

QUOD GAUDIUM EST RIVOS SANGUINIS CERNERE?
THE SUFFERING OF ANIMALS IN THE CHRISTIAN CRITIQUE
OF THE TRADITIONAL GRAECO-ROMAN SACRIFICE

Słowa kluczowe: ofiara zwierzęca, cierpienie, współczucie Arnobiusz, starożytni chrześcijanie

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Schlüsselworte: Tieropfer, Leid, Mitleid, Arnobius, die alten Christen

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Cracoviensi –
viro nobili honestoque,
litterarum cultori eminentissimo
et amico probo*

If some of you ever participated as witness to the killing of a domestic animal (quadrupeds especially) in slaughterhouse or country estate, you have certainly observed the agony of the dying beast, its kicking movements or last convulsions; later on, you might have an opportunity to felt peculiar scent both of blood as warm, fuelling entrails after the opening of the corpse of a dead beast¹. Not every participant would be ready for such a gore view and disturbing experience. If, however, one is be accustomed for facing bravely such grim spectacle of violence, he might say that is able – to some extent – to understand the experiences of men speaking in Old Greek and/or Latin who once upon a time populated the Mediterranean area. On the occasion of the analyzing the ancient Greeks' opinions concerning animal sacrifice Professor Richard Sorabji quoted Günther Zuntz's suggestive remark from his book on *Persephone* (Oxford 1971)²: 'The glorious city – Zuntz wrote – in its continuous worship must have resounded with the shrieks of dying animals; its air reeking with

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¹ See V. Huet, *Watching Rituals*, in: *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, eds. R. Raja and J. Rüpke, Malden – Oxford – Chichester 2015, p. 146–147; see F. Lissarague, *Figuring Religious Ritual*, in: *A Companion to Greek Art II*, eds. T.J. Smith and D. Plantzos, Malden – Oxford 2012, p. 565f.

² R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals. The Origins of Western Debate*, Ithaca 1993, p. 171.

the stench of blood and burning carcasses³. Well said, terribly suggestive, no additional comments needed⁴.

However, these and alike reflections expressed by modern classic scholars and anthropologists are by no means new ones: it was the ancient observers themselves who were perfectly conscious of such unforgettable impressions as far as many of them witnessed and participated in the bloody religious spectacles⁵. A kind of familiarity with these gore rituals may be seen in the beginning of the fourth century AD from the passage written by the learned Numidian Arnobius Afer, an eloquent rhetor of Sicca Venera⁶, who in his *opus vitae*, the great polemical world-history entitled *Adversus nationes* (*Against the Gentiles* – written about 326)⁷, in a very graphic (rhetorical) manner presented a following picture (*Adv. nat.* 7. 4. 8)⁸:

Deos aliquis credet pios beneficos mites caede pecor delectari diffundique laetitia, si quando sub his concidunt et spiritum miserabiliter ponunt? Et voluptatis ergo ut cernimus nulla est in sacrificiis causa nec cur fiant ratio est, quoniam nec est ulla, ac si forte est aliqua, in deos eam cadere nulla posse ratione monstratum est ('Will any one believe that the gods, [who are] kind,

³ G. Zuntz, *Persephone. Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia*, Oxford 1971, p. 183–184; cf. G.S. Kirk, *Some Methodological Pitfalls in the Study of Ancient Greek Sacrifice (in particular)*, in: *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité* [Entretiens Fondation Hardt 27], eds. O. Reverdin and B. Grange, Geneva 1981, p. 41f. Cf. also F.S. Naiden, *Smoke Signals for the Gods. Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic through Roman Periods*, Oxford 2013, p. 4, 11 and 14, challenging W. Burkert's and R. Girard's (cf. note 9, *infra*) long-standing and highly influential thesis (accepted, e. g., as unquestioned orthodoxy in this country) about the primacy of the sacrificial killing animals in the ancient Greek religious practices (although they explained its primacy in quite different ways); also Ch. Faraone and F.S. Naiden, *Introduction*, in: *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice. Ancient Victims, Modern Observers*, eds. Eidem, Cambridge 2012, p. 1–10. Also J. Larson, *Greece*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, ed. B.S. Spaeth, Cambridge 2013, p. 141–142; cf. G. Ekroth, *Animal Sacrifice in Antiquity*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, ed. G.L. Campbell, Oxford 2014, p. 324f. All the dates, unless otherwise stated, refer to AD.

⁴ Also R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, New York 1987, p. 72; cf. F. Graf, *What Is New about Greek Sacrifice?*, in: *Kykeon. Studies in Honour of H.S. Versnel*, ed. H.F.I. Horstmanshoff, H.W. Singor, F.T. van Straten & J.H.M. Strubbe, Leiden 2002, p. 116–124.

⁵ See J. Kindt, *Ancient Greece*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, ed. T. Insoll, Oxford 2011, p. 698.

⁶ Cf. M. Edwards, *The Flowering of Latin Apologetics: Arnobius and Lactantius*, in: *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, eds. M. Edwards, M. Goodman, S. Price and Ch. Rowland, Oxford 1999, p. 197–222, esp. 198.

⁷ Before 331 – so F. Mora, *Arnobius*, in: *Brill's New Pauly* I, eds. H. Cancik and H. Schneider, Leiden – Boston 2003, p. 17–19; cf. C. Moreschini and E. Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature. A Literary History* II, Peabody, Mass. 2005, p. 392–395.

⁸ Translated by H. Bryce and H. Campbell, *The Seven Books of Arnobius, Adversus Gentes*, Edinburgh 1871. The reference to the Arnobius passages I owe to the paper by A. Kucz, *Krytyka antropomorfizmu pogańskiego w „Adversus nationes” Arnobiusza*, *Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne* 42 (2009), p. 65–71; see also her recent book *Umbra veri. Arnobiusz i nurty filozofii klasycznej*, Katowice 2012, p. 69 (I thank Professor Kucz for calling my attention to Arnobius' testimony). On this passage see also recently J.A. North, *Arnobius on Sacrifice*, in: *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected. Essays Presented by Colleagues, Friends and Pupils* [BICS Supplement 91], eds. J. Drinkwater and B. Salway, London 2007, p. 27–36.

beneficent, gentle, are delighted and filled with joy by the slaughter of cattle, if ever they fall and expire pitiably before their altars? And there is no cause, then, for pleasure in sacrifices, as we see, nor is there a reason why they should be offered, since there is no pleasure [afforded by them]; and if perchance there is some, it has been shown that it cannot in any way belong to the gods’).

Slightly earlier he added even more terrifying, naturalistic passage of how does killing of an animal (that’s, it was a cow, most probably) looks like⁹. It is this passage from which the title question comes (*Adv. nat.* 7. 4. 6):

*Postremo quod gaudium est innoxiorum animantium mactatione laetari, miserabilis saepe exaudire mugitus, rivos sanguinis cernere, animas cum cruore fugientes patefactisque secretis provolvier intestina cum stercore et ex residuo spiritu exultantia adhuc corda tremibundis que palpitantes in visceribus venas? (‘Lastly, what pleasure is it to take delight in the slaughter of harmless creatures, to have the ears ringing often with their piteousbellowings, to see rivers of blood, the life fleeing away with the blood, and the secret parts having been laid open, not only the intestines to protrude with the excrements, but also the heart still bounding with the life left in it, and the trembling, palpitating veins in the viscera?’)*¹⁰.

This naturalistic (if not rough and turpistic) passage, written in the manner of Aristotle’s ‘cold’ and descriptive language from his *Zoology*¹¹, may be supplemented by another suggestive paragraph, coming from Prudentius’ famous poem in his *Crown of Martyrdom* (*Liber Peristephanon*; second half of the fourth century)¹².

⁹ See J.W.H.G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion*, Oxford 1979, p. 252–260; cf. generally W. Burkert, *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1983; R. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, Baltimore – London 1977, ch. 1; also S. Price and E. Kearns, s. v. *Ritual*, in: *The Oxford Dictionary of Classical Myth and Religion*, Oxford 2003, p. 471–473.

¹⁰ Cf. M.R. Salzman, *The End of Public Sacrifice: Or, Changing Definitions of Sacrifice in the Post Constantinian World?*, in: *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, eds. J. Wright Knust and Z. Varhelyi, Cambridge 2011, p. 167f.; see M. Beard, J. North and S.R.F. Price, *Religions of Rome II. A Sourcebook*, Cambridge 1998, p. 163.

¹¹ See W. Burkert, *Sacrificial Violence: a Problem in Ancient Religions*, in: *The Oxford Handbooks of Religion and Violence*, eds. M. Juergensmeyer, M. Kitts and M. Jerryson, Oxford 2013, p. 437f.

¹² On which see generally St. Stabryła, *Chrześcijański świat poezji Prudencjusza* [PAU Prace Komisji Filologii Klasycznej 40], Kraków 2011, p. 106–143. An especially emphatic description is found in 10, 1021–1045:

huc taurus ingens fronte torva et hispida / ertis revinctus aut per armos floreis / aut inpeditis cornibus dedueitur, / nee non et auro frons coruscat hostiae, / saetasque fulgor brattealis inficit. / hie ut statuta est inmolanda belua, / pectus sacratio dividunt venabulo; / eructat amplum vulnus undam sanguinis / erventis, inque texta pontis subditi / fundit vaporum flumen et late aestuat. / turn per frequentes mille rimarum vias / inlapsus imber tabidum rorem pluit, / defossus intus quern sacerdos excipit / guttas ad omnes turpe subiectans caput / et veste et omni putrefactus corpore. / quin os supinat, obvias offert genas, / supponit aures, labra, nares obicit, / oculos et ipsos perluit liquoribus, / nee iam palato parcit et linguam rigat, / donee cruorem totus atrum conbibat. / postquam cadaver sanguine egesto rigens / conpage ab ilia flamines retraxerint, / procedit inde pontifex visu horridus, / ostentat udum verticem, barbam gravem, / vittas madentes atque amictus ebrios.

It depicts (10. 1011–1048) a notorious ‘pagan’ ritual called *taurobolium*¹³. In some sense, Prudentius’ vivid characterization should be analyzed together with Arnobius’ earlier dark picture, and both descriptions share an additional and fundamental, common trait: it is justified to see them today as the evidence for breaking of something that the modern scholar has labeled ‘a visual taboo’¹⁴. Such a taboo was kept (or it was tried to have been kept), as it is maintained, by the writers and artists from the classical times; it required the concealment of violence – for whatever reason – and the avoidance of picturing the scenes on which shocking details of immolation itself were visible¹⁵.

(‘Hither is led a great bull with a grim, shaggy brow, wreathed with garlands of flowers about his shoulders and encircling his horns, while the victim’s brow glitters with gold, the sheen of the plates tinging his rough hair. When the beast for sacrifice has been stationed here, they cut his breast open with a consecrated hunting-spear and the great wound disgorge a stream of hot blood, pouring on the plank-bridge below a steaming river which spreads billowing out. Then through the many ways afforded by the thousand chinks it passes in a shower, dripping a foul rain, and the priest in the pit below catches it, holding his filthy head to meet every drop and getting his robe and his whole body covered with corruption. Laying his head back he even puts his cheeks in the way, placing his ears under it, exposing lips and nostrils, bathing his very eyes in the stream, not even keeping his mouth from it but wetting his tongue, until the whole of him drinks in the dark gore. After the blood is all spent and the officiating priests have drawn the stiff carcass away from the planking, the pontiff comes forth from his place, a grisly sight, and displays his wet head, his matted beard, his dank fillets and soaking garments’ (ed. and transl. H.J. Thomson, Loeb).

¹³ On this see H. Oppermann, s. v. *taurobolium*, in: *Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft* V.A., Stuttgart 1934; J.B. Rutter, *The Three Phases of the Taurobolium*, Phoenix 22 (1968), p. 226–249; also M.J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis. The Myth and the Cult*, London 1977, p. 102–103; cf. N. McLynn, *The Fourth-Century „taurobolium”*, Phoenix 50 (1996), p. 312–330.

¹⁴ The term of Joannis Mylonopoulos in the entry *Sacrifice in the Arts*, in: *The Classical Tradition*, eds. A. Grafton, G.W. Most, and S. Settis, Cambridge, Mass. – London 2011, p. 855. On ancient avoidance of the picturing the act of immolation itself see G. Ekroth, *Iconographic Evidence for the Treatment of Animal Blood at Greek Sacrifices*, in: *Common Ground. Archaeology, Art, Science and Humanities*, eds. C.C. Mattusch and A.A. Donohue, Oxford 2006, p. 42; see also her paper *Blood on the Altars? On the Treatment of Blood at Greek Sacrifices and the Iconographical Evidence*, *Antike Kunst* 48 (2005), p. 11. Of the same opinion are I. S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans. Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas*, London – New York 2006, p. 116, and S. Georgoudi, *L’occultation de la violence dans le sacrifice grec: données anciennes, discours modernes*, in: *La cuisine et l’autel: les sacrifices en questions dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne*, eds. S. Georgoudi, R. Koch Piettre and F. Schmidt, Turnhout 2005. See especially the fundamental studies of F. von Straten, *Hiera kala. Image of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic & Classical Greece*, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1995, and N. Himmelmann, *Tieropfer in der griechischen Kunst*, Opladen 1997, p. 7f.; cf. A. Henrichs, *Blutvergiessen am Altar*, in: *Gewalt un Ästhetik*, hrgs. B. Seidensticker und M. Vöhler, Berlin 2006, p. 82. Recently, one should consult two contributions in a book edited by Ch. Faraone and F.S. Naiden: *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice* (see note 3, *supra*). The first of them, by R. Neer (‘Sacrificing Stones: On Some Sculpture, Mostly Athenian’, p. 99–119), deals with Greek representation; the second, by J. Elsner (‘Sacrifice in Late Roman Art’, p. 120–163), is a comprehensive treatment of the theme in the imperial representations. On the Homeric picture of sacrificial killing itself cf. S. Hitch, *The King of Sacrifices. Ritual and Royal Authority in the Iliad* [Hellenic Studies 25] Washington DC – Cambridge Mass. 2009, p. 87–92: she concludes (at p. 89) that ‘the sacrifice in the *Iliad* is not a particularly bloody affair’; but see note 34, *infra*.

¹⁵ P. Borgeaud, *Taurobolion*, in: *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für*

In the following my aim is to devote some space to the first of these depictions and argue that the two accounts of the two fourth-century Christian philosophers may be interpreted, however, as corroborating really a somewhat new trend in the Christians' polemics against the traditional animal sacrifice. What is was? For the three first centuries of the Christian contestation of the way the pagans honoured the gods by killing animals as well the theme of the traditional performing *θυσία* (*thysia*)¹⁶, was treated in a rather general way. It was perceived as the result of misconceptions about the nature of the gods¹⁷. With Arnobius it seems that has been enhanced with an additional new argument¹⁸. In the intellectual fighting the long contest against the traditional religious rites the late third-, and fourth-century Christian apologists began to employ a new objection: maltreatment of animals, their physical suffering, and finally – killing. Accordingly, in their strategy of juxtaposing the shocking details of how innocent animal victims suffer in the dreadful moment of taking their lives, a by-product (so to speak) of the Christian polemics gradually began to emerge: it was a very rudimental reflection on the status of animal quarry itself and it was followed, let us say, by a kind of compassion (even if it was feeble and cursory) for living entities that died mercilessly beheaded by pagan worshippers in a senseless way, in fact – without any reasonable justification. Of course, in claiming so I am as far as possible to make of the early Christian thinkers precursors of ancient 'animal welfare', or 'Animal Rights Movement'-like thinking¹⁹. Nor is my aim – on the contrary – to blame them for an instrumental (which is obvious) using of the 'animal pain'-subject for the purposes of pure, anti-pagan polemics. The second reason for their objections was then and is now naturally clear: the exposure of the fact that animals *really* fear, heavily suffer and feel pain was raised in fierce polemical debates. Its appearance must be seen in the specific context – it was an important part of rhetorical strategy during intellectual exchange with pagans, aimed at refuting traditional erroneous beliefs and practices²⁰. But acknowledging this is one matter; the other is that we must not reject the possibility that in this case rhetoric excluded author's true, humanitarian intentions. An apologist's rhetoric notwithstanding, it touched, however, something real for, if the goal of such rhetoric were aimed to be persuasive and sound, it could

Walter Burkert, hrsg. F. Graf, Stuttgart – Leipzig 1998; cf. F. Lissarague, *Figuring Religious Ritual*, in: *Comp. Greek Art II*, p. 568.

¹⁶ Which, by no means should be understood that such polemics was narrow or one-sided. On the Greek cultic/sacrificial vocabulary see generally A. Hermay, M. Leguilloux, V. Chankowski and A. Petropoulou, *2a. Sacrifices*, in: *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum (ThesCRA) I*, eds. J.Ch. Balty et al., Los Angeles – Basel 2004, p. 61–62.

¹⁷ That's, performed in order to worship someone who simply does not exist or cares little of sacrifices – an important argument that appears already in Plato's *Eutyphro*.

¹⁸ In comparison, for instance, St. Paul's assertion that eating of sacrificed meat was permissible if one did not know of its origin; cf. R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, p. 170.

¹⁹ Cf. R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*; cf. S.T. Newmyer, *Animals in Ancient Philosophy*, in: *A Cultural History of Animals in Antiquity*, ed. L. Kalof, London 2007, p. 152; also his *Plutarch on the Treatment of Animals. The Argument from Marginal Cases*, *Between the Species* 12 (1996), p. 40, and *Speaking of Beasts: The Stoics and Plutarch on Animal Reason and the Modern Case against Animals*, *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* n. s. 63 (1999), p. 99–110.

²⁰ See R.L. Lanzillotta, *Christian Apologists and Greek Gods*, in: *The Gods of Ancient Greece. Identities and Transformations*, eds. J.N. Bremmer and A. Erskine, Edinburgh 2010, p. 442f.

not be – one may here additionally argue – wholly fictitious; it was just related to life and social practices²¹. In this way, interestingly, not only stood by the same Arnobius on the side of those pagan critics who opposed animal sacrifices but started – by the way – a controversy that continues to exist until today: in the 70s of the previous century (cf. note 21, *infra*) this controversy brought in academic circles a renewal of studies on Greek sacrificial ritual. It also pervades in heavy (but occasionally arranged) protests against the bloody act of animal religious offerings now²². In other words, with Arnobius' argumentation in which a far greater attention was put on man's unjustified act of cruelty towards innocent victims²³, Christian philosophers adopted such kind of the interpretation what pagan sacrifices were which in itself has become an autonomous, *moral* problem²⁴. Killing animals began to constitute – to follow modern anthropologists – a serious dilemma²⁵. Arnobius' emphasis on slaugh-

²¹ It would be not inappropriate here to quote the words of Karl Meuli from his famous study: 'Wir sind, um es kurz herauszusagen, der Überzeugung, daß das olympische Opfer nichts anderes sei als ein rituelles Schlachten' (*Griechische Opferbräuche*, in: O. Gigon *et al.*, *Phyllobolia. Festschrift Peter von der Mühl*, Basel 1946, p. 223). Such an approach that has begun to be treated more explicitly in the books of the late W. Burkert who, remarkably, as the motto to his impressive book *Homo Necans* gave Clement of Alexandria's definition of mysteries: literally, they relied on the act of killing (*phonoí*). For this scholar the act of bloody violence lay at the heart of ancient religion, cf. *Homo Necans*, p. 9–10; see note 9, *supra*. Burkert himself, however, was not a moral philosopher; rather, his look was that of a naturalist. As he wrote in the preface to his highly acclaimed book *Creation of the Sacred. Tracks of Biology in Early Religion* (Cambridge Mass. 1996), p. xii: '[...] the language and symbolism of sacrifice in a specific cultural context prompt a variety of interpretations, real bones remain at the site to prove that real killing took place there'; cf. his *credo* (on priority of ethology in studying religion) in *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1979, p. 39. Also P. Blome, *Das Schreckliche im Bild*, in: *Ansichten griechischer Rituale*, p. 95; J.B. Rives, *The Theology of Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World*, in: *Anc. Mediterranean Sacrifice*, p. 187.

²² E.g., on the occasion of the festival (organized every five years) in honour of the goddess Gadhimai in Nepal; see my essay *Homo Venans. Religijny wymiar polowania starożytnych Greków według Arriana z Nikomedii*, *Rocznik Antropologii Historii* 1 (2011), p. 99, note 19.

²³ What was the Greek philosophers' opinion, cf. L. Calder, *Cruelty and Sentimentality: Greek Attitudes to Animals, 600–300 BC* [Studies in Classical Archaeology V/British Archaeological Reports, No. 2225], Oxford 2011, ch. 6, p. 99–116.

²⁴ I am happy to found similar conclusion in S.R.L. Clark's chapter *Animals in Classical and Late Antique Philosophy*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*, eds. T.L. Beauchamp and R.G. Frey, Oxford 2014, p. 53: 'out of compassion for the animals'. As Professor Clark thinks, among the later Christian intellectuals Arnobius was an exception in such a thinking.

²⁵ Cf. W. Burkert, *The Problem of Ritual Killing*, in: *Violent Origins*. Walter Burkert, René Girard and Jonathan Z. Smith on *Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation*, ed. R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, Stanford (CA) 1987, p. 162–163; see his study *Horror Stories. Zu Begegnung von Biologie, Philologie und Religion*, in: *Gewalt und Opfer: im Dialog mit Walter Burkert*, hrsg. A. Bierl und W. Braungart, Berlin – New York 2010, p. 50f. The emphasis put on animal bloodshed and death stands apparently in a contradiction to another understanding of sacrifice and killing animals. The latter, one ought to grant, prevails of course in the modern attitudes and interpretations, and, as it seems, prevailed in ancient Greece too (see, e. g., Homer, *Od.* 14. 250f.). In this view, animal killing was and is done just in order to provide meat and gain the most valuable protein diet; cf. J.-L. Durand, *Greek Animals: Toward a Topology of Edible Bodies*, in: J.-P. Vernant and M. Detienne, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, Chicago – London 1989, p. 87, and, especially, J.-P. Vernant, *A General Theory of Sacrifice and the Slaying of the Victims in the Greek *Thusia**, in: his *Mortals and Immortals*, New York 1981, p. 290–302. See also C. Grottanelli, *Uccidere, donare*,

ter of domestic animals may be thus viewed as an introduction of issue whose moral nature relied on an open expression of pity toward innocent flock²⁶, as Ingrid Saelid Gilhus rightly has observed²⁷. The source of such pity was a disquieting observation that what one was dealing with when participating in sacrifice was in fact ‘an abuse of our power’²⁸, ‘ritual murder’, or, as Professor Graf put it, ‘the destruction of life’²⁹.

I would like to suggest that this unusual, indeed ostentatious focusing on animals by Arnobius in a more unhesitating and complex way may be seen as

mangiare: problematiche attuali del sacrificio antico, in: *Sacrificio e società nel' mondo antico*, eds. C. Grottanelli e N.F. Parese, Roma – Bari 1988, p. 16f. S. Stowers' words (*The Religion of Plant and Animal Offerings Versus the Religion of Meanings, Essences, and Textual Mysteries*, in: *Anc. Mediterranean Sacrifice*, p. 40) are in this context perspicuous: ‘In the religion of everyday social exchange, animal sacrifice was not a dramatic action, but a relatively mundane occasion in which meat was shared with the gods as it was eaten’. To some degree the problem lies in that which aspect of sacrifice one wants to stress out. But it cannot be omitted that even if for the majority of ancient consumers the killing of the victims was an occasion to feast (as it goes nowadays, on an industrial scale, in the modern secularized societies), there were always men whose sensibility and compassion did not permit them to pass neutrally on the acts of animal violence (as was in the case of the notorious Roman *venationes*, cf. note 27, below). This shows that the ancients' attitude toward domestic species, used mainly for sacrifice (I exclude horses, pets or carnivores – all they were, for different reasons, sacrificed rarely or not used, as wild animals, for this goal at all) was far from mere indifference, although indifference remained rather, as far as we can state it, a rule and typical attitude (which in turn may be a proof for the omitting the drastic details of killing itself in the iconographic material, cf. note 14, *supra*). On the practice of sacrificing domestic animals see J.Z. Smith, *The Domestication of Sacrifice*, in: *Violent Origins*, p. 191–235; cf. S. Stowers, *Greeks Who Sacrifice and Those Who Do Not: Toward an Anthropology of Greek Religion*, in: *The Social World of First Christians. Essays in Honor of Wayne Meeks*, eds. L.M. White and O.L. Yarbrough, Minneapolis 1995, p. 329. On the importance of ‘cuisine’, rather than of killing cf. G. Ekroth, *Meat in Ancient Greece: Sacrificial, Sacred or Secular*, in: *Sacrifices, marché de la viande et pratiques alimentaires dans les cités dumonde Romain* [Food & History 5], ed. W. van Andringa, Tournai 2007, p. 269; also her *Meat, Man, and God: On the Division of the Animal Victim in Greek Sacrifices*, in: *ΜΙΚΡΟΣ ΙΕΡΟΜΝΗΜΩΝ: Μελέτες εις Μνήμην Michael H. Jameson*, eds. A. Matthaïou and I. Polinskaya, Athens 2008, p. 259–290; generally A. Dalby, *Siren Feasts. A History of Food and Gastronomy in Greece*, London – New York 1996, p. 12–13.

²⁶ There is, fortunately, a fascinating modern account of the great role of cattle in the Greek economy: J. McInerney, *The Cattle of the Sun. Cows and Culture in the World of Ancient Greeks*, Princeton 2010.

²⁷ I am convinced (but this is another story) that in the case of the first Christians there was a major additional factor that contributed enormously to their compassion for animals sacrificed for pagan deities: many of the Christian believers were witnesses (or, although rarely, cast in the role of victims) of the cruel Roman spectacles (*spectacula*) on the arena in which wild animals were killed in hundreds. This true ‘industry of bloodshed’ for entertainment must have been a disturbing, worrying experience for the onlookers of philosophical mind (but not only for Christians) and must have generated in some observers, I believe, at the same time, a lot of moral questions. Indeed, as L. Nasrallah, *The Embarrassment of Blood. Early Christians and Others on Sacrifice, War, and Rational Worship*, in: *Anc. Mediterranean Sacrifice*, p. 153–154, reminds, Tatian (*Ad Graecos*, 23. 2) compared gladiator spectacles to pagan ‘sacrifices’. See G. Jennison, *Animals for Show and Pleasure in Ancient Rome*, Manchester 1937, p. 177f.; cf. L. Kalof, *Looking at Animals in Human History*, London 2007, p. 27–34; also J.-A. Shelton, *Beastly Spectacles in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, [in:] *Cultural History of Animals in Antiquity*, p. 116–126.

²⁸ J. McInerney, *Cattle of Sun*, p. 37.

²⁹ *One Generation after Burkert and Girard. Where Are the Great Theories?*, in: *Greek & Roman Animal Sacrifice*, p. 37.

a further step towards the sharpening of the arguments in the dispute with pagan adversaries³⁰; its importance was, I think, twofold. First, rejecting of the traditional animal sacrifice meant for the Christians an essential and profound break with an *ethos* ('way of life' and, in a broader sense, culture) of Greeks and Romans among whom Christians themselves lived³¹. Therefore, it simultaneously meant an effort the Christians took up in order to construct a kind of self-definition³² – anyhow, to the same extent the old, traditional sacrifice was an act of self-definition for its 'pagan' participants since ever³³, as Herodotus (8. 144)³⁴

³⁰ Naturally, before Arnobius, already in the second century Tatian (*Or.* 23) and Athenagoras (*De leg.* 27) also paid the attention to the suffering of animals while submitting their in sacrifice. Others seem to have been less interested in animals as such. Tertullian advised his co-followers to participate in sacrifices passively as mere spectators: *De idol.* 16. 6; cf. 17. 3. None the less, he refused to assist the priest-butcher.

³¹ See R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, p. 171: 'Evidently, you could not say that you that you shared in traditional religion, but did not eat meat, or that you ate an unsacrificed meat. And conversely, you could not say that as an early Christian that you repudiates the city's religion, but liked a nice piece of beef'; also K. Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire. Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians*, Cambridge 2012, p. 6–12.

³² Professor Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, p. 171, n. 12, cites the opinions of Tertullian, Cyprian, Eusebius and Julian the Emperor who restituted sacrifices. This was pointed out by L. Nasrallah in her excellent study *Embarrassment of Blood*, in: *Anc. Mediterranean Sacrifice*, p. 146–147. Although early Christians were by no means social 'revolutionists' and destroyers of the political *ordo Romanus*, what M.R. Gale has said of Lucretius ('Roman values are [...] provocatively overturned': *Didactic Epic*, in: *A Companion to Latin Literature*, ed. S. Harrison, Malden – Oxford 2005, p. 107) would be – looking from a longer perspective – true of them, too.

³³ As an acknowledged British expert, G.E.M. de Ste. Croix wrote in the essay 'The Religion of the Roman World' (*Didaskalos* 4, 1972, p. 61): 'I know of nothing harder to grasp in Classical antiquity than Greek and Roman paganism; its whole mental world was one which most of us find exceedingly difficult to understand' (see also G.W. Most, *Philosophy and Religion*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*, ed. D. Sedley, Cambridge 2003, p. 300. Cf. K. Dowden, *European Paganism. The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, London – New York 2000, p. 167–173, and R. Parker, *Greek Religious Practices*, in: *Greek Civilization. An Introduction*, ed. B.A. Sparkes, Oxford 1998, p. 131–135).

³⁴ Which obviously corresponds with Cicero's classical definition of religion as *cultus deorum: De natura deorum*, 2. 8; cf. St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 4. 27; 6. 5; see cf. G. Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice. Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict*, Washington, D. C. 2007, p. 12, and G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*. München 1902, p. 318f.; also see J. Scheid, *Introduction*, p. 184, and J. Rüpke, *Roman Religion*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic*, ed. H. Flower, Cambridge 2014, p. 213f.). On Herodotus' famous passage one should consult the recent commentary by A.M. Bowie, *Herodotus, Histories, Book VII* [Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics], Cambridge 2007, *ad loc.*; see N. Spivey & M. Squire, *Panorama of the Classical World*, London 2005, p. 81. The same idea has been expressed by the great Aristotle who in his *Politics*, 1280b 34, plainly stated that among the most important factors that bound human community (that's, essentially, which make this community a *polis*), animal sacrifices take the most privileged place (cf. Xenophon, *Oec.* 5). The tradition of the ritual killing animals – a fascinating issue in itself – goes back to the prehistoric times, as far as the modern anthropologists and ethnologists can recognize it. In ancient Greece the first literary testimony is provided, in abundance, by the Homeric poems, plenty with the scenes of ritual slaughtering cows, sheep, goats; cf. K.J. Torjesen, *Social and Historical Setting: Christianity as Culture Critique*, in: *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, eds. F. Young, L. Ayres and A. Louth, Cambridge 2004, p. 182–183; S. Hitch, *King of Sacrifice*, p. 18–38; see R. Seaford, *Sacrifice*, in: *The Homer Encyclopedia III*, ed. M. Finkelberg, Malden – Oxford 2011, p. 756–757; also E. Kearns, *Religion in the Greek World*,

and others have proven³⁵. This strategy was nothing new in itself, as from the beginning the Christian sect tried to keep restrained from performing pagan rites³⁶.

c. 750–400 BCE, in: *The Cambridge History of Religions in the Ancient World I*, eds. M.R. Salzman and M.A. Sweeney, Cambridge 2013, p. 280–303; cf. B. Burliga, *Zalotnicy Penelopy, barany Odysa: parergon do fenomenu greckiej ofiary zwierzęcej* (θυσία), *Przegląd Religioznawczy* 4 (254) (2014), p. 29–39.

³⁵ Equally emphatic and revealing is Theophrastus' definition of piety: he identified it with sacrifices – Περὶ εὐσεβείας (*Peri eusebeias/ De pietate*), fr. 12, 42–44, ed. W. Pötscher (= Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, 2. 24: καὶ γὰρ ὅλως τριῶν ἔνεκα θυτέον τοῖς θεοῖς: ἢ γὰρ διὰ τιμῆν ἢ διὰ χάριν ἢ διὰ χρείαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν; cf. R. Parker, *Sacrifice, Greek*, in: *The Oxford Classical Dictionary. Third Edition*, eds. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, Oxford 1996, p. 1344; cf. see cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen I*, Basel – Stuttgart 1959³, p. 16, and J.D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion*, Malden – Oxford 2010, p. 24–25; also J. Bollack, *L'homme entre son semblable et le monster*, [in:] *L'animal dans l'antiquité*, eds. B. Cassin and J.-L. Labarriere, Paris 1997, p. 381. A work of fundamental importance is now the study of D. Obbink, *The Origin of Greek Sacrifice: Theophrastus on Religion and Cultural History*, in: *Theophrastean Studies III. On Natural Science, Physics and Metaphysics, Ethics, Religion, and Rhetoric*, eds. W. W. Fortenbaugh and R.W. Sharples, New Brunswick NJ – Oxford 1988, p. 272f. Pliny's criterion meant to belong to the Roman community and it may be compared with Macrobius' statement (in his commentary on Virgil) that piety meant a knowledge of how to perform sacrifices in a right way (see J. Scheid in his *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, Bloomington – Indianapolis 2003, p. 79). Fortunately, it we are happen to compare Pliny's testimony with a memorable scene describing animal sacrifice on an iconic monument of the Trajan's reign: the famous Column. Dedicated in 113, this priceless record of the Roman arrogance and boastful pride contains suggestive scene of sacrificing a bull, a sheep and a pig (*suovetaurilia*: cf. L. Nasrallah, *Embarrassment of Blood*, in: *Anc. Mediterranean Sacrifice*, p. 142) – providing thus vividly a fine iconographical commentary on the Roman religious mentality; cf. the analysis of R. Brilliant, *Visual Narratives. Story Telling in Etruscan and Roman Art*, New York 1984, p. 90f. On the Greek counterpart of such sacrifice see. C. Bérard, *The Order of Women*, in: C. Bérard et al., *A City of Images. Iconography and Society in Ancient Greece*, Princeton 1984, p. 108, fig. 152: it is vase on which there were painted sacrificial animals for Athena: bull, shep and pig; see M.H. Jameson, *Sacrifice and Animal Husbandry in Classical Greece*, in: *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity* [Cambridge Philological Society Supplement 14], ed. C.R. Whittaker, Cambridge 1988, p. 87f.

³⁶ Already Saint Paul criticized animal sacrifice in his *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1 *Corinth.* 8 and 10 [19–31]). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, ascribed to Paul (*Hebr.* 9.6–10.22) one finds the reason for this. Following Paul, other Christians claimed that one of the most important criterions for being a Christian is the man's attitude towards the sacrifices. So held Tertullian in such writings as *Ad Scapam*, 4.1–4, or *Apologeticus*, 28–29. Not differently maintained Saint Cyprian in the epistle XX. Sometimes modern scholars say that early Christian approval for sacrifice may be detected: as S. Price has reminded, there is plenty of testimonies to prove this and he cites, e. g., Irenaeus, *Contra haer.* 1.6.2–4 (*Religions of the Ancient Greeks*, Oxford 1999, p. 161; he also refers to Beard, North and Price, *Religions of Rome II*, no. 12.7); cf. generally A.H. Armstrong, *Greek Philosophy and Christianity*, in: *The Legacy of Greece. A New Appraisal*, ed. M.I. Finley, Oxford 1981, pp. 347f. The first serious mention of the adherents of the new philosophy as we find it is in Pliny the Younger's famous and always cited letter to the Emperor Trajan (98–117; cf. A.H.M. Jones, *The Social Background of the Struggle between Paganism and Christianity*, in: *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. A. Momigliano, Oxford 1963, p. 18). The letter is dated on 110. Much has been written on this priceless (for many reasons) testimony but for our purpose one characteristics of the strange, alienated sect is for the Roman administrator crucial (K. Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods. Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Roman Empire*, London 1999, p. 92–93): the Christians, the governor of Bithynia wrote, reject sacrifices; it was a mark of their attitude to the Roman state by which they can be recognized (such was the accusation of Celsus in his notorious diatribe against the Christians, as refuted later by Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 8.69–73). One may complain now that Pliny was so laconic, yet his

But there is a second point: a relatively important place the victims occupy in Arnobius' argumentation presented a paradox: it relied on the assumption that in order to be effective in their arguing, early Christian thinkers must have adopted what Professor Bremmer has called 'reductionist approach'³⁷, by which the stressing out of unreasonable and savage dimension of the bloody rite is meant. It was this 'reductionist approach' which enabled the Christian believers to look at killing animals not as an act of piety but impiety, and to criticize it by pointing out its purely biological and physical dimension³⁸. So, it appears that what looks in Arnobius as mere description of animal's physical symptoms of death served in fact to express a moral standpoint³⁹. In effect, given all that when dealing with the Christians' attitude towards animal sacrifice what is usually less exposed (or even neglected) is – as I have mentioned above – that the critics came (perhaps inevitably) to a logical conclusion about the bringing the suffering and ritual killing⁴⁰. As Arnobius' vocabulary in the Book VII reveals, there is in his analysis much of compassion, as, *exempli gratia*,

remarks remains extremely important in one fundamental respect: it shows the working of a Roman stereotype which remains, otherwise, meaningful in itself for it reveals the power of the stereotypical social thinking. At that time the Roman elite circles did not enter into the details or a subtle analysis; they were content of generalizations and this exactly is the case. In his reply Trajan advised him to act wisely: if they will make sacrifices before the gods' imagines, they should be let go (cf. M. Simon, *Cywilizacja wczesnego chrześcijaństwa*, transl. E. Bąkowska, Polish ed. Warszawa 1979, p. 195–196); cf. M.-Z. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Greek Religion, Judaism, and Early Christianity in the Period 100 BC–AD 200*, Oxford 2008, p. 224.

³⁷ J.N. Bremmer, *Greek Normative Animal Sacrifice*, in: *A Companion to Greek Religion*, ed. D. Ogden, Malden – Oxford 2007, p. 144.

³⁸ Since sacrifice was not a holy act, it must have been logically unjust. Cf. S.H. Webb, *On God and Dogs. A Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals*, Oxford 1998, p. 128: 'language of sacrifice is often used to justify animal killing'.

³⁹ S.T. Newmyer in his useful anthology *Animals in Greek and Roman Thought. A Sourcebook*, Milton Park – New York 2011, p. 90, says that 'Christian apologists denounced the practice of blood sacrifice, again not on grounds of sympathy for the victims but because the sacrifice of Christ was considered to have rendered animal sacrifice unnecessary (see, for example, Hebrews 9: 12–14 on Christ as the new sacrifice'. If this was rule, the Arnobius passage may be interpreted as an exception to it.

⁴⁰ I do not, however, aim to imply that Arnobius' standpoint was followed unequivocally by the next generations of Christian thinkers. R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, p. 195f., reminds that in the later Christian literature, especially in the works of St Augustine whose authority was decisive for the intellectuals of Latin West (Thomas of Aquinas read him carefully), a different, yet not quite new approach as Aristotle and Stoic thought prove, was advanced: namely, that animals are not rational as humans, so their killing was permissible (*De Civit. Dei*, 1. 20; cf. Aristotle, *HA*, 488b 24–26: Βουλευτικὸν δὲ μόνον ἀνθρωπὸς ἐστὶ τῶν ζῴων. Καὶ μνήμης μὲν καὶ διδασχῆς πολλὰ κοινῶναι, ἀναμνήσκουσαι δ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο δύναται πλὴν ἀνθρώπου; see esp. *EN*, 1161b 2: φιλία δ' οὐκ ἐστὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀψυχα οὐδὲ δίκαιον. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πρὸς ἵππον ἢ βοῦν; see *Polit.* 1256b 16–22; with the example in Apuleius, *Met.* 15.17.14). After Aristotle (*Polit.* 1256b 16–22; 1254b 10–16), Augustine introduced thus the concept of a strong hierarchy among living entities. Such strong sense of a biological 'ladder' was firmly held in the Middle Ages, perhaps with one major exception to St. Francis; cf. the observations by L. White Jr. in his famous essay *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*, *Science* 155 (1967), p. 1203–1207; see P. Singer, *On Comparing the Value of Human and Non-Human Life*, in: *Applied Ethics in a Troubled World* [Philosophical Studies 73], eds. E. Morscher, E. Neumayer and P. Simmons, Dordrecht 1998, p. 96.

in the ‘Homeric’ picture of animals falling and expiring ‘pitifully before their altars’ (*Adv. nat.* 7. 4. 8: *spiritum miserabiliter ponunt*)⁴¹.

Naturally, it goes without saying that in their insisting on animal torment on the one and human violence on the other hand, Christian intellectuals were not original at all. A few words about it. Perhaps no idea as recorded in a written form could be wholly original or quite independent from the influences of other literary works. So in this case too, the Christian adherents relied heavily on the observations of their pagan predecessors who occasionally criticized traditional blood offerings as unnecessary and inhuman. It is not my goal here to give a complete list of these passages – the topic is well-known. That the theme still remains vivid the really huge modern bibliography on the subject-matter proves. It suffice here only to cite the realistically shocking accounts in Homeric epic (see the passages cited below) of how animals destined to sacrifice deserve pity; or to recall Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (15.75–142; 15.463–466) and his *Fasti*⁴². What Arnobius described so vividly has also been discussed in the middle of the 1st century BC by the Epicurean philosopher Lucretius⁴³, then by Plutarch of Chaeronea⁴⁴, a learned Greek Platonic thinker whose *floruit*

⁴¹ Or, in Lactantius (who was a disciple of Arnobius), *Div. inst.* 6.25.3, who quoting Seneca, asked: ‘what is pleasure in tortures of the innocent?’ (*quae extrucidatione innocentium voluptas est?*). One may argue, however, that a lot of worry or anxiety appears already in the Homeric *Iliad*, where occasionally one may hear the formula: ‘the pitiless bronze’ (νηλεῖ χαλκῶ: 3. 292; 19. 266; transl. A.T. Murray, Loeb); cf. Hitch, *King of Sacrifice*, p. 88; see G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary. Volume I: Books 1–4*, Cambridge 1995, on 3. 292, p. 307. Remarkably, Kirk gives a note that here in Homer one has ‘unusual attention to the victims’. The same is true in the Aristophanic play *Peace*, p. 956–1121, where sacrifice is associated with war, blood and gore, and so not showed and described; cf. J. Wilkins, *The Boastful Chef. The Discourse of Food in ancient Greek Comedy*, Oxford 2000, p. 21–22.

⁴² The first of the Ovidian passages is a part of the famous doctrine popularized by Pythagoras of Samos (cf. W.K.Ch. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy I*, Cambridge 1962, p. 187–188; D.A. Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism*, London 1984, p. 35–54). In the *Fasti* there is a famous catalogue of the animal victims (1.337–456): scholars have interpreted it by focusing on its various aspects, yet its lecture makes at least one sure that there was some anxiety on the part of the worshippers who sought guilt in animals’ behaviour; at least, there was a strong sense of uneasiness of making violence: ‘the victim fears the knives mirrored in the water before they strike’ (1.328–329); see also 1.361–364: ‘The sow suffered for her crime, and the she-goat suffered, too, for hers. But the ox and you, ye peaceful sheep, what was your sin? Aristaetus wept because he saw his bees killed, root and branch, and the unfinished hives abandoned’; tr. J.G. Frazer, revised G.P. Goold, Loeb). But again, the primacy of depicting such naturalistic details belongs, as usual, to Homer. For instance, in the *Iliad* (23.165–169; 771–775) he does not fail to narrate that during the contests after the burial of Patroclus Ajax slipped on excrements left by the animals killed as sacrificial victims at the grave of the hero; on another kind of realistic narrative see Homer’s *Odyssey*, 3.449–463; also Virgil, *Aen.* 12.214: *in flammam iugulant pecudes et vivis viscera eripiunt*. One may remind the feast of *hordicidia* at Patrae: Varro, *De agricult.* 2.5.6; Pausanias, 7.18.11–13.

⁴³ *DRN*, 1.82–83; 1.101 (a famous statement that *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*); 3.52–54. Lucretius remains a typical representative of the ancient philosophers who rejected traditional piety and rituals, including, first and foremost, the horrors of animal sacrifices. Yet, his epic masterpiece show by the same, as the later works of Plutarch and Porphyry do, that sacrifices belonged to the core of Greek and Roman religious attitude. As Stowers has shown (*Greeks Who Sacrifice and Those Who Do Not*, cf. note 25, *supra*), sacrifice was fundamental means by which social relations were organized and kept.

⁴⁴ See S.T. Newmyer, *Animals in Plutarch*, in: *A Companion to Plutarch*, ed. M. Beck, Malden – Oxford – Chichester 2014, p. 223f.

fell on the second half of the first century AD⁴⁵. In one of his most unusual writing that prompted the idea that man should abstain from eating animal flesh, Plutarch observed, however, that concerning meat diet in everyday life the reverse practice is (regrettably) true: a most common procedure, say, the characteristic of human race, Plutarch's argument runs, is in fact animal mass killing, including the popular, specific type of depriving of life – ritual sacrifice to the gods. A very sensitive man himself and perfectly acquainted with darker sides of human nature, Plutarch knew that so ubiquitous was the killing in human culture that in practicing it (irrespective of various motivation that stood behind) a kind of a perverse pleasure may be observed. As he pointedly and pessimistically stated in the essay *On the Eating of Flesh*, ἡμεῖς δ' οὕτως ἐν τῷ μαιφόνῳ τρυφῶμεν – ‘so we find pleasure in carnage’ (*De esu carniū*, 995c)⁴⁶. From the second century AD another bitter voice may

⁴⁵ Cf. G. Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents. The Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy*, Pittsburg PA 2005, pp. 93f.

⁴⁶ I cannot accept Louise Calder's view (*Cruelty and Sentimentality*, p. 109) that when in *De esu carniū*, 996a, Plutarch gives a story of an Athenian who ‘had flayed a ram while it was still alive’ (transl. H. Cherniss and W.C. Helmbold, Loeb), ‘the concern for animal suffering’ is not explicit. Rather, the opposite is true (cf. Newmyer, *Plutarch and Treatment of Animals*, p. 40). The two essays certainly reveal the author's compassion and his sense of deep empathy for man's unjustified bestiality toward animals and the practice – in Calder's own words ‘publicly acceptable carnivory’ (p. 101). Plutarch expresses his attitude plainly in claiming that when dealing with such a subject, one must abandon ‘artificial or sophistical manner’ and to appeal to ‘our own emotions’ (*tois pathesi emblepsantes: De esu carniū* 2.7 = *Mor.* 999a). I think to this purpose serve many emphatic passages in both treatises where drastic details (like in the case of Arnobius) are brought forth. For example: ‘How could his eyes endure the slaughter when throats were slit and hides flayed and limbs torn from limb? How could his nose endure the stench? How was it that the pollution did not turn away his taste, which made contact with the sores of others and sucked juices and serums from mortal wounds?’ (993b); ‘We shall kill an animal, but in pity and sorrow, not degrading or torturing it – which is the current practice in many cases, some thrusting red-hot spits into the throats of swine so that by the plunging in of the iron the blood may be emulsified and, as it circulates through the body, may make the flesh tender and delicate. Others jump upon the udders of sows about to give birth and kick them so that, when they have blended together blood and milk and gore (Zeus the Purifier!) and the unborn young have at the same time been destroyed at the moment of birth, they may eat the most inflamed part of the creature. Still others sew up the eyes of cranes and swans, shut them up in darkness and fatten them, making the flesh appetizing with strange compounds and spicy mixtures’ (996e–997a). Another drastic, pessimistic account of human nature is briefly given at 998b–c: ‘Just so, at the beginning it was some wild and harmful animal that was eaten, then a bird or fish that had its flesh torn. And so when our murderous instincts had tasted blood and grew practised on wild animals, they advanced to the labouring ox and the well behaved sheep and the house-warding cock; thus, little by little giving a hard edge to our insatiable appetite, we have advanced to wars and the slaughter and murder of human beings’. A similar sentiment is expressed by Plutarch in his another essay (quoted by S.T. Newmyer, *Animals in Greek & Roman Thought*, p. 89), (cited in Latin as *Terrestriane an aquatica*, and also known in its English form as *Whether Land or Sea Animals Are Cleverer*), §2 (= *Mor.* 959b–e): ‘Yet that is the very source, my dear Soclarus, from which they say insensibility spread among men and the sort of savagery that learned the taste of slaughter on its hunting trips and has grown accustomed to feel no repugnance for the wounds and gore of beasts, but to take pleasure in their violent death. The next step is like what happened at Athens’: the first man put to death by the Thirty was a certain informer who was said to deserve it, and so was the second and the third; but after that they went on, step by step, until they were laying hands on honest men and eventually did not spare even the best of the citizens. Just so the first man to kill a bear or a wolf won praise; and perhaps some cow or pig was condemned as suitable to slay because it had tasted the sacred meal placed before it. So from that point, as they

be heard: the malicious satirist Lucian of Samosate (of Syrian descent himself, he looked at many aspects of Greek and Roman culture from an outsider's perspective) produced another, very acid and harsh protest against the absurdity of performing animal sacrifices by the Greeks⁴⁷, presenting by the same on this occasion a sarcastic, if not cynic and malicious portrait of the Graeco-Roman society obsessed with-, and blinded by bloody religious rituals⁴⁸. It is understandable that this ancient 'Voltaire' rejected the way in which the rites were explained by the performers themselves; he took them evidently as totally unconvincing and unnecessary, if not preposterous at all⁴⁹. Perhaps the most explicit argumentation against the practice was presented in the second half of third century by the Neoplatonic thinker Porphyry of Tyre (c. 234–305⁵⁰) in his influential and famous treatise *De abstinentia*

now went on to eat the flesh of deer and hare and antelope, men were introduced to the consumption of sheep and, in some places, of dogs and horses. The tame goose and the dove upon the hearth, as Sophocles says, were dismembered and carved for food – not that hunger compelled men as it does weasels and cats, but for pleasure and as an appetizer. Thus the brute and the natural lust to kill in man were fortified and rendered inflexible to pity, while gentleness was, for the most part, deadened' (transl. H. Cherniss and W.C. Helmbold, Loeb). Cf. generally M. Lonsdale, *Attitudes towards Animals in Ancient Greece*, Greece & Rome 26 (1979), p. 153.

⁴⁷ *De sacrificiis*, 9 and 13; cf. *Demonax*, 11. See recently F. Graf, *A Satirist's Sacrifices: Lucian's On Sacrifices and the Contestation of Religious Traditions*, in: *Anc. Mediterranean Sacrifice*, p. 203–213; cf. N. Belayche, *Entre deux éclats de rire. Sacrifice et représentation du divin dans le De sacrificiis de Lucien*, in: „Nourrir les dieux?” *Sacrifice et représentation du divin*, eds. V. Pirenne-Delforge and F. Prescendi, Liège 2011, p. 165–80.

⁴⁸ Clement of Alexandria would agree with him: *Stromat.* 7.6.30–32; cf. H.-J. Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity. A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, Edinburgh 2000, p. 17–18.

⁴⁹ Although he had no warm words of the Christians and their 'sect', and he considered them as very stupid, indeed foolish (*De morte Peregr.* 13 and 15), he unconsciously, and presumably against his own intentions, shared with them a deep distaste for animal carnage for religious purposes. It will be interesting to add here that his point of departure in such a disapproval of Greek bloody ritual was fundamentally similar to that adopted by Christian philosophers. The latter followed the critique from the pagans and agreed that animal sacrifices constitute a patent absurdity. But a profound difference between them cannot be ignored too: so Porphyry did not deny the reality of the gods, and therefore he took for granted that most of people try to win favor of the gods – which in turn logically presupposed a belief in the existence of the deities. After W. Burkert, one may call this kind of the long critical approach a 'philosophical religion' (*Greek Religion*, Cambridge Mass. 1985, ch. VII, p. 305–338; cf. also M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, München 1955, p. 741–744). W. Burkert rightly observed that although philosophical dispute with regard religious rituals, myths and the nature of the gods (it may be labelled *theologia*) was of very old provenience (it goes back, in fact, as far as to the VIIth century BC, when the *Iliad* was composed), the critique of traditional forms of cult and behaviour 'remains without effect in practice'.

⁵⁰ P. Townsend, *Bonds of Flesh and Blood. Porphyry, Animal Sacrifice, and Empire*, in: *Anc. Mediterranean Sacrifice*, p. 215, puts it 'in the mid- to late third century CE'.

(*On Abstinence from Killing Animals*)⁵¹ which, as scholars nowadays think⁵², had a great influence on Arnobius' argumentation in the Book VII of his *Against the Gentiles*, devoted wholly to the traditional animal θυσία-offerings⁵³. The theme as also the subject-matter of Philostratus' famous biography of Apollonius of Tyana (*Vita Apol.* 1.1; 1.10).

* * *

To return to Arnobius, a dilemma of his and his predecessors was resolved through the very end of the fourth century AD. In the year 391 the Christianized Roman emperor Theodosius issued a verdict forbidding ancient religious ritual practices⁵⁴. In this way the old custom has been ended by a formal, political decision. On this occasion severe punishments were also announced to be executed if someone attempted to break the imperial order. This step may be read today in one of the most symbolic documents from that period, the *Codex Theodosianus* (16.10.2). The *Codex* represents the collection of earlier prescripts as referring to the law requiring *sacrificiorum aboleatur insania* ('the madness of sacrifices must be abolished'), issued by the emperor Constantius II (he reigned 337–361). But with regard to pagan sacrifices, the first serious attempt was made, in fact, by the Emperor Constantine the Great himself (who at the same time retained, nevertheless, the old, prestigious pagan office of *pontifex maximus*). It was perhaps a favourable political atmosphere at that time that hastened a decisive blow to the traditional pagan rites. Perhaps there is no coincidence in the fact that in the same year the Christians destroyed the old temple of Serapeum at Alexandria. So, after many centuries which have passed from that time it is today clear enough that Theodosius' edict was not only one of the 'symbolic' steps leading to a true end of antiquity. It constituted a really decisive end – if such an end is measured by abandoning of very old rituals that in consequence resulted in a transformation of mentalities of the members of the Graeco-Roman

⁵¹ Περί ἀποχῆς ἐμψύχων (in Latin *De Abstinencia ab esu animalium*). An alternative translation: *On Abstinence from Animal Food*; cf. J. Bouffartigue et M. Patillon, *Introduction*, in: *Porphyry, De abstinencia*, Paris 1977; cf. G. Clark, *Introduction*, in: *Porphyry: On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, London 2000, p. 1, and C. Osborne, *Dumb Beasts and Dead Philosophers. Humanity and the Humane in Ancient Philosophy and Literature*, Oxford 2007, ch. VII. Influenced by the fifth-century BC philosopher Empedocles, Porphyry gave a vital critique of the traditional sacrifices. He also relied on treatise of Theophrastus *On Piety*; see D.A. Dombrowski's seminal study *Philosophy of Vegetarianism* and his paper *Philosophical Vegetarianism and Animal Entitlements*, in: *Oxf. Handb. of Animals in Cl. Thought and Life*, p. 535f.; cf. R.M. Grant, *Early Christians and Animals*, London – New York 1999, p. 11–13.

⁵² Several scholars rightly observe that the main goal of Porphyry was first and foremost to condemn meat eating as such, rather than to bring out the killing the victims, cf. R. Parker, *On Greek Religion*, Ithaca – London 2012, p. 125.

⁵³ Of course, wherever possible Arnobius relied on the opinion of other the 'pagan' authorities too, e. g., Varro (*Adv. nat.* 7. 1).

⁵⁴ R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, p. 171; as J. Elsner reminds (*Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*, Oxford 1998, p. 223), at that time Christians destroyed the pagan temples at Apamea, Alexandria and Gaza.

oecumene, living under the blessed sky of the Roman empire. Thirty four years after the imperial edict another symbolic event took the place: the Emperor Justinian definitely closed the Platonic Academy at Athens and in this way put the end to the teaching classical philosophy; Plato's followers migrated eastwards, to Persia. But this is not the end of the story of the Christian opposition to what constituted 'ancient way of life'. The story did not stop; it found, however, its own 'to be continued' in modern times.

As Bruce Lincoln perspicuously has observed, 'food was *and is* created through an act of sacrifice'⁵⁵. To be sure he analyses a Middle Persian text, yet his remark fits well the case of the ancient Greeks. With a few exceptions (hunting was certainly this case⁵⁶), meat came in ancient realities *via* –, and from sacrifices, arranged privately or openly and publicly. Engaging with supporters of old worship and cultic practices in a sharp issue that concerned the sense of making animal bloodshed⁵⁷, the Christians caused something out of the ordinary: with the help of the standing aside Pythagoreans and Neoplatonic philosophers they contributed to the process that can be named a desacralization of primeval animal killing rite that – over time – ceased eventually to be considered as the 'sacred' act (and it was the moment of contact in by which humans met the gods⁵⁸) and in the following centuries started instead to be regarded as a purely secular profession – economic enterprise aimed at meeting human needs⁵⁹; in a word – it came about to be a business, again and again on an increasing scale. One may say that the modern *homo oeconomicus* (the term of

⁵⁵ *Sacrificial Ideology and Indo-European Community*, in: his *Death, War, and Sacrifice*, Chicago 1991, p. 170 (his cursive).

⁵⁶ R. Parker, *Eating Unsacrificed Meat*, in: *Paysage et religion en Grèce antique. Mélanges offert à Madeleine Jost*, eds. P. Carlier and Ch. Lerouge-Cohen, Paris 2010, p. 137; see G. Ekroth, *Meat in Ancient Greece: Sacrificial, Sacred or Secular?*, in: *Sacrifices, marché de la viande et pratiques alimentaires dans les cités du monde romain*, p. 254.

⁵⁷ Cf. G.H. van Kooten, *Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World*, in: *The Routledge Companion to Early Christian Thought*, ed. D. J. Bingham, Milton Park – New York 2010, pp. 17 – 17.

⁵⁸ Cf. M. Jameson, *Sacrifice and Ritual: Greece*, [in:] *Civilizations of Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome II*, eds. M. Grant and R. Kitzinger, New York 1988, p. 974; also G. Ekroth, *Burnt, Cooked or Raw? Divine and Human Culinary Desires at Greek Animal Sacrifice*, in: *Transformations in Sacrificial. Practices: From Antiquity to Modern Times*, eds. E. Stavrianopoulou, A. Michaels and C. Ambos, Berlin 2008, p. 88.

⁵⁹ Which was connected with 'the victory' of the Aristotelian/Stoic thoughts on animals in the medieval thought (see note 40, *supra*); cf. J.J. Scanlan, *Introduction*, in: *Albert the Great, Man and the Beast. De animalibus (Books 22–26)*, Binghampton 1987, p. 25f. But there is a problem: what was a substantial difference between the killing animals in sacrifice and killing them in butchery as it goes nowadays? Was any? It was, of course, but it related to men and their ethics, their viewing animals and their status – which determined in turn the treatment of animals by men: were they reasonable creatures towards which men had (and still have, as recent hot disputes rage) moral obligations, or were they objects only, things, along which one may pass indifferently and use them according to her/his needs. As N.G. Gregory wrote (*Physiology and Behaviour of Animal Suffering*, Oxford 2004, p. 1): 'The main reason for being concerned about human and animal suffering is a sense of respect and fairness towards others. Many people feel that needless suffering is unfair, and should be controlled or avoided. Society should not be responsible for needlessly ruining other peoples' or animals' lives. This is a moral outlook, and it inevitably varies between individuals. Some people care. Others do not'; see also P. Shepard, *Thinking Animals. Animals and the Development of Human Intelligence*, Athens GA 1978, p. 245.

S.H. Webb) has replaced the ancient *homo sacrificans*⁶⁰. Naturally, this major change in no way helped animals or saved them from mass butchering, at least with regard to these species that are (as they were in the ancient times⁶¹) bred especially in order to be killed and provide meat diet, for innumerable McDonald's- and alike restaurants⁶². Indeed, despite animal rights killing of these domestic species began to be included into the category 'secularized' industry. Inevitably, animals constituted a branch of this industry. Since, due to the expansion and development in technology this industry is far more advanced now than it was, say, a century or two ago, it is a really difficult thing to imagine now how many farm animals are kept in order to become ham, steak or sausage. This confirms a notorious maxim ascribed to the Prussian *eiserne Kanzler* Bismarck: if you like sausage, you should not try to learn how is it produced⁶³, and he had not in mind various chemical ingredients used in the process of food production but the fact where the meat is taken from⁶⁴. As Webb reminds (*On God and Dogs*, p. 129), 'A persuasive case can be made that the greatest victims of economic thinking have been nonhuman animals. Animals are treated as a renewable resource that can be used without limit and without end. In fact, the only limits to their use are economic. Not only are they bought and sold for everything from zoos to scientific and industrial research, but the pressures of the free market have turned farm animals into products that must be raised as efficiently as possible. Over 100 million of cows, sheep and pigs and more than 5 billion chickens are raised and slaughtered in the United States each year under conditions that treat animals like protein machines converting plentiful feed into precious flesh'⁶⁵. As it was in antiquity, the rivers of blood are still flowing now, so what is maybe at stake is a sensibility of individuals. Perhaps the only thing for which we can be thankful is that their voice could be occasionally heard at all, quieter or louder⁶⁶. In

⁶⁰ See P. Shepard, *The Others. How Animals Made Us Human*, Washington DC 1997, p. 291f.

⁶¹ An ancient list of the animal victims is given by P. Stengel, *Griechische Kultusalthertümer*, München 1898, p. 107f.; see G. Kron, *Animal Husbandry, Hunting, Fishing, and Fish Production*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Ancient World*, ed. J.P. Oleson, Oxford 2006, p. 177f.

⁶² See R. Scruton, *Animal Rights and Wrongs*, London 2006, p. 71–72; see G. Clark, *Animals in Classical and Late Antique Philosophy*, in: *Oxf. Handb. of Animal Ethics*, p. 139.

⁶³ A famous anecdote tells that the German authority in the field of ancient Greek religion, Professor Paul Stengel (the author of the still valuable contribution: *Opferbräuche der Griechen*, Leipzig – Berlin 1910) has visited slaughterhouses in Berlin, searching for confirmation from butchers if they lift up an animal before killing it – as it is described in some of the ancient sources (e. g., in Euripides' *Electra*). Stengel's question raised amusement among the butchers (I refer the tale after F. von Straten, *Hiera kala*, p. 104–106.).

⁶⁴ An ancient comment on this may be the attitude of an unknown author of the treatise preserved in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*. Here we are told: 'The meat of young pig is injurious when it is either underdone or burnt: it may lead to cholera and upset the bowels. Pork is the best of all meats: the most beneficial is that which is neither excessively fatty nor, on the other hand, excessively lean; nor should it have the age of a slaughter animal. Eat without the skin, and let it cool a little' (Hippocrates, *On Regimen in Acute Diseases*, App. 18; I quote after A. Harden, *Animals in the Classical World. Ethical Perspectives from Greek and Roman Texts*, New York 2013, p. 65).

⁶⁵ These numbers are really frightening and modern mass media (the Internet especially) allow to see the records of how the animal killing industry looks (an euphemism in itself) in practice.

⁶⁶ See E. Aaltola, *Animal Suffering. Philosophy and Culture*, New York 2012, p. 68–79.

Graeco-Roman antiquity there were Pythagoras and Empedocles⁶⁷, then Plutarch. The latter remains perhaps one of the most sincere ancient advocates of non-human animals. His understanding, generosity and compassion toward animals, his pity, regret and grief over the spilling sacrificial blood undoubtedly deserve to be remembered. Early Christians had their 'utilitarian' interest in criticizing pagan blood rites and animal sacrifices, no doubt, yet this does not mean that they were totally blind and deaf to what the traditional sacrifice rested on. Arnobius was among them: he left us one of the strongest voices of protest.

**QUOD GAUDIUM EST RIVOS SANGUINIS CERNERE?
CIERPIENIE ZWIERZĄT W CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKIEJ KRYTYCE
TRADYCYJNEJ OFIARY U GREKÓW I RZYMIAN**

STRESZCZENIE

Tytułowy cytat łaciński ('Jakaż jest radość z oglądania strumieni krwi?') pochodzi z apologetycznego dzieła Arnobiusza, zatytułowanego *Przeciw poganom* (*Adversus nationes*). Księga VII tego dzieła zawiera najbardziej chyba wyrazistą krytykę składania przez Greków i Rzymian w ofierze zwierząt hodowlanych. Jednym z argumentów, jakim posłużył się uczony mówca, jest cierpienie zwierząt, które zabijano niepotrzebnie, ponieważ bogowie nie wymagali krwawych ofiar od ludzi. Podkreślając fakt zadawania ofiarom cierpienia i bezsensownego pozbawiania ich życia, Arnobiusz wprowadził szokujące szczegóły, w jaki sposób ofiarowanie zwierzęcia (tj. zabicie go) wyglądało w praktyce. W artykule staram się zwrócić uwagę na tę okoliczność, iż przytaczając te szczegóły chrześcijański apologeta nawiązał do wcześniejszych wypowiedzi pisarzy klasycznych, takich jak Pitagoras i Plutarch, którzy również krytykowali powszechnie praktykowany rytuał. Mimo że okazjonalnie słyszy się opinie, iż wczesnochrześcijańscy myśliciele pozostawali obojętni na los zwierząt ofiarnych, przykład Arnobiusza dowodzi, że nie można stosować tutaj uogólnień, oraz że w tym wypadku uzasadnione jest mówić o wrażliwości i empatii.

⁶⁷ Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* 9.127–129; Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 30. 186; Philostratus, *Vit. Apol.* 1.1; 1.8.

QUOD GAUDIUM EST RIVOS SANGUINIS CERNERE?
DAS LEIDEN DER TIERE IN DER CHRISTLICHEN KRITIK
DER TRADITIONALEN OPFER DER GRIECHEN UND RÖMER

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das lateinische Zitat im Titel des Artikels (‘Was für eine Freude ist von der Beobachtung der Ströme von Blut?’) stammt aus dem apologetischen Werk von Arnobius *Gegen die Heiden* (*Adversus nationes*). Das siebte Buch dieser Arbeit umfaßt die vielleicht ausdrücklichsste christliche Kritik der Griechen und Römer, die die Tiere opferten. Eines der Argumente, die von dem gelehrten Lautsprecher verwendet wird, ist das Leiden dieser Tiere, die unnötigerweise getötet wurden, weil die Götter keine Opfer von den Menschen verlangten. Unter Betonung der Tatsache, daß den Opfern das Leiden gegeben ist und kein Sinn in der Tötung der Tiere ist, führt Arnobius die schockierenden Details ein, was dieses Opfertitual (das Töten) in der Praxis war. In diesem Artikel versuche ich, die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Tatsache zu schenken, daß sich in der Darstellung dieser Informationen der christlicher Fürsprecher auf frühere Aussagen der klassischen Autoren wie Pythagoras und Plutarch bezog, die auch das gängige Ritual kritisierten. Obwohl man gelegentlich heute die Meinungen hört, daß die frühe christlichen Denker gleichgültig gegenüber dem Schicksal der Opfertiere waren, bestätigt der Schriftsteller von Sicca Venera, daß es sehr schwer wäre, Verallgemeinerungen zu wenden, genauso wie daß in diesem Fall von der Sensibilität und Einfühlungsvermögen zu sprechen gerechtfertigt ist.