent Christian community. Due to the sacrificial terminology with which the last supper is presented,⁴⁶² and which the eucharist invokes, Church fathers could argue that the eucharist is the true and full sacrifice:⁴⁶³

Thus, if Jesus is the Lord, and our God, and also the high priest to the Father, and himself a first sacrifice to the father, who also commanded us to do the same in his memory, then the priest, who imitates what Christ did and offers a true and whole sacrifice in the Church to God the Father, executes the office of Christ, when he starts offering according to the same way, as he saw Christ offering himself.⁴⁶⁴

The eucharist is, however, not a mere ritual, serving as a substitution for the Temple sacrifice. Already in the *Gospels*, it bears a strong metaphorical reference to the death of Jesus.⁴⁶⁵ Thus, it connects it to the concept of sacrifice.⁴⁶⁶ Thus, it was not only the eucharist that substituted for Temple sacrifices, but on a more profound level, the crucifixion as well.⁴⁶⁷ To a certain extent, claiming that the willing death of Jesus, as a human being (in form at least, if not otherwise)⁴⁶⁸ was a sacrifice might have

⁴⁶² See Klawans, "Interpreting the Last Supper," *New Testament Studies* 48, no. 1 (2002): 1-17, here 1-3.

⁴⁶³ The first to phrase it explicitly, was Cyprian of Carthage (See Ullucci, *Sacrifice in the New Testament*). As for Cyprian's position, see also Robert M. J. Hayes, "The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Cyprian of Carthage," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 74 (2000): 307-324, here 313-317.

⁴⁶⁴ (Cyprian, *Epistulae* 63:14:4) Nam si Iesus Christus dominus et deus noster ipse est summus sacerdos dei patris et sacrificium patri se ipsum primus optulit et hoc fieri in sui commemoratione praecepit, utique ille sacerdos uice Christi uere fungitur qui id quod Christus fecit imitatur et sacrificium uerum et plenum tunc offert in ecclesia deo patri, si sic incipiat offerre secundum quod ipsum Christum uideat optulisse.

⁴⁶⁵ "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'" (Lk 22:19-20).

⁴⁶⁶ Since the eucharist as an institution was connected to sacrifices already in the Gospels. See Douglas, "The Eucharist," 209-210.

⁴⁶⁷ This is partly a retrojection. As I have indicated above, the first clear expression of this idea is in the writings of Cyprian. Nevertheless, it clearly becomes part of the Christian tradition after the third century, and, therefore, it is reasonable to talk about this as source of a problem for later traditions. See Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection*, 6-10.

⁴⁶⁸ On the issue of the humanity of Jesus' body, see Judith Perkins, "Early Christian and Judicial Bodies," in *Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Thorsten Fögen and Mireille M. Lee, 237-261 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009) here 241-243.

become a problematic claim within a tradition that strongly opposes human sacrifices and relegates it to barbarism.⁴⁶⁹ The precariousness of this situation has been raised of late by a number of scholars.⁴⁷⁰ In her most recent book, Mónika Pesthy-Simon even argued “But the contrary happened in the case of the sacrifice of Christ: animal sacrifices were replaced by a human one, making the latter acceptable once again in the civilized world ... which paved the way to further human sacrifices.”⁴⁷¹ Despite their interest in the theme of human sacrifices and their prohibition, I am, however, not aware of Church fathers ever engaging into discussing the self-sacrifice of Jesus in such a framework. But interpreters could not have possibly overlooked⁴⁷² the similarity⁴⁷³ between the *Akedah*, a clear instance of would-be human sacrificing of a child⁴⁷⁴ on the one hand, and the death of Christ on the cross on the other, the latter act fulfilling the former,⁴⁷⁵ since they even drew parallels between them.⁴⁷⁶ Moreover, subsequent martyrs of the Church were often eulogized as people who imitating the sacrifice of Christ, gave their life for the glory of the Christian faith. So, the fact that Church fathers did not consider Jesus as a human sacrifice and that they were not even forced to do so due to external accusations,⁴⁷⁷ can be seen as their successful toning down the implications of Jesus’ death by emphasizing other aspects of the crucifixion. One way of doing so was to highlight

⁴⁶⁹ The institution was detested – if not clearly forbidden – in the Hebrew Bible. See Katell Berthelot, “Jewish Views of Human Sacrifice in the Hellenistic and Roman Period,” in *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, Studies in the History of Religions, ed. Karin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange and K. F. Diethard Römheld, 191-213 (Brill: Leiden, 2007) 151-161. Moreover, several Church fathers already celebrated its disappearance as an achievement of Christian morality (e.g. Clement, *Protrepticus* 3. Cf. Stroumsa, *End of Sacrifice*, 73-74). See also James Rives, “Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995): 65-85, here 77-85.

⁴⁷⁰ See Nasrallah, “The Embarrassment of Blood,” 155-157. See also Peter Lampe, “Human Sacrifice and Pauline Christology,” in *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, Studies in the History of Religions, ed. Karin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange and K. F. Diethard Römheld, 191-213 (Brill: Leiden, 2007) here 203-213.

⁴⁷¹ See Mónika Pesthy-Simon, *Isaac, Iphigeneia, Ignatius. Martyrdom and Human Sacrifice* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2017) 115.

⁴⁷² See Rubenstein, “What was at Stake,” 101.

⁴⁷³ Especially so, since they were reminded of such associations by a plethora of non-Christian thinkers, accusing the Christians of or simply bewildering their willingness to venerate a human sacrifice. See Rives, “Human Sacrifice,” 72-77.

⁴⁷⁴ This is even more clearly pronounced to be a abomination in the *Old Testament*, than human sacrifice in general (See e.g. Lv 20:2, Dt 12:31, Ez 23:27 etc.) See also Armin Lange, “‘They Burn their Sons and Daughters – That was no Command of Mine’ (Jer 7:31),” in *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, Studies in the History of Religions, ed. Karin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange and K. F. Diethard Römheld, 109-132 (Brill: Leiden, 2007) here 109-112.

⁴⁷⁵ See e.g. *Epistle of Barnabas* 7:3; Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* 10:6 etc.

⁴⁷⁶ This was possibly already hinted at by Paul, when he said: “He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?” (Rom 8:32). Cf. Robin M. Jensen, “The Offering of Isaac in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Image and Text,” *Biblical Interpretation* 2, no 1. (1994): 85-110, here 98.

⁴⁷⁷ Importantly, the pagan accusations of Christians participating in human sacrifices do not concern the death of Jesus. See Rives, “Human Sacrifice,” 65-71.

his divine nature in the moment of his death.⁴⁷⁸ An alternative was to treat it not as a human but as a metaphorical animal sacrifice.

3.2.1. From a gentle lamb to the martyrs

An important source of identifying Jesus with sacrificial animals was the patristic interpretative tradition of the suffering servant of Is 52-53.⁴⁷⁹

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its
shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.⁴⁸⁰

The suffering servant, who was interpreted as a prefiguration of Jesus at least in some of the earliest patristic texts,⁴⁸¹ if not the *New Testament* per se,⁴⁸² was compared in the *Book of Isaiah* to a lamb willing to be slaughtered.⁴⁸³ Relying on the Pauline statement that Christ was a sacrifice realizing the commandment of the paschal lamb on a higher level (“For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed”)⁴⁸⁴, and since this was emphasized in subsequent *New Testament* writings (Jn 1:29, Jn 1:36, Acts 8:32),⁴⁸⁵ Church fathers could affix Jesus’ suffering and self-sacrifice to the interpretation of the paschal lamb in more than one *Biblical* locus of exegesis.⁴⁸⁶

Earlier Christian literary pieces building a clear connection between the activities of Jesus and the suffering servant of Isaiah 52-53 (such as the *Acts of Peter* and various letters of Ignatius) focus mostly on healing as a core aspect of the mission.⁴⁸⁷ There is, however, another characteristic

⁴⁷⁸ On the development of the notion of Jesus’ humanity, see the brief summary of Moss: Yonatan Moss, *Incorruptible Bodies: Christology, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oakland CA: University of California Press, 2016) 21-75.

⁴⁷⁹ Although the passage itself was not as substantial in the exegetical texts of the early church fathers, as one would expect. See Christoph Marksches, “Der Mensch Jesus Christus im Angesicht Gottes. Zwei Modelle des Verständnisses von Jesaja 52,13-53,12 in der patristischen Literatur und deren Entwicklung.” In *Der leidende Gottesknecht: Jesaja 53 und seine Wirkungsgeschichte ; mit einer Bibliographie zu Jesaja 53*, ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stulmacher, 197-251 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), here 197-199.

⁴⁸⁰ See Is 53:7.

⁴⁸¹ See Korinna Zamfir, “From Humble Servant to Incarnate Logos. Christology, Ethics, Apologetics and Polemics in the Early Christian Readings of Is 52-53.” *Sacra Scripta* 11, no. 2 (2013): 206-225, here 206-215.

⁴⁸² See Sydney H. T. Page, “The Suffering Servant between the Testaments,” *New Testament Studies* 31, no. 4 (1985): 481-497, here 489-493.

⁴⁸³ On the Isaiah-text, see J. Schipper “Interpreting the Lamb Imagery in Isa 53” *Journal of Biblical Literature* (2013): 315-325, here 315-316.

⁴⁸⁴ 1 Cor 5:7.

⁴⁸⁵ See Lampe, “Human Sacrifice and Pauline Christology,” 196-198.

⁴⁸⁶ See also Brian Luke, “Animal Sacrifice: a Model of Paternal Exploitation,” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 24, no. 9 (2004): 18-44, here 35-38.

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. Zamfir, “From Humble Servant,” 210-215.

increasingly emphasized, particularly in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*: the connection between the death of Jesus, his blood and the sacrifices of the *Old Testament* beyond that of the paschal lamb:

Similarly, Isaiah did not send you to the bathhouse in order to wash away the murder and all sins there. There is not enough water for this in the seas. He sent you – metaphorically – to the redeeming libations of old times. He said this to those who repented but were no longer purified by the blood of goats and sheep, or the ashes of a heifer or by offering the finest flour. However, they would be purified through faith in the blood of Christ, and his death, which he suffered for them, as it is said by Isaiah: “The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the Lord. For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight” (Is 52:10-12)⁴⁸⁸

At this point, Justin does not claim that Jesus was a sacrificial animal (in any sense), only that his death marked a turning point in history inasmuch as with it, previous means of atonement (i.e. animal sacrifices) were abrogated. Thus, baptism into the Christian faith is a way for individuals to take the expiatory effect of Jesus' death onto them. The introduction of the suffering servant-symbolism from Isaiah serves as a link between the atoning capacity of Jesus' death and the sacrificial regulations and practices of the *Old Testament*. In another passage of the *Dialogue*, it is the consent of the lamb of Jer 11:19, that is understood to represent Jesus. But Justin goes on to claim that this lamb is equal with that of Is 53:7:

And from those things that Jeremiah said, they [the Jews] cut out this: ‘But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter’ (Jer 11:19) ... The Jews decided about Christ that they would take him, since they wanted to crucify him. And this was indicated and said in advance also by Isaiah: ‘like a lamb that is led to the slaughter’ (Is 53:7)⁴⁸⁹

Even clearer is the interpretation offered in Melito of Sardis' *Homilia de Pascha*:

⁴⁸⁸ (Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 13:1) Οὐ γὰρ δὴ γε εἰς βαλανεῖον ὑμᾶς ἔπεμπεν Ἡσαίας ἀπολουσομένους ἐκεῖ τὸν φόνον καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἁμαρτίας, οὐδὲ οὐδὲ τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης ἱκανὸν πᾶν ὕδωρ καθαρίσαι, ἀλλὰ, ὡς εἰκός, πάλαι τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο τὸ σωτήριον λουτρὸν ἦν, ὃ εἶπε, τὸ τοῖς μεταγινώσκουσι καὶ μηκέτι αἵμασι τράγων καὶ προβάτων ἢ σποδῶ δαμάλεως ἢ σεμιδάλεως προσφορᾷς καθαριζομένοις, ἀλλὰ πίστει διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ὃς διὰ τοῦτο ἀπέθανεν, ὡς αὐτὸς Ἡσαίας ἔφη, οὕτως λέγων· Ἀποκαλύψει κύριος τὸν βραχίονα αὐτοῦ τὸν ἅγιον ἐνώπιον πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν, καὶ ὀψονται πάντα τὰ ἔθνη καὶ τὰ ἄκρα τῆς γῆς τὴν σωτηρίαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ. Ἀπόστητε, ἀπόστητε, ἐξέλθετε ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄψησθε, ἐξέλθετε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς, ἀφορίσθητε οἱ φέροντες τὰ σκεύη κυρίου, ὅτι οὐ μετὰ ταραχῆς πορεύεσθε.

⁴⁸⁹ (Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 72:2) Καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν διὰ Ἱερεμίου λεχθέντων ταῦτα περιέκοψαν· Ἐγὼ ὡς ἄρνιον φερόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι ... Ἰουδαῖοι περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀναιρεῖν αὐτὸν σταυρώσαντες βουλευσάμενοι, καὶ αὐτὸς μὴνύεται, ὡς καὶ διὰ τοῦ Ἡσαίου προεφητεύθη, ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἀγόμενος.

It says about our Lord, Jesus Christ, that he was bound like a ram. And also, that he was shorn like a lamb and that he was led to the slaughter like a lamb.⁴⁹⁰ And also that he was crucified like a lamb and that he carried the wood on his shoulders, led to be slaughtered like Isaac by his father. But unlike Isaac, who did not suffer [death], Christ did. For Isaac was a prefiguration of the coming suffering of Christ.⁴⁹¹

At this point, Melito compared Christ explicitly to Isaac, the protagonist of one of the most important sacrificial narratives of the *Old Testament*. Thus, he argues for a sacrificial interpretation of Isaiah's suffering servant, a perspective in which Christ appears to be represented not by the gentleness of this particular animal, but by its presence in said narrative. Melito's aim is here, however, not so much to argue for the sacrificial overtone of the Servant's song, but to exhibit the guilt of the Jews in these events and their eventual punishment.⁴⁹² The reference to the sacrificial lamb is, therefore, only a secondary aspect of his argumentation. Nevertheless, the passage indicates an important development: the notion that sacrificial animals can represent Jesus and his death by virtue of the sacrificial nature of their death.

The atoning lamb⁴⁹³ was not the only correspondence that patristic authors observed between *Old Testament* animal sacrifices and the story of Jesus' sacrifice. The *Epistle of Barnabas*, for example, claims that Jesus was also prefigured by the goats of the scapegoat-ritual:

He himself was ready to offer the vessel of his soul for our sins, so that the *typos* of offering Isaac on an altar be fulfilled ... 'They should eat from the goat that is offered in fasting, on behalf of their sins'⁴⁹⁴ ... 'Take two goats, without blemish and identical ones and sacrifice them.'⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. Is 53:7.

⁴⁹¹ (Melito of Sardis, *Homilia de Pascha* Fr. 9:1:1-6) Ὡς γὰρ κριὸς ἐδέθη, φησὶ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ὥς ἀμνὸς ἐκάρη καὶ ὥς πρόβατον εἰς σφαγὴν ἦχθη καὶ ὥς ἀμνὸς ἐσταυρώθη, καὶ ἐβάστασε τὸ ξύλον ἐπὶ τοῖς ὤμοις αὐτοῦ, ἀναγόμενος σφαγῆναι ὡς Ἰσαὰκ ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ. Ἀλλὰ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν, Ἰσαὰκ δὲ οὐκ ἔπαθεν· τύπος γὰρ ἦν τοῦ μέλλοντος πάσχειν Χριστοῦ.

⁴⁹² See Melito of Sardis, *Homilia de Pascha* 95, cf. Zamfir, "From Humble Servant," 216, fn. 53. As for the polemic aspect of Melito's understanding of the sacrifice of Jesus, see Robert Louis Wilken, "Melito, the Jewish Community at Sardis and the Sacrifice of Isaac," *Theological Studies* 37, no. 1 (1976): 53-69, here 64-66.

⁴⁹³ It seems that without even attempting to identify who the servant is, the vocabulary of the Isaiah-passage in the Hebrew Bible, as well as its translations indicate that the protagonist is thought of as an atoning sacrifice. See Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Sacrificial Life and Death of the Servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)," *Vetus Testamentum* 66 (2016): 1-14, here 1-7. And although the passage in Leviticus dealing with sin offerings lists lambs just as well as bullocks, bucks and she-goats (cf. Lv 4:1-5:13), the Isaiah-passage mentions only one of these, the lamb.

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. Lv 16:7-9. For an analysis of the ritual itself, see Grabbe, Lester L. "The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation," *JSJ* 18 (1987) 152-167, here 152-156.

⁴⁹⁵ (Epistle of Barnabas, 7:3-6) Ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἁμαρτιῶν ἔμελλεν τὸ σκεῦος τοῦ πνεύματος προσφέρειν θυσίαν, ἵνα καὶ ὁ τύπος ὁ γινόμενος ἐπὶ Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ προσεγεχθέντος ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τελεσθῇ ... Καὶ

The author of the *Epistle* focuses not on the one goat that was offered as a sacrifice, but rather on the other one that was sent into the desert. Nevertheless, he argues that both of them (even the sacrificial goat)⁴⁹⁶ were typological representations of Christ and his death on the cross respectively. This idea is adopted by subsequent fathers. Justin Martyr, for example says:

The mystery of the lamb about which God commanded to be a Passover sacrifice is that it was a *typos* of Christ ... days will come after the suffering of Christ ... all the sacrificing will be ended in one stroke ... from among the two identical goats which were ordered to be sacrificed during fasting, one was sent away, and the other was sacrificed. Both prefigured the advent of Christ.⁴⁹⁷

Here, the argument concerning the typological relationship between Jesus' fate and the regulation concerning the scapegoat does not stand alone. Intent on proving that – similarly to other “corporeal” laws⁴⁹⁸ – sacrifices were only instituted as a temporary measure for reining in Jewish lust, Justin acknowledges that Jesus himself was prefigured by more than one type of sacrifice.⁴⁹⁹ The argument is no longer Christological, but moral. It not only strengthens the claim that the death of Jesus was a sacrifice of various implications (as remembrance, alimentation – the original role of the Passover sacrifice – but also as atonement), but it also provides an answer to the problematic issue of Christians failing to continue the *Old Testament* tradition of animal sacrifices. If Christ is a fulfillment of not only the paschal sacrifice but all other sacrifices as well, then these need not be executed anymore. And this is precisely what Ambrose claims in his *De Spiritu Sancto*:

He [God] steers the man who is educated and has foreknowledge of the excellent mysteries of the future, and he [Gideon] killed the bullock⁵⁰⁰ that was intended by his father to be sacrificed to idols, and took another, seven years old bullock and sacrificed it to God. This was most

φαγέτωσαν ἐκ τοῦ τράγου τοῦ προσφερομένου τῇ νηστείᾳ ὑπὲρ πασῶν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.» ... Λάβετε δύο τράγους καλοὺς καὶ ὁμοίους καὶ προσενέγκατε.

⁴⁹⁶ As for a broader analysis of this passage, see Léopold Sabourin, “The Scapegoat as ‘Type’ of Christ in the History of a Doctrine,” in *Sin, Redemption and Sacrifice: A Biblical and Patristic Study*, ed. Léopold Sabourin and Stanislav Lyonnet, 269-289 (Analecta Biblica 48; Rome: Biblical Institute Press 1970) here 274-275.

⁴⁹⁷ (Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 40:4-5) Τὸ μυστήριον οὖν τοῦ προβάτου, ὃ τὸ πάσχα θύειν ἐντέταλται ὁ θεός, τύπος ἦν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ... ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν τὸν Χριστόν ... παύσονται ἅπασαι ἀπλῶς προσφοραὶ γινόμεναι ... οἱ ἐν τῇ νηστείᾳ δὲ τράγοι δύο ὅμοιοι κελευσθέντες γίνεσθαι, ὧν ὁ εἷς ἀποπομπαῖος ἐγένετο, ὁ δὲ ἕτερος εἰς προσφορὰν, τῶν δύο παρουσιῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ καταγγελία ἦσαν.

⁴⁹⁸ Such as circumcision. On the general tendency of identifying Judaism with a *carnal* understanding of the Mosaic laws, see Susanna Drake, *Slandering the Jew*, 19-38. As for the partitioned acceptance of this notion in rabbinic tradition, see Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel. Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1993) 44-47.

⁴⁹⁹ As for a similar, although not so explicit recognition in Latin Christianity, see Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* 13 and 14 respectively.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. Jdg 6:25.

explicitly revealed after the advent of God: that all Gentile sacrifices should be abrogated, and only the one recalling the passion of God should be preserved for the redemption of the people. Thus, the bullock was a *typos* of Christ ... Abraham offered that bullock ... It is him [Christ] who is offered as a goat here, and as a sheep there, and as a calf over there. As a goat, for he is an atoning sacrifice. As a sheep, for he is a willing one, and as a calf, for he is spotless.⁵⁰¹

Similarly, to his predecessors, Ambrose wishes to make the point that animal sacrifices have been abrogated. In the course of this argument, he points out that Jesus was not only typologically depicted by the bullock of Gideon's sacrifice,⁵⁰² but also by other types of sacrificial animals: the goats and the sheep.

By identifying him with all sacrificed mammals of the *Old Testament*, the Church fathers qualify the image of Jesus. Moreover, they also alter the concept of sacrificial animals. In the *Gospels*, the most emphatic aspects of Jesus' death were his suffering and the deliberate nature of offering himself up for death. With the exception of the willful lamb in Isaiah 53, these elements are missing from the *Old Testament* notion of animal sacrifices. By identifying Jesus' death with the latter in a general manner, Church fathers enabled the formation of a new notion of animal sacrifice, centered around suffering and willingness. A sacrificial animal that suffers and does it willingly is no longer a passive object of a ritual. It becomes a subject.

The importance of this change is clear in contrast to the *New Testament*. Although in this corpus, suffering is often related to Jesus (e.g. Mt 17:15, Acts 26:23) and sacrificial language is implemented to discuss his death on the cross, these two aspects are connected directly only once, in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which states: "For then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself".⁵⁰³ As it was essential for the early Church to prove that the sacrifice of Jesus

⁵⁰¹ (Ambrose, *De Spiritu Sancto*, Liber 1 Prologus 4) Advertit igitur vir doctus et praesagus futuri superna mysteria et ideo secundum oracula occidit vitulum a patre suo idolis deputatum et ipse septennem alium vitulum immolavit deo. Quo facto manifestissime revelavit post adventum domini omnia gentilitatis abolenda sacrificia solum que sacrificium deo dominicae passionis pro redemptione populi deferendum. Etenim vitulus ille erat in typo Christus ... Hunc vitulum et Abraham obtulit ... Hic est qui nunc in haedi typo, nunc in ovis, nunc in vituli offerebatur: haedi, quod sacrificium pro delictis sit, ovis, quod voluntaria hostia, vituli, quod immaculata sit victima.

⁵⁰² In the beginning of the passage, Ambrose refers to Jgs 6:25-26, then, he seamlessly moves on to Abraham, who – however – never offered a bullock (vitulus), only a heifer (vacca) during the sacrificial act of his covenant with God (see Gn 15:9-10). Ambrose probably had another text in mind, that of Jer 34:18, in which the covenant of God and Israel is indeed related to a bullock (vitulum).

⁵⁰³ Heb 9:26.

was real,⁵⁰⁴ and also that – as we have seen – the death of Jesus was expressed through sacrificial language and compared to the death of sacrificial animals with an increasing regularity, the connection of the two notions was bound to occur. If we return – for a moment – to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, we can see the earliest expression of this idea:

And how is he similar to it [the goat]? With respect to this it is said: ‘the goats need to be identical and without blemish’.⁵⁰⁵ So when they see him coming, they will be astounded by his similarity to goats. Thus, you can see a *typos* of the suffering Jesus.⁵⁰⁶

However, by emphasizing suffering as the major point in the self-sacrifice of Jesus, Church fathers paved the way for interpreting the death of further individuals who died through suffering as sacrificial acts. Such a one is the first-century writer Ignatius of Antioch, who foresees himself as a sacrifice:

Instead, you should flatter the wild beasts, so that they become a grave for me and that they do not leave anything behind from my body. So, when I pass away, I will be no burden to anyone. I will be a true disciple of Jesus Christ only then, as the world will see no part of my body. You should pray to Christ on my behalf, so that through these means, I can become a sacrifice.⁵⁰⁷

In this passage, Ignatius compares *damnatio ad bestias* to *imitatio Christi*, claiming that his martyrdom and death by wild beasts will be a sacrifice. The similarity between his passing and that of Jesus is that both entail considerable suffering on the part of the victim and that both of them undergo the process willingly. This is, however, enough for Ignatius to claim that – without altar, priest, sprinkling of the blood – his death will be a sacrificial one. Ignatius’ example is followed by many subsequent interpreters. In his commentary on the *Gospel of John*,⁵⁰⁸ Origen claims, for example:

⁵⁰⁴ See Paul Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassable God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 64-91.

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. Lv 16:7-9.

⁵⁰⁶ (Epistle of Barnabas 7:10) Πῶς γὰρ ὅμοιος ἐκείνῳ; εἰς τοῦτο «ὁμοίους» τοὺς τράγους καὶ «καλοὺς», ἴσους, ἵνα ὅταν ἴδωσιν αὐτὸν τότε ἐρχόμενον, ἐκπλαγῶσιν ἐπὶ τῇ ὁμοιότητι τοῦ τράγου. Οὐκοῦν ἴδε τὸν τύπον τοῦ μέλλοντος πάσχειν Ἰησοῦ.

⁵⁰⁷ (Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistula ad Romanos* 4,2) μᾶλλον κολακεύσατε τὰ θηρία ἵνα μοι τάφος γένωνται καὶ μηθὲν καταλίπωσι τῶν τοῦ σώματός μου ἵνα μὴ κοιμηθεῖς βαρὺς τινι γένωμαι τότε ἔσομαι μαθητὴς ἀληθῶς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτε οὐδὲ τὸ σῶμά μου ὁ κόσμος ὄψεται λιτανεύσατε τὸν Χριστὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ ἵνα διὰ τῶν ὀργάνων τούτων θυσία εὐρεθῶ.

⁵⁰⁸ As for the initial verse of the interpretation (Jn 1:29), there are numerous possibilities of identification. See Lilly Nortjé-Meyer, “Ancient Art, Rhetoric and the Lamb of God Metaphor in John 1:29 and 1:36,” *HTS Teologiese Studies* 71, no. 1 (2015): 1-8, here 1-4.

He says: “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29). There are five animals led to the altar. Three among them are land-animals and two are birds. And it seems to me expedient to ask why John calls the savior a “lamb” and not the rest [of the sacrificial animals] ... This lamb that was slaughtered had become a purification of the entire world in accordance with certain secret words, on behalf of which – and in accordance with the love of the father toward humanity – he was slaughtered ... And the rest of the sacrifices, as symbolized by the laws, are similar to this one. And to all the rest of sacrifices of shedding [blood], one thing seems to be similar to me: that of shedding the blood of the noble martyrs.⁵⁰⁹

Here, Origen tries to make sense of all sacrificial laws in a way different from that of Tertullian, Justin Martyr or Ambrose. Rather than arguing that each and every sacrifice prefigured the death of Jesus, he envisions a categorization of Mosaic sacrifices, according to which the most fitting to Jesus is that of sheep, but the sacrifice of other animals also represents human deaths: namely those of the martyrs. Their passing bears a resemblance to the expiatory nature of Jesus’ death, inasmuch as they are willing to die for their faith.⁵¹⁰ This interpretation, although uniquely phrased,⁵¹¹ fits the overall direction of the Christian tradition, which develops a general analogy between martyrdom and sacrifices. By the fourth century, there is such an abundance of similar narratives that Eusebius, for example, does no longer deem it necessary to refer to Jesus as a sacrificial lamb before comparing Polycarp to a ram to be sacrificed:

Just as they put around him the things prepared for the fire, as they were about to fix him [to the stake], he said: ‘leave me like that, for the one, who enabled me to endure fire, will give me stability even without your nails to stay in the fire unmoved.’ And they did not nail him to the stake, but bound him to it. And he, with his hands behind him, offered himself

⁵⁰⁹ (Origen, *In Iohannem* 6:51-53) Καὶ λέγει· Ἴδε ὁ ἄμνός τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. Πέντε ζώων προσφερομένων ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον, τριῶν μὲν χερσαίων πτηνῶν δὲ δύο, ἄξιόν μοι ζητεῖν φαίνεται τί δήποτε ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰωάννου ὁ σωτὴρ »ἄμνός« λέγεται καὶ οὐδὲν τῶν λοιπῶν ... Οὗτος δὴ ὁ ἄμνός σφαγεῖς καθάρσιον γεγένηται κατὰ τινὰς ἀπορρήτους λόγους τοῦ ὅλου κόσμου, ὑπὲρ οὗ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ τὴν σφαγὴν ἀνεδέξατο ... Καὶ ταύτῃ θυσίᾳ συγγενεῖς εἰσὶν αἱ λοιπαί, ὧν σύμβολόν εἰσιν αἱ νομικαί. Λοιπαὶ δὲ καὶ συγγενεῖς ταύτῃ τῇ θυσίᾳ θυσίαι αἱ ἐκχύσεις εἶναι μοι φαίνονται τοῦ τῶν γενναίων μαρτύρων αἵματος.

⁵¹⁰ (Origen, *In Iohannem* 6:54) Κατάλυσιν οὖν νομιστέον γίνεσθαι δυνάμεων κακοποιῶν διὰ τοῦ θανάτου τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων, οἷον τῆς ὑπομονῆς αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς ὁμολογίας τῆς μέχρι θανάτου καὶ τῆς εἰς τὸ εὐσεβὲς προθυμίας ἀμβλυνοῦσης τὸ ὅξυ τῆς ἐκείνων κατὰ τοῦ πάσχοντος ἐπιβουλῆς.

⁵¹¹ It seems that this specific argument (namely that the five types of sacrificial animals can be categorized into two groups of typological symbols) of Origen is a unique one, without parallels in either Greek or Latin tradition. See J. Petruccione, “The Martyr Death as Sacrifice: Prudentius, Peristephanon 4. 9-72,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 49, no. 3 (1995): 245-257, here 248 fn 10.

as a great ram, that was taken from a huge flock, a wholly burnt offering to the omnipotent God.⁵¹²

The likewise fourth-century Gregory of Nazianzus presents a different narrative. He starts with prayers (as substitutions to sacrifice) and ends up arguing that individuals (that is, humans!) should be glad to offer their pain and suffering as self-sacrifice:

We shall not sacrifice young heifers and sheep that raise their horns and hoofs, in the case of which much is dead and senseless. We shall sacrifice praises to God, upon a higher altar ... we shall sacrifice to God rather our own selves, let us sacrifice ourselves each day and in every moment. We shall receive everything on behalf of the Logos, we shall mimic the suffering through sufferings, magnify [his] blood through [our] blood, willingly stepping up to the cross. The nails are sweet, even if they are very painful.⁵¹³

In this passage, martyrdom is substituted by liturgical activity. The life devoted to God is not the body of an animal or an individual, but the time and attention one may dedicate to a liturgical practice. This idea is represented by many Church fathers, among them Justin Martyr,⁵¹⁴ Clement⁵¹⁵ and Tertullian.⁵¹⁶ It is also present in various loci in rabbinic tradition,⁵¹⁷ and in the *Babylonian Talmud* it is explicitly claimed that daily sacrifices have been replaced by daily prayers.⁵¹⁸ This substitution of “actions by words”⁵¹⁹ is an important similarity between the two communities’ novel understanding of sacrifices, on which I will comment below.

All in all, my analysis shows that sacrificial discourse, which had originally been used only as a metaphorical reference to Jesus, was turned into a description of a type of self-sacrifice in the patristic tradition. In the literary output of the Church fathers, *Old Testament* animal sacrifices were turned

⁵¹² (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4:15:31) εὐθέως οὖν αὐτῷ περιετίθετο τὰ πρὸς τὴν πυρὰν ἡρμοσμένα ὄργανα· μελλόντων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ προσηλοῦν αὐτόν, εἶπεν· ἄφετέ με οὕτως· ὁ γὰρ διδοὺς ὑπομεῖναι τὸ πῦρ δώσει καὶ χωρὶς τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐκ τῶν ἡλῶν ἀσφαλείας ἀσχύλτως ἐπιμεῖναι τῇ πυρᾷ. οἱ δὲ οὐ κατήλωσαν, προσέδησαν δὲ αὐτόν. ὁ δ' ὀπίσω τὰς χεῖρας ποιήσας καὶ προσδεθείς ὥσπερ κριὸς ἐπίσημος, ἀναφερόμενος ἐκ μεγάλου ποιμνίου ὀλοκαύτωμα δεκτὸν θεῷ παντοκράτορι.

⁵¹³ (Gregorius Nazianzenus, *In Sanctum Pascha Oratio* (Oratio 45:23)) Θύσωμεν, μὴ μόσχους νέους, μηδὲ ἄμνους κέρατα ἐκφέροντας καὶ ὀπλὰς, παρ' οἷς πολὺ τὸ νεκρὸν καὶ ἀναίσθητον· ἀλλὰ θύσωμεν τῷ Θεῷ θυσίαν αἰνέσεως, ἐπὶ τὸ ἄνω θυσιαστήριον ... ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς θύσωμεν τῷ Θεῷ· μᾶλλον δὲ, θύωμεν ἐν καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν καὶ πάσαν κίνησιν. Πάντα ὑπὲρ τοῦ Λόγου δεχώμεθα, πάθει τὸ πάθος μιμώμεθα, αἵματι τὸ αἷμα σεμνύνωμεν, ἐπὶ τὸν σταυρὸν ἀνίωμεν πρόθυμοι. Γλυκεῖς οἱ ἡλοὶ, καὶ εἰ λίαν ὀδυνηροί.

⁵¹⁴ See *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 117-118.

⁵¹⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 7:3-7.

⁵¹⁶ Tertullian, *De Oratione*, 28.

⁵¹⁷ See *Tanhuma* Aharei Mot 14; *Midrash on Psalms* 5:4 etc.

⁵¹⁸ See *bBerakhot* 26a-b. See also Ferguson, “Spiritual Sacrifice,” 1160-1162.

⁵¹⁹ See Stroumsa, *End of Sacrifice*, 62-63.

from an institution aimed at establishing and maintaining human-divine relationship through the slaughtering of animals,⁵²⁰ into a metaphorical tool describing self-dedication for the sake of a human community.

⁵²⁰ See Douglas W. Ferguson, “The Changing Social Meaning of Sacrifices in Jewish Worship: an Historical Overview,” *Sociological Focus* 17, no. 3 (1984): 211-221, here 211-214.

3.3. Rabbis and animal sacrifices

It has frequently been observed⁵²¹ that despite the destruction of the Second Temple, the rabbinic tradition continued to insist on the significance and centrality of animal sacrifices for the Israelites. Despite the often-repeated patristic claim that wishes to identify the rabbinic and Jewish approach to sacrifices with a pre-supposed *Old Testament* precursor of an exclusively ritualistic understanding, the rabbis did subscribe to the notion that sacrificial animals may in a metaphorical fashion represent other concepts. Thus, in accordance with the polysemic character of rabbinic literature and especially Biblical exegesis,⁵²² they managed to argue for the relevance and validity of animal sacrifices although at the moment, Judaism was devoid of their practice.

One example of this tendency is presented by *Leviticus Rabbah*. In a passage commenting on the regulations concerning sacrificial animals (cf. Lv 22), the rabbis propose the following midrash:⁵²³

R. Judah b. R. Simon said in the name of R. Jose b. R. Nehorai: The Holy, blessed be he, always claims the blood of those who are pursued on those who pursue ... Israel is pursued by the Gentiles and the Holy, blessed be he, elected Israel as it is said: "It is you the Lord has chosen out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession" (Dt 14:2). R. Eliezer b. R. Jose b. Zimra said: it is similar in the case of sacrificial victims. The Holy, blessed be he, said: the ox is pursued by the lion, the goat is pursued by the leopard, and the sheep is pursued by the wolf. Do not sacrifice from among pursuers, but from among the ones that are pursued, as it is said: "When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born" (Lv 22:27).⁵²⁴

⁵²¹ Although several directions of substitution for sacrifices in the rabbinic tradition have been registered (see the profound summary of Goldstein: Naftali Goldstein, "עבודת הקרבנות בהגות חז"ל שלאחר חורבן בית-המקדש" [Avodat hakorbanot behagut chazal selaahar churban beit hamikdas], "A Journal of Jewish Philosophy & Kabbalah", 8 (1982):29-51), it has also been pointed out that the *Mishnaic* interest in sacrifices – especially in light of the destruction of the Temple – is an indication of the rabbis willingness to preserve sacrificial traditions in the focus of their own, new understanding of Judaism. See Kathryn McClymond, "Don't Cry over Spilled Blood," In *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, 235-251 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) here 243-246.

⁵²² In comparison with the contemporary Biblical exegesis of the Church fathers, the rabbis exhibit an astounding readiness to include distinct, often even contradictory exegetical answers to questions of Biblical interpretation. There is still no consensus regarding the beginning of this phenomenon, neither with regards to its exact function in the final editing of rabbinic corpora. In accordance with the nomenclature of the ongoing debate, I call this general inconclusiveness of rabbinic exegesis "polysemy" here, without trying to offer any detailed analysis of the phenomenon. For a comprehensive overview of the debate, see Steven D. Fraade, "Rabbinic Polysemy and Pluralism Revisited: Between Praxis and Thematization," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 31, no. 1 (2007): 1-40. As for a more recent, but also more brief assessment, see Yadin-Israel Azzan, "Rabbinic Polysemy: A Response to Steven Fraade," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 38, no. 1 (2014): 129-141.

⁵²³ The same tradition, with minor differences also appears in *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 3:15.

⁵²⁴ (Leviticus Rabbah 27:5, Vilna edition) רבי יהודה ב"ר סימון אמר בשם ר"י ב"ר נהוראי לעולם הקדוש ברוך הוא תובע דמן של נרדפין (Leviticus Rabbah 27:5, Vilna edition) ... ישראל נרדפין מפני האומות ובהר הקדוש ברוך הוא בישראל שנאמר וכן בחר ה' להיות לו לעם סגולה רבי אליעזר ב"ר יוסי בן זמרא

The named author of the passage, the late third century R. Judah clearly believes that there is a deeper meaning beyond the material act of sacrificing. We do not see such an ardent attempt at identifying animal sacrifice and human expiatory suffering as we did in contemporary patristic tradition.⁵²⁵ However, the allusion to a link between the two is clearly present. In an attempt to make sense of the selection of species to be sacrificed (namely that all of them happen to be domesticated animals),⁵²⁶ R. Eliezer offers an associative link, comparing sacrificial animals and human agents. While the persecutors of Israel are similar to wild animals, Israel can be compared to sacrificial animals inasmuch as it suffers persecution. Notably, the list of pursuer animals (lion, leopard and wolf) is a list of wild animals known from Jer 5:6 and used elsewhere as a reference to the political powers oppressing Israel.⁵²⁷ The contrast of Israel and its enemies through the opposition of sacrificial animals and predators of the wilderness serves the purpose of explaining the *Old Testament's* choice of sacrificial animals but also emphasizes Israel's defenselessness and reliance on divine support, as expressed through the exclusive role it plays in maintaining the economy of divine-human relations by sacrificing to God.

Rather than reserving for Israel the unenviable role of an animal to be sacrificed, other midrashic traditions identify the Gentile empires with the sacrificial animals. Such a reading is presented in a passage of *Genesis Rabbah* partly attributed to Palestinian amoras of the 3rd century:

Bring me a heifer three years old" (Gn 15:9): this refers to Babylonia that raised three kings: Nebuchadnezzar, evil-Merodach and Belshazzar. "A female goat three years old" (ibid.): this refers to Media that produces three kings: Cyrus, Darius and Ahasuerus. "A ram three years old" (ibid.): this refers to Greece. R. Elazar ad R. Johanan had different opinions on this verse. R. Elazar said: the Greeks conquered all parts of the world, except for the east. R. Johanan rather interpreted: "I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward. All beasts were powerless to withstand it, and no one could rescue from its power; it did as it pleased and became strong" (Dn 8:4). "A turtledove,

אמר אף בקרבנות כך אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא שור נרדף מפני ארי עז נרדף מפני נמר כבש מפני זאב לא תקריבו לפני מן הרודפים אלא מן הנרדפין. הה"ד שור או כשב או עז כי יולד.

⁵²⁵ It is worth mentioning that – to a lesser extent – the rabbinic tradition was also interested in the relationship between suffering and sacrifice. In certain passages of the *Tosefta*, for example, sacrifice – inasmuch as it is related to atonement was replaced by the suffering of the individuals (David Kraemer, *Responses to Suffering in Classical Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 68-69). But, as several further loci (*Midrash on Psalms*, 118:18, *bMoed Katan*, 28a) prove, suffering is not interpreted as sacrificial, but rather equated it. Therefore, this rabbinic interpretation do not belong to the question of *transforming* sacrifice, but to replacing it. See also Ferguson, "Spiritual Sacrifice," 1161-1162.

⁵²⁶ This is an important question for the editor of the text. For a partial answer, see *Leviticus Rabbah* 27:6.

⁵²⁷ See e.g. *Esther Rabbah* Introduction 5. See also chapter 5.4.1.

and a young pigeon (גזל) (Gn 15:9): this is the kingdom of Rome. They are a turtledove, but they are also⁵²⁸ destructors (גזל).⁵²⁹

The passage argues that Abraham's vision prefigured his covenant with God.⁵³⁰ The list of offerings (containing all sacrificial animal species) is taken to represent the traditional quadripartite enemy of the people of Israel.⁵³¹ Israel itself is not seen represented in animal form, but through a silent human participant, namely Abraham, the forefather of Israel, to whom the entire vision is presented. What one encounters here is thus an implicitly dualistic presentation of humankind and its history, exhibited from the vantage point of Israel towards the nations identified with various animal sacrifices. This tradition is unique as in most other commentaries the rabbis opt for an identification of Israel with sacrificial animals. In these texts, the solution for the concerning aspect of Israel's annihilation in a sacrificial act was to maintain a distinction between on the one hand metaphorical representation by a sacrificial animal with regards to its vulnerability and purity, and on the other hand the actual ritual death of an animal sacrificed *for* Israel.

3.3.1. Isaac, the ram and Israel

In order to see clearly how this is achieved, it is expedient to examine further commentaries dealing with sacrificial texts where the relationship between sacrificing agent and sacrificed victim comes to the foreground.⁵³² Among such narratives, there is no text that is more important for the rabbis than the sacrifice of Isaac, the *Akedah*.⁵³³ I am using the term ‘sacrifice’ – of course – somewhat tentatively. Despite the relative clarity of the episode in the *Book of Genesis*⁵³⁴ and the consensus

⁵²⁸ The etymological argument is based on the shared roots of the two terms. Thus, the rabbis argue, by calling them pigeons with this term, the *Book of Genesis* implied that Romans have a predatory nature.

קחה לי עגלה משולשת זו בבל שמעמדת שלשה נבוכדנצר ואיל מרודך ובלשצר, ועז משולשת זו מדי שמעמדת (Genesis Rabbah 44:15)⁵²⁹ שלשה כורש ודריש ואחשורוש, ואיל משולש זו יוון, ר' לעזר ור' יוחנן ר' לעזר א' כל הרוחות כיבשה ורוח מזרחית לא כיבשה, אמר ליה ר' יוחנן והכת' ראיתי את האיל מנגח ימה וצפונה ונגבה וכל חיות לא יעמדו לפניו... ותור וגזל זו אדום תור הוא אלא גזלני

⁵³⁰ This aspect is similarly evoked in other commentaries of the passage (see *bTaanit* 27b, *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* 5:2 etc.)

⁵³¹ On the rabbinic tradition concerning the fourfold historical distinction of the enemies of Israel see chapter 5.4.1.

⁵³² In my phrasing, I am relying on the vocabulary (*victim* and *agent*) from the groundbreaking work of Hubert and Mauss (see Andrea Zeeb-Lanz, Rose-Maria Arbogast et al., “Human Sacrifice as ‘Crisis Management’, The Case of the Early Neolithic Site of Herxheim, Palatinate, Germany,” in *Diversity of Sacrifice, Form and Function of Sacrificial Practices in the Ancient World and Beyond*, ed. Carrie Ann Murray, 171-191 (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2016) here 183-184), who attempted to formulate an overarching vocabulary to describe sacrificial practices. See Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, “Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice,” *Année sociologique* 2 (1899): 29-138.

⁵³³ As for the profound importance of the *Akedah* in Jewish (and also in Christian tradition) see Judah Goldin, “Preface,” to *The Last Trial: on The Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice: The Aqedah* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967). See also Isaac Kalimi, “‘Go, I beg you, take your beloved son and slay him!’ The Binding of Isaac in Rabbinic Literature and Thought,” *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 13, no. 1 (2010): 1-29, here 1-3.

⁵³⁴ As for ambiguities in the Biblical narrative itself, see Kalimi, “‘Go, I beg you,’” 1-6.

regarding Isaac's willingness to be sacrificed, rabbis were not unanimous about whether he was offered at all.⁵³⁵ While in some traditions they lay specific emphasis on the fact that literally not even a hair on his head was hurt (such as *Genesis Rabbah* 56:7),⁵³⁶ others assume that Isaac did shed his blood on the altar.⁵³⁷ But most importantly, there is an opinion that he was actually slaughtered during the *Akedah*, and that he was later resurrected:

And [God] said to the angel destroying the people [It is enough; now stay your hand (2Sam 24:16)] R. Eleazar said: ‘God said: take a great man from among them, on behalf of whom some of their sins can be atoned for. At that instance, Abishai son of Zeruiah died, who was as worthy as the [entirety of the] Sanhedrin. And as [the angel] was destroying, God “took note and relented” (1Chron 21:15). Why does it say that he took note? ... Samuel said: he saw the ashes of Isaac, as it is said: “God himself will provide”⁵³⁸ the lamb” (Gn 22:8).⁵³⁹

This *Talmudic* passage reminds the reader of Christian interpretations of the death of Jesus.⁵⁴⁰ It implicitly identifies Isaac with the absent lamb of the *Akedah*, and argues that his death had an expiatory effect for later generations. In this narrative, God is presented as repenting and changing his mind on account of the sacrifice of Isaac and the testament of this event, his ashes. According to this passage, the death of a human can be a satisfactory expiation, even atoning for further transgressions. Unfortunately, the passage is silent concerning the exact nature of the relationship between Isaac and the ram on Mount Moriah, but it is clear that it views Isaac as the progenitor of the people of Israel, and he himself is considered to be a sacrificial victim. In a manner similar to the Christian tradition, Isaac is a typological representation of the people of Israel, and at the same time, his sacrifice is also an atonement facilitating Israel's ultimate redemption. Thus, Isaac is a barrier between Israel and the sacrificial animal. His death serves instead that of Israel. The solitary sacrifice of Isaac and its effects on the future of his community makes this commentary peculiarly similar to patristic interpretations, which emphasize the atoning effect of the death of Jesus.

⁵³⁵ See Kalimi, “‘Go, I beg you,’” 19-25.

⁵³⁶ This rabbinic interpretation claimed that even the knife was melt that had been supposed to be used during the sacrifice. Cf. Kalimi, “‘Go, I beg you’,” 19-20.

⁵³⁷ *Midrash Tanhuma* Vayerah 23.

⁵³⁸ Literally “*see for himself*”

⁵³⁹ (*bBerakhot* 62b) שיש בו ליפרע (במלואו), אמר רבי אלעזר, אמר ליה הקדוש ברוך הוא למלאך: טול לי רב שבהם, שיש בו ליפרע (*bBerakhot* 62b). ואמר למלאך המשחית בעם רב אמר רבי אלעזר, אמר ליה הקדוש ברוך הוא למלאך: טול לי רב שבהם, שיש בו ליפרע (*bBerakhot* 62b). ואמר למלאך המשחית בעם רב אמר רבי אלעזר, אמר ליה הקדוש ברוך הוא למלאך: טול לי רב שבהם, שיש בו ליפרע (*bBerakhot* 62b).

⁵⁴⁰ And indeed even before the Christian tradition, Isaac was understood in many layers of Jewish interpretation as a the primary example of voluntary sacrifice. See Jensen, "The Offering of Isaac," 101-103.

This interpretation is, however, possible only because the commentary claims that Isaac died a sacrificial death. In other traditions, the rabbis avoid commenting on Isaac's fate and instead focus on the ram. Thus, they draw a direct connection between Israel and the sacrifice, sometimes without even making a reference to Isaac. *Genesis Rabbah* argues:

And Abraham looked up and saw a ram [behind]⁵⁴¹ (Gn 22:13). Why behind (אחר)? R. Judan said: after everything that happens, Israel is still caught in sins and tangled up in distress. And in the end, it will be saved through the horns of the ram, as it is said: "the Lord God will sound the trumpet" (Zec 9:14). R. Yehuda b. Simon argued: after all the generations, Israel is still caught in sins and tangled up in distress And in the end, it will be saved through the horns of the ram, as it is said (Zec 9:14) ... R. Levi said, Abraham, our father sees the ram get freed from this bush, and get entangled in another. And the Holy, blessed be he, says to him: similarly will your sons entangle in the kingdoms from Babylon to Media, from Media to Greece, from Greece to Edom. And in the end, they will be saved through the horns of the ram.⁵⁴²

The sacrificial scene on Mount Moriah is evoked here, but the immolation of the ram is not emphasized. Instead it is the animal's entanglement in the thickets that is read prefiguratively. The governing idea that connects all four interpretations in the above text is the redeeming function of the horns of the ram.⁵⁴³ And although it is only the last opinion (the one quoted in the name of the 3rd century Palestinian amora, R. Levi) that connects the ram directly to Israel, the existence of similar arguments in other commentaries support the assumption that – if only implicitly – even the other authorities named – argue on the basis of the understanding that the ram of the narrative is a symbol of Israel.

Although it is explicitly stated that the ram represents Israel, the metaphor does not extend to the act of immolation (as the sacrifice of the ram is not mentioned either here, or in variant readings of the passage).⁵⁴⁴ The contextual similarity with Christian interpretations is noteworthy, but, in a sense, the argument is a reversal of the Christian view of Jesus' self-sacrifice.⁵⁴⁵ Whereas, in patristic narratives,

⁵⁴¹ The term behind (אחר) is not part of the NRSV translation.

⁵⁴² (*Genesis Rabbah* 56:9) וישא אברהם את עיניו וירא והנה איל אחר מהו אחר אמר רבי יודן אחר כל המעשים ישראל נאחזים בעבירות ומסתבכין בצרות וסופן להיגאל בקרנו של איל שנאמר וה' אלהים בשופר יתקע וגו', אמר רבי יהודה בר סימון אחר כל הדורות ישראל נאחזים בעבירות ומסתבכין בצרות וסופן להיגאל בקרנו של איל הה"ד ... רבי לוי אמר לפי שהיה אברהם אבינו רואה את האיל ניתוש מן החורש הזה והולך ומסתבך בחורש אחר, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא כך עתידין בניך להסתבך למלכיות מבבל למדי מן מדי ליון ומיון לאדום וסופן ליגאל בקרנו של איל הה"ד וה' אלהים בשופר.

⁵⁴³ On rabbinic tradition for the relationship between blowing the shofar and redemption, see Jacob Neusner, *The Comparative Hermeneutics of Rabbinic Judaism I* (Binghamton: Global Publications, 2000) 491-496.

⁵⁴⁴ See e.g. *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* 23:10; *Leviticus Rabbah* 29:10, *jTa'anit* 2:4 etc.

⁵⁴⁵ As for the possibility of an actual polemic here, see Wilken, "Melito, the Jewish Community," 58-64.

prosper through the offered animals. The shortest variant of this tradition was conserved in the early compilation of *Lamentations Rabbah*,⁵⁴⁸ which states:

R. Phinehas argued that the seventy bulls that Israel used to offer on the Feast [of the Tabernacles] was on behalf of the seventy nations, so that the world does not become depopulated because of them.⁵⁴⁹

Observing the oddly high number of bull sacrifices required by the Mosaic law,⁵⁵⁰ which is especially remarkable compared to other feasts where a maximum of two bulls is ever prescribed,⁵⁵¹ the rabbis look for an explanation, and find it in the corresponding number of Gentile nations, as presented by various midrashim.⁵⁵² The argument thus follows that the Israelites were ordered to sacrifice a correlating number of bulls, in order to atone for the sins of their neighbors. Thus, they are presented here as representing the entirety of humanity *vis-à-vis* God.⁵⁵³ The idea that Israel sacrifices animals for the sake of the Gentiles is emphasized in another variant of the midrash:

R. Eleazar said: there are seventy bulls here. On behalf of whom? On behalf of the seventy nations. And why is there a solitary bull? On behalf of the solitary nation ... R. Yohanan said: Alas, you nations, who lost [something] and do not know what you have lost. Back when the Temple still functioned, the altar atoned for them, and now, who would atone for them?⁵⁵⁴

The destruction of the Temple prevented the continuation of the practice, and that is just as much a tragedy for the Gentiles as for the Jews. With this, the author of the passage evokes a notion similar to the one implied in *Lamentations Rabbah*, namely that it was for the sins of the Gentiles that Israel had to offer sacrifices in the first place.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁴⁸ As for the complex problem of the dating of *Lamentations Rabbah*, see the excellent summary of Alexander: Philip S. Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations, translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (Collegeville MI: Liturgical Press, 2007) 51-54.

⁵⁴⁹ (Lamentations Rabbah 1:2:23) א"ר פנחס אותם שבעים פרים שהיו ישראל מקריבין בחג כנגד שבעים אומות הם כדי שלא יצדה העולם מהם.

⁵⁵⁰ Num 29:12-34.

⁵⁵¹ See Noga Ayali-Darshan, "The Seventy Bulls Sacrificed at Sukkot (Num 29:12-34) in Light of a Ritual Text from Emar (Emar 6, 373)," *Vetus Testamentum* 65 (2015): 9-19, here 10-11.

⁵⁵² See Ayali-Darshan, "The Seventy Bulls," 16 and also Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 7-8.

⁵⁵³ This notion has an origin in the Biblical tradition of priests serving on behalf of the entirety of humankind. See Ex 19:6; Lv 1-9 etc. For a recent commentary on this idea, see Suzanne Boorer, *The Vision of the Priestly Narrative, its Genre and Hermeneutics of Time* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016) 19-21. See also *bZev*, 19a

⁵⁵⁴ (bSukkah 55b) אמר רבי אליעזר הני שבעים פרים כנגד מי - כנגד שבעים אומות. פר יחידי למה - כנגד אומה יחידה. משל למלך בשר ודם (bSukkah 55b) שאמר לעבדיו: עשו לי סעודה גדולה. ליום אחרון אמר לאוהבו: עשה לי סעודה קטנה, כדי שאהנה ממך. אמר רבי יוחנן: אוי להם לגויים שאבדו ואין יודעין מה שאבדו, בזמן שביית המקדש קיים - מזבח מכפר עליהן, ועכשיו מי מכפר עליהן.

⁵⁵⁵ An even more elaborate, and much longer version of this tradition can be found in *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* 28:9

A common element in all these rabbinical commentaries is that they distinguish between the metaphorical identification of sacrificial animals with Israel and the act of sacrificing itself. In the latter case, Israel is no longer identified with the animal. This rabbinic interpretative tradition exhibits a twofold strategy. On the one hand, it presents a variety of arguments for the continual validity of sacrifices. And on the other, it maintains the notion of a metaphorical understanding of sacrifices and that of subjectified animality. The interpretations themselves appear in corpora dating from different historical periods. Most of the passages are from Palestinian Midrashim of the 5th and 6th centuries, and some are taken from the *Babylonian Talmud*. The authorities, however, to whom the above material is attributed are almost all Amoraim from the 3rd century. If these attributions can be trusted, one might attempt to see the rabbinic interpretative tendency of metaphorizing sacrifices in light of the slightly earlier patristic traditions, in which fathers ranging from the 1st to the 4th centuries appear. The rabbinic aim of accepting the metaphorization of sacrificial animals, but maintaining their argument that sacrificial practices retained their validity can be seen – from this perspective – as a mitigated alternative of patristic interpretations. Thus, by expressing a different interpretation concerning sacrifices and sacrificial animals, the rabbis could maintain their position. The difference this created between the otherwise comparable exegetical tendencies, is particularly stark in the related theme of the liaison of sheep and goats with their shepherd.

3.4. The sheep and its mentor

Subjectifying sacrificial animals and the accompanying notion that they are willing participants in the rituals creates an image of animality that is imbued with individual responsibility, desires and a capacity for understanding. These features are all of fundamental importance in exegetical texts dealing with sacrificial narratives, but they are most clearly emphasized in related non-sacrificial discourses, most importantly those about shepherds and shepherding.

In the *Old Testament*, all sacrificial animals are domesticated ones. And in accordance with their perception as immaculate beings atoning for the sins and transgressions of the community that owns them, most of them are selected from among beings that are perceived as vulnerable. This image fits most notably sheep and goats, beings presented in *Old Testament* passages, as requiring constant surveillance and protection,⁵⁵⁶ an important task that is fulfilled, in turn, by shepherds. The activity of shepherding even became an all-prevailing metaphor representing political leadership of both humans and the divine in prophetic texts, psalms and numerous narratives of the so-called historical books.⁵⁵⁷ However, by becoming a symbol of the liaison between humankind and God, specifically between God and the people of Israel, the notion of shepherding itself became somewhat vague. Since sheep are presented in a variety of contexts, the metaphor can be established with regards to various traits of sheep (requiring guidance, being innocent, pure, lost, ignorant or defenseless etc.). Consequently, the intended messages of *Old Testament* narratives differ greatly. The great diversity of possibilities is exemplified concisely by chapter 34 of the *Book of Ezekiel*⁵⁵⁸ in which the prophet elaborates on a story in which God dismisses bad shepherds (former leaders of his flock) after they have failed to perform their duties (pasturing the flock, caring for the weak, searching for those who wandered away) and acted only for their own good⁵⁵⁹ Then after a brief interval in which God is

⁵⁵⁶ Schochet, *Animal Life*, 60-61.

⁵⁵⁷ E.g., Ps 23:1; 2 Sm 5:2; Is 41:11; Zec 11:17 etc.

⁵⁵⁸ Thus says the Lord God: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. ... For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered... and will bring them into their own land; ... I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; ... I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice... I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd (Ez 34:2-23).

⁵⁵⁹ Not at all surprisingly, this erroneous behaviour is also expressed through elements of real shepherding (drinking the lambs' milk, using their wool for clothing, even slaughtering the fatlings)). See Mein, "Profitable and Unprofitable

shepherding the flock on his own and passing judgment on members of the congregation, he appoints a good shepherd in his stead, one who represents the divine will and cares for the flock as a real-life shepherd would.⁵⁶⁰ In this political metaphor the activities of providing safe pasturage, protection from the threats of enemies, and guiding the flock of sheep into a proper direction are emphasized.⁵⁶¹ This metaphorization marks the beginning of a long development of the image. As evidenced by several pieces of intertestamental literature (such as the *Book of Sirach*⁵⁶², *2 Baruch*⁵⁶³, *4 Esdras*,⁵⁶⁴ the *Damascus Document*⁵⁶⁵ and the *Book of Enoch*⁵⁶⁶) and the works of Philo of Alexandria, the next stage in its evolution occurs sometimes between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st century CE. These texts and most clearly those of Philo show how the shepherd metaphor gradually turned into an equivalent of spiritual leadership. The first century philosopher, and to a certain extent⁵⁶⁷ *Biblical* interpreter, Philo presents a new concept of shepherding in a lengthy 20 chapters of his tractate *De Agricultura*. Here, he begins with a verse on Noah's husbandry, but swiftly wanders off toward explaining the exact nature of the activity of shepherding. His twofold interpretation follows closely the one offered by Plato in the *Statesman*⁵⁶⁸ and the *Republic*.⁵⁶⁹ On the one hand, he gives an

Shepherds" 497-499. Nicholas Cachia, *The Image of the Good Shepherd as a Source for the Spirituality of the Ministerial Priesthood* (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1997) 58-59.

⁵⁶⁰ Møller-Christensen, *Biblisches Tierlexikon*, 82-84.

⁵⁶¹ Cachia, *The Image of the Good Shepherd*, 45-63. See also Yair Lorberbaum, *Disempowered King: Monarchy in Classical Jewish Literature* (New York, N.Y.: Continuum, 2010), 1-36.

⁵⁶² "The compassion of human beings is for their neighbors, but the compassion of the Lord is for every living thing. He rebukes and trains and teaches them, and turns them back, as a shepherd his flock." (Sir 18:13).

⁵⁶³ "If therefore ye have respect to the law, And are intent upon wisdom, A lamp will not be wanting, And a shepherd will not fail, And a fountain will not dry up" (2Bar 77:16). Translation from: R.H. Charles and William John Ferrar, *The Apocalypse Of Baruch And The Assumption Of Moses* (Newburyport: Red Wheel Weiser, 2006) 88.

⁵⁶⁴ "Therefore I say to you, O nations that hear and understand, "Wait for your shepherd; he will give you everlasting rest, because he who will come at the end of the age is close at hand." (4Esdras 2:34).

⁵⁶⁵ "This is the rule for the overseer of the camp. It is his duty to enlighten the masses about the works of God, and to make them understand His wondrous powers. He is to tell them in detail the story of things that happened in the past He is to show them the same compassion as a father shows for his children. He is to bring back all of them that stray, as does a shepherd his flock. He is to loose all the bonds that constrain them, so that there be no one in his community who is oppressed or crushed." (CD 13:7-17) Translation from: Theodor Herzl Gaster, *The Dead Sea scriptures, in English translation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1976), 92.

⁵⁶⁶ "And I saw till that in this manner thirty-five shepherds undertook the pasturing (of the sheep), and they severally completed their periods as did the first; and others received them into their hands, to pasture them for their period, each shepherd in his own period." (Enoch 90:1) Translation from: Robert H Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Pr., 1893), 247-248.

⁵⁶⁷ See Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria a Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora* (Boston: Brill, 2012) 117-127.

⁵⁶⁸ Plato, *Statesman*, 264-276c.

⁵⁶⁹ Plato, *The Republic*, 345c. Cf. Hans Svebakken, *Philo of Alexandria's exposition of the Tenth Commandment* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012) 81-85.

anthropocentric understanding of shepherding and, on the other, a cosmic interpretation.⁵⁷⁰ The more elaborately outlined anthropocentric model claims that the relationship of the shepherd and the flock should be understood as a metaphor of the relationship of different parts of the soul. As the shepherd is responsible for the dim-witted sheep who would only follow their desires without attaining spiritual development, so is the most elaborate part of the soul, the *nous* is responsible for its remaining components, which are “destitute of reason”.⁵⁷¹ As Philo argues, those historical figures that the Mosaic scriptures call shepherds are named thus precisely for their ability to govern the irrational parts of their souls.

This interpretation is entirely novel in three regards: 1. Philo is the first to understand shepherding as an inner, moral activity. 2. He is the first interpreter to complement the activity of shepherding with that of self-restraint.⁵⁷² 3. Finally, he re-establishes the boundaries of shepherding by claiming that God would put shepherds above irrational human beings, who are incapable of ruling their own desires. This latter idea is expressed by Philo in a notable way:

When he installs his own first-born son, his true reason [λόγον] that will look after this sacred flock.⁵⁷³

The concept of a divine son, a *Logos*,⁵⁷⁴ an appointed leader of the lost sheep of Israel⁵⁷⁵ certainly rings a bell with those acquainted with the corpus of the *New Testament*.⁵⁷⁶ However, this shows not only Philo’s embeddedness in first century intellectual movements, but also foreshadows the major direction of *New Testament* and Early Christian interpretations of the metaphor of shepherding.⁵⁷⁷ It is clear that a reinterpretation of the role of shepherding precedes that of the end of sacrifices. In lack of a clearly causal relationship between these two fundamental shifts, one might argue that they are both products of the same fundamental change of Late Antique religion, the individualization and the allegorization of ritual and that – despite important connections between them, such as the theme of self-sacrifice as an act of the highest morality – the apparent harmony between the two is the result of their gradual harmonization by interpreters.

⁵⁷⁰ Philo, *De Agricultura* 51-53. See Philo, Albert C. Geljon, and David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria, On Cultivation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 145-151.

⁵⁷¹ Cf Philo of Alexandria, *De Agricultura* 39-66.

⁵⁷² Philo, *De Agricultura* 43.

⁵⁷³ (Philo of Alexandria, *De Agricultura* 51) προστησάμενος τὸν ὀρθὸν αὐτοῦ λόγον καὶ πρωτόγονον υἱόν, ὃς τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἱερᾶς ταύτης ἀγέλης.

⁵⁷⁴ See Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 31-34, 646-647.

⁵⁷⁵ E.g., Mt 10:6, also Cachia, *The Image of the Good Shepherd*, 78-80.

⁵⁷⁶ E.g., Mt 25:31-32; Mk 14:21-27 etc.

⁵⁷⁷ See also Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 78-9.

Authors of the *New Testament* not only proceeded toward the direction indicated by Philo, but actively brought the concept of spiritual shepherding to even higher peaks than their Alexandrian predecessor. An overview of the major instances⁵⁷⁸ of the metaphor of shepherding in the *New Testament* reveals that no more than half of them quote or echo⁵⁷⁹ *Old Testament* narratives directly. The rest of these occurrences mark the steps in a process of distancing from earlier tradition, in which the primary objective was adjusting the image of leadership to Christ, and to a lesser extent also to his disciples. Just as *Old Testament* leaders were prone to be seen as shepherds of the people, Jesus, who was presented as a political and religious leader, was also necessarily labelled as such.⁵⁸⁰ But Jesus had a political agenda of his own. This agenda, as evidenced by parables and speeches present in the *Gospels*⁵⁸¹ and explained in the Pauline Epistles,⁵⁸² revolved around protecting and helping the poor, but also around teaching and introducing an acceptable and less rigid version of the laws to the people of Israel.⁵⁸³ This agenda is markedly different from the *Old Testament* concept of leadership, and the *New Testament* ideal of Jesus as the shepherd corresponds to this development.

Accordingly, Jesus as a shepherd is not a political leader of the Israelites, but rather a spiritual authority, a rabbi interpreting *Old Testament* laws in a favorable way for his flock, hoping that the simple sheep would understand his message. An example of this concept is palpable at the arrival of Jesus to the Sea of Galilee in the *Gospel of Mark*. In this narrative, Jesus is trying to have a quiet hour with his disciples, when suddenly a crowd of people swarms in asking him to preach:

As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things⁵⁸⁴

The image, while recalling the *Old Testament* symbolism of shepherding (even providing the reader with a direct quotation from Zech. 10:2), adds the elements of compassion⁵⁸⁵ and teaching.⁵⁸⁶ These

⁵⁷⁸ The most notable *loci* are: Mt 9:36, Mt 10:6 Mt 12:11, Mt 18:12-13 Mt 25:35, Mt 26:31, Mk 6:34, Jn 10:11-16, Jn 10:26-7, Jn, 21:15-17, Heb 13:20, 1 Pt 2:25, 1 Pt 5:1-4, Acts 20:28, 1 Cor 9:7.

⁵⁷⁹ For Moyise's categorization of references, see Steven Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New* (Continuum: New York, 2001).

⁵⁸⁰ Joel Willitts, *Matthew's Messianic Shepherd-King in Search of 'the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel'* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007) 124-125.

⁵⁸¹ Mk 10:21; Lk 14:13 etc.

⁵⁸² Jas 2:5; Gal 2:10 etc.

⁵⁸³ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 541-543, 578-580.

⁵⁸⁴ Mk 6:34.

⁵⁸⁵ This aspect probably stems from the intertestamental period, as it is presented in the Psalms of Solomon. See Young Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 123-124.

⁵⁸⁶ The rather far-fetched image is only held together through the medium of Jesus' compassion. The crowd is not identified as sheep because they would be susceptible to education, but merely because they are like a flock without

are evidently not included in the *Old Testament*, nor – for that matter – in Matthew’s account of the same event, where Jesus is seen curing members of the crowd.⁵⁸⁷ More importantly, these aspects are not in accordance with Philo’s interpretation, where parts of the soul are metaphorically described as a flock precisely because they are numerous, destitute of reason and, thus, unteachable.⁵⁸⁸ Consequently, one must conclude that the idea of a teaching shepherd is an innovation of the authorial circles of the *Gospel of Mark*.

Another far-reaching consequence of the fact that Jesus was identified as a shepherd was that his willing death for the sake of his community was also interpreted as a characteristic of the ideal shepherd. An often-quoted passage from the *Gospel of John*, in which Jesus quite literally argues that his being the foretold good shepherd is signified in his just as well foretold self-sacrifice,⁵⁸⁹ expresses this view.⁵⁹⁰

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”⁵⁹¹

This concept is perhaps even more alien to the *Old Testament*⁵⁹² and Philo’s superimposed interpretation than the image of a teaching shepherd. In the works of the Alexandrian philosopher, it would be quite unfathomable for a shepherd to sacrifice himself for the flock, since the relationship of the two is viewed as a form of dependence. The sheep’s constant reliance on the shepherd would render the self-sacrifice as betrayal, ultimately resulting in the annihilation of the flock.

The significance of this innovation cannot be emphasized enough. The interpretation of the *New Testament* goes even further than that of Philo. Although he claims that shepherds’ guidance refers to a spiritual activity, he would never argue that the shepherd can teach the sheep.⁵⁹³ The real novelty

shepherd, thus inciting the compassion of a person, who designates himself by the term, shepherd. As John Aranda Cabrido presents, the activity of compassion is an attribute of Jesus’ role as the promised shepherd in the entirety of the Gospel of Matthew. Probably, the author even intends to distance the figure of the shepherd-Jesus from a political messiah precisely with the insertion of the term ‘compassion’. (See John Aranda Cabrido, “A Mark of the Shepherd: the Narrative Function of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in Matthew’s Story of Jesus,” *Philippiniana Sacra* 42 (2008): 163-180, here 179-180.

⁵⁸⁷ Mt 14:14.

⁵⁸⁸ Philo, *De Agricultura* 31.

⁵⁸⁹ On the innovative aspect of the Gospel of John in this regard see Dorothy Lee “Paschal Imagery in the Gospel of John: A Narrative and Symbolic Reading,” *Pacifica* 24 (2011): 13-28, here 22-23.

⁵⁹⁰ However, there are other occurrences implicitly pointing toward such an interpretation of the duties of the shepherd. See Raymond E Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966) 395.

⁵⁹¹ Jn 10:11

⁵⁹² There is even an indication that the concept of Jesus sacrificing his life for the sake of the sheep echoes a Greek rhetorical tradition. See Jerome H Neyrey, “The ‘Noble Shepherd’ in John 10: Cultural and Rhetorical Background,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*. 120, no. 2 (2001): 267-291.

⁵⁹³ Cf. Philo, *De Agricultura* 31.

of the *New Testament* is actually that it deems sheep capable of learning, therefore, intelligent actors. While shepherds are similar to political leaders of the *Old Testament* inasmuch as they provide sustenance and protection and in that they are hierarchically above the flock, the aspect of education and self-sacrifice can hardly be attributed to this profession in the *Old Testament* tradition.⁵⁹⁴

3.4.1. Royal shepherds of the past

As a model of education-based spiritual leaders would suit the rabbis of the *Talmud* and midrashim very well,⁵⁹⁵ it is perplexing to realize that they did not approve of this direction of exegesis, but favored a rather conservative interpretation of *Old Testament* material. The earliest rabbinic commentary⁵⁹⁶ that sheds light on their notion of shepherding is in *Sifre Zuta*. The passage starts with the frequently occurring *Old Testament* saying⁵⁹⁷ concerning the disheartening sight of the people of Israel, similar to a flock without a shepherd. The anonymous author argues that the kings of Israel should not act as the kings of the nations, but rather like David:

So, he will not do like the kings of the nations by bringing out the sons of David to war, but staying in their houses. They should go before them on their way out and on their way home. This is what is said about David: “But all Israel and Judah loved David; for it was he who marched out and came in leading them” (1Sam 18:16).⁵⁹⁸

The argument concerning David as the ideal shepherd is quite prevalent in haggadic tradition as well. An anonymous midrash from *Genesis Rabbah* establishes David as the shepherd of Israel, above whom there is only one greater shepherd, God himself. The enumeration inserts David among such noteworthy figures of Israelite history as Moses and Abraham:

Who blessed Abraham? The Holy One, blessed be he, blessed him ... Moses was the sign of Israel... and who was the sign of Moses? The Holy One, blessed be he! ... David is the shepherd of Israel, as it is said “It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel” (1Chr 11:2). And

⁵⁹⁴ The contradiction between the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament* models is even more obvious in light of the fact that pastors and shepherds were at the margins of Late Antique Israelite society, and were often regarded with significant distaste, thus being inadequate for the most highly revered status of educators. (Cf. Wilfred Tooley, “The Shepherd and Sheep Image in the Teaching of Jesus,” *Novum Testamentum* 7 (1964): 15-25, here 23.

⁵⁹⁵ Shaye D. Cohen, *The Significance of Yavneh and other Essays in Jewish Hellenism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 282-283. Also Günter Stemberger, “Sages, Scribes, and Seers in Rabbinic Judaism,” in *Scribes, Sages, and Seers The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*, ed. Dietrich-Alex Koch, Matthias Köckert et al, 295-319 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 2008) here 295-296.

⁵⁹⁶ As for the dating of *Sifre Zuta* see *Sifre Zuta* is generally considered – together with other halakhic midrashim to date back to third century CE. See Encyclopaedia Judaica vol 14. s.v. “Midreshei Halakha,” 202-203.

⁵⁹⁷ E.g., Nm 27:17; 1 Kgs 22:17 etc.

⁵⁹⁸ (Sifre Zuta 27:4) שלא יהא עושה כדרך שמלכי אומות העולם עושין שהן מוציאין את בני דוויד למלחמה ויושבין להן בתוך בתיהם אלא אשר יצא לפנייהם ואשר יבא לפנייהם שכן הוא אומר בדוד וכל ישראל ויהודה אוהב את דוד כי הוא יוצא ובא לפנייהם.

who is the shepherd of David? The Holy One, blessed be he, as it is said
“I shall not want” (Ps 23:1).⁵⁹⁹

David is the ideal shepherd, for in both cases, he shows traits of exceptional political leaders: such as leading his people to successful wars and providing the material means for the prosperity of the flock. The concept of spiritual shepherding is curiously, even conspicuously missing here. Solomon is never deemed a shepherd of Israel, it is always David.⁶⁰⁰ And whenever figures of the pre-monarchic period are considered shepherds, the title is almost never granted for their (otherwise rather ostensible) spiritual grandeur, but due to some activity related to physical aspects of maintaining the protection of the flock of God.⁶⁰¹ A further passage from the above quoted *Sifre Zutta* displays the same tendency. Moses’ virtue as a shepherd results from his refusal of leaving the flock of Israel without a military commander and political leader:

Moses said before God: ‘Ruler of the world, you did not lead the sons of Israel out of Egypt so that they would sin and you can refrain from supporting them, but in order that they would sin and you can forgive them ... in order that there will be support for them as it is said by Micaiah: “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep that have no shepherd” (1Kgs 22:17)’. Another thing: “like sheep that have no shepherd”. Why was Moses similar to a good shepherd? Because when the lord of his flock told him: ‘leave my flock behind!’, he answered: ‘I will not depart [from the flock] until you tell me whom you will appoint in my stead’.⁶⁰²

From these commentaries, it is apparent that in rabbinic tradition the major trait of shepherds remained their capability of preserving the physical integrity of the flock.⁶⁰³ As an addendum to this, one should consider the later compilation of *Midrash Tanhuma*, in which the late third century R.

⁵⁹⁹ (Genesis Rabbah 59:5) מי מברך את אברהם, הקדוש ברוך הוא מברכו ... משה נסן של ישראל ... מי הוא נסן של משה, הקדוש ברוך הוא (Genesis Rabbah 59:5) ... דוד רוען של ישראל שנ' אתה תרעה את עמי, מי הוא רוען שלדוד, הקדוש ברוך הוא. י"י רועי לא אחסר.

⁶⁰⁰ I believe that even those later kings, who earned the dubious glory of being called bad shepherds, were not denounced for their lack of spiritual excellence but rather for their lack of wisdom to preserve the physical integrity of the flock of Israel. E.g. *Sifre Deuteronomy* 304: “There were four kings, who ruled Israel, and there were no wisdom and prudence in them. It was in the times of Ahab, king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, that Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd (2Chr 18:16).” Mark the interplay on the adjectives of Gn 41:39 (נבון, חכם), which seems to indicate that what these kings really lacked was a Joseph-like cunning to maintain the nourishment of their subjects.

⁶⁰¹ See e.g. *Genesis Rabbah* 91:4.

⁶⁰² (Sifre Zutta 27) אמר משה לפני המקום רבש"ע לא הוצאת את ישראל ממצרים ואתה מוחל להם לא הוצאת את ישראל ממצרים על מנת שלא (Sifre Zutta 27) יהיו להם פרנסים אלא על מנת שיהיו להן פרנסים לא כמות שהוא אומר ויאמר ראיתי את כל ישראל נפוצים על ההרים כצאן אשר אין להם רועה ד"א ולא תהיה עדת י"י כצאן אשר אין להם רועה למה היה משה דומה לרועה נאמן שאמר לו בעל צאנו הסתלק מצאני א"ל איני מסתלק עד שתודיעני מי אתה ממנה תחת.

⁶⁰³ There is a notable exception of that tendency in *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* A 1:17.

Yohanan b. Nappaha⁶⁰⁴ claims that the major characteristic of sheep is actually their incapability of observing the laws of the Torah:

So, he says: “You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture and I am your God, says the Lord God” (Ez 34:31).⁶⁰⁵ If they are a flock, why does he call them men? And if they are men, why does he call them flock? R. Yohanan explained: [he calls them] flock with regards to sins, and [calls them] men, when he gives them rewards. If they commit sins, he will treat them like a flock in order to punish them. And if they observe the laws, he will treat them like men, giving them rewards.⁶⁰⁶

Shepherding is a similitude to political activity in the strict sense of ruling. A shepherd’s job is to lead the flock (in case of war), to maintain the continuity of rule and to provide it with nourishment. The sheep, in turn, are not regarded capable of caring for their own good. They often seem to wander around without a clue, endangering their own situation. The distinction between humans and sheep seems to corroborate the assumption that for the author of this commentary, sheep were seen as incapable of comprehension.

3.4.2. Teaching shepherds of the future

Church fathers offer an entirely different direction of interpretation. The chronologically earliest commentary, an epistle from the first century author, Ignatius of Antioch claims that the shepherd’s guidance is of spiritual and moral character:

Children of the light of truth, flee division and the wicked teachings, and rather follow like sheep where the shepherd goes, since many are the seemingly trustworthy wolves that – by evil pleasures – capture those who run toward God.⁶⁰⁷

Similar arguments can be found in the writings of many patristic authors of the first four centuries CE.⁶⁰⁸ And although, one occasionally encounters subtle hints at a consideration for the *Old*

⁶⁰⁴ Stemberger dates the redaction of the Tanhuma to the 8th century CE, and adds that the “dating of individual passages is most problematic” (Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud*, 305). Thus, despite the appearance of a second generation amora in the text (namely R. Yohanan (see Wilhelm Bäcker, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer* (Hildesheim: G. Olms. 1965) I, 205-309)), I should not aim at arguing for an early composition of the passage.

⁶⁰⁵ Exceptionally, I quote the KJV here, since the NRSV omits the very important expression ‘you are men’ from its translation.

⁶⁰⁶ (Midrash Tanhuma Beshallah 15) וכן הוא אומר ואתנה צאני צאן מרעיתי אדם אתם, אם צאן למה אדם, ואם אדם למה צאן, אלא אמר ר' יוחנן צאן לעונשים ואדם למתן שכר, אם חייבים נוהג בהם כצאן כדי ענשו, ואם עשו מצות נוהג בהם כאדם ליתן להם שכר.

⁶⁰⁷ (Ignatius, *Epistula ad Philadelphos* 2:1-2) Τέκνα οὖν φωτὸς ἀληθείας φεύγετε τὸν μερισμὸν καὶ τὰς κακοδιδοασκαλίας ὅπου δὲ ὁ ποιμὴν ἐστὶν ἐκεῖ ὡς πρόβατα ἀκολουθεῖτε. πολλοὶ γὰρ λύκοι ἀξιόπιστοι ἡδονῇ κακῇ αἰχμαλωτίζουσιν τοὺς θεοδόμους.

⁶⁰⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1:26; Eusebius: *Demonstratio Evangelica* 10:8:83 etc.

Testament-based interpretation of political shepherding, such commentaries are quite rare and, therefore, constitute rather an exception than a tendency.⁶⁰⁹ The explicit notion of shepherds' educational activity is also wide-spread in the Church fathers' exegesis. One of its earliest representatives, Clement of Alexandria argues:

It happens sometimes that he calls himself a shepherd and says: "I am the good Shepherd" (Jn 10:11). By a metaphor of the shepherds guiding the sheep, he is to be understood as the Instructor of the children, the shepherd caring for the young. These are simple, and they are understood allegorically as sheep. And – as it is said – "there will be one flock and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16). The word [λόγος], who leads us children to salvation is, thus, properly [called] an instructor. And this was most clearly expressed by Hosea, [who says] I am your instructor (cf. Hos 5:2)⁶¹⁰. For instruction is piety, which is the learning of venerating the divine and the training toward recognizing the right guidance of truth that leads toward heaven.⁶¹¹

The major opinion among patristic authors is in accordance with the *New Testament* model: the primary duty of shepherds is to keep the flock of God together.

What could be a greater or better office for leaders than to provide for the maintaining and protection of the sheep by diligent concern and healthy cures ... What else is there for us to do, my dear brother than to gather and revive the sheep of Christ, executing full diligence and curing the wounds of those that fell by applying the medicine of paternal piety.⁶¹²

The priority given to the spiritual aspect of shepherding does not mean that its physical facets are disregarded. The fact that one element, the concept of the shepherd's willing self-sacrifice is

⁶⁰⁹ Cf Tertullianus *De Fuga in Persecutione* 11: "Thus Zechariah threatens: Arise, O sword, against the shepherds, and pluck out the sheep; and I will turn my hand against the shepherds. And against them both Ezekiel and Jeremiah declaim with kindred threatenings, for their not only wickedly eating of the Sheep,— they feeding themselves rather than those committed to their charge—but also scattering the flock, and giving it over, shepherdless, a prey to all the beasts of the field. And this never happens more than when in persecution the Church is abandoned by the clergy."

⁶¹⁰ Clement interprets the Greek words (ἐγὼ δὲ παιδευτὴς ὑμῶν) rather differently than the translator of the NRSV. The latter understands punisher under the term, whereas exploiting the etymological connection, the Church father argued for a more benevolent interpretation of the term.

⁶¹¹ (Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 1:7) Ἔσθ' ὅτε οὖν ποιμένα ἐαυτὸν καλεῖ καὶ λέγει ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, κατὰ μεταφορὰν ἀπὸ τῶν ποιμένων τῶν καθηγουμένων τοῖς προβάτοις ὁ καθηγούμενος τῶν παιδίων παιδαγωγὸς νοούμενος, ὁ τῶν νηπίων κηδεμονικὸς ποιμὴν· ἀπλοὶ γὰρ οἱ νήπιοι ὡς πρόβατα ἀλληγορούμενοι καὶ γενήσονται, φησὶν, οἱ πάντες μία ποίμνη καὶ εἷς ποιμὴν. Παιδαγωγὸς οὖν εἰκότως ὁ λόγος ὁ τοὺς παῖδας ἡμᾶς εἰς σωτηρίαν ἄγων. Ἐναργέστατα γοῦν ὁ λόγος περὶ ἐαυτοῦ διὰ Ὡσηὲ εἶρηκεν ἐγὼ δὲ παιδευτὴς ὑμῶν εἰμι. Παιδαγωγία δὲ ἡ θεοσέβεια, μάθησις οὕσα θεοῦ θεραπείας καὶ παιδευσίς εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἀγωγή τε ὁρθὴ ἀνάγουσα εἰς οὐρανόν.

⁶¹² (Cyprian, *Epistula* 68:4:1) Quae est enim maior aut melior cura praepositorum quam diligenti sollicitudine et medella salubri fouendis et conseruandis ouibus prouidere... Quid nos aliud facere oportet, frater carissime, quam colligendis et refouendis Christi ouibus exhibere diligentiam plenam et curandis lapsorum uulneribus paternae pietatis adhibere medicinam.

vigorously emphasized in early Christian tradition evidences to this claim. On the basis of the concise and somewhat puzzling words of the *Gospel*⁶¹³ Church fathers argue that self-sacrifice is not only a sign, but a *sine qua non* of being a good shepherd. The second century interpreter, Tertullian claims that in perilous times, leaders of communities should not leave their flock, but should be willing to sacrifice themselves:

When leaders are fleeing, who from among common soldiers will take the task of convincing [people] to hold fast in battle lines? A good shepherd indeed gives his life for the flock, as Moses already said⁶¹⁴ figuratively when before [our] Lord Christ was revealed: ‘if you destroy this people, I will perish with them’⁶¹⁵

A similar idea is present in the later tradition of both Greek-speaking⁶¹⁶ and Latin authors. Along the lines already suggested by Tertullian, Augustine even generalizes, when he claims that self-sacrifice is not only Jesus’ characteristic, but that of all the good shepherds of the Church:

We heard how the Lord Jesus established for us the office of good shepherds ... He says: ‘the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep’ ... so Christ is a good shepherd. And what about Peter? Is he not a good shepherd? Did he not also lay down his life for the sheep? And what about Paul? And what about the rest of the Apostles? What about the blessed bishops and martyrs following them in short time? What about the holy Cyprian? Are they not good shepherds? ... They are all good shepherds for not only have they shed their blood, but they did it for the sheep.⁶¹⁷

What emerges from this overview of rabbinic and patristic material is a dissimilarity in the interpretation of the shepherd-metaphor. Rabbinic tradition refuses to interpret shepherding as a

⁶¹³ Cf. Jn 10:11.

⁶¹⁴ Cf. Ex 32:32.

⁶¹⁵ (Tertullian, *De Fuga* 11:1) Itaque cum duces fugiunt quis de gregario numero sustinebit ad gradum in acie figendum suadere? certe quidem bonus pastor animam pro pecoribus ponit, ut moyses non domino adhuc christo reuelato et iam in se figurato ait: "si perdis hunc populum", inquit, "et me pariter cum eo disperde".

⁶¹⁶ A fine example is (John of Chrysostom’s *In Iohannem Homiliae* 60) Ἀλλ’ ἀμφοτέρων ἑαυτὸν διύστησιν ὁ Χριστός ἐκείνων μὲν (50) τῶν ἐπὶ λύμῃ παραγενομένων, τῷ εἰπεῖν, Διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον, ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσι, καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσι· τούτων δὲ τῶν περιορώτων ὑπὸ τῶν λύκων ἀρπαζόμενα τὰ πρόβατα, τῷ μὴ καταλιπεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ θεῖναι ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, ὥστε μὴ τὰ πρόβατα ἀποθανεῖν. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐβουλεύοντο ἀνελεῖν, οὐτε τῆς διδασκαλίας μετέθετο, οὐτε τοὺς πιστεύοντας προῦδωκεν, ἀλλ’ ἔστη, καὶ εἶλετο ἀποθανεῖν. Διὰ τοῦτο ἄνω καὶ κάτω ἔλεγεν· Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός.

⁶¹⁷ (Augustine, *Sermo* 138) Audiuius dominum iesum commendantem nobis boni pastoris officium ... pastor, inquit, bonus animam suam ponit pro ouibus. pastor ergo bonus christus. quid petrus? nonne bonus pastor? nonne et ipse animam pro ouibus posuit? quid paulus? quid caeteri apostoli? quid eorum tempora consequentes beati episcopi martyres? quid etiam sanctus iste cyprianus? nonne omnes pastores boni ... omnes ergo isti pastores boni, non solum quia sanguinem fuderunt, sed quia pro ouibus fuderunt.

spiritual activity, and – while displaying a distaste for the profession itself in amoraic material⁶¹⁸ – relegates the activity to the glorious, monarchic past. Meanwhile, Church fathers follow the framework defined by the *New Testament* and claim that shepherding is more or less equal to offering spiritual guidance and education.

I would like to emphasize that the development of the metaphor in Christian tradition is not a substitution of the *Old Testament*'s interpretation of the metaphor with a new one, but rather a shift in understanding the nature of ruling and the role of subjects in a wider perspective.⁶¹⁹ Neither the *New Testament*, nor Church fathers claim that the physical protection and leadership of *Old Testament* shepherds have become invalid. They rather argue that with the advent of the Messiah, the form of leadership has changed altogether.⁶²⁰ Ruling is no longer only about assuring the physical integrity of the flock. On the contrary, not even the physical soundness of the shepherd is relevant, when the moral and spiritual integrity of the flock is at stake. This notion fits the shift I have observed in the case of the sacrificial animals. Instead of being objects in a power-structure, the patristic tradition proceeds to claiming that sheep (both in their sacrificial capacity and as members of a flock) are not destitute of reason. Moreover, they are expected to gradually comprehend and accept the reformulated material of the existing power structure: knowledge. This status, therefore, is not granted to anyone but open to all those willing to learn.⁶²¹ From the sources, it seems that rabbis decided to express a more secluded self-representation, a flock of Jews into which acceptance from the outside world was difficult at best.⁶²² Thus, the Jewish notion of being a sheep is a granted one (irrespective of whether

⁶¹⁸ Cf. *Mishnah Baba Kama* 7:7 etc. Cf. Gedalia Alon and Gershon Levi, *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age (70-640 C.E.)* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989) 277-285.

⁶¹⁹ I argue for this distinction, in particular, against the misleading conclusion of Baxter that differentiated between the Late Antique Christian activity of education and that of political guidance. Cf. Wayne Baxter, "From Ruler to Teacher: The Extending of the Shepherd Metaphor in Early Jewish and Christian Writings," in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality. Vol. 1, Vol. 1*, ed. Evans, Craig A., and H. Daniel Zacharias, 208-224 (London: T & T Clark, 2009) here 223-224.

⁶²⁰ See Francis Oakley, *Kingship: the Politics of Enchantment* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2006), 58-63.

⁶²¹ See Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 298-304.

⁶²² Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) 180-183. Elementary rules of converting to Judaism as well as examples are known from the Hebrew Bible. However, the rabbinic community – as varied as it was – occupied itself with questions concerning conversion and converts on a significant level. The results of their discussions have been as varied both temporally and geographically, as the different Jewish communities of Babylonia and Palestine were. And even in the best case, they only reflect the rabbinic community as such, and could be far removed from actual practices of conversion in the Jewish society at large. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that conversion was a lengthy process (often extending beyond one's life inasmuch as certain rights enjoyed by anyone born as a Jew, would only be available to the offspring of the convert), and an arduous one. See Gary G. Porton, *The Stranger within Your Gates: Converts and Conversion in Rabbinic Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 198-218.

the individual commits sins)⁶²³ and also exclusive, as being a sheep is not achieved by learning or will of heart but by belonging to the community.⁶²⁴ Thus, instead of accommodating a convincing, and otherwise appropriate symbolical framework,⁶²⁵ the rabbis opted for a more archaic model of interpretation, which was – probably not as fitting to themselves – but at least less all-encompassing.⁶²⁶

⁶²³ See Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 120-122.

⁶²⁴ See Gary G Porton, *Goyim: Gentiles and Israelites in Mishnah-Tosefta* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1988).

⁶²⁵ For a thorough analysis of the rabbis self-professed role as educators, see Moulie Vidas, *Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 115-150.

⁶²⁶ Lorberbaum, *Disempowered King*, 109-112.

3.5. Conclusions

The difference between the patristic and the rabbinic models of interpreting shepherding and the role of sheep reminds the reader of the one concerning sacrifices. Church fathers engaged into a sort of reinterpretation of domestic animals both as sacrificial victims and as members of the flock. They argued that although sacrificial laws were obsolete, the sacrificial discourse remained valid in a metaphorical fashion. According to the predominantly Stoic worldview of the *New Testament* animals were without reason, and did not fulfill a major role in the economy of human-divine interaction. In these interpretations, they were given a new role as metaphorical subjects. The animal itself was no longer an object acted upon by humans, but became a subject of its own equipped with desire, consciousness and intelligence.

As seen in both cases, the rabbis accepted this notion only in part. They did subscribe to a metaphorization of animality that resulted in a subjectified vision of certain animals, but they also retained the distinction between human agents and animal objects in many cases. In their eyes, sacrificial animals were not so much symbols of human communities or individuals, but rather tools to represent them before God. With this dual strategy, they could effectively maintain a nuanced argumentative position, adding a semantic layer to sacrifices, without refusing their practical value. Thereby, they left the door open for the much-desired restitution of sacrificial practice in a rebuilt Temple. It seems quite likely that the rabbis developed their metaphorical interpretations in order to counter the defamatory external argument that Jews only see the material aspects of practicing animal sacrifices.

The notion of subjectified animality that is, thus, shared by the two traditions has enormous consequences especially in the case of discourses in which an outgroup is presented through an animal symbol. As the relationship of the two communities relies on the notion that there is a possibility for interaction between them, identifying the respective outgroup with an animal symbol paves the way for a further shift in the understanding of animality: the turn from active subjects to interactive agents.

4. The animal that seduces

4.1. Animal impurity as an identity marker

For the student of rabbinic Judaism, there is perhaps no more “obviously Jewish” concept of the animal world than that of purity and impurity.⁶²⁷ In the *Biblical* tradition itself, this conceptual framework has much smaller significance, and it extends only occasionally beyond the scope of the Mosaic corpus.⁶²⁸ In the Hellenistic period, however, this system of categorization has gradually become one of the (if not the) most, important cornerstones of Jewish zoological tradition.⁶²⁹ As a result of the growing importance of animal impurity, impure and pure animals have similarly become increasingly important and they have evolved into symbols of identity and alterity not only in Second Temple Jewish tradition, but also in its derivatives, the literature of the rabbis and that of the Church fathers as well.

The topic of animal impurity was of increased importance for both Jews and non-Jews in Late Antiquity. On the one hand, the number of Jews co-habiting with non-Jewish as well as the rate of urbanized Jewish populations steadily increased in Palestine from the third century CE.⁶³⁰ In such a context, non-Jews who disregarded the Mosaic distinction between impure and pure animals and consumed both types of animals⁶³¹ could be seen as contesting Jewish culture. As a response, the observation of dietary laws could be seen as a cornerstone of Jewish identity.⁶³²

On the other hand, the refusal of impure animals (not only as objects of consumption but even as beings to exist in Jewish milieus)⁶³³ triggered an interest in the dietary laws themselves both within

⁶²⁷ I deliberately refrain from using the misleading terms “clean” and “unclean animals” in this chapter. Consult further Mary Douglas’ analysis of the vocabulary applied to such concepts. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger; an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966) 7-12.

⁶²⁸ E.g. Jgs 13:6-7; 1Kgs 13:15-18; Is 65:4;

⁶²⁹ For a great summary of the development of the concept, cf. Nathan MacDonald “You Are How You Eat: Food and Identity in the Post-Exilic Period,” in Idem, *Not Bread Alone: the Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) Published as an e-book.

⁶³⁰ Cf. Lester L. Grabbe, “Hellenistic Judaism,” in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck and Bruce Chilton, 53-84 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995) here 61-69.

⁶³¹ As for the conspicuous nature of Jewish dietary customs among intellectuals, but apparently even commoners of the Graeco-Roman oecumene cf. Louis Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 167-170.

⁶³² Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone the Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 201-202.

⁶³³ Cf. 2 Mac 7:1-6, 2 Mac 6:18-20. In this regard, the tannaitic tradition (see e.g. *mBaba Kama* 7:7) prohibiting the raising of pigs in Jerusalem and in the entirety of Israel, and its developments in the *Talmudic* period is a telling example. See Jordan Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 55.

and beyond the Jewish community. And since the *Book of Leviticus* presented these laws in a highly enigmatic manner, failing to divulge the reasons behind the selection criteria or the consequences of transgressing the dietary regulations, various interpretations dealing with these questions as well as that of the scope of its application began to flourish. And since the Jewish commitment to dietary laws and their observation was thematized in frameworks of interaction between Jews and non-Jews, observing them was not only an expression of the piety of the Jew in question, but also a marker of his or her Jewishness in the face of other, non-Jewish identities.

The fact that the observation of dietary regulations embodied Jewish identity in such an emphatic manner had an important practical consequence: if eating was a basic expression of one's identity, and if Jews lived in vicinity of an ever increasing number of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, then, eating with people other than someone's close family was no longer a question of taste, but also that of identity. One could never be certain if the food offered by a neighbor or a friend did meet the strict (and in the rabbinic period gradually more detailed)⁶³⁴ criteria of pure food. In other words: Jews were increasingly conscious of the "Jewish nature" of their food, while also recognizing the existence of "Gentile food".⁶³⁵

The early rabbinic tradition⁶³⁶ was not unanimous with respect to commensality. A debate between the exegetical schools of Hillel and of Shammai treats – among others – exactly this aspect of relating to the impurity of Gentiles.⁶³⁷ At the end of the debate, the more lenient opinion of Hillel's followers gained the upper hand⁶³⁸ and interactions, and table fellowship with Gentiles were not severed. The second century tanna, R. Meir was even allowed to participate on a banquet organized by a Gentile (although not without an intention of teaching his hosts a lesson).⁶³⁹ The lack of an all-encompassing

⁶³⁴ Rosenblum, *Food and Identity*, 143-145.

⁶³⁵ Charles Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2007) 25-29

⁶³⁶ Although the discussion of commensality started before the rabbis, there was no clear consensus to its meaning. The earliest example – known to me – in which commensality is explicitly cited as a problem is Jub 22:16: "And do thou, my son Jacob, remember my words, And observe the commandments of Abraham, thy father: Separate thyself from the nations, And eat not with them: And do not according to their works, And become not their associate; For their works are unclean, And all their ways are a pollution and an abomination and uncleanness". Later on, this concern was expressed even more clearly: cf. Acts 10:28: "He said to them, You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean".

⁶³⁷ In fact, table fellowship seems to have been one of the most sensitive issues of debate between the two exegetical schools. Jacob Neusner points out that "no fewer than 249 of the 341 rabbinic texts attributed to the Pharisaic schools of Shammai and Hillel pertain to table fellowship." (Jacob Neusner, *Pharisaic Law in New Testament Times* (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 1971) 337.)

⁶³⁸ Clinton Wahlen, "Peter's Vision and Conflicting Definitions of Purity," *New Testament Studies* 51, no. 4 (2005): 505-518, here 506-507.

⁶³⁹ Cf. *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* 6:2.

rabbinic prohibition on commensality⁶⁴⁰ does – however – not mean that the rabbis were content with the idea of Palestinian Jews eating together with Gentiles or even non-local Jews.⁶⁴¹ Despite the theoretical possibility of commensality, it was considered – at least – suspicious. And although the rabbis argued that the real danger was not the food of the Gentiles itself, but the possibility that commensality, and the frivolities of a wedding banquet would allow Jews to participate in unacceptable Gentile practices (most of all in idolatry),⁶⁴² it seems that the threats of “impure, Gentile food” and “Gentile impurity” affecting one through sexual intercourse were not separable.

The notion that the Gentiles are in some way intrinsically impure and that this is related to their eating practices and nourishment was, it seems, not universally accepted among early rabbis,⁶⁴³ and only after a lengthy process of legislation, in the amoraic period, did they agree to such a notion. And even then, it was not a unanimous, but a majority decree.⁶⁴⁴ What is apparent from this hesitation is – of course – the difficulty of exactly defining the nature of the supposed impurity of Gentiles. To put it briefly, the conundrum was: if the impurity of Gentiles refers to their morality, how could they ever convert to Judaism? However, if their impurity is of ritual nature (which is a temporary condition, caused by contact with impure substances or persons),⁶⁴⁵ how can they be seen as sources of constant danger, against which decrees of separation are warranted? The impurity of animals is a similarly problematic matter. If it is related to their intrinsic nature, why were they only prohibited in the

⁶⁴⁰ Günter Stemberger, “Forbidden Gentile Food in Early Rabbinic Writings,” in *Jewish Identity and Politics between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba Groups, Normativity, and Rituals*, ed. Benedikt Eckhardt, 209-225 (Leiden: Brill, 2011) here 219-224.

⁶⁴¹ Notably, it was a pupil of the same R. Meir, R. Shimon b. Eleazar who declared: “Jews that live outside the Land of Israel are considered idolaters in matters of purity. Why? There was an idolater, who organized a banquet for his son, and invited all the Jews of his town. And even though they [the Jews] eat and drink from their own, and served by their own, Scripture treats them as those who ate from the sacrifices to dead idols, as it is written: ‘someone among them will invite you, and you will eat of the sacrifice’ (Ex 34:15)” (*bAvoda Zara* 8a).

⁶⁴² And this is the major intention behind the rabbinic prohibition of participation on Gentile festivities. The Babylonian rephrasing of this baraita in *bAvoda Zara* 8a-b, for example, categorically refuses the possibility of participating on a Gentile banquet, if the invitation was expressed in relation to a wedding. Cf. Stemberger, “Forbidden Gentile Food,” 219-220.

⁶⁴³ For an overview of the arguments of Büchler, Schürer and Alon claiming such a direct relationship, cf. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 7-19.

⁶⁴⁴ Jonathan Klawans, “Notions of Gentile Impurity in Ancient Judaism,” *AJS Review* 20, 2 (1995): 285-312, here 302-312. Cf. *bShabbat* 83b; *bNiddah* 34a; *Sifra Zavim* 1.

⁶⁴⁵ These two aspects of impurity are generally called moral and ritual impurity in current scholarship. For an overview of these markedly distinct types of impurity, see Jonathan Klawans, “Idolatry, Incest, and Impurity: Moral Defilement in Ancient Judaism,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism*. 29, no. 4 (1998): 391-415.

Sinaitic covenant? If their impurity is of ritual nature, why does their consumption not result in any purification ritual,⁶⁴⁶ and why are they prohibited at secular meals at all?⁶⁴⁷

It seems to me that rabbis observed the similarity between the ambiguous natures of these two cases of impurity. And since the issue of discussing Jewish-Gentile commensality already created a metonymic link between impure animals served as food in Gentile households, and the impurity of the Gentiles themselves, animal impurity offered itself in a clandestine manner as a tool for referring to the problematic impurity of Gentiles. *bShabbat* 145b, for example, answers the question: „Why do the idolaters render someone impure?” by claiming that: „Because they eat abominations and swarming things.”⁶⁴⁸ And according to *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*, R. Joshua is told by his disciples that his staying among Gentiles is like eating pork:⁶⁴⁹

It was told about him: we used to say about your dwelling with the impure, uncircumcised Gentiles that you were like one that eats the flesh of swine.⁶⁵⁰

4.1.1. The roots of metaphorizing impurity

Comparing animal impurity with that of Gentiles gives a framework for handling the latter's ambiguous nature. Moreover, it also helps managing the growing internal and external pressure concerning the interpretation of animal impurity. Ever since learned Pagan authors of Greek and Roman heritage discovered for themselves the existence and “peculiarity” of Jewish dietary traditions,⁶⁵¹ these precepts have been subject to an increasing number⁶⁵² of inquiries. The writings of authors such as Tacitus, Plutarch, Petronius and Juvenal attempted to make sense of dietary traditions, most notably from the Jewish abstinence from pork, their narratives ranging from neutral

⁶⁴⁶ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 25-26.

⁶⁴⁷ Contracting ritual impurity is not a sin by itself, and it was considered as a part of everyday life. Generally, many law-observing Jew would have been ritually impure most of the day, which – in itself was not a problem – but a perfectly legal state (as long as their impurity did not defile sacrifices etc.) Cf. James G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004) 90-91. Although Milgrom points out that it was expected from the average Israelite to strive for a maintenance of ritual purity (Cf. Jacob Milgrom, “The Dynamics of Purity in the Priestly System,” in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*, ed. Baruch J. Schwartz, 29-33 (New York: T & T Clark, 2008) here 29-30.)

⁶⁴⁸ (*bShabbat*, 145b) מפני מה עובדי כוכבים מזוהמים? - מפני שאוכלין שקצים ורמשים

⁶⁴⁹ Cf. also Misgav Har-Peled, *The Dialogical Beast the Identification of Rome with the Pig in Early Rabbinic Literature* (PhD Diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2013) 66.

⁶⁵⁰ (*Abot de Rabbi Nathan* B, 19) אמרו לו היינו אומרים עליך כשהיית בין הגוים הטמאים הערלים היית כאוכל בשר חזיר

⁶⁵¹ As for the conspicuous nature of Jewish dietary customs among intellectuals, but apparently even commoners of the Gareco-Roman oecumene cf. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 167-170.

⁶⁵² This is clearly shown by the apparent identification of Jewishness with the lack of pig-consumption by a great variety of Greek and Roman authors. Cf. Rosenblum, “‘Why Do You Refuse’,” 95-96.

interest to mockery and even an accusation of misanthropy.⁶⁵³ And although their derision is not especially harsh – compared to other topics of anti-Judaic rhetoric in the period⁶⁵⁴ – they nevertheless paved the way to the development of various, harder responses to Jewish dietary traditions, mostly by familiarizing their audience with its concepts, but also by implying that the Jewish avoidance of certain animals is not a sign of dislike – but on the contrary – a manifestation of clandestine veneration.⁶⁵⁵

However, the issue of dietary traditions was a pressing problem even within Judaism itself. Exposed to Hellenistic philosophical traditions⁶⁵⁶ in a Graeco-Roman urbanized environment, Jews, must have also felt a strong need to explain their dietary laws. In light of the and general change from practical to spiritualizing understandings of rituals that permeated all fields of Late Antique religious traditions,⁶⁵⁷ they might have even considered the seemingly arbitrary nature of dietary regulations as a problem. The Stoic tradition, for example, argued that the value of animals was in direct correlation with their respective value to humans.⁶⁵⁸ This philosophical perspective could be applied very well to the dimension of animal impurity. Through it, the purity-consideration ceased to function in a ritual manner, and – in order to maintain its relevance – interpreters were forced to find new meaning behind the concepts of “pure animal” and “impure animal”. The Stoic tradition exerted considerable influence with regards to questions about animals on various directions of Late Antique Judaism, most notably on the writings and understanding of Paul⁶⁵⁹ and Philo. Thus, facing both an inner motivation to make sense of ritual requirements and an external curiosity from neighboring cultures (playing an ever growing role in Jewish life, within the boundaries of a now unified Mediterranean),

⁶⁵³ Cf. Misgav Har-Peled and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le cochon comme un problème Grecs, Romains et l'interdit juif du porc = the Pig as a Problem : Greeks, Romans and Jewish Pork Avoidance* (PhD diss., EHESS, Paris, 2011) 144-163.

⁶⁵⁴ Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) 80-81.

⁶⁵⁵ Har-Peled, *Le cochon comme un problème Grecs*, 148-151.

⁶⁵⁶ See Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974) 83-102.

⁶⁵⁷ Such a notion was first voiced in Karl Jaspers' axial age theory (Karl Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (München: R. Piper, 1949)). Since then, numerous critics have voiced their concerns and doubts about this thesis (see the overview of Provan: Iain Provan, *Convenient Myths: the Axial Age, Dark Green Religion, and the World that Never Was* (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2013) 19-29) The criticisms often neglect the apparently non-historical, but religious-philosophical nature of Jaspers' original claim (see Peter Brickley LeQuire, “The Axial Age Debate as Political Discourse: Karl Jaspers and Eric Voegelin,” *Clio* 43, no. 3 (2014): 295-316, here 309-316). But even if the concept is taken as a scientific theory, there is reason to uphold many of its aspects. See e.g. Nicolas Baumard and Pascal Boyer, “Explaining Moral Religions,” *Trends in Cognitive Science* 17, no. 6 (2013): 272-280. In any case, I do not wish to argue in support of Jaspers' notion of axial age, but only wish to point out the unmistakable similarity between Jewish and Christian approaches to allegorizing dietary impurity.

⁶⁵⁸ See Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, 119-120.

⁶⁵⁹ See Gilhus, “Animals in Late Antiquity.”

Jews experienced a dual pressure on making sense of dietary laws. This situation gave birth to the first interpretations of the meaning of impure and pure animals as well as to the exact nature of the abstinence thereof.

The first – and in light of its later echoes – most important such interpretation was preserved in the second century BCE *Letter of Aristeas*:

So in order that no one is polluted and that we – by sharing ourselves with wicked things – do not take perversions to ourselves, he encircled us from all sides with laws of purity concerning what we eat, drink, touch, hear or see ... it was all ordered in an honorable manner so that we see things in a pure light and implement just ways ... concerning the birds which are forbidden, you will find that they are savage, carnivorous and oppressing those around them with their power Through these, the lawgiver transmitted the interpretation to the wise that they should be righteous and that they should not exert violence and that they should not oppress those around them subjugated them to their power ... The separation and divided nature of the hoofs is a symbol [teaching us] to discriminate among [our own] actions with regard what is good.⁶⁶⁰

The unknown⁶⁶¹ author of the passage undertakes a difficult task. He attempts to translate the ritual concept of purity and impurity into a moral dimension, and tries to identify the former with morality and the latter with immorality. And although this transition seems familiar from later interpretative traditions, one should not disregard the difficulties of such a change in discourses. On the former, ritual level, it is physical contagion that needs to be avoided. On the latter, moral level, it is the imitation of certain behaviors, thus a non-physical form of transmission. Even such a partial substitution of physical transmission by a non-physical aspect is a huge leap, for it not only contradicts the mechanics of purity but also renders safeguarding institutions (such as avoiding to keep or touch certain animals) largely useless.

The text does not fully explain the way in which the negative influence of impure animals function. The language used seems to imply both physical contagion (συναλισγούμενοι) and learning by

⁶⁶⁰ (*Letter of Aristeas*, 1:142-150) Ὅπως οὖν μηθενὶ συναλισγούμενοι μηδ' ὁμιλοῦντες φαύλοις διαστροφὰς λαμβάνωμεν, πάντοθεν ἡμᾶς περιέφραξεν ἀγνείαις καὶ διὰ βρωτῶν καὶ ποτῶν καὶ ἀφῶν καὶ ἀκοῆς καὶ ὁράσεως νομικῶς ... πρὸς ἀγνὴν ἐπίσκεψιν καὶ τρόπων ἐξαρτισμὸν δικαιοσύνης ἔνεκεν σεμνῶς πάντα ἀνατέτακται ... Περὶ ὧν δὲ ἀπηγόρευται πτηνῶν, εὐρήσεις ἄγρια τε καὶ σαρκοφάγα καὶ καταδυναστεύοντα τῇ περὶ ἑαυτὰ δυνάμει τὰ λοιπὰ ... Διὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὖν παραδέδωκεν ὁ νομοθέτης σημειοῦσθαι τοῖς συνετοῖς, εἶναι δικαίους τε καὶ μηδὲν ἐπιτελεῖν βία, μηδὲ τῇ περὶ ἑαυτοὺς ἰσχύϊ πεποιθότας ἐτέρους καταδυναστεύειν ... Τὸ γὰρ διχηλεῦειν καὶ διαστέλλειν ὅπλῃς ὄνυχας σημείον ἐστὶ τοῦ διαστέλλειν ἕκαστα τῶν πράξεων ἐπὶ τὸ καλῶς ἔχον.

⁶⁶¹ As for a recent analysis of possible authors and dating, see Benjamin G. Wright III, *The Letter of Aristeas: 'Aristeas to Philocrates' or On the Translation of the Laws of the Jews* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015) 16-20.

example (σημειοῦσθαι τοῖς συνετοῖς), and perhaps this was the only way for the author to answer the twofold challenge of making sense of a ritual practice for an audience interested in moral dimensions and at the same time obeying the ritual requirements. With this strategy, the *Letter of Aristeas* opened up the possibility for a variety of subsequent interpretations denying the arbitrariness of the dietary laws and the choice of impure animals, and reinterpreting the laws of animal impurity as a coded language for regulating human activity. Importantly, the allegorical interpretation of the *Letter* does not imply a refusal of the literal one. The passage is constructed in a way to interpret the non-debatable observation of Jewish dietary laws in a way so that it would also satiate the growing need for spiritual lessons behind the legal traditions.⁶⁶² Although many consider this text to have been addressed to a Jewish audience, there is also ostensibly apologetic elements in it.⁶⁶³ Perhaps the long debated question of intended audience⁶⁶⁴ can be better understood if one regards the aim of this passage: the intention to emphasize the harmony between Greek ethical culture and Jewish ritual law.

This need clearly became even more pressing in subsequent centuries. The first century Alexandrian philosopher Philo, arguing for a Jewish audience,⁶⁶⁵ took a further step in stressing metaphorical interpretation, when he commented upon the dietary traditions of the *Book of Leviticus*:

Do you not see that the law pronounces the camel to be an impure beast, because it chews the cud and does not part the hoof? And yet, if we considered this sentence as it is expressed in its literal sense, I do not see what reason there is in it when it is interpreted; but if we look at it in its allegorical meaning, it is very clear and inevitable. For as the animal which chews the cud, again masticates the food which is put before it and devoured by it, when it again rises up to its teeth, so also the soul of the man who is fond of learning, when it has received any speculative opinions by hearing them, does not abandon them to forgetfulness, but quietly by itself revolves over every one of them again in its mind in all tranquility, and so comes to the recollection of them all.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶² Id. 6-7.

⁶⁶³ Id. 62-63.

⁶⁶⁴ Id. 62-67.

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria a Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora* (Boston: Brill, 2012) 67-69.

⁶⁶⁶ (Philo, *De Agricultura* 1:131-132) τὸν κάμηλον οὐχ ὀρᾷς ὅτι ἀκάθαρτον εἶναι φησι ζῶον ὁ νόμος, ἐπειδὴ μηρυκᾶται μὲν, οὐ διχληεῖ δέ; καίτοι γε πρὸς τὴν ῥητὴν ἐπίσκεψιν οὐκ οἶδ' ὃν ἔχει λόγον ἢ προσαποδοθεῖσα αἰτία, πρὸς δὲ τὴν δι' ὑπονοιῶν ἀναγκαιότατον. ὥσπερ γὰρ τὸ μηρυκώμενον τὴν προκαταβληθεῖσαν ὑπαναπλέουσιν αὐθις ἐπιλαίει τροφήν, οὕτως ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ φιλομαθοῦς, ἐπειδὴν τινα δι' ἀκοῆς δέξεται θεωρήματα, λήθη μὲν αὐτὰ οὐ παραδίδωσιν, ἡρεμήσασα δὲ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἕκαστα μεθ' ἡσυχίας τῆς πάσης ἀναπολεῖ καὶ εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τῶν πάντων ἔρχεται..

In his commentary, the Alexandrian philosopher uses the Platonic model of the partition of intellectual capabilities.⁶⁶⁷ By arguing that the parting of the hoofs and chewing of the cud refer to the cognitive capabilities of distinction and memory, and that the Mosaic law symbolically compares those individuals to impure animals, who fail to use one of these two capabilities, Philo accepts the full identification of ritual purity and the perfection of virtues. He does not urge his readers to avoid the consumption of certain animals – although he apparently did not disregard dietary laws as a practical diet⁶⁶⁸ – but provides a manual for virtuous life. By focusing exclusively on the symbolic meaning of animals as images of virtues and vices, he already heralds the way for the fundamentally non-literal interpretation of later Christian tradition, and – although not directly – also a rabbinic reinterpretation of these regulations along ethical lines. But, unlike rabbinic circles, in which Philo's reception is almost non-existent, his interpretations are very much welcome in Christian tradition, as they bear great similarity to the understanding of dietary laws in the – for the Christian tradition – formative corpus of the *New Testament*.

⁶⁶⁷ See Eric Ottenheijm, "Impurity between Intention and Deed: Purity Disputes in First Century Judaism and in the New Testament," in *Purity and Holiness, The Heritage of Leviticus* ed. M. J. H. M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz, 129-149 (Leiden: Brill, 2000) here 130-134.

⁶⁶⁸ Although he argued for the validity and even pre-eminence of an allegorical interpretation, Philo certainly endorsed the observation of the laws in a practical sense as well. Cf. Preston M. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: the Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 109-110. Concerning the dietary laws, he reveals such an understanding by admitting his own abstinence: "Now of land animals, the swine is confessed to be the nicest of all meats by those who eat it, (Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 4:101)

4.2. Moral animals

In the *New Testament*, the question of dietary laws is not treated as a separate topic, but as part of a greater debate on the relevance and precise meaning of the distinction between pure and impure. What emerges from its narratives concerning this theme is a concept of purity in which moral integrity dominates over ritual observation. This notion is advocated by Jesus in various Gospel-texts.⁶⁶⁹ And even though, similarly to Philo, he did not argue for the abrogation of purity-laws,⁶⁷⁰ some stories reveal a profound difference between his interpretation and *Old Testament* precursors. Most notable among them is the Markan version⁶⁷¹ of the story of the leper.⁶⁷² In this account, Jesus heals a leper, and after it he claims that due to the interaction with him, the leper is not only healed, but also cleansed (although it remained for him to visit a priest).⁶⁷³ Thus, Jesus is presented as someone, whose purity – quite in contradiction with the worldview of the *Old Testament*⁶⁷⁴ – is contagious.⁶⁷⁵ With this notion in the forefront, the impurity of objects ceases to be a matter of ritual inapplicability.⁶⁷⁶ The concept of animal purity is likewise no longer only an issue of ritual purity, but also functions as an expression of one's moral integrity. Peter's vision on the rooftop,⁶⁷⁷ in which dietary restrictions are symbolically abrogated, has, for example, also a metaphorical reference,⁶⁷⁸ to his commensality with the Gentile Cornelius.⁶⁷⁹ Thus, the divine claim that "What God has made clean, you must not call profane"⁶⁸⁰ is not only a statement concerning dietary impurity, but also refers to the moral

⁶⁶⁹ Cf. Stettler, *Purity of Heart*, 489-491.

⁶⁷⁰ Jesus takes purity quite seriously (cf. e.g. the cleansing of people from unclean spirits in Mk 5:12-13, 9:25 etc.). See also Demetrios C. Passakos, "Clean and Unclean in the New Testament: Implications for Contemporary Liturgical Practices," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 47, 1-4 (2002) 277-293, here 283-285.

⁶⁷¹ Mk 1:40-42. As for differences between this version and the one in the *Gospel of Luke*, see Bart J. Koet, "Purity and Impurity of the Body in Luke-Acts," in *Purity and Holiness, The Heritage of Leviticus* ed. M. J. H. M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz, 93-107 (Leiden: Brill, 2000) here 97-106.

⁶⁷² Cf. Mt 8:1-4; Lk 5:12-13.

⁶⁷³ Koet, "Purity and Impurity," 104.

⁶⁷⁴ Tom Holmén, "Jesus' Inverse Strategy of Ritual (Im)purity and the Ritual Purity of Early Christians," in *Anthropology in the New Testament and its Ancient Context*, ed. Michael Labahn and Outi Lehtipuu, 13-33 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010) 23-24.

⁶⁷⁵ See Anderson, Kevin. "Purity in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Purity: Essays in Bible and Theology*, ed. Andrew Brower Latz, and Arseny Ermakov, 153-177 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014) here 109-110; Stettler, *Purity of Heart*, 485-488.

⁶⁷⁶ See Ottenheim, "Impurity between Intention and Deed," 145-146.

⁶⁷⁷ Acts 11:10-16.

⁶⁷⁸ Wahlen, "Peter's Vision," 510-516.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. Wahlen, "Peter's Vision," 505-510; For the Jewish perspective on the issue cf. Rosenblum, *Food and Identity*, 91-4; Stemberger, "Forbidden Gentile Food," 213-224.

⁶⁸⁰ Acts 10:15.

character of Cornelius. The Pauline tradition that dietary laws should only matter to those who believe in them,⁶⁸¹ and that the community's morality is safeguarded by baptism and faith and not by observation of the law⁶⁸² can be seen as elaborations on such a notion of reconstructing purity as an expression of morality.⁶⁸³ In these passages, purity in general and animal impurity in particular are also symbolical concepts, relating to one's moral character. In this context, the rabbis' insistence on a continuous observation of dietary laws as a marker of one's belonging to the ethnic community of Jews propelled a strong reaction from nascent Christianity, which – ever since the mission of Paul, strived to develop its message to serve as a universalistic call to humankind leaping over ethnic boundaries.⁶⁸⁴ And since changing socio-cultural realities soon resulted in a decreasing number of Christians actually emerging from Jewish ethnic communities and, thus, abstaining from impure animals,⁶⁸⁵ it was the duty of the representatives of the early Church to supply exegetical justification for this change. But whereas, along the lines offered by Hellenistic Jewish tradition in general, and Philo in particular,⁶⁸⁶ making sense of the dietary code consisted primarily of a metaphorical understanding of pure and impure animals, early Christian interpreters were not merely trying to emphasize the allegorical meaning of the purity-code while keeping silent concerning practical implementation. Instead, they advocated a supersessionist view in which practical aspects of the

⁶⁸¹ Rom 14:14. Cf. Stephen Westerholm, "Is Nothing Sacred? Holiness in the Writings of Paul," in *Purity, Holiness and Identity in Judaism and Christianity*, eds. Carl S. Ehrlich, Anders Runesson, Eileen Schuller, 87-100 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013) here 89-92.

⁶⁸² Cf. Anderson, "Purity in the Epistle to the Hebrews," 150-151; Crossley, "From Jesus Observing Purity Laws," 114-115. Cf. also Cana Werman, "The Concept of Holiness and the Requirements of Purity," in *Purity and Holiness, The Heritage of Leviticus*, ed. M. J. H. M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz, 163-181 (Leiden: Brill, 2000) here 173-174.

⁶⁸³ The narrative of the *Acts of the Apostles*, as well as Paul's frequent remarks on the subject should be understood as a reaction to their opposite, the refusal of commensality (cf. Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990) 222-230, 236-259). Interestingly even Jesus himself is presented in the *Gospel of Luke* (Lk 7:1-10) as not entering the house of a non-Jew, and only in the *Gospel of Matthew* (Mt 8:5-13) is he depicted entering a non-Jewish household. Cf. Peter J. Thomson, "Jewish Purity Laws as Viewed by Church Fathers," in *Purity and Holiness, The Heritage of Leviticus*, ed. M. J. H. M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz, 73-93 (Leiden: Brill, 2000) here 87-88.

⁶⁸⁴ See Jürgen Becker, *Paulus: Der Apostel der Völker* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989) 60-66 and 89-99. See also Tet-Lim N. Yee, *Jews, Gentiles and Ethnic Reconciliation Paul's Jewish Identity and Ephesians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 126-127 and 190-198.

⁶⁸⁵ It is seemingly impossible to date this change exactly. Cf. S. Stein, "The Dietary Laws in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature," in K. Aland and F. L. Cross (eds) *Studia Patristica*, II, 141-154 (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1957) here 145-149. There is even strong indication from the times of Origen, and from that of John Chrysostom that several purity considerations were observed long after the Apostolic Age. Cf. Thomson, "Jewish Purity Laws," 73-75 and 77-78.

⁶⁸⁶ Philo is generally considered to have exerted a significant influence on both western and eastern Church fathers. Cf. David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*. As for Clement's extraordinary reliance on Philo cf. Annewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and his Use of Philo in the Stromateis: an Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (Leiden: Brill, 1988) 69-116, esp. 96-97.

purity-code, that is eating only the flesh of pure animals need to be actively refused and that this particular aspect of the Mosaic law is to be understood exclusively in allegorical terms.

The earliest *per se* Christian attempt of presenting the impurity of animals in such a way can be found in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, which dedicates its tenth chapter to the interpretation of the list of *Leviticus* and – in doing so – relates the impurity of animals to a “Graeco-Roman natural historical tradition”.⁶⁸⁷

And as to Moses saying that you shall not eat the pig, the eagle, the vulture, the raven, or any fish which that does not have fins or scales: with this, he grasped three doctrines in the mind ... Moses speak in a spiritual manner. The pig, he named, as if saying: do not join such people, who resemble pigs. When they have delights, they forget about the Lord. But when they are in need, they remember him. Similarly the swine: when it is satisfied, it does not know [its] lord, but when it hungers, it growls, and as it receives, silences once again.⁶⁸⁸

The most striking difference between the *Epistle of Barnabas* and earlier Jewish interpretations is the former’s insistence⁶⁸⁹ on the exclusively ethical nature of the dietary restrictions.⁶⁹⁰ The author of the *Epistle* argues that “Moses spoke with a spiritual reference”. And, in accordance with its denial of any practical application of the dietary regulations, the *Epistle* establishes the concept of the impurity of animals as a purely symbolical notion:

And concerning taking food, Moses uttered three rules in a spiritual manner: but they [the Jews] took them with regards to the desire of the flesh, as if he truly spoke of meat.⁶⁹¹

In subsequent tradition, this concise idea was further elaborated. Commenting on various Pauline sayings, Church fathers often argued that carnality is characteristic of Judaism and Jews, and assumed

⁶⁸⁷ By this term, I am referring to the end-result of a centuries-long amalgamation of Greek and Roman zoological tradition, folklore, and literature (Cf. R. K. French, *Ancient Natural History: Histories of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1994) 211-212.) the content of which was widespread and readily available to speakers of Greek and or Latin.

⁶⁸⁸ (*Epistle of Barnabas* 10:1-3) Οτι δὲ Μωϋσῆς εἶπεν Οὐ φάγεσθε χοῖρον οὔτε ἀετὸν οὔτε ὀξύπτερον οὔτε κόρακα οὔτε πάντα ἰχθύν ὃς οὐκ ἔχει λεπίδα ἐν αὐτῷ τρία ἔλαβεν ἐν τῇ συνέσει δόγματα. ... Μωϋσῆς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι ἐλάλησεν. Τὸ οὖν χοιρίον πρὸς τοῦτο εἶπεν οὐ μὴ κολληθῇσιν φησὶν ἀνθρώποις τοιοῦτοις οἵτινές εἰσιν ὅμοιοι χοίροις τουτέστιν ὅταν σπαταλῶσιν ἐπιλανθάνονται τοῦ κυρίου ὅταν δὲ ὑστερῶνται ἐπιγινώσκουσιν τὸν κύριον ὡς καὶ ὁ χοῖρος ὅταν τρώγει τὸν κύριον οὐκ οἶδεν ὅταν δὲ πεινᾷ κραυγάζει καὶ λαβὼν πάλιν σιωπᾷ.

⁶⁸⁹ The *Epistle of Barnabas* is clearly an exception in this respect even among early Christian interpreters. Cf. James Carleton Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1994) 152-3.

⁶⁹⁰ For the relationship between the *Epistle*’s overtly polemic overtone and the formation of Christian identity in the first century, cf. Ferdinand-Rupert Prostmeier, “Antijudaismus im Rahmen christlicher Hermeneutik zum Streit über christliche Identität in der Alten Kirche; Notizen zum Barnabasbrief,” *Zeitschrift Für Antikes Christentum* 6 (2002): 38-58.

⁶⁹¹ (*Epistle of Barnabas* 10:9) Περί μὲν τῶν βρωμάτων λαβὼν Μωϋσῆς τρία δόγματα οὕτως ἐν πνεύματι ἐλάλησεν οἱ δὲ κατ’ ἐπιθυμίαν τῆς σαρκὸς ὡς περὶ βρώσεως προσεδέξαντο.

that dietary laws were established precisely in order to hinder the Jewish inclination of surrendering to corporeal desires. The second century Justin Martyr, for example, claims that:

You were commanded to keep yourself from some [types of food], so that even when you eat and drink, you would keep God before your eyes. Because it is in your habit to forget about him, as it was said by Moses: “the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel” (Ex 32:6).⁶⁹²

According to Justin, the reasons for passing these laws were the waywardness and the impiety of the Israelites. Thus – unlike the *Epistle of Barnabas* – without actually claiming that the Jews misunderstood the Mosaic tradition, Justin still managed to burden the Jewish custom of not consuming impure animals by implying that such an abstention is – in its essence – a punishment on unfaithful people.

4.2.1. The consumption of immorality

If we return once more to the words of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, another interesting aspect comes to the forefront:

Do not eat either the eagle, or the vulture, the kite or the raven (cf. Lv 11:11-14). He says: do not bind yourself or be similar to humans who are like that: who do not know how to supply themselves through toils and sweat, but prey on the things belonging to others in lawlessness and although [they act] as if they were innocent, they prowl around looking for something to plunder due to their greediness ... He also says: do not eat the sea-eel, the octopus, the cuttlefish (see Lv 11:9-10) meaning that you should not bind yourself and become similar to such humans that are throughout impious and are [thus] sentenced to death ... Do not eat the hare (see Lv 11:6), he says, so that you do not become a member of the kind of pederasts and do not become similar to them ... But he also says: do not eat the hyena, meaning: you should not be similar to the kind of adulterers and corrupters. Why so? Since this animal changes its nature once every year and sometimes it is a male, and other times, it becomes a female. He also hated the weasel (cf. Lv 11:29). And rightly he did, for you should not become similar to those about whom we heard that they commit lawless acts with their mouths.⁶⁹³

⁶⁹² (Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 20:1) Καὶ γὰρ βρωμάτων τινῶν ἀπέχεσθαι προσέταξεν ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἔχητε τὸν θεόν, εὐκατάφοροι ὄντες καὶ εὐχερεῖς πρὸς τὸ ἀφίστασθαι τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ, ὡς καὶ Μωυσῆς φησιν: Ἔφαγε καὶ ἔπιεν ὁ λαὸς καὶ ἀνέστη τοῦ παίζειν.

⁶⁹³ (*Epistle of Barnabas* 10:4-8.) Οὐδὲ φάγη φησὶν τὸν ἀετὸν οὐδὲ τὸν ὀξύπτερον οὐδὲ τὸν ἰκτίνα οὐδὲ τὸν κόρακα οὐ μὴ φησὶν κολληθήσῃ οὐδὲ ὁμοιωθήσῃ ἀνθρώποις τοιοῦτοις οἵτινες οὐκ οἶδασιν διὰ κόπου καὶ ἰδρωτός ἑαυτοῖς πορίζειν τὴν τροφήν ἀλλὰ ἁρπάζουσιν τὰ ἀλλότρια ἐν ἀνομία αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπιτηροῦσιν ὡς ἐν ἀκεραιοσύνῃ περιπατοῦντες καὶ περιβλέπονται τίνα ἐκδύσωσιν διὰ τὴν πλεονεξίαν ... Καὶ οὐ φάγη φησὶν σμύραιναν οὐδὲ πόλυπα οὐδὲ σηπίαν οὐ μὴ φησὶν ὁμοιωθήσῃ κολλώμενος ἀνθρώποις τοιοῦτοις οἵτινες εἰς τέλος εἰσὶν ἀσεβεῖς καὶ κεκριμένοι ἤδη τῷ θανάτῳ... Ἀλλὰ

Out of the list of ten animals listed (swine – χοῖρος; vulture – ὄξύπτερος; kite – ἰκτῖνος; raven – κόραξ; sea-eel – σμύραινα; octopus – πόλυψ; cuttlefish – σηπία; hare – δασύπους; hyena – ὕαινα; weasel – γαλή) four (sea-eel, octopus, cuttlefish, hyena) does not feature in the *Bible* at all.⁶⁹⁴ Among them an especial case is that of the hyena. First of all, the notion that hyenas annually change their gender, which is obviously not a *Biblical* concept, but often features in the writings of Graeco-Roman natural historians,⁶⁹⁵ show that the author of the *Epistle* generously blended *Biblical* and Graeco-Roman zoological tradition. Secondly, its presence among the list of impure animals is all the more perplexing, since unlike the rest of the animals which are either eaten by the Israelites or are prohibited in the *Book of Leviticus* (but consumed by others), there is no reason to believe that anyone would have regularly favored eating hyenas.⁶⁹⁶ I do not believe that the author included them into his list due to a misreading of the Greek word swine (ῥς) for hyena (ὕαινα).⁶⁹⁷ I would rather argue that it was due to the intention to present hyena, a notorious symbol of excessive sexuality, and as such, a well-known animal symbol of “impure human nature”. Judging by the list, the *Epistle*’s author chose animals which generally fit the exegetical tradition of a symbolical interpretation of impure animals representing human vices. In doing so, he or she relies on the *Biblical* corpus,⁶⁹⁸ but also presents concepts drawn out of Graeco-Roman zoological lore.

And this enterprise was certainly a success inasmuch as it managed to even mislead educated, later authors.⁶⁹⁹ Clement of Alexandria, for example, argued for a similar interpretation of the list of impure animals. In it, he claimed that the hyena – along with the hare – was prohibited by Moses since he did not want Israelites to partake in adultery (as represented by the hyena’s sexual behavior).⁷⁰⁰

καὶ τὸν δασύποδα οὐ φάγη πρὸς τί οὐ μὴ γένῃ φησὶν παιδοφθόρος οὐδὲ ὁμοιωθήσῃ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ... Ἀλλὰ οὐδὲ τὴν ὕαιναν φάγη οὐ μὴ φησὶν γένῃ μοιχὸς οὐδὲ φθορεὺς οὐδὲ ὁμοιωθήσῃ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις Πρὸς τί ὅτι τὸ ζῷον τοῦτο παρ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἀλλάσσει τὴν φύσιν καὶ ποτὲ μὲν ἄρρεν ποτὲ δὲ θῆλυ γίνεται. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν γαλῆν ἐμίσησεν Καλῶς οὐ μὴ γένῃ φησὶν τοιοῦτος οὐδὲ ὁμοιωθήσῃ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις οἷους ἀκούομεν ἀνομίαν ποιοῦντας ἐν τῷ στόματι.

⁶⁹⁴ As for the peculiar order and names of impure animals in the *Epistle* cf. Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, 150.

⁶⁹⁵ The idea that hyenas are hermaphrodites is present in Hellenistic culture at least since the time of Aristotle, as he repeatedly refused the claim (Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* 579b). However, despite his efforts of refutation, the notion persisted in both Greek and Roman (E.g. Oppian, *Cynegetica* 3:288-292; Plinius, *Historia Naturalis* 8:44) natural historical tradition. Cf. Mary Pendergraft, “‘Thou Shalt Not Eat the Hyena,’ A Note on ‘Barnabas’ Epistle 10.7,” *Vigiliae Christianae*. 46, 1 (1992): 75-79, here 75-76.

⁶⁹⁶ On the general reasons against widespread consumption of carnivores cf. Nick Fiddes, *Meat, a Natural Symbol* (London: Routledge, 1991) 138-139.

⁶⁹⁷ Cf. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) 138.

⁶⁹⁸ Cf. *Epistle of Barnabas* 10:11.

⁶⁹⁹ Cf. also John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos* 1:31:1.

⁷⁰⁰ In fact, Clement denies the annual switch of gender, but claims that hyenas conduct non-reproductive intercourse with the help of a special organ found on both male and female specimens. See Bernadette J. Broton, *Love between Women Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago [Ill.]: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996) 330.

Look, how Moses who was the wisest, symbolically prohibited the fruitless sowing of seeds, by saying ‘You shall not eat the hare nor the hyena.’ He did not want that the people partake in their characteristics, nor that they taste such wantonness, for these animals are very much inflamed for intercourse.⁷⁰¹

It is important to pay attention to Clement’s choice of words. He does not only speak about consumption, but also about partaking (μεταλαμβάνειν). By this term, he reveals something about his notion of how exactly the eating of impure animals would lead someone to become impure. In order to clarify what exactly Clement understood under the term, one needs to consider his more detailed interpretations of the dietary laws and especially the Mosaic list of impure animals. In the *Stromata*, he argues:

But David, and before him Moses exhibit their awareness of the three principles, through the words: “Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked” (Ps 1:1). Similarly: Moses prohibited to have fish that descend into the gloomy depths. For those that have no scales, feed at the bottom of the sea. “Take the path that sinners tread” (ibid.) It is just as those who seem to fear the Lord, while they are committing sins, as a pig. When they are hungry, they cry out, but when they are satisfied, they do not know the Lord. David says: “sit in the seat of scoffers,” (ibid.) just like birds preparing for the prey. And Moses advised us “Do not eat the swine, the eagle, the vulture, the raven or any fish that does not have scales” (cf. Lv 11). I heard a wise man interpreting “advice of the wicked” as the Gentiles, “path of sinners” as a reference to the Jews and “seat of scoffers” as heretics.⁷⁰²

Closely following in the footsteps of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Clement deals with three types of animals here: fish, swine and birds of prey. But through the collation of the Mosaic tradition and the moralizing admonitions of the Psalms,⁷⁰³ he categorizes the symbolic expressions of impurity into three categories. By eating fish without scales, one would merely follow the advice of sinners (representing the Gentiles), by consuming swine, one would act as a sinner (representing the Jews),

⁷⁰¹ (Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2:10) Ὁρᾶτε γοῦν ὁ πάνσοφος Μωσῆς ὅπως ποτὲ συμβολικῶς τὴν ἄκαρπον ἀποκρούεται σποράν, οὐκ ἔδεσαι λέγων τὸν λαγὼν οὐδὲ τὴν ὕαιναν. Οὐ βούλεται τῆς ποιότητος αὐτῶν μεταλαμβάνειν τὸν ἄνθρωπον οὐδὲ μὴν τῆς ἴσης ἀσελγείας ἀπογεύσασθαι· κατακόρως γάρ τοι περὶ τὰς μίξεις τὰ ζῷα ταῦτα ἐπτόνγται.

⁷⁰² (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2:15) Ἀλλὰ καὶ Δαβὶδ καὶ πρὸ Δαβὶδ ὁ Μωσῆς τῶν τριῶν δογμάτων τὴν γνῶσιν ἐμφαίνουσιν διὰ τούτων· μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς οὐκ ἐπορεύθη ἐν βουλῇ ἀσεβῶν, καθὼς οἱ ἰχθύες πορεύονται ἐν σκότει εἰς τὰ βάθη οἱ γὰρ λεπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες, ὧν ἀπαγορεύει Μωσῆς ἐφάπτεσθαι, κάτω τῆς θαλάσσης νέμονται οὐδὲ ἐν ὁδῷ ἀμαρτωλῶν ἔστι, καθὼς οἱ δοκοῦντες φοβεῖσθαι τὸν κύριον ἀμαρτάνουσιν ὡς ὁ χοῖρος· πεινῶν γὰρ κραυγάζει, πληρωθεὶς δὲ τὸν δεσπότην οὐ γνωρίζει· οὐδὲ ἐπὶ καθέδραν λοιμῶν ἐκάθισεν, καθὼς τὰ πτηνὰ εἰς ἀρπαγὴν ἔτοιμα. παρήνεσε δὲ Μωσῆς «οὐ φάγεσθε χοῖρον οὐδὲ αἶτον οὐδὲ ὀξύπτερον οὐδὲ κόρακα οὐδὲ πάντ' ἰχθύν ὃς οὐκ ἔχει λεπίδα ἐν αὐτῷ. ἀκήκοα δ' ἔγωγε σοφοῦ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀνδρὸς βουλὴν μὲν ἀσεβῶν τὰ ἔθνη λέγοντος, ὁδὸν δὲ ἀμαρτωλῶν τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν ὑπόληψιν καὶ καθέδραν λοιμῶν τὰς αἰρέσεις ἐκλαμβάνοντος.

⁷⁰³ Cf. Ps 1:1.

and by consuming birds of prey, one would actually become a sinner (representing the heretics). The underlying idea is that the consumption of these – prohibited – animals would bring someone to imitate the presumed immoral behavior of the impure animals and – thus become – immoral himself of herself.

In this interpretation, the shift from the *Old Testament* notion of impurity and purity is very explicit. Impure animals (that were objects and not active agents in the *Old Testament*) are interpreted here as symbols of non-Christian communities. This transformation is based on the same shift that enabled the subjectification of sacrificial animals. However, unlike the sacrificial victims, the impure animals are no longer presented as passive subjects suffering death for the sake of the community. Their impurity is interpreted in a moral dimension and the animals become agents inviting Christians to immorality. With this perspective, Clement exploits not only the *Old Testament* notion of impure animality, but also the related notion of contagion. Similarly to the way impure objects are seen as polluting individuals who approach them, impure animals are presented as contaminating those who consume them. Thus, Clement creates a symbolism of morality, in which the major threat of impure animals is that they pervert the morality of Christians.

The way in which this process occurs is, however, not entirely clear. Despite the apparently well-structured nature of this passage, and the careful consideration behind it, Clement is not thoroughly consistent. While most of his passages interpret the impurity of these animals on a symbolical level, claiming that they represent immoral behavior, immoral desires or immoral subjects on a metaphorical level, Clement occasionally refers to the actual consumption of or physical contamination by impure animals as the way of becoming impure:

So, although the divine law remembers all the virtues, prepare humans – most of all – to self-restraint, setting it as the foundation of virtues. And by forbidding us to partake (μεταλαμβάνειν) from animals, which happen to be fat by nature, such as the fleshiest kind of swine, he educates us preserve self-restraint ... and he similarly forbade us to partake (μεταλαμβάνειν) from fish that have neither fins, nor scales. By this, making us rein our desires.⁷⁰⁴

This reading of the impurity of animals, demonstrates that Clement did not share the exclusively allegorical understanding of the *Epistle of Barnabas*. He agreed with the notion that the impurity of

⁷⁰⁴ (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2:20) Πάσης τοίνυν ἀρετῆς μεμνημένος ὁ θεῖος νόμος ἀλείφει μάλιστα τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπὶ τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, θεμέλιον ἀρετῶν κατατιθέμενος ταύτην, καὶ δὴ προπαιδεύει ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν περιποίησιν τῆς ἐγκρατείας ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ζώων χρήσεως, ἀπαγορεύων μεταλαμβάνειν τῶν ὅσα φύσει πίονα καθάπερ τὸ τῶν συῶν γένος εὐσαρκότατον τυγχάνον ... τῶν τε ἰχθύων ὁμοίως ἀπηγόρευσε μεταλαμβάνειν, στέλλων ἡμῶν τὰς ἐπιθυμίας ἐκείνων οἷς μήτε πτερύγια μήτε λεπίδες εἰσίν.

animals should be interpreted in an allegorical manner, but – following the Philonic tradition, he did not question the validity of the practical interpretation of dietary laws.

Secondly, the above passage seems to imply that Jews (acting as sinners) are symbolically represented by swine. Although the idea is far from unheard of among early Christian interpreters, it is at odds with Clement's exegetical passage from the sixth book of *Stromata*, where the Jews are symbolically represented by an impure animal, whereas Gentiles are symbolized by an impure one (yet none from the list of the *Leviticus*):

Just as the nation [of Jews] was dear to the Lord, so is the holy nation that is a unity of Jews and converters from among the Gentiles [Christians] ... The writing says that the ox and the bear join together to eat (cf. Is 11:7). Ox refers to the Jews, the animal from under the yoke that is regarded pure, for the ox has a parted hoof and it chews the cud. The Gentiles, in turn, are represented by the bear, an impure and savage beast.⁷⁰⁵

The recurrence of swine and swinish behavior in Clement's commentaries as a standalone category among much larger groupings such as "fish without scales" and "birds of prey" merits the reader's attention. In accordance with the developments of the intertestamental period, and similarly to its role – as we will see⁷⁰⁶ – as a *pars pro toto* impure animal in rabbinic tradition, they occupy an important place in the patristic *mentalité* as well. This is demonstrated not only by their exalted status in the above passages but also by the fact that many early Christian interpreters prefer swine as symbols of moral impurity in general. Clement is no exception, as he repeatedly treats them in this manner.⁷⁰⁷ In the *Paedagogus*, he writes:

However, it seems that only cohabitation with good people has an advantageous effect. In turn, the all wise Instructor forbade – through Moses – the old Israelites to partake (μεταλαμβάνειν) in [the flesh of] swine, on behalf of the fact that intercourse with bad people he considered swinish. By this, he showed (ἐμφαίνων) that it was unnecessary for those who called to God to mingle with impure people, who in the manner of swine enjoy corporeal pleasures, filthy nutrition and lascivious ticklings, desiring the evil pleasures of Aphrodite.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁵ (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6:6) Ὡςπερ οὖν τίμιος ὁ λαὸς τῷ κυρίῳ, οὕτως ὁ λαὸς ἅγιος ἅπας ἐστὶν σὺν τῷ Ἰουδαίῳ καὶ ὁ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἐπιστρέφων ... εἰκότως ἄρα βοῦν φησι καὶ ἄρκτον ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἔσσεσθαι ἡ γραφή· βοῦς μὲν γὰρ εἴρηται ὁ Ἰουδαῖος ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ νόμον ὑπὸ ζυγὸν καθαροῦ κριθέντος ζώου, ἐπεὶ καὶ διχηλεῖ καὶ μηρυκάται ὁ βοῦς· ὁ ἐθνικός δὲ διὰ τῆς ἄρκτου ἐμφαίνεται, ἀκαθάρτου καὶ ἀγρίου θηρίου.

⁷⁰⁶ See below 4.3.1.

⁷⁰⁷ Cf. also Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2:1; 2:7; 3:4.

⁷⁰⁸ (Clemens, *Paedagogus* 3:11) Ἀλλ' ὡς ἔοικεν, μόναι αἱ μετὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν συναναστροφῆς ὠφελοῦσιν. Ἐμπαλιν γοῦν τὴν μετὰ τῶν φαύλων συνδιαίτησιν ἀνθρώπων ὕωδη γνωρίζων ὁ πάνσοφος διὰ Μωυσέως παιδαγωγὸς χοιρείων

Here, Clement uses impurity-terminology to support his moral teaching. By comparing immoral people to swine, he once again exemplifies the workings of the Hellenistic tradition of moralizing Jewish law. Similarly to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, he also harmonizes *Biblical* law and Graeco-Roman zoological lore, for it is only in the latter that pigs are taken as exceedingly voluptuous creatures.⁷⁰⁹ Since the proportion of Christians not believing in the necessity of observing the Mosaic laws was on the rise in the second century,⁷¹⁰ interpretations similar to that of Clement were welcome. The resulting downplay of the practical aspects of the dietary laws opened up the possibility for Christian interpreters to explain why specifically the animals listed in the law were prohibited.

I have already presented the option chosen by Clement and the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, namely to allegorize the *differentia specifica* of the *Biblical* tradition (divided hoofs, lack of scales etc.) and present the impure animals as symbols of immoral humans, or even as objects of contagious immorality. Another possibility for explaining the Mosaic laws' choice of animals was to surmise some sort of non-physical – yet intrinsic – feature that would render certain species impure. Such a solution was taken by Origen, who claimed:

Although there are other astonishing things in the writings of Moses, I believe it is worthy of astonishment how Moses understood the different natures of animals. Either he learned this from the divine knowledge about animals and about the demons (δαιμόνων) related to them or he understood it through his own wisdom when he ascended. As he considered the different types of animals, he declared all those to be pure, that are considered by the Egyptians and the rest of the people to be [applicable] for divination, and in turn, [he declared] those impure that are not like these. And in the writing of Moses, wolves, foxes, snakes, eagles, hawks and similar ones are [called] impure. And you will find not only in the laws, but also in the [writings of the] prophets that these are examples to the worst things and that wolf or fox is never mentioned as a beneficial creature. It seems that each demon has something common with one of these animal species.⁷¹¹

ἀπηγόρευσεν μεταλαμβάνειν τῷ λαῷ τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ, ἐμφαίνων μὴ δεῖν τοὺς θεὸν ἐπιβοωμένους ἀκαθάρτοις ἀναμίγνυσθαι ἀνθρώποις, οἱ δίκην ὕδων ἡδοναῖς σωματικαῖς καὶ δεισαλέαις τροφαῖς καὶ γαργαλισμοῖς ἀσελγέσι κνηστιῶντες πρὸς ἀφροδίτην κακόχαρτον ἡδονὴν χαίρουσιν.

⁷⁰⁹ See Robert M. Grant, *Early Christians and Animals* (London: Routledge, 1999) 6-7. See also Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 6-7.

⁷¹⁰ However, the existence of Christians of Jewish origin to continue observing their – practical – interpretation of the Mosaic laws apparently haunted the Church far beyond the Apostolic Age. Cf. Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 16. Cf. also Stephen Anthony Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 164-166.

⁷¹¹ (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 4:93) Ὅθεν εἴπερ ἄλλο τι Μωϋσέως τεθαύμακα, καὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον θαύματος ἀποφανοῦμαι ἄξιον εἶναι, ὅτι φύσεις κατανοήσας ζώων διαφόρους καὶ εἴτ' ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μαθὼν τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἐκάστῳ ζῳῶ

Out of the five animals, Origen lists as impure (wolf, fox, serpent, eagle, hawk), again not all actually feature in the list of the *Leviticus*. And although he is right inferring that wolf, fox or serpent would count as impure according to the tacit logic of the dietary tradition, namely that terrestrial carnivores and animals capable of limbless locomotion are impure, one is under the impression that Origen follows another pattern of reasoning. In this regard, the fact that Egyptians are specifically mentioned merits special attention. The animals listed by him as tools of divinitaion may recall gods venerated in the Hellenistic period: canid deities such as Anubis, Seth, or Wosret;⁷¹² serpentine deities such as Isis, Uraeus, Isis-Thermuthis;⁷¹³ and the eagle and hawk-like Horus or Harpocrates.⁷¹⁴ With this in mind, it seems possible that Origen's argument might revolve around pagan deities, reflecting upon their theriomorphic representations and identifying them with the animals rejected by the Mosaic laws. In any case, his interpretation is clearly based on the "wickedness" of these animals, a deduction not from the corpus of *Leviticus*, but from the fact that they represent evil forces in the Biblical tradition in general (a convincing, although not entirely truthful assumption)⁷¹⁵. Thus, Origen argues that their frequent use as symbols of evil forces in the *Old Testament* is a hint at the fact that these animals are often possessed by demonic forces.

This concept was not invented by Origen,⁷¹⁶ but the idea of demons or demonic forces taking animal forms was previously more often phrased in relation with beasts of the wilderness and untamed, poisonous creatures.⁷¹⁷ The notion that impure animals and demonic forces had a close relation was also clearly present in the Animal Apocalypse in *1 Enoch*,⁷¹⁸ where the enemies of Israel are all

συγγενῶν δαιμόνων εἶτε καὶ αὐτὸς ἀναβαίνων τῇ σοφίᾳ εὐρών, ἐν τῇ περὶ ζώων διατάξει πάντα μὲν ἀκάθαρτα ἔφησεν εἶναι τὰ νομιζόμενα παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἶναι μαντικά, ὡς ἐπίπαν δὲ εἶναι καθαρὰ τὰ μὴ τοιαῦτα. Καὶ ἐν ἀκαθάρτοις παρὰ Μωϋσεὶ ἐστὶ λύκος καὶ ἀλώπηξ καὶ δράκων ἀετός τε καὶ ἰέραξ καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις. Καὶ ὡς ἐπίπαν οὐ μόνον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς προφήταις εὗροις ἂν ταῦτα τὰ ζῷα εἰς παράδειγμα τῶν κακίστων παραλαμβανόμενα, οὐδέ ποτε δὲ εἰς χρηστὸν πρᾶγμα ὀνομαζόμενον λύκον ἢ ἀλώπεκα. Ἔοικεν οὖν τις εἶναι ἐκάστῳ δαιμόνων εἶδει κοινωνία πρὸς ἕκαστον εἶδος ζώων.

⁷¹² See Youri Volokhine, "Quelques aspects de Bès dans les temples égyptiens de l'époque Gréco-Romaine," in *Isis on the Nile Egyptian Gods in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Isis Studies*, ed. Laurent Bricault and Miguel John Versluys, 233-257 (Leiden: Brill, 2010) here 242.

⁷¹³ See Pierre P. Koemoth, "Couronner souchos pour fêter le retour de la crue," in *Isis on the Nile Egyptian Gods in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Isis Studies*, ed. Laurent Bricault and Miguel John Versluys, 257-291 (Leiden: Brill, 2010) here 272-273.

⁷¹⁴ Pascale Ballet and Geneviève Galliano, "Les isiaques et la petite plastique dans l'Égypte hellénistique et romaine," in *Isis on the Nile Egyptian Gods in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Isis Studies*, ed. Laurent Bricault and Miguel John Versluys, 197-221 (Leiden: Brill, 2010) here 202-205.

⁷¹⁵ Cf. e.g. Num 21:9 and its early Christian interpretations (e.g. Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* 10).

⁷¹⁶ As it already surfaced in *New Testament* passages. Cf. Jean Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973) 436-437.

⁷¹⁷ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 225. See chapter 5.1.

⁷¹⁸ *1 Enoch* 85-90. On its use in posterior literature, see Daniel C. Olson, *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch "All Nations Shall be Blessed"* (Boston: Brill, 2013) 245-256.

symbolized by demonic impure animals and – even if the non-canonized text of this book was not unequivocally accepted by later Christian interpreters⁷¹⁹ – a similar tradition is expressed in the story of Jesus exorcising the demon Legion into a herd of swine,⁷²⁰ and in two scenes of the *Book of Revelations* as well.⁷²¹ The concept of this link, however, remains a minor exegetical tendency in later Christian tradition, and despite its occasional repetition both in the East⁷²² and the West,⁷²³ it should rather be considered as an additional aspect of identifying demonic forces with the animals of the wilderness (most of which are impure animals implicitly, but their major feature in both the *Biblical* tradition and in exegesis is rather their ferocity).⁷²⁴

The major reason for the gradual disappearance of this exegetical tradition might be that it does not argue for a *merely* symbolic correspondence between impure animals and the vices they would incite in anyone consuming them. If these animals are more often possessed by demons than other species, then the prohibition regarding their consumption can no longer be read in a purely allegorical manner, and there is reason to treat dietary regulations as valid, practical instructions. So, if Origen is right, one should truly uphold the dietary laws in order to avoid interaction with demonic forces. However, since the basis on which any Christian interpretation needed to rely was the denial of a literal validity of the dietary laws, such interpretations could not easily be accommodated. As further commentaries will prove, many of Origen's contemporaries even felt it necessary to explicitly claim that the impurity these animals symbolically represent has no connection with their nature.

Elsewhere, even Origen himself resorted to the more dominant tradition of interpreting animal impurity. In his treatment of the main text of animal impurity in *Leviticus* 11, he, for example, highlights the notion that the impurity of animals refers to human immorality.⁷²⁵ Since in most of his interpretations, he offers a repetition of Philo's allegory, which I already presented through Clement's account, I will quote only one passage from this lengthy piece of writing, in which a discussion on the way impurity is contracted from immoral people (represented symbolically as impure animals) is presented:

⁷¹⁹ On Origen's growing doubt about the validity of Enochic literature and their use in *Biblical* exegesis, as demonstrated in his writings, cf. Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: the Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 197-198.

⁷²⁰ Mk 5:1-20; Lk 8:26-39; Mt 8:28-33.

⁷²¹ Rv 16:13; Rv 18:2.

⁷²² Cf. John Chrysostom: *In Epistulam ad Philippenses* 6.

⁷²³ Cf. Augustine, *In Iohannem Homiliae*, 7:6.

⁷²⁴ Consequently, this tradition is treated in the related, but separate chapter on the animal symbolism of wild and domesticated animals. Cf. Chapter 5.1.

⁷²⁵ Cf. Origen, *Homiliae in Leviticum* 7:5-7.

Now that it has been corroborated by apostolic and evangelic authority, we can see how any human can be seen either to be impure or to be pure. Every human has some sort of food in themselves, which they offer to those that come near to them, since it is impossible for us, humans to approach each other and join in conversation without giving or taking some taste of each other, either by response, question or some similar gesture ... So, as we said, every human has some sort of food in themselves, from which – if they are good – “out of the good treasure of the heart, produce good” (Lk 6:45), some pure food to their neighbor. But if they are, in turn, evil, they produce evil and offer impure food to their neighbors. So, all those who are innocent and righteous at heart, can be seen as pure animals, as sheep. They offer to their audience pure food as sheep. And it is similar in other cases. And thus, every human, just as we said, when they speak to their neighbors, either benefit their neighbors with their words, or harm them. And the animals are made either pure or impure by them, from which it can be seen that pure ones are to be used and impure ones need to be avoided.⁷²⁶

In this passage, Origen interprets the term “food” and even eating in a metaphorical way, referring to the interaction between humans. By doing so, he argues that through their interaction, humans (represented symbolically as either pure or impure animals) offer food for consumption to each other. This way, Origen attempts to tackle the difficulty arising from the conflict between the fact that the *Biblical* passage clearly refers to the transmission of impurity by contact and consumption and the Christian axiom of interpreting the Mosaic law in a supersessionist way.⁷²⁷ This difficulty did not seem to bother either the author of the *Epistle* or Clement of Alexandria, and that it does not arise in subsequent Christian literature either, might be due to the fact that Origen was much more aware – and therefore sensible – to Jewish interpretational tendencies due to his proximity to its

⁷²⁶ (Origen, *Homiliae in Leviticum* 7:5:2) His igitur ex auctoritate apostolica atque evangelica comprobatis, videamus quomodo unusquisque hominum vel mundus, vel immundus possit ostendi. Omnis homo habet aliquem in se cibum, quem accedenti ad se proximo praebeat. Non enim potest fieri, ut cum accesserimus adinvicem nos homines, et conserverimus sermonem, non aliquem, vel ex responsione, vel ex interrogatione, vel ex aliquo gestu aut capiamus inter nos gustum, aut praebeamus... ut ergo diximus, omnis homo habet in se aliquem cibum, ex quo qui sumpserit, si quidem bonus est, et de bono thesauro cordis sui profert bona, mundum cibum praebeat proximo suo. Si vero malus, et profert mala, immundum cibum praebeat proximo suo. Potest enim quis innocens et rectus corde, mundum animal ovis videri, et praebere audienti se cibum mundum tanquam ovis, quae est animal mundum. Similiter et in caeteris. Et ideo omnis homo, ut diximus, cum loquitur proximo suo, et sive prodest ei ex sermonibus suis, sive nocet, et mundum ei, aut immundum efficitur animal ex quibus vel mundis utendum, vel immundis praecipitur abstinendum.

⁷²⁷ Despite his emphasis on the importance of the prohibition of consumption, evidently not even Origen would have suggested that dietary regulations should be observed in a practical sense. Cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 8:29-30. Cf. Alex T Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999) 268 and also Ruth Clements, “Origen’s Readings of Romans in Peri Archon: (Re)constructing Paul,” in *Early Patristic Readings of Romans*, ed. Kathy L. Gaca and L. L. Welborn, 159-179 (New York: T & T Clark, 2005) here 166-167.

representatives and erudition in Jewish exegesis of the period.⁷²⁸ It is to these Jewish exegetical traditions that I will turn now.

⁷²⁸ Drake, *Slandering the Jew*, 39-41.

4.3. Cruel oppressors and hypocritical pigs

Similarly to their Christian contemporaries, rabbis were also facing a number of difficulties concerning the notion of animal impurity. But unlike them, for the rabbis, the difficulty did not result from a desire to downplay certain aspects of the interpretation of these laws, but from precisely the opposite: to try and uphold a twofold interpretational tendency. Similarly to the matter of sacrifices, the rabbis were interested in showing that although animal impurity in general and impure animals in particular had specific, symbolical meanings, the dietary laws continued to be valid practical regulations.

In this endeavor, the first step was to tackle the seemingly arbitrary nature of the distinction between pure and impure animals.⁷²⁹ Perceiving this as a question of primary relevance, rabbinic authorities attempted to explicitly anchor the observation of dietary laws to the concept of Jewish identity, but at the same time, address the various accusations formulated by pagan and (later on) Christian authors. The aim of the rabbis was to argue on the one hand, that dietary laws retain their importance and validity, and on the other, to answer – at least in some form – to the pressing internal and external curiosity concerning the reason behind the laws themselves. The rabbis, thus, constructed a form of divine command theory that is manifest already in the very early compilation of *Sifra*,⁷³⁰ generally believed to have been authored in the second century:⁷³¹

R. Eleazar b. Azaria asks: how do we know that men should not say: I am incapable of wearing shatnez [a dress made from two different plants], and I am incapable of eating pork, or that I am incapable to commit adultery? Because we are capable to do so. But what else could we do [than avoiding these], if our Father in heaven passed laws saying: “You shall be holy to me” (Ibid.).⁷³²

Turning the observation of the purity laws into an expression of loyalty and faithfulness toward the divine commands, which is the core of this midrash even became later on a recurrent leitmotif of

⁷²⁹ Although, there are rabbinic traditions supporting the idea that one should not search for the reason behind the law (cf. e.g. *bSanhedrin* 21b), it is – nevertheless – remarkable that the rabbis made no apparent attempt – not even for internal circles – at offering a direct answer to this question (as Mary Douglas notes with regard to Anglo-Saxon *Biblical* interpreters: “such interpretations are not interpretations at all”) Cf. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 45-47.

⁷³⁰ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, The Anchor Bible (Toronto: Doubleday, 1991) 718.

⁷³¹ See Günter Stemberger, „Sifra – Tosefta – Yerushalmi zur Redaktion und frühen Rezeption von Sifra,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 30, no. 3 (1999): 277-311, here 277-280.

⁷³² ר' אלעזר בן עזריה אומר מנין שלא יאמר אדם אי איפשי ללבוש שעטנז אי אפשי לאכול בשר חזיר, אי איפשי לבוא (Sifra Kedoshim 10:11) על הערוה, אבל איפשי מה אעשה ואבי שבשמים גזר עלי כך ת"ל ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי.

midrashic tradition and evolved into an eschatological statement.⁷³³ In fact, there is a tradition (although refused *in situ*⁷³⁴) that the future reward for the steadfastness of the Jews in matters of kashrut will embody an eschatological abrogation of the entire system of dietary regulations.⁷³⁵ So, even if Philo's interpretation of an ethical sense of dietary laws was not inherited into rabbinic tradition, the Jewish context in which this understanding was developed, namely an increasing tension between the observation of rituals and the unexplained nature of their origins, purpose and advantages for one's moral development were similarly perceived in rabbinic tradition.

In an early attempt at establishing their twofold interpretational process, the rabbis tried to show that the two approaches (allegorization and ritual observation) are not in contradiction at all. A passage similarly from *Sifra* marks this approach in a concise formulation, by identifying Gentiles with impure animals:

Follow my laws. These are the words that are written in the Torah. But even if such things as burglary, public nakedness, idolatry, blasphemy and bloodshed were not written like that, they should be part of the [natural] laws.⁷³⁶ And those are things that are brought upon them by the evil inclination and by the idolatrous peoples of the world: eating swine and wearing mixed clothes and the levirate marriage.⁷³⁷

The clash between the immoral Gentiles (who do the same as the evil inclination) and the yet unblemished Jews is expressed here in an overt language of pure-impure dichotomy. By assuming that the Gentiles would urge Jews to eat pork, the anonymous author of the passage claims that the consumption of swine is not a habit of Gentiles that they would preserve for themselves, but similarly to their idolatry (as also implied by the adjective of "peoples of the world"),⁷³⁸ something that they wish to urge the Jews to do as well. Eating swine is seen here not as an isolated practice, but as a

⁷³³ Cf. *Leviticus Rabbah* 13:2.

⁷³⁴ As it is clear from the subsequent passage of *Midrash on Psalms*, in which the position on the eschatological allowance is refused by the rest of the rabbis, and the distinction of the Jews based on their different diet is corroborated once more. Cf. *Midrash on Psalms* 146:4.

⁷³⁵ Cf. *Midrash on Psalms* 146:4. Notably, this rabbinic argument echoes the gist of the much earlier argument of Jesus in the Gospels namely that in the Messianic Age the written Torah will be eliminated for those who are redeemed. Cf. Stettler, *Purity of Heart* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) 494-502.

⁷³⁶ See also *bYoma* 67b. As for "natural" laws, see also Jonathan A. Jacobs, *Reason, Religion, and Natural Law: from Plato to Spinoza* (Oxford Scholarship online publication) 91.

⁷³⁷ (*Sifra Aharei Mot* 13:10) "אם לא נכתבו בדין היה לכתבן כגון הגזלות והערייות וע"א וקללת השם ושפיכת דמים שאלו לא נכתבו בדין היה לכתבן, ואלו שיצר הרע משיב עליהם ואומות העולם ע"א משיבין עליהם כגון אכילת חזיר ולבישת כלאים וחליצה."

⁷³⁸ The notion that Gentiles present a danger to Jews by trying to seduce them to idolatrous practices is an axiom of rabbinic tradition. Cf. eg *Sifre Num* 131 and the analysis of the passage by Stemmerger. Stemmerger, "Forbidden Gentile Food," 223-224.

contagious habit. With that the rabbis argue in a fashion similar to Clement, and reinterpret impurity and the consumption of impure animals in a framework of morality and seduction. Notably, the *Sifra* singles out pork-consumption as a practice of impure Gentiles, through which they mislead the Israelites. Behind this notion, one can discover a major shift in Late Antique Jewish society, which is worthy of some more detailed commentary.

4.3.1. The most troubling swine

Since swine is a domesticated animal and is only raised in order to produce meat,⁷³⁹ its prohibition could be seen as especially relevant already in the *Old Testament*.⁷⁴⁰ And since pork was – in general – refused by many other societies of the wider region in Antiquity,⁷⁴¹ there is reason to believe that encountering swine was a generally scarce experience of Israelites in pre-exilic times. It is, therefore, understandable that the general rise in pork-consumption in the Palestinian region, which – as archeological and sporadic textual evidence⁷⁴² indicates – occurred in the Hellenistic period,⁷⁴³ and coincided with the process of Hellenization and the ascent of Greek and then Roman political power in the region. Consequently, it was seen by law-abiding Jews as a phenomenon that coincided with the increasing number of Gentiles in their vicinity. The result of this experience was a more emphatic attention toward the issue of pork-consumption and toward the Gentiles, who were marked – perhaps most notably – by their preference for eating this impure animal. Therefore, Jews did not only construct their identity through the refusal of consuming pork – as evidenced by the examples from the Philonic corpus and the *Book of Maccabees*.⁷⁴⁴ Through the use of the metonymic formula “you are what you eat!”,⁷⁴⁵ the rabbis could also establish⁷⁴⁶ the identification of the Gentiles with their eating of swine. This, in turn, enabled a more complex identification of the impurity of the swine with

⁷³⁹ Kraemer, *Jewish Eating*, 32.

⁷⁴⁰ Cf. Is 65:4, where consumption of pork is considered as a major mark of the impiety of Jews.

⁷⁴¹ Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993) 176-177.

⁷⁴² The presence of swine in the region is corroborated directly by the Gospel-episode of the gadarene swine (Mk 5:1-20; Lk 8:26-39; Mt 8:28-33) and indirectly more than once by early rabbinic dicta against raising swine (*mBaba Kama* 7:7, *mSheviit* 8:10).

⁷⁴³ Brian Hesse, “Pig Lovers and Pig Haters: Patterns of Palestinian Pork Production,” in *Journal of Ethnobiology* 10, no. 2 (1990): 195-225, here 218; Justin Lev-Tov, “Upon what Meat doth this our Caesar Feed ...? A Dietary Perspective on Hellenistic and Roman Influence in Palestine,” in *Zeichen aus Text und Stein: Studien auf dem Weg zu einer Archäologie des Neuen Testaments*, ed. Stefan Alkier, and Jürgen Zangenberg, 420-446 (Tübingen: Francke, 2003).

⁷⁴⁴ See 2Mac 6:18-20 and also 2Mac 7:1-6.

⁷⁴⁵ On the origins of the phrase, cf. Massimo Montanari, *Food is Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) 122. A classic and concise articulation of this view can be found in Claude Fischler, “Food, Self and Identity,” *Social Science Information* 27/2 (1988): 275–292, 279–282.

⁷⁴⁶ As for the applicability of the term to rabbinic thinking, see Rosenblum, *Food and Identity*, 45-46 and 53-154.

that of the Gentiles, claiming that in the Mosaic prohibition of pork-meat, there lies an allegorical reference to the Gentiles, and perhaps even to certain Gentiles in particular.

The contrast between swine as the marker of Gentiles and Jews following explicit and implicit divine ordinances is further elaborated in various accounts of the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Temple. The compilation⁷⁴⁷ of *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* describes the end of the siege in the following way:

They brought a catapult and set it in front of the wall of Jerusalem. They brought cedar spears, put them in the catapult and hit the wall with them, until it was pierced. Then they brought the head of a pig, loaded the catapult with it and threw it toward the [sacrificial] limbs on the altar. At this very moment Jerusalem was captured.⁷⁴⁸

The midrash claims that the presence of a carcass of swine in the innermost part of the Temple marked the end of Temple sacrifice. Whereas the trope of the desecration of the Temple with the filth, sacrifice or simply the presence of pig already surfaced in the *Old Testament*,⁷⁴⁹ and in the Second Temple period,⁷⁵⁰ it is notable that *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* links it with the last siege of Jerusalem and the final destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. As a testament to the rabbis awareness of the recurrence of the trope (of impure animals desecrating the Temple), the *Palestinian Talmud's* account links the story of Roman siege to a previous one:

R. Simon said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: during the reign of the Greeks, they used to lower two baskets of gold [over the walls of Jerusalem], and two sheep were sent up ... R. Levi, said: the same happened during the wicked Kingdom. They lowered two baskets of gold, for which two sheep were sent up. Finally, as they lowered the two baskets of gold, two pigs were sent up [by the besieging Romans]. But they did not even reach halfway, as one pig stuck [its hoof] in the wall and it trembled. And the pig itself was thrown back forty parasangs from the Land of Israel. It was at that very moment that the sins of Israel

⁷⁴⁷ Despite the fact that the *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* as a compilation is dated to the end of the third century at the earliest (Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 226), the fact that the same story is recounted by Origen in his commentary on the *Gospel of Matthew*, it is reasonably assumed that *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* preserved an early version of the legend of the siege. Cf. Har-Peled, *The Dialogical Beast*, 105-106.

⁷⁴⁸ (*Abot de Rabbi Nathan*, A 4) הביאו לו קשת של זירים ותיפ"א כנגד החומה של ירושלים. הביאו לו נסרים של ארז ונתנו לתוך קשת של זירים והיה משליך אותו כלפי אברים שע"ג המזבח. זירים והיה מכה בהן על החומה עד שפרץ בה פירצה. הביאו ראש חזיר ונתנו לתוך קשת של זירים והיה משליך אותו כלפי אברים שע"ג המזבח. באותה שעה נלכדה ירושלים.

⁷⁴⁹ Cf. Is 66:3 and the commentaries of Har-Peled (Har-Peled, *The Dialogical Beast*, 97-98);

⁷⁵⁰ See 1Mac 1:43-49 and cf. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 12:253.

resulted in the cessation of daily sacrifices and that the Temple was brought down.⁷⁵¹

The difference between the two sieges of Jerusalem discussed in the passage is notable. Whereas, during the first siege in the Hasmonean period,⁷⁵² the besiegers replaced the obligatory lamb sacrifices with improper (but not at all impure) goats, and the resulting ritual crisis is promptly solved by divine intervention, in the second siege, the Romans replaced the lambs with swine, animals that are impure, and the result is a complete annihilation of the defenses of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the Temple.⁷⁵³ Thus, the authors of the passage not only emphasize the direct relationship between the presence of impure animals and the end of the Temple-cult, but also the relationship between the Romans and this most notable impure animal, the swine. It is precisely the use of swine that grants final victory to the Romans. The passage lays special attention on the contrast between the impurity of swine and the previously pure nature of the Land of Israel by claiming that although the two pigs managed to pierce the walls of the city, they were thrown far beyond the borders of the Land of Israel. Moreover, through the remark that it was the sins of Israel that led to (גרמו העונות) the cessation of the Temple-sacrifices, the rabbis also manage to propose a non-practical interpretation of the impurity of animals. In this passage swine are not simply bearers of impurity, but also tools of divine punishment, just like the Romans. Thus, it seems appropriate from the perspective of the rabbis, to claim that one represents the other.

The identification of the swine with not only Gentiles, but particularly Romans is not a matter of contingency. Several factors have been suggested in secondary literature as an initial reason for the identification of Rome with the swine, among them the use of pig-symbols in Roman military insignia; a pig-statue erected by Romans in Aelia Capitolina; and a myth of the foundation of Rome from the *Aeneid* in which the presence of pigs define the future place of the Imperial Capital and namesake of the Empire.⁷⁵⁴ However, as Har-Peled points out,⁷⁵⁵ these facts are never referred to in

⁷⁵¹ ר' סימון בשם רבי יהושע בן לוי בימי מלכות יון היו משלשלין להן שתי קופות של זהב והיו מעלין להן שני טליים פעם אחת (yBerakhot 4:1) שילשלו להן שתי קופות של זהב והיו מעלין להן שני גדיים באותה שעה האיר הקדוש ברוך הוא עיניהם ומצאו שני טליים מבוקרים בלישכת הטלאים על אותה שעה העיד ר' יודה בר בבא על תמיד של שחר שקרב בארבע שעות א"ר לוי אף בימי מלכות רשעה הזאת היו משלשלין להן שתי קופות של זהב והיו מעלין להם שני כבשים ובסוף שלשלו להן ב' קופות של זהב והעלו להם שני חזירים לא הספיקו להגיע לחצי חומה עד שנעץ החזיר בחומה ונזדעזעה החומה וקפץ מ' פרסה מארץ ישראל באותה שעה גרמו העונות ובטל התמיד וחרב הבית.

⁷⁵² Maurice Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005) 40-41.

⁷⁵³ Cf. Har-Peled, *The Dialogical Beast*, 107.

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. Har-Peled, *The Dialogical Beast*, 117-129; Virgil, *Aeneid* 3:387-393, cf. Nora Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns: Ennius' Annales and Virgil's Aeneid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) 86-88.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid. 130-131.

rabbinic tradition and, therefore, it is difficult to prove that they served as any sort of basis for the rabbinic notion. An alternative and more recent idea claims that the principal reason for the concept was the Roman preference for pork and the inseparable link between Roman agriculture and the raising and eating of pigs.⁷⁵⁶ However, as the *Books of Maccabees* show, the identification of eating swine with foreign, Gentile powers dates back long before the emergence of Rome as an actual threat or perceived symbol to Judaism.

I do not wish to claim that these particular links remained unobserved by the rabbis. They might have even bolstered the identification of Romans with the swine. However, I wish to call attention to the political perspective behind the identification. From the vantage point of the rabbis, Rome was not only one of the political players in the region, but the most distinct and only visible representation of foreign rule in Palestine.⁷⁵⁷ As such, it became the most apparent – and for the rabbis of Palestine⁷⁵⁸ – *pars pro toto* symbol of non-Jewish political power over the Israelites.⁷⁵⁹ In this light, the identification of the two is not so much a question of “why”, but of “how exactly”.

In the above, early sources (quoted in the name of R. Shimon and R. Joshua b. Levi, both authorities from 3rd century Palestine⁷⁶⁰), it is the oppressing cruelty of Rome that apparently warrants their identification with the swine. Viewing Rome, as an oppressor, could lead someone into believing that it is only the oppressing Gentile that is seen as an impure animal. The rabbis, however, also state that the power position of Rome has an effect on how Gentiles behave in general. *Tanhuma* Shemini contains the following tradition:

“And the pig” (Lv 11:7). This is the evil Kingdom of Edom, about which it was said: “The boar from the forest ravages it” (Ps 80:14). Why is it compared to a pig (חזיר)? Because the Holy one, blessed be he, will turn its [own] (החזיר) judgment on it. How? The Holy one, blessed be he, will announce that all who studied the *Torah*, will come and take their prize. And the Gentiles will say: give us our prize, for even we have observed such and such laws. To this, the Holy one, blessed be he, will say: all those, who did not eat the abominations and the crawling things, shall come and take their rewards. And in this very moment they

⁷⁵⁶ Cf. Rosenblum, *Food and Identity*, 55, esp. fn 76.

⁷⁵⁷ Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) 11-14.

⁷⁵⁸ Notably, in none of the Babylonian retellings of the siege of Jerusalem (*bBaba Kama* 82b, *bSotah* 49b, *bMenachot* 64b) can one find a reference to the Roman siege of Jerusalem. These accounts only deal with the siege during the kin-strife of Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, although the episode of the swine sticking its hoof into the walls is clearly identical to the one attributed to the Roman siege in the *Talmud* of Eretz Israel.

⁷⁵⁹ Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 15-17.

⁷⁶⁰ See Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud*, 84, 90.

will receive their verdict, as it is said: “eating the flesh of pigs, vermin, and rodents, shall come to an end together” (Is 66:17).⁷⁶¹

The etymological opening of the midrash (החזיר - חזיר) is turned into a statement about the nature of Roman leadership. Although the nations (הגוים) claim to have observed certain divine regulations, they had – in fact – “followed one in the center” (Is 66:17) and ate impure things, for which they will be destroyed together with their leader, Rome. Clearly, this midrash can be interpreted as a subtle remark on the Roman preference for pork,⁷⁶² but it has a more important message: it offers a metonymic identification: the Romans eat pork, and through that, they mislead the nations into committing sins.

In a verse from the *Psalms* a boar⁷⁶³ is presented as a destroyer. The rabbis took this as an important cue and offered a lengthy interpretation of it in *Midrash on Psalms*:

“The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the forest feed on it” (Ps 80:14). The “boar from the forest” is the major general, while “all that move in the forest” are his subordinate generals. Another explanation: “from the forest”. If you prove worthy, it will come from the river [יָאֹר] and if not, it will come from the forest [יַעַר]: from among the animals of the thicket.⁷⁶⁴

In the second part of the interpretation, the midrash proposes that the fate of Israel will depend on its conduct regarding the observation of the covenant. Notably, there is no scenario in which Israel will not be dominated by a foreign power.⁷⁶⁵ But in case they act properly, the rule of the “kingdoms” will be like the rule of more gentle aquatic animals. The implicit claim is that such a rule is opposed to

⁷⁶¹ ואת החזיר זו מלכות אדום הרשעה, שנאמר יכרסמנה חזיר מיער, למה נמשלה לחזיר שעתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא (Tanhuma Shemini 14) להחזיר עליה את מדת הדין, כיצד לעתיד לבא הקדוש ברוך הוא מוציא כרוז כל מי שעסק בתורה יבא ויטול שכרו, ואף הגוים אומרים תן לנו שכרינו שאף אנו עשינו מצוה פלונית, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא כל מי שלא אכל שקצים ורמשים יבא ויטול שכרו, באותה שעה הם נוטלין איפופסין שלהן, שנאמר אוכלי בשר החזיר והשקץ והעכבר יחדו יספו נאם ה'.

⁷⁶² Although rabbis never explicitly state so, I am inclined to believe that they could also have been aware of the “virtues” of consuming swine-flesh. As a Jewish precursor to them, Philo admitted the strangeness of the fact that swine was forbidden, although it “is confessed to be the nicest of all meats by those who eat it” (Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 4:101). There is also a *Talmudic* notion that by the prohibition of the swine, Jews are refused a delicious meal (*bHullin* 109b). Pork-consumption was both a marker of high status toward poorer citizens in Rome, and a general expression of Roman style in diet. See M. Corbier, “The Broad Bean and the Moray: Social Hierarchies and Food in Rome,” in *Food: A Culinary History*, ed. J. L. Flandrin and M. Montanari, 128-140 (New York: Penguin, 2000) here 133.

⁷⁶³ Note that the Hebrew text does not make a difference between wild boar and domesticated swine, and therefore the rabbis took the appearance of the same expression (חזיר) in both the *Psalms* (80:14) and *Leviticus* as an indication that the two verses can be treated as co-referential. The LXX also uses the same expression (ὕς) and it is only in the Vulgate that the distinction between *sus* and *aper* arises.

⁷⁶⁴ יכרסמנה חזיר מיער. זה השר צבא. וזיו שדי ירענה. זה איסטרטיקולין [דבר אחר] וזיו שדי ירענה. זה וזה. דבר (Midrash on Psalms 80:6) אחר יכרסמנה חזיר מיער. אם זכיתם מיאור, ואם לאו מיער, מן חיותא דהורשא.

⁷⁶⁵ There is an alternative to this tradition in the *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* which claims that “so long as Israel do the will of God the nations do not rule over them ... so long as Israel do his will, no nation or people kills them or harms them or smites them. (*Abot de Rabbi Nathan* A 34).

the harshness and brutality of the rule of an animal from the thicket (דְּחֹרֶשָׁא). In both cases, the boar/swine serves as a metaphorical representation of the cruelty of the Gentile rulers, which is, also a form of punishment for the sins of the Israelites. Thus, the swine of these passages is not an independent agent, but a tool in the divine plan.

4.3.2. The impure Empires

The swine singled out as the most notable – and perhaps most desired⁷⁶⁶ – item of the list of impure animals and as a symbol for the Romans runs in some mild contradiction with the fact that in the *Book of Leviticus*, there is almost⁷⁶⁷ no indication that swine would be exceptional among impure animals. And while many of the animals prohibited in *Leviticus* never constituted a major part of the nourishment of a non-Jew (rock-badgers or buzzards might have been part of one's everyday encounter with the fauna in Late Antique Palestine, but they certainly were not consumed on a regular basis), and swine possibly could, the rabbis were still driven by their own desire to account for the dietary laws to find some sort of explanation for the presence of other impure animals in *Leviticus'* list. I claim that it was such a drive that ultimately led to the development of a more general identification of the rest of the impure animals with Gentiles, even despite the fact that they were not part of any non-Jewish menu.

This second phase of rabbinic exegesis can be fairly well dated by the authorities to whom they are attributed. R. Judah b. Simon, R. Berekiah and R. Helbo, the only ones the below midrashim quote with name are all from the beginning of the fourth century.⁷⁶⁸ The most detailed treatment of the entire list can be found in *Leviticus Rabbah*:

Moses saw how the kingdoms acted. The camel (Lv 11:4) is Babylon, as it is said: "O daughter Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall they be, who pay you back what you have done to us!" (Ps 137:8). The rock badger (Lv 11:5) is Media. In this regard, the rabbis and R. Judah b. Simon disagreed. The rabbis said: the rock badger has signs of purity and those of impurity as well. And it was the same with the Kingdom of Media, which raised both righteous and wicked people⁷⁶⁹ ... R.

⁷⁶⁶ The idea that if there were no dietary laws, Jews would very much enjoy the consumption of pork is ostensibly present in Jewish tradition. The words of Eleazar b. Azaria claiming that he is very much "capable of eating pork" (*Sifra Kedoshim* 10:11) seems to me a clear admission of this notion. Added to this is the rabbinic tradition, according to which the delights of consuming pork are known to both Israelites and God, and – in order to make up for this loss – Israelites are provided with a specific kind of meal (the "shibbufa") (see *Leviticus Rabbah* 22:10).

⁷⁶⁷ A notable peculiarity concerning swine in the *Biblical* tradition is that it is the only impure animal that transmits its impurity also in the form of a carcass (Dt 14:8).

⁷⁶⁸ See Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud*, 92, 93, 96.

⁷⁶⁹ Probably Haman and Mordecai or Haman and Ahasureus.

Judah b. Simon said: Dareius, the last son of Esther was pure from his mother's side and impure from his father's side.⁷⁷⁰

This passage marks the beginning of an important development of rabbinic tradition concerning impure animals. One may encounter here, for the first time, the rabbinic tradition, according to which the sequence of impure animals fit another, political sequence: that of the Kingdoms. According to this midrash, through forbidding certain animals as impure, Moses was referring to another kind of impurity that of the Gentiles. If swine was a representative of the most notorious (and the only present) Empire, and if it was listed as fourth in an enumeration, then the rabbis could safely rely on a wide-spread and accepted interpretative technique: focusing precisely on such a fourfold partition of Israelite history, the sequence of four Empires.⁷⁷¹

Another explanation: The camel (Lv 11:4) is Babylonia, because it praises with the throat. This refers to praising the Holy, blessed be he. R. Berekiah and R. Helbo said in R. Yishmael b. Nahman's name: all the separate praises of David, this evil one [Nebuchadnezzar] summarized in one verse, saying: "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven" (Dn 4:37). The rock-badger (Lv 11:5) is Media, because it praises with the throat. This refers to praising the Holy, blessed be he, as it is said: "Thus says King Cyrus of Media" (Ezr 1:2). The hare (Lv 11:6) is Greece, because it praises with the throat. This refers to praising the Holy, blessed be he. Alexander the Macedonian, when he saw R. Simeon the Just, said: Blessed be God, the God of Simeon the Just. The pig (Lv 11:7) is Edom, which does not chew the cud, that is to say: it does not praise the Holy one blessed be he. On top of that, it even swears and blasphemes, saying: "Whom have I in heaven" (Ps 73:25).⁷⁷²

The midrash opens up with an etymological argument (based on the similarity between the roots regurgitate (גרר) and throat (גרין) and finds that despite their hostile nature, each of the three kingdoms paid homage to God. Rome, however, was not content in failing to honor God, it actually blasphemed him. Thus, the unfavorable comparison between Rome and the rest of the evil kingdoms reaches a new height in this argument. Although no actual reference is given to a specific incident, the

⁷⁷⁰ משה ראה את המלכיות בעיסוקן. את הגמל ואת הארנבת ואת השפן. את הגמל, זו בבל, אשרי שישלם לך את גמולך (Leviticus Rabbah 13:5) שגמלת לנו. את השפן, זו מדי. רבנין ור' יהודה בר' סימון. רבנין אמ' מה השפן הזה יש בו סימני טומאה וסימני טהרה כך היתה מלכות מדי מעמדת צדיק ורשע. אמ' ר' יהודה בר' סימון דריוש האחרון בנה שלאסתר היה טהור מאמו וטמא מאביו.

⁷⁷¹ See also chapter 5.4.4.

⁷⁷² ד"א את הגמל זו בבל כי מעלה גרה היא שמקלסת להקב"ה רבי ברכיה ורבי חלבו בשם ר' ישמעאל בר נחמן כל (Leviticus Rabbah 13:5) מה שפרט דוד כלל אותו רשע בפסוק אחד שנאמר כען אנה נבוכדנצר משבח ומרומם ומהדר למלך שמיא. ואת השפן זו מדי כי מעלה גרה הוא שמקלסת להקב"ה שנא' כה אמר כורש מלך פרס ... ואת הארנבת זו יון כי מעלת גרה היא שמקלסת להקב"ה, אלכסנדרוס מוקדן כד הוה חמי לר"ש הצדיק אומר ברוך ה' אלהי של שמעון הצדיק, את החזיר זה אדום והוא גרה לא יגר שאינה מקלסת להקב"ה ולא דיין שאינה מקלסת אלא מחרפת ומגדפת ואומרת מי לי בשמים

accusation is certainly of theological nature. The real problem with Rome is that it mocked and blasphemed God.⁷⁷³ Since the Roman tolerance for the religious diversity of the Empire (especially the protection of Jewish religious tradition)⁷⁷⁴, as well as the unlikelihood of Gentile kingdom actually professing the supremacy of God, must have been obvious to the rabbis, I am inclined to believe that the real aim of this particular rabbinic statement is not simply anti-Roman, but in fact anti-Christian. The subsequent midrash of the compilation argues in a similar fashion:

Another explanation: the camel (Lv 11:4) is Babylonia, because it raises a foreigner high.⁷⁷⁵ Babylonia raises Daniel, as it is said “Daniel remained at the king’s court” (Dn 2:49). The rock badger (Lv 11:5) is Media, because it raised a foreigner high. Media raises Mordecai high, as it is said “Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate” (Est 2:21). The hare (Lv 11:6) is Greece, for it raises a foreigner high. Greece raises the righteous. When Alexander was inspecting Simeon the Just, he rose to his feet. The heretics asked him: ‘you are standing up in front of the Jews?’ He answered: ‘when I go to battle, I see his likeness and I am victorious.’ The pig (Lv 11:7) is Edom. It does not treat foreigners fairly, and it does not raise the righteous high. But not only does [Rome] fail to do that, but they also murder them, as it is said “I was angry with my people, I profaned my heritage,” (Is 47:6). My heritage is R. Akiva and his companions.⁷⁷⁶

In this passage, the basis is a similar etymological argument as before, marking the resemblance between stranger (גר) and throat (גריון). The rabbis claim that each of the Gentile kingdoms elevated at least one righteous Jew, but Rome turns out to be the worst of them, for it slaughtered the most righteous. The historical reference is to the martyrdom of R. Akiba and his companions.⁷⁷⁷ In the conclusion of the midrash, a different etymological argument (based on the connection between “to

⁷⁷³ The contradiction is not phrased this accurately in the present passage, but the same Psalm-verse is used in such a sense both in *Leviticus Rabbah* (7:6) and in *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* (4:9). The framework is similar in these two loci: contrary to other Gentile kingdoms, Edom/Rome is denigrated for its failure to acknowledge God.

⁷⁷⁴ Cf. Maijastina Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: the Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2009) 14-16.

⁷⁷⁵ The interpretation relies on a metaphorical understanding of the Biblical term *chews the cud* “מעלה גרה” (lit. brings up the cud). The rabbis understood the second word etymologically as stranger (גר).

⁷⁷⁶ (Leviticus Rabbah 13:5) מעלה גרה היא שמגדלת את דניאל שנאמר ודניאל בתרע מלכא ואת השפן זו מדי כי מעלה גרה היא שמגדלת את מרדכי שנא' ומרדכי יושב בשער המלך ואת הארנבת זו יון כי מעלה גרה היא שמגדלת הצדיקים אלכסנדרוס כד הוה חמי גרה היא שמגדלת את מרדכי שנא' ומרדכי יושב בשער המלך לשמעון הצדיק הוה קאים על רגליה אמרין ליה מינאי מן קדם יהודאי את קאים אמר להם בשעה שאני יוצא למלחמה דמותו אני רואה ונוצח ואת החזיר זו אדום והוא גרה לא יגר ושאינה מגדלת הצדיקים ולא די שאינה מגדלת אלא שהורגת אותם ה"ד קצפתי על עמי חללתי נחלתי וגו' נחלתי ר"ע וחבירי.

⁷⁷⁷ Cf. *jTaanit* 68d and Schäfer’s latest evaluation: Peter Schäfer, “Bar Kokhba and the Rabbis,” in Ibid. (ed.) *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2003) 1-23, here 17-19.

restore” (חזר) and “pig” (חזיר)) leads to a claim concerning Israel’s future glory and triumph over the Gentiles:

Another explanation: the camel (Lv 11:4) is Babylonia, it raises a foreigner: a foreign empire after itself. And the hare (Lv 11:5) is Greece, because it raises a foreigner: a foreign empire after itself. And the pig (Lv 11:7) is Edom, which does not raise a foreigner: there is no Empire after it. And why is it called a pig? Because it restores⁷⁷⁸ the crown to its master, as it is said: “Those who have been saved shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s” (Ob 1:21).⁷⁷⁹

As a result of a lengthy process of *translatio imperii*, the Roman Empire was given domination over the known world. However, its seemingly absolute power, especially evident for the Jews of Palestine after the Bar Kochba revolt⁷⁸⁰ is just a preface for returning the crown to its rightful owner, the people of Israel. It is the dominance of Rome, the swine which will precede and directly lead to the eschatological victory of Israel. In the framework of pure and impure animals: the presence of the swine, the *pars pro toto* representation of Gentile impurity signifies the oppression of Israel. And – as a consequence – it is the downfall of the most impure animal, the swine which will herald the arrival of the messianic era.

4.3.3. The hypocritical pig

So far, I have distinguished between two interpretational tendencies regarding the identification of Rome as the most notable impure animal, the swine. In an earlier, 3rd century tradition, Rome is represented by swine due to its cruelty in dealing with the Israelites, and – at the same time – as a divine tool in punishing Israelites for their transgressions. In a somewhat later, tradition attribute to 4th century interpreters, preserved mostly by *Leviticus Rabbah*, one encounters an exegetical trend, which identifies Rome with the swine, as they both occupy the fourth place in their respective lists

⁷⁷⁸ Again, the rabbis argue on the basis of a supposed etymological connection between pig (חזיר) and to return (חזר).

⁷⁷⁹ (Leviticus Rabbah 13:5) כי מעלה גרה הוא, שמגדלת את הצדיקים, ודניאל בתרע מלכא. ואת השפן, זו מדי. כי מעלה גרה היא, שמגדלת את הצדיקים. אלכסנדרוס מקדון כד גרה הוא, שמגדלת את הצדיקים, ומרדכי ישב בשער המלך. ואת הארנבת, זו יוון. כי מעלת גרה היא, שמגדלת את הצדיקים. אלכסנדרוס מקדון כד הוא חמי לשמעון הצדיק הוה קאים על ריגליה אמ' ליה יהודאי לית את יכיל למיחמי, מן קדם יהודיי את קאים, אמ' להן בשעה שאני יוצא למלחמה כדמותו אני רואה ונוצח. ואת החזיר, זו אדום. והוא גרה לא יגר, שאינה מגדלת את הצדיקים, ולא דייה שאינה מגדלת אלא הורגת, הה"ד קצפתי על ד"א את הגמל, זו בבל. כי מעלה גרה הוא, שגררה מלכות אחריה. את השפן, זו מדי. כי מעלה. עמי חללתי נחלתי ואתנם בידך, זה ר' עקיבה וחביריו גרה הוא, שגררה מלכות אחריה. את הארנבת, זה יוון, כי מעלה גרה הוא, שגררה מלכות אחריה. ואת החזיר, זו אדום, והוא גרה לא יגר, שלא גררה מלכות אחריה. ולמה נקרא שמה חזיר, שמחזרת עטרה לבעלה, הה"ד ועלו מושיעים בהר ציון לשפט את הר עשו והיתה לי"י המלוכה.

⁷⁸⁰ The proximity and relatively vivid memory of the horrors of the revolt and the Roman measures taken against the Jews after its end in the following generation of rabbis might have been the reason for the organization of the two midrashim. Notably, the same etymological argument about the swine and the restoration of power to Israel is quoted by R. Meir, a third generation tanna: “Finally they asked him [R. Meir] why the pig is called ‘hazir’, and he replied, ‘Because it is destined to restore the sovereignty to its owners.’” (*Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 1:9)

(of the four Empires and of the four impure land animals). There is, however, one further tradition, belonging chronologically to the second phase, in which the rabbis focus on a specific reason for the swine's impurity, and attribute Rome's identification with the swine to that.

An emphatical focus on the political aspects of Roman dominion and its relations to the etymology and physical characters of swine is present in a commentary provided by fourth and fifth generation amoraim (R. Pinehas and R. Hilkiyah):⁷⁸¹

R. Pinehas and R. Hilkiyah said in the name of R. Simon: from among all the prophets, only two has made it clear [that Edom is symbolized by the swine]: Asaph and Moses. Moses said: "The pig, for even though it has divided hoofs..." (Lv 11:7). And why is it compared to a pig? It means that [Rome] is just like the pig, when it lies on the ground, showing its feet and saying: 'look, I am pure'. Similarly this Wicked kingdom loots, plunders and robs appearing to be establishing law and order.⁷⁸²

The tradition argues that pig was chosen as a symbol of Rome in accordance with its seemingly pure, but in fact impure status. The midrash interprets the physical aspects of pigs and their impurity as a reference to the cruel nature of Roman dominion in contrast to a promised justice. The allegorical understanding of the swine is markedly different from Philo's, that of the Church Fathers and even earlier rabbinic notions inasmuch as swine is not taken to represent one or two specific human vices (failure to venerate God, carnality etc.) but understood as a being of liminal nature. The real problem is not that Romans are cruel, but that they pretend to be just, and, therefore, entice their subjects to obedience, just as a seemingly pure swine would incite a Jew to consume its meat. By fulfilling one of the criteria of being pure, Romans metaphorically pose a threat not only to the physical integrity of Israel, but as hypocritical deceivers also threaten Israel's moral integrity. Thus, the biggest danger is posed by those who seemingly fit the legal requirements, but in nature do not match them.⁷⁸³ Swine is thus the most appropriate symbol for the most dangerous other, Romans, who had occasionally been seen as similar and even as some sort of allies to Judaism in the earliest periods of Late

⁷⁸¹ See Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud*, 90 and 96.

⁷⁸² (Genesis Rabbah 65:1) ר' פינחס ר' חלקיה בשם ר' סימון מכל הנביאים לא פירסמוה אלא שנים, אסף ומשה, אסף יכרסמנה חזיר מיער, (Genesis Rabbah 65:1) ומשה אמר את החזיר כי מפריס פרסה, למה הוא מושלה בחזיר, אלא מה חזיר הזה בשעה שהוא רובץ הוא מיפשט את טלפיו כלומר שאני טהור, כך מלכות הרשעה הזו גוזלת וחומסת נראת כאילו מצעת בימה.

⁷⁸³ Notably, the same ambivalence is no reason for concern in the case of Media (symbolized by a rock-badger), as it either meant that both a righteous and a wicked person originate from this Empire, or either that one of its representatives originate partly from a "righteous" (Jewish) person.

Antiquity,⁷⁸⁴ but – perhaps due to their alliance with Christianity – turned out to be the most terrible threat for the Jewish community.⁷⁸⁵ The same argument is expressed with one important addition in *Leviticus Rabbah*:

R. Pinehas and R. Hilkiyah said in the name of R. Simeon: from among all the prophets, only two has made it clear [that Edom is symbolized by the swine]: Asaph and Moses. Asaph said: “The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it” (Ps 80:14) and Moses said: “The pig, for even though it has divided hoofs...” (Lv 11:7). And why is it compared to a pig? It means that [Rome] is just like the pig. When it lies on the ground, it shows its feet and says: ‘look, I am pure’. Similarly the Kingdom of Rome loots, plunders and robs appearing to be establishing law and order. Just like a governor, who while sentencing thieves, adulterers and those who engaged into magical practices, told a councilor: ‘I have done these three yesterday in the night.’⁷⁸⁶

In this passage, the argument of hypocrisy is similarly attributed to R. Pinehas. The text of *Leviticus Rabbah* bears very close resemblance to that of *Genesis Rabbah*. It also revolves around the image of a hypocritical behavior, and the moral impurity of a ruler. The only major difference is the presence of boasting. Here, Rome, the swine is not simply unforthcoming, but actively brags about its crimes. In line with the observation of the relatively late dating of these commentaries (the second half of the fourth century, I am tempted to see in this passage not only as a critique of the Roman Empire, but once again, one of a Christian Roman Empire. The rabbinic argument is not only that the Romans misrepresent themselves but also that they are proud of their cruelty. I wish to argue that the rabbis, who previously were facing a Roman government, with (merely) a claim for world dominance, were now experiencing a Christian Empire in which religious minorities – among them the once equal community of the Jews – were increasingly marginalized and persecuted.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸⁴ Cf. Yuval, *Two Nations*, 11-13. As for the gradual deterioration of Rome's image, see Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem against Rome*, 360-380.

⁷⁸⁵ Cf. Nicholas deLange, “Jews in the Age of Justinian,” in *The Age of Justinian*, ed. Michael Maas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 401-427, here 418-419.

⁷⁸⁶(*Leviticus Rabbah* 13:5, Vilna edition) אסף אמר ומהשה, אסף אמר יכרסמנה חזיר מעער, משה אמר ואת החזיר כי מפריס פרסה למה נמשלה לחזיר לומר לך מה חזיר בשעה שהוא רובץ מציא טלפוי ואומר ראו שאני טהור כך מלכות אדום מתגאה וחומסת וגוזלת ונראת כאלו מצעת בימה מעשה בשלטון אחד שהיה הורג הגנבים והמנאפים והמכשפים גחין ואמר 'לסנקליטין שלשתן עשיתי בלילה א'.

⁷⁸⁷ Cf. Peter Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1995), 188-191.

4.4. Impurity as a taxonomy of the world

The rabbinic treatment of animal impurity is markedly different from Christian tradition in one aspect. It does not only have a framework of mutually exclusive and contrasting categories of pure and impure animals, but through its unique, continued observation of the Mosaic dietary regulations – in contrast to other peoples – also an evident point of reference in its metaphorical interpretation. The exact correspondence between individual impure animals and individual groups of Gentiles might have been subject to discussions in rabbinic tradition, but the dichotomy of pure and impure animals, in which impure animals always represented Gentiles, was never in question. Definitely, there is a difference between eating an impure animal and being symbolically represented by one. However, overcoming the metonymical relationship, binding the two concepts together was easier for the rabbis than for Christians.

The development of Christian tradition exhibits a reverse situation. By refusing to obey the dietary regulations from the very beginning, producing an allegorical interpretation for impure animals was never a challenge. But the same refusal also deprived representatives of the Christian tradition from a clear point of reference in applying their allegorical image. There was no hesitation about identifying one's own community with pure animals. However, in lack of actual points of reference (that is: the presence of a group other than *us* that had a *practical* relationship with impure animals) interpreters went in directions different from their rabbinic counterparts.

I have already presented the commentaries of Clement and Origen, in which impure animals were interpreted as symbols of human carnality, idolatry, and several other vices. However, in later tradition, the lack of one specific “other”, drove Church fathers to find a universal application to their interpretations. In line with that, what one observes in the development of Christian tradition is an exploration of the variety of impure animals to describe the entirety of the human world. An early representative of that, Irenaeus wrote in his *Adversus Haereses*:

All this was said already in a metaphorical way in the Laws, describing humans in the form of animals. Those which have double hoofs and ruminant are declared pure, while those that lack either or both of these it separates as impure. So who are the pure? Those who pass through their way with a strong faith in Father and Son ... the impure are those that have neither double hoofs and which do not ruminant. These are [the people] who neither believe in God, nor consider his words: the abomination of Gentiles. And those that while ruminating, do not have the double hoofs and are impure: this is the depiction of Jews, who have the words of God in their ears, but do not tie it in a stable way to Father

and Son ... those that have double hoofs, but do not ruminate are clearly the entirety of heretics.⁷⁸⁸

The tripartite concept of impure animals established in this interpretation is more complex than the text of *Leviticus*, which only operates with the two mutually exclusive categories of pure and impure animals. Irenaeus distinguishes between pure animals (implicitly: symbols of Christians), and three subcategories of impure animals. By elaborating on this concept, the Church father argues that the three categories of impurity correspond to three levels of relation with the divine message (complete ignorance; awareness and an accompanying refusal; acceptance accompanied by misunderstanding). This notion of Irenaeus implicitly suggests that Jews (symbolical animals that have split hoofs, but do not ruminate) are represented by camels, hares and rock-badgers, whereas heretics are symbolized by swine. Furthermore, Irenaeus attributes the impurity to carnality, attributed to impure animals:

As we have already established, they take the lives of dogs and swine, giving themselves over to impurity, gluttony and to all other types of lunacies. The Apostle was right to call all of them carnal and animalistic, as out of incredulity or luxury they failed to take in the divine Spirit, and expelled various parts of the life-giving Word [of God], and walked around irrationally in their concupiscence. The prophets call them cattle and wild beasts. [And one can] experience that they are like irrational beasts, and even the Law declare them to be impure.⁷⁸⁹

Irenaeus' system of tripartite categorization was repeated and further developed by later tradition. The third century church father, Novatian argued that animals themselves cannot be pure or impure, and – as a consequence – it must be human characteristics that are figuratively reproached by the prohibition of certain impure species. Along the lines of the interpretation of Philo, and its elaboration by early Church fathers, Novatian offers a detailed analysis of the individual features which certain

⁷⁸⁸ (Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5:8:3) Praedixit autem figuraliter omnia haec lex, de animalibus delinians hominem, quaecumque duplicem ungulam habent et ruminant munda enuntians, quaecumque autem aut utrumque vel alterum horum non habent velut immunda segregans. Qui sunt ergo mundi? Qui in Patrem et Filium per fidem iter firmiter faciunt, haec est enim firmitas eorum qui duplicis sunt ungulae, et eloquia Dei meditantur die ac nocte uti operibus bonis adornentur, haec est enim ruminantium virtus. Immunda autem, quae neque duplicem ungulam habent neque ruminant, hoc est qui neque in Deum fidem habent neque eloquia ejus meditantur: haec autem ethnicorum est abominatio. Quae autem ruminant quidem, non habent | autem ungulam duplicem, et ipsa immunda: haec Judaeorum est imaginis descriptio, qui quidem eloquia Dei in ore habent, stabilitatem autem radicis suae non infigunt in Patre et in Filio ... Immunda autem similiter, quae duplicem quidem ungulam habent, non autem ruminant: haec est autem omnium videlicet haereticorum.

⁷⁸⁹ (Ibid.) quemadmodum praediximus, porcorum et canum assumpserunt vitam, immunditiae et gulae et reliquae incuriae semetipsos tradentes. Juste igitur tales omnes, qui propter suam incredulitatem aut luxuriam non adipiscuntur divinum Spiritum et variis characteribus ejiciunt a se vivificans Verbum et in suis concupiscentiis irrationabiliter ambulant, Apostolus quidem carnales et animales vocavit, prophetae autem jumenta et feras dixerunt, consuetudo autem pecora et irrationales interpretata est, lex autem immundos enuntiavit.

impure animals might represent. More importantly, he interprets animal impurity on a more general level as well, claiming – similarly to Irenaeus – that the two *differentiae specificae* of Leviticus (chewing the cud and parted hoofs) delineate a threefold categorization:

In the animals, human morals, acts and desires are depicted. Some of the animals are pure, whereas others are impure. The pure ones are those that ruminate (that is: they always have some food in their mouths, such as the divine laws) and have divided hoofs ... The way of those that divide the hoof into two parts, is secure and always continuous. Even if one part slips, it is supported by the firmness of the other and helped back to stable steps. So those who do neither of these are impure, for they are neither rooted firmly in virtues, nor have any part of the divine laws in their mouth as food similarly to ruminates. And those who do only one of these, are also not pure, for they are crippled by the [lack of the] other and are, thus, not perfect in both. And those, who do both, are the believers, who are pure. And those who do only one are the Jews and the heretics, who are polluted. And those who do neither are like the Gentiles, who are, thus, impure.⁷⁹⁰

Novatian's argument differs from that of Irenaeus in two aspects: he does not clarify which condition of purity is missing in the case of Jews, and which one in the case of heretics. Moreover, he interprets the purity of chewing the cud and having divided hoofs not as discernment concerning the faith, but rather as loyalty to it. It is impossible to determine, whether he wished to establish any specific correspondence between particular species and these two groups, beyond declaring their "blemished" (*inquinatus*) nature. Beyond the generic identification of lacking certain aspects of purity as markers of groups (Jews, heretics, Gentiles), Novatian also offers traditions reflecting upon features of the individual species:

"You shall not eat ... the camel" (Lv 11:4 et seqq.). He does nothing else but condemns the ugly life twisted by crimes through the example of animals. And similarly, when he prohibits the consumption of pork: he blames with it the filthy and muddy life that revels in filthy vices, setting its moral not in the generosity of the soul, but only in the flesh. And with the hare? With it, he accuses men who are effeminate. And

⁷⁹⁰ (Novatian, *De Cibis* 1:3:7-11) In animalibus mores depinguntur humani et actus et uoluntates, ex quibus ipsi homines fiunt uel mundi uel inmundi: mundi, si ruminent, id est in ore semper habeant quasi cibum quandam praecepta diuina. Ungulam findunt ... Eorum uiae enim, quae in duas ungulas pedem diuidunt, robustus semper incessus est, dum lubricum partis alterius ungulae firmamento fulcitur et in uestigii soliditate retinetur. Sic qui neutrum faciunt inmundi sunt, quorum nec in uirtutibus firmus ingressus est nec diuinorum praeceptorum in ore ullius [ruminationis] teritur cibus. Nam et qui alterum faciunt, nec ipsi mundi, dum sunt ex altero debiles nec in utroque perfecti. Hi autem sunt: aut utrumque facientes, ut fideles, qui sunt mundi; aut alterum, ut iudei et heretici, qui sunt inquinati; aut neutrum, ut ethnici, qui sunt consequenter inmundi.

who would ever make food out of the rock-badger? It is a condemnation of theft.⁷⁹¹

With this, Novatian manages to harmonize two traditions: he accounts for the prohibition of individual species by referring to features attributed to them in Late Antique zoological lore, but he also manages to establish a threefold concept of impurity as categories of human station and group identities in a historical setting. As he points out, the characteristics that impure animals have, are not in themselves, problematic, but just as markers of specific human behaviors. Relying on the Stoic philosophical tradition,⁷⁹² he emphasizes that animals do not have the possibility of fighting their base instincts:

These and ones similar to them the law curses in animals: and while it is not reproached in them, for they are born in this way, in humans it is subject to slander. In them it is not due to nature that they are present, but to human error.⁷⁹³

This means that it is not specific characteristics of animals that are interesting for the interpreter, but rather the variety that can be perceived in the fauna through the observation and acknowledgment of these characteristics. If anything, Irenaeus argued that Jews might be symbolized by camels, hares and rock-badgers. In the case of Novatian, it is impossible to recognize such a claim. Apparently, their attempt to transform the concept of animal impurity into a system encompassing all possible status of humankind from the vantage point of Christian religious economy (Christian, Gentile, Jew and heretic) was more important than identifying lore concerning individual species with any perceived characteristic. At this point the process of representing human communities through animal symbolism, yields a major result: through the analysis of the minute differences between animal species, the interpreters can draw a clear, detailed and essentialist image of the interrelations between human communities. of non-Christians. This development of Christian exegesis is particularly interesting, since it resembles the structure of the rabbinic tradition recognizing a manifold structure of the world of non-Jews in the form of various impure animals. Moreover, it is chronologically not far from said tradition.

⁷⁹¹ (Novatian, *De Cibis* 1:3:14-17) ‘camelum non manducabis’, nisi quoniam de exemplo animalis uitam damnat informem et criminibus tortuosam? aut cum cibo suem prohibet adsumi? reprehendit utique caenosam et luteam et gaudentem uitiorum sordibus uitam, bonum suum non in animi generositate, sed in sola carne ponentem. Aut cum leporem? accusat reformatos in feminam uiros. Quis autem mustelae corpus cibum faciat? sed furta reprehendit.

⁷⁹² Cf. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 39-41

⁷⁹³ (Novatian, *De Cibis* 1:3:24) Haec ergo et his paria lex in animalibus exsecratur, quae in illis quidem non criminosa, quia in hoc nata sunt, in homine culpata, quia contra naturam non ex institutione, sed ex errore quaesita sunt.

One of the reasons, Church fathers make so great efforts to map the world of impure animals, was to make up for the difficulty resulting from the fact that Christian communities discontinued the observation of dietary laws. The fact that there was no stronger metonymic connection between “outgroups” and impure animals on the one hand and “ingroup” and impure animals on the other (that is to say: Christians consumed impure animals just as much as non-Christians did) was a difficulty to be solved. This problem is all the more evident in case of the Jews, who actually did not consume animals considered impure in the *Book of Leviticus*. Thus, even in the most obvious case of the swine, one is hard-pressed to find many examples of direct correspondences with Jews in the writings of the Church fathers. And although several of them implicitly argue some sort of similarity between these,⁷⁹⁴ the example of Chrysostom, who openly compares the behavior of swine with that of Jews is apparently rather the exception than the rule:

They [the Jews] ... living for their bellies, desire the things of this world, not being better than pigs or goats in accordance with the principle of licentiousness and exceeding gluttony. The only thing they know is filling their bellies and drinking.⁷⁹⁵

Chrysostom's reference builds on the assumed carnality of pigs, and not on their impure status. But perhaps even this tradition can help one better understand his further statements. In his homilies on the *Gospel of Matthew*, he argues:

“Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine” (Mt 7:6). Also, later he said in commandment: “and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops” (Mt 10:27). And this is not in contradiction to the former statement, since even there, he did not command them to declare it to all, but only to those, whom it should be told honestly. And [the term] “dogs” refer to those who live in incurable impiety and do not have the hope to switch to a better station. And swine refer to those who trudge in corrupt lives, all of whom he declared unworthy of hearing these. Paul also said this clearly: “Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them” (1Cor 2:14).⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁴ E.g. Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitiones* 3:1 and Augustine, *De sermone Domini in monte* 2:20:68-9.

⁷⁹⁵ (Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos* 1.4) Ἐκεῖνοι δὲ ... τῇ γαστρὶ ζῶντες, πρὸς τὰ παρόντα κεληνότες, ὕδιν καὶ τράγων οὐδὲν ἄμεινον διακέμενοι, κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἀσελγείας λόγον καὶ τὴν τῆς ἀδηφάγίας ὑπερβολήν· ἐν δὲ ἐπίστανται μόνον, γαστρίζεσθαι καὶ μεθύειν.

⁷⁹⁶ (John Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum* 23:3) Μὴ δῶτε τὰ ἅγια τοῖς κυσὶ, μηδὲ ρίψετε τοὺς μαργαρίτας ἔμπροσθεν τῶν χοίρων. Καίτοιγε προῖων, φησὶν, ἐκέλευσεν· Ὁ ἠκούσατε εἰς τὸ οὖς, κηρύττετε ἐπὶ τῶν δαυμάτων. Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἐναντίον ἐστὶ τῷ προτέρῳ. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκεῖ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς ἐπέταξεν εἰπεῖν, ἀλλ' οἷς δεῖ εἰπεῖν, μετὰ παρρησίας εἰπεῖν. Κύνas δὲ ἐνταῦθα τοὺς ἐν ἀσεβείᾳ ζῶντας ἀνιάτω, καὶ μεταβολῆς τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ κρεῖττον οὐκ ἔχοντας ἐλπίδα ἡνίκατο, καὶ χοίρους τοὺς ἐν

Bearing in mind Chrysostom's preference for chastising the Jews as carnal people, who pursue their base instincts instead of listening to the divine truth,⁷⁹⁷ and the widespread notion of the Church fathers, namely that the most terrible fault of the Jews was their "stubborn refusal to believe in or yield to the 'proof'",⁷⁹⁸ one is tempted to think that John Chrysostom intended to interpret the original reference of Paul's *ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος* as an argument against the Jews, who are like swine abiding "in an unchaste life". However, this is an inference, and even Chrysostom does not state explicitly that Jews are morally impure, and are, thus, represented by impure animals. Even in his harsh language, it is not swine that is openly compared to Jews, but the other candidate of Jesus's saying from *Matthew*, the dog.⁷⁹⁹

The Philonic idea of interpreting the impurity of non-ruminants as a symbol for human ignorance is most clearly elaborated in one of Augustine's anti-Manichean writings, *Contra Faustum*. In a passage, where Augustine wishes to harmonize Paul's comment about the relative significance of purity-impurity distinctions with the *Old Testament* tradition,⁸⁰⁰ he claims in accordance with Novatian that it is not the animal that is itself impure, but the human fallacy, which it symbolically represents:

The apostle says: "To the pure all things are pure" (Ti 1:15) and also "everything created by God is good" (1 Tm 4:4) ... The apostle talks about nature itself: those writings [the Old Testament] claims that certain animals are temporal prefigurations as impure not in nature, but in symbolic value. To say one example, the pig and the lamb are both pure in their nature, since everything created by God is good, but in a symbolic manner, the lamb is pure and the pig is impure. Of course, it is claimed in the law [in the Old Testament] that this animal is impure, as it does not chew the cud. This is, however, not his fault, but its nature. The humans, who are symbolized by this animal, are impure due to their own sins, and not due to their nature. They are those who listen to the words of wisdom freely, but later on do not consider it at all.⁸⁰¹

ἀκολάστῳ βίῳ διατρίβοντα διαπαντός, οὗπερ ἅπαντας ἀναξίους ἔφησεν εἶναι τῆς τοιαύτης ἀκροάσεως. Τοῦτο γοῦν καὶ ὁ Παῦλος δηλῶν ἔλεγε· *Ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος· μορῖα γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστί.*

⁷⁹⁷ See Drake, *Slandering the Jew*, 82-83.

⁷⁹⁸ François Blanchetière, "The Threefold Christian anti-Judaism" in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Graham Stanton, and Guy G. Stroumsa, 185-211 (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998) here 203-4.

⁷⁹⁹ Cf. Mark Nanos, "Paul's Reversal of Jews Calling Gentiles 'Dogs' (Philippians 3:2): 1600 Years of an Ideological Tale Wagging an Exegetical Dog?," *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches*. 17, 4 (2009): 448-482. As for the identification of Jews with dogs, see chapter 5.5.2.

⁸⁰⁰ Cf. Romans 14:14. See Passakos, "Clean and Unclean," 287.

⁸⁰¹ (Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manicheum* 6:7) Qua dicit apostolus: omnia munda mundis et: omnis creatura dei bona est ...f apostolum de ipsis dixisse naturis, illas autem litteras propter quasdam praefigurationes tempori congruentes animalia quaedam non natura, sed significatione inmundas dixisse. itaque uerbi gratia, si de porco et agno requiratur,

4.5. Conclusions

My overview of the Christian tradition shows that there are various possibilities in interpreting the impurity of animals in allegorical fashion. They *may* represent Jews, but they could equally likely symbolize the idolatry of the non-Christians,⁸⁰² the incomprehensibility of the average people⁸⁰³ etc. But one can still observe a historical development similarly to the one demonstrated with regards to rabbinic tradition. Whereas rabbis were on the way of steadily unifying the possibility of interpretations toward a dominant model of identifying the impure animals symbolically with Rome – and through it, with the entirety of the Gentile world, Christian tradition did not offer a similarly overarching complementary model. But I believe this difference can be best understood in the framework of majority-minority relations. As Christianity gradually became a religious and political majority in the Roman Empire, its thinkers had to become, on the one hand, increasingly welcoming toward a variety of different political and cultural traditions. Therefore, interpretations concerning such strong boundary markers as purity and impurity needed to be regularly revisited and reformulated. On the other hand, the rise to a majority power also always implied the rise of new enemies. Church Fathers simply could not afford to permanently stick to any interpretational model identifying one group as impure animals.

There is, however, a similarity of fundamental importance between the two exegetical traditions. Although both rabbis and Church fathers interpreted impure animals in a symbolical manner, they both apply it to human outgroups. This does not only affect the image of the other, but also that of the animal, and – similarly to the case of sacrificial ones – it imbues them with a notion of subjectivity. Unlike sacrificial animals, the subject-aspect of impure creatures is not encapsulated in their desire for death or serving the community, but rather in the forbidden desire of humans toward them. The impure animal is, thus, a source of threat. And insofar as it is not only seen as an object of desire but also as a subject capable of seducing humans, its identification with the outgroup makes it from a simple subject animal into an active, subverting agent.

This shift in the understanding of impure animals is present in both Jewish and Christian tradition. Despite the latter's exclusive allegorization and a somewhat similar tendency of metaphorization

utrumque natura mundum est, quia omnis creatura dei bona est; quadam uero significatione agnus mundus, porcus immundus est ... inmundum quippe illud animal in lege positum est eo, quod non ruminet; non autem hoc eius uitium, sed natura est. sunt autem homines, qui per hoc animal significantur, imundi proprio uitio, non natura; qui cum libenter audiant uerba sapientiae, postea de his omnino non cogitant.

⁸⁰² Cf. e.g. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 4:17:18.

⁸⁰³ Cf. e.g. Gregory of Nazianzos, *Orationes* 28.

among the rabbis, the identification of otherness with impure animals is interwoven thoroughly with the practical aspect of consumption and its prohibition. The impure animal other is presented as a seductress, capable of subverting the community by offering itself. The connotations of this notion are widespread, ranging from the rabbi's description of Rome's hypocrisy and the implicit linking of consuming impure animals and becoming idolatrous, to the concept of moral corruption through following heretic theology or Jewish practices in the patristic tradition as well as the clear-cut association of carnality and the consumption of impure animals in the writings of Irenaeus and Novatian. And since the impure animal also invokes the framework of corporeality, it even gives a gendered, sexualized overtone to its prohibition and symbolic interpretation. The fulfillment of such corporeal desires, can also be seen as illicit sexual desires, which attributes an immoral and subversive overtone to the agency of the impure animal, irrespective of whether the affected ingroup was depicted as a pure animal or as a human community. The prospect of an active subject-other seducing members of the ingroup is a profound way of describing the threat of proximate otherness. In the last chapter of the dissertation I will explore the implications of this shift in the view of animality (and in the respective outgroup) and investigate two proposals of the communities for remedying the situation.

5. The animal that destroys

5.1. An ever threatening wilderness and its inhabitants

One of the primary criteria of zoological classification in the Bible is that of habitats.⁸⁰⁴ It gives an all-encompassing taxonomy to the story of creation (as water, air and land animals are created separately) and it has also permeated the languages of prophetic narratives and Psalm texts, as it is evidenced by the often repeated *hendiadys* “I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee.”⁸⁰⁵

As far as the terrestrial habitat is concerned, an additional distinction is established between animals coexisting with humans and those that live beyond the boundaries of human civilization. The latter group occupies the domain of the “wilderness/מִדְבָּר” (a region typically presented as harmful and destructive). The two regions, wilderness and (in lack of a better term) “human lands”⁸⁰⁶ are in a binary opposition. Although the domain of the wilderness can be further divided into harmful, detrimental and poisonous animals (wolves, snakes etc.) on the one hand, and harmless creatures of the night (hyenas, owls, bats) on the other hand, creatures belonging to the wilderness are generally perceived as being in opposition with the fauna of human lands, and with domesticated animals.

In the Hebrew Bible, this opposition is also translated into concrete geographical terms. The Land of Canaan is often identified with the benevolent region of domesticated animals, while its immediate surroundings, and sometimes even the wider region around it is construed as belonging to the domain of the wilderness. Such a geographical consideration is presented in narratives elaborating on the difference between the Sinai desert *vis-à-vis* the abundance of Palestine in narratives concerning the Exodus story⁸⁰⁷ or in frequent prophetic accounts describing the threat of the incursion of wilderness

⁸⁰⁴ Richard Whitekettle, “Where the Wild Things Are: Primary Level Taxa in Israelite Zoological Thought,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 93 (2001):17-37, here 17-22.

⁸⁰⁵ Ez 32:4. Cf. also Ez 38:20; Dn 2:38; Ps 8:7-8 etc. These *Biblical* loci correspond to a concept of a tripartite structure of the world. Cf. Luis I. J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1970) 9-10.

⁸⁰⁶ As for the mutually exclusive natures of the concepts wilderness and human lands, cf. Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, “‘The Mountain, a Desert Place’: Spatial categories and mythical landscapes in the *Secret Book of John*,” in *Wilderness in Mythology and Religion Approaching Religious Spatialities, Cosmologies, and Ideas of Wild Nature*, ed. Laura Feldt, 95-113 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012) here 95-97.

⁸⁰⁷ Cf. Laura Feldt, “Wilderness and Hebrew Bible Religion – Fertility, Apostasy and Religious Transformation in the Pentateuch,” in *Wilderness in Mythology and Religion Approaching Religious Spatialities, Cosmologies, and Ideas of Wild Nature*, ed. Laura Feldt, 55-95 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), here 55-63. Cf also Hans-Jürgen Zobel, “Der frühe Jahwe-

into the Land of Israel.⁸⁰⁸ Moreover, since human lands of Palestine are not presented as a coherent region, but rather as patches of domesticated areas interlaced with protrusions of the wilderness,⁸⁰⁹ the concept arising from the *Biblical* tradition is not that of two strictly demarcated regions, but rather a sense of a transitional region,⁸¹⁰ in which the presence of friendly, domesticated animals often hangs by not more than a thread. They can be easily destroyed and, thus, substituted by wild beasts and the once friendly environment might turn into a wilderness itself.

5.1.1. The *Old Testament's* *Verwilderung*

This possibility is most precisely captured in the concept of *Verwilderung*, which describes the devastation of human lands by wild forces of nature. Narratives centered around the concept of *Verwilderung* are used to describe the fate of the Land of Israel after the Israelites are brought into captivity (e.g. Jer 2:14-15, Jer 9:11 etc.) but also to describe the destiny of the enemies of Israel (such as Assyria in Zep 2:12-15, Babylon in Jer 51:37 or Edom in Is 34:7-17). The animals that feature in these texts (hyena, bat jackal, ostrich, lion, owl) represent a wide spectrum of possible connotations. Some of them (such as owls or bats) act shyly and do not signify aggression. Others (jackals and hyenas) betoken scavenging, while some (lions, wolves, leopards) even indicate open aggression and destruction.⁸¹¹ Sometimes the *Verwilderung* is part the punishment itself, and not just a result of it:

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pride of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; Arabs will not pitch their tents there, shepherds will not make their flocks lie down there. But wild animals will lie down there, and its houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will live, and there goat-demons will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand, and its days will not be prolonged.⁸¹²

Glaube in der Spannung von Wüste und Kulturland,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101, (1989): 342-365, here: 342-344.

⁸⁰⁸ Cf. Is 13:21-22; Jer 50:39 etc. Cf. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible) (New York: Doubleday, 2000) 280.

⁸⁰⁹ Cf. Shemaryahu Talmon, “The ‘Desert Motif’ in the Bible and in Qumran Literature,” in *Biblical Motifs; Origins and Transformations*, ed. Alexander Altmann, 31-63 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), here 40-42.

⁸¹⁰ Cf. Feldt, “Wilderness and Hebrew Bible Religion,” 61-63.

⁸¹¹ See also Ken Stone, “Jackals and Ostriches Honoring God: The Zoological Gaze in the Isaiah Scroll” in *Focusing Biblical Studies: The Crucial Nature of the Persian and Hellenistic Periods, Essays in Honor of Douglas A. Knight*, ed. Jon L. Berquist and Alice Hunt, 63-83 (New York: T&T Clark, 2012) here 71-72.

⁸¹² Is 13:19-22.

There are several other types of discourses in the Hebrew Bible in which the opposition between domesticated and wild animals and the two respective domains is depicted. Some of these discuss the hostility between predators and the flock of sheep (see e.g. 1Sam 17:34); while others focus on the bringing of domesticated animals into the wilderness (1Kgs 13:24-25) or on the representation of wilderness as a particularly poisonous area (e.g. Is 30:6). But wild beasts could also be perceived as free, self-determinant agents. In the *Biblical* tradition of a well-organized natural world established by divine principles,⁸¹³ such behavior is either attributed to divine intention (e.g. in prophetic texts describing punishment through the incursion of the animals of the wilderness) or to the rebellious intention to fight against divine will (as in Daniel's vision of the four beasts). In the latter case, the "wild nature" of beasts might be ascribed to their own strength, power and ferocity. But these qualities are regularly used in the *Biblical* corpus not only to describe the oppression of the enemies of Israel, but also the supremacy of the God of the Israelites over that of other nations or the strength of Israelites themselves over their enemies. Therefore, animals of the wilderness are quite often employed in symbolic representations of a powerful God⁸¹⁴ or a battle-ready Israel as well.⁸¹⁵ And although these discourses are far less frequent in the Hebrew Bible than the discourse about the incursion of the wilderness, they are picked up and elaborated in the *New Testament*, and, consequently, also become fundamental for the Christian understanding of the opposition of wild and domesticated domains.

Common in all these variations concerning the opposition between the wilderness and human lands is that the region of wilderness and its inhabitants are depicted in a liminal state. Wilderness and human lands are not static entities, but two extremes in constant struggle with each other. Sometimes, the wilderness devastates and invades human lands (*Verwilderung*), and sometimes (although it is far less explicit in the Hebrew Bible), areas belonging previously to the wilderness are domesticated by humans and their own animals. The destruction and desolation of human lands is – as the above example shows – occasionally depicted as an irreversible scenario. But the Hebrew Bible is not entirely consistent in this regard. There is a notion of non-separation between wild and domesticated

⁸¹³ Cf. Eilberg-Schwartz, "Creation and Classification," 357-362.

⁸¹⁴ Jer 49:19; Amos 3:4-5; Hos 11:10; Hos 13:8 etc. Cf. further M. C. A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990) 538-540; Kristen Nielsen "I am Like a Lion to Ephraim / Observations on Animal Imagery and Old Testament Theology" *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007): 184-197; and lately Brittany Kim and Charlie Trimm, "Yahweh the Dragon: Exploring a Neglected Biblical Metaphor for the Divine Warrior and the Translation of 'Ap'" *The Bible Translator* 65 (2014): 165-184.

⁸¹⁵ Dt 33:20; Mc 5:8; etc. On the most frequent image of a leonine Israel, see Brent A. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2005) 47-49, 58-65

animals,⁸¹⁶ and there is an idea of a possible change with regards to the nature of wild beasts. Thus, the liminality of the ferocious creatures of the wilderness has not only a spatial manifestation, but it even translates into temporal categories. The oscillation between the wilderness and human lands, as stages of divine-human relations, is also interpreted in a grandiose historical perspective: there is a possibility for a permanent change in the conduct of wild animals, as presented in the *pre-lapsarian* peace⁸¹⁷ of the *Book of Genesis* (under Adam, lord of “all the animals”, as a past situation)⁸¹⁸ and also envisioned in Isaiah’s eschatological description of a peaceful coexistence of wild beasts and domesticated animals (as a hope for the future). The *pre-lapsarian* and eschatological scenes are connected in one particular aspect (namely that they both grasp the peaceful nature of coexistence by claiming that every animal follows a herbivore diet)⁸¹⁹ and, more importantly, also on a structural level. By describing the situation in an unreachable paradise and in an equally unattainable eschaton,⁸²⁰ both present an atemporal version of the natural world, preceding on the one hand, and succeeding on the other hand, the world of a human’s everyday experiences. The message, these two scenarios of temporal “hereafter” communicate serves as a frame for a concept of development in the opposition of wild and domesticated animals.

Wilderness and its inhabitants, the wild animals, are seen as representatives of an unsettled and never permanently delimited, hostile area contrary to human lands and their domesticated animals. This is why predators identified as creatures of the wilderness are presented as capable of changing from their aggressive, conduct (their essence in many accounts)⁸²¹ to an inoffensive or even docile one. The chronological and spatial liminality of wild beasts was exploited by both exegetical traditions.

⁸¹⁶ The Genesis-accounts are contradictory in this regards. Whereas in the first creation story, no clear distinction is made between wild and domesticated land animals, the second chapter mentions them separately (see Gn 2:19). But even with this, it is only after the fall of mankind that any hostility between mankind and *certain types* of animals becomes manifest (See Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 168.) See also Rüdiger Bartelemus, “Die Tierwelt in Der Bibel II. Tiersymbolik im Alten Testament - exemplarisch dargestellt am Beispiel von Dn. 7, Ez 1/10 und Jes 11:6-8,” in *Gefährten und Feinde des Menschen. Das Tier in der Lebenswelt des alten Israel*, ed. Bernd Janowski, Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, Uwe Gleßmer, 283-306 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1993) here 305-306.

⁸¹⁷ Cf. Gn 2:19, which distinguishes between wild and domesticated animals (חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה - בְּהֵמָה). However, this distinction bears no consequence on the relationship between mankind and animals belonging to separate groups. Cf. Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 168 and M-L. Henry, s.v. “Behemot” *Biblisch-Historisches Wörterbuch; Landeskunde, Geschichte, Religion, Kultur, Literatur* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966) 1984-1987. Cf. also McLaughlin, “Evidencing the Eschaton”.

⁸¹⁸ Cf. Bernd Janowski, P. Riede (ed.), *Die Zukunft der Tiere. Theologische, ethische und naturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1999) 114-127.

⁸¹⁹ Cf. Walter Pangritz, *Das Tier in der Bibel* (München: E. Reinhardt, 1963) 63-64. Also Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 159-160.

⁸²⁰ See Pangritz, *Das Tier in der Bibel*, 62-63.

⁸²¹ Cf. Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 153-154.

And since the production of community boundaries between Jews and Christians is produced in an ever changing environment of shifting emphases and a feeling of threatening proximity, the concept of an always menacing wilderness made this framework of zoological classification into an extremely fertile topic of expressing community-boundaries.

In the present chapter, I will present how this aspect of liminality was exploited in a variety of ways, enabling the identification of wild beasts with not only others, but also with members of the ingroup. Furthermore, I will discuss the ways in which the narrative of liminal, wild-beasts was used to depict the respective other in an eschatological scenario, and how the opposition between docile and wild others was finally solved in two divergent, but similar eschatological scenarios.

5.1.2. The wild beasts of the *New Testament* and early Christian tradition

The broad variety of *Old Testament* passages depicting the opposition of the wilderness and the human domain is not reproduced in the *New Testament* in its entirety. Many of the animals featuring in relation with the theme of “*Verwilderung*” are never even mentioned in the *New Testament* corpus.⁸²² But the detailed treatment of a few wild beasts more than makes up for the meager amount of animals actually treated. More importantly, the wild animals that do feature in the *New Testament*, occupy a central role in its understanding of the theme of identity and alterity-representation, therefore the threat of fierce, non-domesticated and dangerous wild animals is still an important theme in various discourses of patristic literature.

A good starting point for presenting the treatment of wild animals and the wilderness is the ophid metaphor that Jesus uses several times in the *Gospel of Matthew* and once in Luke’s account, chastising his Pharisee interlocutors. The context of the somewhat unclear appellation, “brood of vipers”⁸²³ and a restricted number of parallels in Greek and Latin literature,⁸²⁴ helps understanding the general direction of the outburst, even though some connotations might be lost. In the *Old Testament* and in some layers of Graeco-Roman tradition, snakes are often identified with deceit and hypocrisy.⁸²⁵ Thus, one can safely assume that the metaphor focuses on corruption, lying or even

⁸²² Despite their frequent treatment in the patristic literature, one does not encounter in the *New Testament* ostriches, hyenas, owls, bats and the rest of the wild animals so typically representing the incursion of the wilderness into human domains in the *Old Testament* corpus.

⁸²³ Mt 3:7, Mt 12:34, Mt 23:33, Lk 3:7, see Michael P. Knowles, “Serpents, Scribes and Pharisees,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, 1 (2014): 165-178, here 165-170.

⁸²⁴ Cf. Craig S. Keener, “‘Brood of Vipers’ (Matthew 3.7; 12:34; 23.33),” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28, no. 1 (2005): 3-11, here 6-8.

⁸²⁵ James H. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol became Christianized* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) 315-317.

matri/patricidal intentions of the scribes.⁸²⁶ Thus, despite the lack of a direct parallel in the Hebrew Bible, Jesus' exclamation can be tied to a number of *Old Testament* loci in which serpents but specifically vipers, feature as embodiments⁸²⁷ of various moral vicissitudes.⁸²⁸

The polysemy behind the meaning of this term is manifests in patristic literature. While Origen, for example did not venture beyond explaining the context of the verse in the *Gospel*:⁸²⁹ "it was not these people [who came to be baptized] who heard from the Baptist any word of rebuke or refutation, but only those many Pharisees and Sadducees whom he saw coming,"⁸³⁰ later authors mapped out other possibilities. In his *Catecheses*, a century later, Cyril of Jerusalem used the saying as a general term for heretics and among them primarily Manicheans:

Since he [Mani] desires to become the special one among evil men, taking all together and combining them into one heresy, filling it with blasphemies and lawlessness, he maltreats the Church (or rather those who are outside the Church), as a stalking lion that devours. Do not approach their nice speeches, neither their seeing humility, for they are "snakes ... brood of vipers" (Mt 23:33).⁸³¹

There is a tradition that interprets the statement in a generally anti-Jewish sense. According to the late fourth century Church father, John Chrysostom, viper is an appropriate appellation for the Sadducees, for they have betrayed their true Jewish identity by fighting against Jesus:

He called them: "brood of vipers", since they boasted themselves on behalf of their ancestors. With this, he shows that they do not gain any profit from it. Through that, he expels them from their relationship with Abraham, and gives them a progenitor fitting to them:⁸³² thus, stripping them of their glory.⁸³³

In the words of Cyril and that of Chrysostom, serpents become a tool for describing the dangerous entity of otherness. One should not be surprised that Chrysostom even seems to use a harsher tone

⁸²⁶ Cf. Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 10:170

⁸²⁷ Jb 20:16; Ps 140:4 etc.

⁸²⁸ Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent*, 275-281.

⁸²⁹ See Knowles, "Serpents, Scribes and Pharisees," 165-167.

⁸³⁰ Origen, *Commentarii in Evangelium Ioannis* 6:14.

⁸³¹ (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 6:20) Φιλοτιμούμενος γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς ἐξαίρετος γενέσθαι, τὰ πάντων λαβὼν, καὶ μίαν αἵρεσιν πεπληρωμένην βλασφημιῶν καὶ πάσης παρανομίας συστησάμενος, λυμαίνεται τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, (μᾶλλον δὲ τοὺς ἐκτὸς τῆς ἐκκλησίας) ὡς λέων περιπατῶν καὶ καταπίνων. Μὴ πρόσεχε αὐτῶν τῇ χρηστολογίᾳ, μηδὲ τῇ νομιζομένῃ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ· ὄφεις γὰρ εἰσι γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν.

⁸³² i.e. the devil, cf Jn 8:44

⁸³³ (John Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum Homilae* 42:1) Γεννήματα δὲ ἐχιδνῶν αὐτοὺς εἴρηκεν, ἐπειδὴ ἐπὶ τοῖς προγόνους ἠϋχοῦν. Δεικνὺς τοίνυν, ὅτι οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς ἐντεῦθεν τὸ κέρδος, τῆς μὲν πρὸς τὸν Ἀβραάμ ἐξέβαλεν αὐτοὺς συγγενείας, δίδωσι δὲ αὐτοῖς προγόνους ὁμοτρόπους, τῆς ἐκεῖθεν περιφανείας γυμνώσας αὐτούς.

than the context of the *Gospel*-narrative itself,⁸³⁴ for it is certainly expected of him. In a number of accounts and – as I will shortly prove – not only in his anti-Jewish orations, he symbolizes Jews by a wide variety of non-domesticated animals. The Antiochean father, intent on exploiting the theme of wild beast-otherness beyond the meager opportunities presented in the *New Testament*, readily drew upon the much deeper pool of wild animal-symbolisms of the *Old Testament*. One of the themes Chrysostom regularly avails himself of in his writings is the opposition between animalistic instincts (in this case, that of wild animals) and cultivation.⁸³⁵ In his first oration against the Jews, he claims:

The synagogue is not merely a brothel and a theatre, but also a den of robbers and a shelter of wild beasts. It is said: “Has this house of mine became the shelter hyenas under you”. He talks not simply of wild beasts, but impure wild beasts. And in another place: “I have forsaken my house, I have abandoned my heritage” (Jer 12:7). But what hope for salvation remains, when God abandons it? For when abandons it, the place will become a lodging for demons.⁸³⁶

The first *Biblical* reference is, in fact, a conflation of two verses (Jer 7:11, Jer 12:9),⁸³⁷ the first of which refers originally to the Temple in Jerusalem,⁸³⁸ whereas the second is part of a longer narrative of *Verwilderung*.⁸³⁹ By blending them, Chrysostom achieves two goals. Since hyena is considered as a par excellence impure animal, since the earliest Greek patristic tradition,⁸⁴⁰ its inclusion implies not only the ferocity of the Jews, but also their (moral) abjection.⁸⁴¹ Second, the divine desolation of the land is presented in a way that the incursion of the wilderness is equated with the appearance of demonic forces. In a subsequent passage of the oration, the demonic nature is identified with the attempt to seduce Christians to participate in worship in synagogues,⁸⁴² an accusation regularly made

⁸³⁴ Knowles, “Serpents, Scribes and Pharisees,” 168-9.

⁸³⁵ Benjamin H. Dunning, “Chrysostom’s Serpent: Animality and Gender in the Homilies on Genesis,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 23, no. 17 (2015): 71-96, here 76-80.

⁸³⁶ (John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos* 1:3:1) Μᾶλλον δὲ οὐχὶ πορνεῖον καὶ θέατρον μόνον ἐστὶν ἡ συναγωγὴ, ἀλλὰ καὶ σπήλαιον ληστῶν, καὶ καταγώγιον θηρίων. Σπήλαιον γὰρ, φησὶν, ὑαίνης ἐγένετό μοι ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν· οὐδὲ ἀπλῶς θηρίου, ἀλλὰ θηρίου ἀκαθάρτου. Καὶ πάλιν, Ἀφῆκα τὸν οἶκόν μου, ἐγκατατέλειπα τὴν κληρονομίαν μου. Ὅταν δὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἀφῇ, ποία λοιπὸν σωτηρίας ἐλπίς; Ὅταν ὁ Θεὸς ἀφῇ, δαιμόνων κατοικητήριον γίνεται ἐκεῖνο τὸ χωρίον.

⁸³⁷ Cf. John Chrysostom, *Discourses against Judaizing Christians*, The Fathers of the Church (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1979) 11, ff. 40-41.

⁸³⁸ Cf. also Mk 11:17 and see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 467-468.

⁸³⁹ Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 654-656.

⁸⁴⁰ Cf. Pendergraft, “‘Thou Shalt Not Eat the Hyena,’ 75-79.

⁸⁴¹ For an interesting example of contracting the aspects of wilderness and immoral sexual behavior, see Pseudo-Chrysostom, *De Susanna* 1, analyzed by Drake, *Slandering the Jew*, 75.

⁸⁴² Cf. (*Adversus Iudaeos* 1:6:3) Εἰπὲ γάρ μοι, ὅπου δαίμονες οἰκοῦσιν, οὐχὶ ἀσεβείας χωρίον ἐστὶ, κἂν μὴ ξόανον εἰστήκη; Ὅπου Χριστοκτόνοι συνέρχονται, ὅπου σταυρὸς ἐλαύνεται, ὅπου βλασφημεῖται Θεὸς, ὅπου Πατὴρ ἀγνοεῖται, ὅπου Υἱὸς ὑβρίζεται, ὅπου Πνεῦματος ἀθετεῖται χάρις, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ αὐτῶν ὄντων δαιμόνων, οὐ μείζων ἐντεῦθεν ἢ βλάβη; Ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ γυμνὴ καὶ περιφανὴς ἡ ἀσέβεια, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ῥαδίως ἐπισπάσαιτο, οὐδὲ ἀπατήσσει τὸν νοῦν ἔχοντα

by the Church father. So, ultimately, the comparison between Jews and the hyena is part of the broader narrative that seeks to depict them as devious, seductive agents. Additionally, the opening statement of comparing the synagogue to a den of wild beasts (θηρίων) refers to another important characteristic of wild animals: a desertion of human morals and social standards and an accompanying brutality of action. In a further passage of the first oration, Chrysostom refers to accusations of infanticide. By invoking prophetic accusations against Israelites for offering their children to Moloch or Baal,⁸⁴³ he draws a particularly disdainful⁸⁴⁴ image of Jews:

They offered their sons and daughters to demons. They did not acknowledge the nature, forgetting how it hurts during childbirth. They trampled child-rearing and shook the foundations of the laws of kinship, becoming more savage than any wild beast.⁸⁴⁵

Chrysostom does not merely identify Jews with wild beasts, but claims that they are worse than even the most ferocious animals. While wild animals might be able to act mercifully or to show willingness for self-sacrifice despite their obviously irrational nature,⁸⁴⁶ Jews are not even capable of doing that. He goes on to say:

It often happens that wild beasts offer themselves and disregard their own lives in order to save their offspring. There was no necessity for the Jews to kill their children with their own hands so as to venerate the enemies of our lives, the avenging demons. Which deed should be more astonishing: their impiety, their savagery or their inhumanity; the fact that they sacrificed their children, or that they sacrificed to demons?

καὶ σωφρονοῦντα· ἐνταῦθα δὲ λέγοντες Θεὸν προσκυνεῖν, καὶ εἰδῶλα ἀποστρέφειν, καὶ προφήτας ἔχειν καὶ τιμᾶν, τοῖς ῥήμασι τούτοις πολὺ κατασκευάζοντες τὸ δέλεαρ, τοὺς ἀφελεστέρους καὶ ἀνοήτους ἀφυλάκτως εἰς τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐμβάλλουσι πάγας.) Cf. Drake, *Slandering the Jew*, 82-83.

⁸⁴³ See e.g. Jer 32:35; Lv 18:21 etc. See also Jacob Milgrom, "Were the Firstborn Sacrificed to YHWH? To Molek? Popular Practice or Divine Demand," in *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, ed. Albert I. Baumgarten, 49-57 (Leiden: Brill, 2002)

⁸⁴⁴ Accusing heretics with infanticide was a particularly widespread claim of Church fathers in Late Antiquity. See Alexander Patschovsky, "Der Ketzer als Teufelsdiener," in *Papsttum, Kirche und Recht im Mittelalter; Festschrift für Horst Fuhrmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. H. Mordek, 317-334 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1991). Therefore, Chrysostom's claim implies a similarly denigrating view of Jews as to Christian heretics. The accusation of infanticide was applied to Jews en masse only in the 12th century. See Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb. Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) 164-165.

⁸⁴⁵ (John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos* 1:6:7) ἔθυσαν τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς θυγατέρας αὐτῶν τοῖς δαιμονίοις· τὴν φύσιν ἠγνόησαν, ὠδίνων ἐπελάθοντο, παιδοτροφίαν κατεπάτησαν, τῆς συγγενείας τοὺς νόμους ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν βάρβάρων ἀνέτρεψαν, θηρίων ἀπάντων γεγόνασιν ἀγριώτεροι.

⁸⁴⁶ Animals putting themselves in harm's way or even sacrificing themselves to save members of their species was a recurrent topic in natural historical lore. Chrysostom's slander might be based – in part – on Pliny or Plutarch. See Stephen T. Newmeyer, *Animals in Greek and Roman Thought: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2011) 48-53.

Did they not overshadow the lust of irrational [beast with their gluttony]?⁸⁴⁷

Seemingly, the author denies Jews even the lowly stature of animals. But the entire narrative of animalization functions on the basis of the premise that Jews are humans guilty of moral misconduct, only in comparison to this implicit assertion would a claim of animalization function as censure. And it is only in the backdrop of such a rhetorical comparison, that through the use of a hyperbole, Chrysostom goes further, and reaches the conclusion that Jews are not even animals, but below them. Therefore, I claim that, on the whole, the argument remains the same: Jews act like animals, and are – accordingly – symbolized by them. Indeed, in the end of his argumentation, Chrysostom returns to this very position:

Listen to the prophet: how he speaks about their gluttony: “They were well-fed lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor's wife” (Jer 5:8). He did not say: “each desired the wife of his neighbor”, but used [a term referring to] the voice of an irrational [animal], displaying the madness emerging from their licentiousness.⁸⁴⁸

It has been noted that Chrysostom was witness to a period in which Judaism was regarded as a highly enticing entity present on the horizon of many Christian communities.⁸⁴⁹ For him, it was important to make a clear distinction between the two communities, for he believed the threat of Jewish missionary activities⁸⁵⁰ to warrant desperate measures in polemics. The major theme in this novel view of the Jewish threat was the perceived aggression of the Jewish community breaking into and disrupting the safety of newly established Christianity.⁸⁵¹ This aggression was mostly seen as a physical threat, but in some cases also as a form of seduction. As both seductive and destructive members of a community that is close enough to be similar, but different enough to be misguided, Jews – in the words of Chrysostom – are beings of a liminal nature. The liminality of wilderness – an aspect that is presented

⁸⁴⁷ (John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos* 1:6:8) Τὰ θηρία μὲν γὰρ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπιδίδωσι πολλάκις, καὶ τῆς οἰκείας καταφρονεῖ σωτηρίας, ὥστε ὑπερασπίσαι τῶν ἐκγόνων· οὗτοι δὲ οὐδεμιᾶς ἀνάγκης οὔσης τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν φύντας ταῖς οἰκείαις κατέσφαζαν χερσίν, ἵνα τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τῆς ἡμετέρας ζωῆς, τοὺς ἀλάστορας θεραπεύσωσι δαίμονας. Τί ἂν τις αὐτῶν ἐκπλαγείη πρότερον, τὴν ἀσέβειαν ἢ τὴν ὠμότητα, καὶ τὴν ἀπανθρωπίαν; ὅτι τοὺς υἱοὺς ἔθυσαν, ἢ ὅτι τοῖς δαιμονίοις ἔθυσαν; Ἀλλὰ ἀσελγείας ἕνεκεν οὐχὶ καὶ τὰ λαγνότατα τῶν ἀλόγων ἀπέκρυψαν;

⁸⁴⁸ (John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos* 1:6:8) Ἀκουσον τοῦ προφήτου, τί φησι περὶ τῆς ἀκολασίας αὐτῶν· Ἴπποι θηλυμανεῖς ἐγένοντο· ἕκαστος ἐπὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ ἐχρεμέτιζεν. Οὐκ εἶπεν, ἕκαστος τῆς γυναικὸς τοῦ πλησίον ἐπεθύμει, ἀλλ' ἐμφαντικώτατα τῇ τῶν ἀλόγων φωνῇ τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἀσελγείας ἐγγινομένην αὐτοῖς μανίαν ἐνέφηνεν.

⁸⁴⁹ See Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, 46-47, and 66-79. And also Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 202-210.

⁸⁵⁰ In this respect, it is quite irrelevant whether Chrysostom's assessment of a threat of Jews proselitizing was warranted (cf. Miriam S. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 27-29).

⁸⁵¹ See Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 369-375.

and highlighted in both the *Old* and the *New Testament* – serves as an appropriate characteristic to describe the threatening otherness of Jews.

The surprisingly harsh tone of Chrysostom's orations against the Jews have been understood as a result of this specific socio-historical situation.⁸⁵² It is, however, important to distinguish between animalization of otherness and the specific notion that the other is a wild beast. The former is a more general phenomenon without clear historical, geographical or even religious boundaries. It is not the general animalization of otherness that results from their challenging presence, but the subtopic of their wild nature, as opposed to that of domesticated animals. The identification of Jews with wild animals matched, as the above examples show, both the topos of a seductive enemy and that of a destroyer of human communities. Thus, it was a particularly fitting metaphor for depicting intercommunity relations from Chrysostom's vantage point.

Also pointing toward the historical reasons behind this change is the fact that the shift in the language of animalization of otherness is present not only in Chrysostom's writings, but in the writings of many of his contemporaries as well. At the end of his long treatise concerning the six days of creation, Basil the Great, for example, claimed:

Just as those wild beasts that hate man, gnashing at the bars when they are locked off in cages, showing their bitter and savage nature being unable to fulfill their passions, the Jews, a people that is inimical to truth, when they are confined, claim that there were many persons to whom God spoke. For according to them, God spoke to the angels around him, when he said: "let us make humankind" (Gn 1:26)⁸⁵³

This passage was not written in a polemical situation similar to that of Chrysostom's orations, but it was composed in the same period.⁸⁵⁴ The tone and the argument is strikingly similar, and I believe this similarity was due to the major historical shift in the perception of Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations in the era. As much as one can see, Basil's only altercation with Jews is over a difference on their respective interpretations of the plural used in the creation narrative. And although this

⁸⁵² See e.g. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, 68-73.

⁸⁵³ (Basil, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron* 9:6:60) ὥσπερ δὲ τῶν θηρίων τὰ μισανθρωπότατα, ἐπειδὴν τοῖς ζώοις ἐναποκλεισθῇ, περιβρύχεται τοῖς κυλίνδροις, τὸ μὲν πικρὸν καὶ ἀνήμερον τῆς φύσεως ἐνδεικνύμενα, ἐκπληρῶσαι δὲ τὴν μανίαν οὐκ ἔχοντα· οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἐχθρὸν τῆς ἀληθείας γένος οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι στενοχωρούμενοι, πολλὰ, φασίν, ἐστὶ τὰ πρόσωπα πρὸς οὓς ὁ λόγος γέγονε τοῦ Θεοῦ. Τοῖς ἀγγέλοις γὰρ λέγει τοῖς παρεστῶσιν αὐτῷ, Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον.

⁸⁵⁴ As for the context in which Basil's text was written, and especially for his reference on Jews, and their exegesis, cf. David T. Runia, "'Where, Tell Me, is the Jew...?': Basil, Philo and Isidore of Pelusium," *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992): 172-189.

question is crucial for Christian theology,⁸⁵⁵ it would have hardly warranted the tone, had it not been for the Basil' intention to dehumanize his subject, the Jews. Apparently only by doing so, could he hope to distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish positions in a process of disentanglement.⁸⁵⁶

Wild animals and the liminality of the wilderness was a fitting depiction of a perceived danger for more than one reason. Although the ferocity and aggression that these animals exhibit is certainly important in the overall appeal of the metaphor, another recurring topos, as I have shown, is seduction. In several of the above passages wild beasts pose both the external danger of destruction and the internal danger of corruption to their prospective prey. And in a few cases, even the notion of seduction, or more properly the possibility of successful seduction (against which Chrysostom warns his audience) is present. The latter implies the possibility of an internal change. That is to say: wild beasts are not only dangerous because they can physically destroy their domestic and docile counterparts, but also as they are capable of seducing, corrupting, and ultimately changing them. I believe that this is a quintessential aspect of the liminal nature of wild animals in the Christian tradition. By being at the border of the two domains, wild animals maintain a bridge to the other side, enabling a *Verwilderung* of not only human lands, but also its inhabitants. The metaphorical wild beast, the Jew – in the words of Chrysostom – or the heretic – in Cyril's view – is feared because it might transform the Christians to something similar to itself, into being wild beasts themselves. The important implication underneath this possibility is that if wild beasts can exert an influence on domesticated agents, then the boundary between the two domains is very much traversable in both directions.

⁸⁵⁵ The importance of this topic in interreligious polemics was recognized and discussed by Segal (Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 1977) esp. 220-234). For a very recent overview of the topic, see Stephen Waers, "Monarchianism and Two Powers: Jewish and Christian Monotheism at the Beginning of the Third Century," *Vigiliae Christianae*, 70 (2016):401-429.

⁸⁵⁶ Christine Shepardson, *Anti-Judaism and Christian Orthodoxy Ephrem's Hymns in Fourth-Century Syria* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008) 144-145.

5.2. The porous boundary between wild and domesticated animals

With a traversable boundary, the *Old Testament*'s notion of the *Verwilderung* of human lands is taken and elaborated into a complex argument, which supposes a transformation not of the landscape but of its animal inhabitants. Contrary to this direction of *Verwilderung*, there is a less frequent prophetic tradition, according to which wild animals can, and in the end of times will be tamed. This notion is encapsulated in the tradition of messianic peace between wild and domesticated animals, as presented in the *Book of Isaiah*. Here, wild and domesticated animals do not meet halfway, but the former become completely similar to the latter, giving up their carnivorous diet. Thus, the *Old Testament* offers a scenario according to which the proximity of domesticated and wild animals results not in the destruction of the former, but in the taming of the latter.

By virtue of one of its most influential schemes dealing with the opposition of wild and domesticated animals, that of the wolf and the sheep,⁸⁵⁷ the *New Testament* shows how much difficulty the porous nature of the border had posed even before the formulation of mutually exclusive definitions concerning Jewish and Christian communities. Similarly to the case of the viper, the narrative of opposition between wolves and sheep is also based on an *Old Testament* discourse, that of shepherding.⁸⁵⁸ The discourse capitalizes on a primary opposition between wild and domesticated animals, for it continually reminds the readers of the existence of dangers threatening sheep, and other domesticated animals of the household.⁸⁵⁹ This aspect of the otherwise much broader shepherding-topos became so emphatic in *New Testament* tradition that it fundamentally influenced the way Church fathers dealt with the concept of a hostile wilderness and its representatives.

The two passages in which this opposition is treated in the *New Testament* are the one describing wolves pretending to be sheep (clad in sheep's clothes, extant only in the *Gospel of Matthew*)⁸⁶⁰ and the one recounting the sending out of disciples, appearing in both *Luke* and *Matthew*. Apparently, both describe the relationship between the two types of animals with a particular focus on the boundary between them. In the first, wild animals come into the domain of domesticated ones,

⁸⁵⁷ E.g. Mt 7:15; 10:16; 23:33; Lk 10:3; 10:19 etc.

⁸⁵⁸ E.g. Ps 23:1, Is 40:11, Am 3:12 etc. See also Silvia Schroer, *Die Tiere in der Bibel: eine kulturgeschichtliche Reise* (Freiburg: Herder, 2010) 32-35.

⁸⁵⁹ See Schochet, *Animal Life*, 60-61.

⁸⁶⁰ See Mt 7:15.

pretending to be similar to them. In the second, it is domesticated animals that are sent among the wild beasts, not in order to become prey, but to change them!

In Jesus' sending out of disciples, the opposition is not presented through the movement of wilderness and wild animals into domesticated terrains, but in an opposite direction. In Mt 10:16, Jesus sends his disciples among the wolves, and in Lk 10:3 and 10:19 the sheep representing the disciples also approach wild animals.

The notion of domesticated animals approaching wolves and other wild beasts is a major shift from *Old Testament* precursors (including even Isaiah's eschatological prophecy). In accordance with the *Gospel*-message of turning larger masses to believe in Christ with the help of the sheep-disciples,⁸⁶¹ the idea arises here that the taming of wild animals can not only be expected from divine intervention, but it can be facilitated through the intercession of the domesticated animals themselves. Thus, the *Old Testament* narrative of *Verwilderung* is countered here with a process of taming in which an initially vulnerable group of domesticated animals changes the behavior of their wild "counterparts".

5.2.1. Who are the conquering sheep?

The importance of *Gospel*-texts describing the sending out of sheep-disciples and the one warning of wolves hiding among sheep is matched by the Church fathers' attention. For them, the primary task was to counter a more restrictive Judaizing interpretation, according to which sheep were Jews and wolves were hostile Gentiles, and come to an understanding in which sheep symbolized any Christian (regardless of Jewish or Gentile origins), while wolves represented anything not Christian (again, regardless of origin).

In this attempt, they were aided by the tenth chapter of the *Gospel of John*, describing the formation of the true flock of God.⁸⁶² By reading the Johannine passage together with the Markan and Lukan texts, Christian interpreters could widen the interpretation of the idea of transformation with far-reaching consequences. In his commentary on the *Gospel of John*, Augustine captures this possibility:

Were those who heard him sheep? Judas did hear him, and he was a wolf. He followed him, covered in sheepskin, as he was trying to ambush the shepherd. In turn, others did not hear him, but were sheep, [like those] who crucified Christ. He was looking at them in the crowd, when he said: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he" (Jn 8:28). So how can one solve this riddle? Those who hear him are not sheep and those who do not hear him are sheep. Certain wolves follow the voice of the shepherd, and certain sheep

⁸⁶¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1951-55) 67-82.

⁸⁶² Jn 10:1-17.

contradict it. Later on, sheep kill the shepherd. The puzzle can be solved by arguing: before they heard it, they had not been sheep but wolves. But hearing the voice altered them, and turned them from wolves into sheep. And when they were changed into sheep, they heard and found the Shepherd.⁸⁶³

By arguing that the original sheep (the Jews) did not all hear the voice of their shepherd, whereas others, who were not sheep (Gentiles) did, Augustine argues for a reversal of roles between Jews and Christians, and by that he attempts to appropriate the role of *Verus Israel*.⁸⁶⁴ Interpreting the calling of the sheep in light of the saying about wolves clad in sheepskin, Augustine demolishes the image that Jews are the flock and the Messiah is their shepherd, and shifts the explanation of identity from an ethnic to an ethic level. The same argument – although not as explicit concerning the “past” change of roles – occurs in writings of various Greek-speaking Church fathers interpreting the story of Jesus sending out his twelve, or seventy/seventy-two⁸⁶⁵ disciples. Chrysostom, for example, writes:

Even, when they were going out among wolves, he told them to show the gentle nature of sheep as they go out. And he did not simply send them to the wolves, but among the wolves ... We, who act contrary to that, should thus be ashamed jumping on our enemies like wolves. For as long as we remain sheep, we will be victorious. And even if we are surrounded by myriads of wolves, we will overcome and defeat them. But if we are wolves, we are going to be defeated, for the shepherd’s help will be removed from us, as he is not herding wolves, but sheep.⁸⁶⁶

There are two interesting elements in these two commentaries. On the one hand, they do not present beastliness as a static position, but as a dynamic one. This means that taming beastliness (and of course also losing one’s domesticated nature) is a question of choice, and not of divine arbitration.

⁸⁶³ (Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus* 45:10) Qui audierunt, oues erant? ecce audiuit iudas, et lupus erat; sequebatur, sed pelle ouina tectus pastori insidiabatur. Aliqui uero eorum qui christum crucifixerunt, non audiebant, et oues erant; ipsos enim uidebat in turba, quando dicebat: cum exaltaueritis filium hominis, tunc cognoscetis quia ego sum. Quomodo enim ista soluitur quaestio? audiunt non oues, et non audiunt oues; sequuntur uocem pastoris quidam lupi, et ei quaedam contradicunt oues; postremo pastorem occidunt oues. Soluitur quaestio; respondet enim aliquis, et dicit: sed quando non audiebant, oues nondum erant, tunc lupi erant; uox audita eos mutauit, et ex lupis oues fecit; quando ergo factae sunt oues, audierunt, et pastorem inuenerunt.

⁸⁶⁴ On the use and importance of this particular argument, see Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 84-90.

⁸⁶⁵ In the *Gospel of Matthew* (Mt 10:16) the metaphor is used in relation to the twelve apostles, whereas in the *Gospel of Luke* (Lk 10:3) the same saying (cf. Christopher M. Hays, *Luke’s Wealth Ethics: a Study in their Coherence and Character* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 99) is referred to seventy or seventy-two apostles. For a clarification of the number as well as an explanation of the two variants, cf. Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile-mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) 45-47.

⁸⁶⁶ (John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Matthaeum*, 33:1) φησί·Καὶ οὕτως ἀπιόντες, τὴν προβάτων ἡμερότητα ἐπιδείκνυσθε, καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς λύκους ἵεναι μέλλοντες· καὶ οὐχ ἀπλῶς πρὸς λύκους, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς μέσους λύκων ... Αἰσχυνόμεθα τοίνυν οἱ τάναντία ποιοῦντες, οἱ ὡς λύκοι τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἐπιτιθέμενοι. Ἔως γὰρ ἂν ὤμεν πρόβατα, νικῶμεν· κἂν μυρίοι περιστοιχίσωνται λύκοι, περιγινόμεθα καὶ κρατοῦμεν· ἂν δὲ γενώμεθα λύκοι, ἡττώμεθα· ἀφίσταται γὰρ ἡμῶν ἢ τοῦ ποιμένου βοήθεια. Οὐ γὰρ λύκους, ἀλλὰ πρόβατα ποιμαίνει.

On the other hand, the process of becoming tame is presented as dependent upon one's relationship with Christian faith. And although the authors present the situation from a retrospective vantage point and focus on the results, they inevitably discuss a past situation: if gentile Christians *turned into* sheep, then they had been wolves, that is to say, wild beasts before that. This claim features in several writings,⁸⁶⁷ perhaps most explicitly in Eusebius' *Demonstratio Evangelica*:

It is very clear that Christ was born from the root of Jesse (who was the father of David). The call to the Gentiles, which had previously been proclaimed only through the enigma of prophetic words, should be [based] upon this. Since the “the wolf shall feed with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid” (Is 11:6) and like passages do not serve any other purpose than to show that nations, not different from wild and rough beasts will turn the same way to piety, cultivation and sociability.⁸⁶⁸

On the surface, this exegetical concept serves the purpose of legitimizing the Christian aspiration of appropriating *Old Testament* expressions concerning the flock of God and to buttress their self-representation as a tame and peaceful community. An additional, and perhaps more important element is, however, that by intertwining the turn from wild into tame with the process of conversion, the image of the Church also effectively counters external claims identifying it with wild beasts and might also help refuting the concerning notion (so emphatic in Jewish tradition⁸⁶⁹) that characteristics of wild animals do feature in “us” and that sometimes even the ingroup must be identified as a wild beast. If Christians are represented by animals that became tame (despite their wild origins) due to their conversion to or acceptance of the Christian faith, then the tame nature will be preserved as long as one keeps with the faith. In other words: if conversion is taming, then proper faith is a safeguard against a possible *Verwilderung* of the individual.

Except for the solitary sheep in the *Book of Isaiah*, who is willing to suffer death, the *Old Testament* tradition depicting sheep as vulnerable and defenseless animals would not fit the *New Testament* notion of a flock prepared to approach wild and furious animals. With regard to this aspect of the *Gospel*-passage, Cyril of Alexandria said:

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. Also Augustine, *Expositio in Psalmorum* 104:13, Ephrem, *Hymns on the Nativity* 3:7.

⁸⁶⁸ (Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* 2:3:111) σαφέστατα τὴν ἐκ ρίζης Ἰεσοῦ (πατὴρ δὲ ἦν οὗτος τοῦ Δαβὶδ) γένεσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παριστάς. ἐφ' ἣ γένεσιν τὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν κλήσιν πρότερον μὲν δι' αἰνίγματος προφητικῶ τρόπῳ ἀναφωνεῖ· τὸ γὰρ συμβοσκηθήσεται λύκος μετὰ ἀρνός, καὶ πάρδαλις σὺν ἐρίφῳ συναναπαύσεται, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ τῶν ἀγρίων καὶ ἀπηνῶν τὸν τρόπον καὶ μηδὲν θηρίων διαφερόντων ἐθνῶν τὴν ἐπὶ τὸν εὐσεβῆ καὶ ἡμερόν τε καὶ κοινωνικὸν τρόπον μεταβολὴν ἐδήλου.

⁸⁶⁹ See chapter 5.3. and 5.3.2.

And how could sheep gain the upper hand, and how could the tame prevail over the wild beasts? For indeed he says: ‘I will be with you, and I will be at your side, and I will remove all the wicked things.’ I will turn the wolves into sheep. For I will change everything, and nothing will resist my will.⁸⁷⁰

The mission of the seventy is a peaceful one. Jesus does not ask them to try and convert the wolves, but to “cure the sick ... and say to them [those welcoming the apostles], ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’”.⁸⁷¹ Although in the *New Testament*, the metaphor is not explained any further, the seemingly counter-intuitive nature of the symbolism used⁸⁷² urges Cyril to propose an explanation, claiming that Christ will ultimately turn the wolves into sheep. The possibility of a change of natures ensconced in the *Gospel*-verse becomes a compelling idea and – as I will present in the final part of the present chapter⁸⁷³ – also serves as a core-concept for the Church fathers’ treatment of wild-beast eschatology as a description of the fate of the outgroup.

In a way similar to that of Cyril, Chrysostom also argues that sending out disciples in the form of docile animals was an intentional choice. He, moreover, goes on to explain yet another transformation (and by that showing once more the traversable nature of the boundary between wild and domesticated animals) in which those sent out are not simply tame, but also wise, as symbolized by the symbol of serpents.⁸⁷⁴

He says: ‘Do not be afraid that I send you to be among wolves as sheep and as doves’ (cf. Mt 10:16). I could have done the opposite and could have prevented you from enduring any distress or from staying among wolves in sheep’s form. And I could have made you more dreadful than lions. But it is fitting this way [that I did not do so]. Thus, you are more magnificent and my power is declared. He also said this to Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2Cor 12:9). I made you to be like that. And by saying “I am sending you out like sheep”, he is referring to this. Do not be disheartened, for I know with certainty that this way you will be more invincible. “so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt 10:16). And one could ask: ‘what gain could our wisdom [achieve] in such dangers? How can one

⁸⁷⁰ (Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentarii in Lucam* 10:3) Καὶ πῶς ἂν πρόβατον κατισχύσειε λύκου καὶ τῆς τῶν θηρῶν ἀγριότητος κρατήσῃ τὸ ἡμέρον; Ναί, φησίν, ἐγὼ συμπάρεσομαι καὶ συνασπιῶ καὶ παντὸς ἐξελοῦμαι κακοῦ, ἐγὼ τοὺς λύκους εἰς πρόβατα μεταβαλῶ· ποιῶ γὰρ πάντα καὶ μετασκευάζω καὶ οὐδὲν τοῖς ἐμοῖς θελήμασι τὸ ἀντιστατοῦν.

⁸⁷¹ Lk 10:9.

⁸⁷² Namely that sheep, animals which are traditionally (in the *Old Testament* and in other places in the *New Testament* as well) considered to be vulnerable and defenceless are sent among predators without any reference for an undertone of self-sacrifice.

⁸⁷³ See chapter 5.5.

⁸⁷⁴ Charlesworth observes the relationship between Greek mythological tradition and the *Biblical* notion of serpents as symbols of wisdom. See Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent*, 246-247 and 394-5.

even be wise among such drenching waves? For how can a sheep be wise when it is among wolves, and such wolves? What can it even do? Or what could a dove, be it so gentle, achieve against such an overwhelming number of falcons?’ In case of the animals, it could do nothing. But in your case, it could achieve much.⁸⁷⁵

Emphasizing that Jesus could have turned his followers into mighty and savage wild beasts, Chrysostom goes further than Cyril and gives three – partly contradicting – answers: the vulnerability of the disciples⁸⁷⁶ highlights the power of Jesus, but it was also the only way for victory. And, by a sudden twist at the end of his commentary, Chrysostom shifts back to a fully metaphorical interpretation and points out the intellectual superiority of Christian humans as opposed to their Gentile persecutors.

Augustine, who reads the two major *Gospel*-verses (Mt 7:15 and Mt 10:16) explicitly together, even arrives to an ultimate reversal of the idea of transformation: Jesus could have sent his disciples as wolves so that their lupine persecutors would receive them more favorably. In light of this possibility, the choice of assuming the vulnerability of a sheep is not only a declaration of the non-aggressive nature of Christianity, but also a sign of courage on the part of the disciples:

You might say: ‘we will penetrate their den more easily if we lie about what we really are’. If this has been permitted or useful, Christ could have ordered his sheep to approach the wolves clothed in wolfskin and discover their deceptions through this method. But he did not say this, not even when he promised that he would send them out in the midst of wolves (cf. Mt 10:16).⁸⁷⁷

5.2.2. And who are the wolves?

⁸⁷⁵ (John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Matthaeum* 33:3) Μὴ θορυβηθῆτε, φησὶν, ὅτι μεταξὺ λύκων πέμπων, ὡς πρόβατα καὶ ὡς περιστέρως εἶναι κελεύω. Ἡδυνάμην μὲν γὰρ ποιῆσαι τοῦναντίον, καὶ μηδὲν ὑμᾶς ἀφεῖναι δεινὸν ὑπομένειν, μηδὲ ὡς πρόβατα ὑποτεθῆναι λύκοις, ἀλλὰ λεόντων ἐργάσασθαι φοβερωτέρους· ἀλλ’ οὕτω συμφέρει γενέσθαι. Τοῦτο καὶ ὑμᾶς λαμπροτέρους ποιεῖ· τοῦτο καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνακηρύττει δύναμιν. Τοῦτο καὶ πρὸς Παῦλον ἔλεγεν· Ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου· ἡ γὰρ δύναμίς μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται. Ἐγὼ τοίνυν οὕτως ὑμᾶς ἐποίησα εἶναι. Ὅταν γὰρ εἴπῃ, Ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς πρόβατα, τοῦτο αἰνίττεται· Μὴ τοίνυν καταπέσητε· οἶδα γὰρ, οἶδα σαφῶς, ὅτι ταύτη μάλιστα πᾶσιν ἀχέιρωτοι ἔσεσθε ... Γίνεσθε οὖν φρόνιμοι ὡς οἱ ὄφεις, καὶ ἀκέραιοι ὡς αἱ περιστέραί. Καὶ τί δύναται ἂν ἡ ἡμετέρα φρόνησις, φησὶν, ἐν τοσούτοις κινδύνοις; ... Ὅσον γὰρ ἂν γένηται φρόνιμον πρόβατον μεταξὺ λύκων ὄν, καὶ λύκων τοσούτων, τί δυνήσεται πλέον ἀνύσαι; ὅσον ἂν γένηται ἀκέραιος ἡ περιστέρα, τί ὠφελήσῃ, τοσούτων ἐπικειμένων ἱεράκων; Ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ἀλόγων, οὐδέν· ἐπὶ δὲ ὑμῶν, τὰ μέγιστα.

⁸⁷⁶ Doves are clearly regarded just as vulnerable animals, and also apt for sacrifice as sheep. See Pangritz, *Das Tier in der Bibel*, 83-4, and Christensen, *Biblisches Tierlexikon*, 135-138.

⁸⁷⁷ (Augustine, *Ad Consentium contra Mendacium* 6:12) Sed multo facilius, inquires, eorum latibula penetramus, si quod sunt nos esse mentiamur. hoc si liceret aut expediret, potuit christus praecipere ouibus suis, ut lupinis amictae pellibus ad lupos uenirent et eos huius artis fallaciis inuenirent: quod eis non dixit nec quando eas in medium luporum se missurum esse praedixit.

Although less thematized than in the *New Testament*, the opposition of wolves and sheep was already present in the *Old Testament*.⁸⁷⁸ Therefore, it offered an important symbolic framework for interpreting ingroup-outgroup relations for the rabbis as well. They, however, not only commented on *Old Testament* precursors, but formulated a tradition that is in many details strikingly reminiscent of the *New Testament* passages discussed above and the Church Fathers' interpretations of them. One of these is the rabbinic notion according to which the nations of the world are considered to be seventy wolves,⁸⁷⁹ among whom the solitary Israel is standing alone, symbolized by a sheep. The concept of seventy Gentile nations as opposed to the solitary Israel is extant in various midrashic collections⁸⁸⁰ and it is attributed to a number of historical figures, among them David:

David said: what can one sheep among seventy wolves do? What could Israel among seventy strong nations do, if it were not for you, who stand with them in every hour, the one who "deliver the weak from those too strong for them" (Ps 35:10), that is Israel.⁸⁸¹

The earliest rabbinic authority, to whom the notion is ascribed is R. Yehoshua b. Hanania. However, this attribution is recorded only in late midrashic collections, such as *Esther Rabbah*:

The Emperor Hadrian said to R. Joshua: 'the sheep that can withstand seventy wolves is glorious'. [R. Joshua] replied: 'it is the shepherd that delivers it and crushes them [its enemies] that is great, as it is said: "No weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper" (Is 54:17).⁸⁸²

The opposition of wolves and the sheep is twisted in an intriguing way in this midrash. Whereas the *Old Testament* image of hostile animals threatening the flock⁸⁸³ is based on the implicit notion that a large number of sheep (hence flock) is threatened by a much smaller number of wolves or lions, this proposition is reversed here. Similarly to Chrysostom's interpretation of the *Gospel of Matthew* (*Homiliae in Matthaeum*, 33:1) the opposition of sheep and wolves is not only an opposition of natures but also of numbers. Here, Israel, as a solitary sheep, faces a much larger number of wolves. By doing so, the midrash comes to the same counter-intuitive concept of an overpowering number of predators that is behind the *Gospel*-narrative of sending out a few disciples among large packs of

⁸⁷⁸ See Is 11:6, Is 65:25.

⁸⁷⁹ On the scriptural origins and structure of this argumentation see Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 8, and fn 41.

⁸⁸⁰ Cf. E.g. *Genesis Rabbah* 39:11.

⁸⁸¹ (PesR 9) אמר דוד כבש בין שבעים זאבים מה יכול לעשות, ישראל בין שבעים אומות חזקים מה הם יכולים לעשות אילולי אתה עומד להם בכל (PesR 9) שעה ושעה הוי מציל עני מחזק ממנו אילו ישראל.

⁸⁸² (10:11 *Esther Rabbah*) אנדריאנוס קיסר אמר לו לר' יהושע גדולה היא הכבשה שעומדת בין שבעים זאבים, אמר לו גדול הוא הרועה שמצילה ושוברן לפנייהם הה"ד כל כלי יוצר עליך לא יצלה וגו'

⁸⁸³ E.g. Ez 34:5, 1 Sm 17:34 etc.

wolves (“See, I am sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves”).⁸⁸⁴ The similarity between these two passages was observed first by Lachs and Marshall.⁸⁸⁵ Marshall gives credit to the claim of *Esther Rabbah*, a midrash-compilation of the sixth century, that the argument was formulated by a tanna of the early second century. If that is the case, R. Yehoshua’s comment might have originated from the same parable that gave birth to Jesus’ logion. However, since the passage appears only in commentary-compilations of later periods, such as *Tanhuma*,⁸⁸⁶ it seems more plausible to imagine that the rabbinic argument did not emerge from the same literary circles as the Gospels, but that it was a late reaction to such texts. If one takes into account that in the midrash, the security of the solitary sheep is warranted by its special relationship with God, its shepherd, whereas the apostles are promised suffering *due to* their relationship⁸⁸⁷ with Jesus, the shepherd,⁸⁸⁸ on whose behalf they would be persecuted (thus, a direct opposite of the midrash’ argument) the midrash might even seem like an ironic commentary. In this case, the 5th or 6th century tradition attributed to R. Yehoshuah was probably formulated in awareness of the *Gospel*-text,⁸⁸⁹ and as a subtle parody of it. Applying the number to the wolves, the text might be referring to a fabled number of Christian missionaries threatening the lamb of Israel, which can only expect salvation from God.

⁸⁸⁴ Mt 10:16. Here, the Greek phrase (ἐν μέσῳ λύκων) implies that the wolves can surround the sheep, consequently their numbers must be greater than that of the disciples

⁸⁸⁵ Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Hoboken NJ: Ktav, 1987) 181-182; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1978).

⁸⁸⁶ *Tanhuma* Toldot 5.

⁸⁸⁷ Cf. Mt 10:19.

⁸⁸⁸ Mt 10:22-23. Cf. L. Ann Jervis, “Suffering for the Reign of God. The Persecution of Discipleship in Q,” *Novum Testamentum* 44, 4 (2002): 313-332, here 322-326.

⁸⁸⁹ On the puzzling issue of whether the rabbis knew the text of any *Gospel*-text first-hand, see Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2007) 122-125.

5.3. The wild nature within

The treatment of the opposition of wolves and sheep showed that the Church fathers took the possibility of a change of natures very seriously, emphasizing the fact that if wild beasts can be tamed (through conversion) than an opposite movement must also be possible: there is room for personal *Verwilderung*. This is clearly a problematic discovery. On the one hand, it jeopardizes the stability of identifying one's ingroup with tame and peaceful animals but on the other, it is very much in accordance with the ambivalent and unsettled nature of wilderness as a habitat and of wild animals as its representatives.

The oscillation between two states (being wild and being like a domesticated animal) was a generally recognized ambiguity of human existence in both traditions, and the opposition of wild and domesticated animals was an appropriate discourse for handling this observation in a comprehensible manner. Thus, the ambiguity of wild animal symbolism (namely, that they represented both the uncultivated, wild, ferocious and dangerous outgroup and the free, mighty and unstoppable forces within the human nature materializing in physical or spiritual prowess) was put to good use.

Such a solution is exemplified by the Church fathers' treatment of the scene in which Jesus sends out his disciples with the words, be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Mt 10:16). The inherent opposition between these two animals was less of a problem for the *Gospel-text*⁸⁹⁰ than for Church fathers, who tended to identify serpent with the devil or at least attribute demonic powers to it.⁸⁹¹ But, by claiming that they represent two equally available aspects of human existence, their opposition could be reconciled. Gregory of Nyssa, who argues for a balance between the characteristics of the two, phrases this possibility:

The dogma can be openly heard in the scene of Jesus' teaching, when he instructs his disciples to mingle with the wolves as sheep, but not to be like doves only, but also have something from the serpents. This means that they should not pursue simplicity (a seemingly laudable feature of humans) ... nor should cleverness (a feature praised by many) and shrewdness unmixed with its opposite taken to be the highest virtue ... the two need to be brought together into one good habit in which simplicity, knowledge and shrewdness are mixed, as he says: "so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Mt 10:16).⁸⁹²

⁸⁹⁰ Cf. also Jn 3:14-16, Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent*, 356-7.

⁸⁹¹ Cf. Grant, *Early Christians and Animals*, 4-5.

⁸⁹² (Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate* 17:2) τὸ δόγμα φανερώς γὰρ τῆς τοῦ κυρίου διδασκαλίας ἔστιν ἀκοῦσαι, ἐν οἷς διδάσκει τοὺς μαθητάς, ὡς ἄρνας λύκοις συναναστρεφομένους, μὴ περιστερὰς εἶναι μόνον, ἀλλ' ἔχειν τι καὶ τοῦ ὄφεως

A similar argument is presented by Chrysostom in relation to a number of *Old Testament* texts:⁸⁹³

And it should be observed everywhere that the examples should not all be taken entirely, but the useful parts should be selected and for what purpose they have been taken, and to leave the rest behind. For example, when it is said: “He crouched, he lay down like a lion” (Nm 24:9), we should concentrate [ἐκλαμβάνομεν] on the non-combatant and fearful aspect, not on savageness, or other things related to lions. And when again it is said: “I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs” (Hos 13:8), we should [take from it] the revengeful [part].⁸⁹⁴

Whereas the anthropocentric, and mostly demythologized world of the Bible could tolerate an oscillation between the meaning of wild animal symbols (referring both to fearful enemies and to the – similarly fearful – power of God or that of Israel), the situation in which interpreters were making sense of Biblical narratives was fraught with intercommunal polemics and an ongoing struggle for the appropriation of symbolic Biblical imagery. Thus, the power and destructive force ensconced in both aspects of the metaphor, rendered the image of wild animals at the same time alluring and perilous. Jewish and Christian exegetes were rightfully uncomfortable with the ambivalence of animal symbols that could be used both as representations of feared and disliked others and of a powerful self. Concerning this danger, the lion is a particularly interesting animal symbol, for on the one hand, it is interpreted in both ways by the two traditions, and on the other, since the ambiguity regarding it is an idea well reflected by both Jews and Christians.

5.3.1. The two lions

The ambiguity of this particular symbol results from the fact that even before the beginning of Jewish and Christian exegesis, lion was a major symbol of royal power in ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and later on Biblical tradition. In this capacity, it represented the monarch’s power to protect its subjects, but also his right to exert his will on commoners.⁸⁹⁵ This aspect of royal power does not

ἐν τῷ ἥθει. Τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ μὴ τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἀπλότητα δοκοῦν ἐπαινετὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις εἰς ἄκρον ἐπιτηδεύειν ... μὴδ’ αὖ πάλιν τὴν ἐπαινουμένην ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν δεινότητα καὶ πανουργίαν ἀμιγῆ τῶν ἐναντίων καὶ ἄκρατον ἀρετὴν νομίζειν ... ἐν ἀποτελεσθῆναι καλὸν ἐπιτήδευμα ἀπλότητι γνώμης καὶ ἀγχινοῖα συγκεκραμένον. Γίνεσθε γάρ, φησί, φρόνιμοι ὡς οἱ ὄφεις καὶ ἀκέραιοι ὡς αἱ περιστῆραι.

⁸⁹³ For further examples, see also Gregory of Nazianzos, *Orations* 18:27, Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 10:3.

⁸⁹⁴ (John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam ad Romanos* 16:20) Καὶ τοῦτο πανταχοῦ δεῖ παρατηρεῖν, ὅτι τὰ ὑποδείγματα οὐ πάντα καθόλου δεῖ λαμβάνειν, ἀλλὰ τὸ χρήσιμον αὐτῶν ἐκλεξαμένους, καὶ εἰς ὅπερ παρείληπται, τὸ λοιπὸν ἅπαν ἔξν. Ὡς περ οὖν ὅταν λέγῃ, Ἀναπεσὼν ἐκοιμήθη ὡς λέων, τὸ ἄμαχον καὶ φοβερὸν ἐκλαμβάνομεν, οὐ τὸ θηριῶδες οὐδὲ ἄλλο τι τῶν τῷ λέοντι προσόντων· καὶ πάλιν ὅταν λέγῃ, Ἀπαντήσομαι αὐτοῖς, ὡς ἄρκτος ἀπορουμένη, τὸ τιμωρητικόν.

⁸⁹⁵ Marc Zvi Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1989) 89-90.

only include a mild fulfilling of will, but also the prerogative to resort to sheer force when needed.⁸⁹⁶ Therefore, a leonine ruler is not only seen as an agent providing protection, but also as someone, who intimidates his own subjects.⁸⁹⁷ The same ambiguity is preserved in both the *Old Testament*⁸⁹⁸ and – to a restricted extent – in the *New Testament*.⁸⁹⁹ And due to the identification of a loving royal God⁹⁰⁰ with a lion in the former as well as Jesus' representation as such in the latter, the symbol itself was partly transformed,⁹⁰¹ and presented as a creature, whose bravery, strength and fierceness are necessary to prevail over the enemies of the community. The power of the wild beast is the same, but the perspective is different. The ruler is not presented from the point of view of the destroyed, but from that of the protected.

In the exegetical tradition of the two communities, this duality is also present. Rabbis identified God or the house of Judah with lions in a positive manner,⁹⁰² but they also tried to harmonize these interpretations with the negative aspects of wild animality:

Jacob fathered two against two, and Moses fathered two against two. [Jacob fathered] Judah against the Babylonian Empire. Both are compared to lions. This [Judah] is compared to a lion: "Judah is a lion's whelp" (Gn 49:9) and that [Babylonia] is compared to a lion: "The first was like a lion" (Dn 7:4). And whose hand it is that brings down the Babylonian Empire? Daniel's hand, who came from [the tribe of] Judah.⁹⁰³

Although the commentary claims that Daniel was responsible for the downfall of the Kingdom of Babylonia, the identification does not build on the savagery or the physical power of the lion, but rather on a concept of kinship (his emergence from the tribe of Judah). Moreover, it implicitly

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid. 95-98.

⁸⁹⁷ Cf. Michael B Dick, "The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt and Yahweh's Answer to Job," *Journal of Biblical Literature*. 125 (2006): 243-270.

⁸⁹⁸ Lions can be seen as forces of destruction (e.g. Is 15:9; Jer 4:7; Ps. 35:17 (On the demonic, lion-like forces of the Psalms see Othmar Keel, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: am Beispiel der Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1996) 84-85) but also as symbols of God or powerful Israelites (E.g. 1Kg 7:29; Ez 19.2-5; Hos 5:14; Amos 3:8.).

⁸⁹⁹ On the one hand, the lion was used as a symbol of hostile, diabolic forces (cf. 2 Tm 4:17, Heb 11:33, 1 Pt 5:8. Cf. Raymond F Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: a Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) 286), on the other hand, it was identified once with Jesus (Rv 5:5). On the latter verse, see Rebecca Skaggs and Thomas Doyle, "Lion/Lamb in Revelation," *Currents in Biblical Research*. 7, no 3. (2009): 371-373.

⁹⁰⁰ E.g. Is 31:3-5; Am 3:4-8; Hos 11:9-11 etc. Cf. Andersen, *Hosea*, 591.

⁹⁰¹ See Bernard Levinson, "The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah," *Vetus Testamentum*, 51 (2001): 511-518.

⁹⁰² (Abot de Rabbi Nathan A 2) כיוצא בו אריה שאג מי לא יירא ה' אלהים דבר מי לא ינבא לא כאריה אחד בלבד אלא ככל אריות שבעולם See also *bShabbat* 30a.

⁹⁰³ (Genesis Rabbah 99:2, Vilna edition) יעקב זיווג שנים כנגד שנים, ומשה זיווג שנים כנגד שנים, יהודה כנגד מלכות בבל, זה נמשל באריה (Genesis Rabbah 99:2, Vilna edition) וזה נמשל באריה גור אריה יהודה, וזה נמשל באריה קדמייתא כאריה, ביד מי מלכות בבל נופלת ביד דניאל שהוא בא משל יהודה.

“Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness – who dares rouse him up?” (Gn 49:9) In order to make clear how true this prophecy is, I deem it enough [to point out] that by the word “crouching down” it predicts the death of Christ. And he is not a lion because he has to die, but because he can die. Even he predicts this power in the Gospel, when he says: “I have power to lay it [my life] down, and I have power to take it up again” (Jn 10:18).⁹¹⁰

According to this passage, the leonine feature of Jesus has nothing to do with the ferocity of the animals in the original text of Jacob's blessing, but only with the fact that it is presented as lying down (*recumbens*). This term gives an opening to Augustine, to remind the reader of a terminological similarity with the *Gospel of John* (*pono animam meam*) and to claim that the leonine aspect of Jesus is his willing death and resurrection. Thus, he is presented as the only one capable of lying down (i.e. dying) and then rising again.

The destructive aspects of lions are not forgotten either in patristic tradition. Although, in accordance with the spiritual power of Jesus's leonine nature, the wicked character whom the lion is understood to represent (death or the devil) is sometimes as abstract as Jesus.⁹¹¹ But the problem of the lion's duality remains a constant concern. The most notable commentary dealing with this is in Augustine's *Sermones de Novo Testamento*, which argues from the point of view of semiotics. Augustine points out that the Biblical lion can refer to Jesus inasmuch as lions are as strong and prevailing as him, but they can also symbolize the devil, for they are as savage and harmful to their victims as he is:

Is Christ not a sheep? Is he not also a lion? When you talk about wild beast or the cattle, a sheep is a sheep and a lion is a lion. Christ, however, is both of these. He bears the features of and similar to both. Moreover, sometimes different things are called with the same name when they are similar ... Christ and the devil are both called lions. Christ is a lion (“the Lion of the tribe of Judah ... has conquered” (Rv 5:5)) and the devil is a lion (“Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour” (1 Pet 5:8)). So, both are lions. The first one due to its bravery, the second one due to its ferocity. [Christ] is a lion in victory and the other is a lion in destruction.”⁹¹²

⁹¹⁰ (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 16:41): Catulus leonis iuda; ex germinatione, fili mi, ascendisti; recumbens dormisti ut leo et ut catulus leonis; quis suscitabit eum? ... Satis esse arbitror, quantum ueritas prophetiae huius elucet; ubi et mors christi praedicta est uerbo dormitionis et non necessitas, sed potestas in morte nomine leonis. Quam potestatem in euangelio ipse praedicat dicens: potestatem habeo ponendi animam meam et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi eam.

⁹¹¹ E.g. Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* 10:13; Didymus: *In Psalmis* 10:8; Ambrose: *Expositio Super Psalmos* 45:4 etc.

⁹¹² (Augustine, *Sermones de Novo Testamento* 10:13) Nonne agnus Christus? Nonne et leo Christus? Inter feras et pecora, qui agnus agnus, qui leo leo: utrumque Christus. Illa singula per proprietatem: ista utrumque per similitudinem. Plus etiam

In Augustine's commentary, both directions of leonine power refer to the spiritual realm and the physical aspect of leonine fierceness is gone almost entirely. In case of Jesus, the only leonine aspects that interpreters could apply was endurance in suffering, that is to say bravery and willingness to self-sacrifice for the good of his community.⁹¹³ Thus, choosing lion as his attribute constituted a deliberate break with the emphasis of the *Old Testament's* leonine imagery. Only this way, could the once savage predator be harmonized with other animal-like aspects of the figure of Jesus.⁹¹⁴

An example from *Esther Rabbah* shows that the rabbis also reflected their concerns about the duality of the leonine imagery:

“The Jews gathered in their cities ... and no one could withstand them, because the fear of them had fallen upon all peoples” (Esther 9:2). And Israel was ferocious like a lion assaulting a flock of sheep: it struck and there was no deliverance, as it is said: “And among the nations the remnant of Jacob, surrounded by many peoples, shall be like a lion among the animals of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep” (Mi 5:7).⁹¹⁵ And they killed the sons of Haman and hanged them. The Emperor Hadrian said to R. Joshua: ‘the sheep that can withstand seventy wolves is glorious’. [R. Joshua] replied: ‘it is the shepherd that delivers it and crushes them [its enemies] that is great, as it is said: “No weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper” (Is 54:17).’⁹¹⁶

The anonymous midrash starts with the image of a fearful – leonine – Israel waging war against the nations incapable of defending themselves. The author of the text goes even as far as to compare these “victims” of the Israelites to sheep. But this image is perhaps the last one the rabbis wanted their audience to formulate about Israel, depicted more regularly as an elected nation resisting the onrush of numerous gentile enemies threatening their existence. Not only does it contradict Israel's *Biblical* association with the image of the sheep of God, it also draws an unfavorable picture about Israel as an aggressor. In an attempt to mend the blemished reputation of a “persecuted chosen nation”, the

est quod accidit, ut per similitudinem multum a se res distantes, uocentur uno nomine. Quod enim tam distat ab inuicem, quam Christus et diabolus? Tamen leo et Christus est appellatus, et diabolus. Christus leo: uicit leo, de tribu iuda. Diabolus leo: nescitis quia aduersarius uester diabolus tanquam leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem deuoret? Ergo et ille leo et ille leo: ille leo propter fortitudinem; ille leo propter feritatem: ille leo ad uincendum; ille leo ad nocendum.

⁹¹³ Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 84-85.

⁹¹⁴ Rebecca Skaggs' argument is similar concerning the 5th chapter of the Book of Revelation although She argues for a different direction. Skaggs, “Lion/Lamb in Revelation,” 362-375, 374-5.

⁹¹⁵ Mc 5:8 in the NRSV

⁹¹⁶ (Esther Rabbah 10:11) נקהלו היהודים בעריהם וגו', ואיש לא עמד בפניהם כי נפל פחדם על כל העמים וישראל מתגברים כאריה שנפל בעדרי צאן ומכה והולך ואין מציל מידו הה"ד והיה שארית יעקב בגוים בקרב עמים רבים כאריה בבהמות יער וככפיר בעדרי צאן וגו', והרגו בניו של המן ותלאום, אנדריאנוס קיסר אמר לו לר' יהושע גדולה היא הכבשה שעומדת בין שבעים זאבים, אמר לו גדול הוא הרועה שמצילה ושוברן לפניהם הה"ד כל כלי יוצר עליך לא יצלח וגו'.

author or authors of the passage revert to the more familiar narrative in which Israel is again the victimized sheep, and the nations play their usual role as wolves.

Jewish and Christian interpreters both aimed at tackling the ambiguity of the lion symbol, and their interpretations are similar inasmuch as they distinguished between positive fierceness on a spiritual level and the destructive nature of lionness on a physical one. This distinction enabled them to account for the positive identification available in certain Biblical narratives, without contradicting the overall concept of the detrimental interpretation of animals of the wilderness. With such an interpretation, both exegetical traditions could accommodate a more intimate, and therefore more profound understanding of the concept of wild animality than a mere exploration of a hostile wilderness would have made possible.

5.3.2. The individual and the communal wild beast

By distinguishing between positive and negative aspects of wild predators and projecting the latter on the outgroup the rabbis and Church fathers could offer an answer to the troubling issue of the liminality of wild beasts on an exegetical level. By a precise differentiation of references, the ambiguity of the Biblical symbolism was treated. However, there was a different kind of psychological interest in the phenomenon of the occasionally erupting beastliness of human nature, to which both traditions attest.

In a number of interpretations, both rabbis and Church fathers discussed the possibility that human desire can be and is rightfully depicted by wild animals at times. They, however, also argued that such identification works on the individual and not on the communal level. Thus, communal wild beast symbolism could be maintained as referring exclusively to others. Such a strategy is visible in the above examples of Gregory of Nyssa and Chrysostom,⁹¹⁷ but it is even more apparent in the writings of the rabbis, where the admission that being a wild beast is a not a distant possibility but an ever threatening alternative to remaining a tame and obedient animal.

Encapsulating the idea concisely, *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*, for example, offers the following argument:

R. Yose the Galilean says: all that the Holy, blessed be he, created on Earth, he also created in humankind ... In his wisdom and understanding, He created the whole world and the sky and the Earth, the higher beings and the lower ones. And whatever he created in the world, he also created in humankind ... he created evil beasts in the

⁹¹⁷ Cf. the interpretations of Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate* 17 and John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam ad Romanos* 16:20.

world, and created evil beasts in humankind (namely the worms in humans).⁹¹⁸

As the beginning of a long physiological description of the limbs of man, and their correspondent entity in the created world, R. Yose, declares that the microcosm in humans reflects even the presence of evil(!) beasts (חיה רעה). In light of the rest of R. Yose's comparisons (wind – breath; the sun – forehead; salt water – tears, kings – heart etc.), the observation that vermin dwell in men is clearly not a medical statement, but one of anthropology and psychology: despite all intentions to the contrary, there is a tidbit from the nature of wild beasts within each individual. The Palestinian R. Yose's statement fits that of a Babylonian amora, Rami b. Hama:

Rami b. Hama said: a wild beast does not rule a man, except if the man behaves like a beast, as it is said: "they are like the animals that perish" (Ps 49:20).⁹¹⁹

This baraita is more general than the tradition of the *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*. In line with the widespread notion of Late Antique Graeco-Roman lore that humans bear animalistic and specifically savage features, characteristic of undomesticated animals,⁹²⁰ Rami b. Hama reflects upon the possibility of becoming a wild beast. Several passages show that this notion was not envisaged as a fate of only non-Jews, but as a general anthropological feature threatening Jews and Gentiles alike. The broader context of the midrash from *Genesis Rabbah* comparing Jewish and Gentile wild beasts offers an explanation to this feature:

"Surely the Lord God does nothing" (Amos 3:7). Jacob fathered two against two, and Moses fathered two against two. [Jacob fathered] Judah against the Babylonian Empire. Both are compared to lions. This [Judah] is compared to a lion: "Judah is a lion's whelp" (Gn 49:9) and that [Babylonia] is compared to a lion: "The first was like a lion" (Dn 7:4). And whose hand it is that brings down the Babylonian Empire? Daniel's hand, who came from [the tribe of] Judah. [Jacob fathered] Benjamin against the Kingdom of Media. Both are compared to wolves. This [Benjamin] is compared to a wolf: "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf" (Gn 49:27) and that [Media] is compared to a wolf ... This is the opinion of R. Johanan, for he said "Therefore, a lion from the forest shall kill them" (Jer 5:6) ... [Jacob fathered] Joseph against the Kingdom of Rome, for both has horns. This [Joseph] has horns: "A firstborn bull - majesty is his" (Dt 33:17) and that [Rome] has horns: "and concerning

⁹¹⁸ (Abot de Rabbi Nathan A 31) רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר כל מה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא בארץ ברא באדם משלו ... בחכמתו ובתבונתו ברא (Abot de Rabbi Nathan A 31) את כל העולם כולו וברא את השמים ואת הארץ עליונים ותחתונים ויצר באדם כל מה שברא בעולמו ... ברא חיה רעה בעולם וברא חיה רעה באדם זה הכנימה של אדם.

⁹¹⁹ (bSanhedrin 38b) אמר רמי בר חמא: אין חיה רעה שולטת באדם אלא אם כן נדמה לו כבהמה, שנאמר נמשל כבהמות נדמו. (bSanhedrin 38b)

⁹²⁰ Cf. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 205-226.

of a militant opposition to beastly Gentiles is missing: Israel is identified with wild beasts, without – at the same time – arguing for a similar correspondence between beasts and the enemies of Israel:

“The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous (חיות)” (Ex 1:19). What does vigorous mean? If you would say that it means midwife,⁹²⁷ do you think that midwives would need other midwives to give birth? No, the [Egyptian] midwives said: ‘this nation is similar to wild beasts’, as it is said: “Judah is a lion's whelp”; Dn “shall be a snake”; Naphtali a “doe let loose”; Issachar a “strong donkey”; Joseph a “fruitful bough”; Benjamin a “ravenous wolf” (Cf. 49:9-27). [For those sons of Jacob where a comparison is written] it is written, and when there is nothing written “What a lioness was your mother among lions” (Ez 19:2) applies.⁹²⁸

Once again, capitalizing on the words of Jacob's blessing, the anonymous tradition translates the symbolic language into an argument concerning the vigor of the newly born Israelites in Egypt. This interpretation does not explain the wild nature of Israel in relation to the savagery of the kingdoms, but creates the impression that being symbolized by lions, wolves and serpents can serve as a positive collective symbol as well. The text interprets Jacob's blessing in accordance with its positive overtone in the Biblical original. Thus, the ferocity of wild animals is turned into a lauded trait. The savage nature of lions, wolves or snakes is interpreted as an expression of physical vigor.

An interesting expression of this concept features in rabbinic descriptions of the harshness of sages. Wild animals are likewise symbols of positive features, however, not in a physical but – once again – in an intellectual sense. According to tractate *Avot* of the *Mishna*, R. Eliezer argued that sages can be rightfully compared to wild animals:

They said three things. R. Eliezer said: ‘the honor of your friend should be as important to you as your own. You should not get angry easily. You should repent the day before you die. Get warm in front of the fire of the sages, but be careful of their coals so that you do not get burned. Their bite is the bite of the fox, their sting is the sting of the scorpion, their hiss is the hiss of the serpent and their words are like fiery coals.’⁹²⁹

⁹²⁷ The term (חיה) has this meaning in rabbinic parlance.

⁹²⁸ (bSotah 11b) ותאמרן המילדות אל פרעה כי לא כנשים וגו' - מאי חיות? אילימא חיות ממש, אטו חיה מי לא צריכה חיה אחריתי לאולודה? (bSotah 11b) אלא, אמרו לו: אומה זו כחיה נמשלה, יהודה – גור אריה, דן – יהי דן נחש, נפתלי – אילה שלוחה, יששכר – חמור גרם, יוסף – בכור שור, בנימין – זאב יטרף, דכתיב ביה – ודלא כתיב ביה – כתיב: (ביה) מה אמך לביא בין אריות רבצה וגו'.

⁹²⁹ הם אמרו שלשה שלשה דברים רבי אליעזר אומר יהי כבוד חברך חביב עליך כשלך ואל תהי נוח לכעוס ושוב יום אחד לפני (mAvot 2:10) מיתתך והוי מתחמם כנגד אורן של חכמים והוי זהיר בגחלתן שלא תכוה שנשיכתן נשיכת שועל ועקיצתן עקיצת עקרב ולחישתן לחישת שרף וכל דבריהם כגחלי אש.

The representation of the intellectual acumen of the sages in the form of various wild beasts is an easily intelligible metaphor.⁹³⁰ The emphasis of the passage on the pain of the verbal acerbities through the metaphors of bite/sting/hiss focuses the reader's attention on the sages' educational activity. The passage of the *Mishna* is baffling, for it is in clear opposition with the way the rabbis handled the symbolism of lions and similar creatures. The existence of an inner beast, however, also provides a framework in which the beastliness of others can be presented as not only a physical but also a spiritual threat of seduction.

5.3.3. The hunter and the hunted

This threat and the ambiguity on the basis of which it functions was palpably presented in especially liminal situations, such as hunting. In hunting, an image that is closely related to the opposition of wild and domesticated beasts, the roles of hunter and hunted are often unstable and subject to exchange, due to the ambiguous nature of wilderness and wild animals themselves.

In the traditional layout, it is wild animals that pose a threat to domesticated ones and to humans. But from the perspective of human society, wild animals are beings without protection likely to be hunted themselves. Identifying with a wild beast that is hunted and persecuted by humans is a topic recurrent in *Esther Rabbah*:

“And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate” (Est 3:2): R. Jose b. Hanina started to interpret this with the help of the verse “The arrogant have hidden a trap for me” (Ps 140:6). [This is what] the community of Israel said to the Holy, blessed be he, Lord of the world. The idolaters set up traps to overthrow me. They tell me to perform idolatry with them. If I harken to them, I will be punished, and if I do not, they kill me. This is like the parable of the wolf that is thirsty and a trap is set up next to the water source. It says: ‘If I descend to drink I will be trapped, and if I do not, I will die of thirst.’⁹³¹

R. Jose's midrash is a convincing example of wild beast-symbolism used in order to highlight the loneliness and the resulting distress of being a wild animal. In this comparison, the usually hostile, yet fearsome force of the wolf threatening its victims is not emphasized at all. Instead, Israel (the hunted wolf) is presented as a cornered, defenseless creature hesitating between two wrong choices. *bSanhedrin*, and a number of interpretations⁹³² offer a variant of this narrative, commenting on Nm

⁹³⁰ For a further version cf. *bBaba Kama* 117a.

⁹³¹ (Esther Rabbah 7:6) הקב"ה לי אומר פתח טמנו גאים פה לי אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה (Esther Rabbah 7:6) וכל עבדי המלך אשר בשער המלך וגו', רבי יוסי בר חנינא פתח טמנו גאים פה לי אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה (Esther Rabbah 7:6) רבנו של עולם מצודה פרשו לי עובדי כוכבים להפילני, אומרים לי עבוד עבודת כוכבים אם אני שומעת להם נענשתי ואם אין אני שומעת להם הן הורגין אותי, משל לזאב שצמא למים ופרשו לו מצודה על פי המעיין אמר אם ארד לשתות הריני ניצוד ואם לא ארד הריני מת בצמא.

⁹³² The same tradition surfaces in *Sifre Numbers* Matot 157; *DeutR* 20:4; *Tanhuma* Balak 4.

22:7 (“So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam, and gave him Balak’s message.”):

“So, the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed” (Num22:7). It is argued by the Tannaim: Midian and Moab were in constant war with each other. They were like two dogs in one cage snarling at each other. However, when a wolf came against one of them, the other said: ‘if I do not help him, the wolf will kill him, and comes and kills me tomorrow.’ So, they went [together] and killed the wolf.⁹³³

Even though Israel is presented as the initial aggressor in this baraita, the loneliness of wild beasts is even more emphatic, as the wolf is not contrasted with humans, but with their counterparts in the domesticated realm: dogs. The initial predator, Israel the hunter is becoming the hunted as its enemies form an alliance dedicated to Israel’s annihilation. As I will present in the end of this chapter, this self-representation is paralleled in Christian tradition, most remarkably by Chrysostom, who famously used the hunting narrative in his second oration against the Jews, describing himself and Christian missionaries as dogs who lay a net for the wild beasts, the lupine Jews. And perhaps even Augustine’s commentary on the *Book of Psalms*, according to which Jews are wolves, who – in the course of their conversion – will finally turn into domesticated dogs themselves, is not detached from the general notion of an easy shift between hunter and hunted.

One is tempted to believe that the similarity between these Jewish and Christian interpretations is not accidental. If this is the case, it seems more likely that Church fathers were those who accepted and reused rabbinic exegetical materials. Not only is the alternative (namely that the rabbis would have willingly accepted the hostile appellation of wolves and used it to describe their own situation *vis-à-vis* Gentiles) difficult to fathom, but it also contradicts the chronology that the rabbinic texts themselves present. Although it is impossible to date these traditions with any certainty,⁹³⁴ both *Esther Rabbah* and the *Babylonian Talmud* introduce their respective traditions as tannaitic material. If this is to be believed, the rabbinic interpretations originate from before the end of the second

⁹³³ (b*Sanhedrin* 105a) זה וילכו זקני מואב וזקני מדין תנא: מדין ומואב לא היה להם שלום מעולם. משל לשני כלבים שהיו בעדר והיו צהובין זה (b*Sanhedrin* 105a) זה וילכו זקני מואב וזקני מדין תנא: מדין ומואב לא היה להם שלום מעולם. משל לשני כלבים שהיו בעדר והיו צהובין זה. הלכו שניהם והרגו הזאב. לזה, בא זאב על האחד, אמר האחד: אם איני עוזרו - היום הורג אותי, ולמחר בא עלי. הלכו שניהם והרגו הזאב.

⁹³⁴ As for the problems of dating rabbinic materials and especially aggadic texts, cf. Günter Stemberger, “Dating Rabbinic Traditions,” *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature*, ed. Riemund Bieringer, Florentino García Martínez et al., 79-97 (Leiden: Brill, 2010) here 90.

century. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that due to their apparent popularity, these texts could have even reached fourth-century representatives of the Christian exegetical tradition.⁹³⁵

However, this observation still does not provide an answer to the troubling question as to why the rabbis used such an ambivalent picture to describe Israelites. In lack of a more conclusive answer, I propose to read these texts as rabbinic expressions of two separate themes. For one thing, they suit the anthropological observation of a wild beast residing in every human. More importantly, they help solving the puzzling difficulty of certain *Biblical* passages, in which a clear identification of Israel with wild beasts is present. And apparently, the rabbis approached certain *Biblical* passages (such as Gn 49:9-27 or Hos 8:9) with a totemic mindset, explaining identifications with wild animals in a way that wild and ferocious aspects of the animal in question was not mitigated but even emphasized. These interpretations were however problematic inasmuch as in several narratives (e.g. Ez 22:27, Zep 3:3 etc.) Israel or its leaders are presented as wild beasts turning away from the faith of God and preying on the weak. In contrast, highlighting the loneliness and persecuted stature of wild animals matched the general self-representation of a chosen and hated Israel oppressed by the rest of the world. Thus, rabbis subverted otherwise concerning identifications with savage beasts and succeeded in reestablishing one of their core messages concerning Israel and its place in the world.

The problem was slightly less significant in the Christian tradition, where the notion of a possibility for a fundamental ontological change in the life of the individual (conversion) was an important part of anthropology. Church fathers could always admit the existence of a wild nature within humankind, by adding that being a Christian or converting to Christianity constitutes a taming of this very nature, and thus, Christians are no longer wild animals. This possibility was essential for the Church fathers' understanding of the *Gospel*-story of sheep-apostles being sent among wolves, but it also played a major role in their interpretation of the eschatological fate of wild animal others, a theme to which I will turn now.

⁹³⁵ On the difficulties of estimating such connections, see Günter Stemberger, "Exegetical Contacts between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire," *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation* vol I., ed. Magne Sæbø, 569-586 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996) here 576-586.

5.4. Daniel's kingdoms

The liminality of the wilderness enabled wild animals to be tamed but also domesticated ones to undergo a process of *Verwilderung*. This liminal character was a major source of insecurity in using wild and domesticated animals for identity-construction. Any instance of taming or *Verwilderung* is a further weakening of the border between the two domains and – with it – one more reason to emphasize the opposition between them. Thus, the liminality of the concept of wilderness is, in fact, a feature contributing to the usage of wild-domesticated opposition in tense intercommunal polemics. And although the *Old Testament* notion of wild beasts, as representatives of the threatening wilderness, a danger for the existence of the human domain is captured in prophetic narratives describing the destruction of individual locations, most notably cities (Jerusalem, Babylon etc.).⁹³⁶ This concept is worked out to its greatest extent in apocalyptic literatures. In Apocalyptic scenarios, the concerning aspect of non-clear borders finally resolved by the destruction, expulsion or taming of wild beasts.

Many literary pieces from the second century BCE⁹³⁷ venture into this scenario, but none of them is more relevant for both Jewish and Christian interpreters than the “four beasts” of the *Book of Daniel*. Daniel's status as an authoritative piece of literature was already secured by the end of the first century CE (that is: the beginning of Jewish and Christian exegesis),⁹³⁸ and it was, thus, bound to be interpreted in both early Jewish and Christian exegetical circles. Moreover, the huge amount of paraphrases of and references to it in both apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature⁹³⁹ show that the vision of the four beasts was perceived as one of the center-pieces of the entire *Book of Daniel*. The

⁹³⁶ Cf. Stone, “Jackals and Ostriches,” 69-77. The topic of the destruction of cities has come to the focus of recent Biblical research and studies of the cultures of the Ancient Near East. See Jacob L. Wright, “Urbicide: The Ritual Killing of Cities in the Ancient Near East,” in *Ritual Violence in the Hebrew Bible: New Perspectives*, ed. Saul M. Olyan 147-166 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). See also Donna Lee Petter, *The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments* (Göttingen: V&R, 2011)

⁹³⁷ The most notable parallel is of course the so-called Animal Apocalypse of Enoch, a part of 1 Enoch, in which human history is depicted as a process of continuous deterioration through the medium of animal symbols. See Patrick A. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of I Enoch*, Early Judaism and its Literature (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993) 18-19. For a recent commentary and analysis of this text, see Olson, *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse*. For an extensive list and analysis of apocalyptic texts functioning in a similar fashion from the period, see Bennie H. Reynolds, *Between Symbolism and Realism: The Use of Symbolic and Non-Symbolic Language in Ancient Jewish Apocalypses 333-63 B.C.E.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011) 161-225.

⁹³⁸ See Klaus Koch, “Stages in the Canonization of the Book of Daniel,” in *The Book of Daniel Composition & Reception Volume Two*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, 421-447 (Brill: Leiden, 2001) here 441-444.

⁹³⁹ Cf. Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem against Rome*, 422-423. See further James J. G. Dunn, “The Danielic Son of Man in the New Testament,” *The Book of Daniel Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, vol II, 528-550 (Brill: Leiden, 2001) here 537.

scene, depicting four, more-or-less fantastic⁹⁴⁰ but emphatically wild and ferocious animals, was expounded as representing four subsequent empires ruling over the people of Israel before its messianic liberation. Daniel's vision is unique as it presents a finite view⁹⁴¹ of world history. The four beasts emerging from the sea is perceived as representing the remaining Empires of the world. This gives a clear framework for interpretation, and forces exegetes to harmonize political experiences and their interpretations with a fourfold concept of *translatio imperii*. Moreover, it also drives them to try and recognize various systems of political government established and maintained by the outgroup as a stage in such a fourfold vision of history, implying both a conflict with it and its ultimate destruction by a subsequent power or by the end of times.⁹⁴²

As the concept of representing empires and their strife for power through the medium of animal symbols reached far beyond the *Book of Daniel*,⁹⁴³ and was present both in apocryphal traditions such as the so-called *Animal Apocalypse of Enoch*⁹⁴⁴ and in Targum-versions⁹⁴⁵ of the *Book of Daniel* itself, rabbis and Church fathers referring to the beasts of Daniel could rely upon a widespread awareness of such a tradition of animal symbolism,⁹⁴⁶ and quite often did not bother to give explicit reference to their base-text. Thus, in order to enable a better understanding of the complex structures of interpretations, I shall revisit Daniel's vision in 7:4-7 and 17 and add a minor observation:

The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then, as I watched, its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a human being; and a human mind was given to it. Another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, had three tusks in its mouth among its teeth and was told, "Arise, devour many bodies!" After this, as I watched, another appeared, like a leopard. The beast had four wings of a bird on its back and four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the visions by night a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth and was devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping what was left with its feet. It was different from

⁹⁴⁰ For a detailed analysis of the literary and cultural background of the beasts themselves, cf. Paul A. Porter, *Metaphors and Monsters: A Literary-Critical Study of Daniel 7 and 8* (Toronto: Paul A. Porter, 1985) 34-37.

⁹⁴¹ See David Flusser, "The Four Empires in the Fourth Sybil and in the Book of Daniel," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1978): 148-157, here 157.

⁹⁴² See John Joseph Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998) 116-119.

⁹⁴³ Cf. Amos 5:19; Hos 13:8 etc. Cf. Schroer, *Die Tiere in der Bibel*, 90-103. Cf. Also John J. Collins, *Daniel: a Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 280-291.

⁹⁴⁴ Cf. Porter, *Metaphors and Monsters*, 43-60

⁹⁴⁵ Concerning the Targum-versions of Daniel, cf. Uwe Glessmer [sic], "Die 'Vier Reiche' aus Daniel in der Targumischen Literatur," in *The Book of Daniel Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, vol II, 468-489 (Brill: Leiden, 2001).

⁹⁴⁶ See Collins, *Daniel*, 311-312.

all the beasts that preceded it, and it had ten horns ... As for these four great beasts, four kings shall arise out of the earth.⁹⁴⁷

The text does not only depict four empires in the form of wild beasts, it also presents these animals as striving for world-domination.⁹⁴⁸ The undeniable similarities between Nebuchadnezzar's own dream in chapter two and Daniel's vision in chapter seven⁹⁴⁹ did not leave much doubt that the first one of these must represent the Babylonian Empire.⁹⁵⁰ The two subsequent creatures were symbols of Media and Persia in Daniel's own interpretation⁹⁵¹. This identification of the first three beasts was all the more likely since the topos of a Babylonian-Median-Persian *translatio imperii*⁹⁵² was well known from the earliest layers of Greek historiography.⁹⁵³ A product of the second century BCE,⁹⁵⁴ Daniel's vision matched and (with the addition of a fourth beast) further elaborated on this tradition. As a witness of the rise of Greek Empires, the author of the *Book of Daniel* argued logically that the fourth empire was that of Macedonia, and the kingdoms of the *diadochoi*.⁹⁵⁵ However, for Jewish and Christian interpreters of the *Book of Daniel*, this fourfold identification was problematic. The appearance of the Roman Empire, as a fifth contestant in the first century BCE, challenged the stability of Greece's identification. Interpreters who wished to maintain the legitimacy of Daniel's vision as an apocalyptic prediction, had to make room for Rome in the fourfold model. Their solution was to exploit the fact that the distinction between Medes and Persians faded in

⁹⁴⁷ Dn 7:4-7, 17.

⁹⁴⁸ See Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem against Rome*, 422.

⁹⁴⁹ As for the similarities between chapter 2 and seven cf. John Goldingay, *Daniel* (World Biblical Commentary) (Dallas TX: Word Books, 1989) 148.

⁹⁵⁰ Although the identification of the animal symbols was in itself not necessarily self-evident for the prospective audience from the text itself, ample and extensive use of identical or very similar animal symbolism for depicting empires and hostile kingdoms can be found in prophetic books and among the Psalms. The existence of these *Biblical* parallels excluded any possible uncertainty concerning their identification as subsequent empires. Cf. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 148-150 and Louis Francis Hartman, Alexander A. Di Leila, *The Book of Daniel*, The Anchor Bible (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2009) 212.

⁹⁵¹ Cf. Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem against Rome* 422.

⁹⁵² The term "translatio imperii" denotes the idea of a linear transfer of power, in which subsequent political structures (empires) inherit the mantle of power one from the former. As for Daniel's role in the formation of this idea see Reinhard Gregor Kratz, *Translatio Imperii: Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991). Daniel's tradition of *translatio imperii* has been the basis for a wide variety of political traditions claiming Greek and Roman predecessors. See Jacques Le Goff, *La Civilisation de L'Occident Médiéval* (Paris: Arthaud, 1964) 145-148.

⁹⁵³ Joseph Ward Swain, "The Theory of Four Monarchies Opposition History under the Roman Empire," *Classical Philology* 35, no. 1 (1940): 1-21, here 4-6.

⁹⁵⁴ According to wide-spread scholarly consensus, the Book of Daniel was written at ca. 165 BCE. Cf. R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929) 16.

⁹⁵⁵ Hartman, *The Book of Daniel*, 208-214.

hindsight⁹⁵⁶ (which already started in the *Book of Daniel*)⁹⁵⁷ and the third beast “inherited” an identification with the Greeks, so as to make room for yet another empire in the symbolic representation.

Integrating Rome into the framework, however, was only one side of the problem. The structure of Daniel’s vision also implied on the one hand that the Empires follow each other in a linear fashion.⁹⁵⁸ This contradicted a major rabbinic experience of an oscillation between Roman and Persian dominance.⁹⁵⁹ On the other hand, the vision also stipulated that the fourth beast would represent the last and most terrible Empire. For Church fathers living under the sway of a Christian Roman Empire, this was a peculiarly problematic issue, as they had to find a way to dull the edge of the implications of this part of the vision.

5.4.1. The rabbis read Daniel’s vision into the present

The *locus classicus* for the study of rabbinic exegesis concerning the four beasts of Daniel can be found in *Leviticus Rabbah*, in which rabbis (mostly 3-4th century Palestinian amoraim) explore Daniel’s sequence of beasts and comment extensively on the possible reasons for their respective identifications. However, in the rabbinic tradition this text is not only relevant as an eschatological passage describing the interrelation between Jews and the four Empires. For the rabbis, Daniel’s vision also provides a key for reading various further passages featuring wild beasts. The generic way, rabbis read Daniel’s vision is apparent at the very beginning of the lengthy passage of *Leviticus Rabbah*:

‘Different from one another’ (Dn 7:3). Do not read it as different (שׁוֹנֵה), but as hating (שׂוֹנֵה), one more than the other. It teaches you that every nation that governs the world, hates Israel and puts them into slavery.⁹⁶⁰

Here, the kingdoms of Babylonia, Persia and Greece do not only function as references to one-time political structures, but they also represent the ever worsening attitude of ruling powers toward the

⁹⁵⁶ Albeit, even rather late, some minor variations concerning the distinction between Medes and Persians (and an accompanying lack of the Medes in some interpretations) occur in certain interpretations (Cf. Ephrem, *Commentarii in Danielum*, 7:4-6).

⁹⁵⁷ A convincing case is that of “Darius the Mede”, which was apparently another appellation for Cyrus the Persia. Cf. Brian E. Colless, “Cyrus the Persian as Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 17, no. 56 (1992): 113-126.

⁹⁵⁸ See Kratz, *Translatio Imperii*, 104.

⁹⁵⁹ See e.g. *bYoma* 10a, *bAvoda Zara* 2b etc. For an excellent interpretation of these traditions, see Alexei Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 37-38.

⁹⁶⁰ (*Leviticus Rabbah* 13:5) שׁוֹנֵה דָא מִן דָא שׁוֹנֵה דָא מִן דָא. מִלִּי שְׂכַל אִמָּה שְׂשׁוּלְטַת בְּעוֹלָם הִיא שׁוֹנָאָה יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִשְׁעַבְדָּא בָהּ.

people of Israel, as it culminates with the Romans.⁹⁶¹ In subsequent interpretations, rabbis invoke various *Biblical* narratives, mostly due to their display of sequences of wild animals similar to the one found in Daniel's vision. Subjecting these narratives to the structure of the vision of Daniel, they use the latter as an interpretive tool for strengthening the image of oppressive kingdoms, identified with wild beasts. The discourse of *Leviticus Rabbah* continues with a following argument:

“The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings” (Dn 7:4) refers to Babylonia. Jeremiah saw it both as lion and as eagle, as it is said: “A lion is gone up from his thicket” (Jer 4:7) and “Look, he shall mount up and swoop down like an eagle” (Jer 49:22). They asked Daniel: ‘so how did you see it?’ He answered: ‘I saw it as a lion-faced, eagle-bodied [creature]’ as it is said: “The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings” (Dn 7:4) ... “Another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear” (Dn 7:5). It is written like that (27)⁹⁶² [because] it is Media. This is the opinion of R. Johanan, for R. Johanan said: “Therefore a lion from the forest shall kill them a wolf from the desert shall destroy them” (Jer 5:6): “a lion from the forest” refers to Babylonia and “a wolf from the desert” refers to Media. “A leopard is watching against their cities” (ibid.) refers to Greece. “Everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces” (ibid.) refers to Edom. Why? Because they have committed many crimes and numerous sins.⁹⁶³

After the identification of the second animal, as Media, R. Yohanan offers a secondary opinion. Relying on a defective reading of the consonants, he claims that the second beast is not a bear (דוב), but a wolf, as written in Aramaic (דב). Based on such an etymological argument, he can turn to a verse from Jeremiah, describing a plunder of the abandoned city of Jerusalem by wild beasts. Since in Jeremiah's description, three wild animals (a lion, a wolf and a leopard) are named, R. Yohanan could compare the two *Biblical* passages, and transfer the interpretation of Daniel's vision to the verse of Jeremiah. The second animal, this time a wolf, takes the place of Media.

Representatives of the next generation of Palestinian amoraim argue in a similar fashion. In reaction to a joint claim of the rabbis that the numerical value of Greece⁹⁶⁴ (יון - sixty) indicates that each of the Greek rulers appointed sixty commanders over the people of Israel, they claim:

⁹⁶¹ Cf. Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and Christianity in the Age of Constantine, History, Messiah, Israel and the Initial Confrontation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 29-58.

⁹⁶² I.e. not *plene* (דוב), but without the waw (דב).

⁹⁶³ (*Leviticus Rabbah* 13:5, Vilna edition) קדמיתא כאריה, זו בבל, ירמיה ראה אותה ארי וראה אותה נשר, דכתיב עלה אריה מסבכו הנה (Leviticus Rabbah 13:5, Vilna edition) קדמיתא כאריה וגפין די נשר לה כנשר יעלה וידאה, אמרין לדניאל את מה חמית להון. אמר להון חמית אפין כאריה וגפין די נשר, הדא הוא דכתיב קדמיתא כאריה וגפין די נשר לה ... וארו חיוה אחרי תנינא דמיא לדב, לדב כתיב זה מדי, הוא דעתיה דרבי יוחנן דאמר רבי יוחנן על כן הכם אריה מיער, זו בבל. זאב ערבות ישדדם, זו מדי נמר שקד על עריהם, זו יון כל היוצא מהנה יטרף, זו אדום, למה, כי רבו פשעיהם עצמו משבותיהם.

⁹⁶⁴ In rabbinic parlance the Macedonian Empire is often expressed metonymically as Greece (cf. James M. Scott, *Exile, Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 277-278).

R. Berekiah and R. Hanin discussed the decision of the rabbis: ‘who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions’ (Dt 8:15): the term ‘snakes’ refer to Babylon, the term ‘poisonous’ refers to Persia, and the expression ‘scorpions’ refers to Greece. They [R. Berekiah and R. Hanin] add: just as a scorpion lays sixty offspring, so does the Kingdom of Greece appoint sixty [generals].⁹⁶⁵

The Mosaic verse, the rabbis quote is located in a framework of divine admonition: even in the safety of their houses, Israelites should not forget about the afflictions of the wilderness, in which God enabled them to survive.⁹⁶⁶ The only link of this midrash to the larger narrative of the chapter (of *Leviticus Rabbah*) and the only reason for its inclusion seems to be the topic of “sixty offspring”. Thus, relying on a natural historical observation and without quoting Daniel’s vision,⁹⁶⁷ R. Hanin and R. Berekiah manage to include a verse not only referring to the wilderness and its opposition with the human world,⁹⁶⁸ but also identifying its poisonous inhabitants with some of the traditional four Kingdoms from the rabbis’ worldview. This variability of wild animals as symbols of the four empires Gentiles, is perhaps most apparent in a midrash from *Esther Rabbah*:

R. Judah b. R. Simon started his explanation thus “as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake” (Amos 5:19). R. Huna and R. Hama said in the name of R. Hanina: *as if someone fled from a lion* refers to Babylonia, because it is said “the first was like a lion” (Dn 7:4). *And was met by a bear* refers to Media, as it is said “another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear” (Dn 7:5). R. Yohanan ... “Therefore, a lion from the forest shall kill them” (Jer 5:6) refers to Babylonia. “a wolf from the desert shall destroy them” (ibid.) refers to Media. “A leopard is watching against their cities” (ibid.) refers to Greece. “Everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces” (ibid.) refers to Edom. “Went into the house” (Amos 5:19) refers to Greece, for the Temple stood [in their time]. “and was bitten by a snake” (ibid.) refers to Edom, for it is said “She makes a sound like a snake gliding away” (Jer 46:22).⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁵ (*Leviticus Rabbah* 13:5, Vilna edition) ורבי ברכיה ורבי חנין על הדא דרבנן המוליכך במדבר הגדול והנורא נחש שרף ועקרב נחש זה בבל שרף זה מדי עקרב זה יון מה עקרב זה משרצת ששים ששים כך היתה מלכות יון מעמדת ששים.

⁹⁶⁶ Cf. Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (The Anchor Bible) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) 394-395.

⁹⁶⁷ Cf. L. Lewysohn, *Die Zoologie des Talmuds. Eine umfassende Darstellung der rabbinischen Zoologie, unter steter Vergleichung der Forschungen älterer und neuerer Schriftsteller* (Frankfurt am Main: L. Lewysohn, 1858) 299.

⁹⁶⁸ Perhaps, there is a further opposition implied here. The reference might not be simply to the hostility between the human world and the wilderness. According to a tannaitic tradition, these representatives of the harmful wilderness, serpents and snakes have never harmed anyone in Jerusalem (cf. *Pirke Avot* 5:5).

⁹⁶⁹ (*Esther Rabbah* Introduction 5) רבי יודא בר"ס פתח כאשר ינוס איש מפני הארץ, רבי הונא ור' אחא בשם ר' חמא בר' חנינא כאשר ינוס איש מפני הארץ וגו' על שם קדמיתא כאריה ופגעו הדוב זה מדי על שם וארו חיוה אחרי תנינה דמיה לדוב... על כן הכם אריה מיער זה בבל

The associative structure underlying this midrash is worth reconstruction. Authors of this passage are presented as making a claim about the symbols (not only animals) representing the kingdoms inimical to Israelites. The midrash commences with a quotation from the *Book of Amos*,⁹⁷⁰ describing the divine punishment. The verse refers to three animals (lion, bear, snake). The first two, and the order in which they are mentioned present an opportunity for invoking Daniel's vision (lion, bear). Having this text in mind (and that Daniel's third beast is a leopard or resembles it), they can jump to Jer 5:6,⁹⁷¹ a verse referring to three wild beasts (lion, wolf, leopard). Influenced by the framework of Daniel's vision (namely, that the sequence must contain four symbols of hostile forces), the author deems it necessary to distinguish between *leopard* and the agent of the passive term "everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces", and claim that the latter one (the "one" tearing those who go out) is Rome. In turn, the same idea is implemented in the interpretation of the passage of Amos: the "house" is understood as a reference to Greece,⁹⁷² thus, the snake must be taken as a reference to Edom. Seemingly, Daniel's vision is used here as a governing pattern for the interpretation of a sequences of threatening wild animals in the *Old Testament*. The presence of wolf and snake as symbols of evil kingdoms marks a rabbinic tendency of reading Daniel's vision into other passages. A further example of this development is preserved in *Genesis Rabbah*:

The community of Israel gathered on the meadow of Beth Rimmon. When the letters [from the king] arrived, they cried out and intended to revolt against the Kingdom. They [the rabbis] said, a solitary wise man should go and placate the community. They said: let R. Joshua b. Hanania go, because he is a scholar of the Torah. So, he went [to the congregation] and explained to them [the situation with the example]: A lion caught something and [its] bone stuck in its throat. It said: if anyone should come and remove it, I would give it a reward. An Egyptian heron, that has a long beak, came and put its beak [into the lion's mouth] and removed the bone. Then, it said to the lion: 'give me my reward!' The lion said: Leave! You will be able to boast that you went into the mouth of the lion in peace and came out in peace.

זאב ערבות ישדדם זו מדי, נמר שקד על עריהם זו יון כל היוצא מהנה יטרף זו אדום, ובא הבית זה יון שהיה הבית קיים, ונשכו הנחש זו אדום, שנאמר קולה כנחש ילך.

⁹⁷⁰ "As if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake" (Amos 5:19).

⁹⁷¹ "Therefore a lion from the forest shall kill them, a wolf from the desert shall destroy them. A leopard is watching against their cities; everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces-- because their transgressions are many, their apostasies are great" (Jer 5:6).

⁹⁷² Capitalizing on the notion that under Greek rule, Temple worship continued uninterrupted. There is even a baraita of the *Babylonian Talmud* featuring Alexander being convinced by Simon the Just to revoke his earlier promise to the Samaritans and refrain from destroying the Temple. Cf. *bYoma* 69a, see also Shaye D. Cohen, *The Significance of Yavneh and other Essays in Jewish Hellenism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 163.

vision served as a model for identifying Gentile “kingdoms” with a variety of wild animals, thereby asserting Israel’s role as a pursued and oppressed nation.

It is important to note that irrespectively of its acerbity, all statements are referring to power relations and not to the individual characteristics of Gentiles. And although in a few cases, rabbis do identify the average Gentile with a wild animal. Thus, the rabbinic model of interpreting the bestiality within on an exclusively individual level, is complemented with an identification of wild animals and Gentile outgroups almost exclusively on a communal level. A notable exception is presented in the *Babylonian Talmud*, but even here, one notices some hesitation.

Resh Lakish introduced his commentary of the verse thus: “Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people” (Prv 28:15). The roaring lion refers to the evil Nebuchadnezzar, about whom it is written: “A lion has gone up from its thicket” (Jer 4:7). The charging bear is Ahasuerus, about whom it is written “Another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear” (Dn 7:5). R. Joseph said: ‘indeed, such are the Persians, who eat and drink like bears, have bodies like that of bears and grow fur like bears. Similarly to bears, they are never placid.’⁹⁷⁷

One encounters here a covert disagreement between the opinions of the two amoraim. The compiler of the passage contrasts Resh Lakish’ argumentation with that of R. Joseph, for the identification of bear and the average Persian. Resh Lakish builds upon a verse of *Proverbs*⁹⁷⁸, in which lion and bear are used as metaphors of unjust rulership.⁹⁷⁹ Thus, according to his view, the identification of rulers and wild beasts is based upon a similarity of behavior and not upon a similarity of outlook. His interlocutor, the Babylonian R. Joseph, in turn, argues for a physical similarity and avoids claiming a tyrannical interpretation based on the savage nature of bears. Thus, at the price of claiming that an average Persian is comparable to a wild beast, he avoids accusing his sovereign of being so. The reason behind their different interpretations might be due to the different political contexts they emerge from. Perhaps Resh Lakish who lives under Roman rule was free to claim Persians to be tyrannical⁹⁸⁰, but the Babylonian R. Joseph (exposed to Sassanian rulers)⁹⁸¹ had to be more cautious,

⁹⁷⁷ (bMeg 11a) דכתיב ארי נהם - זה נבוכדנצר הרשע, דכתיב ריש לקיש פתח לה פתחא להא פרשתא מהכא: ארי נהם ודב שוקק מושל רשע על עם דל. ארי נהם - זה נבוכדנצר הרשע, דכתיב ארי נהם ודב שוקק מושל רשע על עם דל. ותני רב יוסף: אלו פרסיים, שאוכלין ושותין כדוב, ביה עלה אריה מסבכו, דב שוקק - זה אחשוורוש, דכתיב ביה וארו חיוה אחרי תגינה דמיה לדב. ותני רב יוסף: אלו פרסיים, שאוכלין ושותין כדוב, ומסורבלין בשר כדוב, ומגדלין שער כדוב, ואין להם מנוחה כדוב.

⁹⁷⁸ Prv 28:15.

⁹⁷⁹ Cf. Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (World Biblical Commentary) (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1998) 216.

⁹⁸⁰ In any case, his position seems to be the minority opinion. Cf. bAvoda Zara 2b; Esther Rabbah 10:13 Cf. Mokhtarian, *Rabbis, Sorcerers*, 71-73.

⁹⁸¹ As for the positively benign opinions Babylonian sages tend to occupy with regards to Persians cf. Mokhtarian, *Rabbis, Sorcerers*, 50-51 and Stern, *Jewish Identity*, 6-7 and ff. 33.

and – thus – decided for a less harmful identification of external similarities, which could even be understood as an acknowledgement of Persian prowess. So even in this case, the identification of individual Gentiles with one of the beasts of Daniel’s vision is done in order to avoid a transgression of a more serious nature, and perhaps further examples of this tradition have also been constructed with this view in mind.⁹⁸²

Regardless of this limitation, the vision of Daniel was a powerful narrative, and one that was used by the rabbis in order to establish a generic identification of Gentile political structures with wild beasts. In light of the strong *Old Testament* tradition of the electedness of Israel and the promise of an ultimate preservation of this people, despite all hardships, the perceived reality of an Israel constantly surrounded by a multitude of wild animal Gentiles, could incite a notion that the distresses of Israel will finally be lifted and the opposition of the wild and domesticated beasts will be brought to an end. The apocalyptic message of a final reckoning with wild beasts was however different from its Christian counterpart. The major reason for this difference was the different way in which Christian exegetes interpreted Daniel’s vision. Thus, before coming to the final solutions of the opposition of these two types of animals, we must first review the Christian approach to Daniel’s text.

5.4.2. The Church fathers read Daniel’s vision into the past

Church fathers dealing with the vision of Daniel has a major key (and also a constraint) of interpretation, the understanding of the vision in the *Book of Revelation*. Inspired by a number of topics of the *Book of Daniel*,⁹⁸³ the author of *Revelations* drew a concise image unifying Daniel’s four beasts into one: “And I saw a beast rising out of the sea ... And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear’s, and its mouth was like a lion’s mouth”.⁹⁸⁴ There can be little doubt that according to the author of *Revelation*, the Roman Empire was meant here as the most terrible of beasts.⁹⁸⁵

This identification was largely unproblematic for early interpreters. The first of them, who dealt with the theme extensively⁹⁸⁶ and the one who most probably also set one general course of interpretation

⁹⁸² A similar statement is attributed to another Babylonian amora, R. Ammi, from the same period (the 3rd century CE) in *bKid* 72a.

⁹⁸³ Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) 572-573. Also Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem against Rome* 471-477.

⁹⁸⁴ Rv 13:2.

⁹⁸⁵ Koester, *Revelation*, 580.

⁹⁸⁶ Although, occasional comments appear already in the writings of Irenaeus, his treatment of the vision of Daniel is only superficial. Cf. Gerbern S. Oegema, “Die Danielrezeption in der Alten Kirche,” in *Europa, Tausendjähriges Reich*

for later generations, Hippolytus of Rome, claimed without hesitation that the sequence of beasts should be interpreted as Babylonia, Persia, Macedonia, and finally Rome:

As various beasts then were shown to the blessed Daniel, and these were different from each other, we should understand that the truth of the narrative deals not with certain beasts, but under the type and image of different beasts, exhibits the kingdoms that have risen in this world in power over the race of humankind. For by the great sea he means the whole world ... He said, then, that a lioness comes up from the sea, and by that he meant the kingdom of the Babylonians in the world ... The three nations he calls three ribs. The meaning, therefore, is that beast had the dominion, and these others under it were the Medes, Assyrians and Babylonians ... In mentioning the leopard, he means the kingdom of the Greeks, over whom Alexander of Macedon was king. And he likened them to a leopard, because they were quick and inventive in thought and bitter in heart, just as that animal is many-colored in appearance and quick in wounding and in drinking human blood ... That there has arisen no other kingdom after that of the Greeks except that which stands sovereign at present is manifest to all ... And the little horn, which is antichrist, shall appear suddenly in their midst and righteousness shall be banished from the earth, and the whole world shall reach its consummation.⁹⁸⁷

The frame of Hippolytus' commentary was accepted in subsequent tradition, and this was also the major framework of rabbinic interpretations. Greek speaking Church fathers (such as Theodoret of Cyrus⁹⁸⁸) subscribe to Hippolytus' concept just as much as Latin-speaking ones (such as Jerome⁹⁸⁹). In fact, the version of *translatio imperii* codified in this commentary was so wide-spread that in his *Catecheses*, Cyril of Jerusalem even declared it to be "Church tradition"⁹⁹⁰:

The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on Earth, which surpasses all the other kingdoms. And it has been transmitted by the Church's interpreters that these are the Romans. The first one was the honored kingdom of the Assyrians. The second was that of the Medes and the

und Neue Welt Zwei Jahrtausende Geschichte und Utopie in der Rezeption des Danielbuches, ed. Mariano Delgado et al., 84-105 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 2003) here 85-86.

⁹⁸⁷ As Hyppolitus' commentary on Daniel in full is only extant in Old Slavonic, I do not present the original here. The translation is taken from Kenneth Stevenson, Michael Glerup, Thomas C. Oden, *Ancient Christian Commentary on the Scripture, Ezekiel, Daniel* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2008) 222-228. As for a brief introduction on the text, cf. Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* vol I. (Leiden: Brill, 2006) 530-531 and Marcel Richard, "Les difficultés d'une édition du commentaire de saint Hyppolyte sur Daniel" *Revue d'histoire des textes* 2 (1972): 1-10.

⁹⁸⁸ Cf. Theodoret, *Interpretatio in Daniele* 7:2-7. Cf. Gerhard Podskalsky *Byzantinische Reicheschatologie; die Periodisierung der Weltgeschichte in den vier Grossreichen (Daniel 2 und 7) und dem tausendjährigen Friedensreiche (Apok. 20) Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (München: W. Fink, 1972) 23-26.

⁹⁸⁹ Cf. Jerome, *Commentarium in Daniele Prophetam*, 7:3-8. Cf. Oegema, "Die Danielrezeption in der Alten Kirche," 95-97.

⁹⁹⁰ Cf. also Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 322.

Persians, and after that [the kingdom] of the Macedonians, the third one.
And this fourth one is that of the Romans.⁹⁹¹

Apparently, the identification of the fourth beast was largely unproblematic⁹⁹² for early Christian interpreters, who regarded themselves as suffering under the rule of the Romans.⁹⁹³ The rise to power of Christian emperors and the transformation of the Roman Empire into a Christian realm in its wake during the fourth century, however, disrupted this identification in particular and repudiated Daniel's historical perspective of ever worsening forms of oppression. Thus, interpreters living under an already Christianized Roman Empire did not only have to deal with the problematic implications of Daniel's vision, namely that the Empire following that of the Greeks would be represented by the worst wild beast, but they also had to effectively counter two centuries of accepted patristic interpretations, which could still unproblematically claim that Rome was the worst oppressor in history. Claiming that the Roman Empire was not depicted as an evil force in the Holy Scriptures or that it had nothing to do with the fourth beast was not only contradicting Daniel's vision (and the interpretations of previous fathers) but also that of the *Book of Revelations*. To be sure, only Syrian exegetes⁹⁹⁴ ever contested the traditional identification of the fourth beast as the Roman Empire. Those living under Roman rule⁹⁹⁵ could not debate the identification itself, but – as I will show – they tried to mitigate its negative overtones to such a level that the wild beast ceased to be evil and turned into a simple symbol of power. The first signs of such a shift can already be observed before the Constantinian turn. Origen, who famously expressed a positive attitude toward the Roman Empire's capability to secure a peaceful environment for the spread of Christianity, paved a way for a not-so negative interpretation of Rome as the fourth beast in his treatise against Celsus:

⁹⁹¹ (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 15:13) τὸ θηρίον τὸ τέταρτον βασιλεία τετάρτη ἔσται ἐν τῇ γῇ, ἥτις ὑπερέξει πάσας τὰς βασιλείας. ταύτην δὲ εἶναι τὴν Ῥωμαίωνοι ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ παραδεδώκασιν ἐξηγηταί. πρώτης γὰρ ἐπισήμου γενομένης τῆς Ἀσσυρίων βασιλείας καὶ δευτέρας τῆς Μήδων ὁμοῦ καὶ Περσῶν καὶ μετὰ ταύτας τῆς Μακεδόνων τρίτης ἢ τετάρτης βασιλείας νῦν ἡ Ῥωμαίων ἐστίν.

⁹⁹² Klaus Koch, *Europa, Rom und der Kaiser vor dem Hintergrund von zwei Jahrtausenden Rezeption des Buches Daniel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 54-59.

⁹⁹³ Cf. Nicole Kelley, "Philosophy as Training for Death: Reading the Ancient Christian Martyr Acts as Spiritual Exercises," *Church History* 75, no. 4 (2006): 723-747, here 726-729.

⁹⁹⁴ Notably, in Syriac Christianity (e.g. in the commentaries of Ephrem), a more traditional interpretation of the four beasts flourished, the major difference being that the last, fourth animal was still identified with the Seleucid Empire. Cf. Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*, 14-16 and Jürgen Tubach, "Die Syrische Danielrezeption," in *Europa, Tausendjähriges Reich und Neue Welt Zwei Jahrtausende Geschichte und Utopie in der Rezeption des Danielbuches*, ed. Mariano Delgado et al., 105-139 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 2003).

⁹⁹⁵ Rome was naturally interested in spreading a belief that its rule will continue forever uninterrupted. This is communicated by "Romae aeternae" coins from the second century onwards and in various other forms. Cf. Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 209.

In his [Jesus'] "days may righteousness flourish and peace abound" (Ps 71:7),⁹⁹⁶ which started with his birth, God has prepared the nations for his teaching, so that under only one kingdom of the Romans ... the Apostles were told by Jesus to "Go ... and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). The existence of many kingdoms would have been an obstacle for the spread of Jesus' teaching.⁹⁹⁷

Although there is no extant commentary of Origen to the *Book of Daniel*,⁹⁹⁸ it does not seem far-fetched to argue on the basis of this text and similar ones⁹⁹⁹ that he subscribed to an irenic view concerning Rome and its role in the unfolding salvific history.¹⁰⁰⁰ Since the seventh chapter of the *Book of Daniel* enabled a distinction between the fourth beast itself and the horns rising from it,¹⁰⁰¹ Origen could settle with a less defamatory option, and refrain from identifying Rome with the last empire, standing under the direct rule of the Antichrist. Instead, he could present Rome as a political entity that is neutral, or only providing the framework for the spiritual battle between Christians and their enemies.¹⁰⁰²

By accepting Roman secular rule as a framework in which the glorious history of the Church can develop, Origen undermined a more traditional identification of Rome with the absolute of evils. When in 325 CE Constantine suddenly and for many Christians unexpectedly¹⁰⁰³ converted to Christianity, the path smoothed by Origen turned out to be an exceedingly advantageous one. Those interpreters (the first of whom was of course Constantine's most ardent Christian supporter and historian, Eusebius of Caesarea) who wished to argue in a chiliastic fashion that the Kingdom of God has arrived with the emperor's conversion, interpreted the relationship between Daniel's fourth beast and the arrival of the Son of Man as a transformation and not as an apocalyptic war.¹⁰⁰⁴ Eusebius' explicit interpretation of the seventh chapter of the *Book of Daniel* (in *Demonstratio Evangelica* 15)

⁹⁹⁶ Ps 72:7 in the NRSV

⁹⁹⁷ (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2:30) Ἀνέτειλε γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτοῦ δικαιοσύνη, καὶ πλῆθος εἰρήνης γέγονεν ἀρξάμενον ἀπὸ τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ, εὐτρεπίζοντος τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔθνη, ἵν' ὑπὸ ἑνα γένηται τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλεία ... προσέταξεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰπὼν· Πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ... Ἦν δ' ἂν ἐμπόδιον τοῦ νεμηθῆναι τὴν Ἰησοῦ διδασκαλίαν εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην τὸ πολλὰς εἶναι βασιλείας.

⁹⁹⁸ Koch, *Europa Rom und der Kaiser*, 58.

⁹⁹⁹ Cf. e.g. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5:25:3. See Koch, *Europa Rom und der Kaiser*, 58 ff. 89.

¹⁰⁰⁰ R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 48; Gerbern S. Oegema, *Early Judaism and Modern Culture: Early Jewish Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 161-162.

¹⁰⁰¹ Cf. Newsom, *Daniel*, 273-274.

¹⁰⁰² See Podskalsky *Byzantinische Reichseshatologie*, 11.

¹⁰⁰³ See James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews: a History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001) 176.

¹⁰⁰⁴ See Brennan Breed, "What Can a Text Do? Reception History as an Ethology of the Biblical Text," in *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, ed. Emma England and William John Lyons, 95-111 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) here 107-108.

survives only in fragments,¹⁰⁰⁵ and it is impossible to ascertain how he managed to depict a peaceful transition on the basis of the *Biblical* text itself.¹⁰⁰⁶ In any case, he claimed that as there is no further beast after the Roman Empire, the triumph of the Son of Man needed to happen under Roman power.¹⁰⁰⁷ The positive judgement of the Roman Empire in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*,¹⁰⁰⁸ and the identification of the rule of Constantine and his successors with the “everlasting Kingdom” of Daniel 7:27¹⁰⁰⁹ had a quite significant price. By arguing for a favorable view of Rome, a fourth beast that turns into the Kingdom of God, Eusebius raised the stakes to an unbearable height. If the successors of Constantine failed to perform similarly to their predecessor, or if they simply seemed to be less pious or less suitable to match the eschatological expectations phrased in the *Book of Daniel*, then the chiliastic interpretation of Eusebius was inevitably destined to fracture. As this occurred in the post-Constantinian era, Eusebius’ successors were much less devoted to idealizing readings of the fourth beast of the *Book of Daniel*.¹⁰¹⁰ Nevertheless, his commentary-tradition was quite influential in the Greek-speaking world. And although his successors – with experiences of ongoing wars, rebellions and usurpations behind them – had enough reason to doubt an altogether benign view of the Roman Empire as the fourth beast, one is hard-pressed to find Greek-speaking authors who openly contradicted the Origenian-Eusebian concept of a fourth beast enabling the spread of Christianity. For most interpreters, the way out of a contradiction between the harsh words of the *Book of Daniel* and the aim of representing the Roman Empire in a mild tone was to focus on the prowess of the Empire in their interpretations.¹⁰¹¹

Thus, the Church fathers’ commentaries about the four beasts – although it started from a similar ground-concept – gradually deviated from its rabbinic counterpart. The contrary directions of the two exegetical traditions concerning the vision of Daniel are nowhere clearer than in their comparisons between the four beasts. Whereas in the rabbinic tradition the primary concern was to show that the

¹⁰⁰⁵ Podskalsky *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*, 11.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Distinguishing between them becomes exceedingly problematic in Daniel’s own explanation of the vision (Dn 7:18-20).

¹⁰⁰⁷ Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* 15, fr. 1.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 10:9:6-9.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Eusebius, *De Laudibus Constantini* 3:2.

¹⁰¹⁰ See e.g. Jerome, *Epistula* 121:11: Nec vult aperte dicere Romanum imperium destruendum, quod ipsi qui imperant, aeternum putant. Unde secundum Apocalypsim Joannis, in fronte purpuratae meretricis scriptum est nomen blasphemiae, id est, Romae aeternae.

¹⁰¹¹ E.g. (Theodoret, *Interpretatio in Daniele* 7:7) Τὸ τέταρτον θηρίον τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν καλεῖ βασιλείαν· ὄνομα δὲ αὐτῷ οὐ τίθησιν, ἐπειδὴ ἐκ πλείονων ἐθνῶν ἡ Ῥωμαίων συγκροτηθεῖσα πόλις τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐκράτησε· πρῶτον μὲν βασιλευμένη, εἶτα ὅτε μὲν δημοκρατουμένη, ὅτε δὲ ἀριστοκρατουμένη· ὕστερον δὲ εἰς τὴν προτέραν ἐπανελθοῦσα βασιλείαν.

fourth beast was even more terrible than its predecessors combined, Church fathers advocated an opposite direction and attempted to argue for an optimistic view of political history, in which Rome was less terrible and its commonality with a beast lies in its mighty force endorsing salvific history. These two positions can be seen as vastly different solutions to the same problem. In Jewish tradition, the threat posed by wild animals and the wilderness was seen in the historical-eschatological framework of the vision of Daniel as an ever-growing entity. As wild beast-others were seen more and more dangerous, there was less and less room for a conciliatory solution of the opposition between the wilderness of the outgroup and the humanity of the ingroup. Consequently, the eschatological future was inevitably imagined without the presence of wild animals. As opposed to this view, the Church fathers' attempt at placating the fourth beast was a bridge toward implementing a different eschatological view, much more characteristic of Christian tradition, that of taming. In the final segment of the present chapter, I will elaborate on these two views of the eschatological fate of wild animals and the two proposed solutions of the opposition of wild and domesticated domains.

5.5. Solutions of the wild beast-problem

5.5.1. The rabbis' eschatology: removal of the wild beast

In the rabbis tradition concerning the eschatological fate of wild beast others, the influence of Daniel's vision of the four beasts is complemented by that of Isaiah regarding the peaceful coexistence of animals¹⁰¹² and the divine promise of the removal of wild beasts from the Land of Israel from the *Book of Leviticus*,¹⁰¹³ and other *loci*.¹⁰¹⁴ As Peter Riede rightfully pointed out, Isaiah's prophecy, especially its first, longer variant has a particular Israel-perspective, insofar as the list of wild animals matches that of other prophetic texts, depicting divine punishment on Israel.¹⁰¹⁵ Therefore it is connected in its selection of animals to the divine promise of their removal from Palestine.¹⁰¹⁶ The rabbis did not only recognize this link, but also made good use of it in harmonizing two seemingly contradictory scenarios. Using the vision of Daniel as a bridge between the two, the rabbis formulated

¹⁰¹² Is 65:25, see also Is 11:6-8. Although these are the only explicit descriptions of a peace between wild and domesticated animals in the future, there are truncated versions of similar traditions in Is 43:20 and Hos 2:18-20 Cf. Stone, "Jackals and Ostriches," 72-74.

¹⁰¹³ Lv 26:6 cf. also Ex 23:29.

¹⁰¹⁴ Cf. Ez 34:25, Is 35:9

¹⁰¹⁵ Cf. Amos 5:19 and Jer 5:6. Cf. Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 160.

¹⁰¹⁶ As for this link, see Richard Whitekettle, "Freedom from Fear and Bloodshed: Hosea 2:20 (Eng. 18) and the End of Human/Animal Conflict," *Journal for the Study of Old Testament* 37, no. 2 (2012): 219-236, here 231-234.

the eschatological argument that the threat of wild beasts as well as Gentile political structures will ultimately be neutralized by divine decree. Thus, they developed a model of the future, “the world to come”, in which the specific power-relations between Jews and Gentiles will cease to function and Gentiles (wild animals) will not rule over Israelites any longer. In this tradition, Isaiah’s prophecy is juxtaposed to the promise of Leviticus, and the former is used as an interpretation of the latter. This idea is brought forth first in *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*,¹⁰¹⁷ but as it gives a more detailed account, I will focus on the variant of the midrash found in *Sifra*:

“And I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and no one shall make you afraid; I will remove dangerous animals from the land, and no sword shall go through your land.” (Lv 26:6). R. Jehuda said that he will remove them from the whole world. R. Simon said that He will placate them so that they do not harm anyone. R. Simon asked [R. Jehuda]: ‘In which case is God more praiseworthy: when there is no animal that can hurt anyone or when there are such animals but they do not hurt anyone?’ [R. Jehuda] answered: ‘when there are such animals, but they do not hurt anyone.’ ... “The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. (Is 11:6-8)¹⁰¹⁸

The dispute between the two second century tannaim, R. Simeon and R. Jehuda revolves around the exact meaning of the term “remove” (השבית), and represents the two major opinions concerning the fate of wild beasts in the Land of Israel. R. Simeon’s argument (which coincides with the majority view in this midrash) is that wild animals will not be removed from Palestine, but they will cease to be ferocious, and will not present a danger to the inhabitants any longer. Thus, R. Simeon proposes a concept of taming. The discussion is presented as part of an interpretation on the divine promise detailing Israel’s inheritance of the promised land.¹⁰¹⁹ However, by virtue of the quotation from the *Book of Isaiah*, R. Simeon gracefully navigates the disputation into the field of eschatological ruminations. The majority opinion he represents can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically. Unfortunately, the midrash from *Sifra* is not entirely explicit, but taking into account further rabbinic discussions of the intersection of the two *Biblical* passages, one might see more clearly. A text closely

¹⁰¹⁷ Cf. *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael* Pisha 12:1.

ושכבתם ואין מחריד, לא יריאים מכל ברייה, והשבתי חיה רעה מן הארץ, ר' יהודה אומר מעבירים מן העולם, ר' שמעון (*Sifra Hukkotai* 1) ¹⁰¹⁸ אומר משביתן שלא יזוקו, אר"ש אימתי הוא שבחו של מקום בזמן שאין מזיקים, או בזמן שיש מזיקים ואין מזיקים, אמור בזמן שיש מזיקים ואין מזיקים ... וכן הוא אומר וגר זאב עם כבש ונמר עם גדי ירבץ ועגל וכפיר ומריא יחדיו ונער קטן נוהג במ. מזיקים

¹⁰¹⁹ See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27* (The Anchor Bible) (London: Doubleday, 2001) 2296, 2310.

related to Lv 26:6, is Dt 11:22-25, which also describes the future reward for Israel's obedience, but instead of promising a removal of dangerous animals, it declares that hostile nations will be removed:

If you will diligently observe this entire commandment that I am commanding you ... then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and mightier than yourselves ... No one will be able to stand against you.¹⁰²⁰

The divine promise of the future removal of “larger and mightier” Gentile people from the Land of Israel inspired authors of *Sifre Deuteronomy* to construct the following discussion on the *Biblical* passage:

“I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field multiply against you” (Ex. 23:29). R. Jacob asked R. Eleazar b. Azariah: ‘Israel is either righteous, and then they do not have to fear wild beasts [or they are not righteous]. If they are righteous, they should not be afraid of wild beasts, as it is said: “For you shall be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you” (Jb 5:23)’.¹⁰²¹

Capitalizing on the prophetic topos of divine punishment through an incursion of wild animals against offenders,¹⁰²² the interpretation discusses the conquest of Palestine. The anonymous author of the text exploits the similarity of the two *Biblical* passages: Lv 26 and Dt 11. Noticing the parallel in structure (both promise the removal of hostile forces during the conquest of Canaan) as well as in conditions (removal depends on Israel's obedience), the author bridges them with Ex 23 and, thus, proposes a reading in which the two are one and the same, only expressed in different forms. Although Eleazar b. Azariah's statement is difficult to unwrap and vague at best, it seems to fit into a 2-3rd century Palestinian tradition of interpreting wild beasts as symbols and ultimately metaphorical references to the nations. The clearest expression of this concept under the name of a Palestinian authority (although not a tanna, but an amora from the first generation) is preserved in *DEZ*:

Rabi Yehoshua b. Levi said: ‘peace is great, and peace in the Land of Israel is like the rising of the dough. If The Holy One, blessed be he did not give peace to the Land of Israel, the sword and the wild beasts would have ruined it.’ So, what does it mean: “And I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and no one shall make you afraid; I will remove dangerous animals from the land, and no sword shall go through

1020 Dt 11:22-25

לא אגרשנו מפניך בשנה אחת, פן תהיה הארץ שממה ורבה עליך חית השדה: דברי רבי יעקב. אמר לו רבי (Sifre Deuteronomy Ekev50)¹⁰²¹ אלעזר בן עזריה או לפי שישראל צדיקים הם למה יראים מן החיה? והלא אם צדיקים הם אין יראים מן החיה שכן הוא אומר כי עם אבני השדה ברייתך וחית השדה השלמה לך.

¹⁰²² Cf. Pangritz, *Das Tier in der Bibel*, 90-92.

your land” (Lv 26:6)? It means that ... “A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.” (Eccl. 1:4). A kingdom comes, and a kingdom goes, but the Land of Israel stays forever. Solomon also said: even though generations go and come and kingdoms go and come and decrees pass and are renewed by those who hate Israel, the Land of Israel stays forever and Israel stays forever.¹⁰²³

Yehoshua ben Levi’s argument is easier to understand than those of his predecessors. Commencing with the divine promise concerning peace in the Land of Israel, he claims that the removal of wild beasts from Canaan needs to be interpreted as a promise of Israel’s future safety from harm caused by the nations. The apparently eschatological overtone of the passage re-contextualizes the removal of wild beasts. It is presented as a metaphor for the removal of Gentile kingdoms (from Palestine) in the world to come. Emphatically the midrash does not go as far as to argue for an eradication of Gentile political power from the entirety of the world, only from the Land of Israel. This way, the discrepancy between the promise of Leviticus and the prophecy of Isaiah is also resolved. Wild beasts will not be eradicated from the entirety of the world, only from the Land of Israel. But as the people of Israel will live in peace, without being molested by the nations, its redemption will realize, an allegorical understanding of Isaiah’s prophecy, namely that wild and domesticated animals (Gentile kingdoms and the people of Israel respectively) will also peacefully coexist. And although this spatial restriction mitigates the grandiosity of the promise of removal itself, it fits the Promised-Land-oriented message of the Mosaic tradition much better.

5.5.2. The Church fathers’ eschatology: ultimate taming of otherness

The Church fathers’ approach to the eschatological fate of wild animals as symbolic representations of others was markedly different from the rabbinic perspective. Largely uninterested in a divine promise of the removal of wild animals from one specific region of the world, they were open to the idea of a systemic change in the conduct of wild animals, and focused, therefore, on the topic of world-wide restoration of a peaceful coexistence between wild and domesticated animals. This concept was alluring to them, for it matched their interest in salvific history merging Christians, Jews and Pagans. Accordingly, Isaiah’s brief narrative was turned into a cornerstone of interpreting the eschatological fate of wild beasts. From a mere description of the latter’s change of diet, the Church fathers gradually developed a narrative of taming. The wild beasts becoming tame and herbivorous

¹⁰²³ (DEZ Shalom 1) אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי גדול הוא השלום, שהשלום לארץ כשאוור לעיסה, אלמלא שנתן הקדוש ברוך הוא שלום בארץ היתה (1 DEZ Shalom) ... ההרב והחיה משכלת את הארץ, מה טעם דכתיב ונתתי שלום בארץ ושכבתם ואין מחריד והשבתי חיה רעה מן הארץ וחרב לא תעבר בארצכם ... דור הולך ודור בא והארץ לעולם עמדת, מלכות באה ומלכות הולכת, וישראל לעולם קיים, אמר שלמה אף על פי שדור הולך ודור בא, מלכות הולכת ומלכות באה, גזירה הולכת וגזירה באה ומתחדשת על שונאי ישראל, הארץ לעולם עומדת, ישראל לעולם עומדין.

was interpreted as a metaphorical sign of their recognition of the exclusively redemptive nature of the message of Jesus. The chronologically earliest attestation of a concept of taming, as a metaphorical description of conversion can be found already in the beginning of the third century. Tertullian writes in his treatise against Marcion:

Similarly, when he predicts that Gentiles will convert, he says: “The beasts of the field shall honor me, the dragons and the owls” (Ez 43:20).¹⁰²⁴

The off-hand comment belongs to Tertullian’s lengthy attempt of highlighting the necessity of understanding *Biblical* texts in an allegorical and metaphorical manner.¹⁰²⁵ As an argument against Marcion, he points out that the prophecy about the wild beasts honoring God¹⁰²⁶ should not be understood literally but as a metaphor referring to the future conversion of Gentiles. Tertullian does not elaborate on his interpretation, as if he expected his audience to be familiar with the interpretation itself. And indeed, the casual identification of non-Christian (!) Gentiles with wild beasts seems to have been a wide-spread tradition in the first centuries of Christian exegesis. A contemporary of Tertullian, the Greek-speaking Clement of Alexandria wrote:

The Bible says correctly that the ox and the bear shall come together (Cf. Is 11:7). Jews are called oxen, since they are under the yoke and they are impure according to it; since the ox has divided hooves and regurgitates. The Gentiles are designated by the bear, an animal that is both impure and wild ... The word () transforms those among the Gentiles, who are converted, from a beastly life to gentleness; and they are made pure, just like the ox.¹⁰²⁷

Clement opens with the eschatological vision of Isaiah. And despite his emphasis on the opposition of pure and impure, he also considers the distinction between wild and domesticated animals. The yoke (ζυγόν) under which the “Jewish ox” treads must be understood as the same thing that rendered the animal clean, the Mosaic laws.¹⁰²⁸ The wild nature of the Gentiles, on the other hand, expresses

¹⁰²⁴ (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 3:5:3) Sicut et praedicans de nationum conversione, Benedicent me bestiae agri, sirenes et filiae passerum.

¹⁰²⁵ Cf. further Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Tertullian’s Scriptural Exegesis in de Praescriptione Haereticorum,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14, no. 2 (2006): 141-155.

¹⁰²⁶ See Is 43:20.

¹⁰²⁷ (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6:6) εικότως ἄρα βοῦν φησι καὶ ἄρκτον ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἔσεσθαι ἡ γραφή· βοῦς μὲν γὰρ εἴρηται ὁ Ἰουδαῖος ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ νόμον ὑπὸ ζυγὸν καθαροῦ κριθέντος ζώου, ἐπεὶ καὶ διχληεῖ καὶ μηρυκάται ὁ βοῦς· ὁ ἔθνικος δὲ διὰ τῆς ἄρκτου ἐμφαίνεται, ἀκαθάρτου καὶ ἀγρίου θηρίου· ... λόγῳ γὰρ τυποῦται εἰς τὸ ἡμερῶσθαι ἐκ τοῦ θηριώδους βίου ὁ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἐπιστρέφων, τιθασευθεὶς τε ἤδη καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς βοῦς ἀγνίσκεται.

¹⁰²⁸ The *New Testament* idea of a yoke of the Mosaic law (cf. Mt 11:26-28, Gal 5:1) seems quite prevalent in the second century both among Church fathers (e.g. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 4:15), and even among the rabbis (cf. *mAbot* 3:5)

their lack of faith. However, in accordance with Clement's supersessionist view¹⁰²⁹ of the relationship between Jewish law and the teaching of Christ, the acceptance of the Christian faith will enable the wild beast to turn from impure into pure, and more importantly, from a wild into domesticated creatures:

The prophet, for example, says: "The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches" (Is 43:20). From among impure animals, the beasts are known to be from the field, that is to say from the material world. For those are addressed as wild beasts which are savage concerning faith, and live a filthy life, and are not purified by the justice of the laws. However, when they are changed by divine faith, they will turn from wild beasts into men of God.¹⁰³⁰

Clement's interpretation of the eschatological prophecy depicts a scenario in which the final stage is the peaceful coexistence of Jewish and Gentile Christians.¹⁰³¹ This narrative is based on Clement's particularly mild *Weltanschauung*,¹⁰³² a perspective in which the two communities are not only not conceived of as opposites, but are seen as constituent parts of one unit. In this respect, Clement's commentary occupies a unique place between rabbinic and patristic tradition, for he does not argue that Jews would become wild animals due to their refusal of the teaching of Jesus.

It is important to notice that there is an implicit premise to Clement's argument, namely that the eschatological scenario described by Isaiah has not occurred yet. Thus, the peaceful coexistence of wild and domesticated animals and the view of harmony among Christians of different origins is not expected to occur before the second coming of Christ. But, as the commentaries of Clement's slightly earlier contemporary, Irenaeus indicate, retrospective interpretations were also present in early Christian tradition.¹⁰³³ In the *Demonstratio*, Irenaeus writes:

cf. also Celia Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11:25-30* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987).

¹⁰²⁹ Cf. Eric Francis Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 82-83.

¹⁰³⁰ (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6:6) αὐτίκα φησὶν ὁ προφήτης· «σειρῆνες εὐλογήσουσίν με καὶ θυγατέρες στρουθῶν καὶ τὰ θηρία πάντα τοῦ ἀγροῦ.» τῶν ἀκαθάρτων ζώων τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ γινώσκεται, τουτέστι τοῦ κόσμου, ἐπεὶ τοὺς εἰς πίστιν ἀγρίους καὶ ῥυπαροὺς τὸν βίον μηδὲ τῇ κατὰ νόμον δικαιοσύνην κεκαθαρμένους θηρία προσαγορεύει. μεταβαλόντες μέντοι ἐκ τοῦ εἶναι θηρία διὰ τῆς κυριακῆς πίστεως ἄνθρωποι γίνονται θεοῦ.

¹⁰³¹ Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* 36-37.

¹⁰³² On Clement's views see James Carleton Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish-Christians in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 97-99.

¹⁰³³ Another example of reading Isaiah into the future is Origen, *De Principiis* 4:1:8. Cf. Also François Bovon, "The Child and the Beast: Fighting Violence in Ancient Christianity," *Harvard Theological Review* 92, no. 4 (1999): 369-392, here 373-374. Irenaeus is consistent in his retrospective understanding (see also *Adversus Haereses* 5:33) and even Tertullian shares his view (*Adversus Hermogenem* 11:3) McLaughlin, "Evidencing the Eschaton," 121-124.

Now as to the union and concord and peace of the animals of different kinds, which by nature are opposed and hostile to each other, the Elders say that so it will be in truth at the coming of Christ, when He is to reign over all. For already in a symbol he announces the gathering together in peace and concord, through the name of Christ, of men of unlike races and (yet) of like dispositions. For, when thus united, on the righteous, who are likened to calves and lambs and kids and sucking children, those inflict no hurt at all who in the former time were, through their rapacity, like wild beasts in manners and disposition, both men and women; so much so that some of them were like wolves and lions, ravaging the weaker and warring on their equals; while the women (were like) leopards or asps, who slew, it may be, even their loved ones with deadly poisons, or by reason of lustful desire. (But now) coming together in one name they have acquired righteous habits by the grace of God, changing their wild and untamed nature. And this has come to pass already. For those who were before exceedingly wicked, so that they left no work of ungodliness undone, learning of Christ and believing on Him, have at once believed and been changed.¹⁰³⁴

Although Irenaeus is not explicit in identifying what he means by wild animals, one can conclude that his perspective is closer to that of Tertullian than to that of Clement.¹⁰³⁵ The past tense he employs excludes a Clementine interpretation of Jews and Gentiles. Plausibly, the domesticated calves and lambs must refer to Christians, who – in Irenaeus’ description – find their peace with former enemies and oppressors, presumably Gentiles.¹⁰³⁶

It seems that in the writings of the earlier fathers, taming was understood to refer primarily to Gentiles. But, as I have pointed out above, a notable shift occurred in the middle of the fourth century,¹⁰³⁷ laying emphasis on identifying wild animals as Jews specifically. In accordance with this change of tone, the focus of the notion of taming was also altered. For example, in his second oration against Jews, Chrysostom discussed the fate of Judaizers with the following terms:

We shall, thus, extend the nets of education. We should encircle them like hunting dogs, driving them together from all sides toward the laws of the Church. We should send to them – if you agree – the best of the hunters, the blessed Paul, who shouted and said: “Listen! I, Paul, am

¹⁰³⁴ Irenaeus, *Demonstratio* 61. There is no full Latin or Greek version of the text, and the only full version is in Armenian. The translation is taken from J. Armitage Robinson’s translation from 1920. Cf. Iain M. Mackenzie, *Irenaeus’s [sic] Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: A Theological Commentary and Translation* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002) 19.

¹⁰³⁵ On Irenaeus’ eschatology see Andrew Chester, “The Parting of the Ways: Eschatology and Messianic Hope,” *Jews and Christians The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James G. Dunn, 239-315 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992) 239-315, here 266-267.

¹⁰³⁶ Cf. McLaughlin, “Evidencing the Eschaton,” 124-125.

¹⁰³⁷ Nevertheless, Gentile-focused taming-narratives still appear in this, later period. Cf. Ephrem, *Hymns on the Nativity* 3:7.

telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you” (Gal 5:2). Since when the undomesticated and savage beasts, who are hiding among the bushes hear the voice of the hunter, they spring up out of fear ... and often they fall into the traps. So too, your friends, are hiding in the bush of Judaism. I know that when they hear the voice of Paul, they will easily fall into the nets of salvation and put away the deceit of Judaism.¹⁰³⁸

The opposition between hunting dogs on the one hand and wild and savage beasts hiding under the thickets on the other refers directly to Christians and Jews (or Judaizing Christians).¹⁰³⁹ With the help of this narrative, however, the author is describing a process of conversion. Thus, the concept of hunting¹⁰⁴⁰ is fundamentally altered here. The end result will not be the death of the hunted and not even a permanent confinement (as one could imagine with hunts for exotic carnivores in the Roman oecumene)¹⁰⁴¹ but a change in the wild beasts’ status. After falling into the nets of salvation, their previous, ferocious will change. Translating this narrative back into the language of animal symbolism, one sees that Chrysostom describes – although only implicitly – a process of taming. This twist of a hunting narrative reminds the audience of the original opposition between wild and domesticated animals, and more importantly, points out the reason for identifying Jews with the former.

Chrysostom’s description of a future hunt for and taming of the Jewish wild beasts fits into the conceptual framework of the prophetic tradition of an eschatological peace. The end of the conflict between domesticated and wild animals is not the destruction of the latter, but their taming, as expressed most conspicuously through a change in their diet. The application of the wild-domesticated opposition to the relationship of Judaism and Christianity is a theme that is also elaborated by Augustine, in a significantly different manner. In a commentary on a Psalm-verse, he claims:

¹⁰³⁸ (John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos* 2:1:5) Ἀναπετάσωμεν τοίνυν τὰ δίκτυα τῆς διδασκαλίας, περιστῶμεν κύκλῳ, καθάπερ κύνες θηρατικοί, πάντοθεν αὐτοὺς συνελαύνοντες εἰς τοὺς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας νόμους. Ἐπαγάγωμεν δὲ αὐτοῖς, εἰ δοκεῖ, ὥσπερ τινὰ κυνηγέτην ἄριστον, τὸν μακάριον Παῦλον βοῶντα καὶ λέγοντα· Ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι, ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε, Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει. Καὶ γὰρ πολλὰ τῶν ἀνημέρων ζώων καὶ ἐξηγριωμένων, ἐπειδὴν ὑπὸ θάμνον κρυπτόμενα τύχη τῆς τοῦ κυνηγέτου φωνῆς ἀκούσαντα, ἐξάλλεται μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου ... καὶ ... πολλάκις ... εἰς αὐτὰ ἐμπίπτει τὰ θήρατρα· οὕτω καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ οἱ ὑμέτεροι, οἱ καθάπερ ἐν θάμνῳ τινὶ, τῷ ἰουδαϊσμῷ, κρυπτόμενοι, ἂν τῆς Παύλου φωνῆς ἀκούσωσιν, εὖ οἶδ’ ὅτι ῥαδίως εἰς τὰ τῆς σωτηρίας ἐμπεσοῦνται δίκτυα, καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν ἀποθήσονται πλάνην.

¹⁰³⁹ For the religious landscape in late fourth century Antiochia and Chrysostom’s challenges cf. Wilken, *Chrysostom and the the Jews*, 66-94.

¹⁰⁴⁰ See chapter 5.3.3.

¹⁰⁴¹ See C. M. C. Green, “Did the Romans Hunt?” *Classical Antiquity* 15, 2 (1996): 222-260.

“Each evening they come back (*convertentur*), howling like dogs and prowling about the city” (Ps 59:6) ... They suffer hunger like dogs. It is the people of the Jews that are called dogs ... They shall yearn for the grace of God, understanding that they are sinners. The strong shall be made weak and the rich shall become poor. The just should learn that they are sinners, and these lions should turn into dogs.¹⁰⁴²

Augustine’s interpretation of the Psalm-verse depicts the conversion of Jews at the end of times, an event to which – according to Augustine – the text of the 59th *Psalm* typologically refer. Jews, who are lions at present, will become dogs. And although dogs are nowhere positive symbols of moral conduct in the Christian – or for that matter in the *Biblical* – tradition, the example of Chrysostom, who compared Christians fighting against Judaizers and Jews to hunting dogs, shows that they can nonetheless be implemented as symbols of faithful believers of Christ.¹⁰⁴³ Augustine’s distinction between the former status as lions and the future position as dogs capitalizes on this concept. By arguing for a change in species, he goes further than Chrysostom. The process of ultimate conversion is not a taming of natures, but a change. The argument is however similar inasmuch as Augustine’s interpretation also builds on the opposition of two domains and the eschatological settlement of their antinomy.

¹⁰⁴² (Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 58 S. 1:14) Conuertantur ad uesperam. nescio quos dicit quondam operadores iniquitatis, et quondam tenebras, conuerti ad uesperam ... et famem patiantur ut canes. canes gentes iudaei dixerunt, tamquam immundos ... famem patiantur ut canes. desiderent gratiam dei, intellegant se peccatores; fortes illi fiant infirmi, diuites illi fiant pauperes, iusti illi agnoscant se peccatores, leones illi canes fiant.

¹⁰⁴³ As for positive canine-symbolism of the *Old Testament*, cf. Geoffrey David Miller, “Attitudes toward Dogs in Ancient Israel: A Reassessment,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32, no. 4 (2008): 487-500, here 498-500.

5.6. Conclusions

Wild beasts, representatives of a threatening domain, that of the wilderness, are particularly alluring, and at the same time problematic symbols for an exegete. On the one hand, they propose a framework in which otherness and especially the proximate otherness of Judaism and Christianity can be described with great accuracy. The respective other is not only seen as destructive, but also as seductive due to the liminal nature of wilderness as a habitat and the resulting liminality of wild beasts. On the other hand, the existence of liminal entities means, by definition, that the boundary between one's own group and the respective other is far from secure. Consequently, not only is the other subject to changes, but one cannot even be certain of the unchangeability of one's own nature. The ambiguity of wild beasts can be well observed in both the Jewish and the Christian implementation of wild-animal symbolism and especially in their understanding of the opposition of wild and domesticated animals. The two directions of change (*Verwilderung* and taming) are present in both exegetical traditions, and both the rabbis and the Church fathers reflect extensively on the possibility of the inherently wild aspect of members of their respective communities. The apparently attractive nature of such an opposition was exploited by interpreters in a variety of ways.

From the perspective of Jewish-Christian interrelations, the most important among these uses was the tendency of interpreting communal relations in such a framework. By using wild animals as communal symbols of otherness, and at the same time describing the ingroup as a domesticated, vulnerable animal, interpreters could communicate a twofold message. On the one hand, they were able to affirm their respective community's self-representation as threatened by an uncultivated external force, expressing both physical and spiritual menace. Such an image could help reinforcing cohesion within the community. On the other hand, combining the view of this opposition with eschatological material depicting its resolution could help abiding the contradiction between political realities and prophetic traditions concerning the future of the two communities.

And since in the interpretations of these prophetic narratives the two communities differ considerably, their use of the opposition of wild and domesticated animals in the eschatological domain is also substantially different. Rabbis, who were interested in explaining how and why their community is under the political sway of changing Gentile political structures, return to the vision of Daniel, a passage capable of describing such a volatile political status. They aim at harmonizing political realities with the repeated divine promise to protect the people of Israel from the outward threats as symbolized by the wilderness and its inhabitants. By relegating the end of this predicament to an

eschatological future, they help making the situation bearable for members of their communities. On a political level, they claim that the community of the Jews will be once again free of oppression, with the removal of the wild beasts, thereby finding a way out of the problematic consequences of the traversability of the boundary between wild and domesticated domains. In this discourse, even if wild animals can become domesticated and (more importantly for the rabbis) domesticated ones can turn into wild beasts, this will not matter in the eschatological age, as the latter will be removed for good.

Christian interpreters, emphasizing the possibility of both individual change and the transformation of larger communities, which is a pre-requisite for any claim to a second covenant between God and the *verus Israel* (the *Ecclesia*), do not follow the same path as their rabbinic counterparts. Instead, they rely on another *Old Testament* tradition, in which the opposition between wild and domesticated animals is resolved in an eschatological scenario of the taming of the former. Relying heavily on the traversability of the border between two domains, they can settle with the concerning nature of political reality. The proximate otherness of Judaism, heretics, or pagans is only a temporal threat, and there is a gradual process of changing the wild others in the course of conversion.

At this point, the two traditions arrive to a similar concept. The routes might be different, but the end-result is the same: in the eschatological age, wild beasts will no longer be present. The world (or in the case of the rabbis: Palestine) will be populated only by domesticated and/or peaceful animals, that is: members of one's own community, and the ever-present threat of proximate otherness will be, thus, finally solved.

6. Conclusions

Research on Jewish-Christian relations in Antiquity has undergone an important paradigm change in recent years. The notion of “parting of the ways,” dominant in the 1980s, tended to emphasize the common origins of both religions and searched for a unique historical moment of split. In contrast, the twenty-first century witnessed an emerging consensus according to which the Late Antique history of Jewish-Christian relations can be better described as a permanent process of negotiating boundaries. It is argued that in this process, the two communities were both interested in constructing frontiers by which they defined and distanced themselves from each other. This view of Jewish-Christian history provides an opportunity for the scholar to avoid the precarious task of identifying certain notions present in the traditions of these two communities as either “Jewish” or “Christian”. Instead, similarities and differences between features of the two traditions can be regarded as shared assets claimed or refused by interested parties. Furthermore, by invoking the concept of negotiation, the focus is shifted from the temporal aspect of the concept of parting of the ways toward the qualitative one. The major task is not so much to answer when the partition happened, but rather describing how it has happened.

Two versions of proximate otherness, the one between humans and animals and the one between Jews and Christians stand in parallel to each other. The study of animal symbolism in the two traditions can therefore make a particularly rich contribution to the view of Jewish-Christian interrelations. Due to its dependence on questions of defining humankind and its relationship with its environment, the study of animal symbolism allows the scholar to investigate how the mutual representation of the two traditions was related to their most profound anthropological and theological persuasions. Moreover, as both traditions draw their animal imagery either from their shared corpus of scriptures or from Graeco-Roman tradition, the symbolic values expressed by animals are not only assets that the two communities strive for, but also a common metalanguage through which alterity can be grasped and addressed.

The appeal of zoological language as a way of constructing identity and alterity is, in part, a result of the fact that any use of animals as symbols of alterity, whether opposing animals and humans or different animal species with each other, allows human-human differences to be interpreted as part of a natural order. Naturalizing difference between ingroup and outgroup is indeed an important aspect of animalization. However, as I have abundantly shown in the present study, it is not the only

reason for implementing such a metaphorical language by communities struggling with the threat of proximate otherness.

I argued in my first chapter that the distinction between humans and animals is far from being secure. Neither rabbinic nor patristic exegetes could arrive at a set of mutually exclusive definitions of animality and humanity, and their mythical and folk traditions concerning the relationship between the two classes of beings represent their concern with this situation inasmuch as it shows that to some extent they entertained the possibility of a passable boundary between humanity and animality. For exegetes, the ambiguity of human-animal difference was apparently more a source of appeal than a reason to avoid this metaphorical language. In particular, the similarity between the ambiguous relationships of humans and animals on the one hand, and Jews and Christians on the other was exploited in both exegetic traditions. The animalization of the respective other was, thus, not exclusively a tool of distancing, but also an expression of anxiety concerning the penetrable border between ingroup and outgroup.

The ambiguity of animality was extremely palpable for representatives of the two communities, as the historic transformation of interrelations between Jews and Christians was paralleled by a similarly fundamental shift in the conceptualization of animals in the course of Late Antiquity. As a result of various factors (including urbanization, the transformation of sacrificial cults, a widespread tendency of emphasizing the moral aspect of religious rituals etc.), the everyday relationship between humans and animals was no longer characterized by an exceptional position of animals in the communication between divine and human realms. This enabled an emphasizing of symbolical and metaphorical interpretations of the scriptural narratives featuring various animal species. The second chapter is dedicated to the study of this change through the analysis of interpretations of sacrifices and the metaphorical meaning of sacrificial animals. I argue that the religious transformations of Late Antiquity, and in particular the end of sacrificial rituals, enabled a novel way of interpreting sacrificial victims in literary traditions. The lack of sacrificial rituals permitted interpreters to formulate a discourse in which animals were not seen as passive objects, tools of communication between the divine and the human sphere, but as voluntary victims, as suffering subjects.

Although the role of sacrificial victim is still a passive one, the voluntary nature of its devotion indicates a shift toward active agency. Self-sacrifice invokes the concepts of consideration, decision and desire. Sacrificial animals capable of deciding to offer themselves are agents with a morality and a potential of comprehension. This is most evident in the case of sheep. In certain narratives, sheep are presented as comprehending animals capable of being educated and learning proper morality.

Such a metaphorical image occurs in alignment with a transformation of the image of shepherding within Jewish and, more notably, Christian tradition. From a political concept presented by the Hebrew Bible and retained in the rabbinic mindset throughout the centuries, the patristic tradition diverged toward an interpretation of shepherding as *magisterium*, aimed at guiding sheep toward moral perfection. In this symbolism, sheep are not simply obedient subjects, but become active subjects. They are not understood as being only driven toward certain goals, but – to an extent – expected to engage in self-improvement.

The cessation of animal sacrifices and the emergence of their metaphorical interpretation, entailed an increased emphasis on the morality of the individual and the search for the allegorical meaning behind not only rituals but also religious codes. Similarly to the reinterpretation of the notions of sacrificiability and the particular requirements of a sacrificial victim, the related dichotomy of pure and impure animals also became allegorized. While only the rabbis maintained the validity of this distinction in matters of alimentation, both exegetic traditions treated the opposites of pure and impure animals as symbols expressing identity and alterity. Due to the fact that the notion of purity is expressed in the Hebrew Bible in a quasi-medical framework of contagion, contamination and purification, the identification of the outgroup with an impure animal is not only an act of classification and distancing, but also an indication of perceived danger. As the concept of impurity survived in exclusively metaphorical-moralistic terms in the Christian tradition, and since to an extent these aspects are developed in Jewish tradition as well, the identification of the outgroup with an impure animal included the assumption that the other poses a danger of contaminating and defiling the ingroup in a moral sense. A peculiar feature of both Jewish and Christian notions of impurity was that it was seen partly as an issue of corporeality and it was linked to sexual activity and sexual desire. And since the impurity of certain animals mainly implied the prohibition of enjoying their flesh, their presence was perceived as a potentially gendered and sexualized form of seduction, in which consumption was either identified with or interpreted as leading to the fulfillment of illicit sexual desires. This reading of seductive otherness was a further step in the process of subjectifying animals, since the image of an animalized other capable of seducing members of the ingroup attributes an immoral and subversive agency to the impure animal, irrespective of whether the affected ingroup was depicted as a pure animal or as a human community.

In such cases, proximate otherness is threatening not simply because the outgroup is close, but also because it is capable of transgressing borders, annexing territories and undermining the ingroup's stability and integrity, since the ingroup is incapable of protecting itself from the other, or marking

out the exact border. There are two possible solutions to this problem: the exclusion or the conquest of the other. One can either resolve the presence of a threateningly similar other by arguing for an eventual destruction of the outgroup, or by incorporating it in a way that it ultimately becomes identical with the ingroup. Both of these solutions are present in the literature of the two communities, as presented in the last chapter of the dissertation.

This fourth and last chapter explores the ways in which the two communities pursued the subjectification of animality to its ultimate results. I am inspecting a topic in which community relations were depicted by a domesticated animal as opposed to an outgroup of wild and dangerous beasts. The latter is, however, not only seen as a source of physical danger but also as an expression of immorality, which – similarly to the contagious concept of impurity – poses a danger of corruption. The respective domains of these two groups of animals (the wilderness and the domesticated lands) are seen in a dichotomy, governed by an overtone of liminality, which enables not only the wilderness and its inhabitants to invade, occupy and devastate domesticated lands and its animal representatives, but also the domesticated animals to conquer and transform their wild counterparts. In the *Gospel* passage of Jesus sending out his disciples as sheep among the wolves, a worldview is presented in which the gentle nature of domesticated animals obtains the taming of wild beasts.

By describing the outgroup as symbolized by a wild beast and, at the same time, pointing out the possibility of its taming, exegetes of the two communities could exploit the full potential of their subjectification of animalization. In wild animal narratives, where both parties are identified as animal species interacting with each other, a literary fantasy of addressing the outgroup in a secure way was finally constructed. By these means, interpreters of both groups could invent ways of facilitating the toleration of proximate otherness: by relegating its solution to a messianic perspective they could accommodate to leaving it intact in the present.

Since all this effort took place only on a literary level and it was addressed to one's own group, these solutions were not intended to affect the relationship of the two communities, but to construct and maintain the perception of it. In the two communities, the pacification or removal of the animalized outgroup was mostly relegated to the eschatological future. Through arguing that the wild beasts would ultimately be removed from the land of Israel, the rabbis could make good use of their identification of the outgroup with such animals. The vision of most Christian Fathers, announcing the future coexistence and peace between wild and domesticated animals, capitalizes much more on the subjectification of animals. In this narrative, the imaginary coexistence of two types of animals (tame, but originally wild, and gentle ones) was interpreted as a description of the future peace and

reconciliation of proximate others. In this vision, animals are not only subjects interacting with each other, but also agents capable of being changed and changing each other, as the taming of wild animal others is executed through members of the ingroup symbolized by gentle domesticated animals. The Christian vision of a progressive conversion of the entirety of the world stands in contrast with the rabbis' spatially restricted model of removal. Lacking the benefit of an anthropological model similar to the Christian concept of conversion which enabled the notion of an instantaneous change of the individual's status, the rabbis did not accommodate the model of personal taming to their eschatology. The threat of an external wilderness and the accompanying danger of a wild beast within – a notion well-reflected by the rabbis – drove them to settle for a complete removal of the threat from only Palestine.

My findings show that while naturalizing difference through animal symbols functioned as a method of creating boundaries, the subjectification of animals could serve an opposite aim. For these two communities animalization was not a tool of severing connections, but a way of potentially establishing them. By identifying communities with different animal species, the distinction between them was recognized and expressed, fostering a process of crystallizing boundaries and community identities, ultimately allowing authors to use animal symbols as an intercommunal metalanguage. Thus, by crossing over from one community to the other, animalization transgressed boundaries, but also confirmed them.

The interrelation of Jewish and Christian community is often understood as a peculiar case. Not only did the two communities share their scriptures and theological convictions, but the respective other was also a constant source of interest and threat in their view. And as my findings indicate, this feeling of external menace continued even after their parting of the ways in legal and societal terms in the 4th and 5th centuries CE. It seems that the boundary between Jews and Christians kept eluding the interpreters' attempts at clarification. The observation that this ambiguity functions so similarly to that of human-animal boundary indicates that Jewish-Christian interrelation might not be such a peculiar case after all. Perhaps, by further investigating the way in which the two communities exploit the twofold system of border-making, one can gain a better understanding of not only the parting of the ways of these two communities but also a more general pattern of how interrelations between communities are constructed and maintained.

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Abbreviations

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