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SUFFERING DOE AND SLEEPING SERPENT:
ANIMALS IN CHRISTIAN MAGICAL TEXTS FROM LATE
ROMAN AND EARLY ISLAMIC EGYPT¹

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There was a magician who took a maiden, and turned her into an ass by his wicked arts in the presence of all who saw her. And she remained with him three years, as she related. And when he took her out into the desert, he made her a woman, that she might serve him, and he might commit sin with her. But when he entered the city, he rode upon her, as if she were an ass. Then, on the seventh of Abib, the feast of the holy Sinuthius, the excellent prophet, the aged Abba Paul met that man, when she was with him, and took her from him, though none knew of her except

1. This discussion is based on a paper which was presented at the 1st International Symposium on *Animals in Ancient Egypt*, held at the Musée des Confluences in Lyon, 1-4 June 2016; a shorter version was subsequently presented at a joint seminar held by the Early Christian Studies and Animal and Non-Human Studies workshops at the University of Chicago on the 14 November, 2016. Some of the research which contributed to this work was carried out on behalf of Lindsay Watson of Sydney University, while other parts draw on work carried out as part of the project “The Coptic Magical Papyri: Vernacular Religion in Late Roman and Early Islamic Egypt” at the Julius Maximilian University Würzburg. I would like to thank all those who commented on or inspired aspects of this discussion, among them Sydney Aufrère, Sam Baudinette, Linda Evans, Cameron E. Ferguson, Thomas Galoppin, Nathan J. Hardy, Lee Douglas Hoffer, Kelly Holob, Salima Ikram, Owen Joyce, Rozenn Bailleul La Suer, Jacob H. Leveton, David Martinez, Megan Meagher, Ágnes Mihálykó, Margaret Mitchell, Samantha Pellegrino, Zach Ralston, Héléna Rochard, Sam Schulte, Sofia Torallas Tovar, Christine Trotter, Matthew Vanderpoel, Lindsay Watson, and D. Bruce Woll. Any remaining mistakes are my own.

The regular abbreviation *PGM* refers to texts from K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, Stuttgart, Teubner, 1973-1974, 2nd ed.; 2 vols.). Other papyri will be referred to by their usual sigla, followed on their first mention by the Trismegistos (TM) number in brackets; this allows their bibliography to be consulted on the website www.trismegistos.org. Unless otherwise noted, Greek texts refer to those stored online within the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (stephanus.tlg.uci.edu), while pre-Coptic Egyptian texts (Middle and Late Egyptian and Demotic) are drawn from the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (aaww.bbaw.de/tla/index.html).

the accursed misbelieving magician. And Abba Paul took the magician, and gave him up to the governor, who caused him to be burnt in the fire after he had been put to death. Then the bishop loosed the woman from the bonds of Satan and delivered her to the superior of the convent of nuns

*The History of the Patriarchs*²

In his 1978 book *Jesus the Magician*, Morton Smith presented an unfamiliar portrait of the central figure of Christianity, painting him as a gnostic libertine whose charismatic healings and secret initiations led him to be accused by his opponents of practicing necromancy which he had learned in Egypt.³ Morton's claims are tangential to this discussion, but the controversy which greeted his claims highlights the tension that results when we bring together the concepts of "magic" and "Christianity".⁴ On the one hand, nearly every major figure in early Christianity whose writings survive – from the writers of the books of the New Testament to the Church Fathers, and later bishops, abbots and chroniclers – is unanimous in condemning magic whenever they mention it,⁵ and whichever term they use – *mageia*, *goēteia*, or *pharmakeia* in Greek, these same words alongside *hik* in Coptic – and this attitude is regularly reproduced even in the relatively few surviving texts attesting to the alternative forms of Christianity which once existed alongside the stream which was to become the orthodox tradition.⁶

Yet alongside these polemic attitudes exists evidence that individuals who would almost certainly have described themselves as Christians performed practices that we, and often others in their own society, would describe as "magical" – private rituals intended to heal, curse, divine the future, and impel others to love or to hate.

2. B. Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria. Part 3: Agathon-Michael I (766 AD)*, Paris, Firmin-Didot et Cie., 1910, p. 205-206.

3. M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, London, Victor Gollancz, London, 1978. See also his earlier treatment of similar themes in *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1973.

4. One summary of the controversy can be found in S. G. Brown, "The Question of Motive in the Case against Morton Smith", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 125, n° 2, 2006, p. 351-383.

5. For an overview see M. W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 251-272.

6. For the idea of "magic" as an evil force in Sethian texts, see for example *On the Origin of the World* (NH II 5 123.4-12) where magic is taught to humans by demons along with idolatry, an idea repeated in the *Pistis Sophia* (C. Schmidt and V. MacDermot, *Pistis Sophia*, Leiden, Brill, 1978, p. 25.5-24-32.4), where Jesus describes how he has altered the celestial spheres so that the magic (μαγία) of human beings will be ineffective. Negative attitudes can also be found in Manichaean texts; the *Kephalaia of the Teacher* warns "Keep away from the magic arts (μαγία) and enchantments of darkness (ἄρῆκ μαγεῖα)! For any person who will be taught them, and who does and accomplishes them, in the place where will be bound the King of the realms of Darkness with his powers, they will bind that one" (H. J. Polotsky and A. Böhlig, *Kephalaia. IHäfte (Lieferung 1-10)*, Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer, 1940, p. 31.25-29). For further discussions of these texts see J. van der Vliet, "Fate, Magic and Astrology in Pistis Sophia, Chaps 15-21", in A. Hilhorst and G. H. van Kooten (ed.), *The Wisdom of Egypt. Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuisen*, Leiden, Brill, 2005, p. 519-536; P. Mirecki, "Manichaean Allusions to Ritual and Magic: Spells for Invisibility in the Coptic Kephalaia", in *The Light and the Darkness: Studies in Manichaeism and Its World*, in P. A. Mirecki, J. D. BeDuhn (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2001, p. 173-180.

This evidence consists not only of outsider texts written by those who disapproved – sermons complaining that parishioners were wearing amulets,⁷ church canons prescribing excommunication for those who performed or paid for magic⁸ – but also of material produced by “insiders”, among them the hundreds of handbooks, amulets, written curses, and so on, which survive from late antique and early Islamic Egypt.⁹

We should not see these simply as “pagan survivals” made illegitimate by their new Christian context, although in many cases they clearly did develop out of older practices. Already in the official discourse of Roman Egypt, certain ritual practices were seen as illicit, depending upon either their context or their purpose,¹⁰ and so even

7. To pick two well-known examples, see the complaints of John Chrysostom (*ca.* 349-407 CE) about the wearing of protective amulets (περίαιττα, κώδωνες) by children (*Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, 1.12.13) in Antioch, and Shenoute of Atripe’s discussion of the wearing of fox-claws, crocodile teeth and snake’s heads as amulets, and the use of anointing and washing with oil and water given by magicians (ρεφιμογτε, ρεφιμαρρε) to heal, in Upper Egypt (T. Orlandi, *Shenute contra Origenistas*, Rome, C. I. M., 1985, p. 18-21; Id., “A Catechesis against Apocryphal Texts by Shenute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi”, *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 75, 1982, p. 90).

8. The Canons of Basil forbid Christians to practice magic or astrology, or to consult those who do, mentioning the practices of healing and attracting women by magic (W. Riedel, *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien*, Leipzig, A. Deichert, 1900, canons 2, 21 & 35; p. 237, 243, 253-254). The Canons of Pseudo-Athanasius prescribe that priests who own books of magic are excommunicated for three years, and must burn their books and fast as penance (W. Riedel and W. E. Crum, *The Canons of Athanasius of Alexandria*, Oxford, Williams and Norgate, 1904, § 71, 72; p. 47). If these canons are unanimous in their condemnation of magic, the presence and details of such mentions suggests that the practices were widespread.

9. Checklists of magical material from Christian Egypt may be found in T. de Bruyn and J. Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets”, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, vol. 48, 2011, p. 163-216 (Greek texts), and R. Bélanger Sarrazin, “Catalogue des textes magiques coptes”, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, vol. 63.2, 2017, p. 367-408 (Coptic texts). We must note that while Egypt has provided a large quantity of material on papyrus and, to a lesser extent, parchment, paper, and ostraca, the thousands of amuletic gems and metal binding tablets usually originate outside Egypt, and thus bear witness to the fact that similar, if not identical, practices were common in other areas of the Mediterranean and Near East.

10. The literature on magic in Roman law is extensive, but see for example C. R. Phillips III, “*Nullum Crimen sine Lege*: Socioreligious Sanctions on Magic”, in C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (ed.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic & Religion*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 260-276; M. W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, *op. cit.*, p. 142-161, 251-272; J. B. Rives, “Magic in Roman Law: The Reconstruction of a Crime”, *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 22.2, 2003, p. 313-339. There is no evidence of general laws against magic in the Pharaonic and Ptolemaic periods (on this point see R. K. Ritner, “The Religious, Social, and Legal Parameters of Traditional Egyptian Magic”, in P. Mirecki and M. Meyer (ed.), *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, Leiden, Brill, 1995, p. 43-60). Nonetheless, the use of ritual means to harm the king was clearly a capital offence in the Ramesside period, as shown by the records of the trial which took place during the so-called “Harem Conspiracy”, in which a group of conspirators used wax effigies as part of an assassination attempt against Ramesses III (see S. REDFORD, *The Harem Conspiracy: The Murder of Ramesses III*, DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 2002; J.-M. Kruchten, *Le grand texte oraculaire du Djéhoutymose*, Brussels, Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1986, p. 329; R. K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, Chicago, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1995, p. 193-197, 216). Similar ambivalence can be found in the Demotic story *Setna II* IV.1-V.23,

in the “pagan” past the concept of *mageia* had been a complex one, a term used more often by outsiders than by the insiders who practiced “magic”. These insiders seem for their part to have viewed themselves as experts who drew upon the logic and power of the official cults for their clients. In magical texts from Christian Egypt, *mageia* and its synonyms are almost always mentioned as a hostile force against which the ritual expertise of the practitioner is employed,¹¹ and their worldview is resolutely Christian – invoking angels, saints, and God and his hypostases, adopting phrases and ritual practices from the liturgy,¹² or even using Biblical passages as amulets.¹³

in which a Nubian magician uses his magic (*hqy*) to kidnap and beat King Menkheperre Si-Amon (Thutmose III), and must be fought with the magic (*hqy*) of Thoth wielded by an Egyptian lector-priest. By the period we are discussing, however, we might expect Roman attitudes towards “magic” to have been absorbed to some degree by the Egyptian population in general; for an example of the application of such laws upon the population see SB 14.12144 (198/199 CE), a circular from the prefect of Egypt forbidding “magical” (μ-αγγανίας, l. 7) oracles (J. REA, “A New Version of P. Yale Inv. 299”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, vol. 27, 1977, p. 151-156).

11. Anastasi 9 (TM 100023; vi CE) provides protection from a curse caused by a male or female magician as well as “magic” more generally (μαγος (νεριμε), 2v, 24-25; μητμαγος, 4r, 10; ρικ, 10v, 27); London Oriental Manuscript 1013A (TM 100012; vii-ix CE) promises protection from “male and female” magic (μαγια νεριμε/νεροογτ, l. 13), unusually the binding performed by the practitioner also seems to be described as “magic” (μαγια, l. 14); Berlin 11347 (TM 98055; vii-ix CE) promises healing from magic (μακια, φαρμακια, verso l. 7); as does Vienna Nationalbibliothek K 8302 (TM 91437; vi-vii CE; ρικ, μαγια, φαρμακια, l. 21-22); P. Heid. Inv. Kopt. 685 (TM 102074; x CE) 4.3-4 contains an invocation to destroy magic (μαγια μη φαρμαγια); P. Heid. Inv. Kopt. 686 (TM 100022; x CE), l. 137, 140, 141, 270 contains invocations against magic (ρικ) and magicians (μαγος) which might affect people or livestock; P. Macq. I.1 14.18-24 (TM 113926; viii CE) contains three recipes against magic (ρικ); P. Mich. Inv. 1190 (TM 98058; v-viii CE), l. 29-30 mentions an illness caused by a magician (μακος or φαρμαγος); P. Bad. V 133, l. 1 (TM 102082; ix-xi CE) contains a recipe to help a man affected by “a great magic” (φλμακια); BKU I 11, l. 6 (TM 107297; vii-viii CE) contains a mention of a magician (μαγος), probably as a negative force despite the interpretation of the original editor (read ογτε μαγος rather than [π]νογτε κνμαγος); BKU I 8, l. 25 (TM 63027; vii-viii CE) asks for protection from magic (μαγια, φαρμαγια). In P. Yale 1800 (TM 99993; vi-vii CE), l. 15-16, male and female magicians (μακος, φαρμαγος) are said to be unable to remove a particular curse, and while this does suggest a somewhat positive role for these magicians, they are still a force opposed to the user of the curse.

12. See A. Kropp, *Ausgewählte Koptische Zaubertexte*, Brussels, Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1931, vol. 3, p. 229-244 and K. Dosoo, “Horus, Sabaoth, Satanas: La ‘Bibliothèque de Berlin’ et autres fonds d’archives magiques de l’Égypte romaine et les premiers siècles de la période islamique”, in J.-C. Coulon (ed.), *La magie et les sciences occultes dans le monde islamique*, forthcoming.

13. For lists of these see T. de Bruyn and J. Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies”, art. cit., p. 196-215 (Greek texts), and R. Bélanger Sarrazin, “Catalogue des textes magiques coptes”, art. cit. (Coptic texts). See also T. de Bruyn, “Papyri, Parchments, Ostraca, and Tablets Written with Biblical Texts in Greek and Used as Amulets: A Preliminary List”, in T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas (ed.), *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach*, Leiden, 2010, p. 145-189; T. J. Kraus, “Psalm 90 der Septuaginta in apotropäischer Verwendung”, *Biblische Notizen*, vol. 125, 2005, p. 39-73; Id., “Manuscripts with the Lord’s Prayer – They Are More Than Simply Witnesses to that Text Itself”, in T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas (ed.), *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*, Leiden, Brill, 2006, p. 227-266; J. E. Sanzo, *Scriptural Incipits on Amulets from Late Antique Egypt*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2014. For an excellent overview, see J. van der Vliet,

It is this range of practices that I will examine in this discussion, a rich vein of information about the daily lives of individuals in late antique Egypt, and their attempts to use divine power to protect themselves and solve their otherwise insoluble problems. These texts also tell us about the world in which they were produced – a world that humans shared with both invisible powers and with visible animals, and I will focus here on the relationship between these three categories – human, divine being, and animal – asking to what extent this trichotomy existed in late antique Egypt, and what sub-divisions and overlapping boundaries we may find.

The magical texts discussed here date to between the 3rd and 12th centuries, and although most are written in Coptic, there is a smaller number of Greek manuscripts, and a still smaller number in a combination of Coptic and Greek or Arabic.¹⁴ These texts are of two types: the first, formularies, consists of manuscripts containing one or more recipes for rituals, and would have been used by practitioners as handbooks, while the second type of manuscripts can be described as “applied texts” – amulets, curses, love spells, and so on – created in the process of a magical ritual. These rituals are very diverse, but it is worth attempting to sketch the outlines of a “typical ritual”, in order to get a clearer sense of what is meant here by the often-nebulous term “magic”.

The two key acts in a magical ritual seem to have been the speaking of a formula, a “magic spell”, along with the burning of an offering – usually incense, despite the stereotypical association of magic with human and animal sacrifice both today and in antiquity. This basic ritual might be combined with the creation of an object – most often a written text or drawn image on a support such as papyrus, parchment, or bone. These objects, empowered by the ritual, are the applied texts discovered by excavators, and their final use determined the function of the ritual. Amulets to protect or heal would be worn by the patient, or displayed in a prominent place, while curses or love spells might be buried either in or outside the victim’s home or in a graveyard, where a few examples have indeed been found;¹⁵ in the rarer divination rituals the text might be placed beside or under the head of an individual seeking a prophetic dream.

That these practices developed from earlier, non-Christian practices is clear – very similar, though often more complex practices – are found in handbooks and applied texts from the preceding centuries written in Greek, and less often Demotic or Old Coptic. Most obviously, the Christian texts may contain the same linguistic constructions (“I adjure you”), magical names (*Ablanathanalba*), and imagery as the “pagan” material – including the pseudo-writing known as *kharaktēres*, consisting of large

“Christian Spells and Manuals from Egypt”, in D. Frankfurter (ed.), *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic*, Leiden, Brill, 2019, p. 322-350.

14. This discussion takes into account most of the manuscripts listed in the checklists in n. 9, approximately 186 Greek and 302 Coptic texts. I will occasionally make reference to texts not included in these collections.

15. For some examples of the deposition of curse tablets in graves outside Egypt, see A. Wilburn, *Materia Magica: The Archaeology of Magic in Roman Egypt, Cyprus, and Spain*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2012, p. 236-253. The fact that the majority of papyri from Egypt have been acquired via the antiquities trade rather than excavated *in situ* generally makes it impossible to know exactly where they were found, but references to being buried with or even inside dead bodies are explicit in applied texts such as *PGM XIXa* (TM 89305; III-IV CE), *PGM Christian 13* (TM 64558; IV-V CE), *Munich Coptic Papyrus 5* (TM 99579; VI CE).

letter-like forms with circles or “rings” at their vertices, often understood as writing the “names” of divine beings. Indeed, the “pagan” material often includes mentions of figures from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, including names of angels, Jesus, and God himself (*Iaō Sabaōth*).¹⁶ Where the Christian material tends to differ from its predecessor, therefore, is less in the details, but rather in the overall worldview, which is thoroughly Christianised by the 5th century, despite the occasional appearances of non-Christian deities up until the 9th century or so.¹⁷

This transformation in worldview has notable consequences for the presence of animals in magical texts; like the Pharaonic system from which it developed, Graeco-Egyptian religion contained the idea that the divine could manifest itself through natural phenomena, from the sun as the cosmic manifestation of the solar deity to human and non-human animals as divine beings or manifestations.¹⁸ This keen concern for the symbolic and divine power of the animal world is everywhere in pre-Christian magical texts. One clear example is found in a 4th- or 5th-century text in which the god Thoth, called by his Greek name Hermes, is told “I also know what your forms are: in the east you have the form of an ibis, in the west you have the form of a dog-faced baboon, in the north you have the form of a serpent, and in the south you have the form of a wolf”.¹⁹ Here the knowledge of the animal forms of the god is knowledge of an aspect of his essential nature, which grants power over him and justifies his invocation, equivalent to the knowledge of his name in other texts. Animals do appear in the Christian texts – sometimes as the subjects of aggressive or beneficial magic, sometimes as mythic or divine beings, sometimes as ingredients – but it is notable that they are much rarer than in earlier material; lists of animal forms are replaced by lists of saints and martyrs. It would be easy to see this as a fundamental shift, from a nature-centred to a human-centred worldview, but a more nuanced perspective is suggested by the work of Ingvild Gilhus. She notes that the rise of Christianity not only privileged “the human body [as] the key symbol in a religion that focused on the death and resurrection of Christ”, but also removed animals from their role as divine-human mediators in the act of sacrifice.²⁰ This left animals with only a marginal cultural role, chiefly considered as a series of

16. Cf. W. Fauth, *Jao-Jahwe und seine Engel: Jahwe-Appellationen und zugehörige Engelnamen in griechischen und koptischen Zaubertexten*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2014, p. 17-56.

17. “Pagan” (Greek and Egyptian) deities appear in approximately twenty texts written in Coptic; for a full list see L. Blumell and K. Dosoo, “Horus, Isis, and the Dark-Eyed Beauty: A Series of Magical Ostraca in the Brigham Young University Collection”, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, vol. 64.1, 2018, p. 257-259.

18. On animals in Egyptian religion, see H. te Velde, “A Few Remarks upon the Religious Significance of Animals in Ancient Egypt”, *Numen*, vol. 7.1, 1980, p. 76-82 for a strong introduction. For more general discussions of the nature of divinity in Pharaonic Egypt and its relationship to the natural world, see D. Lorton, “God: Transcendent, Dead, or Everything?”, *Göttinger Miszellen*, vol. 140, 1994, p. 53-67; J. Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, transl. D. Lorton, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2001, p. 53-82.

19. *PGM* VIII.8-11 (TM 59324; IV-V CE): οἶδά σου καὶ τὰς μορφάς, αἱ εἰσι· ἐν τῷ ἀπηλιώτῃ μορφὴν ἔχεις ἴβεως, ἐν τῷ λιβί μορφὴν ἔχεις κυνοκεφάλου, ἐν τῷ βορέα μορφὴν ἔχεις ὄφεως, ἐν δὲ τῷ νότῳ μορφὴν ἔχεις λύκου. For a fuller discussion of the role of animals in Graeco-Egyptian magic, see K. Dosoo and T. Galoppin, “Animals in Graeco-Egyptian Magical Practice”, in this volume.

20. I. S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans. Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas*, London and New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 1-11, 102-105, 154-160.

fixed metaphors for human and divine realities rather than as beings with their own inherent interest.

Divine animals

Occasionally, animals do seem to retain something of their divine status in Christian magical practice, although it is often difficult to interpret exactly how the divinity of these “animal deities” was conceived. One 7th century amulet against fever invokes a being called “the white wolf” (*lukos leukos*) to heal its wearer, Joseph, and while the text’s editor attempted to connect the wolf to Horus-Apollo, identified with Jesus, the argument is not entirely convincing, and the wolf’s identity must remain somewhat mysterious.²¹

Similarly strange are the appearances of polymorphic beings whose forms – hybrids with parts from many animals – are reminiscent of late Pharaonic or ‘gnostic’ deities. In an 8th-century codex we find an invocation to a great eagle who sits on a tree that grows by the Euphrates, with the face of a lion and hindquarters of a bear, who intercedes twelve times each day for human souls.²² The origin of this eagle is probably to be found in the Sethian cosmogony known as *The Apocryphon of John*, which mentions that Jesus appeared to Adam and Eve in the form of an eagle who sat upon the Tree of Knowledge in Eden,²³ although the monstrous details of his form are unknown in this text. A parallel version of the same magical text shifts the description of the creature’s form so that it applies directly to Jesus, calling him the one who “arose from the dead... [who] came from the father’s first breath: the one whose face is that of a lion and his

21. Cologne 851 (TM 65318; vi-vii CE). For the argument that the wolf represents a synthesis of Jesus, Horus, and Apollo, see D. Wortmann, “Der weisse Wolf. Ein christliches Fieberamulett der Kölner Papyrussammlung”, *Philologus*, vol. 107 1/2, 1963, p. 160-161. Despite Wortmann’s argument, the lack of attestations for “white wolf” as an epithet of Horus-Apollo makes the connection speculative.

22. P. Macq. I 1, p. 6, l. 20-7.4 (TM 113926; vii CE): “You are the one who is upon the tree that grows there beside the Euphrates river, that is, the great eagle whose front is lion-faced, whose back is bear-faced. He shall speak on behalf of human souls twelve times daily until they shall be given rest. If he should fly, his wings are an aroura (across); should he stay an aroura is his dwelling-place” (ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲛⲉⲧⲣⲓⲕⲉⲛ ⲛⲟⲛ · ⲉⲧⲣⲏⲧ · ⲉⲓⲕⲏ ⲛⲉϥⲑⲣⲁⲧⲏⲥ · ⲛⲉⲣⲟ · ⲉϥⲉⲛⲁϥ ⲛⲉⲓ ⲛⲓⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓⲧⲟⲥ · ⲉⲣⲏ · ⲛⲟϥ · ⲟ ⲛⲉⲁⲛⲟϥⲓ · ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲁⲣⲟϥ ⲛⲟϥ · ⲟ ⲛⲉⲁⲛⲓⲁⲃⲟⲓ · ⲉϥⲁⲕⲁⲣⲁϥ · ⲉⲕ ⲛⲉϥⲧⲏⲕⲏⲟⲩⲉ · ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲛⲉ : ⲓⲃ : ⲥⲟⲛ ⲛⲏⲛⲉ ⲑⲁⲛⲧⲟϥⲧⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲟⲛ · ⲛⲁϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲁⲛⲉⲣⲟⲗ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ · ⲑⲁⲣⲉⲛⲉⲃⲧⲉⲗ · ⲉⲣⲟϥⲥⲉⲧⲱⲣⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲁⲛⲟϥⲱⲣ ⲟϥⲥⲉⲧⲱⲣⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲃⲛⲁⲛⲟϥⲱⲣ). Here, and in the following examples I translate ⲓⲁⲃⲟⲓ as “bear”, a meaning which makes more sense than the alternative “lioness” when it is contrasted with “lion”, although both translations are possible (see W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1939, p. 16b); see W. Spiegelberg, *Der ägyptische Mythos vom Sonnenauge. Nach dem Leidener demotischen Papyrus I 384*, Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1994, p. 190 for an extended discussion of the word and its origins. An alternative would be to see the dual nature (lion/lioness) as referencing the androgyne nature of the deity.

23. *Apocryphon of John*, NH II.1, 23, 27-28 (iv CE); cf. NH III 30.12-16-22, BG 60.19-61.7 where the eagle is instead Reflection (ⲉⲣⲓⲛⲟⲓⲁ; M. Waldstein and F. Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John*, Leiden, Brill, 1995, p. 134-135); cf. M. Choat and I. Gardner, *A Coptic Handbook of Ritual Power (P. Macq. I 1)*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2013, p. 90-91.

This Petbe, whose name literally meant “the Avenger”, seems to have been a popular deity in Roman Egypt, and was identified with the griffin, a hybrid creature with echoes of the later polymorphic monster: “his beak is that of a falcon, his eye is that of a man, his limbs are those of a lion, his ears are the scales of the *abash*-fish of the sea, his tail is that of a snake”.³¹ Petbe was identified with the Greek deity Kronos,³² who was overthrown and chained by his son Zeus, explaining the bound toes in our spell, and indeed the link to Ialdabaoth; through an association with time (*khronos*), Kronos developed in the Roman period into a polymorphic, and often lion-headed pantheistic deity symbolising time and eternity.³³ It seems then that the “floating description” of Jesus, the eagle of Eden, and other beings, derives ultimately from this syncretistic late Egyptian deity, whose roots go back to still earlier texts.

The final “animal deity” I will look at here is the Artemesian scorpion (*skorpios artemisios*), invoked in five surviving Greek-language amulets dating to between the 4th and 6th centuries.³⁴ The purpose of each of these texts seems to be to protect the house in which they are placed, “from all evil, from the evil-eye from all aerial spirits and from human eyes and from terrible suffering and the bites of scorpions and snakes”, in the words of one version.³⁵ While they contain numerous “pagan” features – including brief mentions of Aphrodite³⁶ and Horus³⁷ – all of the texts suggest a primarily Christian context, with a predominance of Judaeo-Christian names such as Adonai³⁸ and Solomon.³⁹ Several are marked at the beginning of their texts with crosses,⁴⁰ and in some we find lengthy invocations of Saint Phokas,⁴¹ or Jesus, “son of

μπνοῦν; cf. P. Mil. Vogl. Copt. 16 C2, l. 5-6 (TM 102252; v-vii CE): “Petbe, with the face of a bull, who undoes the foundations of the earth” (πετβε νρα νσεν πετβολβελ Ἰσα ἰσντε μπκαρ).

31. *Myth of the Sun's Eye* 15.2-4: *fn̄t̄f n n̄sr̄ ḫr̄:ḫf n rmt̄ n̄ȳḫf ʿy.w n m̄ȳ n̄ȳḫf ms̄dr̄[.w n] ḫnfy n ʿb̄h̄ n ȳm̄ sd̄f n ḫf*.

32. W. M. Brashear, *Magica Varia*, Brussels, Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1991, p. 24-34. For a fuller discussion of Petbe's associations see J. Quaegebeur, “De l'origine égyptienne du griffon némésis”, F. Jouan (ed.), *Visages du destin dans les mythologies*, Paris, Société d'édition, 1983, p. 41-54; S. H. Aufrère, “κρονος, un crocodile justicier des marécages de la rive occidentale du Panopolite au temps de Chénouté?”, in Id. (ed.), *Encyclopédie religieuse de l'Univers végétal. Croyances phytoreligieuses de l'Égypte ancienne III* (Orientalia Monspeliensia, XV), Montpellier, 2005, p. 77-88.

33. R. Pettazzoni, *Kronos in Egitto*, Pisa, Industrie Grafiche V. Lische & Figli, 1949, especially the description cited in p. 295 fn. 7; Id., “The Monstrous figure of Time in Mithraism”, H. J. Rose (transl.), *Essays on the History of Religions*, Leiden, Brill, p. 180-192.

34. *PGM XXVIIIa-c*; *PGM Christian 2 & 3*. The name appears with minor variations in each text.

35. *PGM Christian 3*, l. 3-6: ἀπό παντός κακοῦ, ἀπό βασκοσύνης πάσης ἀερίνων πνευμάτων καὶ ἀνθρώπινου ὀφθαλ[μοῦ] καὶ πόνου δεινοῦ [καὶ] δῆγματος σκορπίου καὶ ὄφεως.

36. *PGM Christian 2*, l. 1-3.

37. The name either appears in its simple form as Ὠρ, or else prefixed with the Egyptian definite article (ρ̄/π-), as Φωρ; this use of the definite article with the names of deities was common in later stages of the Egyptian language. See *PGM XXVIIIa*, l. 1; *PGM XXVIIIb*, l. 1; *PGM XXVIIIc*, l. 2, 10; *PGM Christian 2*, l. 3; *PGM Christian 3*, l. 2.

38. *PGM XXVIIIa*, l. 1; *PGM XXVIIIb*, l. 4; *PGM XXVIIIc*, l. 4; *PGM Christian 2*, l. 4; *PGM Christian 3*, l. 2.

39. *PGM XXVIIIa*, l. 1, *PGM XXVIIIb*, l. 6, *PGM XXVIIIc*, l. 5.

40. *PGM XXVIIIc*, l. 1-2; *PGM Christian 2*, l. 1.

41. *PGM Christian 2*, l. 9.

David in the flesh” and his mother, “the Holy Virgin Maria”.⁴² Yet the central figure of the Artemesian scorpion seems to come from Greek mythology – it is most likely the scorpion created by Artemis to protect herself from Orion, which became the constellation of Scorpio.⁴³ Here the deadly apotropaic power of the scorpion is harnessed against external forces which might threaten a household – a power visibly demonstrated in late antique gems where scorpions and other dangerous creatures are shown attacking the evil eye⁴⁴ – but a power expressed specifically in terms of Hellenic mythology, and therefore an attestation of the continuing power of the texts which transmitted it even after the civic cults to deities such as Artemis would have ended.



Fig. 1. An amulet depicting a scorpion and other animals attacking the evil eye (CBd-2221).

Each of these three exceptional cases of “animal deities” thus seems to represent a survival from older, non-Christian practices, which have been, to varying degrees, Christianised. This Christianisation is typically in the form of additions, such as the names of the saints and the Holy Family in the house-amulets, but in the most extreme case it includes the wholesale adoption by Jesus of the attributes of a griffin-god. But while the Graeco-Egyptian magical texts use animals to represent the imminent power of divinity in living creatures whom they might encounter in real life, the white-wolf, polymorphic god, and Artemesian scorpion are more abstract beings who sit on mythical trees or invisibly guard homes. Their adoption of animal attributes serves, as in the

42. *PGM* Christian 3, l. 9-11: “O lord, son of David according to the flesh, the one born of the holy Virgin Mary, O holy one, highest god, from the Holy Spirit” (κύριε, υἱὲ τοῦ Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ τεχθεὶς ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας παρθένου Μαρίας, ἄγνε, ὕψιστε θεέ, ἐξ ἁγίου πνεύματος).

43. A more common tradition has Orion as a favourite of Artemis killed by a scorpion produced by Gaia, but see for example Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, 48.393-402, Nicander, *Theriaca*, 13-15, Eustathius, *Comentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, 4.226.4-7; cf. the discussions in S. Eitrem, “Der Skorpion in mythologie und religionsgeschichte”, *Symbolae Osloenses*, vol. 7.1, 1928, p. 53-82, 61-62; M. N. Tod, “The Scorpion in Graeco-Roman Egypt”, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. 25.1, 1939, p. 59.

44. See, for example, CBd-221, 1073 and 1722 in the Campbell Bonner Magical Gems Database (antik.szepmuveszeti.hu/talismans/).

more complex theriomorphy of the Pharaonic artistic traditions, as manifestations of their power – the eagle, lion and bear, archetypal super-predators, represent merciless, unstoppable power, whose combination renders them more dangerous than any one of them alone; in earlier Demotic myth, the griffin Petbe was the only being capable of ending a cycle of violence which began with a lizard swallowing a fly, and ended with a lion consuming a catfish. The hybrid griffin, representing the final supremacy of the sun god and combining the attributes of all the other creatures, is the only being which can kill the lion.⁴⁵ Most interesting of all, though, is perhaps the Artemesian scorpion, whose supernatural power is called on not only to protect, but to protect from *other* venomous creatures of its kind.



Fig. 2. A Coptic Scorpion Amulet (Vienna, Nationalbibliothek K 7110).

Crawling creatures and quadrupeds

If the creatures we have just looked at represent distant, mythological beings, the threat of venomous creatures in pre-modern Egypt was very real. Amulets and spells for banishing scorpions and snakes from homes are known from pre-Christian Egypt,⁴⁶

45. *Myth of the Sun's Eye* 14.12-15.7.

46. See, for example, J. F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, Leiden, Brill, 1978, n° 121 (= Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek AEIN 974; 332-330 BCE) l. x+8-9: "Words to be said over garlic, ground and pulverized together with beer. To sprinkle the house with it in the night, before daybreak. No male snake, female snake, scorpion, reptile, male dead or female dead will enter this house". For a discussion of spells against scorpion bites, see M. Collier, "The Sting of the scorpion", in C. Price, R. Forshaw, A. Chamberlain and P. T. Nicholson (ed.), *Mummies, Magic and Medicine in Ancient Egypt. Multidisciplinary Essays for Rosalie David*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016, p. 109-113. Although I am not aware of any studies of amulets against scorpions in Pharaonic Egypt, several examples of scarabs decorated with scorpions, with a presumably apotropaic function, survive from at least as far back as the 17th Dynasty; see, for example, Cairo 59823 (18th Dyn.?) in

and the fear of scorpions in particular seems to have generated a particularly common amulet type, consisting simply of a small rectangle of papyrus with a scorpion drawn upon it, accompanied by a brief text. The earliest surviving example dates from the 5th-century and is written in Greek,⁴⁷ and the latest Medieval example is a Hebrew manuscript dating from 12th century Cairo,⁴⁸ while the intervening period has provided us with several other examples written in Greek, Coptic, Arabic, or a combination of the three languages.⁴⁹ A close modern parallel, copied in Arabic and Coptic upon modern paper in 1932 is also worth noting.⁵⁰ The popularity of these amulets should be clear from the long-timespan and linguistic variation in this specific amulet type, but another indicator may be found in a specific characteristic of the 12th-century example, which is in fact a manuscript containing 20 such charms written continuously on a single sheet, mass-produced and ready to be cut off one by one. A neat rectangular cut from the bottom right on the sheet indicates that five or so amulets have already been removed. The ubiquity of such documents is unsurprising when we consider that surveys of areas where scorpions are endemic have found that as many as 44 % of the population may suffer life-threatening stings over the course of their lives.⁵¹

Scorpions were not the only animals against whom Egyptians needed protection, however; the Coptic term *jatfe* referred collectively to all crawling creatures whose bites or stings might be dangerous to humans – scorpions, snakes, lizards, and even certain insects.⁵² Several texts provide evidence of amulets or rituals intended to protect

E. Teeter, *Scarabs, Scaraboids, Seals and Seal Impressions from Medinet Habu*, Chicago, Oriental Institute Publications, 2003, p. 81; Metropolitan Museum of Art 36.3.3, 27.3.395 (xv BCE); British Museum EA66435, EA66436 & MFA Boston 86.694 (all three from Naucratis, VIII-IV BCE). There are also a few examples of scorpion-form amulets; these include Rijksmuseum van Oudheden inv. F 1955/5.18 (4th-11th Dyn.); Metropolitan Museum of Art 22.1.1944x (13th-18th Dyn.); Archaeological Museum, Khartoum Location 37 (18th Dyn.; image online as n° 55408471 at wfa.glbx.image-data.com). For a discussion of Roman-period amulets against scorpions in the form of yellow jaspers inscribed with the creature's image, see C. A. Faraone, *The Transformation of Greek Amulets in Roman Imperial Times*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018, p. 98-100.

47. PGM CXIII; cf. PGM CXII which seems to be intended for similar purposes, but apparently contains no image of a scorpion.

48. Cambridge AS 143.26 (XII CE), edited in G. Bohak, "Some 'Mass Produced' Scorpion-Amulets from the Cairo Genizah", in Z. Rodgers, M. Daly-Denton, and A. Fitzpatrick McKinley (ed.), *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne*, Leiden, Brill, 2009, p. 35-49.

49. These include P. Hermitage Copt. 66 (TM 109329; x CE; Copto-Arabic), Vienna K 7076 (TM 91404; x-xi CE, Coptic), Vienna K 7110 (TM 91413; x-xi CE; Coptic), P. Bad. V 162-166 (TM 105702, 105703, 105704, 105705, 105706; ix-xi CE; Arabic); P. Heid. Arab. inv. 162 (TM 832357; x-xi CE; Arabic); cf. L. Berkes, "An Arabic Scorpion-Amulet on Paper from the 10th-11th c. and its Coptic and Hebrew Parallels", *Chronique d'Égypte*, vol. 94, 2019, p. 213-215. For a discussion of similar later amulets, see J. W. Frembgen, "The Scorpion in Muslim Folklore", *Asian Folklore Studies*, vol. 63, n° 1 (2004), p. 112-114, who notes that scorpion-shaped amulets in more recent Egyptian history were used to avert both scorpions and the evil eye.

50. R. Schulz and K. S. Kolta, "Schlangen, Skorpione und feindliche Mächte", *Biblische Notizen. Beiträge zur exegetischen Diskussion*, vol. 93, 1998, p. 89-104.

51. J. W. Frembgen, "The Scorpion in Muslim Folklore", art. cit., p. 98. For a discussion of figures recorded for workers in New Kingdom Deir el-Medinah, see M. Collier, "The Sting of the Scorpion", art. cit., p. 109-113.

52. S. H. Aufrère, "Chasser, conjurer les 'animaux venimeux' (*ddf.t*) et s'en protéger d'après le Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.138. Notes de lecture", *Journal of the Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*, vol. 40, 2013-2014, p. 24-27.

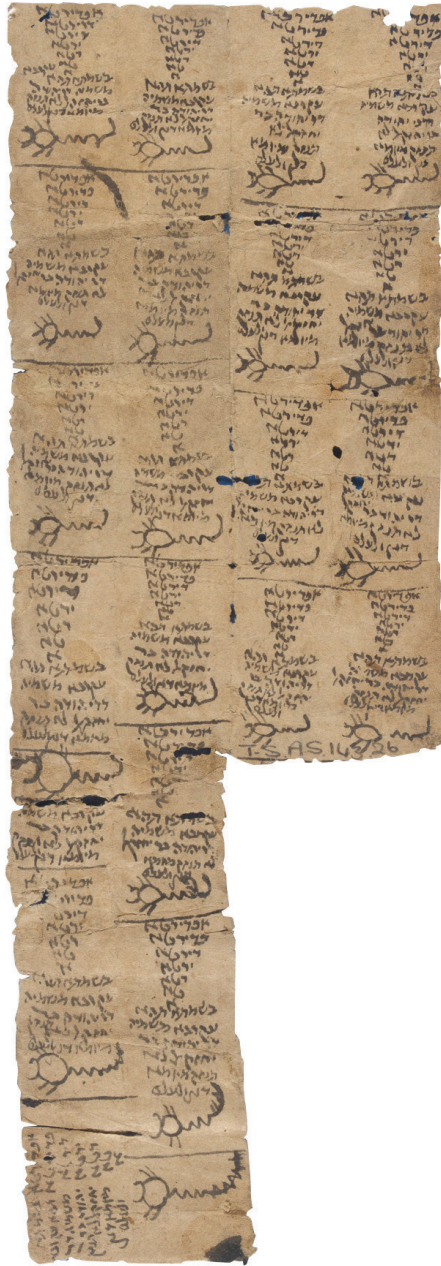


Fig. 3. Mass-produced Hebrew Scorpion Amulets (Cambridge AS 143.26).

against this diffuse but deadly category, with one formula calling for *jatfe* to “freeze like stone and iron” at the approach of the amulet’s wearer,⁵³ while a 4th-century miniature codex describes a spell in which oil is invoked in the name of God and Jesus to heal the bite of a *jatfe*.⁵⁴ This protection is often linked specifically to the power of Jesus to subdue animals; in one text he is described as rebuking the *jatfe* as he descends upon the earth in his incarnation,⁵⁵ while several amulets consist partly or wholly of Psalm LXX 90.13, which reminds the Lord – interpreted by Christians as Jesus – that “on asp and cobra you will tread, and you will trample lion and dragon underfoot”.⁵⁶ The laconic nature of such amulets often makes it difficult to know exactly what kind of protection is envisaged; one Coptic text copied onto the wall of a cell in Pachoras in Lower Nubia contains a story of a monk who is bitten by a horned viper (*kerastēs*) while walking in the desert. He recites Psalm 90, and when he reaches verse 13 the serpent dies, and the monk is saved.⁵⁷ But while this example is rather literal in its understanding of the “asp and cobra”, one 5th or 6th century Greek text containing this passage promises protection from “blind, deaf [and] dumb or toothless demons... [and] every disease and evil occurrence”.⁵⁸ Here – as in the Artemesian scorpion charms – the physical threats of snakes and scorpions overlaps with the more intangible, but equally real, threat of demons and disease.⁵⁹

53. P. Ryl. Copt. 104, section 4 (TM 98059; xi-xii CE) r, l. 11-17: “It is the mouth of the Lord Sabaoth that said this: Let no *jatfe* bite me, but let all *jatfe* on earth become stone before me, and all those upon the earth become stone and iron before me, for it is the mouth of the Lord Sabaoth that said these things, and the words of the Lord are true” (ταπρο μπῶς σαβαωθ τεπτασχε παι : δε нпертρεлаау нхатве локст анок алла наренхатве тнроу мпказ ωπε нωне нпаемто евол тнететрлхнпказ тнроу ωπε нөе ноүдне нноүпенипе нпаемтоү евол хетапро пῶς саваωθ теπτασхенаи дүω нрахе нлхоеис рнне не).

54. P. Kell. Copt. 56 5.2-7.5 (TM 128633; iv CE): “I adjure every poison by this oil that I will pour out, through the honoured name of the living God, the Lord Jesus, his Christ, the Nazarene, so that you may wipe off (?) the place where you have bitten” (†τῦρο ἡνάτογε νηι ρῆ πῆεζ εἴνατφῆζ μνοϋ ἀβολ ριτῆ πρ(η) εἴταῖηϋ ἡπνοүте ετοнῆ πχοι[с ι]ῆс πεφхῖс πпазωρεүс хекас ереқап ойна епталоксῖ). See also Vienna K 8686 (TM 91422; x CE), another spell for protection against wild, and in particular, venomous, animals; P. Mich. inv. 136, l. 176-182 (TM 92874; vi CE), to remove *jatfe* from a house; and Michigan 593 5.11-6.3 (TM 100021; v-vii CE), which contains a formula to heal the bites of *jatfe* and beasts (θηρίον).

55. Yale 1792 (TM 98049; vi-vii CE): “Christ was born on the twenty-ninth of Choiak (7 January), he came, and when he had come down upon the earth, he rebuked all the poison-spitting *jatfe*” (ταχхпо ἡпехс соүхоүтῖс ἡхаῖαεк аеи еаеи епеснт ехῖ пказ аеиπтне ннхатве нн речнехнатоү).

56. Used in Ianda 14 (TM 64868; v-vi CE), l. 15; P. Stras. Inv. WG. Kopt. 1, l. 14-15 (TM 382628; vi-vii CE); on the use of this psalm, see T. J. Kraus, “Psalm 90 der *Septuaginta*”, art. cit., p. 39-73; Sanzo, *Scriptural Incipits*, op. cit., p.40-45, 59-60, 106-120. As J. E. Sanzo notes (p. 106-107), the use of this text is in no way limited to Christian Egypt, and attestations of its use can be found in the Qumran documents, the New Testament, and material from the Cairo Genizah, to mention only a few examples.

57. F. L. Griffith, “Oxford Excavations in Nubia”, *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. 14 1927, p. 87, text n° 17.

58. *PGM* Christian 17 (v-vi CE), l. 15-16: ἡ ὄσα τυφλά δαιμόνια ἢ κο[φὰ ἢ ἄλ]αλα ἢ νοδὰ ακα ἢ οἰτο νόσημα κ·ὸι πονηρὸν συνάντημα. The text also includes the Lord’s prayer from Matthew 6.9-13.

59. See also *PGM* Christian 17 (TM 65256; vii-viii CE), an amulet to protect against “every sting of the devil’s beasts on the earth” (πᾶν δῆγμα τοῦ [δ]ιαβόλου θηρίων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, l. 5-6).

This conflation of demons and dangerous animals is echoed in literary texts, such as the story of the 7th-century bishop Pisentius, who, sleeping in a pagan tomb on the Theban mountain, was beseeched for intercession by a mummy, who briefly rose from the dead to describe hell as a gulf “more than a hundred cubits deep, filled with *jatfe*, each of which had seven heads and was covered with (?) scorpions, and there were mighty worms (*fmt*) of huge size... [and] round about [them] were gathered together wild beasts (*thērion*) of every kind”.⁶⁰ In a similar vein, Shenoute, the head of a monastic community in the Upper Egypt of the 4th to 5th centuries, described the hearts of heretics as being like the hiding-holes of serpents. He recounts several times what must have been a process familiar to his hearers, that of killing snakes trapped in their holes: unable to escape they are stabbed with sharp implements, and they spit poison in a futile attempt to defend themselves. In the same way, he says, the demons inside heretics can only writhe in pain as they are stabbed by the faith of true Christians, spitting out lies from the mouths of their human hosts.⁶¹ He describes how lamps must be burned at night when on the lookout for snakes which have stolen into the home, just as the teachings of the Church must illuminate the heart to avoid sin, and once these snakes have been caught and killed their bodies must be cast outside, just as sin, and by extension sinners, must be cast out.⁶²

Compare the discussion of the overlap between demons and animals in Christianity in I. S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, *op. cit.*, p. 162-163, 169-171, 180, 221-222.

60. Edition in É. Amélineau, “Un évêque de Keft au VII^e siècle”, *Mémoires présentés à l’Institut égyptien*, vol. 2, 1889, p. 408.11-409.7. Compare later Muslim accounts of a hell inhabited by scorpions as large as camels, one drop of whose venom could kill every fish in the ocean (J. W. Frembgen, “The Scorpion in Muslim Folklore”, *art. cit.*, p. 98-99).

61. *Let Our Eyes* fr. 1 6: “For when serpents (ροϋ) grow weak (ρ̄ο̄ωβ) from being stabbed inside of crevices (ρενωκολ), they can still spit out poison (ρελμοοϋ εβολ) at their attackers. Just so, when the unclean spirits (π̄νᾱ νακαθαρτων) grow weak from being stabbed with their attackers’ faith (πίστις) and their love (ἀγάπη) for Jesus, they can do nothing as they writhe from side to side except spit out lies and insults through the mouths of those whose hearts serve them as nests” (S. Emmel, “Shenoute of Atripe and the Christian Destruction of Temples in Egypt: Rhetoric and Reality”, in J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter (ed.), *From Temple to Church. Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, Leiden, Brill, 2008, p. 183, 191. Compare also n. 62, below.

62. *Is It Not Written*: “To slay a snake (ροϋ) you use a spear (μερεϋ) inside holes (ωκολ) or narrow places (ρενια εϋση), including confining conduits (βο) or other such places, to bring it out when you are going to pierce it with a sharp instrument of some sort such as you have made with which to kill it. You should rather slay sin with the commandment and teaching within our hearts in order to recognise our undisciplined impulses. And we take the snake out of those places when we would pierce its head (with the instrument) or its underside, and its vitals (?) or its guts would spill out. And when it is dead, we take it and throw it without the wall of our abode. And in the darkness you always burn lamps too until you catch the snake. But you should also keep instruction and teachings burning within your hearts until you capture sin and the darkness engendered by your ignorance. Furthermore, you always impart knowledge to people about the snake you caught, boasting you killed it. Instead, you ought to impart knowledge to an angel or to the angels about the sin you caught. Boast to them that you killed it. Contrarily, put the lamp aside and venture into the darkness to catch the snake, and if it does not devour you, in this manner you should also forsake instruction and teachings and conduct your life in the darkness engendered by your disobedience (π̄τογ̄η̄π̄τατ̄ωτ̄η̄)” (D. W. Young, “With Respect to the Fourth Work of Shenute’s Sixth Canon”, *Göttinger Miszellen*, vol. 179, 2000, p. 89-90, 98).

If it is common for venomous creatures – who can be easily seen and defended against – to stand in for hidden demons, theriomorphic depictions of demons themselves are less common, at least in textual magical material, although paintings and literary texts often show demons in animal or part-animal form.⁶³ Among the few known examples from the magical corpus are a 6th-century Greek amulet which describes a demon with the “feet of a wolf and the head of a frog”,⁶⁴ while another series of amulets from around the same period describes headless demons, in one case a headless dog (*kuōn akephalos*).⁶⁵ It is telling that, along with snakes and scorpions, dogs are the third specific category of animal against which magical texts offer protection; these might have been the guard or attack dogs owned by other humans, or else the feral dogs which are common in Egypt to this day.⁶⁶

If disease, demons, and venomous creatures were the dangers that the people of late antique Egypt sought protection against, it was these same afflictions that they wished upon their enemies. One bilingual Coptic-Arabic text curses its victim to “shame and suffering (?) and hatefulness and imprisonment and hunger and poverty, with no property”,⁶⁷ and the hatred of “everyone who sees him”.⁶⁸ As the litany of degradation reaches its height, it ends with the injunction “[let] the inside of his house fill with serpents (*drakōn*), snakes (*hōf*), and demons (*daimonion*)!”⁶⁹ – a curse which should remind us both of the house amulets in which the Artemesian scorpion protects against many of these same dangers, and Shenoute’s descriptions of real vigils held to catch

63. For examples see the discussion in E. O. Love, “Apa Baula and The Destroyer: The Embedding of Efficacy in Figural Amulets/Deposits from Roman and Early Islamic Egypt”, and “Crum’s Chicken’: Alpak, Demonised Donkeys, and Avianised Demons among the Figures of Demotic, Greek, and Coptic Magical Texts”, both in this volume.

64. *PGM* Christian 10 (VI CE), l. 12-13:.. το ἔχων πόδας λύ[κου, τοῦ δὲ] βατράχου τὴν κε[φαλὴν].

65. *PGM* Christian 15b, l. 4 (VI CE); cf. *PGM* Christian 15a, l. 13-14 (V-VI CE), which mentions a headless demon which is not explicitly stated to be a dog. Headless demons also appear in the *Testament of Solomon*, a magical manual in the form of a narrative (C. C. McCown, *The Testament of Solomon*, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1922, IX.1, rec. C X.3), and a deity called the headless one (ἀκέφαλος) recurs in the earlier Graeco-Egyptian magical texts; see A. L. Delatte, “Études sur la magie grecque. V. Ἀκέφαλος θεός”, *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, vol. 38, 1914, p. 189-249; K. Preisendanz, *Akephalos, der kopflose Gott*, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs, 1927.

66. London Oriental Manuscript 1013A, a spell against the dog of a specific person; cf. *PGM* I.115-116 (III CE) where a summoned angel offers protection from dogs, along with other carnivorous beasts (θηρες), and crawling creatures (έρπετά); *PDM* xiv.554-562 (TM 55955; III CE), a Demotic recipe to heal a dog bite, and P. Mich. inv. 4451a (IV-V CE) verso, l. 8-11, a Greek recipe for the same purpose invoking the angels Michael, Raphael and Misael (M. Zellmann-Rohrer, “Three Magical Papyri from the Michigan Collection”, *Zeitschrift für Papyri und Epigraphik*, vol. 194, 2015, p. 176-192, p. 180). On dogs in Egypt, compare A. Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 67-87. A. Mikhail recounts (p. 80, 92) the reports of 17th- and 19th-century visitors to Egypt who described packs of as many as fifty dogs who would follow the human inhabitants of the city through the streets and try to enter their houses, although he also notes that the Ottoman authorities cultivated them deliberately to eat the refuse from the streets, so it may not be possible to project similar numbers earlier in history.

67. P. Bad. V 123, l. 64-66 (TM 102087; IX CE ?): †ναβ νοϋωπιε μη οϋπινε μη οϋβατστο μη ρεωατεκω μη οϋμετρικε μη οϋμετεβειν ενλααϋ ναγκα.

68. P. Bad. V 123, l. 63-64: οϋωτ μη ναβναϋ ερωϋ εφμεστοϋ.

69. P. Bad. V 123, l. 78-79: ντεροϋν πεϋνι μοϋρ ντρακον ρι ρωϋ ρι δεμονιον.

snakes inside the home. The detailed nature of this curse also highlights a further role for animals; the curse is to take from the victim all of his property, leaving him “neither livestock (*tbne*) nor gold, nor silver, nor clothes, nor a house, down to the smallest thing”.⁷⁰ But these livestock are not simply property – the curse intends to “bring down upon the soul of NN and his house and his livestock, and his wife, and his children all devastation and all strife and all enmity”⁷¹ – that is, they appear in a list directly *after* a man’s soul and home, and *before* his own family,⁷² a phenomenon paralleled by Coptic letters in which the writers ask after the addressee, those with them, and “their animals”, listing their children afterwards or not at all.⁷³

The Coptic word used here – *tbne* – seems to refer to domestic quadrupeds: donkeys and horses kept primarily as beasts of burden,⁷⁴ camels as draft animals and as sources of wool, sheep and goats kept for their milk, wool, meat and skins, cattle kept as draft animals as well as for their milk, meat, and skins, and pigs, kept for meat only.⁷⁵ While it is difficult to be sure of the exact economic and social context of animal ownership in late antique Egypt, many families probably owned small numbers of them, particularly for their milk and their usefulness as beasts of burden, while others – the wealthy, or

70. P. Bad. V 123, l. 67-69: ⲥⲱ ⲛⲁⲃ ⲟⲩⲗⲉ ⲧⲉϥⲛⲏ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲗⲁⲧ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲗⲉϥϥⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲏ ϥⲁⲗⲣⲁⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲕⲉⲩⲉ ⲛⲟⲩϥⲛⲉ. For ϥⲉϥϥⲟⲩ, understand ⲗⲉⲃⲥⲟ (W. E. Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, *op. cit.*, p. 660a) rather than the “ripe fruit” (ⲟⲩⲧⲉⲗ ⲉϥϥⲟⲩ) of the editors.

71. P. Bad. V 123, l. 69-72: ⲁⲛⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲗⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲗⲉⲛ ⲧⲉⲗⲣⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲗⲁ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲛⲉϥⲛⲏ ⲛⲏ ⲛⲉϥⲧⲉϥⲛⲟⲩⲉ ⲛⲏ ⲧⲉⲃⲣⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲏ ⲛⲉϥϥⲛⲉ ⲛⲧⲁⲕⲟ ⲛⲏ ⲗⲓ ϥⲱϥ ⲛⲏ ⲗⲓ ⲃⲁϥⲟ ⲛⲏ ⲗⲓ ⲙⲉⲧⲗⲁⲗⲉ ⲛⲏ.

72. For another ritual intended to harm livestock, see Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 4.21-26 (TM 102268; x-xi CE), a recipe to afflict cows with ticks.

73. One of the fullest examples of these is in the practice letter MPER XVIII 162, l. 1-8 (TM 83168; vi-viii CE): “Firstly, I greet all of you. May the Lord bless all of you, men and animals (ⲧⲃⲛⲟⲟⲩ), and all your children and all their children and their (children)”; cf. MPER XVIII 158, 159, 160 (TM 83156, 83155, 83154; vi-viii CE); O. Vind. Copt. 288 (TM 84745; vii-viii CE); P. Theb. Copt. 36 (TM 84466; vii-viii CE); O. Frange 68 verso l.23-25 (TM 140990; viii CE); SB Kopt. IV 1778 (TM 92607; xi-xii CE), although in this last list the animals are mentioned after sons and daughters, but before all other possessions. Compare the expressions of concern for domestic animals from Greek papyri collected in C. Gorteman, “Sollicitude et amour pour les animaux dans l’Égypte gréco-romaine”, *Chronique d’Égypte*, vol. 32, 1957, p. 101-120.

74. For discussions of beasts of burden in, respectively, Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, see J. G. Manning, “A Ptolemaic Agreement Concerning a Donkey with an Unusual Warranty Clause. The Strange Case of P. Dem. Princ. 1 (inv. 7524)”, *Enchoria*, vol. 28, 2002/3, p. 46-61; R. Bagnall, “The Camel, the Wagon, and the Donkey in Later Roman Egypt”, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, vol. 22, p. 1-6.

75. Although direct evidence on its consumption is lacking, it seems likely that meat would have been a luxury for the majority of the Egyptian population, with the poorest perhaps eating it only rarely, the highest elites consuming it regularly, and the remainder of the population somewhere between; milk products may have been more common in the diet of peasants, and the meat of smaller animals such as pigeons (which could be kept by individuals at a low cost) and fish (which were abundant in the Nile) more common than that of larger quadrupeds such as cattle. For discussions, see I. S. Gilhus, *Animals Gods and Humans*, *op. cit.*, p. 16-20 and P. Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 16-17, 123-127 for the Roman world in general; S. Ikram, *Choice Cuts: Meat Production in Ancient Egypt*, Leuven, Peeters, 1995, p. 199-229 for the Pharaonic period; A. Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt*, *op. cit.*, p. 27-29 on later periods.

those who worked as herdsmen – would have possessed or been responsible for much larger flocks.⁷⁶

Amulets, and instructions for their creation, which have survived from late antique Egypt are almost wholly concerned with the protection, or healing, of humans, with a smaller but still significant number, as we have seen, for protecting households.⁷⁷ Amulets and rituals protecting *tbne* represent a still smaller, but nonetheless important, third group.⁷⁸ One 10th-century codex provides instructions for releasing a herd of livestock from sorcery (*hik*) performed against them,⁷⁹ while a longer invocation from an earlier example asks God to protect “men, women, children and livestock”,⁸⁰ and a third instructs the user to sprinkle blessed water over their house, animal enclosures, and (unspecified) other possessions in order to protect them from evil.⁸¹ Yet another recipe describes the invocation of a deity to find “either gold or garments, adornments or iron, either copper or livestock”,⁸² it is not clear whether these are lost possessions the user would retrieve, or treasures that they would discover, but it is notable that here we find domestic animals listed alongside precious metals.

The most interesting example of an amulet intended for an animal is a text produced by the monk Frange, who lived in an 18th Dynasty tomb on the west bank of Thebes in the early 8th century. This amulet consists of a limestone ostrakon, written on two faces with a text apparently adapted from an intercessory prayer found in the liturgy.⁸³

76. For a discussion of the economic importance of animals in pre-modern Egypt, see A. Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt, op. cit.*, p. 19-37. A. Mikhail notes in particular the importance of animals as “the heavy-lifters, stores of energy and long-distance transporters needed to power the early modern economy” (p. 20), and this role would have come into its own in Late Antique Egypt after the 3rd-century development identified by R. Bagnall, in which the use of animal-powered irrigation using wheels became an important part of the economy (R. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 18, 28-29, 50, 81; cf. A. G. López, *Shenoute of Atripe and the Uses of Poverty*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2013, p. 85). A. Mikhail also notes that in Ottoman Egypt “nearly all classes of rural society participated in... animal ownership” (p. 22-26) – from elites who might own dozens of animals, to peasant farmers who might own part-shares in individual donkeys.

77. A rare example of an amulet not fitting into one of these categories is provided by a recipe to protect ships at sea in P. Mich. 593 I.9.10-15.

78. Other examples not discussed here in detail include *Suppl. Mag.* II.92, l. 1-13 (TM 64588; IV-V CE), apparently an amulet or invocation to protect a horse, and P. Palau Rib. Copt. 5 (TM 749383), an amulet containing the incipits of the gospels, of Psalm LXX 90, and the Letter of Jesus to Abgar, followed by the command “heal these animals (τεβνιουγε)!”; the papyrus has holes in its corners which imply that it was nailed somewhere in sight of the animals it was to heal.

79. P. Heid. Kopt. 686, l. 270.

80. Anastasi 9 I r, l. 25-1v, l. 4; cf. p. 2r, l. 10, in which God is asked to remove the power of a curse buried anywhere in the house, in the livestock pen, the orchards, the fields, or the gardens.

81. P. Mich. 593 8.16-9.2 “For your house, and your (animal) enclosures (ḫbe), and all that belongs to you: recite it over some water and sprinkle your house and every place that belongs to you. No evil (neoooy) will befall you”.

82. P. Stras. Inv. Kopt. 550 verso (1), l. 23-26 (D. Tibet, “A Magical Request for Revelation”, in A. Boud’hors, A. Delattre, C. Louis and T. S. Richter (ed.), *Coptica Argentoratensia*, Paris, De Boccard, 2014, p. 133-141).

83. One version of the passage from the liturgy reads as follows: “Remember, O Lord, the safety of the men and the livestock. Remember, O Lord, the safety of this your sacred place, and

The text on one side reads: “Jesus Christ, son of the living God, protect the men of the monastery and the livestock, and bless them with the blessing of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Frange wrote this with his hand”.⁸⁴ The text on the other side reproduces the same prayer with minor differences.⁸⁵ A context for this amulet can be reconstructed from correspondence from Frange’s cell: Frange was often called upon to copy many texts of various types, and a related pair of texts attest that he was asked on occasion to send written amulets either to place in front of livestock,⁸⁶ or to attach to their bodies, tied around the neck of a mare in one letter.⁸⁷ Frange’s practice, drawing upon liturgical texts for protection, has parallels with that of using copies of Psalms as amulets for humans, and represents a phenomenon somewhat different to the more explicitly magical material, where deities are invoked in long formulae with *voces magicæ* and *kharaktēres*, although it clearly belongs to the same spectrum of private ritual practices.

Why would *tbnē* constitute a third category of beings who needed amulets – alongside humans and households? We can see hints of an answer in the texts which describe these animals, in which they are so often mentioned alongside homes, family members, and precious goods. Like other possessions, livestock had a clear, and particularly important, economic value; depending on their species, they could provide food, transport and labour, and they were the only possession – with the exception of enslaved humans – which could reproduce themselves. But, like human beings, and unlike gold and silver, domestic animals were vulnerable biological beings, who could not be safely locked away or hidden in chests, and were therefore subject to disease, violence, and the malevolent attacks of demons and magicians; the victory of these hostile forces, and the death of animals, could ruin families.⁸⁸ Livestock were thus both vitally important to the livelihoods of many late antique Egyptians, and particularly vulnerable, but, unlike the harvest and the Nile flood on which it depended, animals were the property of individuals, and so, while prayers for these former were a part

all places and all monasteries of our orthodox fathers” (F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western. Vol. 1. Eastern Liturgies*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1896, p. 157, l. 20-23); cf. H. Junker and W. Schubart, “Ein griechisch-koptisches Kirchengebet”, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. 40, 1902/3, p. 27, n° 18.

84. O. Crum ST 18 (TM 111157; VIII CE).

85. The prayer on the other side reads: “Jesus Christ, the son of the living God; you shall bless this monastery with every blessing that is written in the scriptures; have pity on us in love, O Lord, Jesus Christ”.

86. O. Frange 190 (TM 141112; VII CE). The recto reads: “My brother Azarias. Since you have written to me, ‘Write a big ostrakon (πλάξ) and send it to me so I can place it in front of the animals (τῶν ἰσθῶν)’ , look, I have sent it, my good brother”.

87. O. Frange 191 (TM 141113; VIII CE). The text reads: “Please put this cord on your mare, and tie the blessings on her neck so that the Lord will bless her and watch over her for you”. Although the value of a horse might be assumed to vary considerably depending on its age and physical condition, the evidence from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods suggests that horses were fairly expensive animals (C. Boutantin, *Terres cuites et culte domestique. Bestiaire de l’Égypte gréco-romaine*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, p. 166-168), and A. Mikhail notes that horses were a rare marker of elite status in Ottoman Egypt (*The Animal in Ottoman Egypt, op. cit.*, p. 23); this may suggest that Frange’s client was relatively wealthy.

88. See for example P. Oxy. I 134 (TM 20773; 569 CE) and P. Oxy. XXVII 2479 (TM 36070; VI CE), two petitions written by farmers ruined by the deaths of their animals, discussed in A. G. López, *Shenoute of Atripe and the Uses of Poverty, op. cit.*, p. 85-86.

of communal rituals,⁸⁹ the protection of livestock was ultimately a private concern in which magic might play an important role.

As we might expect in a society which owed its existence to a river, fish likely formed an important part of the Egyptian diet,⁹⁰ and the unpredictability of the act of fishing likewise attracted further magical solutions. Two surviving manuscripts give instructions for using magic in fishing; in the first a mixture of dove droppings and the juice of aloe is placed in the water, apparently to attract or intoxicate fish so that a man may catch them in a net.⁹¹ The second is an amulet for an individual named Severus, which calls upon the archangel Raphael to bring “every species of fish for me [to the place] where your image and your amulets will be, just as a shepherd collects his sheep [in] their sheepfold”.⁹² The angel’s status here as a herdsman of wild animals comes from the *Book of Tobit*, where Raphael helps the protagonist Tobias catch a fish, whose heart, liver and gall are later burnt to exorcise a demon.⁹³

Animal Materia

While the rituals we have looked at so far treat animals as either the beneficiaries or (more often) victims of magic, they also play a less visible, but nonetheless significant, role as ingredients in the recipes themselves. As we have noted, magic was stereotypically associated with sacrifice – animal or human – an association that was perhaps strengthened with the rise of Christianity, which, unlike earlier forms of religion in the Mediterranean, did not feature ongoing sacrifice as a central act.⁹⁴ The most dramatic illustration of this link is found in the hagiographical *Life of Severus*,

89. A prayer for the Nile Flood is attested as early as the 7th century, and it later became one of the three season-specific intercessions included in the anaphora. Early attestations of such prayers include P. Oxy. LXXV 5024 (TM 128953) and MPER XVIII 197r (TM 82855; vii CE); for the more recent Bohairic recension of this text, see ‘A. al-M. Şalīb (ed.), *πικρὸν κτε πνευχολογιὸν εὐοῦλαβ* (= *Euchologion*), Cairo, 1902, p. 589-594, and F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, *op. cit.*, p. 156, 157, 167, 168 for a version translated into English. Compare the *Encomium of Eustathius*, in which Michael and the other angels pray outside the veil of the Father for three days and three nights in the month of Paoni (beginning June 6) for the rise of the Nile flood (E. A. Wallis Budge, *Saint Michael the Archangel: Three Encomiums*, London, Kegan Paul, 1894, p. 90-91, 113-115).

90. See H. Kroll, “Animals in the Byzantine Empire: An Overview of the Archeozoological Evidence”, *Archeologia Medievale*, vol. 29, 2012, p. 110, who notes on the basis of faunal remains that “freshwater fish played a major role [in the diet of those who lived] on the Nile”; cf. I. S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, *op. cit.*, p. 18-20.

91. Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 1.6-11.

92. London Oriental Manuscript 6795 (TM 100018; vi-vii CE), l. 19-23: *ἡ ἁγία εὐαγγελία καὶ ἐροῦν ἡ γενος ἡμῶν ἡ τῆς ἐπιπέρας ἐπερὶ περὶ τῶν ἡμῶν νεκρῶν καὶ νεκρῶν (ἡμῶν) ἡ [ἀγαθῶν] ἐπερὶ τῶν ἡμῶν νεκρῶν ἐροῦν ἡμῶν ἐπερὶ τῶν ἡμῶν*.

93. The episode in question is found in Tobit 6.1-9, 6.16-18, 8.1-3; the passages in 6.7-9 are remarkably reminiscent of a “magical” recipe. Explicit reference to the book of Tobit may be found in l. 5-11 of the manuscript (London Oriental Manuscript 6795). Reference is also made to another famous Biblical fishing incident, the *Miraculous Draught of Fish*, in which the post-resurrection Jesus helps his apostles to catch 153 fish (John 21.1-14; cf. Luke 5.1-11).

94. For ideas about human sacrifice in magic, cf. K. Dosoo, “Circe’s Ram: Animals in Greek Magic”, in J. Kindt (ed.), *Animals in Ancient Greek Religion*, London, Routledge, 2020, p. 273-278.

where a group of would-be magicians attempt to invoke a demon for a love spell by sacrificing an enslaved Ethiopian in a hippodrome in Beirut,⁹⁵ but Augustine of Hippo also claims that while working as a teacher of rhetoric in Carthage a *haruspex* offered to help him win a poetry prize by sacrificing animals (*animantes*) to gain the favour of demons.⁹⁶ In fact, animal sacrifice is relatively rare even in the corpus of “pagan” magic from Roman Egypt; instead offerings of resinous incenses – frankincense, myrrh, mastic, storax, and so on – predominate,⁹⁷ and offerings (*thusia*) in the Christian magical papyri consist almost entirely of these aromatics, with the occasional addition of stranger items such as hair, bitumen, or pepper.⁹⁸ The offering of incense, like the use of anointing, and unlike animal sacrifice, remained an important part of ritual in Christian churches, and so would have had no distinctly “pagan” overtones. There is nonetheless at least one apparent example of clear animal sacrifice – in an exorcistic ritual in which the ritualist is instructed to sacrifice six doves, and presumably burn their bodies along with an offering of frankincense, storax, stacte, cinnamon and rose oil.⁹⁹ Doves – or pigeons, since they refer here to the same bird – are used as sacrificial animals in earlier magical texts,¹⁰⁰ and the fact that they were small creatures raised for meat in large numbers in Egypt would have meant they were readily available.¹⁰¹

But while the sacrifice of animals might have been relatively rare, perhaps due to a Christian taboo against the practice, the idea that parts of their body might have inherent powers that could be harnessed in rituals did not go away so easily, and so

95. M.-A. Kugener, *Vie de Sévère par Zacharie* (Patrologia Orientalis, vol. 2.3), Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1904, p. 58-59. The would-be magicians are frustrated when the Ethiopian escapes.

96. *Confessions* 4.2.3.

97. See the discussion in K. Dosoo and T. Galoppin, “Animals in Graeco-Egyptian Magical Practice”, in this volume.

98. See, for example, the offerings in P. Bad. V 137 86, l. 44-46 (TM 99576; 967 CE): white male myrrh and frankincense; London Oriental Manuscript 6794, l. 60-61: male frankincense, male mastic, cassia; London Oriental Manuscript 6795, l. 52-54 (TM 100017; VI-VII CE): calamus extract, male mastic, frankincense; London Oriental Manuscript 6796 [4], l. 46-48 (TM 100020; VI-VII CE): male frankincense, male mastic, gourd, storax, calamus extract.

99. Rossi’s Gnostic Tractate (TM 98062; date uncertain): “Offering: Frankincense; storax; stacte; a nest, sacrifice the six doves; cinnamon; rose oil; burn (?) (them on) charcoal of white wood, olive wood” (ΘΥΣΙΑ ΛΙΒΑΝΟΣ ΣΤΗ(ΡΑΞ) ΣΤΑΚ(ΤΗ) ΜΑΡ ΑΥΤΗΣΟΟΥ ΠΩΡΟΜΠΕ ΚΙΝΑΜΩΜΗΝ ΝΕΣ ΝΟΥΕΡΤ [ΘΥ]ΒΞ ΚΑΡΒΩΝΕ ΞΗΛ[ΟΝ] ΗΛΕΥΚΟΝ ΞΗΛΟΝ ΠΧΟΕΙΤ).

100. See the discussion in K. Dosoo and T. Galoppin, “Animals in Graeco-Egyptian Magical Practice”, in this volume.

101. On the eating of pigeons in Egypt, best attested in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, see W. J. Darby, P. Ghalioungui and L. Grivetti, *Food: The Gift of Osiris*, vol. 1, London, Academic Press, 1977, p. 286-291; A. J. Mills, “Research in the Dakhleh Oasis”, in L. Krzyzaniak and M. Kobusiewicz (ed.), *Origin and Early Development of Food-Producing Cultures in North-Eastern Africa*, Poznan, Poznan Archaeological Museum, 1984, p. 205-210; E. M. Husselman, “The Dovecotes of Karanis”, *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 84, 1953, p. 81-91; M. Cobiانchi, “Ricerche di ornitologia nei papiri dell’Egitto greco-romano”, *Aegyptus*, vol. 16.1/2, 1936, p. 94-121. One indication of the importance of pigeon in the diet of normal Egyptians in the 5th century may be found in the writings of Shenoute of Atripe, who lists the food given to refugees sheltered at his monastery; while the main foodstuffs listed are vegetables (boiled vegetables, lentils, bread, wheat, barley, grapes, fruit, radishes) or of vegetable origin (olive oil, wine, vinegar), pigeons are the only meat mentioned, alongside eggs and cheese (*Continuing to Glorify the Lord*, translation in A. G. López, *Shenoute of Atripe and the Uses of Poverty*, *op. cit.*, p. 58).

we find several rituals where animal body parts – animals who in many cases would be by necessity dead – are used in burnt offerings. In one bilingual Coptic-Arabic manuscript, the hair of animals is frequently burnt along with incense – sheep’s wool¹⁰² or boar bristles¹⁰³ in love spells, wool again in a curse.¹⁰⁴ This same papyrus uses pig brains in another of the love spells,¹⁰⁵ and also in a separation spell,¹⁰⁶ while a different text prescribes the burning of storax and the bones of a falcon for a spell to encourage customers to frequent a shop.¹⁰⁷

If the use of these materials seems at first strange, it can perhaps be explained by looking at the rhetoric and practice of late antique Egyptian magic more generally. “Burning” in spoken invocations is often thought of as a kind of compulsion, which can be transferred from real offering fires to the bodies of humans and deities, and from one object to another. Thus, for example, one early Coptic invocation commands that “[as] the bones of Apis and Isis and Osiris are burned.... Abrasax will not quit the midst of the flame, urging her [the victim of the love spell] on”,¹⁰⁸ and an earlier Greek love spell addresses myrrh burned in an offering, saying “as I burn you up... so burn the brain of her whom I love, NN”.¹⁰⁹ Thus the burning of hair or brains in the Coptic spells may be understood as working through a kind of compulsion – a force compelling victims to fall in love, separate, or even to go shopping – which works through fire applied literally to animal and resinous materia, and transferred magically to the victims. As the Greek example demonstrates, the brain, as the seat of consciousness, is one obvious target of this compulsive fire, but hair too plays an important role as an intimately connected part of the body, which was nonetheless easily removed and manipulated; the hair of the victim of a spell is used in at least one Coptic ritual, and played an important role in magical practice in the Roman world, as elsewhere.¹¹⁰ But there is an interesting blurring here – the body parts are not those of the spell’s victim, but rather belong to an animal, a victim of another sort, who seems to be understood as standing in for the human target. The animal’s hair, brain, or bones become those of the human, and perhaps the choice of animal in some way represented the desired or actual qualities of the human for which they stood – docile like a sheep or shameless like a pig. Practicality may again have played a role here – animals were more readily accessible, and more vulnerable, than humans – it would be possible to remove and

102. P. Bad. V 123, l. 116-124.

103. P. Bad. V 123, l. 1-5, 116-124.

104. P. Bad. V 123, l. 52-84.

105. P. Bad. V 123, l. 116-124.

106. P. Bad. V 123, l. 85-102.

107. Moen 3 (TM 100007; IX-XI CE) flesh side l. 24.

108. P. Mil. Vogl. Copt. 16 C1 l. 4-15: σοῦσαρτε ρανκөөс н̄ραπε м̄н̄ н̄се̄ н̄н̄ оуцире н̄нетсоте ло ескаоте

επρη н̄н̄х̄αλλοογ λω ескаоте εποορ н̄нетс̄ιμογт ло ρηт̄н̄ηте н̄п̄κωρ[т] н̄επ̄κωρт ло εβογom н̄са̄ п̄ωηт̄εт̄ηρ н̄неγ̄λο ε[γс]αрте ρанкөөс н̄раπε м̄н̄ н̄се̄ н̄ н̄ оуцире н̄авр̄са̄з ло ρηт̄н̄ηте н̄п̄κωρт εс̄ωρη н̄се̄с̄...

109. PGM IV.1496-1595 (IV CE): ὡς ἐγὼ σε κατακάω καὶ δυνατὴ εἶ οὗτω ἦς φιλῶ, τῆς δεῖνα κατὰκασον τὸν ἐγκέφαλον.

110. Cologne T 10 (TM 99587; VI-VII CE), l. 31. For the use of hair in earlier spells of love and compulsion, see e.g., PGM xiv.1182-1187, PGM CXVII fr. 10, and C. A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 7-8.

manipulate integral body parts such as the brains or bones of animal that would be impossible in the case of a human.¹¹¹

Given the centrality of writing to magical rituals, the production of inks with which applied texts were to be written could be highly significant. Ink in the ancient world was generally produced by mixing the soot produced by burning substances with a liquid medium, and in magical rituals the constituents of this soot were often specified; usually they used the same kinds of resins burned in offerings, and at times precisely the same combination of ingredients as those used as offerings in the same rituals.¹¹² But in other cases blood, that substance which is intimately tied to both human and animal life, is used as an ink, alone or mixed with other substances.¹¹³

In Coptic spells, the blood of white dove is especially common, and apparently always in rituals for positive purposes: to gain power,¹¹⁴ favour,¹¹⁵ or love,¹¹⁶ to find treasure,¹¹⁷ to bring customers to a shop,¹¹⁸ or to gain a good singing voice.¹¹⁹ None of the texts are explicit about the purpose of using the blood of white doves, but, as we have noted, they are birds which would have been well known and readily available; dove-cotes filled with pigeons would have been a common sight in late antique Egypt,¹²⁰

111. Cf. C. A. Faraone, “Animals-Effigies in Ancient Curses: The Role of Gender, Age and Natural Behavior in their Selection,” *Mediterraneo Antico*, vol. 22, 2019, p. 289-315, and K. Dosoo and T. Galoppin, “Animals in Graeco-Egyptian Magical Practice”, in this volume.

112. As in the case of *PGM XIII* (iv CE), l. 133-134, 227-228.

113. For older examples, see for example *PDM* Suppl. 40-60 (iii CE; TM 64218), a dream-sending ritual in Demotic using the blood of a hoopoe to write out the formula, *PGM VII.222-249* (IV-V CE; TM 60204), a Greek dream-oracle using the blood of a dove and a crow to draw a figure of the god Bes on the ritualist’s hand, and P. Leiden I 348 n° 13, col. 6 l. 4-col. 8 l. 7 (19th Dyn., XIII-XII BCE), a spell against a headache which uses the blood of a fish to draw a figure of Re on a bandage over which the spell is spoken (J. F. Borghouts, *The Magical Texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348*, Leiden, Brill, 1971, p. 20-22).

114. Cf. London Oriental Manuscript 6796 [2, 3] verso, l. 112-115 (TM 100019; vi-vii CE).

115. P. Bad. V 123, l. 103-115; Heidelberg Kopt. 686 p. 14.253.

116. London Hay 10414 verso, l. 17-21 (σνοϥ/σναϥ ρερονπε ρλεγκον). Damage to the papyrus makes it difficult to be certain that the blood is to be used as ink, but this seems to be the most reasonable reading of the text.

117. Cairo 45060, l. 52-61 (TM 100016; vi-vii CE).

118. P. Heid. Inv. Kopt. 685 p. 17, l. 14-16. The text reads σνοϩ ελεγκον, which the original editor understands as “limpid blood”. It seems likely, perhaps, that the copyist intended “blood of a white dove” (σνοϩ ρερονπε ρλεγκον) but was unable to fit it into the small space left by the images which surround the instructions. The editor also understands this text to be related to a spell written in a script based on Arabic above the image (for which cf. V. Porter, “The Use of the Arabic Script in Magic,” in M. C. A. Macdonald (ed.), *The Development of Arabic as a Written Language*, Oxford, Archaeopress, 2010, p. 131-140). It seems more likely to me, however, that the ingredients in this section relate to the following invocation, a “gathering” or business spell; the script may be intended to be copied to create an applied text. This interpretation may be strengthened by the mention of *athelikon* water (μαου ραεελικον, l. 10-12) both here and in another spell for good business (London Hay 10414 verso, l. 1-2); see M. Meyer, *The Magical Book of Mary and the Angels* (P. Heid. Inv. Kopt. 685): *Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996, p. 40-41, 98-101. On *athelikon* water, see J. Drescher, “Two Coptic Magical Ingredients”, *Bulletin de la Société d’archéologie copte*, vol. 1, 1958, p. 59-60.

119. Yale 1791 (front), l. 1-11 (TM 100011; vi-vii CE).

120. See n. 101 above.

and they are one of the most commonly depicted animals in art from the period.¹²¹ Their explicit associations are plentiful: in Graeco-Egyptian religion doves were associated with Aphrodite and the moon goddess, and they are used in several magical rituals connected to these deities,¹²² while in the Christian period the dove had both erotic associations from its appearance in the *Song of Songs*, where the writer calls his lover “my companion, my beautiful dove”,¹²³ and religious associations with both the Holy Spirit¹²⁴ and the Virgin Mary.¹²⁵ These associations, and the ready availability of pigeons to bleed, may be the reason for its popularity in erotic and other positive rituals.

By contrast, the blood of a heterogeneous range of other animals is used for rituals with more negative purposes: bat’s blood in a ritual for deception,¹²⁶ the blood of a hoopoe and a black dog or a mountain raven to destroy relationships,¹²⁷ the blood of an unidentified male animal or a frog to cause destruction.¹²⁸ There are a few common threads we can perhaps suggest here – some of these animals (the dog, the raven, the bat) are dark in colour, in contrast to the positively charged white dove, and in contrast to this feminine bird, others – the male animal and the hoopoe – may be considered masculine;¹²⁹ the blood of another stereotypically feminine animal – the vulture – is,

121. See L. Evans, “Animals in Coptic Art”, *Göttinger Miszellen*, vol. 232, 2012, p. 69.

122. For example, *PGM* IV.2241-2358, 2891-2942 (TM 64343; iv CE).

123. *Song of Songs* 2.10, cf. 2.14 (“my good dove”), 5.2 (“my perfect dove”).

124. See, e.g., the account of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove in Matthew 3.13-17, Mark 1.9-11, Luke 3.21-23, John 1.32.

125. In magical texts, see for example Leiden, Anastasi n° 9: “Mary, the true dove” (ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ ⲧⲉⲃⲣⲟⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲉ; p. 14v, l. 16-17); T. Vat. Copt. 7 (TM 99591; vii CE): “Mary, the beautiful dove” (ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ ⲧⲉⲃⲣⲟⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲧⲓⲛⲉⲱⲥ, l. 30). For a discussion of the symbolism of the dove, see I. S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, op. cit., p. 173.

126. Cairo 45060, l. 29-31. The word for “deception” (ⲉⲗⲗⲁⲣⲟ, l. ⲉⲗⲗⲁⲣⲟ) is somewhat ambiguous, since the title only says that it is “concerning” (ⲉⲧⲃⲉ) deception; if “deception” is the correct interpretation, it could equally be a spell against deception – in the rest of the text, spells may be “concerning” favour (ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲟⲩⲭⲁⲣⲓⲥ, l. 28) or “concerning” (i.e. against) eye disease (ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲟⲩⲕⲁⲕⲃⲁⲗ, l. 31). Here I understand it to mean “to cause” deception, since we might expect a spell against deception to be more explicit: “for revealing deception”, or something similar.

127. Leiden F 1964/4.14 verso, l. 16-17 (xi CE): “A separation: write with blood of a mountain raven” (ⲟⲩⲧⲱⲣⲕ : ⲉⲃⲟⲗ : ⲉⲣ(ⲁⲫⲉ) ⲛⲥⲛⲁⲓⲕ ⲛⲁⲃⲱⲕ ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲩ); verso l. 18-19: “A hatred in the midst of the man: write with blood of a hoopoe and blood of a black dog upon hide” (ⲟⲩⲛⲁⲥⲧⲉ : ⲉⲛ ⲧⲓⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲡⲣⲱⲛⲉ : ⲉⲣ(ⲁⲫⲉ) ⲛⲥⲛ[ⲟⲩ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲁⲕ]ⲟⲩⲛⲁⲧⲓ ⲉⲓⲥⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣ ⲛⲕⲁⲛⲉ : ⲉⲓⲭⲱ ⲡⲁⲗⲁⲣ). For publication, see M. Green, “A Late Coptic Magical Text from the Collection of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden”, *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, vol. 67, 1987, p. 29-43 and Id., “Additional notes on the Coptic Magical Text Leiden F 1964/4.14”, *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, vol. 68, 1988, p. 113-115.

128. Leiden F 1964/4.14 l. 6: “A destruction: write in blood of a frog” (ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲕⲟ: ⲉⲣ(ⲁⲫⲉ) ⲛⲥⲛⲁⲓⲕ ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲩⲣ); verso 7: “A destruction: Write with blood of a male... on a wooden board” (ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲕⲟ : ⲉⲣ(ⲁⲫⲉ) ⲉⲓ ⲥⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲗⲥⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩⲧⲓ ⲉⲡⲓⲛⲁⲗ).

129. The association of the hoopoe is unclear; for a brief discussion, see K. Dosoo and T. Galoppin, “Animals in Graeco-Egyptian Magical Practice”, in this volume. The word itself (ⲕⲁⲕⲟⲩⲛⲁⲧ; W. E. Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 102) could be either masculine or feminine in Coptic, though in Greek the Egyptian loanword is masculine (ⲕⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩⲟⲩⲫⲁⲥ, LSJ, s. v. p. 986). As noted below (n. 130), the blood of a vulture is used to write in a healing ritual, and the hoopoe is, according to one Greek magical papyrus the male vulture (ⲅⲣⲡⲁⲗⲉⲕⲧⲱⲣ; *PGM* II.18), so it may have been understood as the inverse of the female and positively signified vulture.

like the dove, used for positive purposes in one healing spell.¹³⁰ Thus we have a series of linked dichotomies – positive/negative, love/hate, healing/harming, white/black, female/male – which might be manipulated in the selection of the ink with which to write applied texts. It is interesting that while we have many recipes which call for the use of human blood,¹³¹ these are generally more specific: apparently normal human blood was insufficiently determined, and so instead menstrual blood,¹³² or the blood from specific body parts is required, while the blood of non-human animals almost always gains its power by virtue of the species from which it comes.

Blood is not the only fluid used in writing practices: one ritual uses the milk of a sheep mixed with mastic to write an amulet against hostile magic,¹³³ and we can see here both the inherent power of a substance which comes, like blood, from within the animal body, and the nutritive-protective power of a liquid intended to strengthen vulnerable infants at work here. Stranger, though, is the use of the crop-milk of doves; described in-text as “the stinking water regurgitated by pigeons”,¹³⁴ this is a fatty secretion produced in the throat-lining, or “crop”, of many birds, and regurgitated by them to feed infants. It is used twice in love spells,¹³⁵ and once in a curse,¹³⁶ in each case to erase a text which has been written during the ritual. The erasure of text from applied objects seems at first counter-intuitive: since its function is to materially embody the spell, erasing it might seem to undo its magic – but we must remember that the act of writing was not a mundane act of communication, but rather a ritual whose performance was at once functional in itself, and, to the extent that it was an act of communication, communication with divine beings whose literacy was not limited to the merely visible.¹³⁷ We might imagine that to erase text in the right way was thus to hide it from mortal eyes, but leave the now secret artefact intact, and perhaps even more powerful, while the liquid itself had now have taken on its power and be used to anoint the objects of the ritual.¹³⁸ The use of crop-milk for this purpose, however, is difficult to explain, and probably depends on some association which may be impossible to recover.

130. Heidelberg Kopt. 686, l. 254. The word used, *noṗri*, can be grammatically masculine or feminine in Coptic, but is etymologically feminine, deriving from the older *nr.t*. The vulture was associated in Pharaonic Egypt with a number of female deities, among them Mut and Nekhbet, and this association continues in Roman-era magical texts such as *PGM VII.756-794* (l. 780), where the vulture is one of the symbols of the moon goddess. Horapollo (*Hieroglyphica* 1.11.3-4) claims that all vultures are female.

131. Menstrual blood: P. Bad. V 139, l. 48 (curse; TM 99609; x CE); P. Bad. V 142, l. 22 (curse/separation spell; TM 102079; xi CE); P. Bad. V 123, l. 1 (love spell), 25/26 (separation spell), 50 (spell to end love [?]), 82 (curse), 89 (separation spell), 101 (separation spell); blood from a finger: BKU I 2, l. 9 (love spell; TM 105606; vii-viii CE).

132. On menstrual blood in Coptic magic, see M. Preininger, “Blood in Coptic Magical Texts and Beyond,” in B. Mathieu, C. Audouit and E. Panaite (ed.), *Les fluides corporels en Égypte et au Proche-Orient anciens, Montpellier 5-7 September 2019* (forthcoming).

133. P. Bad. V 133, l. 2.

134. P. Bad. V 123, l. 2, 82, 117.

135. P. Bad. V 123, l. 1-5, 1316-124.

136. P. Bad. V 123, l. 52-84.

137. Compare P. Bad. V 137 (TM 99576; 967 CE), which uses olive oil to wash writing from a sherd of pottery (l. 1-8).

138. See, for example, Gieben Copt. 1 (TM 140205; ix CE), in which an image is washed from its support with oil which is then used to anoint the face to give grace (l. 12).

Alongside the use of their fluids to write and erase writing, parts of animal's bodies might be used as writing supports for applied texts: gazelle vellum used to write love or separation spells,¹³⁹ camel bones used for a curse.¹⁴⁰ On one hand, the use of skin or bones for writing is not restricted to magic – parchment was a common support in this period, especially for valuable manuscripts, and bones, though far less common, were used for objects as mundane as accounts.¹⁴¹ The use of gazelle vellum in particular may reflect a demand for high-quality materials, paralleling instructions to use high-quality papyrus in earlier texts.¹⁴² But bones of less usual animals, such as vultures,¹⁴³ are prescribed in older ritual texts as writing surfaces, and the use of animal bones is found alongside the use of human bones,¹⁴⁴ a far less common support. Here it seems that the practical value of bones or skin as writing surfaces is combined with the recurrent sense we see of objects of animal origin as being charged with a particular power, the power of a living or once-living creature, and its death.

Animal parts could be used in a variety of other ways where the principle is often more difficult to discern, even if we can glimpse traces of the kinds of principles and dichotomies mentioned above. At times these involve anointing, with animal materia used alongside or instead of the more usual oil: the gall of a black sheep rubbed on a man's penis to ensure the fidelity of his wife,¹⁴⁵ a bridegroom's face anointed with fish blood to bind him,¹⁴⁶ the innards of a lizard and a bat mixed with oil used to anoint the face of someone to be driven away.¹⁴⁷ Others make use of depositions – materia buried at the door of a house alongside or instead of an applied text in exorcistic (ash from

139. P. Bad. V 123, l. 27, 46, 105.

140. Cairo A and B (TM 99589; ix-xi CE); see also T. S. Richter, "Markedness and Unmarkedness in Coptic Magical Writing", in M. de Haro Sanchez (ed.), *Écrire la magie dans l'Antiquité – Scrivere la magia nell'Antichità. Proceedings of the International Workshop (Liège, October 13-15, 2011)*, Liège, Presses universitaires de Liège, 2015, n° 188 in the checklist on p. 108; cf. Moen 596 (TM 104941; vi-vii CE), an amulet written on the bone of an unspecified creature.

141. Documentary texts from Egypt written on bone include accounts: P. Dietrich Knochenstuecke 1 & 2 (TM 169118, 169120; both ix-xi CE, Arabic); lists of names: SB I 442 (TM 40435; i-vi CE, Greek), SB I 443 (TM 40436; i-vi CE, Greek), SB XVIII 13957 (TM 33040; iv-vii CE, Greek), P. Cair. Arab. 255 (TM 169704; viii-ix CE, Arabic); P. Jahn 2 (TM 106497; viii CE, Arabic), a letter, and P. BM inv. 70783 (TM 394859), which contains an epistolary formula and is perhaps a practice letter.

142. In the Greek magical papyri, for instance, there are regular instructions to write on "hieratic" (ἱερατικόν) papyri, referring to one of the highest qualities of papyrus produced in Egypt; see, for example *PGM* I.8, 233; *PGM* II.60-61; *PGM* IV.2068, 2363, 2392, 2512, 3142; *PGM* V.303, 380-381; *PGM* VII.412-413, 581-582, 969-670; *PGM* XIc.1; *PGM* XIXb.4-5; *PGM* XXXVI.70-72, 101. For a discussion of papyrus qualities, see S. H. Aufrère, "La fabrication du papyrus égyptien et son exportation", in Id. (ed.), *Encyclopédie religieuse de l'Univers végétal: Croyances phytoreligieuses de l'Égypte ancienne*, vol. III, Montpellier, Publications de l'université Paul-Valéry – Montpellier 3, 2005, p. 103-117.

143. Coffin Texts, Spell 83b, probably the rubric for Spell 84 "Becoming the (Serpent) Nehebkau in the Realm of the Dead".

144. Florence 5645 (TM 99588, date unclear), written on a human rib, and Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UC32763a-b (TM 874288; vii CE?), written on a human skull.

145. Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 4.18-20.

146. Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 1.6-10.

147. Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 3.21-24.

a rabbit, the bones of a black dog and black horses),¹⁴⁸ separation (the hair of a pig and the blood of a hoopoe),¹⁴⁹ or love spells (a bat or froth from the mouth of a black horse).¹⁵⁰ Yet another type of practice involves the ingestion of animal substances – in the creation of one love potion the blood from the right ear of a cow is mixed with the ash of tamarisk, the hair of the would-be lover, and another liquid, and drunk by (presumably) the victim.¹⁵¹ If the significance of this specific material is, again, difficult to decipher, the connection between the blood from the ears of bovines and love seems secure; another manuscript prescribes that an applied text be written using this blood as ink.¹⁵²

The use of animals in magic shades, of course, into the use of animals in medicine, although the line between medicine and magic in this context is almost impossible to draw. One text contains prescriptions including fat from a sow mixed with honey to treat anal sores, calf marrow used to treat constipation, the (powdered?) horn of a black sheep mixed with urine and applied to skin-disease with an ibis-feather, and the blood of bats and shrimps applied to swollen eyelids when the moon is waning.¹⁵³ If recipes of this type seem to imply to us naturalistic mechanisms with principles closer to our conceptions of medicine than magic, the impossibility of maintaining a strict division between these is more obvious in other examples from the same collection. One prescription to heal a woman with pain in her womb instructs her to squat over a fire with the burning fat of a cow and the hair of an old woman,¹⁵⁴ clearly drawing upon the widely circulated Mediterranean idea that the womb was itself an animal which might try to escape from its proper place, and had to be driven up into or enticed downwards within the body by good and bad odours – hair being a typical substance, chosen for the bad smell it produced when burned,¹⁵⁵ while other texts from the same codex prescribe spoken formulae or the wearing of written amulets to treat disease.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, a papyrus formulary found in the cell of a Theban monk contains a disturbing ritual to heal eye disease, in which a sparrow is caught, has its eyes filled with vinegar, and then cut out of its head before being freed, apparently transferring and then removing the eye-pain (along with the eyes!); again the ritualist takes advantage

148. Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 3.15-20.

149. Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 4.1-2.

150. P. Yale inv. 1791 front l. 2-4: “Offering: bitumen (ἀσπαρτον, *l.* ἄσφαλτον), froth from the mouth of a completely black horse (οὐρτο ἡκάμη τηρῆ), and a bat (οὐβινῶλα). Bury it at the woman’s door”.

151. Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 2.1-5.

152. Leiden F 1964/4.14 verso l. 9: “Desire: Write (with) the blood belonging to cows, from his left ear, on a bone” (οὐωω : γρ[αφε] πεσναϛ ναροου ρετ πεφμααχε νβαναρε : ευχ[ος]).

153. P. Mich. inv. 136, l. 39-40.

154. P. Mich. inv. 136, l. 161-165.

155. On this concept see J.-J. Aubert, “Threatened Wombs: Aspects of Ancient Uterine Magic”, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, vol. 30, 1989, p. 421-449; C. A. Faraone, “Magical and Medical Approaches to the Wandering Womb in the Ancient Greek World”, *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 30.1, 2011, p. 1-32.

156. See e.g., P. Mich. inv. 136, l. 10-17 (an amulet to deal with gout), l. 110-114 (a spoken formula to stop bleeding).

of the differential status of human patient and animal substitute to carry out an act – the removal of the eyes – that they could not perform on a human.¹⁵⁷

Symbolic animals

The last group of animals which I would like to look at here are the animals who appear in spoken formulae, invoked for their symbolic value. As we might expect in texts produced in a Christian cultural context, many of these animals are drawn from the stories of the Bible; one of the fishing spells we have already discussed contains a reference to several fishing miracles from the gospels,¹⁵⁸ and other texts refer to the salvation of Daniel from the lion’s den, another popular *topos* in Christian art of the period.¹⁵⁹ In two curses the spell’s users cast themselves in the position of this prophet, and the lions thus symbolise forces which oppose them; in one example God is called upon to shut the mouth of the curse’s victim as he shut the mouths of the lions.¹⁶⁰

Like Daniel, the four living creatures (*zōon*) are a very common theme in Coptic art;¹⁶¹ mentioned in Ezekiel 1.10 as the bearers of God’s throne, and later in Revelation 4.6-8,¹⁶² they are either winged creatures with four heads – human, lion, ox, and eagle – or else four separate creatures of these types. Often taken in Western Christianity as symbols of the four evangelists, they seem to have been more often understood in the Coptic tradition as cherubim, angelic beings who together symbolised the four types of animals – human, wild, tame, and winged – and, like the polymorphic eagle of Eden, they were believed in some texts to each intercede on behalf of their particular portion of creation.¹⁶³ In Egyptian depictions, they are

157. Cairo 45060, l. 32-35. While here I interpret the recipe as for treating eye-disease, its ambiguous title “for eye-disease” (εἶπε οὐκ·ακβαλ, l. 31) could mean that it is also intended to *cause* disease. Cf. the similar use of the eyes of lizards in the Roman period described in C. A. Faraone, *Transformation of Greek Amulets, op. cit.*, p. 99.

158. See n. 93.

159. For a brief discussion, see P. du Bourguet, “Biblical Subjects in Coptic Art: Daniel in the Lion’s Den”, in A. Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, New York, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1991, vol. 2, p. 384-385; O. Osharina, “The Image of the Lion in Coptic Art”, *Journal of Coptic Studies*, vol. 15, 2013, p. 95-116.

160. P. Bad. V 140, l. 13-15 (TM 100000; x-xi CE): “... in the way that you shut the mouths of the lions before Daniel the prophet, shut the mouth of NN” (ⲛⲉⲟⲉ ⲛⲧⲁⲕ ⲉ ϣⲧⲁⲛ ⲉⲣⲟⲩ : ⲛⲉⲛⲟⲩⲓ : ϣⲓⲟⲛ ⲛ:Ⲕⲁⲛⲛⲓⲗ ⲉ ⲛⲉⲣⲉⲣⲟⲩⲑⲛⲧⲏⲥ ⲉ ⲕⲉϣⲧⲁⲛ ⲉⲣⲟⲩ : ⲉⲛ ⲛⲛ ⲛⲛ); cf. IFAO 451 + 449 (TM 316185; iv-v CE), which contains the passage “Daniel, who was cast into the lion’s den, carry out my judgement upon Mariam and Kallinikos her brother!” (Ⲕⲁⲛⲛⲓⲗ ⲛⲉⲧⲧⲓⲛⲉⲣⲛⲓ ϣⲛ ⲛⲟⲛⲓ ⲛⲛⲛⲟⲩⲓ ⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲁⲗⲉⲣ ⲛⲓ ⲛⲁⲣⲓⲁⲛ ⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲗⲗⲓⲛⲓⲕⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲥⲥⲁⲛ; recto l. 11-13).

161. M. de Grooth and P. van Moorsel, “The Lion, the Calf, the Man and the Eagle in Early Christian and Coptic Art”, *BABesch*, vol. 52-53, 1977-1978, p. 233-245.

162. A separate set of four animals (θηρία) appear in Daniel 7.3-13, although they are generally understood as symbolically representing human kingdoms.

163. For discussions of the four living creatures in the Egyptian and other Christian traditions, see K. Stevenson, “Animal Rites: The Four Living Creatures in Patristic Exegesis and Liturgy”, in M. F. Wiles, E. J. Yarnold (ed.), *Studia Patristica*, vol. 34, Leuven, Peeters, 2001, p. 470-492; M. de Grooth and P. van Moorsel, “The Lion, the Calf, the Man and the Eagle”, art. cit., p. 233-245; A. Tsakos, “*Miscellanea Epigraphica Nubica V: The Names of the Four Creatures of the Apocalypse*

typically shown as a quartet of six-winged beings who surround the throne of Jesus, and it is in this context that they appear in spells. One invocation calls upon Gabriel “by the four creatures that draw [the throne of God] – a lion’s face, an ox’s face, an eagle’s face, a human face”,¹⁶⁴ while others mention their role as the throne-bearers of God in passing,¹⁶⁵ with one combining the four cherubim with the two seraphim who guard Paradise to create a group of six *zōon*.¹⁶⁶ As part of the celestial hierarchy, they themselves could be invoked, and so we find one spell to bind a dog calling upon the four *zōon* by their “true names”,¹⁶⁷ and a healing amulet in which God is asked to send his four incorporeal *zōon* along with the 24 elders and seven archangels.¹⁶⁸ This second example repeats the creature’s apocryphal “true names”, a series of *voces magicæ*, but also refers to them by a sequence of four words – *alpha lēōn phōnē anēr* – which recurs in several other amulets.¹⁶⁹ This sequence – which arranged in a square can be read left to right or top to bottom (table 1) – is clearly derived from the four animals themselves: *lēōn* and *anēr* mean, respectively, lion and human in Greek, while *aleph*, the name of the Hebrew letter which shares a common Phoenician ancestor with *alpha*, means “ox”. The final word, *phōnē* means “voice”, and is probably used because eagle’s ‘voice’ is described as speaking in Revelation 6.7. While this sequence probably originated as the names of the four *zōon*, it usually appears without being introduced as such, and often in conjunction with angel names or the similarly palindromic formula *sator arepo tenet opera rotas*.

Table 1: The Alpha-Lēōn Square.

α	λ	φ	α
λ	η	ω	η
φ	ω	η	η
α	η	η	ρ

The idea suggested by the intercession of the four living creatures, of a unified creation in which humans are one (privileged) part co-existing with animals is found in other texts; one Greek amulet alludes to Jesus’ appearance among the dumb animals

in Christian Nubia”, *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia*, vol. 11, 2014, p. 253-263; C. D. G. Müller, *Die Engellehre der koptische Kirche. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der christlichen Frömmigkeit in Ägypten*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1959, p. 83-84.

164. Rossi’s Gnostic tractate p. 13, l. 4-9: αιο ΓΑΥΡΙΗΛ ΔΕ ΨΑΡΑΚΑΛΙ ΜΝΟΚ ΉΠΕΡΤΟΟΥ ΝΣΩΝΤ ΕΤΣΩΚ ΖΑΡΟΦ ΟΥΡΟ ΜΟΥΙ ΟΥΧΟ ΜΝΑΣΕ ΟΥΡΟ ΝΑΕΤΟΣ ΟΥΡΟ ΝΡΩΝΕ ΔΕΚΕΒΕΙ ΨΑΡΟΙ ΉΠΟΟΥ. Compare SM 36 (TM 63029; v-vi CE), a rare Latin magical text from Egypt, which calls upon the invoked deity “by the four creatures who bear the throne of God” (*per quattuorque animalia qui regunt thronum domini*, l. 18-19).

165. P. Hermitage Copt. 70 (TM 99580; iv-v CE), l. 1-9; Anastasi 9 p. 13v, l. 24-p. 14v, l. 13.

166. T. Vat. Copt. 7, l. 16-22.

167. London Oriental Manuscript 1013A, l. 23-25.

168. Berlin 11347 recto, l. 26-31.

169. P. Heid. Kopt. 544, l. 4-5 (TM 98048; vii-xii CE); P. Berlin 8105 right side, l. 1-2 (TM 108882; viii CE); Vienna, Nationalbibliothek K 7092, l. 4-5 (TM 91410; x-xi CE); Vienna K 7093, l. 1 (TM 102266/91411; x CE); Vienna K 8638 (TM 91420; x CE), l. 11-12; P. CtYBR 1792, l. 1-4 (TM 98049; vi-vii CE).

(*alogoi*) of the manger,¹⁷⁰ while another amulet to protect a house wishes peace on all living creatures (*zōon*),¹⁷¹ and in a long invocation the ritualist announces “I praise you with all the creatures that you have created, and all beasts of the earth, and the birds of heaven, who praise you”.¹⁷² It is tempting to see here reference to the traditional Egyptian idea of the animals hymning the sun-god,¹⁷³ but the direct source is more likely Psalm 148.10 where the beasts and birds are called upon to praise the Lord.¹⁷⁴ This unity of creation is repeated in a spell for good business, in which the invocation calls upon the super-angel Uriel “in whose hand are the souls of people, of men and of women, of *jatfe* and of *tbne* and of those (animals) that terrify and of those (animals) that go upon the ground”.¹⁷⁵ The conception of gods or angels governing various categories of living being, has long roots, but it may be expressed in a Christian context with the angel being compared to a “shepherd”.¹⁷⁶ The image of the shepherd is a rich one in Christian thought: though ultimately derived from secular views of the

170. PGM O 3, l. 9.

171. P. Berlin 3289 (TM 108879; VI-VIII CE), l. 4.

172. Heidelberg Kopt. 686 240-242: †σμοϋ ερακ με ησωντ τηρου ντακταμα με θηριον ηπακαρ μι νεραλα† ηπη ενσμοϋ ερακ.

173. H. te Velde, “Some Remarks on the Mysterious Language of the Baboons”, in J. H. Kamstra, H. Milde, and K. Wagtdonk (ed.), *Funerary Symbols and Religion*, Kampen, J. H. Kok, 1988, p. 129-137; E. Nissan, “Animals Calling Out to Heaven: In Support of the Hypothesis of an Alexandrine Egyptian Connection to the Animals Praising Heaven in Perqe Shirah (A Chapter of Hymns). Some Evidence from Egypt’s Greek Magical Papyri”, *MHNH*, vol. 14, 2014, p. 167-196.

174. See also Revelation 5.13, in which the Christian God and the Lamb are praised by the creatures in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea. Compare, however, Shenoute’s argument that a pagan or a heretic simply raising their hands in church did not make them Christian, since even birds stretch their wings out as if praying, implicitly denying animals the capacity to pray (É. Amélineau, *Œuvres de Shenoudi: Texte copte et traduction française*, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1907, vol. 1, p. 337.1-3).

175. P. Moen 3 flesh-side, l. 16-18. The idea of angels “set over” various dangerous animals recurs in several other magical papyri; cf. PGM XXXV.9 (TM 64721; IV CE) which mentions Saesekhel, the one “set over the serpents” (ἐπὶ τῶν δρακόντων); Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. 34.1.226 (VI CE; M. Zellmann-Rohrer, “Seth on Mount Sinai: A Coptic Magical Formulary with a Prayer and Theophany of the Biblical Seth”, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. 144.2, 2017, p. 240-254), which lists a series of angels set over parts of creation, including Elmoukasa “the ones who preside over the serpents” (νετρημος εἰ[χνη η]Δ[ρ]ακων, l. 13); London MS. Or. 6796 [2, 3] verso, l. 16-17, with Abbakhiaōx, set over the serpent (εεραῖ εχνη πεδρακων), and Baktiotha, set over 49 kinds of serpents in P. Macq. I 1, P. Berl. 5527 and P. Lond. Copt. I 1008; on these latter see K. Dosoo, “Baktiotha: The Origin of a Magical Name in P. Macq. I 1”, in P. Buzi, A. Camplani and F. Contardi (ed.), *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion from Late Antiquity to Modern Times. Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Rome, September 17th-22nd, 2012, and Plenary Reports of the Ninth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Cairo, September 15th-19th, 2008*, Leuven, Peeters, 2016, p. 1237-1244. This idea extended into the literary sphere; a reference to Thegri, the angel set over the beasts, can be found in the *Shepherd of Hermas* (23.4.-5), where he protects the author from a monstrous beast. Compare P. Oxy. LXXXII 5312 (TM 5312; VI CE), a *charitesion* (spell for favour and power), which lists a series of angels, including “Thiemab, the one set over the sheep (?)” (θημαβ ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν βραθων, l. 20).

176. P. Berl. 11347, a prayer invoking the Lord as the “shepherd who tends his sheep” (παρωω [sic] εμοηη νεφεσοϋ, l. 10-11), and Vienna K 70 (TM 91435; X-XI CE), which speaks of entrusting a child to the “sheepfold of Christ” (ταπει ηπεχ(ριστο)ς, l. 9-10).



Fig. 4. Scene of sinners consumed by serpents/worms from the paintings of a church in Tebtunis (after C. C. Walters “Christian Paintings from Tebtunis”, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. 75, 1989, plate xxviii).

have had good reason to be afraid, but here the serpent is not destroyed by Jesus, but rather sent on his own mission of destruction, in the same way that serpents, scorpions, worms and demons are called against the enemies of the curses examined earlier. The word used for the creature has a specific resonance, however; as in many other cultures, the Egyptian language did not distinguish clearly between snakes, worms, and maggots, and *fnt* is the word used to translate the Greek *skōlēx*, which could refer to the “undying worm”,¹⁸³ the supernatural maggot which would eternally devour sinners in hell, as well as to the more mundane worms which would devour their corpses. But this intimate relationship need not wait for death – illnesses might be understood as infestations by *fnt*,¹⁸⁴ an understanding perhaps prompted by the observation of worm-like parasites, and maggots in necrotic flesh.¹⁸⁵ It is probably in this sense that

183. See Mark 9.44-48.

184. See for example Michigan 593 7.7-10, a recipe to cure “one in whom there is a *fnt*” (οὐα εὐοῖν οὐβεντ ἡρητῆ); Shenoute, *Then Am I Not Obligated*: “I am ready for the torments for my sin... may my heart, with all my body, and all my entrails, putrefy and produce *fnt* in the correction that God will give me in this malady for my sins...” (†εβτωτ ερεν μαστιγῆζ επιμα ἡπανοβε... μαροῦκνος η μαροῦρ φητ νει παρητ μη πασῶμα η πασαροῦν τηρφ εβολ ρη νετρε πνογτε μαπαλαεγε ἡμοι ἡρητοῦ ρη πωῶνε ρα ἡανῶβε; É. Amélineau, *Œuvres de Shenoudi*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 85, l. 4-8); *Apocalypse of Paul*: “The sore which broke out in my body was like unto a grain of wheat... and the *fnt* which came out from my sores when I measured them were the width of the palm of my hand in length” (πασα ετηνη εβολ ριῶωτ · εφο ἡτσοτ ἡοῦβλβι ἡσογῶ... αχω ἡφῆτ εμαγει εβολ ρῆ πασαῶ · νεφαιβτοῦ νεεῖ οῦῶοπ ἡρη; E. A. Wallis Budge, *Miscellaneous Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, Oxford University Press, London, 1915, p. 555, l. 33-556 l. 3, 1076).

185. For the idea of literal or figurative worms and “serpents” as agents of disease in older Egyptian magico-medical practice, see J. G. Nunn, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2002, p. 68-73.

a “worm” is wished on a man named Joor and his wife in another curse,¹⁸⁶ and upon the victim of the serpent awakened by Jesus, a wasting disease, a living death in which their body was infested by biting maggots.

These three charms, involving two deer and a serpent, provide interesting parallels with folktales, fables and charms from other cultures in which animals are able to speak and act as protagonists, but a direct predecessor may be found in the talking animals of Biblical texts – the serpent of Genesis,¹⁸⁷ the donkey of Balaam¹⁸⁸ – and the animals who interact with the holy men of Egyptian and Near Eastern Christianity.¹⁸⁹ The *Acts of Philip* records a talking leopard and lamb who accompany the apostle, begging to be baptised and to receive the eucharist;¹⁹⁰ Paul of Thebes, the first anchorite, was said to have been fed by a raven, while lions helped Saint Antony dig a grave for Paul in return for his blessing,¹⁹¹ and Saint Macarius cured a hyena cub whose mother brought him a sheep-skin in payment, but promised never to kill again when the saint upbraided her for killing the sheep.¹⁹² The most striking examples are found in the *Virtues of Macarius*, in which the Egyptian saint is able to understand the prayer of a wolf,¹⁹³ and heals both the deformed child of a *boiši* (either an antelope or a jackal),¹⁹⁴ and a splinter in the eye of a great serpent (*drakōn*)¹⁹⁵ through prayer. In these examples, compassion and communion shared between animals and human beings is a sign of holiness, a return to an Edenic virtue which was lost after the Fall and the Noahide covenant, when humans and animals began to prey upon one another. Isaac of Nineveh, writing in 7th-century Syria, makes this explicit, claiming that when “the humble person approaches ravening beasts... their wildness is tamed... for they

186. P. Mich. Inv. 1523 (TM 99995; IV-V CE): “(may) the curse and the worm and the scattering abroad overtake them” (τρεπκαροϋ τ[ε]νικϋτ ηνικλοϋρε αβαλ τεραϋ, l. 7-8).

187. Genesis 3.1-15.

188. Numbers 22.21-35.

189. Compare the discussion of talking animals in I. S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, *op. cit.*, p. 163-164. This trope is not limited to Christian holy men; Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (5.42) describes the eponymous holy man as able to understand the speech of a tame lion, who is apparently the reincarnation of King Amasis of Egypt.

190. On these passages, F. Bovon, “The Child and the Beast: Fighting Violence in Ancient Christianity”, *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 92.4, 1999, p. 369-392; I. S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, *op. cit.*, p. 251-258; J. Perkins, “Animal Voices”, *Religion and Theology*, vol. 12.3, p. 385-396. For a fuller discussion of the role of animals in Christian apocrypha, and their predecessors in Hellenic and Jewish literature, see J. E. Spittler, *Animals in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: The Wild Kingdom of Early Christian Literature*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2008; C. R. Matthews, “Articulated Animals: A Multivalent Motif in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles”, in F. Bovon, A. G. Brock and C. R. Matthews (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 205-232.

191. *Life of Paul, the First Anchorite*; for the Bohairic Coptic version, see É. Amélineau, *Histoire des monastères de la Basse-Égypte*, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1894, p. 8, l. 3-6, p. 12, l. 9, p. 13, l. 15.

192. *Life of Macarius of Alexandria*; see É. Amélineau, *Histoire des monastères de la Basse-Égypte*, *op. cit.*, p. 235.9-237.13. For the shorter Greek version of the story, see Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*, 18.27.

193. É. AMÉLINEAU, *Histoire des monastères de la Basse-Égypte*, *op. cit.*, p. 153, l. 10-p. 154, l. 15.

194. *Ibid.*, p. 134 l. 8-p. 135 l. 16.

195. *Ibid.*, p. 194 l.4-17.

smell coming from him the same scent that Adam exhaled before the fall, when they were gathered together before him and he gave them names in Paradise”.¹⁹⁶ It is no accident therefore that Jesus, the New Adam,¹⁹⁷ talks to, heals, and commands both doe and serpent in Coptic charms.

A unicorn, quite a different type of animal, appears in another charm from a longer formula intended to exorcise unclean spirits.¹⁹⁸ The narrative portion recounts the death of Jesus upon the cross, and – apparently while dead – he takes a chalice, recites an invocation over it, and pours its contents into the sea. The sea parts to reveal a golden field named *Sappaithai*,¹⁹⁹ in which sits a unicorn (*papitap ʿnouōt*) who demands of Jesus, “Who are you who stands here thus, in the body, yea, in the flesh, who has not been given into my hand?”²⁰⁰ Jesus reveals his secret name, and the unicorn hides itself from him, apparently afraid. Given the function of this spell as an exorcism, it should

196. Isaac of Nineveh, *Homilies 577*, transl. in A. J. Wensinck, *Mystical Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh. Translated from Bedjan's Syriac Text with an Introduction and Registers*, Amsterdam, Uitgave der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1923, p. 386. Interestingly, Isaac also speaks of the “stink of Adam” (79, p. 54) to refer to the flaw shared by all fallen mankind, extending the olfactory metaphor.

197. 1 Corinthians 15.22, 45; cf. Romans 5.12-21.

198. London Oriental Manuscript 6796 [4], 6796, l. 1-23. For a fuller discussion of this text, see J. E. Sanzo, “The Innovative Use of Biblical Traditions for Ritual Power: The Crucifixion of Jesus on a Coptic Exorcistic Spell (Brit. Lib. Or. 6796[4], 6796) as a Test Case”, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, vol. 16.1, p. 67-98.

199. The meaning of the name “Sappaithai” is mysterious; here I follow the reading of M. Meyer (in M. Meyer and R. Smith [ed.], *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, San Francisco, Harper San Francisco, 1994, p. 290) in understanding it as the name of the field, although J. E. Sanzo (“The Innovative Use of Biblical Traditions for Ritual Power”, art. cit., p. 91-92; cf. A. Kropp, *Ausgewählte Koptische Zaubertexte*, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 16) understands it rather as the name of the unicorn. Given the connection of this *historiola* to the story of the Harrowing of Hell, remembered in the Coptic Church (and other communions) on Holy Saturday (“the Great Sabbath”, τὸ μέγα σάββατον; see P. E. Kretzmann, “A Few Notes on The Harrowing of Hell”, *Modern Philology*, vol. 13.1, 1915, p. 49-51; Archbishop Basilios, “Holy Saturday”, in A. S. Atiya, *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, New York, MacMillan, 1991, vol. 4, p. 1247b-1249b), it seems possible that we could understand it as a writing of the Hebrew or Aramaic *šabbatāy* (שַׁבְּתָא; “of the Sabbath”, “Saturn”), where an intermediary stage in Greek may have changed the initial *shin* to a *sigma*, and the *betas* of the original could have been rendered in Coptic by *pi* to indicate a labial stop rather than the labial approximant which *beta* often represented in Coptic, the distinction between voiced and unvoiced stops not being phonemic in Coptic. Similar orthographies may be seen in the Greek writing of the personal name of the same derivation (Σαμβαθαιος, TM Name ID 5609), where the first letter is always *sigma*, the /b/ sound may be rendered as *mu-pi*, and the /t/ is often *theta*. The field would thus be “the Field of the Sabbath/Saturn (Holy Saturday)”, to which Jesus descended between his death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. On the Hebrew name of Saturn, the planet associated with Saturday, see R. R. Stieglitz, “The Hebrew Names of the Seven Planets”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 40.2, 1981, p. 135-137.

200. London Oriental Manuscript 6796 [4], 6796, l. 19-20: ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲓⲛ ⲛⲧⲓⲣⲉ ⲉⲕⲁⲗⲉⲣⲁⲧⲉ ⲗⲛⲓ ⲛⲉⲓⲱⲛⲁ ⲉⲓⲉ ⲧⲓⲕⲁⲣⲗ ⲛⲡⲟⲩⲧⲁⲕ ⲉⲧⲁⲟⲓⲗ. Compare the passage from the *Book of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ* in which Death asks Jesus who he is: “Tell me then, who are you, O you who mock me... I find I have no power over you” (ⲛⲁⲧⲁⲙⲟⲓ ⲟⲩ ⲗⲉ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲛⲓ ⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲁⲓ... ⲙⲓⲛⲧⲉ ⲉⲟⲙ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ; edition in M. Westerhoff, *Auferstehung und Jenseits im koptischen ‘Buch der Auferstehung Jesu Christi, unseres Herrn’*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999, p. 64-65).



Fig. 5. Unicorns and doves (?) from the wall of a hermit's cell in Abydos (after F. Petrie *et al.*, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynchos*, London, British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1925, plate LI).

not be surprising that the unicorn which hides itself from Jesus is not only demonic, but apparently Death or the Devil himself, with the golden field which lies beneath the sea representing the underworld which he rules over,²⁰¹ and the story being an unorthodox retelling of the harrowing of hell.

The term used for unicorn here is that which translates the Greek *monokerōs* where it appears in the Septuagint, the same word used in texts such as the *Physiologus* (late II CE) to describe the creature whose English name, “unicorn”, comes to us via a Latin translation, *unicornis*, of the Greek term. The predominant interpretation of the unicorn in Christian thought, coming from the *Physiologus* itself, is of a creature who symbolises Christ – the unity of the horn representing the unity of the Father

201. The idea that Hell lies under the sea recurs in the *Acts of Paul and Andrew*, in which the apostle Paul dives into the sea to visit the underworld in imitation of the descent of Christ, and Andrew allows him to return by praying over a cup of water which he pours over the sea; Paul ascends through the parted water to report a meeting with Judas, and that the Devil and his servants were lamenting their loss of power. The parallels to the *historiola* of Jesus and the unicorn are very clear; X. Jacques, “Les deux fragments conservés des ‘Actes d’André et Paul’”, *Orientalia*, vol. 38, 1969, p. 194-205; cf. A. Kropp, *Ausgewählte Koptische Zaubertexte, op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 61-62.

and the Son, the coming of the unicorn to a virgin representing Jesus coming to the womb of Mary,²⁰² and it is this association that is probably intended in the few surviving depictions of unicorns from late antique Egypt, in manuscript margins and monastic cells.²⁰³ But alongside these positive associations are negative depictions of the unicorn (Hebrew *re'em*)²⁰⁴ found in the Psalms – in LXX 21.22 the Psalmist calls out to be saved from “a lion’s mouth and... the horns of unicorns”, and this passage may be found in at least one Greek protective amulet.²⁰⁵ The relevance of this Psalm is intensified by the fact that its opening lines – “God, my God, attend to me; why did you forsake me?” – are cited as part of the crucifixion story with which the earlier magical text begins.²⁰⁶ A tradition of the unicorn as a destructive being is also found in the discussion of the Book of Job by the bishop of Rome, Gregory the Great (*ca.* 540-604 CE), who saw in the rhinoceros or unicorn – he regarded these as synonyms for a single creature – the prideful supreme powers of the world, opposed to the Christian law.²⁰⁷ Hints of this idea appear in a few other Coptic texts, with the gnostic *Paraphrase of Shem* describing a demon named Molukhthas who has the form of a “serpent and a unicorn”,²⁰⁸ and Shenoute interpreting the unicorn of Psalm LXX 21 as the devil himself.²⁰⁹ While the unicorn in the golden field stands as a relatively isolated instance of this theme from Egypt, there is a minor but recurrent tradition elsewhere in the Christian world of depicting the devil and his demons as single-horned creatures, if not as the horse-like unicorns of the tradition of the *Physiologus*.²¹⁰ The decision to

202. *Physiologus (redactio prima)* 22. See also the goat with a single horn (ΟΥΓΤΑΠ ΝΟΥΩΤ) in Daniel 8.5, understood in one Coptic exegetical text (XI-XII CE) as representing single-minded and humble devotion to God (S. Torallas-Tovar, “A Coptic Exegetical Text on Daniel 8,5-18: A Parchment Codex Page from Montserrat”, in P. Buzi and A. Camplani, *Christianity in Egypt: Literary Production and Intellectual Trends: Studies in Honor of Alberto Camplani*, Rome, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2011, p. 513-521).

203. C. Downer, “A Ban on Unicorns? Decorative Motif and Illumination in M581”, in M. Immerzeel and J. van der Vliet (eds.), *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium: Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies. Leiden, 27 August-September 2000*, Leuven, Peeters, 2004, vol. 1, p. 1205-1219.

204. For a discussion see J. L. W. Schaper, “The Unicorn in the Messianic Imagery of the Greek Bible”, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 45.1, 1994, p. 117-136.

205. PGM Christian 5c, l. 1-2 (TM 64858; v-vi CE): ἐκ χειρὸς κυνὸς ἀπὸ κεράτων μονοκερῶ[των].

206. See J. E. Sanzo, “The Innovative Use of Biblical Traditions for Ritual Power”, art. cit., p. 75-77.

207. Commentary on Job 31.1-10, 31.29-35, in J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae Latinae*, Paris, Garnier Fratres, 1878, vol. 76, p. 572-578, 589-594. The Latin *rhinoceros* (“nose-horn”) is essentially interchangeable with *unicornis* (“one-horn”), the calque of the Greek μονοκέρω; see A. H. Godbey, “The Unicorn in the Old Testament”, *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, vol. 56.3, 1939, p. 256-296 for a discussion.

208. 34.9-18: “And Molukhthas is a wind... he has the likeness of a serpent and a unicorn” (αὐτὸς ΜΟΛΥΧΘΑΣ ΟΥΓΤΗΟΥ ΠΕ... ΕΥΨΤΑϪ ΠΝΑϪ ΝΟΥΕΙΜΕ ΝΡΟϪ · ΑΥΤΩ ΠΠΑΠΤΑΠ ΝΟΥΩΤ); edition in J. M. Robinson (ed.), *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, Leiden, Brill, 2000, vol. 4, p. 96-97.

209. Shenoute, *On the Wrath of God*: “he (God) will save their humility from the horn of the unicorn, who is the Devil” (ϪΝΑΝΟΥϪΝ ΠΝΕϪΘΒΒΙΟ ΕΠΤΑΠ ΠΠΑΠΤΑΠ ΝΟΥΩΤ ΕΤΕΠΔΑΒΟΛΟΣ ΠΕ); edition in J. Leipoldt and W. E. Crum, *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, Paris, Typographeo Reipublicae, 1908, vol. 3, p. 195, l. 20-21.

210. J. W. Einhorn, *Spiritualis Unicornis: Das Einhorn als Bedeutungsträger in Literatur und Kunst des Mittelalters*, Munich, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998, p. 134-138, 524-528; compare BKU I

draw upon this tradition here may also be linked to the use of the unicorn's horn among some of the Church Fathers as a symbol for the cross upon which Jesus was crucified, and hence that from which he asks to be saved from in his allusion to the Psalm;²¹¹ the unicorn is simultaneously the cross upon which Jesus is nailed and the ruler of the hell to which he descends to destroy the bonds of death.

The final category of animals I will discuss are those which appear in what the anthropologist Stanley J. Tambiah has called “persuasive analogies”.²¹² These consist of brief descriptions of animals that resemble similes, but are intended to function not simply as figures of speech, but as patterns of behaviour that are imposed up on the spell's victim. The first set of these occur in curses, and draw upon ideas of certain animals as powerless; one calls upon a man's penis to become “like an ant (*kajif*) that is frozen in the winter, tiny and frozen”,²¹³ while another calls upon God to make the power (*k'om*) of the disease-bringing devil “like the strength of a gnat (*šalmes*)”.²¹⁴ Similar ideas of small animals as prototypically powerless are found in one of the discourses of Shenoute, where he describes how God made the king of Egypt “weak like some lowly animals”,²¹⁵ and in a love spell where the magician Cyprian describes his powerlessness before the greater “magic” of the Christian virgin Justina, who makes his powers “like a sparrow (*jaj*) in the hands of a small boy”,²¹⁶ a testimony to the perennial danger posed by capricious children to creatures smaller than themselves.²¹⁷

1 recto, l. 15-16, which describes a demon named Agrippa with one eye and one hand (παπειβαλ νοϋωτ πατεισιχνοϋωτ).

211. See, for example, J. Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 91, 105; Tertullian, *Aganist Marcion* 3.18-19, Id., *An Answer to the Jews* 10.

212. S. J. Tambiah, “Form and Meaning of Magical Acts: A Point of View”, in R. Horton and R. Finnegan (ed.), *Modes of Thought: Essays on Thinking in Western and Non-Western Societies*, London, Faber & Faber, 1973, p. 199-229.

213. London Hay 10391, l. 114-116 (TM 100015; VI-VII CE): ΝΓ[Τ]ΡΕΠΕΦΜΑΝΞΟΥΓΤ ΩΩΠΕ ΝΘΕ ΝΟΥΚΑΧΙϞ ΕΣΑΚϞ ΞΝ ΤΕΠΡΩ ΕΣΦΟΜΕ ΕΣΑΚΒ.

214. P. Heid. Inv. Kopt. 686, l. 67: ΕΚΤΡΕΤΕΒΩΜ ΤΗΡΗΣ ΩΩΠΙ ΝΘΕ ΝΤΩΜ ΝΟΥΦΑΛΜΕΣ.

215. *As I Sat on a Mountain*: ΔΠΝΟΥΓΤΕ ΔΑϞ ΝΩΩΒ ΞΝ ΞΕΝΔΑΧΙΣΤΟΝ ΝΩΩΜΟΝ; J. Leipoldt and W. E. Crum, *Sinuthiii archimandritae, op. cit.*, vol. 3, 1908, p. 50, l. 14-15.

216. P. Bad. V 122 (TM 98064; XI CE), l. 31-34: ΝΘΕ ΝΟΥΧΑΧ ΞΨ ΣΙΧ ΝΟΥΩΗΡΕ ΩΗΗ. For other examples of this motif, see Athanasius, *Life of Anthony*: “And indeed he (the Devil) was bound by the Lord like a sparrow for our sport” (καὶ δέδεταί μὲν παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ὡς στρουθίου εἰς τὸ καταπαίξεσθαι παρ’ ἡμῶν, 24.57-28); *Encomium of Eustathius*, “he (the Devil) was gripped fast in the hand of the holy Archangel Michael, like a bird in the hand of a little child, and when the Archangel had made him suffer greatly he set him free in great disgrace” (εἰς ὧν ἔτι οὐκ ἔπιπρην ἄγγελος ἑθούαβ μίχαηλ ἡφρητ̄ νοῦσαχ βεν τχιχ νοῦκοῦχι ἡαλογ οῦορ ἔταφαϞ νοῦχωβ ἑμαῶα αϞχαϞ ἔβολ βεν οῦηιατ̄ ἡῶη; E. A. Wallis Budge, *Saint Michael the Archangel, op. cit.*, p. 99, 124, l. 11-15).

217. As noted by I. S. Gilhus (*Animals, Gods and Humans, op. cit.* p. 29), mosaics depicting children hunting and killing small animals such as rabbits and ducks suggest that such scenes were very much familiar in the Roman world; for examples of the “Hunting Children” motif, see K. M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 116, 133, 140-141. Compare the saying of Bion of Borysthenes preserved by Plutarch (*De sollertia animalium* 965B): “children throw stones at frogs for fun, but the frogs do not die for fun, but in earnest” (τὰ παιδάρια παίζοντα τῶν βατράχων τοῖς λίθοις ἐφίεσθαι, τοὺς δὲ βατράχους μηκέτι παίζοντα ἀλλ’ ἀληθῶς ἀποθνήσκειν).

A slightly different category draws upon descriptions of animal behaviour – one separation spell, for example, calls upon a couple to hate each other “like a pig and a dog, like the Jewish people hated Jesus”.²¹⁸ More common, though, are analogies in love spells in which women are called to act like animals: one calls upon a woman to long for a man like a “black dog whose children are taken away before her eyes”,²¹⁹ or to come mate with him like the “female dogs go under the male dog”,²²⁰ to hang to him “like a sow on a boar”,²²¹ “like a bee seeking honey, a bitch prowling, a cat going house to house, a mare going under a crazed stallion”,²²² “like a she-donkey under the he-donkey... a bitch under the dog, whinnying like a mare, chewing like a she-camel, maddened like a she-bear and a crocodile”.²²³

These persuasive analogies are not limited to late antique Egyptian practice;²²⁴ the earliest known Egyptian love spell, from Ramesside Deir el-Medineh, calls upon a woman to run after the user “like an ox after grass, like a servant after her children, like a drover after his herd”,²²⁵ while similar texts are known from earlier Roman Egypt – a Demotic example calls upon the woman to long for a man with the longing which “a female cat feels for a male cat, a longing which a she-wolf feels for a wolf, a longing which a female dog feels for a male dog”,²²⁶ and parallels can be found in later Christian Europe. As David Frankfurter points out, echoes of these analogies can be found in the story of how Saint Macarius rescued a woman who had been turned into a horse by a suitor’s love spell by anointing her,²²⁷ while a more explicit, and probably

218. P. Heid. 1030v, l. 46-49 (TM 113762; XI CE): εφμεστωδος ενθε νογριρ ην ογραρ ενθε ν{η} ταπλαος μνιογδαϊ μιεστ ιϛ. I have been unable to find another source where the hatred of dogs and pigs for one another is paradigmatic; it may derive from the status of both as scavengers of human waste in Late Antique Egypt, which might have led them to into conflict with one another; compare the discussion of N. de Zorzi, “Of Raving Dogs and Promiscuous Pigs: Mesopotamian Animal Omens in Context”, in this volume.

219. BKU I 3, l. 8-11 (TM 98066; VII-VIII CE): ...νογογρορε κανε εγναβι νεσωηρε ερον ιατς μπεσσαωϋ εσναμισε; cf. Yale 1791 front, l. 14-15: “(let her become) like a [black] dog crazy for its pups...” (ερωε μνιογρωαρ κ[α]με] ετλοβε ησα νεγωηρε).

220. P. Bad. V 131 (TM 99553; IX-XI CE), l. 52-53: ακτρενερογορ ει ρα περογορ.

221. Hs. Schmidt 2 (TM 98063; IV-VII CE), l. 35-36: ηθε νοογρορε ρα ογρορ ηθε νογωωγ ρα ογκαπϛ.

222. London Hay 10414 recto, l. 11-14: ηϛ ρη ογβιω εσωινη ογροορ εσλελε ογενογε εσβωκ ρηογνη λγνη ρη ογτωρε ρη ογτωρε εσβωκ ρα νετωβλε.

223. P. Bad. V 122, l. 114-120: ηθε νογιω εσα πω ογμογτ εσα πδεγ εεηηηη ενθε νογεηταρι εσβηκβηκ ηθε νογβανεγλι εσλιβι ηθε νογλαβαι μεν ογεμσαρ.

224. For a fuller discussion of this theme, see K. Dosoo, *Circe’s Ram*, *op. cit.*, p. 262-267.

225. O. DeM 1057, l. 4-6: *mi ih m-sʹ s(m).w mi bʹk.(t) m-sʹ hrdʹst mi mniw m-⟨sʹ⟩ idrʹf; see G. Posener, Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh. Tome I (N^{os} 1001 à 1108), Cairo, Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1938, p. 15, pl. 31-31 a; P. Smither, “A Ramesside Love Charm”, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. 27, 1941, p. 131-132. Compare the discussion in F. Rouffet, “Des animaux, des hommes et des dieux. Voyage dans le monde animal des textes magiques égyptiens”, in this volume.*

226. PDM xiv.1029-1031: *whʹe iw hr-ire imy.t iyʹf r imy.mw whʹe iw hr-ire wnʹe.t iyʹf r wnʹe whʹe iw hr-ire whre.t iyʹf r whr.*

227. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* (recensio G) 17.6-9; *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, 21.93-101. See the discussion in D. Frankfurter, “The Perils of Love: Magic and Countermagic in Coptic Egypt”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 10.3/4, 2001, p. 480-500.

derivative parallel, is found in the story with which this essay began, from Islamic Egypt, in which a magician changes a woman's appearance into that of a donkey, exploiting her both sexually and as a beast of burden, until she is freed by Abba Paul.²²⁸ No spell survives from Egypt for truly turning a woman into a horse or donkey;²²⁹ instead the purpose of these analogies, reified in the literary parallels, is to force the women out of their normal status within human society, bounded and protected by rules of modesty and propriety, and to make them like animals – at once shameless in sexual heat, and subject to use and abuse by those who remain fully human.²³⁰ A fictional parallel to this transformation is given in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, where the protagonist, transformed into a donkey, is subject to constant physical, and even sexual, use and abuse against which he, as an unspeaking living tool, has no defence;²³¹ in this text we see also the ideological relationship between “animality” and slavery, the animal as the ideal slave, and the slave as a more animal human.²³² To be enslaved, and even more, to be an animal, was to be subject to another's power, and it is this power that the spell promises its user over women.²³³

228. B. Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs. Part 3, op. cit.*, p. 205-206; compare Augustine, *City of God* 18.18, in which he mentions stories he has heard in Italy of the landladies of inns turning their guests into beasts of burden (*iumenta*) in order to perform work.

229. We should note here that Pliny the Elder does record a series of “party tricks” which he attributes to Anaxilaus, one of which involves burning the discharge from mares in heat on a lamp to make those present at a party appear to have the heads of horses (*Natural History* 28.49); a similar trick, making drinkers at a symposium appear to have donkey snouts by burning a wick dipped in donkey blood is found in *PGM* XIb (TM 64086; III CE; cf. the *paignia* attributed to Democritus in *PGM* VII.167-186. This kind of playful illusionism is clearly different from the sort of hostile transformation described in the literary accounts discussed here. For the development of such “lamp experiments” in later Christian Europe, see S. Page, “Animals, Demons and Magic in Late Medieval Europe”, in this volume.

230. For the link between animals and sexuality in Late Antique thought, see P. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 27-32, 93-97.

231. For a discussion focused on the donkey's suffering and the relationship between animal and slave, see K. Bradley, “Animalizing the Slave: The Truth of Fiction”, *Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 90, 2000, p. 110-125.

232. The existence of similar discourses surrounding domesticated animals and human slaves has been noted in several slave-holding societies; see D. B. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, esp. 28-47. A Mikhail (*The Animal in Ottoman Egypt, op. cit.* p. 26-27) describes an estate inventory in which a human concubine is listed alongside animals and other property, with her colour described in the same way “as a shawl or a donkey”; cf. I. S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans, op. cit.* p. 14. This “animalisation” was not limited to slaves, but could be extended to the poor more generally; John Chrysostom describes how landowners “use [the] bodies [of their labourers] as they would use donkeys of mules, or rather stones, without giving them even an instant to breathe” (καὶ ὡς ὄνοις καὶ ἡμίνοις, μᾶλλον δὲ ὡς λίθοις τοῖς ἐκείνων κέχρηται σώμασιν, οὐδὲ μικρὸν ἀναπνεῦσαι συγχωροῦντε; *In Matthaëum* 58.591.47-48).

233. On the connection between women and animals in ancient thought, see A. Carson, “Dirt and Desire: The Phenomenology of Female Pollution in Antiquity”, in J. I. Porter (ed.), *Constructions of the Classical Body*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2002, p. 77-100; N. Loraux, *The Children of Athena*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 89-110. On gender and magic more generally, see C. A. Faraone, “The Construction of Gender in Ancient Greek Love Magic”, in

Conclusions

As we would expect from such a diverse category as “animal” the variety of roles in which we find them in spells – as deity or demon, beneficiary or victim, as mythological or behavioural analogy – is very broad, but we may draw these together to make a few key observations.

The first observation relates not to the textual content of the magical spells, but to their materiality, and this is the fact that many appearances of specific animals or their parts found clustered together – here we might think of the many instances of writing in different kinds of blood,²³⁴ of using crop-milk²³⁵ or animal hair,²³⁶ or anointing with animal products.²³⁷ A large proportion of the instances of each of these occur within single manuscripts, suggesting that we are dealing perhaps with multiple parallel traditions which may have been particularly reliant upon particular ritual mechanisms. But even where we only have a single attestation of a practice, it is likely that this single attestation is the tip of a larger iceberg of written and oral practices which have been lost; the evidence we have is an extremely fragmentary selection of a lost whole.

With this caveat in mind, it is worth considering the patterns that we do notice. As we have seen, truly supernatural animals – animal demons and deities – are rare, and instead we tend to find real animals whose intrinsic abilities – the danger of serpents and scorpions – is magnified to the extent that they become demonic while remaining fundamentally animal. On the other hand, the fact that humans are, ultimately, simply one particular kind of animal meant that animal bodies and behaviour could easily be understood as analogous to those of humans, with the crucial distinction that they were not subject to the norms of human civilisation: thus they were more free to indulge their drives – most importantly for our purposes, their sexual drives – than humans in ordered moral communities, but were also outside the protections of human society, and were therefore subject to more extreme violence – their killing, mutilation or torture. We see these two features at play where the brains of pigs stand in for the brains of women, or in persuasive analogies, and their literary counterparts, where women are cast as animals, at once as sexually shameless as dogs and as powerless to call upon human justice as horses or donkeys. This vulnerability is also played out in the amulets for domestic animals, in which owners attempted to extend to them the kind of supernatural protection that a human might need, and in curses in which domestic animals may be targeted in attacks on their owners. But the “animalisation” of human beings could also be framed positively, as in the examples where a doe

D. R. Jordan, H. Montgomery and E. Thomassen (ed.), *The World of Ancient Magic*, Bergen, The Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999, p. 279-282; Id., *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001; K. B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology & Stereotype in the Ancient World*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2007; Ead. and D. S. Kalleres, *Daughters of Hekate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014; J. J. Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros” in C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 214-243.

234. Leiden F 1964/4.14 verso l. 6, 7, 9, 16-17, 18-19.

235. P. Bad. V 123, l. 1-5, 52-84, 116-124.

236. P. Bad. V 123, l. 1-5, 52-84, 85-102, 116-124.

237. Cairo, Egyptian Museum JdE 42573 1.6-10, 3.21-24, 4.18-20.

stands in for a suffering human, and where the intimacy of the god-man Jesus with the animal-human doe points to a once and future state of Edenic harmony.

In each of the traditions that underlay the culture of late-antique Egypt – Pharaonic,²³⁸ Graeco-Roman,²³⁹ and Judaeo-Christian²⁴⁰ – we can find clear expressions of the idea that other animals were inherently inferior to humans, and existed in some sense for human use. But they nonetheless occupied their own distinct, and vital, position in the cosmic hierarchy; in the symbolism of the four living creatures, non-human animals constituted three-quarters of creation. While animals in Christian Egypt may have no longer occupied the divine position which they did in earlier periods, they had not disappeared, or lost all of their importance; they lurked in the margins and at the centres of human lives, treasured livestock, venomous infiltrators, near demonic, almost divine, and not quite human.

238. See, for example, the *Teaching for King Merikare*, a literary text with copies dating to the 18th Dynasty, which tells us that "... for them [humans] he [the creator-god] created plants and cattle, fowl and fish to sustain them" (*iri.nf n=sn sm.w 'wt 'pd.w rm.w snm st*; pPetersburg 1116 A, verso § 132-133; transl. from W. K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2003, p. 164).

239. For example Aristotle, *Politica*: "If, therefore, nature makes nothing without purpose or in vain, it follows that nature has made all the animals for the sake of men" (εἰ οὖν ἡ φύσις μηθὲν μῆτε ἀτελὲς ποιεῖ μῆτε μάτην, ἀναγκαῖον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἔνεκεν αὐτὰ πάντα πεποιηκέναι τὴν φύσιν; 1256b.20-22); Cicero, *De natura deorum*: "... so far is it from being true that the fruits of the earth were provided for the sake of animals as well as men, that the animals themselves, as we may see, were created for the benefit of men. What other use have sheep save that their fleeces are dressed and woven into clothing for men?" (*Tantumque abest ut haec bestiarum etiam causa parata sint, ut ipsas bestias hominum gratia generatas esse videamus. Quid enim oves aliud adferunt nisi ut earum villis confectis atque contextis homines vestiantur?* 2.63.158; H. Rakhman (transl.), *Cicero. On the Nature of the Gods*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 268, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1933, p. 274-275).

240. One of the principle texts in this tradition is Genesis 9.2-9.3: "And the trembling and fear of you shall be on all the animals of the earth and on all the things that move on the earth and on all the fish of the sea; I have given them under authority to you. And every creeping thing that is alive you shall have for food; like the pasture-land herbs, I have given you all things" (καὶ ὁ τρόμος ὑμῶν καὶ ὁ φόβος ἔσται ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς θηρίοις τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ὄρνεα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ κινούμενα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἰχθύας τῆς θαλάσσης· ὑπὸ χειρας ὑμῶν δέδωκα. καὶ πᾶν ἔρπετόν, ὃ ἔστιν ζῶν, ὑμῖν ἔσται εἰς βρῶσιν· ὡς λάχανα χόρτου δέδωκα ὑμῖν τὰ πάντα; transl. from A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright [eds.], *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 11).

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