Animals in Eden

THE FALL OF MAN IN THE EARLY MODERN ART AND LITERATURE OF GERMANY AND THE LOW-COUNTRIES

PAUL J. SMITH

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is one of long standing. In the 1990s, I began to take an interest in the subject – the pictorial and literary depiction of the animals surrounding Adam and Eve at the moment of the Fall. Initially, this resulted in the publication of some separate articles on Paradise scenes in works of Cornelis van Haarlem (1999), Dürer (2001), and Jan Brueghel and Rubens (2007). Gradually, the idea arose to make a monograph of this, one that could be realised as part of the NWO (Dutch Research Council) funded research project *Cultural Representations of Living Nature: Dynamics of Intermedial Recording in Text and Image* (ca. *1550–1670*), which was carried out at LUCAS (Leiden University Centre of Art in Society) from 2010 to 2015.[1] All in all, however, it still took many years before all previously and newly acquired insights and new findings could be brought together into a coherent whole in book form.

This book comprises 10 chapters, of which chapters 1, 3, and 10 are new. The other chapters derive from adapted translations (from French and Dutch) and updated rewritings of articles previously published in English:

– Chapter 2 is based on my articles "The Melancholic Elk. Animal symbolism and linguistic ambiguity in Albrecht Dürer's *The Fall of Man* (1504) and Aegidius Sadeleer's *Theatrum Morum* (1609)", in Bogaards P. – Rooryck J. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Quitte ou Double Sens. Articles sur l'ambiguïté offerts à Ronald Landheer* (Amsterdam – New York, NY: 2001) 333–343, and "Rereading Dürer's Representations of the Fall of Man", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Zoology in Early Modern Culture. Intersections of Science, Theology, Philology, and Political and Religious Education* (Leiden – Boston: 2014) 301–328.
– Chapter 4 is a thoroughly reworked translation of my article "Art et Science: le défilé des animaux dans *L'Arche de Noé sur le Mont Ararat*, peinture de Simon de Myle (1570)", in Gendt A.M. de – Montoya A.C. (eds.), *La pensée sérielle, du Moyen Age aux Lumières* (Leiden – Boston 2019) 194–217.
– Chapter 5 is based on "Fable and Emblem in *The Fall of Man* (1592) by Cornelis van Haarlem", in Manning J. – Porteman K. – Vaeck M. van (eds.), *The Emblem Tradition and the Low Countries* (Turnhout: 1999) 281–302.
– Chapter 6 is composed from my articles "L'ornithologie de Du Bartas: histoire naturelle et typologie biblique", in Bjaï D. (ed.), La Sepmaine *de Du Bartas, ses lecteurs et la science du temps* (Geneva: 2015) 121–142; "Ichthyological

1 https://www.nwo.nl/en/projects/312-30-001.

Topics of the European Reception of Du Bartas", in Pouey-Mounou A.-P. – Smith P.J. (eds.) *Ronsard and Du Bartas in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden – Boston: 2021) 255–279; and my valedictory lecture *Tussen taal en cultuur: de poëzie van Du Bartas* (Leiden: 2020).

– Chapter 7 is based on "Jan Brueghel the Elder's First Paradise Landscape (1594)", in Falque I. – Guiderdoni A. (eds.) *Rethinking the dialogue between the verbal and the visual. Methodological approaches to the relationship between religious art and literature (1400–1700)* (Leiden – Boston: 2022) 255–274.
– Chapter 8 is a rewriting of "Sympathy in Eden. On *Paradise with the Fall of Man* by Rubens and Brueghel", in Göttler C. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen. The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture* (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 211–244.
– Chapter 9 is a translated rewriting of "Diersymboliek in Rembrandts *Zondeval* (1638) en in Vondels *Adam in ballingschap* (1664)", *De zeventiende eeuw* 26 (2010) 2–20.

My thanks go to the following persons. First of all Walter Melion, editor-in-chief of the series, for his confidence in my book project, and for his angelic patience when it took longer than expected. I would also like to thank the two anonymous reviewers of the manuscript, for their critical but constructive readings. I would like to thank Jan van Dijkhuizen, Florike Egmond, Karl Enenkel, Marrigje Rikken, and Lisanne Wepler for their insightful discussions on early modern natural history and its cultural context and related topics. I thank Meredith McGroarty for her careful linguistic reading of several chapters, and Pete Langman for his invaluable reading of the entire manuscript. And I am grateful to the Brill team – Arjan van Dijk, Ivo Romein, Fem Eggers – for their support in producing the book. I thank my daughter Sophie-Anne and my partner Krista for their patience over the years when I mentioned Adam and Eve or animals in paintings. I dedicate this book to Krista. She was and remains my most incisive interlocutor.

Illustrations

Abbreviations

FR	Max J. Friedländer & Jakob Rosenberg, *The Paintings of Lucas Cranach.* Revised edition (Amsterdam: 1978).
Nouveaux pourtraitz	Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes pour user en l'architecture: composez & enrichiz de diversité d'Animaulx, representez au vray, selon l'Antipathie & contrarieté naturelle de chacun d'iceulx* (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592).
Seconde Semaine	Guillaume Du Bartas, *La Seconde Semaine* (*1584*), ed. Yvonne Bellenger et al. (Paris: 1991).
Sepmaine	Guillaume Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine ou Creation du monde*, ed. Jean Céard et al. (Paris: 2011), vol. 1.
Weekes	Guillaume Du Bartas, *His Divine Weekes and Workes* [...], transl. Joshua Sylvester (London, Robert Young: 1641), in Joshua Sylvester, *The Complete Works*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh: 1880), vol. 1.
WF	Eduard de Dene & Marcus Gheeraerts, *De Warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567).

Introduction

This book is about the early modern portrayal of the animals around Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden at the dramatic moment of the Fall. It takes as its starting point Albrecht Dürer's famous 1504 engraving *The Fall of Man* (also known as *Adam and Eve*) (Fig. 0.1). While this engraving must have made an overwhelming impression on the contemporary viewer, this was perhaps less the result of its subject matter than its sheer beauty. The naked forms of the First Couple dominate the frame, irresistibly drawing the viewer's gaze. Indeed, at first glance Dürer seems to have been more interested in depicting the beauty of ideally proportioned human bodies than in the narrative of the Fall.[1] Dürer was inspired by the newly discovered sculptures of classical antiquity. His Adam is clearly modelled on the Apollo of Belvedere, an ancient sculpture that had been excavated as recently as 1485, and that Dürer may have seen in real life. The source of his Eve is more difficult to establish. While she resembles the Venus of Sandro Botticelli's 1483 *The Birth of Venus* (Florence, Uffizi Gallery), she also draws from the Hellenistic Medici Venus. The link Dürer appears to be making between the biblical Eve and the pagan goddess Venus was as innovative as it was daring.

In his quest for an ideal pagan depiction of the human body, Dürer seems to be distancing himself from the traditional Christian theocentric worldview in favour of a new pagan anthropocentric worldview with man as its radiant centre. He places the First Couple in the middle of a wild landscape with a dense, dark forest and steep mountains in the background. It is from this antithesis of Eden that several animals emerge. But rather than emphasising man's superiority over wild nature, this impressive landscape is full of enigmatic fauna and flora which points to another, underlying level of meaning, based on Scripture. Let us take a closer look at this all-embracing, signifying nature.

Before Dürer, the flora and fauna of the Garden of Eden usually had no more than a decorative function, serving to enhance the paradisiacal setting – except, of course, for the inevitable serpent and the two trees: the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Dürer, on the other hand, imbues every little detail, whether plant or animal, with a deeper meaning, one that transcends the merely picturesque. The contribution each detail makes to the picture's whole is particularly evident in *Melancholia I*. The more the detail

1 For Dürer's long search for the ideal proportions of the human body, see Schoen C., *Albrecht Dürer: Adam und Eva. Die Gemälde, ihre Geschichte und Rezeption bei Lucas Cranach d. Ä. und Hans Baldung Grien* (Berlin: 2001), chap. III, "Menschenbild – Idealbild".

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FIGURE 0.1 Albrecht Dürer, *The Fall of Man* (*Adam and Eve*), 1504, engraving, 25.1 × 19.2 cm. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam RP-P–OB-1155
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deviates from what is traditional the more compelling and less obvious the picture's overall meaning becomes. The animals depicted in Dürer's *Fall* are not part of the traditional fauna of the Earthly Paradise. The elk (behind Adam) and the ibex or chamois (top right) had not, to my knowledge, been depicted before in paintings of Paradise. The other animals, the cat, mouse, hare (or

rabbit), ox and parrot have appeared before, but not in similar dispositions (cat opposite mouse, hare opposite ox, parrot next to the plate with the artist's monogram). These animals challenge an interpretation that is consistent with and supportive of the general interpretation of the Fall.

As with fauna, so with flora. The picture's trees – the left which has been identified as a mountain ash, and the right, very curiously, as a kind of hybrid between an apple and a fig – stand out from the indeterminate trees of the dark forest in the background. How Dürer's animals and plants invite the intended viewer to reflect on the biblical narrative of the Fall is discussed in detail in the second chapter of this book, which follows a first, more general chapter which presents the theoretical and methodical perspectives that underlie the other chapters.

It is not only through the apparent invitation to reflect further on their biblical significance that Dürer's animals challenge the pagan anthropocentrism his works seem, at first glance, to exhort. As the studies by Fritz Koreny and Colin Eisler have shown,[2] animals appear very frequently in Dürer's work. In fact, Dürer seems to be the first to depict animals on their own. Think of his famous portraits of the stag beetle, the young owl, the hare and the rhinoceros, or his animal portraits of which only a few copies and later imitations, such as those Hans Hoffmann and others made from a now lost Dürer squirrel.[3] Consider, too, the depictions of dead animals or their body parts, such as a dead duck,[4] the skin of a bird of paradise, a lapwing's wing, the still bleeding wing of a blue roller,[5] in which man is indirectly present as an invisible, merciless killer. In a recently published study, Sarah Cohen argues that Dürer gives these animals their own non-human perspective.[6] In doing so, she aligns herself with the current perspective of animal studies.[7] For our argument it is

2 Koreny F., *Albrecht Dürer and the Animal and Plant Studies of the Renaissance* (Boston: 1985); Eisler C., *Dürer's Animals* (Washington, DC: 1991).

3 Koreny, *Albrecht Dürer* 94.

4 Is it a pochard drake (*Aythya farina*), as Koreny (*Albrecht Dürer* 48) believes it is, or rather, given the bird's characteristic yellow forehead, a male wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) in eclipse plumage?

5 Koreny, *Albrecht Dürer* 48, 80, 84.

6 Cohen S.R., *Picturing Animals in Early Modern Europe: Art and Soul* (Turnhout: 2022).

7 In literary criticism the animal studies on John Milton's *Paradise Lost* are particularly noteworthy regarding the Fall. I was recently made aware of this literature by Jan van Dijkhuizen, who wrote a comprehensive survey of literary criticism on this subject. See Dijkhuizen J.F. van, "But What Does He Do All Day? Being an Animal in *Paradise Lost*", in Haar A. van de – Schulte Nordholt A. (eds.), *Figurations animalières à travers les textes et l'image en Europe, du Moyen Aga à nos jours, Essais en hommage à Paul J. Smith* (Leiden – Boston: 2022) 389–398. Because Milton and the rich early modern English thematization of the Fall are beyond the scope of the present study, I have not included references to Milton and Milton studies in this book.

important to consider whether the animals surrounding Adam and Eve also contribute their own perspective to that which otherwise appears as a prima facie anthropocentric worldview. Since Cohen's study was too recent to be included in my chapter on Dürer and the other case studies in this book, I will return to this question in my final chapter.

Dürer set a trend. Dürer's followers, and his followers' followers, each gave their own meaning to the fauna (and to a lesser extent the flora) of Eden. So did Cranach the Elder, who, with Dürer in mind, took up the theme of the Fall almost obsessively. Cranach's thematization of the Fall and its fauna is the subject of my third chapter. My subsequent chapters, arranged chronologically, discuss a number of other artists who, on their own terms, incorporated a meaningful fauna into their depictions of Eden. To get a better picture of this, I will not limit myself to the depiction of the Fall, but will also look at the Fifth and Sixth Days of the First Week (which tell of the creation of fish and birds and the creation of land animals and of Adam and Eve, respectively), as well as that other great animal story from the Book of Genesis: Noah's Ark. As early modern depictions of Eden are so numerous, I have restricted my corpus to the products of a limited number of artists from Germany and the Low Countries. Chapter 4 is devoted to the recently discovered Antwerp artist Simon de Myle, of whom only a single work is known – but this is a particularly intriguing one: *Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat* (1570), a subject rarely depicted. In his depiction of the Ark's animals, the artist systematically used the latest facts of natural history, such as those found in Conrad Gessner's illustrated encyclopaedia of the animal kingdom that was published in four voluminous books in the 1550s. Remarkably, De Myle combines Gessner's natural history with the illustrations of animal fables by Bruges artist Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder published in 1567. Chapter 5 is devoted to the Haarlem painter Cornelis van Haarlem, who, for his depiction of the Fall, focuses mainly on one animal fable by Gheeraerts, *The Monkey and the Cat*. Natural history, which developed further in the late 16th century through the work of the naturalists Ulisse Aldrovandi, Carolus Clusius and others, was also an important source of inspiration for Jan Brueghel the Elder. The thematic development of the Fall in Brueghel's work is illustrated by two case studies: one on his first Paradise painting (1594) (chapter 7) and the other on the Paradise painting (ca. 1617) he made in collaboration with Peter Paul Rubens (chapter 8). My series of close readings ends with Rembrandt's intriguing etching *Adam and Eve* (1638), in which he, too, relies on Dürer and Gheeraerts (chapter 9).

The Fall was not only a theme in the visual arts, but is also associated with well-known names in early modern European literature: Hans Sachs, Guillaume

Du Bartas, Joost van den Vondel and John Milton wrote masterpieces about the Fall, not to mention the many lesser-known writers who also either dealt with it directly or included references to it within their own work. Chapter 6 addresses *La Sepmaine* (1580) by the French poet Guillaume Du Bartas, because this encyclopaedic epic on the First Week of Creation played a crucial role in the imagination of Earthly Paradise throughout Europe, but especially in Germany, Britain and the Low Countries. In this chapter's epilogue, I consider a possible source for this work, namely *Adam und Heva* (1550) by the Swiss physician and poet Jakob Ruf. This epilogue also addresses two interesting Du Bartas readers, the otherwise unknown Frenchman Marc-Antoine Chalon, and the Flemish artist Maerten de Vos. One of the writers deeply influenced by Du Bartas was the Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel, who devoted a play, *Adam in ballingschap* (1664), to the Fall. Vondel, together with Rembrandt, long defined the image Dutch readers had of the Fall. Vondel's work is discussed in detail in chapter 9, which is also devoted to Rembrandt.

These chapters are case studies based on a common framework presented in the first chapter. The starting point of this framework is the two books that, according to the Christian worldview, God has given humanity to read and learn from: the "book of words" (the Bible) and the "book of works" (the Book of Nature). This introductory chapter begins with a consideration of how the Bible, and in particular the stories of the Creation and the Fall, has been read. This interpretive reading was done according to the so-called typological method, which, as we shall see, interprets the book of Genesis as a foreshadowing of the New Testament.

Regarding the interpretation of the second book given by God, the Book of Nature, there are three issues that are essential to our understanding of the Fall. The first is the aforementioned natural history and the stormy developments that this discipline underwent in the 16th century. Secondly, and an issue linked to natural history, the concepts of sympathy and antipathy are essential to a proper understanding of all our early modern depictions of Paradise – from Dürer to Rembrandt. Thirdly, the image of the animal world was largely determined by the ancient tradition of the Aesopian animal fable, which experienced a particular revival in the mid-16th century when this genre came into contact with the new genre of the emblem book, created by Andrea Alciato. Subsequently, after the biblical-typological, natural-historical and emblematic-Aesopian perspectives, this chapter will briefly discuss the various forms of imitation that link the numerous representations of the Fall.

The concept of multiform imitation is taken up again as an overarching perspective in the conclusive chapter of this book, which presents a synthesis

of all the aspects heretofore discussed, as exemplified in an *Adam and Eve* (ca. 1610) by Utrecht artist Joachim Wtewael. Finally, and working from the current perspective of animal studies, I address the question of whether, and to what extent, the theme of Paradise was emancipated from the dominant anthropocentric worldview during the hundred years and more that separate Rembrandt from Dürer.

CHAPTER 1

Reading and Painting God's Book of Words and Book of Nature

1 Animals in Genesis

In order to situate ourselves in the topic, we must first return to the very beginning of the Bible, the Book of God's words. Even a cursory reading of the Book of Genesis reveals something of a problem for the early modern artist intent on portraying the animals to be found in the Garden of Eden – Genesis chapters 1 & 2 appear to disagree on the important details, namely the creation of Mankind, the animals and plants, and their presence in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 1 tells of how God created the vegetation on the Third Day:[1]

> And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.
>
> And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
>
> Gen. 1:11–12

Fishes and birds were created on the Fifth Day:

> And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.
>
> And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
>
> Gen. 1:20–21

1 My quotes from the Bible are taken from the King James Bible 1611. For a comprehensive introduction to the theological and philological aspects of the two diverging Genesis narratives, see Hendel R., *The Book of* Genesis: *A Biography* (Princeton: 2013), especially chapter 1: "The Genesis of Genesis".

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Land animals came last, on the Sixth Day:

> And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.
>
> And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
>
> Gen. 1:24–25

And then, on the same day, God created man and woman.

Thus far, everything comes to pass acceptably and in accordance with the internal logic of the story. The problems begin with Genesis 2. While it also obeys its own internal storytelling logic, it does not accord with Chapter 1: the creation story told in Chapter 2 has a very different order of events. Adam is created first, and only then does God create the plants in the Garden of Eden, into which Adam is duly placed. The planting of the garden is described as follows:

> And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
>
> Gen. 2:9

Adam is told that he should not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, because to do so would cause him to die. Subsequently, the animals are created – it is not indicated whether this creation takes place inside or outside of Eden. The animals are brought to Adam, who gives them names:

> And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet [a helper suitable] for him.
>
> Gen. 2:20

God thus creates Eve from the rib of Adam. The question as to whether there are any animals in the Garden of Eden apart from the serpent which is mentioned in Chapter 3 goes unanswered.

It is not surprising, then, that the presence or otherwise of animals in Eden has been the subject of much theological debate through the ages. A survey of the various arguments for and against the presence of animals in Eden is

given by the Spanish Dominican Tomàs Malvenda (1566–1628) in a chapter of his treatise *De Paradiso voluptatis* (1605).[2] Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330–79), and many others after him, including Augustine, were of the opinion that there must have been animals in Eden. These are their arguments, in Malvenda's terms:

> I. Because, if dominion over the animals is given to Man, who lives in Paradise, then it is very likely that there are animals in Paradise over which he could exercise his power. II. Eve should be violently startled at the sight of the serpent, if she had never before seen a snake or any other animal. III. In addition, Paradise should be missing much of its beautiful splendour, if there were no fish in the waters, no multicoloured and beautiful singing little birds in the trees, no animals in the woods, no herds on the fields. IV. Also Man, who lives happily in Paradise, would be deprived from the many and varied, extremely honourable enjoyments, which can be obtained from animals and birds.[3]

Others, including Thomas of Aquinas, either disagree or do not entirely agree. According to them the Garden of Eden was created for Adam, who was free from death as long as he stayed within it. This, however, did not apply to the other living beings, which were mortal. While the animals must have been in the Garden when they were led to Adam in order to receive their names, most then left, leaving behind merely an unspecified collection considered necessary to enhance the Garden's beauty. Because Malvenda belonged to the same

2 I am much indebted to the excellent overview of these discussions given by Van de Velde C., "Het Aards Paradijs in de beeldende kunsten", in Anon. (eds.), *Het Aards Paradijs. Dierenvoorstellingen in de Nederlanden van de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Antwerp: 1982) 17–34 (here 23–24), and on the subject of the Church Fathers: Ledegang F., *In dialoog met de natuur. Vroegchristelijke denkers over het scheppingsverhaal* (Eindhoven: 2022).

3 'I. Quia si homini in Paradiso existenti datum est imperium in animantia, verisimile est in Paradiso animalia etiam fuisse in quae imperium exercere posset. II. Non potuisset Heua non vehementer exhorruisse ad primum serpetis aspectum : si numquam nec serpentem nec animal aliud ante vidisset. III. Non parum ornatus ac pulchritudinis Paradiso defuisset, si nulli in aquis pisces, nullae in arboribus auiculae, praesertim discolores & canorae, nullae in siluis animantes, nulla in campis pecora conspici possent. IV. Defraudatus quoque homo felix fuisset multis varijsq. honestissimis voluptatibus in Paradiso existens, quae ex animalibus, volucribusq. percipi possunt.' Malvenda Tomàs, *De Paradiso Voluptatis quem Scriptura Sacra Genesis secundo et tertio capite describit, Commentarius* (Rome, Carolus Vulliettus: 1605) 199.

Unless indicated otherwise, all translations from Latin, French, German, and Dutch are mine.

order as Thomas of Aquinas, it is not surprising that this was also his final position on the matter.

Therefore, in representing the Fall each early modern artist found himself with liberty of choice: besides the almost obligatory serpent, will he place other animals in the Garden of Eden? The choices that were made differ radically. For instance, three of Albrecht Dürer's six works on the Fall feature animals, while the other three do not – and one of these does not even show the serpent.[4] Those who followed hard on Dürer's heels took varying standpoints on the matter. Not one of Lucas van Leyden's six works on the Fall includes an animal other than the serpent. Jan Gossaert's depictions of Eden do have animals, but they are scarcely visible at the background. And of Cranach's many works on Eden for which documentation is available, seven are without animals.[5] Numerous animals are depicted in the illustrations made by Cesare Bassano for the play *L'Adamo, sacra rapresentatione*, by the Italian playwright Giovanni Battista Andreini (1613) (Fig. 1.1), but they do not appear *in* the Garden but *beyond* it – they were not allowed to pass the Garden's threshold. In this way, Bassano presented a clever solution to the problem, one true to the spirit of Thomas of Aquinas and Malvenda.[6] If the artist chooses a garden without animals, that is a holy vegetal Eden, then the only exception that can be made is for the so-called Scythian lamb or *borometz*, a hybrid creature that falls somewhere between animal and plant.[7] On the frontispiece of John Parkinson's *Paradisi in sole. Paradisus terrestris* (1629), the German artist Christopher Switzer depicted this wondrous plant/animal hybrid amidst a

4 See chapter 3.

5 See chapter 4.

6 For these and other examples, see also Van de Velde, "Het Aards Paradijs," and Prest J., *The Garden of Eden: The Botanic Garden and the Re-Creation of Paradise* (New Haven, CT: 1981) 12–15.

7 Prest, *The Garden of Eden* 6 and 51, refers to Du Bartas, who, in *La Seconde Semaine, Eden* (1584), wrote the following lines on this creature, quoted here in Sylvester's translation:

> 'But with true Beasts, fast in the ground still sticking, / Feeding on grass, and th' Airy moisture licking: / Such as those *Bonarets*, in *Scythia* bred / Of slender seeds, and with green fodder fed, / Although their bodies, noses, mouthes, and eyes, / Of new-yeand Lambs have full the form and guise; / And should be very Lambs, save that (for foot) / Within the ground they fix a living root, / Which at their navell grows, and dyes that day / That they have brouz'd the neighbour-gras away. / O wondrous vertue of God onely good! / The beast hath root, the Plant hath flesh and bloud: / The nimble Plant can turn it to and fro; / The numméd Beast can neither stir nor go; / The Plant is leaf-less, branch-less, void of fruit; / The Beast is lust-less, sex-less, sire-less, mute: / The Plant with Plants his hungry panch doth feed; / Th' admired Beast is sow'n a slender seed. (*Weekes* 104, ll. 569–585).'

FIGURE 1.1 Cesare Bassano, *Adam Naming the Animals*, engraving in Giovanni Battista Andreini, *L'Adamo, sacra rapresentatione* (Milan, Geronimo Bordoni: 1613)
DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES. INTERNET ARCHIVE

FIGURE 1.2 Christopher Switzer, *The Garden of Eden*, woodcut, frontispiece of John Parkinson, *Paradisi in sole. Paradisus terrestris* (London, Humfrey Lownes – Robert Young: 1629). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
PUBLIC DOMAIN

FIGURE 1.3 Christopher Switzer, *The Borometz in the Garden of Eden* (detail of Fig. 1.2)

sea of vegetation in the almost exclusively vegetal Earthly Paradise (Figs. 1.2. and 1.3).[8]

The only animal explicitly mentioned in Genesis as an inhabitant of Paradise, the serpent, also demands that the artist makes a choice. After the Fall, the serpent is punished by God: 'upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust

8 The only animal visible in the garden is a heron.

shalt thou eat all the days of thy life' (Gen. 3:14). The specific nature of this punishment implies that before the Fall, the serpent had legs. It gave Rembrandt, for example, the opportunity to depict the serpent as a repulsive dragon, equipped with claws and wings. The freedom given to artists in this interpretation is writ large in the very languages of the Bible: in Biblical Hebrew נחש (Nāḥāš) signifies mostly 'serpent' or 'snake', but can sometimes be translated as 'dragon';[9] in Ancient Greek δράκων signifies both 'dragon' and 'serpent'; in Latin the words *serpens*, *viper* and even *draco* all translate as 'serpent' or 'dragon'. As we shall see, in his play *Adam in ballingschap*, Vondel makes a theme of the Devil's choice of his transformation into a dragon (and not into a lion, eagle or elephant), and then God's punishment, which turns the dragon into a legless serpent.

By choosing a repulsive dragon, Rembrandt and Vondel show that they have already decided on how to overcome a problem of internal logic: how likely is it that a dragon could seduce a young woman? This would only be possible because the Devil's cunning is so great that Eve is blind to his ugliness – Vondel suggests this is his answer, as we shall see.

Other artists made different choices when depicting the serpent, and for Dürer the decision was made on a work-by-work basis – in most of his depictions of the Fall, he shows the viewer a large, realistically rendered serpent wearing a crown, while in his 1510 drawing *Adam and Eve* (Vienna, Albertina) it is a seductive female figure whose only barely visible snake's tail indicates that it is the Devil. In his drawing *Adam and Eve* (after 1495, Paris, École des Beaux-Arts), Dürer even depicted the Fall without the serpent – a unique rendering which invites a specific interpretation: the blame for the Fall of Sin lies not with an external devil, but with the First Couple themselves.

2 Biblical Typology

Having made a statement with his depiction of the serpent, the early modern artist must then decide on whether or not to include other animals in the Garden of Eden, and if so, are they to be purely decorative or will they serve to give a deeper meaning to the scene of the Fall? To what extent can the animals illustrate or underline, for example, the so-called typological significance of the Fall? The typological interpretation allows for the Fall and other scenes from the Old Testament to be seen as foreshadowing scenes in

9 See Trommius A., *Nederlandse concordantie van de Bijbel* (The Hague: no date, 22nd edition), *s.v.* "draak" and "slang".

the New Testament. Paul provides an important impetus to this interpretive strategy when he describes Adam as 'the figure of him that was to come' (Rom. 5:14). In similar fashion, the sinful Eve can be seen as prefiguring the Virgin Mary. This is, in Latin typology, also clear from her name: the 'Ave' by which the Angel Gabriel greeted the Virgin can be interpreted as a palindrome of the name 'Eva'. Genesis can also be read as a foreshadowing of the life of the individual Christian, or of the Church as community. In the late Middle Ages such symbolic interpretations were systematised in the well-known fourfold interpretation of the Scripture, as formulated in a much cited distich: *Litera gesta docet, Quid credas allegoria,/ Moralis quid agas, Quo tendas anagogia* (The literal sense teaches the historical deeds, the allegorical sense what to believe, the moral sense how to behave, the anagogical sense where to go).[10]

With regard to this way of interpreting the Bible, it is useful to consult the church father Augustine, whose work was taken as authoritative in the humanist and early Protestant circles in which Dürer and Cranach worked (although it cannot be proved that these artists had direct knowledge of Augustine's works).[11] Even though he preferred a "literal" reading, Augustine encouraged other approaches to the Bible, as can be seen in his *City of God*, where he writes:

> And so no one can stop us from interpreting paradise symbolically as the life of the blessed. [...] We can also interpret the details of paradise with reference to the Church, which gives them a better significance as prophetic indications of things to come in the future [...].[12]

Before concluding that

> This is the kind of thing that can be said by way of allegorical interpretation of paradise; and there may be other more valuable lines of interpretation. There is no prohibition against such exegesis, provided that we also believe in the truth of the story as a faithful record of historical faith.[13]

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10 The origin of this distich is unknown. The typological sense is more or less identical to what the distich calls the 'allegorical sense'.

11 In the coming chapters, I will frequently refer to Augustine, especially to his *Civitas Dei* (The City of God), and his tractate *De Genesi ad literam* (On the Literal Meaning of Genesis).

12 Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. H. Bettenson (Harmondsworth: 1972) 535.

13 Idem.

3 Early Modern Natural History – Conrad Gessner

A typological reading of the Book of God can be substantiated by the information the Book of Nature provides us about animals.[14] Natural history – the knowledge of the animal and plant world – underwent rapid development in the period covered by our corpus of artworks and texts. A key moment lies around 1500 – a period when the most important natural history works of antiquity, namely those of Aristotle, Pliny and Claudius Aelianus, were published in print. Aristotle was edited and translated into Latin by Theodorus Gaza from 1476; Pliny appeared in print from 1469 (from 1492 with learned commentary), and Aelianus was edited and translated into Latin by Pierre Gilles (1533). Natural history was at that time a primarily philological occupation of learned humanists. It is in this context that the striking presence of learned, language-oriented humanism in Dürer's versions of Fall must be placed – as I will demonstrate in the next chapter. How strongly knowledge of nature is anchored in the ideal humanist upbringing is evident from the words the French writer, humanist, and physician François Rabelais puts into the mouth of one of his protagonists, the giant Gargantua. In his education letter addressed to his son Pantagruel, Gargantua urges all attention to be paid to the knowledge of nature:

> And as for the knowledge of nature's works, I want you to devote yourself to that with care: let there be no sea, stream, or spring, whose fish you do not know; all the birds of the air, all the trees, shrubs, and bushes of the forests, all the herbs of the earth, all the metal hidden in the bowels of the depths, the precious stones of the entire Orient and Southern Hemisphere: let nothing be unknown to you.[15]

This letter is often read as a reflection of the optimism that characterised Erasmian humanism in the first half of the 16th century.

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14 On the Book of Nature in relation to the Holy Scripture, the Book of God, in early modern perspective, see Jorink E., *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575–1715* (Leiden – Boston: 2010).

15 Rabelais François, *The Complete Works*, transl. D.M. Frame (Berkeley – Los Angeles: 1991) 161. Idem, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. M. Huchon (Paris: 1994) 244–245: 'Et quand à la congnoissance des faictz de nature, je veulx que te y adonne curieusement, qu'il n'y ayt mer, riviere, ny fontaine, dont tu ne congnoisse les poissons, tous les oyseaulx de l'air, tous les arbres, arbustes et fructices des foretz, toutes les herbes de la terre, tous les metaulx cachez au ventre des abysmes, les pierreries de tout l'Orient et midy, rien ne te soit incongneu.'

In the middle of the 16th century, a number of prestigious, abundantly illustrated works on living nature suddenly appeared in staccato. Their authors produced increasingly detailed descriptions, and they frequently and systematically used *ad vivum* depictions. In his anthology of zoological texts, Laurent Pinon characterizes the natural history of this period as 'l'enregistrement de la Nature par l'image' (recording Nature through images).[16] In response to the growing number of known species, naturalists experimented with classifications. They focused their attention not only on geographical regions that were relatively well described, but also on regions which had remained under-described since the classical era. This effect was significantly enhanced by the exchange of information through networks of experts on living nature that stretched across Europe. These developments first took place within the field of botany, due to its direct usefulness for medical science, starting with Otto Brunfels' *Herbarum vivae eicones* (1530), immediately followed by what now is called zoology. The leading naturalists were Frenchmen Pierre Belon (three works on fishes, one on birds) and Guillaume Rondelet (two works on fishes). The one who came closest to the encyclopaedic ideal, as expressed in Rabelais' *Pantagruel*, was the Swiss 'scholar and universal scientist' Conrad Gessner whose works dominated the zoological production of this period.[17] From 1551 Gessner published four thick volumes with hundreds of densely printed pages in folio format about the animal kingdom under the umbrella title *Historia animalium* (1551–1558): the first concerned viviparous quadrupeds (1551); the second oviparous quadrupeds (1554); the third was about birds (1555), and the fourth and final volume dealt with fish and other aquatic animals (1558) – these categories correspond roughly with the four zoological classes as they are currently delineated: mammals, reptiles, birds and fish.

In the work of Gessner everything comes together: the information taken from the zoological works of Aristotle, Pliny, Aelian, and other writers from antiquity, from the medieval encyclopaedists, especially Albertus Magnus, as well as from contemporary zoological texts, such as those by Belon and Rondelet, plus all the information Gessner obtained through correspondence

16 Pinon L., *Livres de zoologie de la Renaissance: une anthologie* (Paris: 1995) 15.

17 On Gessner, his work and its intellectual and cultural context, see, among others, the following recent publications: Leu U.B., *Conrad Gessner (1516–1565). Universalgelehrter und Naturforscher der Renaissance* (Zurich: 2016) (translation: *Conrad Gessner (1516–1565). Universal Scholar and Natural Scientist of the Renaissance* (Leiden–Boston: 2023), and Leu U.B. – Ruoss M. (eds.), *Facetten eines Universums. Conrad Gessner 1516–2016* (Zurich: 2016), and Hendrikx S., *Conrad Gessner´s Fish Books (1556–1560). Processing information in a rapidly expanding field of knowledge.* Doctoral Thesis Leiden University 2024.

with his vast international scholarly network, and not forgetting his own empirical observations, plus bits and pieces of information taken from the whole of antiquity's literature in Greek and Latin, even poetry. Gessner's work is particularly important for this study as it represents the sum total of contemporary knowledge of animals, both those of antiquity and of his own time. Gessner thus provides us with vital contemporary insight into the zoological and cultural significance of animals in Dürer and Cranach. Furthermore, his texts were direct source materials for naturalist poets such as Du Bartas.

Apart from his encyclopaedic inexhaustibility, Gessner's major innovation lay in the systematic use of illustrations. The first four volumes of the *Historia animalium* contain more than 1,400 woodcuts, often of excellent quality, which could be coloured on demand by workshops connected to Gessner's printer and editor Christopher Froschauer. Gessner's illustrations had an immediate and resounding impact. They were reissued in separate publications, under the title *Icones*. The two most interesting categories for our corpus of pictorial depictions of the fauna of the Earthly Paradise are those of mammals and birds: the *Icones* dedicated to mammals appeared in 1553 (a second edition followed in 1560), while that dedicated to birds was published in 1555 (second edition in 1560). The German translations – *Thierbuoch* (1563) and *Vogelbuoch* (1557) – recycled the same woodblocks for their illustrations.[18] Gessner's audience were not just naturalists: *Thierbuoch* was intended to be 'useful' to 'all artists and craftsmen, such as doctors, painters, goldsmiths, engravers, sculptors, hunters, and cooks.'[19] Gessner's illustrations spread rapidly across Europe, and would soon be reflected in the works of Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, Simon de Myle and Jan Brueghel the Elder.

4 Sympathy and Antipathy

The concepts of *sympathy* and *antipathy*, addressed in Gessner's zoological descriptions, are crucial to our argument. Both concepts are linked to the idea of *similitude*. Similitude is eloquently explained by Michel Foucault in his

18 On the translation of a similar work, namely Gessner's book on fishes, see Hendrikx S. – Smith P.J., "Ichthyology in Translation: Conrad Gessner's Fish Books", in Fournel J.-L. – Paccagnella I. (eds.), *Traduire – Tradurre – Translating. Vie des mots et voie des œuvres dans l'Europe de la Renaissance* (Geneva: 2022) 341–361.

19 Gessner Conrad, *Thierbuoch* (Zurich, Christopher Froschauer: 1563): 'allen Kuenstlern, als Arzten, Mahlern, Goldtschmiden, Reissern, Bildschnitzern, Bildhawern, Weydleuten und Köchen.'

Les mots et les choses (1966).[20] In his chapter "La prose du monde", Foucault describes how, in the vision of the Renaissance, the things of the world were related to each other by the principle of *similitude*, which was active in four forms: *convenientia*, *aemulatio*, analogy, and sympathy. *Convenientia* was similitude based on proximity, *aemulatio* upon reflection, and analogy on relationships.[21] The final form, sympathy, was the most important of the four because of its omnipresence:

> It is a principle of mobility: it attracts what is heavy to the heaviness of the earth, what is light up towards the weightless ether; it drives the root towards the water, and it makes the great yellow disk of the sunflower turn to follow the curving path of the sun.[22]

The assimilating effect of sympathy ('It has the dangerous power of assimilating, of rendering things identical to one another, of mingling them, of causing their individuality to disappear')[23] is compensated for by its 'figure jumelle' (twin figure), antipathy:

> Antipathy maintains the isolation of things and prevents their assimilation; it encloses every species within its impenetrable difference and its propensity to continue being what it is.[24]

The notions of sympathy and antipathy described by Foucault are recurrent *topoi* in the natural histories of the Renaissance. Conrad Gessner discussed the sympathies and antipathies of most of the animals he describes, while another great zoologist, Ulisse Aldrovandi, also paid it much attention. In his *Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* (1555), the French ornithologist Pierre Belon du Mans

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20 Foucault M., *Les mots et les choses. Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: 1966).

21 Thus implying, in the case of analogy, at least three objects: A ↔ B and B ↔ C, but mostly four objects: A ↔ B and C↔ D.

22 My English quotations are from Foucault M., *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London – New York: 2002), here p. 26. Idem, *Les mots et les choses* 38: 'Elle est principe de mobilité: elle attire les lourds vers la lourdeur du sol, et les légers vers l'éther sans poids; elle pousse les racines vers l'eau, et elle fait virer avec la courbe du soleil la grande fleur jaune du tournesol.'

23 Foucault, *The Order of Thing* 26. 'Elle a le dangereux pouvoir d'*assimiler*, de rendre les choses identiques les unes aux autres, de les mêler, de les faire disparaître en leur individualité' (Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* 39).

24 Foucault, *The Order of Things* 26. Idem, *Les mots et les choses* 39: 'Celle-ci maintient les choses en leur isolement et empêche l'assimilation: elle enferme chaque espèce dans sa différence obstinée et sa propension à persévérer en ce qu'elle est.'

enumerates some examples from the world of birds, and underlines the hidden and inexplicable character of the phenomenon:

> How come the little troglodyte is the enemy of the little owl and the eagle, and that those who suffer from jaundice will heal if they see a golden oriole or a *charadrios* [legendary bird]? And why are goldfinches hostile to larks? And the great spotted woodpecker to the green woodpecker? The turtle dove is fighting with the oriole, and the oriole with the jay.[25]

He is forced to conclude that the only explanation of the phenomenon lies in Nature's pleasure:

> So, if we highlight their war and peace, unity and hatred, their meeting and disagreement, and if we want to know the reason for this, then one can only say that it is Nature's pleasure, hidden in Nature.[26]

Or, as François Rabelais put it, 'by occult sympathy of Nature' ('par l''occulte sympathie de Nature.')[27]

There even exists a whole treatise – the French architect Joseph Boillot's *Nouvaux pourtraitz et figures de termes pour user en l'architecture* – on architectural columns that have zoological motifs based on the principle of antipathy between animals.[28] Boillot aimed to provide a series of pictorial examples

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25 Belon Pierre, *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux. Fac-similé de l'édition de 1555*, ed. P. Glardon (Geneva: 1997) 11: '[…] pourquoy c'est que le petit Roytelet est ennemy de la Cheueche, & de l'Aigle, & que le Loriot, & Charadrios guerissent la iaunisse de ceux qui en sont malades, pour les auoir regardez? Ne pourquoy les Chardonnerets sont ennemis des Alouettes? Et l'Epeiche de Pics verds? La Tourtrelle mene guerre auec le Loriot, le Loriot auec le Iay.'

26 Belon, *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* 11: 'Si donc nous mettons en auant leur guerre, leur paix, leurs haines, concorde, assemblees, & discorde, & qu'on en cherche la raison, autre chose n'en sçaura lon dire, sinon que tel a esté le plaisir de nature, qui est ouurage caché en elle.'

27 François Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. M. Huchon (Paris: 1994) 694. Sympathy and antipathy play an important role in Rabelais' books, see my "Rabelais et l''occulte sympathie de nature'", in Huchon M. – Le Cadet N. – Menini R. – Thomine M-C. (eds.), *Inextinguible Rabelais* (Paris: 2021) 585–592.

28 The full title is: *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [= columns] *pour user en l'architecture: composez & enrichiz de diversité d'Animaulx, representez au vray, selon l'Antipathie & contrarieté naturelle de chacun d'iceulx*. This book was translated into German (1604), had two rereleases in the 17th century, and enjoyed a bit of a reputation in the 18th century.

(with commentary) of animals worth featuring on a column because they are strong enough to support a building. In order to force the animals to assume their task of 'portefaix', they were combined with one or more of their opposites:

> In order to indicate what makes these animals stand erect and makes them into beasts of burden against their natural movement and habit, I have them accompanied by their opposite, another animal or a plant which, because it is hostile to them or because it contains some natural and secret *dispathie*, keeps them in this erected attitude, a disposition that enables them to keep resisting their opposite.[29]

This combination resulted in weird and dramatic artistic visions, which look strange to the modern eye but were attested to in contemporary zoology: a lion frightened by a rooster (Fig. 1.4) and a goat; an elephant assaulted by both a dragon and a mouse (see Fig. 9.3); a powerful unicorn attacked by a lion (see Fig. 9.7); or a bear threatened by a human skeleton (see Fig. 5.3).

That the notions of sympathy and antipathy were indeed commonplace in Renaissance thinking is clear from Erasmus' colloquy *Amicitia* (1531), which is devoted entirely to this subject. The two characters Ephorinus and John open this dialogue by stating both the commonness and the mysteriousness of the phenomenon, and then talk about the age-old enmity between serpent and man, dating from Eden:

> Ephorinus. Often I fall to wondering what deity Nature consulted when she mingled certain mysterious sympathies and antipathies in everything under the sun – improbable ones by any known causes, except that apparently she enjoyed this spectacle, just as we find entertainment by setting cocks among quail.
>
> John. I'm not yet clear about your meaning.
>
> Ephor. Then if you want it put more plainly, I'll tell you. You know snakes are a species hostile to man.
>
> John. I know that between them and us there is irreconcilable enmity – and will be as long as we remember that ill-omened apple.[30]

29 Boillot, *Nouvaux pourtraitz*, 'Praeface', *in fine:* '[…] a fin de donner quelque apparence qui ayt faict dresser ces animaux pour les assuiettir d'estre portefaix contre leur mouuement & assiette naturelle, ie les ay accompagné de quelque contraire, soit aultre animal ou plante, qui leurs estant ennemy ou contendant par quelque dispathie naturelle & inconnue, leur faict tenir ceste contenance dressee, qui est comme vne disposition qui les appreste a tenir bon & resister a ce que leur est contraire.'

30 Erasmus, *The Colloquies*, trans. C.R. Thompson (Chicago: 1965).

FIGURE 1.4 Joseph Boillot, *Lion Frightened by a Rooster*, woodcut in Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [...] (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592), fol. Diii r. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-V-385
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Endless lists of examples follow. More than a hundred animals are mentioned, and sometimes discussed. For instance, on antipathy Ephorinus states:

> [...] to account for the hatred between swans and eagles, raven and oriole, crow and owl, eagle and wren is almost impossible, unless the eagle is envied because he's called king of birds. Why is the owl at odds with other, smaller birds, weasel with crow, dove with pyarlis, ichneumon wasps with spiders, ducks with gulls, falcons with buzzard-hawk, jackals with lions? Why, moreover, do shrewmice dread a tree full of ants? Whence so irreconcilable a warfare between beetle and eagle, whose very natures provide the basis for a fable?[31]

For sympathy, he gives the following examples:

> So too a certain mysterious bond of affection unites some animals in an extraordinary way, as peacocks and pigeons, doves and parrots, blackbirds and thrushes, crows and herons (which help each other in turn against foxes) and falcon and kite against buzzard-hawk, their common enemy.[32]

The colloquy ends with the subject announced by the title: friendship between humans. This states that a man should 'associate with those to whom he is drawn by natural sympathy.'[33]

The concepts of sympathy and antipathy are essential for the interpretation of the pictorial and literary works of our corpus. Their importance can also be seen, for example, in the painting *Adam and Eve in Paradise, with the Four Elements*, by Hendrick de Clerck and Denis van Alsloot (ca. 1607) (Fig. 1.5). Of the animals depicted *in convenientia*, there are some who live peacefully next to each other in paradisiacal harmony, but who will be, in the postlapsarian world, each other's enemies: the lion and the sheep, and the dog and the cat (bottom right). Reference is also made to the famous antipathy between the lion and the rooster. This antipathy, well known since antiquity, is commented upon by Boillot as follows:

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31 Erasmus, *Colloquies* 523.

32 Erasmus, *Colloquies* 523.

33 Erasmus, *Colloquies* 527. A number of Erasmus' examples are quoted in the opening chapter of *De sympathia et antipathia rerum* (1546) by Hieronymus Fracastor, in which he lays the theoretical basis for his work about contagious diseases.

> And as for the birds, miraculous are the fear and disgust for the rooster that the lion shows in his face, especially if it crows, which is mentioned by Pliny in two places, and by Aelianus and many others. Some persons have told me that they had seen how, on the sight of a goat, a lion was taken by uncontrollable fright.[34]

The lion, as depicted by Boillot, indeed looks frightened (see Fig. 1.4).

FIGURE 1.5 Hendrick de Clerck and Denis van Alsloot, *Adam and Eve in Paradise, with the Four Elements* (ca. 1607 painting on copper 51.8 × 64.3 cm. Alte Pinakothek, Munich
PHOTO HENRY TOWNSEND HENRYTOW, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

34 Boillot, *Nouvaux pourtraitz* fol. Dii r: 'Et entre les oyseaux c'est chose esmerueillable de la crainte & horreur qu'ha le Lion du coq exprimé en ceste figure, principalement lors qu'il chante, ce que Pline tesmoigne en deux endroictz, Elian & assez d'aultres, quelques vns m'ont dict auoir veu presenter vne chieure a vn Lion, qui monstra lors contenance d'en este fort effrayé.'

5 The Four Elements

De Clerck's and Van Alsloot's painting points to a universal principle that plays a major role in natural history: that of the four elements. These are personified: top left is the element Air (with birds as attributes, including a bird of paradise); top right, Fire (with torch and lightning as attributes); bottom right, Earth (surrounded by land animals, and fruits from the autumn months); and bottom left, Water (with fish and shells). These four elements keep the middle scene – in which the Earthly Paradise, with the animals in sweet harmony, is depicted – in balance. The element Air is associated with the Creation of Man; the element Fire is connected with the flaming sword by which the Angel expels Adam and Eve from Eden.

Foucault justly connects the mutual interdependency of the elements to the notions of sympathy and antipathy. He does so by extensively quoting a scholarly commentary by the Protestant poet and editor Simon Goulart on a work by the physician Joseph du Chesne (Josephus Quercetanus).[35] For our purposes, it is better here to quote Goulart's commentary on Du Bartas' *La Sepmaine*. In his rendering of the Second Day of Creation Week, Du Bartas discusses the four elements at length, as well as the attraction and repulsion of their 'qualités'. Goulart provides the following explicit commentary:

> The discordant harmony of the [...] elements is the cause of the various and marvellous works of nature, because of the proper and dexterously mixed qualities of these elements: which each have two qualities, one reigning, the other subject. Those of fire are hot and dry. Those of air, hot and humid. Those of water, moist and cold. Those of earth, cold and dry. Fire is not easily changed into earth, nor earth into fire, because of their opposite qualities: but earth is easily changed into water, and air into fire because of their proximity.[36]

35 Foucault's source citation is extremely brief: "S.G.S." (Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* 40). This might indicate that he was unaware of the identity of the person behind the abbreviation : "S.G.S.": "Simon Goulart Senlisien".

36 Du Bartas Guillaume, *La Sepmaine ou Creation du monde. Tome II L'Indice de Simon Goulart*, eds. S. Arnauld-Seigle, D. Bjaï a.o. (Paris: 2010) 162: 'L'accordant discord des [...] elemens est cause des divers et merveilleux ouvrages de nature, à cause des qualitez propres et dextrement meslées d'iceux elemens: lesquels ont chacun deux qualitez, l'une regnante l'autre sujette. Celles du feu sont chaud et sec. Celles de l'air, chaud et humide. Celles de l'eau, humide et froid. Celles de la terre, froid et sec. Le feu se change mal aisément en terre, ou la terre en feu, à cause de leurs qualitez opposées: mais la terre se mue facilement en eau, et l'air en feu à cause de leur prochaineté.' See also, on the same topic, the ample commentary of Pantaleon Thevenin, another commentator of Du Bartas: Idem, *Tome III Annotations de Pantaleon Thevenin*, ed. D. Bjaï (Paris: 2011) 214–215.

This passage can be linked to another contemporaneous explanation, one which places the operation of the elements in an even broader framework, namely *L'Anthologie ou recueil de plusieurs discours notables* (1572). This compendium of ancient wisdom was written by a certain Pierre Breslay is not well known, but particularly useful for our argument. In his final chapter, "De l'analogie qui est entre les saisons de l'an, & du iour & entre les humeurs du corps humain" (On the analogy that exists between the seasons of the year, the parts of the day, and the humours of the human body), he explains :

> Spring corresponds to the East, summer to the South, and autumn to the West, and winter to the North. In the same way, the morning is spring, the afternoon is summer, the evening is autumn and the night is winter [...] In the same way, spring is related to childhood, summer to youth, the decline of age to autumn, and winter to cold and grey old age.[37]

This, as Breslay points out, can again be linked to the ancient and medieval scheme of the four humours – blood, black bile, yellow bile, and water – which determine the four main types of man: the sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic types. We can represent the ideas of Du Bartas (and Goulart) and Breslay as follows:[38]

TABLE 1 The Four Elements and Their Corresponding Entities

Season	**Cardinal point**	**Part of the day**	**Age**	**Element**	**Quality**	**Humor**	**Character**
Spring	East	Morning	Childhood	Air	Hot / Wet	Blood	Sanguine
Summer	South	Afternoon	Youth	Fire	Hot / Dry	Yellow bile	Choleric
Autumn	West	Evening	Adulthood	Earth	Cold / Dry	Black bile	Melancholic
Winter	North	Night	Old Age	Water	Cold / Wet	Phlegm	Phlegmatic

37 Breslay Pierre, *L'Anthologie ou recueil de plusieurs discours notables, tirez de divers bons autheurs Grecs & Latins* (Paris, Jean Poupy: 1572) fol. 100v.: 'Le printemps symbolize avec le levant, l'esté avec le Sud, & l'automne répond au Ponant, & et l'hiver au Nort. Item le matin est printanier, le midy estival, le vesper autonnier & la nuit hyvernale [...] Item le printemps a correspondence à l'enfance, l'esté à la ieunesse, le declin de l'age à l'autonne, & l'hyver à la froide & grise veillesse.'

38 A similar schema can also be found in Seznec J., *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art* (Princeton: 1972) 47, but it lacks the divisions of the day, and the cardinal points are linked with other elements.

De Clerck's and Van Alsloot's painting shows how in the Earthly Paradise, the four elements and the four *humores* are in an ideal balance, but after the Fall unpredictable imbalances happen. This comprehensive scheme allows us to interpret not only De Clerck's and Van Alsloot's painting but also the work of Jan Brueghel, as we will see in chapters 7 and 8.

According to Erwin Panofsky, the doctrine of the four humours furnishes the key to the interpretation of the animals depicted by Dürer in his works on the Fall.[39] The chapter on Dürer will discuss Panofsky's interpretation in more detail. A related question is whether this scheme can also be used for the animals in the works of Cranach and Cornelis van Haarlem, as art historians following Panofsky also claim.

6 *Physiologus* and Bestiaries

Animal symbolism is probably as old as humanity itself. There are two ancient textual traditions of interest to our textual and visual corpus: the medieval bestiaries and the classical tradition of the Aesopian fable. These became intertwined with the genre of the emblem in the mid-16th century, culminating in the so-called "emblematic fable." It is important to further address both lines of animal symbolism. Medieval bestiaries go back to the Greek *Physiologus*, an anonymous text from the 2nd century AD, which has undergone numerous Latin and foreign-language edits. This text describes a series of animals from the knowledge of animals at the time, which partly goes back to Aristotle. A Christian teaching related to the Bible is attached to the described behaviour of animals. In the *Physiologus*, we already find much information of relevance to our corpus. For example, the following is said about the natural antipathy between the deer – which often appears in early modern portrayals of the Fall – and the dragon (or serpent):

> It is said in Psalm 41, 'As the stag long for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God'[Ps. 42:1].The stag is an enemy of the dragon. Moreover, the dragon flees from the stag into the cracks in the earth, and the stag, going and drinking from a stream until his muzzle is full, then spits out the water into the cracks and draws the dragon out and stamps on him and kills him.

39 Panofsky E., *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: 1948 [1943]).

> Thus did our Lord kill the huge dragon, the devil, with heavenly waters of indescribable wisdom.[40]

This biblical interpretation of nature is directly adopted and expanded in the 12th- and 13th-century bestiaries, which appear in Latin and vernacular languages. These bestiaries were often richly illustrated and contributed to the general portrayal of animals through to the 16th century – exotic animals such as the elephant or the lion, generally little known in Western Europe were thus given a 'traditional' image. This also applied to invented animals such as the dragon or the unicorn – animals that, incidentally, were as real to medieval readers as the elephant or the lion are to us. However, no direct lines can be drawn between such bestiaries and early modern texts and works of art, because the bestiaries disappeared as a genre. Nevertheless, it does appear that early modern natural historical knowledge, imagery and Christological interpretation did trace back to it, albeit indirectly: I will therefore refer to the bestiaries regularly, quoting from the so-called *Aberdeen Bestiary* (Aberdeen University Library MS 24), because it is characteristic of the genre, and because this manuscript has been excellently and accessibly presented, both as a book (by T.H. White)[41] and digitally.[42]

The allegorical description of nature is also found in the medieval encyclopaedic tradition of which the 13th-century *doctor universalis* Albertus Magnus and the also 13th-century Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant are well-known representatives. Here too, though less systematically, natural history data are interpreted christologically or otherwise theologically. Several of these encyclopaedias are also illustrated – illustrations that often match those of the bestiaries. Unlike the bestiaries, these encyclopaedias had a direct influence on the approach to natural history taken in the early modern period. For instance, the work of Albertus Magnus was still published in the 16th century, and was also one of Conrad Gessner's sources. Furthermore, Marcus Gheeraerts and Eduard de Dene, about whom more later, used a manuscript of Maerlant's *Der natuere bloeme* (On the flower of nature) while writing and perhaps even illustrating their fables.[43]

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40 *Physiologus*, transl. M.J. Curley (Chicago – London: 2009) 58.

41 White T.H., *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* [...] (New York: 1954).

42 *Aberdeen Bestiary*, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/index.hti (accessed December 10, 2023).

43 See Geirnaert D. – Smith P.J., "The Sources of the Emblematic Fable Book *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (1567)", in Manning J. – Porteman K. – Van Vaeck M. (eds.), *The Emblem Tradition and the Low Countries* (Turnhout: 1999) 23–38.

7 Illustrated Fable Books and the Gheeraerts Filiation

In the depictions of the fauna of Eden, the references to the animal world of Aesop's fables are numerous and extensive. This is quite understandable. After all, in these fables the animals are constantly busy deceiving, hunting and devouring each other. This cruel world corresponds to the animal world after the Fall, as Joshua Sylvester, the English translator of Du Bartas' *Semaines*, has rewritten it:

> The World's transform'd from what it was at first:
> For Adam's Sin, all creatures else accurst:
> Their Harmonie distunéd by His iarre:
> Yet all againe consent, to make him war [...]
>
> *Weekes* 114, ll. 1–4

While in Paradise all animals lived in perfect harmony, after the Fall they had to submit to the law of the strongest – or the cleverest – and together they turned against man. The early modern artist, seeking to depict this prelapsarian harmony and postlapsarian chaos, found much inspiration in the animal fables.

The postlapsarian chaos is well illustrated in one of the woodcuts in *L'Adamo, sacra rapresentatione* (Fig. 1.6). To depict the situation after the Fall, Bassano has Adam and Eve looking on in horror as the animals devour one another. The law of the jungle prevails. It is no coincidence that Bassano was inspired by illustrations in the tradition of Aesop's fables. Before discussing this in more detail, it is important to take a closer look at this tradition.

From the Middle Ages until the early modern period, animal fables were published with increasingly poetical, typographical, and pictorial artistry. In 1542 the French humanist and printer Gilles Corrozet created a hybrid form, the so-called emblematic fable.[44] His *Fables du tres ancien Esope* combined the traditional illustrated fable and the newly invented humanist emblem (Andrea Alciato, *Liber emblematum*, 1531). The layout of his fable book was modelled on emblem books: the left-hand page, showing the tripartite structure of the Alciatic emblem (*motto-pictura-subscriptio*), forms a whole with the two-part structure (narration and moral) of the fable on the opposite page. The first

44 Tiemann B., *Fabel und Emblem. Gilles Corrozet und die französische Renaissance-Fabel* (Munich: 1974); Saunders A., "Emblems and Emblematic Fables", in Saunders A., *The Seventeenth-Century French Emblem: A Study in Diversity* (Geneva: 2000).

DELL'ADAMO. 115

Ma laſſo, che più miro? ò mè dolente
Ecco da lor fuggir Eua repente.

SCENA QVINTA.

Eua, Adamo. 29

Adamo *Oue men fuggo ahi laſsa, oue m'aſcondo?*
Corri ne le mie braccia,
E chi hà inſieme peccato
Sia da le fere inſieme anco sbranato.

Eua. *Ahi ch'ogni ſcampo è fatto*
Varco di morte, à chi di vita è indegno.
Pur di quell'antro in ſeno

Som.

FIGURE 1.6 Cesare Bassano, *Adam and Eve After the Fall*, engraving in Giovanni Battista Andreini, *L'Adamo, sacra rapresentatione* (Milan, Geronimo Bordoni: 1613)
DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES. INTERNET ARCHIVE

FIGURE 1.7 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *T'serpent en Iupiter* [The Serpent and Jupiter], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 14–15. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-YI-19
PUBLIC DOMAIN

ones to imitate the emblematic layout of Corrozet's *Fables d'Esope* were the artist Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder and the poet Eduard de Dene. Residents of Bruges, they collaborated closely while conceiving and publishing a collection of 107 fables entitled *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Truthful Fables of the Animals), in 1567. In imitation of Corrozet, De Dene and Gheeraerts adopted an emblematic disposition for their illustrated texts. This disposition is as follows: on the left-hand page there is a motto (a rhyming distich), Gheeraerts' etching, and a biblical quotation (which replaces Corrozet's emblematic *subscriptio*); the right-hand page featured a two-part structured fable (narration and moral) (Fig. 1.7).

Many other translations and adaptations appeared. The *Warachtighe fabulen* stands at the basis of a corpus of fable books[45] known as the "Gheeraerts

45 The following introductory overview of the corpus is largely taken from my article "Title Prints and Paratexts in the Emblematic Fable Books of the Gheeraerts Filiation

filiation" because they all contain either Gheeraerts' etchings or direct imitations of them. The Gheeraerts filiation numbers, depending on the criteria adopted for the determination of this corpus, about 15 collections: five in Dutch, five in French, and single collections in Latin, German, English, Russian and even Japanese. Besides the *Warachtighe fabulen*, three fable books from the beginning of the Gheeraerts filiation are important for the depiction of Eden's fauna. The first is the anonymous French-language collection *Esbatement moral des animaux* (1578),[46] which comprised 125 fables, that is, all the fables illustrated by Gheeraerts from the *Warachtighe fabulen*, plus 18 new fables, which he also illustrated. De Dene's texts have been adapted into French sonnets – this is the first time the sonnet form was used for a collection of fables.

The second fable book that is important for my argument is the German *Theatrum morum* (1608).[47] An anonymous author (probably Aegidius Sadeler, court painter at the imperial court of Rudolph II, who wrote the book's preface) translated the French sonnets of the *Esbatement moral* into short German poems. He also made (or had made) mirrored copies of Gheeraerts' illustrations, adding 15 new fables of his own devising, illustrated by his own etchings.

The third important fable book of the Gheeraerts filiation is the Dutch adaptation Joost van den Vondel made of the French *Esbatement moral*. This work was printed in 1617 under the title *Vorsteliicke Warande der Dieren* (Royal Garden of the Animals) by the Amsterdam printer Dirk Pietersz Pers, who had acquired Gheeraerts' copperplates. These copperplates remained unchanged. Vondel translated the French sonnets into Dutch poems of varying lengths, which were printed on the right-hand page. Vondel's book of fables would be reprinted into the 18th century.

The Gheeraerts filiation was disseminated through France and England. The international success of this filiation was mainly due to Gheeraerts' illustrations. This success is referred to by the Czech art historian Lubomír Konečný as follows:

(1567–1617)", in Bossier P. – Scheffer R. (eds.), *Soglie testuali. Funzioni del paratesto nel secondo Cinquecento e oltre / Textual Thresholds. Function of Paratexts in the Late Sixteenth Century and Beyond* (Rome: 2010) 157–200 (here 159–160).

46 *Esbat*[*e*]*ment moral des animaux* [...] (Antwerp, Gerard Smits for Philips Galle: 1578).

47 [Sadeler Aegidius], *Theatrum morum. Artliche gesprach der thier* [...] (Prague, Paul Sesse: 1608).

> Gheeraerts's compositions clearly dominated the field of the illustrated fable north of the Alps from Prague to London and from 1567 far into the eighteenth century. They determined to a radical degree, the contemporary notion of the visual form of the fable narrative. Their impact spread like rings on water.[48]

The influence of Gheeraerts and his followers concerns not only illustrated fable books up to those by John Ogilby and Francis Barlow in England and Jean de La Fontaine in France, but also paintings and all kinds of decorative arts.[49]

Gheeraerts' and Sadeler's fable illustrations are also to be found in numerous depictions of the Fall. The first depiction of the Fall that made use of the Gheeraerts filiation can be found in a biblical emblem book entitled *Humanae salutis monumenta*, by the Jesuit Arias Montanus, with illustrations by Pieter van der Borcht, printed in 1571 in Antwerp by Plantin.[50] The third emblem of this book represents the moment just before the Fall, when Eve calls to Adam to come and see the serpent (Fig. 1.8). This serpent is obviously inspired by the one Gheeraerts depicted in the fable *The Serpent and Jupiter* (*WF* 6),[51] in which the reptile offers Jupiter a rose (see Fig. 1.7). The moral of this fable (never accept a present from an untrustworthy person) is, of course, very applicable to the story of Adam and Eve. In Van der Borcht's illustration, the animals depicted are shown resting peacefully, in direct opposition to the curling serpent (though there is a leaping dog in the background). This is just as they are in the works of Dürer and Cranach. In the fourth emblem of the book, which represents the situation just after the Fall (Fig. 1.9), the disposition of the animals is reversed: the snake has come to rest (condemned as it was to earthly dust), whereas the other animals are taken by panic.

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48 Konečný L., "Of Fables and Painters," *Bulletin of the National Gallery in Prague* 1 (1991) 34–43.

49 For recent research on this issue, see Wepler L., *Tierfabeln von Äsop bis La Fontaine in Gemäldeserien seit 1600* (Petersberg: 2021) and Geirnaert D., "Marcus Gheeraerts, Source of Inspiration for Tapestry-Designers. Sixteenth-Century Fable-Illustrations Used in Seventeenth-Century Tapestries", in Haar A. van de – Schulte Nordholt A. (eds.), *Figurations animalières à travers les textes et l'image en Europe, du Moyen âge à nos jours. Essais en hommage à Paul J. Smith* (Leiden-Boston: 2022) 193–209.

50 L. Voet, *The Plantin Press (1555–1589)* (Amsterdam: 1980), no. 588.

51 *WF* is the abbreviation for *Warachtighe fabulen.* The numbering followed here is that of Scharpé L., "Van De Dene tot Vondel", *Leuvensche Bijdragen* 4 (1900) 5–63 (here 60–63).

FIGURE 1.8 Pieter van der Borcht (designer) and Abraham de Bruyn (engraver), *Ambitio aerumnosa* [Miserable Ambition], copper engraving in Arias Montanus, *Humanae salutis monumenta* (Antwerpen, Christopher Plantin: 1571), Museum Plantin-Moretus
PHOTO: MUSEUM PLANTIN-MORETUS

FIGURE 1.9 Pieter van der Borcht (designer) and Abraham de Bruyn (engraver), *Consilium absconditum* [Hidden Intention], copper engraving in Arias Montanus, *Humanae salutis monumenta* (Antwerpen, Christopher Plantin: 1571), Museum Plantin-Moretus
PHOTO: MUSEUM PLANTIN-MORETUS

FIGURE 1.10 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Den Leeu ende Vos* [The Lion and Fox], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 20. Bibliothèque nationale de France
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For the illustrations of the first edition of this work, Plantin, whose interest in the volume was probably not merely financial but aesthetic,[52] made use of ornamental border decorated with motifs drawn from fables. The three animals (the lion, lamb, and wolf (see Fig. 1.8)), for example, all came directly from Gheeraerts' illustrations for the *Warachtighe fabulen* (Figs. 1.10, 1.11, 1.12). The same goes for the animals represented on the border of Figure 1.9: the wolf

52 Bowen K.L. – Imhof D., *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: 2008).

FIGURE 1.11 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Dogghe ende t'Schaep* [Dog and [the] Sheep], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 48. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-YI-19
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killing a sheep, and the stork catching a frog come from Gheeraerts' illustrations for the fables *The Wolves and the Sheep* (*WF* 37) and *Jupiter and the Frogs* (*WF* 17). It may be a coincidence that these precise borders were used for these illustrations, but the fact is that they illustrate effectively the cruel postlapsarian world of the Aesopian fable, in which there is no place for compassion.

Returning to Bassano's illustration of the Fall (see Fig. 1.6), we see that he took the illustrations of the Gheeraerts filiation as his model, and probably

FIGURE 1.12 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Wolf ende Eghele* [Wolf and Hedgehog], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 46. Bibliothèque nationale de France
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did so directly from Sadeler's *Theatrum morum*.[53] For example, both the lion in the centre of the scene attacking the deer, and the lion killing a donkey, are

53 Bassano's illustrations appear to be inversions of Sadeler's – inversions due to the printing technique. As Sadeler's illustrations are themselves inversions of Gheeraerts', we must conclude that Sadeler's images, and not Gheeraerts' served as the basis for Bassano's illustrations.

taken directly from the illustrated fable books of Gheeraerts and Sadeler.[54] The same goes for the wolves killing the sheep, the fighting roosters and the fleeing hare.[55] Here, too, the animal world after the Fall is the unsympathetic world of Aesop's fables, where the law of the jungle reigns.

The fable illustrations of Gheeraerts or Sadeler can not only be found in Bassano's works, but also in those of our corpus. We will encounter and address them in *Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat* by Simon de Myle, the *Fall* by Cornelis van Haarlem, the engravings of Maerten de Vos, the paradise-scenes of Jan Brueghel and the *Fall* by Rembrandt. However, the important question to ask in all these depictions is whether they borrowed from Gheeraerts and Sadeler's animal motifs alone or also from the moralistic fable themes for which Gheeraerts' illustrations were originally produced. I will argue that the latter is certainly true for Cornelis van Haarlem, Brueghel and Rembrandt, and that in the case of the other artists mentioned, it is certainly a subject for discussion.

8 Imitation

In this study we will often use the concept of 'imitation'. This is an important but difficult concept, some aspects of which will be useful for our argument. As has been known since Rensselaer Lee's article,[56] early modern art theory distinguished between two main types of imitation: direct or literal imitation, in which the artist stays as close as possible to his model; and 'ideal imitation', in which the artist or poet represents nature 'not as it is, but, in Aristotle's phrase, as it ought to be'.[57] 'Direct' imitation can be seen when the artist (Dürer or Jan Brueghel, for example) tries to reproduce his animals and plants as they are in nature (which, of course, according to modern theory, is never entirely possible; the 'ad vivum' is problematic,[58] since even a realistic representation always

54 To be precise, Bassano drew his inspiration from fables 33 (for the lion), 26 (for the general theme of the lion killing a deer) and 101 (for the lion and the donkey) in *Theatrum morum*.

55 These animals correspond respectively to those in fables 116, 114 and 55 of the *Theatrum morum*.

56 Lee R.W. *Ut pictura poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York: 1967; reprint of *Art Bulletin* 22 (1940) 197–269).

57 Ibid., 9.

58 See, for instance, Swan C., "*Ad vivum, naer het leven*, From the Life: Defining a Mode of Representation", *Word and Image* 11 (1995) 353–72. The historiography on the theme has been summarized and analyzed by Balfe T. – Woodall J., "Introduction: The Lives of Ad vivum", in Balfe T. – Woodall J. – Zittel C. (eds.), *Ad vivum? Visual Materials and the Vocabulary of Life-Likeness in Europe before 1800* (Leiden – Boston: 2019) 1–43.

contains elements where reality is idealised or otherwise distorted). In another way, imitation is also 'direct' when the artist copies or 'quotes' his artistic model: for example, Cranach's pupils imitating their master, or Aegidius Sadeler copying Marcus Gheeraerts' fable illustrations in his *Theatrum morum*.[59]

The most famous form of ideal imitation is what we might call 'selective' imitation, in which the artist selects the most beautiful parts from a series of models. This selective imitation is often illustrated by the well-known story of the Greek painter Zeuxis, who, in order to paint the supreme beauty of Helen of Troy, used not one but several pre-selected models.[60] Another frequently cited example of the same principle of imitation is the Horatian image of the honeybee, which makes exquisite honey from the nectar of a wide variety of flowers. Selective imitation can involve a natural object as well as the work of a predecessor. In the latter case, it can take the form of *aemulatio*, in which the follower attempts to equal or surpass his model by means of 'differential imitation'. The term 'differential imitation' was coined by the French literary historian Claude-Gilbert Dubois to describe imitative practices in contemporary mannerisms in the visual arts and literature:[61]

> Mannerist imitation is the result of a conflict: on the one hand, there is an exaggerated deference to a master – which could indicate a complex of inferiority – and, on the other, an exaggerated claim to autonomy, which forces him to reject the title of heir and to choose untrodden paths.[62]

This notion, 'which consists of imitating and recognising one's model while surpassing it'[63] is useful not only for mannerist art, but also for the intertextual and interpictorial relationships between works.

The notion of differential imitation is therefore a useful tool for addressing the lines of imitation between the works in our corpus and the various fable books from the Gheeraerts filiation mentioned above. It is also useful for

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59 See chapter 5.

60 See, for instance, *De Copia* of Erasmus, who indicates the source of this anecdote: Cicero, *De inventione* 2.1–3.

61 Dubois C.-G., *Le maniérisme* (Paris: 1979) 28.

62 Dubois C.-G., "Imitation différentielle et poétique maniériste", *Revue de littérature comparée* 51 (1977) 142–151 (here 147): 'L'imitation maniériste est la résultante d'un conflit: d'un côté nous avons une déférence hyperbolisée à l'égard d'un maître – ce qui pourrait renvoyer à un complexe d'infériorité – et de l'autre une revendication exagérée d'autonomie, qui l'amène à refuser ostensiblement le titre d'héritier et à choisir des chemins non foulés.'

63 Idem: 'qui consiste à imiter et reconnaître son modèle tout en le dépassant.'

addressing the imitative method of Cranach – who respectfully incorporated elements of Dürer, such as his elk, but gave them his own twist. Finally, it can help us unpack the intriguing case of Jan Brueghel, who regularly and respectfully incorporated certain of Rubens' animals, especially his horses, lions and tigers, into his paintings – even into his *Adam and Eve*, which he painted in collaboration with Rubens: Rubens is thus present twice, as co-author and as model.

But let us go back to the starting point of all these lines of imitation: Albrecht Dürer's depictions of the Fall.

CHAPTER 2

Rereading Dürer's Representations of the Fall of Man

1 Introduction

In the six representations of the Fall produced by Albrecht Dürer, the presence of animals is not a given. In the first, a woodcut illustration he made for a devotional work by Marquart von Steyn, entitled *Ritter von Turn* (1493), the only animal he included was the serpent. In Dürer's second representation – a drawing that was probably made after 1495 and is now in Paris – there were no animals present at all: Adam and Eve are alone with their feelings, more specifically the discovery of their mutual sexual attraction. As Christian Schoen has noted, Eve's eye is focused not only on the apple, but also on Adam's genitals.[1] This eroticising of the Fall would be thematised in other works by Dürer, as well as in those by his followers Baldung and Cranach. Dürer's third representation of the Fall, his engraving from 1504 (see Fig. 0.1), is the most famous: its eight animals – serpent, elk, parrot, cat, mouse, hare (or rabbit), cow (or ox), and he-goat (or more precisely an ibex or chamois) – have been discussed by Erwin Panofsky,[2] who set a trend in interpreting these animals. In 1507 Dürer painted two magnificent paired oil panels, now in the Prado in Madrid, without animals (except for the serpent). Dating from 1510 is a drawing in which three animals are present: the serpent, and a very traditional stag and lion (Fig. 2.1). This drawing, now in the Albertina in Vienna, was probably meant to be a preparatory study for the opening woodcut of the series called the *Small Passion* (published in 1510). In this woodcut, however, the serpent and lion are joined not by a stag but by a badger and a bison, neither of which had a traditional place in the iconography of the Fall (Fig. 2.2).[3]

1 Schoen C., *Albrecht Dürer: Adam und Eva. Die Gemälde, ihre Geschichte und Rezeption bei Lucas Cranach d. Ä. und Hans Baldung Grien* (Berlin: 2001) 47.

2 Panofsky E., *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: 1948 [1943]).

3 For the argument of this chapter, it is important to have in mind exactly which animal species are involved. In this chapter, British, not American, animal names are used. So 'elk' is not the American wapiti deer (*Cervus canadensis*), but the deer species that in America is called 'moose' (*Alces alces*), 'badger' is the European badger (*Meles meles*), not the American one (*Taxidea taxus*), and 'bison' is the European bison (*Bison bonasus*), not the American buffalo (*Bison bison*). Dürer's 'parrot' is a Rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*), the 'ibex' is the Alpine ibex, also known as steinbock (*Capra ibex*), and the 'chamois' is the Alpine chamois

 | DOI:10.1163/9789004715271_004

FIGURE 2.1
Albrecht Dürer, *The Fall* (*Adam and Eve*), drawing, 1510. Grafische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna
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The animals which do appear in these representations of the Fall were not merely decorative, however. They, and to a lesser extent the plants, play an essential role in the signification of the Fall, which, as I will show, is multi-layered. The novelty of Dürer's animal depictions lies in his scholarly interest in wordplay and literature – interest fuelled by his contacts, as *pictor doctus*, with the circles of learned humanism north of the Alps, of which three major figures, Erasmus, Pirckheimer and Melanchthon, were portrayed by Dürer. Let us begin with the most traditional of Dürer's three animal representations: his drawing from 1510.

2 Serpent, Stag, and Lion in Dürer's 1510 Drawing

As Genesis 2 gives no detailed information about the serpent in Paradise, scholarly early modern artists such as Dürer were confronted with a fundamental question: What did the serpent of Paradise look like before becoming a real snake, that is, before receiving the punishment of God, who after the Fall said,

(*Rupicapra rupicapra*). The animal depicted by Dürer is probably a chamois (recognisable by the shape of its horns), but in 16th-century natural history there is some confusion between ibex and chamois.

FIGURE 2.2
Albrecht Dürer, *The Fall* (*Adam and Eve*), woodcut taken from *The Small Passion*, in Chelidonius Benedictus, *Passio Christi ab Alberto Nurenbergensi effigiata cum varii generis carminibus* (Nuremberg, Albrecht Dürer: 1511). Rijksmuseum Amsterdam RP-P-OB-1321
PUBLIC DOMAIN

'on your *belly* you shall go' (Gen. 3:14)? Was the prelapsarian serpent a 'normal' snake, a seductive child or woman with a serpent's tail, or a hideous dragon, as can be seen in the famous etching by Rembrandt?[4] While in the first two representations of the Fall that featured the serpent Dürer chose the first option – a normal snake, with only a little crown to distinguish him from other snakes – in 1510 he opted for the second possibility: a seductive female figure in miniature. Upon closer inspection the viewer is struck by the ambivalent eroticism of this creature: its bare breasts denote female eroticism, but Dürer also give the serpent the appearance of an erect phallus. This phallic interpretation of the serpent is in accordance with 16th-century debates on the nature of the serpent of Paradise. According to some authors, the serpent symbolised Adam's penis, and the significance of the Fall comes down to Man's discovery of sexuality – just as appears to be the case in Dürer's 1495 drawing. One finds allusions to this theological interpretation in the novels by the French humanist François Rabelais, who also gives examples of the ambiguous gender, both male and female, of the serpent of Paradise. In his *Quart Livre* (1552), a liar's tale that was partly inspired by Lucianus' *True History*, Rabelais dedicates a whole episode to the Andouilles ('Chitterlings'), who are female creatures with a phallic form and whose queen is named 'Niphleseth', which is, as Rabelais explains, Hebrew for 'phallus'. In

4 On Rembrandt's choice for the dragon, see chapter 9 in the present book.

order to 'prove' this liar's tale, Rabelais (or rather his narrator) inserts a long pseudo-learned dissertation on female creatures with phallic forms:

> And it is still maintained in certain academic circles that the Tempter was a Chidling called Ithyphallus, into whom, long ago, was transformed good Messer Priapus, that great tempter of women in *gardens* called *paradises* in Greek and *jardins* in French.[5]

Exactly which 'Academies' Rabelais is referring to remains unclear. In the commentary of her edition, Mireille Huchon notes: 'For Agrippa [von Nettesheim], *De originale peccato*, 1532, the tempting serpent is none other than Adam's penis.'[6] In his mock dissertation Rabelais mentions some other female phallic creatures: the Himantopodes, a monstrous race mentioned by Pliny; the fairy Melusine, who 'had the body of a female down to her prick-wallet and all the rest below was either a serpentine Chidling or a chidlingesque Serpent;'[7] and the nymph Ora, who 'similarly had a body which was part woman, part Chidling.'[8]

The authorities and examples quoted by Rabelais suggest that Dürer's viewers – at least the learned, humanist ones – might have been acquainted with these kinds of ambiguous creatures, and would thus have understood the artist's theological allusions. This is also the case for the two other animals represented, the stag and the lion.

In medieval and early modern iconography, the stag is a Christological symbol for two main reasons. The first is his antlers, which the animal discards but which grow back again, and thus are a symbol for Christ's Death and Resurrection. As visualised in Dürer's engraving *St. Eustace* (1501), the stag's antlers and the Holy Cross were inextricably connected with each other. Secondly, according to ancient zoology, the stag lives in antipathy with the snake.[9] The French architect Joseph Boillot cites the most evident ancient

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5 Rabelais François, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, ed. and trans. M. A. Screech (London: 2006) 775. Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. M. Huchon (Paris: 1994): 'Encore maintient on en certaines Academies que ce tentateur [i.e. the Devil] estoit l'andouille nommée Ithyphalle, en laquelle feut jadis transformé le bon messer Priapus grand tentateur de femmes par les paradis en grec, ce sont Jardins en François.'

6 Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes* 1552: 'Pour Agrippa, *De originale peccato*, 1532, le serpent tentateur n'est autre que le pénis d'Adam.'

7 Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 776. Idem, *Œuvres complètes* 628: '[elle] avoit corps foeminin jusques aux boursavitz [her genitals], et que le reste en bas estoit andouille serpentine, ou bien serpent andouillicque.'

8 Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 776. Idem, *Œuvres complètes* 628: '[elle] avoit pareillement le corps my party en femme et en Andouilles.'

9 Regarding both reasons, see Bath M., *The Image of the Stag: Iconographic Themes in Western Art* (Baden-Baden: 1992).

sources for this antipathy in his book on the use of animal antipathies in column decoration (*Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes pour user en l'architecture* (1592)): '[The deer] has a great conflict [with snakes], as amply described in Oppian's second book on hunting, and as mentioned by Pliny and Elian.'[10] Deer were also widely known for their religious symbolism as can be seen in the *Pysiologus*,[11] and in numerous medieval bestiaries, such as the *Aberdeen Bestiary*, cited here in translation:

> Deer are the enemies of snakes; when they feel weighed down with weakness, they draw snakes from their holes with the breath of their noses and, overcoming the fatal nature of their venom, eat them and are restored.[12] [...]
>
> They have another characteristic, that after eating a snake they run to a spring and, drinking from it, shed their long coats and all signs of old age.[13]

These 'features' automatically lead to a 'congruous and competent symbolism':

> after the incarnation of the Devil, that is, after committing a sin, they [the Christians] run, by their confession, to Christ, the true spring; drinking in his commandments, they are renewed, shedding their sin like old age.[14]

Through its features, the stag gives a typological meaning to the Fall, foreshadowing Christ's Death and Resurrection, and the Christians' Redemption as well.

This is also the case for the lion. These are the two features of the lion, relevant to our topic, in the words of the *Aberdeen Bestiary*:

> The second characteristic of the lion is that when it sleeps, it seems to have its eyes open. Thus our Lord, falling asleep in death, physically, on the cross, was buried, yet his divine nature remained awake; as it says in the Song of Songs: 'I sleep but my heart waketh' (5:2); and in the psalm: 'Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep' (121:4).

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10 Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz*, fol. Eii v: '[Le cerf] a forte guerre [avec les serpents], comme descript amplement Oppian liure second de la chasse, & en parlent Pline & Elian.' In the absence of source texts prior to Dürer, I will quote a number of texts which, although they are posterior to Dürer, give an impression of how classical and medieval themes survive well into the 16th century.

11 See chapter 1.

12 *Aberdeen Bestiary*, accessed December 13, 2023, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/13r.hti.

13 *Aberdeen Bestiary*, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/13v.hti.

14 Idem.

> The third characteristic of the lion is that when a lioness gives birth to her cubs, she produces them dead and watches over them for three days, until their father comes on the third day and breathes into their faces and restores them to life. Thus the Almighty Father awakened our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day; as Jacob says: 'He will fall asleep as a lion, and as a lion's whelp he will be revived' (see Gen. 49:9).[15]

The principle of antipathy, which we already noticed in the relationship between stag and serpent, is also at work between stag and lion. The animals have an antipathy towards one another, as can be seen in ancient and early modern treatises on natural history. Boillot, for instance, says of the deer: 'This is the female of the stag [...] Her contraries are lions, serpents, dogs, and other animals.'[16] The combination of two adversarial animals such as the lion and the stag shows us the general peace reigning between the creatures in Eden – peace that will be dramatically broken after the Fall, when the lion goes deer hunting and all of the animals devour one another. Thus, the potential for postlapsarian chaos is already present in Eden in the shape of such adversarial animals, a potential realised after the Fall of Man.

This postlapsarian chaos is well illustrated in one of the woodcuts of the above-mentioned *L'Adamo, sacra rapresentatione* (see Fig. 1.6), with the middle of the illustration showing a lion killing a stag. Also of interest is that in Dürer's drawing, as in most of the representations of the Fall where lion and stag are combined, it is the lion that stands on the side of Eve, whereas the stag is on Adam's side. The symbolism is clear: Adam is intended to be the prey of Eve.

3 The Animals in the 1504 Print

Dürer represented eight animals in this engraving, including the serpent, an elk passing behind Adam, a cat and a mouse at the feet of Adam and Eve, and a hare and an ox facing each other, a parrot sits in the Tree of Life, and on the top of the rock there is an ibex or chamois. The best-known interpretation of the animal aspects of this engraving is given by Erwin Panofsky:

> An educated observer of the sixteenth century [...] would have easily recognized the four species of animals in Dürer's engraving as representatives

15 *Aberdeen Bestiary*, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/7v.hti.

16 Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz*, fol. [Eiiij r]: 'cest la femelle du Cerf [...]. Ses contraires sont Lions, Serpens, Chiens, & aultres animaux.'

> of the 'four humors' and their moral connotations, the elk denoting melancholic gloom, the rabbit sanguine sensuality, the cat choleric cruelty, and the ox phlegmatic sluggishness.[17]

According to Panofsky, the image represents the balance between the four humours (which, in medieval scholastic thought, equated with the four elements) present before the Fall. After the Fall, however, this equilibrium disappears rapidly.

While Panofsky's interpretation soon became the default reading of the iconography of these animals, two critical reactions were published, independently of each other, in 2001: the above-mentioned study by Christian Schoen and my own article, of which this present chapter is an updated synthesis.[18] My main criticism of Panofsky's interpretation is that it is limited to only four animals: the elk, the cat, the hare, and the ox. How should one interpret the three other animals represented, and the obvious interconnection between the cat and the mouse, and the (less obvious) relationship between the hare and the ox? Schoen makes much the same point, albeit more implicitly ('The mouse, parrot and ibex play no role in this interpretation'), and comes to an alternative interpretation: 'The animals would thus be coded references to specific sins that can be traced back to the original sin.'[19] This is how Schoen interprets the cat and mouse, whose confrontation is traditionally 'always understood as a reference to human instinctuality or as a reflection of the anticipated gender relationship.'[20] The parrot can be interpreted as a symbol of greed, and the ibex 'may be interpreted as a premonitory sign of self-inflicted doom.'[21] My own interpretation, proposed in 2001 and updated here, goes in another direction: I see Dürer's animal symbolism as a kind of puzzle or riddle to decipher, a puzzle that is based both on traditional animal symbolism and on learned but playful linguistic remotivation of animal names and of proverbial material.

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17 Panofsky, *Dürer* 85.

18 Smith P.J., "The Melancholic Elk. Animal Symbolism and Linguistic Ambiguity in Albrecht Dürer's *The Fall of Man* (1504) and Aegidius Sadeleer's *Theatrum Morum* (1609)," in Bogaards P. – Rooryck J. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Quitte ou Double Sens. Articles sur l'ambiguïté offerts à Ronald Landheer* (Amsterdam: 2001) 333–343.

19 Schoen, *Dürer* 113–114: 'Maus, Papagei und Steinbock spielen bei dieser Interpretation kein Rolle [...] Die Tieren wären somit verschlüsselte Hinweise auf spezifische Sünden, die auf die Ursünde zurückzuführen sind.'

20 Schoen, *Dürer* 114: 'immer als Hinweis auf die Triebhaftigkeit des Menschen bzw. als Reflektion des antizipierten Geschlechterverhältnisses verstanden.'

21 Schoen, *Dürer* 114: 'darf als vorausweisendes Zeichen des selbstverschuldeten Untergangs gedeutet werden.'

Let us start with the elk. The presence of this animal in the Earthly Paradise is surprising to say the least. One would expect to see a normal stag, which was, as we saw, a traditional Christological symbol. As a kind of deer, the elk surely has the same typological symbolism, but why did Dürer choose precisely this kind of deer? The first interpretative clue lies in the animal's name in German: the *Elendt* (elk) is a foreshadowing of mankind's *Elendt* (sorrow) after the Fall.[22] This reading supports Panofsky's, not least as some early modern humanists mention the melancholic nature of the elk as being expressed in its name. Thus, the learned Conrad Gessner explains that this homonymy fits well with the elk's gloomy character: 'The German word means 'misery', and this animal really is sad, if what we have always heard is true.'[23] Dürer, however, goes further than mere wordplay, as the elk recalls both the Fall and Man's Redemption in the medicinal power traditionally ascribed to it. Indeed, the elk's hoof in powdered form was reputed to be an effective treatment for epilepsy, the *falling* disease – just as Christ by his body would one day cure mankind from the evil consequences of the Fall. In order to substantiate this hypothesis, we can once again quote Gessner, who in a later, much enlarged edition of his zoological encyclopaedia, adds the authority of a Polish correspondent, a certain Johannes Bonerus: 'The elk is a very melancholic animal of ugly appearance [...] The hoof of the elk (as Bonerus wrote), put upon a finger or an arm, is held to be an excellent remedy against spasm or the falling disease.'[24] Dürer was very well aware of the medicinal virtue of the elk's hoof, as can be read in his *Journal of the Voyage to the Netherlands*. During his travels in the Netherlands he bought an elk's hoof in powdered form,[25] and just before his death he ordered elk hoof powder from Antwerp to cure his malaria.[26]

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22 Dürer was possibly aware of the etymology of the German word *Elend*: the word is derived from the Old Saxon *elilendi*, which is composed of **alja* ('other') and *land* ('country'). The original meaning of the word is thus: living in another country, which is the cause of misery (cf. Kluge F., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 22nd ed. (Berlin: 1989), s.v. Elend. In the context of the Fall, this means misery for Man, which is caused by being chased from the Earthly Paradise (suggestion made by Merk Kingma)).

23 Gessner Conrad, *Historiae animalium* [...], *De quadrupedis viviparis* (Zurich, Christopher Froschauer: 1551) 3: 'Germanicum nomen miseriam significat; & vere miserum est animal, si credendum est quod saepe audivimus.'

24 Gessner Conrad, *Historiae animalium* [...], *De quadrupedis viviparis* (Frankfurt a.M., Johannes Wechel: 1620) 2, 4: 'Alces [...] est animal valde melancholicum ac tetrum aspectu [...] Ungula Alcis (ut scribit Bonerus) habitur apud Polonos gestata in digito vel brachio pro singulari remedio contra spasmum aut morbum caducum.'

25 'Jch hab 20 stüber umb ein ellendsfus geben' (I bought an elk's hoof for 20 pennies.) (Antwerp, October 10, 1520). I quote from Dürer Albrecht, *Tagebuch der Reise in die Niederlände* [...], ed. F. Anzelewsky (Zürich: 1988) 23. There are two other mentions of elk's hoof in his journal.

26 Eisler C., *Dürer's Animals* (Washington, DC: 1991) 107.

FIGURE 2.3 Albrecht Dürer, *Elk*, drawing, ca. 1501–1504. British Museum
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN

Dürer's playful ambiguity appears to be much more complicated if we take into consideration the drawing he used as a model for his 1504 elk. At the bottom of this drawing he wrote the name of the animal (Fig. 2.3), spelling it *heilant*. According to the standard work by Walter L. Strauss, this is 'archaic German for *elk*.'[27] But in German, of course, the word is also homonymic with *Heilant*, meaning the Redeemer. Etymologically, *Heilant* (Redeemer) is the present participle of the verb *heilen* (to cure), so the connotation of curative power remains. *Nomen est omen*: by virtue of its multi-valent name the elk thus appears to be the most appropriate species of deer to symbolise Christ the Saviour.[28]

27 Strauss W.L., *The Complete Drawings of Albrecht Dürer* (New York: 1974), vol. 2, 568. Strauss dates this drawing to 1501.

28 For a broader contextualisation of the elk in folklore and Bible interpretation at the time of Dürer, see Hübbe B., "Trapped and Lost in Translation – The Moose in Early Modern Zoology and Biblical Philology in: Northern and East-Central Europe", in Roling B. – Schirg B. (eds.), *Boreas rising Antiquarianism and national narratives in 17th- and 18th-century Scandinavia* (Berlin – Boston 2019) 229–261.

Just as German wordplay sheds light on possible typological interpretations of Dürer's engraving, so can the proverbial antecedents of his animalistic pairings of the cat and mouse and the hare and ox. The mouse's tail touches Adam's foot, just as the cat's tail is twisted around Eve's ankle, thus suggesting a game of cat and mouse played between the two. Both animals literally visualise the proverbial material existing in the vernacular: *jouer au chat et à la souris* in French, and *mit jemandem Katz und Maus spielen* in German. Adam (the mouse) will be Eve's (the cat's) prey. This relationship also brings to mind the German proverb *Der Katze*[*n*] *Spiel ist der Mäuse Tod*, which Luther uses in the context of the Fall:

> We know very well that the Devil's play is serious for the Christian, as the proverb says: the cat's play is the death of the mouse [...] And [the Devil] can harm himself in his cleverness, as he did in Paradise, when he thought he had won. But he did not know that the fruit of the woman would come after him and crush his head.[29]

Luther applies the proverb to the game of cat and mouse that the Devil played with man in Paradise, but which ended in his own defeat.

The pair of hare and ox, both sitting and, curiously, facing each other, also seems to refer to a proverbial entity: the Latin proverb *Bove leporem venari*, mentioned by Gessner, who gives the German equivalent, *Man solt ehe ein hasen mit der trummen fangen*, in which the ox is replaced by a drum (literally: 'it would be easier to catch a hare with a drum').[30] In the 1515 edition of his *Adagia*, Erasmus gives the following explanation of the proverb: '*To chase a hare with an ox* is said of those who undertake something absurd, foolish, and wrong.'[31] Erasmus also quotes his main source, Plutarch's *De tranquillitate animi*. Plutarch's text is worth citing because it provides an interpretative clue to Dürer's use of the proverb:

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29 *Eine Wahrhafftige Historia geschehen zu Stasfart, am abend der geburt Christi, im MDXXXIIII jare. Mit einer schönen Vorrede* [*von*] *D. Mart. Luther* (Wittemberg, [Nickel Schirlenz]: 1535) (no pagination): 'Wir wissen fast wol, das des Teuffels scherz uns Christen ein ernst gilt, wie man spricht, der katzen spiel ist der meuse tod. [...] Und [der Teufel] möchte sich noch eben so wol inn seiner klugheit beschmeissen, als er sich im Paradie beschmeis, do er meinet, er hette nu gewonnen, Aber sich gar nicht versahe, das des weibes frucht solt so kurz hinder im her sein, und im das heupt zutretten.' See: http://digitale.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/vd16/content/pageview/4962894, accessed December 22, 2023.

30 Gessner, *Historiae animalium* (1551) 99 and 715.

31 Erasmus, Adagia 4.4.44 (3344): '*Bove leporem venari*, dicuntur qui rem absurdam, stultam ac praeposteram aggrediuntur.'

> [...] in our expectations we aim at things too great; then, when we fail, we blame our destiny and our fortune instead of our own folly. For he is not unfortunate who wishes to shoot with his plough and *hunt the hare with his ox* [...]; it is through folly and stupidity that such men attempt the impossible. And self-love [*philautia*] is chiefly to blame, which makes men eager to be first and to be victorious in everything and insatiably desirous of engaging in everything.[32]

This quotation is perfectly in line with the views of Augustine and his scholarly humanist followers, namely that self-love, and therefore pride, was the main cause of the Fall.[33]

The Tree of Life with the parakeet at Adam's right side can be interpreted in the same onomastic fashion. Panofsky rightly identified this tree as a mountain ash (*Sorbus* sp.). Tree and bird are connected. Although the English name 'mountain ash' says nothing about a relationship between the tree and the bird, in German the tree's name is *Vogelbeer* (literally: bird-berry), which explains the presence of the bird in this particular tree and not elsewhere in the illustration.

One of the reasons the Tree of Life is traditionally identified with a mountain ash is that it can show the different stages of growth – buds, young and full-grown leaves, flowers, and berries – simultaneously, a characteristic it shares with no other tree. This is exactly what Dürer is representing, thus turning the tree into a symbol of reflection on time – we will come back to this later.

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32 *Moralia* 471d. I quote the Loeb edition: Plutarch, *Moralia*, ed. and trans. W. C. Helmbold (London: 1939) 6:205. Without suggesting that Dürer himself had read Plutarch's treatise, we can plausibly admit that as *pictor doctus* he was acquainted with Plutarch, albeit indirectly, through his humanist contacts, for whom the discovery of Plutarch's works was one of the revelations of their time. Plutarch's treatise was well known in Dürer's time, although there seems to be no printed Latin translation before the one Guillaume Budé published and dedicated to Pope Julius II in 1505. However, it is quite possible that manuscript copies of this or other Latin translations of the treatise circulated widely among the humanists. For the early reception of Plutarch, see Aulotte R., *Amyot et Plutarque. La tradition des* Moralia *au XVI^e siècle* (Geneva : 1965).

33 I quote Augustinus: 'Now, could anything but pride have been the start of the evil will? For 'pride is the start of every kind of sin'[Ecclus. 10:13]. [...] This happens when a man is self-complacent when he deserts that changeless Good in which, rather than in himself, he ought to have found his satisfaction'" (Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and transl. H. Bettenson and D. Knowles (Harmondsworth: 1972) 571–572). On Dürer and the Augustinian ideas on the Fall, see Schoen, *Albrecht Dürer* 97, and notes 143 and 145 for references to Scheffczyk L., *Urstand, Fall und Erbsunde. Von der Schrift bis Augustinus* (Freiburg etc.: 1981) and Köster H., *Urstand, Fall und Erbsunde. Von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* ((Freiburg etc.: 1982).

The bird itself probably also contains some playful ambiguity. For this we have to go to Pliny's description of the bird: 'its whole body is green, the only variation being a red circlet at the neck' – which means that Pliny's parrot is a rose-ringed parakeet, the same species as the one depicted by Dürer – 'Its head is as *hard* as its beak; and when it is being taught to speak it is beaten on the head with an iron rod – otherwise it does not feel the blows.'[34] The mention of the bird's 'hardness' is quite relevant: since Pliny, ancient and early modern natural historians never failed to mention this element in the description of the bird. This characteristic could explain why the bird is placed near the sign with Dürer's name and the date on it: *Albert Durer Noricus faciebat AD 1504*. Here, as in other engravings and paintings, Dürer plays with his initials followed by the mention of the year, *AD* meaning 'Albrecht Dürer' as well as 'Anno Domini'. These initials are often engraved in stone or other hard and durable material, suggesting a play on his own name: 'Dürer' evokes the Latin and French words for 'hard', *dur*(*us*), and 'durable', *durabilis/durable* (from the verb *durare/durer*). This may refer to the artist's dream of immortality through the work he created and signed, a common theme in Renaissance art and literature. The hard-headed parrot, placed near his initials, fits in perfectly with Dürer's play on words with his own name.

But the bird was also chosen for other reasons. Its imitative abilities made it a favourite symbol of the Renaissance artist and his ambitions to represent – that is, to imitate – nature. From a typological point of view, the bird (*avis* – *ave* in *ablativus* and *vocativus singularis*) functions as a *trait d'union* between Eve and Mary through its ability to say *Ave* (the word with which the angel greeted Mary in the Annunciation), which is the reverse of *Eva*.[35] 16th-century zoologists like Ulisse Aldrovandi also stressed the bird's peaceful character; it lives in sympathy with all of the other animals, even the wolf, one of the most antipathetic animals in animal symbolism: 'The parrot and the wolf eat

34 Pliny, *Natural History* 10.117. I quote the Loeb edition: Pliny, *Natural History*, ed. and trans. H. Rackam (Cambridge, MA: 1967), 3:368: : 'viridem toto corpora, torque tantum miniato in cervice distinctam. [...] capiti eius *duritia* eadem quae rostro; cum loqui discit, ferreo verberatur radio: non sentit aliter ictus' (italics mine).

35 See Dittrich S. – Dittrich L., *Lexikon der Tiersymbole. Tiere als Sinnbilder in der Malerei des 14.-17. Jahrhunderts* (Petersberg: 2004) 322: 'Das Grußwort *Ave*, das Papageien nachsprechen lernten, die Umkehrung von *Eva*, stellte die Sinnbildbeziehung einerseits zu Eva her, mit der durch den Sündenfall der Tod in dem Welt gekommen war, und andererseits zu Maria als der neuen Eva, die Leben und Heil brachte' (The greeting *Ave*, which parrots learnt to repeat, the inversion of *Eva*, established the symbolic relationship on the one hand to Eve, with whom death had entered the world through the Fall of man, and on the other hand to Mary as the new Eve who brought life and salvation).

together. Wolves, indeed, always love this green bird.'[36] Aldrovandi makes only one exception: the parrot is in antipathy with the serpent. This antipathy is perfectly applicable to Eve and her female offspring, who after the Fall are doomed to live in perpetual enmity with the serpent.

Finally, there is the ibex or chamois in the distance, which looks as if it is about to throw itself from the rocky promontory on which it stands, and therefore is another symbol announcing the Fall of Man. That this mountain goat was seen as a part of biblical typology is plain from this description from the *Aberdeen Bestiary*:

> There is an animal called the ibex, which has two horns of such strength that, if it were to fall from a high mountain to the lowest depths, its whole body would be supported by those two horns. The ibex represents those learned men[37] who are accustomed to manage whatever problems they encounter, with the harmony of the two Testaments as if with a sound constitution; and, supported as by two horns, they sustain the good they do with the testimony of readings from the Old and New Testament.[38]

The *Aberdeen Bestiary* shows the ibex as it falls (Fig. 2.4), while other bestiaries, like Dürer, depict it as the moment before it jumps. It is not bold to suggest that the falling ibex represents the Fall of Man, since its twin horns are directly associated with the two testaments, old and new, and their role in supporting mankind afterwards. The chamois is therefore a perfect example not only of the visual rendering of the Fall, but also of the typological reading of it, by interpreting the Old Testament in light of the New.

Other than the active serpent and the moving elk, Dürer depicts all of the animals at the point immediately before the Fall. They are not waiting indolently so much as poised, seemingly aware of the onrushing doom of Man: the chamois is on the point of jumping into the depths, and the cat and the mouse,

36 Aldrovandi Ulisse, *Ornithologiae, hoc est de avibus historia libri XII* (Bologna, Franciscus de Franciscis: 1599) 653: 'Psittacus & Lupus simul pascuntur. Semper enim viridem hanc Avem amant lupi'. One of the best-known examples, contemporary with Dürer, of the love symbolism of the parrot is *Les Epîtres de L'Amant Vert*, written ca. 1506 by the court poet Jean Lemaire de Belges for his patroness Margaret of Austria. These poems on the 'Green Lover' (i.e. Marguerite's favourite parrot) were printed in 1511. See my "De Groene Minnaar van Margaretha van Oostenrijk", *Virtus. Journal of Nobility Studies* 29 (2022) 150–165.

37 *Aberdeen Bestiary*, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/11r.hti.

38 *Aberdeen Bestiary*, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/11v.hti.

FIGURE 2.4 Anon., *Ibex*, drawing in *Aberdeen Bestiary* (Aberdeen University Library MS 24) fol. 11r (bottom)
PUBLIC DOMAIN

as well as the hare and the ox, are all on the point of chasing or being chased. In a manner paradoxical to the plural temporalities that are combined in the Tree of Life, time appears to have come to a standstill.

Quite apart from the animals, both trees in the engraving merit close inspection, not least because in most of Dürer's work trees are not distinctly individualised – they serve only as upholstery, or at most as repoussoir. Here, however, they occupy the very centre of the image, as if demanding attention. Indeed, the Tree of Life seems to invite the viewer to seek deeper meaning. For the full length of Adam's leg, it is partly stripped: this might, of course, be a purely ornamental coincidence, but it could also reflect the image of bark known since the time of the Church Fathers as a rough surface that hides an inner message. In this sense, bark is often used as an invitation to seek a deeper meaning, to read 'sub cortice verborum hominum' (under the bark of the words of men) – as is expressed in the oft-quoted sentence of Bonaventura: 'Under the bark of the visible letter lies hidden a mystical and deep understanding.'[39] It is also possible that Dürer refers here to one of the numerous vernacular expressions on the bark and the tree, all expressions pertaining to having a very difficult choice to make, a true dilemma: 'entre l'écorche et l'arbre', 'Put not your hand between the bark and the tree'. Modern German has an expression that is very applicable to the hesitant Adam: 'zwischen Baum und Borke wählen', i.e. to choose between two impossible alternatives, but I have not found any medieval or early modern attestation of this expression. There is, however, a Latin application of the expression in the much read *Gesta Romanorum*, which can be applied to the whole scene of the Fall:

> Therefore the thought of death should be put between the tree and the bark, i.e. between the soul and the body. The body is the bark, which should be guided well by the soul, and therefore the devil should never have offspring by a malicious action.[40]

39 Bonaventura, *Brevilogium* [...], ed. and trans. J. C. M. van Winden and A. H. Smits (Van Gorcum: 2000) 1:56: 'sub cortice litterae apertae occultatur mystica et profunda intelligentia.'

40 *Gesta Romanorum*, ed. A. Keller (Stuttgart: 1842), 1:71: 'Ponantur ergo mortis memoria inter arborem et corticem i.e. inter animam et corpus. Corpus est quod cortex est, regens animam, et suic diabolos numquam prolem procreabit perverse operacionis.' See http://books.google.nl/books?id=xcp_HacrNsgC&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad, accessed December 23, 2023.

There are several paradoxical aspects to the Tree of Life. We have already shown how this expresses and summarises the cycle of life, from bud to fruit. In its image time was, as it were, frozen and condensed into one single moment. This condensation is also expressed in another way. While a tree ought, by rights, grow slowly and steadily, the Tree of Life here deals in rapid movement, covering Adam in action. The branch of the Tree of Life sticks straightforwardly out of the trunk from behind Adam to cover his genitals, depicted in such a way that the viewer sees the branch's leaves from below, and therefore his gaze coincides with the direction of the branch's growth – that is, to Adam's genitals. The relationship between Adam and the Tree of Life is very traditional – after all, mankind originates from Adam's genitals – and this can also be interpreted typologically: one can quite literally set up a genealogical tree that begins with Adam and ends with Christ, thus drawing a direct line from the Old to the New Testament. This is a well-known theme in iconology: from the corpse of Adam, buried deep under the earth, springs a tree that turns into the wood of the Cross.[41]

The other tree, the Tree of Knowledge, is also paradoxical: the form of the leaves suggests that it is a fig tree, but the forbidden fruit looks more like an apple than a fig (which is mostly pear-shaped). The fig tree corresponds to the only botanical clarification that the book of Genesis gives: after the Fall Adam and Eve cover their nakedness with fig leaves (Gen. 3:7). The apple-shaped fruit is probably related to a traditional interpretation that identifies the forbidden fruit with an apple, according to the Latin homonymy between *melum* or *malum* ('apple tree') and *malum* ('evil', 'misfortune'). The roundness, according to the above-cited *Aberdeen Bestiary*, is most typical for an apple: 'The apple-tree, *malus*, was so called by the Greeks because its fruit was rounder than any other. From this comes the belief that real apples are those which are exceedingly well-rounded.'[42]

The position of the two trees relative to each other also seems to bear meaning. By its roots the Tree of Life seems to be linked to the Tree of Knowledge. This can, of course, be sheer coincidence or for an aesthetic reason, but it is not impossible for this to be an echo of the Jewish Mystics or the Kabbalah, which had interested humanists of Dürer's time ever since the appearance of Reuchlin's *De verbe mirifico* (1494). On the symbolism of the two trees in Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem writes the following:

41 See, for instance, the contemporary triptych on the *Crucifixion* (ca. 1510) by Cornelis Engebrechtsz. (ca.1462–1527) (Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden).

42 See http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/78v.hti. This etymology does not seem to have any linguistic grounds.

> In the opinion of the Jewish mystics, both trees are in essence one. They grow out into two directions from a common trunk. Genesis tells us that the Tree of Life stood in the center of Paradise, but it does not indicate the exact position of the Tree of Knowledge. The Kabbalists took this to mean that it had no special place of its own but sprouted together with the Tree of Life out of the common matrix of the divine world. […]
>
> The Tree of Life represents that aspect which has hitherto been unrealizable because, due to the sin of Adam, it remained virtually hidden and inaccessible, and we do not know the taste of its fruits. The law, which is concealed in the life of this tree, is that of a creative force manifesting itself in infinite harmonies, a force which knows no limitations or boundaries. The paradisiacal life under this law never came into being. The sin of Adam was that he isolated the Tree of Life from the Tree of Knowledge, to which he directed his desire.[43]

With Scholem's words in mind, one can give an interpretation of the intermediate position of Dürer's Adam between both trees. Adam indeed seems to break loose from the Tree of Life and focus on the Tree of Knowledge.

All of these paradoxes – past, present, and future – solidified in one moment. The forbidden fruit, which is at the same time apple (the cause of evil) and fig (the cover of evil), as well as the density of animal and tree symbolism, announce the hermetic density of Dürer's *Melencolia I* (1514), with its accumulation of enigmatic objects which, taken separately, require interpretation in order for the entire engraving to be understood. Through this Dürer presents himself as an exceptionally intellectual artist. This also gives an indication of how we should interpret the wood engraving from 1510.

4 Badger and Bison in the 1510 Woodcut

As Christian Schoen rightly affirms, 'Since Panofsky's analysis of Dürer's 1504 engraving, the interpretation of animals in Adam and Eve depictions as representatives of the temperaments has become an automatism.'[44] Panofsky him-

43 Scholem G., "The Trees of Eden in the Kabbalah," in Elon A. – Hyman N.M. – Waskow A. (eds), *Trees, Earth, and Torah: A Tu B'Shvat Anthology* (Philadelphia: 1999) 115–120 (here 115).

44 Schoen, *Dürer* 160: 'Seit Panofskys Analyse von Dürers Kupferstich von 1504 ist die Deutung von Tieren bei Adam und Eva-Darstellungen als Vertreter der Temperamente zu einem Automatismus geworden.'

self gave legitimacy to this interpretative automatism in interpreting Dürer's woodcut in the same manner as his 1504 engraving:

> Only three beasts are depicted, and they symbolize the non-sanguine temperaments, the lion standing for 'choleric' wrath, the bison for 'melancholic' gloom and inertia, and the particularly conspicuous badger, notorious for his laziness, for 'phlegmatic' sloth. The 'sanguine' temperament is represented by Adam and Eve themselves; they illustrate its most characteristic feature, the capacity and inclination for love.[45]

This interpretation is as arbitrary as the previous one: I have not been able to find early modern reports of the melancholic gloom of the bison, and the interpretation of the badger as a 'lazy' beast appears anachronistic, as we shall see. Following these arbitrary humoural assignations, Panovsky's imposition of 'sanguinity' onto Adam and Eve is as inevitable as it is distorted, based upon an immoveable interpretative format more than any nuanced reading.

In order to arrive at an interpretation of the woodcut, and of the animals depicted within it, we must see it not as an image in isolation but as intended for inclusion in a greater whole. It is the second woodcut of a series known as *The Small Passion*. This series illustrates a small devotional book, entitled *Passio Jesu Christi*, with Latin poems written by Benedictus Chelidonius.[46] At the opening of this booklet the reader's eye is first struck by the image of the Man of Sorrows, and it then immediately passes to the second woodcut, which shows a huge badger which looms up and goes from left to right, heading to the scene of the Fall. It is clear that this badger is not just a decorative element but must have a symbolic meaning in relation to both the scene from which it seems to come (the Man of Sorrows) and the scenes to which it seems to go: the Fall (second woodcut) and the Expulsion from Paradise (third woodcut).

The movement of the badger, from left to right, reminds us of the movement of the elk in the 1504 engraving. Does the badger perhaps hold, in its name and nature, similar positive iconological possibilities to the elk's? Yes, indeed: in the Middle Ages and in the early modern period the badger did not have the dysphoric symbolism Panofsky believed it had. The animal was not 'notorious for his laziness', but, on the contrary, well known for his inventiveness and diligence in building his very complex subterranean den, or sett. This is mentioned by the great medieval encyclopaedists, such as Vincent of Beauvais,

45 Panofsky, *Dürer* 143–44.

46 Chelidonius Benedictus, *Passio Christi ab Alberto Nurenbergensi effigiata cum varii generis carminibus* (Nuremberg, Albrecht Dürer: 1511).

Thomas of Cantimpré, and Batholomeaus Anglicus, as we can read in a very informative article by Bohdana Librová on the symbolism of fox and badger.[47] In addition to its inventiveness and diligence, the badger 'is a very clean animal that cannot put up with any filth', according to Jacques de Vitry.[48] It is because of this that, the badger lives in antipathy with the fox. The fox sneaks into the badger's den during the short absence of its rightful inhabitant, and it contaminates the den with urine and excrement; the fastidiously clean badger is thus forced to abandon its home. This well-known story was given a religious interpretation in an anonymous 14th-century text:

> The badger is God. The fox is the devil. The badger [digs [?] hard] and the fox wants to have his home without having to work for it. The badger's house is man's soul, which is violated by the devil.

The Christological symbolism of the badger is explicitly mentioned in the following quotation:

> The badger is Christ. His hole is the human heart, in which the fox, i.e. the devil, deposits his excrement on the badger's treasures.[49]

That this story was also known in Dürer's time is evidenced by the fact that it is mentioned by Gessner, who quotes Isidorus and Albertus Magnus, although he does not mention the badger's moralising religious meaning:

> The fox does not make a hole for himself; but he fouls with his excrement the entry of the badger's hole while the badger is absent; when the badger returns, he runs away from the stinking dung and lets the fox live in his home. Isodorus and Albertus.[50]

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47 Librová B., "Le renard dans le *cubiculum taxi*: les avatars d'un *exemplum* et le symbolisme du blaireau," *Le Moyen Age* 109, no. 1 (2003) 79–111.

48 Cited by Librová, "Le renard": 'est mundissimum animal quod fetrum sustinere non potest.'

49 Pierre Bersuire, *Reductorium morale* (ca. 1340), quoted by Librová, "Le renard": 'Taxus est Christus, caverna eius cor humanum in qua [...] vulpes i. diabolus, stercus divitiarum [...] imponit'

50 Gessner, *Historiae animalium*, vol. 1 (1551) 780: 'Propriam sibi foveam vulpes non parat: sed melis foveae, absente ea, introitum excremento inquinat: rediens illa virus olentem deserit, & vulpi habitandam relinquit, Isidorus & Albert.'

We can find the same story in Petrus Berchorius' *Dictionarii seu Repertorii moralis* (1574), now with a moral: 'The badger hates the fox by nature. [...] The badger, a clean animal, is Christ; the fox or deceiver is the Devil.'[51]

How can we apply this symbolism to Dürer's *Fall*? Dürer represents the badger at the moment this animal shows up in full daylight; the animal seems to blink against the light. Because badgers are predominantly nocturnal animals, there should be a very good reason for this animal to do so. In light of the above-quoted medieval and early modern texts, this reason could be that the animal was chased by the fox out of its home, the fox being the traditional symbol of evil and the Devil ('Vulpes diabolus'). The fox itself does not show up. The Devil is, of course, present in the form of the serpent: he has penetrated into the Earthly Paradise, i.e. the human soul, from which God is absent. However, in the end the badger will be stronger than the fox: when it comes to a fight, the badger is always the winner, as is reported in works by Hildegard von Bingen and others.[52]

It is likely that, as with the elk, Dürer also had an onomastic reason for depicting a badger. This animal has two names in Latin: *taxus* and *meles*. *Taxus* in Latin also means 'yew tree', a tree with a rich symbolism: through its old age (there are yew trees known to be 1500 years old) it symbolises eternal life; through its toxicity (of bark, leaves, and seeds) it is also the tree of death – this dual symbolism is why the tree has been planted in graveyards everywhere in Europe. With regard to the Earthly Paradise, the yew tree unites both trees of Eden: the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which is also the Tree of Death – as such, some contemporaries of Dürer, such as Baldung Grien, depict the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil with a human skeleton in it, next to the serpent. By its other Latin name, *meles* or *melis*, the badger might have to be interpreted according to the same kind of wordplay. *Meles* is partly homophonic with the Latin and Greek words for *apple*: *melus* means 'apple', and *melum* or *malum* means 'apple tree' – which is, as we have noticed, homophonic with the Latin word *malum*, signifying 'evil' and 'misfortune'. Unlike the somewhat ambiguous trees Dürer presented in the 1504 engraving, the later woodcut shows clearly that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil bears both fruit and leaf of an apple tree. The badger foreshadows the tree by its homonymic relations to the apple, and warns Adam and Eve by its homonymic relationship to death.

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51 Berchorius Petrus, *Dictionarii seu Repertorii moralis* (Venice, Hieronymus Scotus' heirs: 1574), 1 :15: 'Taxus naturaliter odit Vulpem. [...] Taxus mundum a[n]i[m]al est Christus, Vulpes aut fraudulentus est Diabolus.'

52 See Librová, "Le renard."

The remaining animals deserve a little attention also. The lion's symbolism is as seen in Dürer's 1504 drawing. The final animal is less straightforward. While it is plainly bovine, its exact species is difficult to ascertain. The horns and the long mane indicate that this animal is of a different species than the ox in the 1504 engraving. Its mane resembles that of a wisent or European bison, while its horns suggest an aurochs. In Dürer's time both animals were already very rare: the bison lived only in the primeval forests of Poland, an area where it is still found today; the aurochs was at that time confined to some hunting grounds, also in Poland, until 1627, when the last of them was shot. The species (and their names) were confused with each other in the early modern period.[53] The Latin name for both animals is *urus*, and one of the German names is *Ur*, which is homophonic with the prefix *ur-*, which means *primitive* or *original*. This relationship between the animal name and the prefix is also noted by Conrad Gessner, who was not only a zoologist but also a famous linguist:

> In German we call the 'urus bos' *urochs*, like in the words *uralt, ur*[*h*]*ane, ursprung, ursach, urhab*, and in this sense the word *ur* can be seen as a syncope, a contraction of the German preposition *vor*.[54]

One automatically thinks of the *original sin*, and the recently coined German word *Ur-Sünde* also comes to mind.

5 Conclusion

The key to the interpretation of Dürer's animals is to treat them as an erudite, sophisticated play on language combined with traditional symbolism. Every animal should be interpreted that way; as in Dürer's *Melencolia I*, every object demands a discrete interpretation that also fits within the representation's overall signification. However, it is important not to apply this method blindly to the work of Dürer's imitators. It is likely that Dürer's imitators had an inkling of the deeper meaning of Dürer's animals around Adam and Eve, but they were not able to fathom this meaning in all of its richness and ambivalence.

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53 See Pyle C.M., "Some Late Sixteenth-Century Depictions of the Aurochs (*Bos primigenius* Bojanus, extinct 1627): New Evidence from Vatican MS Urb. Lat. 276", *Archives of Natural History* 21 (1994) 275–288.

54 Gessner, *Historiae animalium*, vol. 1 (1551) 780: 'Dicimus [...] *urochs* urum bovem, [...] ut in nomibus *uralt, ur*[*h*]*ane, ursprung, ursach, urhab*; & videri potest *u* in hoc sensu factum per syncopem a praepositione *vor*.'

Since Dürer, artists have had a tendency to present a personal interpretation of traditional animal symbolism. This applies to Cranach and Baldung, as has been shown by Christian Schoen, and to Herri met de Bles, as has been demonstrated by Michel Weemans.[55] In other chapters of this book it will be shown this to be true for later artists, such as Cornelis van Haarlem and Rembrandt, for whom emblem books and Aesopian fables played an important role, and for Jan Brueghel the Elder, for whom scientific topicality, especially in the field of natural history, appears to be important. All of these artists were inspired by Dürer but demonstrate their own interpretation of Eden's animals.

55 Weemans M., "The Earthly Paradise: Herri met de Bles' Visual Exegesis of *Genesis* 1–3", in Brusati C. – Enenkel K. – Melion W. (eds.), *The Authority of the Word: Reflecting on Image and Text on Northern Europe, 1400–1700* (Leiden – Boston: 2011) 263–312.

CHAPTER 3

Cranach's Animals

Technical research into the preparatory layers of Cranach's and Dürer's paintings has shown that there must have been a historical connection between Cranach and Dürer 'at workshop level'.[1] This may also explain their use of the same motifs. It is possible to interpret this similar thematisation as the manifestation of a love/hate relationship between Cranach and Dürer. Cranach displays imitative admiration, with clear references to Dürer, and at the same time an emulative tendency designed to distinguish himself from his model. Or to be more precise: Cranach quotes Dürer in order to show the viewer his own originality. The best example of this is the way in which Cranach repeatedly imitates Dürer's *Melencholia I*.[2] In these imitations, the thematic similarities are immediately apparent, especially in the melancholy angel figure, the globe and the sleeping dog.

This imitative and emulative ambivalent relationship between the two artists is visible in each of the over fifty depictions of the Fall produced by Cranach. It appears that Cranach could not approach this subject without having Dürer's 1504 print and 1510 panel set firmly in his thoughts. With such a corpus of very similar depictions of the Fall to choose from, there are three that seem particularly representative. The first is Cranach's 1509 woodcut (Fig. 3.1) which is not only his earliest depiction of the Fall, but is also plainly emulative of Dürer's 1504 engraving. The second is Cranach's 1526 painting *Adam and Eve*, now in the Courtauld (FR 191) (Fig. 3.2). As one of the high points of Cranach's depictions of Adam and Eve, this painting has received much art historical attention. However, I believe that its many animals deserve further interpretation. The third work on this subject is an undated painting that turned up in the Galerie De Jonckheere. This painting, which is not listed in the Friedländer and Rosenberg catalogue and is only mentioned in passing elsewhere, depicts a number of animals that have not previously been treated in art historical literature.

1 The exact nature of this connection cannot be determined. For an overview of the various hypotheses on this, see Heydenreich G., "*Adam and Eve* in the Making", in Campbell C. (ed.), *Temptation in Eden. Lucas Cranach's* Adam and Eve (London: 2007) 19–33 (here 19–21).

2 These paintings were made between 1528 and 1533 (see FR 276–277). The abbreviation FR refers to the catalogue Friedländer M.J. – Rosenberg J., *The Paintings of Lucas Cranach* (Amsterdam: 1978).

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FIGURE 3.1 Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Fall* (*Adam and Eve*), 1509, woodcut. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
PUBLIC DOMAIN

FIGURE 3.2 Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Fall* (*Adam and Eve*), 1526, oil on wood, 117.1 × 80.8 cm, Courtauld Institute Galleries, London
PUBLIC DOMAIN

1 Cranach's 1509 Woodcut

The 1509 woodcut is Cranach's first dated work that contains a reference to Dürer's engraving. This reference is by no means disguised: the sheet of paper on which Cranach has placed his initials and mark hangs in roughly the same place as the monogram 'AD' does in Dürer's engraving: in the tree above and to the left of Adam. Like Dürer ('AD' stands for both 'Albrecht Dürer' and 'Anno Domini'), Cranach seems to be making a pun here: his mark, the winged serpent, is depicted between the 'real' serpent of Paradise and two large flying birds. The shape of these birds suggests that they are storks,[3] birds which, since Pliny, had been seen to have a natural antipathy to serpents.[4] The fact that these birds are in flight differentiates Cranach's flying serpent motif from the serpent of Paradise, which is condemned to crawl on its belly forever after the Fall.

There is a similarly amusing lightness in the way Cranach views the relationship between Adam and Eve. Eve has her arm around Adam's shoulders, and Adam seems more interested in her right breast than in the apple. The motif of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is also interpreted by Cranach in similar fashion. Like Dürer, Cranach leaves the question whether the tree is an apple or a fig tree open to interpretation: the fruits look more like apples than figs, but the leaves are clearly fig leaves.[5] Cranach emphasises Eve's nakedness: where Dürer uses a handy fig leaf to hide her genitals, Cranach's Eve is unobscured by vegetation. Cranach appears to be reminding the viewer that Adam and Eve will only cover their nakedness with fig leaves *after* the Fall.

The four stags on the left, near Adam, seem to be a response both to Dürer's elk and to the paradoxical way in which Dürer represented time through the Tree of Life. Scholars have often wondered about these stags. In one exhibition catalogue, for example, we read: 'Whereas in Dürer's work the peculiar arrangement of individual animals has to do with their symbolic meaning,

3 We can see the typical characteristics of the stork here: the birds have a large size, a long bill, and when flying their neck is stretched forward, and they have their long legs extended well beyond the end of their short tail (easily seen in the bird on the right). These characteristics preclude these birds being from some other large species: the crane has a relatively shorter bill, and the heron has a withdrawn neck when flying.

4 Pliny, *Natural History*, Books VIII–XI, ed. and transl. H. Rackam (Cambridge, MA – London: 1967) 333. I will come back to the antipathy between these two animals.

5 Cranach's hesitation between apple and fig is of short duration, and is visible only in two other (early) representations of the Fall (FR 43 and 44).

Cranach immediately calls up a whole herd of stags.'[6] On closer inspection, however, the four stags must be interpreted symbolically, and the key is to be found in the stags' most visible feature, their antlers. The closer to the viewer, the larger the antlers: the first stag, in the background, has the smallest antlers, the next stag's antlers have two tines, the next three, and the final stag, resting closest to the viewer, has a fully grown set. Cranach here actually depicts one stag, but in four stages of its life – four being the number of completion and fulfilment, announcing typologically the fullness of times. In doing so, he echoes the four seasons depicted in Dürer's Tree of Life.

In addition to this paradoxical symbolism of temporality – the passage of time frozen in a single moment – Cranach gives his stags the same traditional multiple symbolic layers of meaning that we have seen in Dürer's works. Its antlers, which the animal sheds but which grow back again, foreshadow the death and resurrection of Christ and the Christian. Through Adam, who is partially covered by the antlers, the stag announces the tree of Adam from which Christ will be born. It also announces the cross on which he will die. When considered in combination with the lion, the stag represents the paradisiacal peace between creatures – a peace which the Fall transforms into enmity between predator and prey.

In addition to the lamb, the lion and the stag(s), there are a number of other animals depicted which can be grouped into the three categories listed in Genesis 2:20: 'all cattle', 'the fowl of the air' (the two flying birds on the left) and 'every beast of the field'. To the right of Eve is a pair of fallow deer. Here and elsewhere, Cranach distinguishes between two species of deer – red deer and fallow deer – to which a third is added in the 1526 Courtauld painting: the roe, as we shall see. This distinction is not so much symbolic as a reference to the reality of contemporary menageries, as all three species were kept in deer parks. The other animals shown to the right of Eve belong to the 'beasts': the viewer can distinguish two sheep and two horses, albeit with some difficulty. These domestic animals will join Adam and Eve after the Fall. The tame animals are together and look distressed, and rightly so: the Fall is about to happen, and to emphasise this threat, an enormous wild boar is depicted in the background. This boar comes out of the woods and is therefore probably the visualisation of the wild boar of Psalm 80, the 'aper de silva', which comes out

6 'Terwijl bij Dürer de eigenaardige schikking van afzonderlijke dieren te maken heeft met hun symbolische betekenis, laat Cranach meteen een hele kudde herten aanrukken,' Messling G. (ed.), *De wereld van Lucas Granach. Een kunstenaar ten tijde van Dürer, Titiaan en Metsys* (Tielt: 2010) 185 (translation mine).

of the woods to destroy the vineyard of God. The negative symbolism of the boar is emphasised in the Courtauld painting of 1526.

Finally, the lion is given a prominent role. It is true that Cranach's lion, along with the stag, is the traditional symbol of the Resurrection, and that in Cranach the lion is never depicted alone with the First Couple, but always in the company of the stag, thus announcing their postlapsarian enmity.[7] Nevertheless, Cranach rarely depicts these animals in the traditional manner, that is, facing one another: in most of Cranach's depictions of the Fall, the lion looks out of the picture at the viewer almost as if he is ready to pounce.[8] The lion not only depicts the inevitability of the Fall, but also the viewer's place within it. This is an example of visual rhetoric through animal figures, and it is where Cranach differs from Dürer: Dürer's animals are trapped in themselves and their relationships to each other (Dürer's elk seems to be the only animal looking at the viewer). With Dürer, the viewer is involved in the picture intellectually (including through the intellectual play on words) rather than emotionally. Cranach, on the other hand, also appeals to the viewer's feelings – in this case, the viewer's fear of the lion – a process which, as we shall see, is used by Cornelis van Haarlem and many others in very effective and varied ways. In their paintings, the lion is not the only animal figure used to evoke emotion; this role is also played by other animals (dog, cat, monkey, etc.). Animals, of course, can evoke more than simple fear in the viewer – they may awake other feelings such as guilt or pity.

The appeal of Cranach's animals to the viewer works not only through the rhetoric of pathos, but also – like Dürer, though perhaps in a less weighty way – on an intellectual level, by arousing the viewer's curiosity about the hidden meaning of the animals depicted. Rather than slavishly follow Dürer by choosing to populate his depictions of the Fall with elk, cat, mouse etc. – animals whose deeper symbolism he certainly suspected but perhaps could not always fathom – Cranach used a large number of other animals, working with their traditional symbolism but never without adding a personal twist.

2 The 1526 Courtauld Painting

The symbolism inherent in the many animals depicted by Cranach in his 1526 panel *The Fall* held by the Courtauld (Fig. 3.2) has been interpreted many times,

7 See my discussion of Dürer's 1510 drawing in chapter 2.

8 We also find similar lions in Cranach's representations of Hieronymus (FR 169, 184, 185, 186). Also, there is here a big difference between them and the sleeping, introverted lions in Dürer's representations of Hieronymus.

most extensively by Caroline Campbell in the catalogue of the 2007 exhibition *Temptation in Eden*. By revisiting the animal symbolism of the painting in comparison with Cranach' first depiction of the Fall, the 1509 woodcut, it is possible to arrive at a more precise interpretation of the Courtauld painting.

As mentioned above, the wild boar is the most obvious thematic link between the animal symbolism inherent in the woodcut and the 1526 painting. The menacing boar comes out of the woods and walks towards the scene in the foreground,[9] its relationship to the boar of Psalm 90 accentuated by Cranach's use not of the fig leaf but of grapes to hide the couple's genitals. But the vine that grows around the tree of knowledge may also hold another, deeper symbolic meaning. It may be intended to call to mind John 15.5: 'I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.' In the painting, Adam's genitals are covered by a bunch of grapes. In the light of John 15:5, this suggests that Adam will be obedient to God after the Fall. But it also suggests that we – the intended viewers, descended from Adam – must also produce grapes, that is, live in God. This message is emphasised by the fact that Adam's genitals are covered not only by a bunch of grapes, but also by the antlers of the stag to his right. Thus, in addition to the deeper meaning of the grapevine, we see here the polyvalent symbolism of the stag's antlers (Resurrection and wood of the Cross) that we discussed earlier.

The stag's antlers cover not only Adam but also the lamb behind him. Unlike Cranach's other images of the Fall, this lamb is not part of a pair, but a single creature. The typological symbolism of the lamb is obvious, especially when one considers some of Cranach's other works. This typological line from Fall to Redemption is most clearly illustrated in the painting *The Fall and the Redemption of Man* (FR 221): on the left is the Fall, and on the right is Redemption, symbolised by a single lamb overcoming death. Another clear example of the typological symbolism of the lamb is the *Crucifixon with an Allegory of Redemption* (FR 434): a lamb is depicted at the foot of the cross, an echo of the combination of lamb and cross symbolised by the stag's antlers. In

9 For a different interpretation of the boar, see Campbell C., "Lucas Cranach the Elder [...]", in Campbell C. (ed.), *Temptation in Eden. Lucas Cranach's* Adam and Eve (London: 2007) 65–79. Campbell argues that in addition to the traditional negative symbolism of the boar ('representing qualities opposite to those of the sheep (anger, brutality and lust) and as the embodiment of the Antichrist'), there is also a positive symbolism of the boar: 'the boar could be interpreted more positively as justice, independence and courage in the face of God's enemies' (Campbell, "Lucas Cranach" 76–78). In my view, Cranach's boars in the context of Paradise are always negative. For example, in the Galerie De Jonckheere painting, the boar in the background scene is chased away by a white hunting dog, which has a positive connotation (see below).

both cases, reference is made to the Lamb of the Apocalypse, so that the lamb depicted in the *Fall* of 1526 refers indirectly to the Apocalypse.

We can therefore see that the 1526 painting preserves and deepens the thematic symbolism of the woodcut, but at the same time it also shows some important changes: the theme of the four stages of the antlers disappears, the eroticism between Adam and Eve is toned down, the multivalent symbolism of the grapevine is added, the fig tree is replaced by an apple tree (which makes renewed allusion to the fig leaf impossible), and the domesticated animals (the 'cattle') are replaced by other animals with their own, often ambiguous, symbolism. Let's take a closer look at these new animals: the stork, the heron, the partridges, and the roebuck.[10]

The first of these additions, the stork, has profoundly positive connotations, as Campbell rightly points out: 'This bird was associated by Christian iconographers with piety, purity and resurrection. A prudent creature, it had only one nest, which was used as a metaphor for the true Church, the only home for the faithful.'[11] Conrad Gessner summed up the stork's symbolic value a mere twenty years after Cranach's painting: 'In the stork we admire reason and prudence, justice, gratitude, temperance.'[12] He also mentions the well-known antipathy between snake and stork. 'These messengers of spring [...] these enemies of the serpent' (as the *Aberdeen Bestiary* calls them)[13] are therefore an ideal symbol of the power of good against evil as symbolised by the serpent. The stork's posture, huddled with its neck retracted and its feathers puffed up, is realistically rendered. This posture corresponds to that described by Gessner on the authority of Gasparus Heldelinus, author of an *Encomium ciconiae* (1534), a much-quoted source in Gessner's chapter on the stork:

> When the storm is threatening from somewhere, the stork anticipates it [...], he sadly fluffs up his feathers, lays his beak on his breast, from which he puffs up his feathers forward, as a beard [...][14]

10 Of these new animals, the stork, heron and the horse were added at a later stage in the painting process than the other animals. See Heydenreich, *Lucas Cranach* 213. However, according to our interpretation, the two birds are not the result of an arbitrary filling of empty spaces, as Heydenreich seems to suggest. Both birds and horse are included for a specific purpose.

11 Campbell, "Lucas Cranach" 76.

12 Gessner Conrad, *Historiae animalium liber III. De avium natura* (Zurich, Christopher Froschauer: 1555) 257. Original Latin reads: 'In ciconia admiramur ingenium et prudentiam, iustitiam, gratitudinem, temperantiam'.

13 See chapter 2.

14 Gessner, *Historiae animalium liber III*. 257. Original Latin reads: 'Ciconia tempestatem praesentit, quae sicunde imminet, [...] pennas tristior diffundit, rostrum in pectus condit, unde et plumas, ceu barbam promittit.' The sole difference between Gessner's and

Cranach's puffed-up stork thus announces that a storm will break over the creatures of the Earthly Paradise immediately after the Fall.

The same symbolism can be seen in the heron. As Gessner reported, albeit in less detail, the heron is also in sympathy with man and can also anticipate stormy weather: 'Herons are very friendly to man and they announce the coming of summer and winter'.[15] But here we should be careful not to automatically conflate Cranach's stork and heron.[16] Cranach's heron is a different creature to his stork – the former active, the latter reactive, huddled in anticipation of the coming storm.

Beside the stork and heron, Cranach includes a pair of partridges, a bird with an extensive, even paradoxical, set of symbolic referents. The partridges in Cranach's painting are surrounded by animals with only positive connotations, whereas the symbolism of the bird according to ancient, medieval and early modern natural historians is almost unanimously negative. Since Pliny, the bird had been a symbol of intolerance, lust and unbridled desire.[17] The *Aberdeen Bestiary*, for example, described the partridge as a 'cunning and unclean bird. For one male mounts another and in their reckless lust they forget their sex. The partridge is so deceitful that one will steal another's eggs.'[18] Furthermore, the male and female did not live in anything resembling connubial bliss, as 'the females often carry their young in order to deceive the males, who frequently attack the chicks [...].'[19]

The question now is why Cranach included partridges in so many scenes with otherwise positive connotations (or alongside other animals with overwhelmingly positive connotations). Campbell is content to explain it thus: 'Cranach used them [the partridges] as a pair to represent the positive power of love – in contexts as diverse as images of Saint Jerome [...] and the Nymph of the Spring – and this is probably their meaning here.'[20] While this is true so far as it goes, there is also the possibility that, by bringing two partridges together as a harmonious pair, Cranach seems to be aiming at a *coincidentia oppositorum* (a unity of opposites in which the opposition between the two contrasting objects disappears), similar to the bringing together of the cat and the mouse (in Dürer's print) or the stag and the lion in several of Cranach's

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Cranach's storks is that Gessner's is described as sitting on its nest, whereas Cranach's is simply standing.

15 Gessner, *Historiae animalium liber III* 204. Orig. Latin reads: 'Ardeae hominibus charissimae sunt, et aestatis hyemisque tempus praesagiunt'.

16 As does Campbell, "Lucas Granach" 76.

17 Pliny, *Natural History* 355.

18 *Aberdeen Bestiary*, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/54r.hti.

19 Idem.

20 Campbell, "Lucas Granach" 76.

Paradise scenes. This *coincidentia* was possible in the paradisiacal state, but not after the Fall.[21]

While the partridge may point to some manner of marital disharmony yet to come (post-Fall), the roebuck brings with it a very different set of associations, not least as it is portrayed as drinking from a stream. This image thus presented the traditional antipathy thought to exist between deer and serpent in much the same manner as did the *Aberdeen Bestiary*: 'after eating a snake they run to a spring and, drinking from it, shed their long coats and all signs of old age'.[22] The destruction of the serpent by the deer was thus seen as a sign of rebirth, while its drinking at the stream would undoubtedly bring to mind Psalm 42:2: 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.' The viewer identifies with the deer and looks into the water with the animal; he sees – even if only partially – that there are images within. This brings us to Paul's famous passage (1 Corinthians 13:12): 'for now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' This passage is widely read as a metaphor for the typological reading of the (biblical) word, which could only be partially understood in the present, but would be fully revealed in the days to come. Thus, Cranach's depiction of the hazy reflection of the drinking roe could be seen as a metapictorial clue: it invites the viewer to make a typological interpretation of the depicted scene, and thus acts in the same way as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which, promising partial revelation through the long crack in its bark, also invites the viewer to search for deeper meaning.[23]

So we see that the animals in both Cranach's woodcut and painting can be interpreted typologically, including both the lamb (which obviously refers to the Lamb of God) and the white horse in the background. We shall return to the white horse at a later juncture.

3 A Lesser Known *Adam and Eve*

The third depiction of the Fall is a relatively unknown, undated painting currently in private possession, that until recently was in the Galerie De Jonckheere

21 The paradoxical nature of a peaceful pair of partridges could also explain why the two partridges in Cranach's Melancholia paintings are depicted as belonging to the *impossibilia* that surround the melancholic protagonist.

22 See the *Aberdeen Bestiary*, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/13v.hti.

23 See also Dürer's fissured tree; see chapter 2.

in Paris.[24] In this painting, Cranach depicts Dürer's most eye-catching animal, the elk, in the same place (on the left) and posture as the elk in Dürer's work, and therefore unmistakably indicates it as a reference to Dürer. The viewer is invited to compare Cranach's painting to Dürer's etching to gauge Cranach's originality and mastery. The originality of the painting is evident in the depiction of the two main characters: Adam is shown neither standing, as was typical for the time, nor sitting, as was common in the Italian renaissance but only occurs once in Cranach's oeuvre,[25] but lying down. This position was rarely seen before Cranach, and in his works only this once. The lion is, atypically, in front of Adam, thus reversing the usual association of Adam and Eve with stag and lion (prey and hunter). Eve's posture is also highly unusual as she is gracefully seated with her left arm resting on a stag. Eve's uncommon position[26] is quite possibly a reference to Cranach's own *Apollo and Diana* (1530), in which he depicts Diana as sitting on a tamed stag.[27] Diana, goddess of the hunt, has complete control over the animal, just as Eve does as she leans nonchalantly on the stag's rump, which she also appears to be stroking – it is no accident that the goddess of love, Venus, is also depicted with a stag (FR 398). As the stag is traditionally associated with Adam, Cranach seems thus to be implying that Eve has complete power over him, following the *Weibermachtsthematik* typical of Cranach's oeuvre.[28]

The painting includes numerous other animals, however. In the foreground, we see three deer (two red deer – a buck and a doe – and a roebuck), a lion, two pheasants with their young, and two lambs. In the background, from left

24 Unfortunately the current anonymous owner has not given permission for reproduction in the present book. An image of this painting can be found in the luxury edition, produced by the Diane de Selliers Institute, of Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*: *Érasme, Éloge de la folie, illustré par les peintres du Nord*, ed. Claude Blum a.o. (Paris: 2013) 295. See also the Cranach Digital Archive, https://lucascranach.org/de/PRIVATE_NONE-P324/ (last consultation 16.06.2024), which attributes the painting to Cranach's workshop.

25 Namely in his woodcut of 1509 (see Figure 3.1).

26 The only other example of Eve sitting on a stag is the drawing *Adam and Eve* (ca. 1525, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen).

27 *Apollo and Diana* (1530, Berlin, Staatlichen Museen, Gemäldegalerie, FR 271); *Apollo and Diana* (ca. 1530, Brussels, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, FR 270). Also Schoen, *Dürer* 207, proposes this reference, but without naming the Galerie De Jonckheere painting.

28 The term is coined by Schoen, *Dürer* 206. For this theme, see, for instance, Bücken V. "Heldinnen en verleidsters in het werk van Lucas Cranach", in Messling G. (ed.), *De wereld van Lucas Cranach. Een kunstenaar ten tijde van Dürer, Titiaan en Metsys* (Tielt: 2010) 54–65.

to right, we can see two bears, an elk, a white hunting dog chasing a wild boar, and two horses (a white one and a red-brown one). Apart from the lion and the elk, all of these animals were well-known either in the wild or in menageries. Most of Cranach's depictions of Paradise feature real animals that either belong to the (Central) European fauna, such as the bear, wild boar, beaver, fox, hare, partridge, crane, and white stork, or are domesticated, such as the dog, pheasant, and peacock. Unlike contemporary painters of Paradise such as Herri met de Bles,[29] or later ones, such as Jan Brueghel and Roelant Savery, who depicted numerous exotic animals, including elephants, giraffes, camels, and rhinoceroses, Cranach seldom included uncommon animals in his Paradise scenes, and that was a mythical or fantasy animal in the background, such as a solitary dragon or unicorn. There may be a perfectly practical explanation of Cranach's use of common-or-garden species. As Lise Wajeman has pointed out, Cranach's works were mostly commissioned by the court of Frederick of Saxony, which was interested in hunting (and female nudes). They saw the animals (and female nudes) in the paintings as 'gibier potentiel' (potential game).[30] It is quite possible that the animals Cranach painted were also to be found in the menageries of his patrons, allowing the rich and powerful to equate their estates with the Earthly Paradise.

While these animals may have owed some of their appearance in Cranach's Eden to the forces of patronage, they also carried symbolic significance. Cranach includes, for example, two bears in the background of two paintings on the theme of Paradise. In these paintings, both dated 1530, Cranach depicts the entire story of Paradise in six scenes: *The Garden of Eden* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (FR 201) (Fig. 3.3) and the very similar *Garden of Eden* in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie (FR 202) (Fig. 3.4). In the Vienna painting there are two bears, one of which is licking the other. This is a reflection of the commonly held belief that bear cubs were born without form and had to be literally licked into shape by their mother.[31] This is why the bear is the traditional symbol of the creation of man and, as such, is placed near the scene of Eve's creation in Cranach's Vienna Paradise painting.

29 See Weemans M., "The Earthly Paradise: Herri met de Bles's Visual Exegesis of *Genesis* 1–3", in Brusati C. – Enenkel K. – Melion W. (eds.), *The Authority of the Word: Reflecting on Image and Text on Northern Europe, 1400–1700* (Leiden – Boston: 2011) 263–312.

30 Wajeman L., *La parole d'Adam, le corps d'Eve: le péché originel au XVI^e siècle* (Geneva: 2007) 40.

31 Hence the expression 'an unlicked cub' (un ours mal léché' in French, 'een ongelikte beer' in Dutch).

FIGURE 3.3 Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Garden of Eden*, 1530, oil on wood, 81 × 114 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
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FIGURE 3.4 Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Garden of Eden*, 1530, oil on wood, 80 × 117 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden
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While the bears in the background reference the creation of man, the boar is associated (as we have seen in the 1526 painting) with Psalm 80 and the urge to destroy the grapes of God's vineyard. In the Galerie De Jonckheere painting, however, the boar is being driven out by the white hound, the symbol of vigilance – the same hound that is depicted sleeping in Cranach's other Genesis painting, at the First Couple's feet, at a moment when God shows them the Earthly Paradise, and vigilance is not yet needed (see Fig. 4.4).

The two horses, one brown and one white, in the Galerie De Jonckheere painting differ slightly from those Cranach included in the Vienna Genesis painting inasmuch as the brown has no white blaze, but is instead completely red-brown.

These two horses, distancing themselves from Paradise, possibly have the same symbolism as the white horse in the 1526 painting, which is on the verge of leaving Eden in response to the boar's brutal assault – and has therefore rightly been seen as a symbol of innocence that must give way to Evil.[32]

The only animal we have not yet addressed is the pheasant. This bird has a positive symbolic value throughout Cranach's works. According to Sigrid and Lothar Dittrich's *Lexikon der Tiersymbolik*, the pheasant is a symbol of the Resurrection, and, as such, comparable to the peacock. Its symbolism is all the more underlined when the pheasants are depicted as a pair with chickens, as is the case of several of Cranach's Paradise-scenes, and of his portraits of Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg as Hieronymus in his studiolum.[33] Furthermore, the Swiss physician-poet Jacob Ruf observed that the pheasant was in antipathy with the snake and its call chased away 'die schnoden wurm, vergiffle their' (the serpent, the poisonous animal).[34]

4 Conclusion

The recycling of animal motifs in Cranach's works such as the Golden Age[35] (which features lions, deer, pheasants, partridges, etc.), the Study of Cardinal

32 See Campbell., "Lucas Cranach the Elder" 78.

33 See Sigrid Dittrich and Lothar Dittrich, *Lexikon der Tiersymbole. Tiere als Sinnbilder in der Malerei des 14.-17. Jahrhunderts* (Petersberg: 2004) 127: 'Ein Fasanpaar mit Jungen auf Bildern mit dem hl. Hieronymus Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts erweitert die Rolle des Fasan's als Erlösungssymbol zum Sinnbild göttlicher Führung'.

34 Ruf J. *Adam und Heva*, ed. H.M. Kottinger (Quedlinburg-Leipzig: 1848), line 955. On Ruf, see chapter 7.

35 *The Golden Age* (ca. 1530, Munich, Alte Pinakothek, FR 261); *The Golden Age* (ca. 1530, Oslo, Nasjonalgalleriet, FR 262).

Albrecht of Brandenburg[36] (a lion, deer, a hare, and a pheasant with its young), and the Melancholia and the Sleeping Nymph (both of which feature a pair of partridges) has two possible (but not mutually exclusive) explanations. The first is that the inclusion of repetitive animal motifs may have been the result of the high-speed production of paintings that was one of the hallmarks of Cranach's workshop; the second that the repetition was deliberately chosen to allow the viewer to make connections to other works by Cranach, whether within a particular client's collection or without. For instance, the recycling of the pair of partridges in the paintings of the Earthly Paradise, the Golden Age, the Sleeping Nymph, and Melancholia invites the viewer to reflect on the changing and ambivalent symbolism of these birds, which can be extremely negative, but also very positive. Thus, within Cranach's pictorial work, the animals can act as a thematic *trait d'union*: the recurrence of the same animals suggests unexpected connections between, for example, the Earthly Paradise, the Golden Age, and Melancholia paintings, or the paintings with hunting scenes. So it is undoubtedly not a coincidence that in the hunting scenes,[37] besides the deer, the same white hunting dogs and the white and red-brown horses are depicted as they are in the Paradise scenes. The animals in Paradise thus have a typological function: they announce the post-Paradise situation of carnage and death. Conversely, the cruel hunting scenes are thus presented as the logical consequence of the Fall.

Such an 'interpictorial' interpretation assumes that there must have been a concrete opportunity to compare the different depictions of the Fall with each other and with depictions of other scenes. In the case of widely distributed prints, this is not a problem: it was relatively easy for an audience of print buyers to place Cranach's 1509 print next to Dürer's 1504 print – or to place these prints next to one of Cranach's paintings. With paintings, of course, the situation was different. In order to compare paintings in detail, they had to have been in close proximity to each other. This was, of course, only possible in the collections of wealthy owners. Unfortunately, not much is known about these collections. Only the Courtauld painting of 1526 can be assumed to have belonged to a series of paintings made to be seen together, probably on a special occasion. This is rightly suggested by Susan Foister, who also suggests a

36 *Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg* (1527, Berlin, Staatlichen Museen, Gemäldegalerie, FR 184).

37 *A Stag Hunt* (1544 and 1545, Madrid, Prado, FR 411 and 412).

possible patron: the future Elector Johann Frederick the Magnanimous, who married Sibylla of Cleves in 1527.[38]

Be that as it may, Dürer and Cranach offered compelling models of the iconology of the Fall to those who followed them. Dürer presented his animals as puzzles to solve – ones based on traditional typology but renewed by a learned play on names and words in Latin and German. Cranach, on the other hand, appears to have presented a primarily traditional iconography in combining, for example, deer and lion. And yet, those of Cranach's works we have analysed suggest an eagerness to breathe new life into old material in an original, idiosyncratic way. In both cases, it requires patient and accurate interpretation by the viewer, who could do this alone (as the 18th-century painter Arnold Houbraken would with paintings by Jan Brueghel), or in the company of others. In the latter case, the painting would become the subject of conversation, for instance of the owner with his scholarly or non-scholarly guests. That artists composed their works with the future interpretive efforts of their eventual owners in mind – perhaps as a conversation piece – is an idea supported by the exceptional thematic density of Simon de Myle's *Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat*, which is the painting to which we now turn our attention.

38 Foister S, "Before the Fall: *Adam and Eve* and Some Mythological Paintings by Cranach", in Campbell C. (ed.), *Temptation in Eden. Lucas Cranach's* Adam and Eve (London: 2007) 47–60 (here 59–60).

CHAPTER 4

Simon de Myle: Bible, Fable, and Natural History

Simon de Myle's *Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat* (1570) (Fig. 4.1) is exceptional for several reasons. Firstly, it is the only known work signed and dated by this painter, of whom nothing else is known. The subject of the painting – the animals leaving Noah's Ark after its landing on Mount Ararat – is also unusual: most painters of the 16th and 17th centuries preferred to depict other scenes from this biblical episode, such as the making of the Ark, the entry of the animals into the Ark, and the dramatic scene of the people who, panic-stricken, try in vain to escape the rising waters. But the animals leaving the Ark is a subject that is rarely painted. One of the few contemporary works on this subject is the well-known *Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat*, attributed to Hieronymus Bosch (Rotterdam, Boijmans-Van Beuningen, ca. 1515) (Fig. 4.2). Given its similar composition and subject matter, Bosch's painting, which was originally the right panel of a triptych, may have been De Myle's source of inspiration, as we shall see.

FIGURE 4.1 Simon de Myle, *Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat*, 1570, oil on wood, 114 × 142 cm, private collection
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 | DOI:10.1163/9789004715271_006

FIGURE 4.2 Hieronymus Bosch, *Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat*, ca. 1515, oil on wood, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam

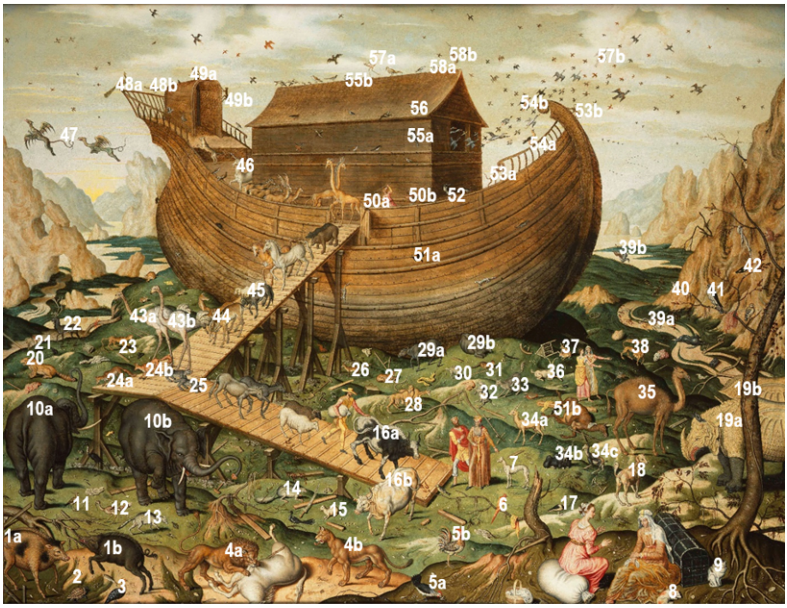

FIGURE 4.3 Identified and numbered animals from Fig. 4.1

This chapter pays special attention to De Myle's exceptional painting because it forms the link between the emblematic fables of Marcus Gheeraerts and Eduard De Dene, and the natural history of Conrad Gessner: its combination of emblematic fable and natural history was highly innovative. Gheeraerts' fable illustrations had only just been printed (the *Warachtighe fabulen der dieren* appeared in 1567), and Gessner's animal illustrations, while slightly less recent, were still relatively new (1551 for the volume on mammals and 1555 for the one on birds). In combining fable and natural history within a depiction of an event from the book of Genesis De Myle's of fable and natural history on a subject from the book of Genesis foreshadows the Paradise paintings of Jan Brueghel the Elder.

De Myle's painting depicts the scene where the eight survivors of the Flood, including Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives, lead the animals out of the Ark on a long gangplank. Upon exiting, they are met with a post-diluvian world that has been destroyed to the point where all that can be seen is debris, the corpses of drowned animals and, in the background, to the right of the boat, a human body. Whether driven by hunger or by their nature, those animals who have by a divine miracle lived together harmoniously alongside one another in the confines of the Ark, revert to type as soon as they set foot on dry land – a scene also dramatically depicted by Hieronymus Bosch. De Myle's lion

(4a) (Fig. 4.3)[1] devours a drowned horse, the wolf (33) prepares to eat the dead sheep (32), and the raven (51b) lands on the corpse of a donkey, while its partner (51a) leaves the Ark to join in this sinister meal, and two frightening griffins (39a and b) pounce on the human body. The viewer (both of Bosch's and De Myle's painting) senses that the animals will soon revert to their natural enmities, where predators hunt not dead but living prey. The situation after the Flood is portrayed by artists and poets as comparable to the time after Adam and Eve's Fall. In the Garden of Eden, animals lived in harmony: after the Fall, they began to fight and devour each other. This dramatic moment would later be visualised by Cesare Bassano in Giambattista Andreini's *L'Adamo, sacra rapresentatione* (1613) (see Fig. 1.6) and described by Du Bartas in *La Seconde Semaine* (1584), here in Sylvester's 1605 translation:

> Since that, the Wolf the trembling Sheep pursues,
> The crowing Cock the Lion stout eschews,
> The Pullein hide them from the Puttock's flight.
>
> *Weekes* 115, ll. 92–94[2]

– Bosch and De Myle's carnivores are, however, seemingly content with carrion, if only for the time being.

1 Imitating Gheeraerts and Gessner

Apart from a possible debt to Hieronymus Bosch, De Myle drew inspiration for his depiction of animals from two main sources: art and science. Art is represented by the illustrations that Marcus Gheeraerts produced to illustrate his book of fables, *De Warachtighe fabulen*. De Myle is indeed very up-to-date in his imitation of Gheeraerts. That is to say, Gheeraerts' illustrations gained an international reputation as soon as the French (*Esbatement moral*, 1578) and Latin (*Mythologia ethica*, 1579) versions of the *Warachtighe fabulen* appeared, whereas in 1570, when De Myle signed his painting, this collection still enjoyed a rather local reputation.[3] Another novelty followed by De Myle: in his illus-

1 The numbers refer to the Table appended in Annex to this chapter, as well as to Fig. 4.3.

2 First published as Du Bartas Guillaume, *La Seconde Semaine* (Paris, Pierre L'Huilier: 1584). Original text: 'Depuis, le Loup en veut à la Brebis tremblante / Le seul vol du Milan le poulet espouvente. / Le Coq met le Lyon en fuite par sa vois [...]' (*Seconde Semaine* 148, var.). I will come back to the lion's fear of the crowing of a cock.

3 As Karen Bowen and Dirk Imhof have shown, the *Warachtighe fabulen* was not presented at the Frankfurt Fair, unlike the other fable books from the Gheeraerts filiation: *Esbatement*

trations, Gheeraerts drew his material not only from the Aesopian fable tradition or Alciato's book of emblems, but also from Conrad Gessner's *Historia animalium*.[4] It is unlikely that De Myle was interested in all the naturalistic aspects of Gessner's work. What is more, we shall see that, in deciding where to place the animals in his painting, he followed other zoological classifications. What interested him most as a painter were Gessner's beautiful illustrations, and no doubt also Gessner's international reputation: by "quoting" Gessner's illustrations, he positioned himself as an innovative *pictor doctus*, open to current scientific developments. In this, as has already been said, he was following in the footsteps of Gheeraerts, who also sought to demonstrate his modernity by drawing on Gessner's natural history.

2 De Myle as Critical Imitator of Gheeraerts

De Myle took 23 of the animals he depicted in Noah's Ark directly from Gheeraerts' *Warachtighe fabulen* (see the Table in the Appendix).[5] Some of these animals stand out because they occupy the front of the painting and are highlighted by the low-angle perspective: the two wild boars (1a and b) on the left of the painting, the elephant (10b) (the one on the right), the lion (4a) devouring the dead horse, the rooster (5b) in the middle, the dromedary (33) on the right of the painting and, of the two ostriches, the one on the right (43b). It should be noted that De Myle took the male and female of some pairs from different Gheeraerts fables: thus the fox and the vixen (24a and b)[6] descending the gangplank come from two separate fables – and the same applies to the cow and the bull (16a and b) and the two boars mentioned above. In most cases, De Myle provides fairly precise imitations of the form and attitude of Gheeraerts' animals, but there are a few exceptions that suggest a more critical reflection

moral and the *Mythologia ethica*. See Bowen K.L. – Imhof D., *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: 2008) 299.

4 This is especially evident in Gheeraerts' etching of the cameleon. Gheeraerts' etching was directly inspired by Gessner's cameleon. On this subject, see my "L'histoire naturelle et la fable emblématique (1567–1608): Marcus Gheeraerts, Eduard de Dene, Gilles Sadeler", in Perifano A. (ed.), *La transmission des savoirs au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance*. Volume 2. *Au XVI^e siècle* (Besançon: 2005) 173–186.

5 To refer to the fable book we use the abbreviation *WF*, followed by the number of the fable according to Scharpé L., "Van De Dene tot Vondel", *Leuvensche Bijdragen* 4 (1900) 5–63 (here 60–63).

6 De Myle appears to have looked very carefully at Gheeraerts' illustrations. His vixen (24b) is modelled not on one of the many dog foxes depicted by Gheeraerts, but on the one vixen that appears in his fable illustrations.

FIGURE 4.4 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Elephant ende Draecke* [Elephant and Dragon], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 46. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-YI-19
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on Gheeraerts' art and his use of sources. Let us consider the elephant (10b). In depicting this elephant, De Myle inverts Gheeraerts' image (Fig. 4.4), showing that he has recognised it as based on one of the three elephants represented in an etching by Giovanno Battista Franco (Fig. 4.5), dating from circa 1540.[7]

7 This etching was probably inspired by a drawing attributed to Raphael.

FIGURE 4.5 Giovanni Battista Franco, *Four elephants and Other Animals*, etching and engraving on copper, ca. 1540
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In representing the elephant's ears with fairly straight edges, De Myle appears to follow Franco's second elephant rather than that of Gheeraerts, whose elephant has frayed ears. De Myle's second elephant (10a) also derives from Franco (this time his first elephant), but in inverting this image so that it looks to its right and this remains within the central scene, though in the process he makes a bit of a meal of its head.[8] This example shows that De Myle not only recognised Gheeraerts' source, but also reverted back to Franco's original, which he plainly preferred to Gheeraerts'.

De Myle also identified the source for Gheeraerts' ostrich (Fig. 4.6) as Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (1555; several editions; French translation 1561), which depicts two ostriches in a single emblem (Fig. 4.7). De Myle here (43a and b) conflates Giovio's and Gheeraerts' ostriches, upgrading Giovio's stocky, indistinctly feathered fowl by adopting the more finely drawn plumage of Gheeraerts' elegant bird.

He also 'corrects' the inverted Gheeraerts' dromedary (35), perhaps following other images of the animal circulating in Flanders at the time.

8 It should be noted that Gheeraerts practised a kind of selective imitation: for his elephant he combined two of Franco's three elephants: the general attitude of Franco's second elephant and the frayed ears of his third elephant.

FIGURE 4.6 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Struus en Nachtegale* (Ostrich and Nightingale], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 105. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-YI-19
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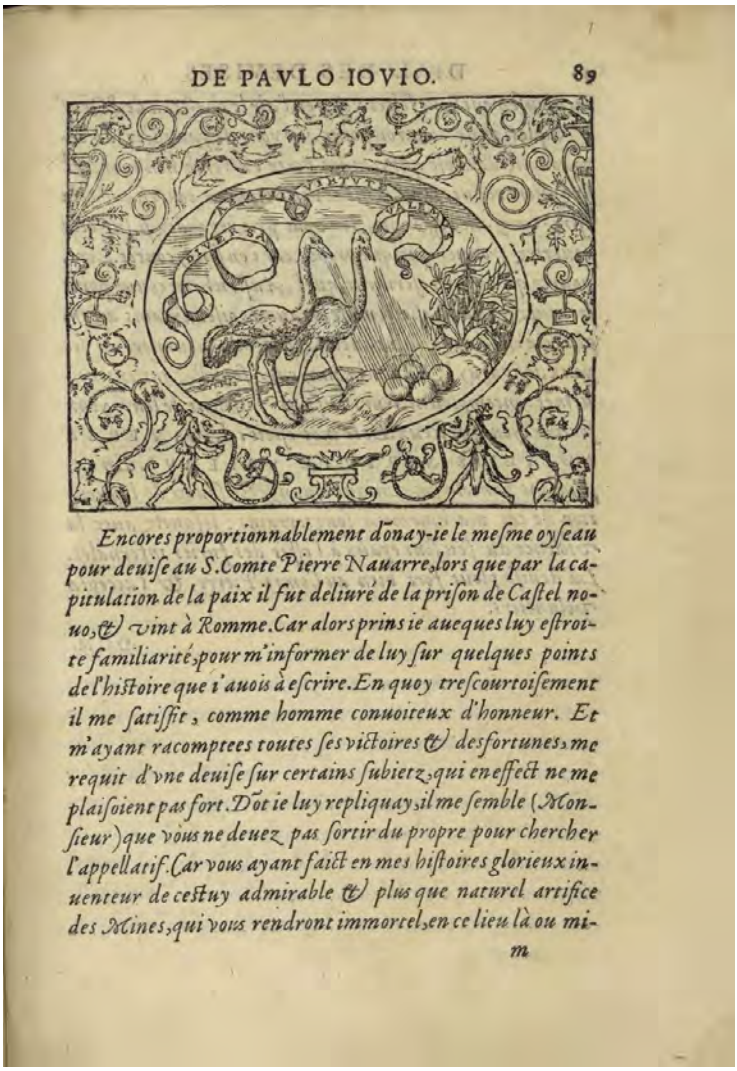
Since De Myle was able to identify Gheeraerts' sources, it seems likely that he also knew of the inspiration behind the latter's depiction of the lion devouring a donkey (Fig. 4.8) – a dramatic scene, in which De Myle replaced Gheeraerts' donkey by a horse. De Myle seems to have wanted to emphasise this scene by placing it at the front of the painting (4a). The source work in question was an ancient Greek sculpture admired by Michelangelo and exhibited at the Capitoline in Rome (Fig. 4.9), where it was for a long time an iconic



DE PAVLO IOVIO. 89

Encores proportionnablement dõnay-ie le meſme oyſeau pour deuiſe au S. Comte Pierre Nauarre, lors que par la capitulation de la paix il fut deliuré de la priſon de Caſtel nouo, & vint à Romme. Car alors prins ie aueques luy eſtroite familiarité, pour m'informer de luy ſur quelques points de l'hiſtoire que i'auois à eſcrire. En quoy treſcourtoiſement il me ſatiſfit, comme homme conuoiteux d'honneur. Et m'ayant racomptees toutes ſes victoires & desfortunes, me requit d'vne deuiſe ſur certains ſubietz, qui en effect ne me plaiſoient pas fort. Dõt ie luy repliquay, il me ſemble (Monſieur) que vous ne deuez pas ſortir du propre pour chercher l'appellatif. Car vous ayant faict en mes hiſtoires glorieux inuenteur de ceſtuy admirable & plus que naturel artifice des Mines, qui vous rendront immortel, en ce lieu là ou mi-

m

FIGURE 4.7 Paolo Giovio, *Dialogue des devises d'armes et d'amours, avec un Discours de M. Loys Dominique sur le même sujet. Traduit d'italien par le S. Vasquin Philieul auquel nous avons adjousté les Devises hêroïques et morales du seigneur Gabriel Syméon* (Lyon, Guillaume Rouille: 1561) 89

FIGURE 4.8 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Leeu Esel ende Vos* (Lion, Donkey and Fox), etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 25. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-YI-19
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work of art, comparable to the *lupa capitolina*. In the time of Gheeraerts and De Myle, this sculpture was highly fragmented: the horse had no head nor legs, only a torso.[9] Scholars and artists of the time speculated a great deal about its

9 The sculpture was not reconstructed until 1590, when the missing parts of the lion and horse were added.

FIGURE 4.9 Anon., *Lion Attacking a Horse*, sculpture, Hellenistic Period. Musei Capitolini, Rome
PHOTO: SAILKO, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN

original appearance. It was no doubt this uncertainty of interpretation that allowed Gheeraerts to change the horse into a donkey[10] – a somewhat disrespectful interpretation that was corrected by De Myle, who made it a white horse (in keeping with the dazzling whiteness of the sculpture).[11]

Generally speaking, De Myle tends to make the animals from Gheeraerts' fable book more elegant: this is particularly noticeable in the slender, finely drawn legs of animals such as the two wild boars, the bull and the cow, and the dromedary. The same is true of the men depicted by De Myle. Their clothes and elongated physique are a far cry from Gheeraerts' figures, which Edward

10 Note that this lion-donkey constellation was taken over by Cesare Bassano (Fig. 1.6), not directly from Gheeraerts, but from Aegidius Sadeler, Gheeraerts' imitator, in his German fable book *Theatrum morum*, fable 101 *Vom Lewen, Esel und Fuchs* (The Lion, the Ass, and the Fox).

11 Note that De Myle does not depict the horse's head, perhaps following the example of the Capitoline sculpture which, in De Myle's time, was also missing its head.

Hodnett, in his monograph on Gheeraerts, rightly characterised as follows: 'They tend to be sturdy churls with joyless, insignificant features. Indeed a small bent nose is almost his signature.'[12] De Myle's figures are more stylised, almost mannerist – in this respect, they are closer to the Italian figures found in the paintings of the Bassanos, for example, who also painted the Flood and other biblical scenes filled with animals.

3 De Myle Reading Gessner

In borrowing from natural history De Myle possibly followed the example of Hieronymus Bosch. As mentioned before, Bosch's painting of Noah's Ark originally formed the right panel of a triptych. The triptych's middle section is unknown, and its left panel depicted a Hell full of monstrous fantasy creatures. By contrast, the depiction of the animals in the right panel was intended to be realistic – at least, according to the state of natural historical knowledge of Bosch's time, a state which had, of course, advanced somewhat by the time De Myle was working. One of Bosch's sources may have been the well-known illustration in Bernhard von Breydenbach's *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (1486, many editions and many translations) (Fig. 4.10).[13] Although it is difficult to correctly identify most of the animals in Bosch's painting, the giraffe, the dromedary and the Nubian long-eared sheep can be found in Breydenbach's engraving and in Bosch's and De Myle's paintings. There are a strikingly large number of horned ungulates in Bosch's work, a feature echoed by De Myle.

Much clearer than Bosch's borrowings from Breydenbach's animals are De Myle's borrowings from Conrad Gessner's natural history: 20 mammals and 9 birds (from a total of more than 80 animals) came from Gessner.[14] No specific work (or edition) by Gessner can clearly be identified as having served as a

12 Hodnett E., *Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder of Bruges, London, and Antwerp* (Utrecht: 1971) 35–36.

13 Breydenbach Bernhard von, *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (Mainz, Peter Schöffer the Elder: 1486). Incidentally, the animals depicted in the illustration are less fantastic than one might assume. The creature with a long tail holding the camel by a rope can be seen as a (clumsily rendered) baboon. And the unicorn, traditionally rendered by the illustrator, is described by the name "unicorn" in Breydenbach's travelogue. What is meant here is the oryx, a large desert antelope that, seen from afar and *en profil*, in the blistering heat of the desert, appears to carry only the single, long horn.

14 For mammals and birds, my references are to the editions of the *Icones* of the 1560s. I use the abbreviation IAN to refer to the *Icones animalium*, and IAV to refer to the *Icones avium*. I consulted two copies of the *Icones* containing the *Icones animalium* and the *Icones avium*, namely an uncoloured digitised copy (http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibli

FIGURE 4.10 Erhard Reuwich, *Various Animals*, woodcut in Bernhard von Breydenbach, Peregrinatio in terram sanctam (Mainz, Peter Schöffer the Elder: 1486). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
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model: Whether it was the *Historia animalium* itself, the *Icones* (two editions) or the German translations, De Myle certainly had a hand-coloured copy of Gessner in front of him as he worked – his publisher, Froschauer, had these works coloured in his studio to order and for a very high price. De Myle may have worked from his own coloured copy, or one owned by a patron, but work from a coloured Gessner he most certainly did, as two examples prove. The first example is the bustard (12), whose plumage, with bands of various colours (brown, reddish brown, black, white and whitish), corresponds remarkably well with the coloured plumage of the bird in certain copies of Gessner's ornithological works. The same applies, mutatis mutandis, to the second example, that of the rhinoceros (19a). In some surviving coloured copies,[15] this animal (which Gessner, in turn, had copied from Dürer) has a very distinctive colouring: the animal's hide is white, almost silvery, the legs and ears are black, and the outline of the snout is red. It was this somewhat curious colour-scheme that De Myle gives his own rhinoceros. De Myle's colour choices are also very useful for defining the Gessnerian source of some of the painting's birds: this applies to the oriole (42) (with its yellow and black colours and red beak) and the falcon (41), called *steinfalck* by Gessner, perched on the tree on the right, the red-backed shrike (56) on the railing of the Ark and the bearded vulture (54a) on the bow.

For the most part, De Myle turned to Gessner for his depictions of exotic and recently discovered species. These animals came from all parts of the world: to name a few spectacular examples, the reindeer or tarandus (22) lives in the polar regions; the guinea fowl (3) (Africa), the turkey (21) (America) and the muscovy duck (17) (America) are species that are well known today, but at the time had only recently been discovered and introduced into Europe. The same applies to the guinea pig (13), which Gessner was the first to describe and illustrate. In addition to the guinea pig, South America is home to two strange species, the *simivulpa* (28) (which is probably the possum)[16] and the *Su* (38) – the

ography/64842#/summary) and a coloured copy (Antiquariaat Junk, Amsterdam, private collection).

15 I have found the rhinoceros with this colouration in two copies of the *Thierbuoch*: the 1563 edition, p. 60 (Antiquariaat Junk, Amsterdam) and one from 1600 on the website https://web.archive.org/web/20120817232843/http://www.humi.keio.ac.jp/treasures/nature/Gesner-web/mammal/html/normal_b/l274b.html (last accessed 25-05-2024).

16 On the *simivulpa*, see Enenkel K.A.E, "Camerarius' Quadrupeds (1595): A Plinius Emblematicus as a Mirror of Princes", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Emblems and the Natural World* (Leiden – Boston: 2017) 91–148 (here 132–139).

latter animal, which appears on the title page of some editions of *Thierbuoch*, was found by Gessner in a work by the French cosmographer André Thevet.[17]

4 Arrangement of Animals

De Myle's arrangement of the animals in his painting was far from arbitrary, but unlike their physical appearance, it owned nothing to the natural historical discourses of the day. Of the three great naturalist authors of the time, Belon, Rondelet and Gessner, the first treated only birds and fish, the second only fish, both adopting pre-Linnaean taxonomic orders. However, Gessner, whose *Historia animalium* covered mammals, birds, reptiles and fish, chose an alphabetical order for reasons of information management.[18] In arranging his animals, De Myle chose a more obvious order, namely that dictated by the Bible. Genesis 1:26 gives a two-step classification, first one into three categories relating to the three elements water, air, earth, then a subcategorization of land animals into cattle, wild beasts and animals 'that creepeth upon the earth.' De Myle accordingly shows the viewer fish (which, logically, are dead having been stranded by the receding of the waters); birds, most of which are depicted as flying; and the terrestrial animals. This third category he arranges according to the following order: the creeping animals have their place in front of the Ark and on the front of the painting; the wild beasts (elephant, wild pig, lion) mainly occupy the left side of the painting, while the cattle move from the end of gangplank towards the right. In doing so, the latter constitute a series: we see from left to right, in a descending line, two donkeys, two sheep, a cow and a bull, a rooster and a hen, a dog and a cat. To this group of cattle also belongs a number of horned animals – goat species and antelopes (34a, b and c) – which Gessner neither mentioned nor illustrated, but which De Myle perhaps painted from specimens he observed in a menagerie or, in rather less animated form, stuffed in a collection. This perhaps also applies to the camel and the two buffaloes (29a and b).[19]

17 Thevet André, *Les singularitez de la France antarctique* (Paris, chez les heritiers de Maurice de La Porte: 1558) 109.

18 Blair A., *Too Much to Know. Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven-London, Yale University Press: 2010), and Hendrikx S., *Conrad Gessner's Fish Books (1556–1560). Processing information in a rapidly expanding field of knowledge* (Doctoral Thesis Leiden University, 2024).

19 In the 16th century, buffalo and dromedary were considered cattle, and were often depicted together with a horse.

While De Myle appears, at first glance, to be respecting the system of classification adopted in the Bible, he in fact continually transgressed it in a way that announces the systematically transboundary practices of Jan Brueghel's depictions of the Earthly Paradise and the four elements.[20] Certain earthbound animals, such as monkeys and cats, found themselves high on the Ark amongst the birds, and several birds are joining the terrestrial animals on dry land, while a wolf, the two rhinos and some other exotic wild animals are located amongst the domestic beasts. The gangplank displays a remarkable variety of animals on parade, alternating between wild and domestic beasts. From top to bottom we see wild (giraffe, bear) followed by domestic (horse, goat), back to wild (deer, ostrich, fox, badger) and finally domestic (donkey, sheep, cow). The most overtly transboundary animals depicted are the numerous dead fish and other aquatic animals that litter the ground – I will return to this in my conclusion.

Other principles of spatial positioning are also at work in the painting. The two largest land animals, the elephant and the rhinoceros, are placed at the extreme left and extreme right of the painting, an opposition that mirrors the natural antipathy thought to exist between these animals, an enmity noted by both Albrecht Dürer, in his commentary on his famous engraving of the rhinoceros,[21] and Gessner in his *Historia animalium*.

The spatial opposition of the elephant and rhinoceros is a vivid example of how De Myle used the principle of antipathy to structure his painting. Indeed, the painting shows several other animals (and pairs of animals) which, in the post-diluvian world, live in a state of enmity. It had been known since Pliny (*Historia naturalis* VIII, 19) that the lion was afraid of the rooster[22] – the two animals are placed next to each other at the bottom of the painting. This same principle applies to the lion and the wild pig: the boar next to the lion is the same as the boar that appears in the fable *The Lion and the Boar* in the *Warachtighe fabulen*: this fable tells of the bloody fight between the two animals (Fig. 4.11). De Myle placed a dog (8) and a cat (9), animals whose mutual

20 See chapters 7 and 8.

21 The German inscription reads: 'Das dosig Thier ist des Helffantz todt feyndt. Der Helffandt furcht es fast vbel / dann wo es Jn ankumbt / so laufft Jm das Thier mit dem kopff zwischen dye fordern payn / vnd reyst den Helffandt vnden am pauch auff vnd er wuorgt Jn / des mag er sich nit erwern. Dann das Thier ist also gewapent / das Jm der Helffandt nichts kan thuon.' ('It is the mortal enemy of the elephant. The elephant is afraid of the rhinoceros, for, when they meet, the rhinoceros charges with its head between its front legs and rips open the elephant's stomach, against which the elephant is unable to defend itself. The rhinoceros is so well-armed that the elephant cannot harm it'). (Transcription and translation quoted from the lemma "Dürer's Rhinoceros" of the German and English versions of Wikipedia).

22 See also the passage from Du Bartas quoted above.

FIGURE 4.11 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Leeu en wild Vercken* (Lion and Boar], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 66. Bibliothèque nationale de France
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antipathy is proverbial, in the painting's foreground. Other antipathies are acted out in the painting: the fox (24a and b) follows the badger (25),[23] the wolf (33) is surrounded by its future prey and, in the tree, the hawk (41) sits amongst a host of little birds.

23 On this antipathy, see Librová B., "Le renard dans le *cubiculum taxi*: les avatars d'un *exemplum* et le symbolisme du blaireau", *Le Moyen Age* 109.1 (2003) 79–111.

As we have seen, antipathy is counterbalanced by sympathy, and sympathy is present throughout De Myle's painting as its subject matter is, at heart, that of love, the principle by which the animals will repopulate a world devastated by the Flood, and the ultimate form of sympathy. The theme of sympathy also has an effect that could be described as "rhetorical": it arouses the viewer's attention. The viewer is invited to look for the corresponding male or female for each animal represented – which, especially in the case of birds, requires a certain amount of effort. For example, the partners of the crane (57a) and the bearded vulture (54b) that are perched on the Ark's bows have already taken flight (and can be found at 57b and 54b). De Myle calls on the viewer's knowledge of natural history to understand that the two birds perched next to each other on the roof of the Ark (58a and 58b) may be in very different poses, one high and elongated, the other in a curled up position, but are, in fact, a pair of bitterns. We should also mention the two wild cats, both borrowed from Gheeraerts, one of which (55b) can be seen on the roof of the Ark and the other (55a) climbing up the sides of the ship. In those instances where such close scrutiny reveals no such partner, as is the case with some of the rare and exotic animals such as the reindeer, the turkey, the guinea fowl, the guinea pig, the animal Su, and the camel, it may well be the case that, in isolating them, De Myle was intent on emphasising their rarity.[24]

There is more. Certain species, those whose existence Gessner considered doubtful (and who, moreover, despite his scepticism, included them in his encyclopaedic natural history), received special treatment from De Myle: they were placed in the margins. This applies to the two dragons which fly away on the left in the painting, and also to the two griffins, which, on the other side of the painting, are preparing to devour a dead man. In a sense, this also applies to the unicorn, which is the last animal to exit the door of the Ark – we also notice that this white and elegant unicorn corresponds to that of Gessner, who observes: 'This figure is the one that painters today are accustomed to painting, but I cannot be certain of its existence.'[25] Ctesias, Pliny and Aelian described the unicorn as a fierce and solitary animal. Referring to the authority of Aelian, Gessner informs us that the male of the unicorn fights his fellows, whether male and female, to the death. It is only during the rut that the male tolerates the presence of the female, but, after this period, 'he becomes wild again, and

24 We find the same "rhetorical" strategy of inviting people to scrutinise animals in certain paintings by Jan Brueghel the Elder. See chapters 7 and 8.

25 Gessner Conrad, *Historiae animalium Lib. I. de quadrupedibus viviparis* (Zurich, Christopher Froschauer: 1551) 781. Original Latin: 'Figura haec talis est, qualis a pictoribus fere hodie pingitur, de qua certi nihil habeo.'

he wanders in solitude' ('rursus efferatur, et solus vagatur').[26] De Myle, notably, represents the animal as accompanied by a female. However, in doing so, De Myle comes up against an unavoidable problem: what does the female of this imaginary animal look like? His solution was to include only the female's head, and that without a horn.

The question also arises for certain other animals represented. Of the *simi-vulpa* only the female is known – Gessner does not speak of the male. De Myle thus had to represent the male as only partially visible, hiding him behind the female. This also applies to the rhinoceros: De Myle reproduces the only known image of the animal – that of Dürer, as propagated by Gessner – leaving it unclear whether it is a male or a female, and putting its companion behind it.

Studying the relative spatial arrangement of the animals further exposes more potential principles of organisation: the elephant and the rhinoceros form a triangle with the unicorn that, in a sense, both frames the other animals and gives the painting yet more structural underpinnings. These three animals comprise a grouping we find in other works of De Myle's time: Hieronymus Cardanus began the zoological part of his *De subtilitate* (1550, several editions) with the elephant, the rhinoceros and the unicorn, an order repeated by François Rabelais in the opening of the episode of the Pays de Satin in his *Cinquiesme Livre*, published posthumously in 1564.[27]

It is a striking feature of De Myle's painting that two animals are represented neither alone or in pairs. These are the dog and cat, both of which pose certain problems in terms of natural history and theology. In the case of the cat, we note that at the bottom of the painting there is a beautiful domestic cat (9), taken from the work of Gessner, while at the top of the painting, on the other hand, there is the wild variant (55a and b), which comes from Gheeraerts. Is this pure chance or deliberate? It seems deliberate, as does the combination of four very different breeds of dog (the small dog (8), the large dog (18), the British dog (30) and the greyhound (7) next to Moses. The inclusion of multiple varieties of feline and canine perhaps refers to a particular theological question referred to by Du Bartas in *La Seconde Semaine*: 'So many sorts of Dogs, of Cocks, and Doves, / Since, dayly sprung from strange & mingled loves' (*Weekes* 136, ll. 422–423).[28] That is to say, are all breeds of such and such a

26 Gessner, *Historiae animalium* 784.

27 See my article "Aspects du discours zoologique dans le *Cinquiesme Livre*", in Giacone F. (éd.), *Le Cinquiesme Livre* (Geneva: 2001) 103–113 (here 109–110).

28 Original text: 'Tant de sortes de Chiens, de Coqs, de Colombelles, / Qui croissent chaque jour en especes nouvelles / Par un baiser meslé.' (*La Seconde Semaine* 293, ll. 377–379. In discussing Jan Brueghel's Paradise paintings, we will encounter the same issue.

species admitted to the Ark, because they are creations of man, and not of divine nature? De Myle and Du Bartas ask the same question, but for different purposes. De Myle makes us think about this question without giving an answer, whereas Du Bartas rejects it, along many other similar questions such as how can so many animals be brought into harmony in the limited space of a boat? how can they be fed? and so on. For Du Bartas, these questions stem from human reasoning, which is futile in the face of divine omnipotence.

5 In Conclusion: Metapictorial Reflections

The underlying structure of this painting presents it as a multifaceted reflection, firstly on the astonishing variety of the animal world, bringing together European and exotic species, domestic and wild, real and fabulous (or whose existence is doubtful). Secondly, it also considers the natural principles of sympathy and antipathy, and their thematisation in the biblical context of the post-diluvian situation, which is, as it is in Bosch's painting, somewhat bleak: the latent antipathies between the animals, as they emerge from the protective embrace of the Ark, will inevitably and violently manifest themselves in the near future. What's more, by displaying a number of dead fish on land, the painting also seems to raise another point of discussion, one that had been bothering scholars since Gessner's time, including the authoritative Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi – a discussion that marked the scholarly, pre-palaeontological interest for fossils:[29] how can we explain the fossils of marine origin and their presence on the uplands, and even on the mountains? Was this presence caused by the Flood? There is no indication that De Myle claims to answer these questions with his painting, merely that he was intent on posing them, and thus stimulating reflection and discussion among the intended audience.

De Myle's painting also contains some reflections of a more metapictorial nature. We have seen that it shows a re-use of Gheeraerts' illustrations, which are "quoted" in the painting, but not without criticism. De Myle shows himself to be a connoisseur here: he knows how to identify Gheeraerts' sources, sources that he sometimes prefers to Gheeraerts' own illustrations. In so doing, De Myle was emulating Gheeraerts by returning to the latter's sources.

29 See his *De reliquibus animalibus exsanguibus*, published in 1606, but whose first thoughts on fossils date from the 1560s. According to Aldrovandi, the existence of fossils of marine origin was not solely due to the Flood.

Earlier, we suggested that De Myle probably regarded Gheeraerts' illustrations not as illustrations of fables, but rather as pictorial models. However, an important exception should be made here for the cockerel (5b) in the centre of the front of the painting. This cockerel comes from the fable *The Cockerel and the Pearl* [*or Diamond*], a meta-fable par excellence, 'the fable of fables', which teaches the reader not to follow the example of the cockerel who despises the pearl (or diamond) he has found (i.e. the precious moral of the fable and the fable book it usually introduces).[30] In the case of our painting, this moral, applied to painting, could warn the viewer not to overlook an essential aspect of painting: the fruitful encounter between pictorial art (Gheeraerts) and natural history (Gessner), thus announcing Jan Brueghel's natural history paintings. And De Myle shows this moral by example: his cockerel, which comes from Gheeraerts, has a hen (5a), which comes from Gessner, as its companion.

The cockerel is but one of a short but essential list of animals that traditionally symbolise the powers of pictorial imitation: next to the cockerel is the parrot (6),[31] whose ability to imitate the human voice was the traditional symbol of the imitative artist. Above the parrot is a large greyhound (7), which is clearly showing the dog's proverbial loyalty to its master Noah, who seems to be guiding the animal with his hand. Since the Middle Ages, the dog's fidelity had been another favourite metapictorial symbol, denoting the painter's ability to depict nature faithfully. And at the very top of the painting, high up on the stern and prow of the Ark, is a third animal symbolising pictorial imitation, the monkey, represented by two species and four individuals (49a and b; 53a and b). While this somewhat plethoric combination of three animals connected with imitation would regularly appear in painters of later generations such as Jan Brueghel the Elder, his son Jan Brueghel the Younger, and Frans Francken the Younger,[32] De Myle was probably a pioneer in using this tripartite animal symbolism.

In short, De Myle's painting combines the figure of Gessner, an eminent representative of scientific current affairs, with that of Gheeraerts, the great innovator of animal illustration whose merits would be universally recognised

30 Speckenbach K., "Die Fabel von der Fabel. Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Fabel von Hahn und Perle", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 12 (1978) 178–229.

31 The bird is difficult to identify. Because of its long tail, we opt for the parrot. This is probably not the other long-tailed bird, the pheasant, because there are two examples of this species, a male and a female, shown on the edge of the Ark next to the two giraffes.

32 See for instance the paintings by Brueghel the Elder and the Younger and Frans Francken reproduced in Van Suchtelen A. – Van Beneden B. (eds.), *Room for Art in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp* (Zwolle: 2009) 22, 23, 32, 34.

from the 1570s onwards. This combination not only serves to make De Myle an important intermediary figure heralding the emergence of animal painting around 1600, but also an extremely interesting artist in his own right. His almost total obscurity within even history of art circles is thus a somewhat regrettable lacuna.

Appendix

WF = *Warachtighe fabulen* = Eduard de Dene & Marcus Gheeraerts, *De Warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567).

IAN = *Icones animalium* = Conrad Gessner, *Icones animalium quadrupedum viviparorum et oviparorum quae in historia animalium Conradi Gesneri describuntur* (Zurich, Christopher Froschauer: 1560 (2nd ed.)).

IAV = *Icones avium* = Conrad Gessner, *Icones avium omnium, quae in Historia avium Conradi Gesneri describuntur* (Zurich, Christopher Froschauer: 1555 (1st ed.) and 1560 (2nd ed.)).

	Animals	**Sources**
1a	Wild pig	*WF* 19
1b	Wild pig	*WF* 66
2	Turtle	*WF* 88
3	Guinea fowl	*IAV* 61
4a	Lion	*WF* 25
4b	Lioness	Unidentified source
5a	Hen	*IAV* 53
5b	Rooster	*WF* 22
6	Parrot	Unidentified source
7	Greyhound	Probably ad vivum
8	Domestic dog	Probably ad vivum
9	Domestic cat	*IAN* 28
10a	Elephant	Franco
10b	Elephant	*WF* 90 / Franco
11	Lapwing	*IAV* 99
12	Bustard	*IAV* 67
13	Civet cat	*IAN* 72
14	Exotic rat	*IAN* 112
15	Guinea pig	*IAN* 106

(*cont.*)

	Animals	**Sources**
16a	Bull	*WF* 74
16b	Cow	*WF* 71
17	Muscovy duck	*IAV* 73
18	Dog	*WF* 48
19a	Rhinoceros	*IAN* 60
19b	Rhinoceros	Artistic imagination
20	Marmot	*IAN* 108
21	Turkey	*WF* 94
22	Reindeer / tarandus	*IAN* 58
23	Sagouin	*IAN* 96
24a	Fox	*WF* 91
24b	Fox	*WF* 41
25	Two badgers	*IAN* 86
26	Marten	*IAN* 98
27	Panther	*IAN* 69
28	Simivulpa	*IAN* 90
29a	Buffalo	Probably ad vivum
29b	Buffalo	Probably ad vivum
30	British dog	*IAN* 28
31	Otter	*IAN* 85
32	Dead sheep	*WF* 81
33	Wolf	*WF* 46
34a, b and c	Some goat species	Ad vivum
35	Dromedary	*WF* 52
36	Exotic goat	*IAN* 40
37	Two hares	*WF* 31
38	Animal *Su*	*IAN* 127
39a and b	Two griffins	Traditional
40	Goldfinch	*IAV* 43
41	Falcon	*IAV* 11
42	Oriole	*IAV* 37
43a	Ostrich	Giovio
43b	Ostrich	*WF* 105
44	Deer and doe	*IAN* 44
45	Two Indian sheep	*IAN* 18
46	Two unicorns	*IAN* 62 / traditional

(*cont.*)

	Animals	**Sources**
47	Two dragons	Traditional
48a	Peacock	*WF* 3
48b	Peacock	*WF* 80 (right)
49a	Monkey	*WF* 36
49b	Monkey	Ad vivum
50a and b	Two pheasants	Ad vivum
51a and b	Two ravens	Ad vivum
52	Black-crowned night heron	*IAV* 18
53a and b	Two monkeys	Ad vivum or traditional
54a	Bearded vulture	*IAV* 12
54b	Bearded vulture	Artistic imagination
55a	Wild cat	*WF* 38 (against the tree)
55b	Wild cat	*WF* 38 (above)
56	Red-backed shrike	*IAN* 13
57a	Crane	*WF* 67
57b	Crane	Artistic imagination
58a	Bittern	Probably ad vivum
58b	Bittern	Probably ad vivum

CHAPTER 5

Cornelis van Haarlem: Eden's Animals in Aesopian Perspective

In the extensive oeuvre of the Dutch painter Cornelis Corneliszoon van Haarlem (1562–1638), the theme of the Fall of Man occupies an important place. Cornelis completed no less than five paintings depicting the Fall. While most of them date from the later, less creative period of Cornelis' production – his so-called classical period – his most impressive and best-known work on the Fall is the one briefly mentioned by Carel van Mander in his *Schilderboek* (Book of Painters) (1604): 'In the Prinsenhof in Haarlem [...] there is also, above a door, a large, vertical, beautifully painted work with life-size figures representing Adam and Eve.'[1] Cornelis finished this work in 1592. This painting, which is actually even larger than life-size, is now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. (Fig. 5.1).

Its central scene, depicting the tragic moment of the Fall, is strongly reminiscent of Dürer. Cornelis' Adam was based on Dürer's 1504 engraving; his Eve was inspired, either directly or indirectly, by Hendrik Goltzius' engraving *Andromeda* (1538).[2] The Devil (here depicted in traditional fashion as a beautiful child with a serpent's tail, as seen in Dürer's drawing of 1510) offers the forbidden fruit to Eve. Taken as a whole, the painting must be 'read' as a narrative sequence, from left to right. On the left is depicted the creation of man, with God shrouded in a white cloud; in the middle is the Fall; and on the right is man's miserable situation after the Fall. This narrative is underlined by the passage from light to dark, representing the passage from good to evil, and by the presence of a number of animals.

Inevitably, perhaps, Cornelis intended these animals to do rather more than simply create a picturesque rendition of Earthly Paradise, but to carry symbolic meaning that can be explained in most of the cases within the context of emblems and fables. The most visible animals, depicted in the foreground, are a monkey embracing a cat. At the bottom, behind the tree, is the head of a

1 Mander Carel van, *Het schilderboek. Het leven van de doorluchtige Nederlandse en Hoogduitse schilders*, ed. J.L. de Jong a.o. (Amsterdam: 1995) 265 (my translation).

2 Thiel P. van, "Cornelis van Haarlem, *The Fall of Man*, 1592", in Luijten G. – Suchtelen A. van a.o. (eds.), *Dawn of the Golden Age. Northern Netherlandish Art. 1580–1620* (Amsterdam – Zwolle: 1993) 337–338 (here 338).

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FIGURE 5.1 Cornelis van Haarlem, *The Fall* (*Adam and Eve*), 1592, oil on canvas, 273 × 220 cm. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam
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bear looking out at the scene before him.[3] At the front left are a large dog and a fox. In the background on the left is a group of various white or light-coloured animals, standing around the divine cloud: two sheep, a white stork, a white

3 According to Dittrich S. – Dittrich L., *Lexikon der Tiersymbole: Tiere als Sinnbilder in der Malerei des 14.-17. Jahrhunderts* (Petersberg: 2004) 248, this animal is not a bear but a wolf.

turkey, two geese, a peacock, a female deer, and a pale grey animal which, on closer inspection, turns out to be a porcupine.[4] There is also an owl (a barn owl, to be precise) perched on the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the centre. A small butterfly is perched on the trunk of the same tree, another one is sitting on the wild vine, scarcely visible at the front right. A hedgehog emerges from behind Eve's foot. At the foreground several little animals – frogs and slugs – are creeping. On the right of the painting are two more animals, barely visible in the darkness. The first, in the far background, is the undulating figure of a dragon, while the second, directly behind Eve, is the head of a huge lion which stares directly at the viewer. Difficult enough to make out in the glossy original, let alone a reproduction, the lion seems to be intended to shock the viewer when or if it is eventually noticed.

One of the specialists on Cornelis van Haarlem, Pieter van Thiel, has interpreted the central cat-monkey scene of Cornelis' *Fall* in the same way as Panofsky did for Dürer's 1504 engraving and 1510 drawing. According to Van Thiel's interpretation:

> There is good reason to believe that the inclusion of this amusingly posed pair of animals, here making their first appearance in iconography, was prompted by the scholastic doctrine that associated the fall with the theory of the four temperaments. The sanguine ape is beside Adam, the hothead who yields to temptation, and the choleric cat is beside Eve to exemplify her cruel cunning.[5]

This interpretation is not justified, partly because, as we have already shown, Panofsky's interpretation falls short in Dürer's case; and partly because the monkey-cat pairing is well known before Cornelis' *Fall of Man*. This motif can be traced back to emblem 110, *Non dolo, sed vi* (Not by cunning, but by force), in the *Emblemata* of Janus Sambucus, published by Plantin in Antwerp in 1564 (and immediately translated into French and Dutch). While this emblem shows a monkey using the paw of a sleeping dog to get chestnuts out of the fire, it was transformed by Marcus Gheeraerts and Eduard De Dene, illustrator and poet of the emblematic fable book *De Warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (see chapter 2), into the fable of *The Monkey and the Cat* (Fig. 5.2). One explanation for the remarkable transformation of a dog into a cat may be that Gheeraerts and De Dene interpreted the Latin word *catellus*, meaning 'little dog, puppy', as the equivalent of the Dutch word *kat*, which phonetically looks a bit like ***cat****ellus*.

4 These light-coloured animals are all positively connotated. See Dittrich – Dittrich, *Lexikon der Tiersymbole* 248.

5 Thiel P. van, "Cornelis van Haarlem, *The Fall of Man*, 1592" 338.

FIGURE 5.2 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Simme ende Catte* (Monkey and Cat], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 104. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-YI-19
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Gheeraerts and De Dene could also have thought of the well-known Middle French proverb 'C'est un bon jeu de chat a singe' (It's a fair game between cat and monkey)[6] – except that this fable does not involve 'fair play', as the monkey forces the cat to (literally) take the chestnuts out of the fire. The monkey

6 For this and comparable proverbs and their meanings, see Singer Samuel, *Proverbiorum Medii Aevi. Lexikon der Sprichwörter des romanisch-germanischen Mittelalter. Band 11: Sommer-Tröster* (Berlin – New York: 2001) 56, nos. 121, 122, 123.

and the cat would reappear in later versions of the fable (including Jean de La Fontaine's) and in many paintings and illustrations. It is also probably the origin of proverbs such as 'use a cat's paw' or 'pull the chestnuts out of the fire', which are well known in most European countries.[7]

The implications of Cornelis' monkey-cat pairing seem clear: like Dürer's cat and mouse, Cornelis' cat and monkey live together peacefully. They are even friends; one does not (yet) dominate the other, as expressed in the French proverb quoted above. The scene thus reflects the harmonious situation before the Fall, the time of paradisiacal happiness and peace. But the scene also implies that things were about to change radically after the Fall.

The central theme of monkey and cat invites the viewer to interpret the animal symbolism of the whole picture in the light of contemporary fable books. Indeed, there is one other detail that seems to justify an Aesopian reading of the painting: the Tree of Knowledge, at the centre of the painting, is partly striped, in keeping with the traditional image of the bark whose rough exterior conceals an inner wisdom (as we have also seen in Dürer's depiction of the Tree of Life in his 1504 engraving). The image of the bark is a motif common to fables, as is expressed in one of the paratexts of the *Warachtighe fabulen*, which advises the reader to read the fables allegorically:

> These fables are indeed old and widely known / But they are excellent and made in learned fashion / And they are full of meaning and wisdom, so do not underestimate them. / Pay no attention to the bark, but the inside tastes good.[8]

By including this image, which is a common motif in contemporary fable and emblem theory, Cornelis seems to invite the viewer to search for a deeper meaning, to practise an allegorical and emblematic reading.

Let us take a closer look at Cornelis' other fable animals. The antipathy between the fox and the dog was well covered by fable literature.[9] More

7 See Dawes E., "Pulling the Chestnuts out of the Fire", in Houwen L.A.J.R. (ed.), *Animals and the Symbolic in Mediaeval Art and Literature* (Groningen: 1997) 155–169, and Geirnaert D. – Smith P.J., "The Sources of the Emblematic Fable Book *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (1567)", in Manning J. – Porteman K. – Van Vaeck M. (eds.), *The Emblem Tradition and the Low Countries* (Turnhout: 1999) 23–38 (here 283).

8 Lucas d'Heere, [To the Reader], *WF* fol. A2r: 'Dees Fabulen (tis waer) sijn oudt ende ghemeene / Maer nochtans excellent, gheleerdelic ghemaect / Ende vol zins oft verstandts, dus en achtse niet cleene / Lett op de schorsse niet, maer t'binnenste wel smaect.' The author of this paratext, the Flemish painter and poet Lucas d'Heere, was befriended to Marcus Gheeraerts.

9 See for instance *WF* 38, 43, 63.

interesting, as they are lesser known, are the stork and the turkey, which are grouped around the divine cloud. The stork was not only a symbol of parental love (as in Alciato's emblems and in the fable *The Old Stork* in the *Warachtighe fabulen*),[10] but also of piety, as the bird sacrifices a tenth of its nestlings to God every year. This pseudo-ornithological detail[11] can be found in a small number of texts. These include the *Warachtighe fabulen*, where it is the subject of the very last fable,[12] and one of its direct sources, *Der Dieren Palleys*, a Dutch natural history book published in Antwerp in 1520:

> When their young are fully grown and well feathered, the stork always throws one of them out of the nest, as a tribute to the lord of the area where they nest. Some say that by doing this they are offering their young to God, and that this is a payment of the tithe that He requires of them.[13]

The turkey, however, was at this time still a relative newcomer to Europe, and thus relatively unknown, which explains its lack of an emblematic and/or Aesopian tradition. The only two examples I know of are in the bird emblems of Guillaume Guéroult (where the turkey symbolises the beauty of nature)[14] and in *De Warachtighe fabulen*, where it is a symbol of peace and tolerance.[15]

Cornelis placed another fable animal whose symbolism was to be understood emblematically beneath the divine cloud, that is, the porcupine. Originally adopted as an *impresa* for the French king Louis XII (with the motto

10 *Vanden ouden Houaere*, *WF* 23.

11 In fact, not quite pseudo-ornithological, as we can read in Barrows E.M., *Animal Behavior Desk: A Dictionary of Animal Behavior, Ecology, and Evolution*, 3rd ed. (Boca Raton, FL: 2011), s.v. "Infanticide."

12 No title, *WF*, p. 216.

13 My translation. Original text: 'Si werpen wt eenen van haren ionghen als hi volwassen en ghepluimet is voor een tribuyt den here daer si nestlen. En somighe segghen dat si god den ionghen gheven voor gaer thiende.' Anon., *Der Dieren Palleys. Die vergaderinghe vanden beesten der Aerden. Van den Vogelen der lucht. Van den visschen ende monstere der wateren* (Antwerp, Jan van Doesborch: 1520), chap. 27.

14 Guéroult Guillaume, *Second livre de la description des animaux contenant le blazon de oyseaux* (Lyon, Balthazar Arnoullet: 1550). For other early pictorial representations, see esp. Mason P., "Of Turkeys and Men: Towards a Historical Iconography of New World Ethnographic and Natural Historical Representation," in Tongiorgi Tomasi L. – Olmi G. – Zanca A. (eds.), *Natura-Cultura. L'interpretazione del mondo fisico nei testi e nelle immagini* (Florence: 2000) 63–90.

15 *Vlaemsche ende Turksche Hane* (The Flemish and the Turkish Rooster), *WF* 94.

'Cominus et eminus'), the animal became the symbol of the good and powerful king, as can be seen in the emblems of Cornelis' contemporary, Joachim Camerarius.[16]

The porcupine must be clearly differentiated from the painting's other spiny animal, one also to be understood in the context of *De Warachtighe fabulen*, the hedgehog that is half visible behind Eve's foot. *De Warachtighe fabulen* contains two fables involving the hedgehog. In the first (*The Hedgehog and the Viper*)[17] the prickly animal is negatively connoted as it chases the rightful owner (the viper) out of his home. The moral of the fable is 'Be careful who you talk to'. In the second, *The Wolf and the Hedgehog*,[18] the hedgehog has positive connotations, which is particularly relevant because the fable's motto is 'Beware of the enemy'.[19] In his biblical *subscriptio* to this fable, paraphrased from 1 Peter 5:8, De Dene explains that this 'enemy' is in fact the Devil, who is associated successively with a roaring lion and a dragon or serpent:

> Everyone must be vigilant, because our adversary, the high risen enemy, besieges us day and night like a roaring lion. And what is more, he cunningly seeks whom he can devour. He who is firm in his faith resists the cunning serpentine evil before the enemy is successful.[20]

These two animals – lion and serpent – are represented in the dark right-hand side of Cornelis' painting, with this important difference that Cornelis' lion is not depicted roaring, and, on closer inspection, looking watchfully, but not menacingly, at the viewer. Therefore the lion has the positive, typological symbolism we saw in Dürer and Cranach.

In Cornelis' painting Eve is in grave danger of stepping onto the spiny beast, suggesting that his hedgehog has yet another symbolic meaning. It is to be found in the work of the emblematist Florentius Schoonhovius, for whom the hedgehog symbolises[21] the painful childbearing to which woman is condemned after the Fall.

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16 Camerarius Joachim, *Symbolorum et Emblematum ex animalibus quadrupedibus desumtorum centuria altera collecta* (Nuremberg, Paulus Kaufman: 1595), fol. 92.

17 *Eghele ende t'Serpent Vipera*, WF 33.

18 *Wolf ende Eghele*, WF 46.

19 'Ieghens dijn vyanden zijt, / Wel voorzien altijt'. (Be always well aware of your enemies).

20 'ELck sal sober ende waeckende wesen / Want ons wederpartie, den vyandt nacht en dach / Als een briesschende Leeu, sterck opgheresen / Ommerijght onslieden, ende bouen desen / Zouct listelick wien hy verslinden mach / Den welcken (eer hy crijght zijn beiach) / Serpentich ende oudtschalckich quaet / De stercke int ghelooue wederstaet.'

21 Schoonhovius Florentius, *Emblemata* (Gouda, Andreas Burier: 1618), no. 28.

The other animals need not be understood exclusively in the specific context of emblems and fables. They will therefore be mentioned only briefly. The goose is a traditional symbol of wisdom.[22] Lamb, deer and peacock invariably carry positive symbolism, as we noticed in our analysis of Cranach's paintings. Cornelis' barn owl (which replaces Dürer's parrot)[23] is a traditional symbol of wisdom, associated with the goddess Minerva.[24] The meaning of the two butterflies is elucidated in another of Cornelis' paintings, the contemporaneous *Titanomachy* (or *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*), in which the rebels' genitals are covered by butterflies with their wings wide open. Cornelis' *Fall of Man* features two butterflies: one is plainly visible sitting on the trunk of the Tree of Knowledge with its wings closed; the other, hidden in the darkness to Eve's left, sits on a vine with its wings wide open. The symbolism seems obvious: chastity (or natural sexuality) before the Fall has been transformed into sinful sexual promiscuity after the Fall.

There is another insect in the *Titanomachy* that helps us to decode Cornelis' *Fall of Man*, a giant dragonfly whose curling tail covers the giant's genitals on the left side of the painting. The dragonfly's curling tail is very similar to the tail of Cornelis' devil serpent-cum-child, which points directly to Eve. This should be interpreted in the context of 16th-century theological debates about the phallic nature of the serpent. In this context, the serpent symbolises Adam's penis, and the significance of the Fall lies in man's discovery of sexuality, as we saw in our chapter on Dürer.

Cornelis also uses plants to underline the symbolic message delivered by his animals. On the left (the 'good' side), just in front of the dog, there is a plantain, a herb known for its medicinal value, especially against snakebites. Opposite the plantain, obscured in the darkness of the postlapsarian world is a wild vine which neither bears fruit nor is it, in turn, borne by another tree or branch as is customary. The lack of fruit is symbolic of barren wilderness that will be the world after the Fall, while the wild vine seeking support in vain seems to foreshadow mankind's future loveless state – Alciato's emblem, *Amicitia etiam post mortem durans* (Friendship lasts even after death), connects the theme of the

22 See Dittrich S. – Dittrich L., *Lexikon der Tiersymbole: Tiere als Sinnbilder in der Malerei des 14.-17. Jahrhunderts* (Petersberg: 2004) 178.

23 Interestingly both parrot and owl will soon afterwards become negative symbols of human folly in painting. See, for instance, the owl in Jacob Jordaens's *Zo de ouden zongen, piepen de jongen* (ca. 1638–40), which is substituted with a parrot in Jan Steen's painting with the same title (ca. 1663–65). See Chapman H.P. – Kloek W.Th. – Wheelock Jr. A.K., *Jan Steen, schilder en verteller* (Amsterdam: 1996) 173–174.

24 This barn owl very much resembles the one depicted as an attribute of Minerva in Hendrick Goltzius, *Minerva*, 1611 (Frans Hals Museum).

vine winding around a tree with friendship.[25] Accordingly, Cornelis' wild vine, seeking support in vain, seems to foreshadow the loveless state of humanity after the Fall.

Cornelis' creeping vine exhibits an unexpected ambiguity, however, as its leaves closely resemble those of the fig tree (whereas the plant's tendrils and its climbing and creeping nature are not characteristic of European fig species). In covering Adam's genitals with a fig leaf rather than the apple leaves he uses for Eve, Cornelis refers to Genesis 3:7 which states that Adam and Eve will cover their nakedness with fig leaves. It is not entirely clear what exactly Cornelis is trying to demonstrate with the distinction between Adam's fig leaf and Eve's apple leaves: is Eve being blamed for the Fall? This could be suggested by the apple she gives to Adam, the stem and leaves of which are connected to her genitals – and which, moreover, is in the immediate vicinity of the open-winged butterfly, symbol of sexual openness. Adam, according to this interpretation, would then be representative of the kind of chastity symbolised by the fig leaf and the butterfly with closed wings next to him.

The snails and frogs in the foreground of *The Fall of Man* are well-known medieval and 16th-century symbols for sin and lust, but these 'crawly creatures'[26] also bear another, once more somewhat ambiguous, set of meanings which are quite in line with the painting's themes. Found in many contemporary depictions of rotting corpses, snails, frogs and other pests were used to symbolise both life and death: the latter for perhaps obvious reasons, the former as, before the studies in microscopy carried out by Anthoni van Leeuwenhoek and Johannes Swammerdam, it was believed that animals such as these generated spontaneously from decaying matter.

The oncoming rush of death, which will come to every creature in the postlapsarian world, is reflected in the bear's gaze, attentive of the scene of the Fall before him. This attention can be explained by the fact that, zoologically speaking, the bear has an aversion to dead people. In 1592, the same year that Cornelis completed *The Fall*, Joseph Boillot published a book on zoological motifs in architecture, in which he asserted that the bear has an aversion to dead people:

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25 For a similar symbolism of the vine in the work of Cornelis' colleagues Hendrick Goltzius and Jan Tengnagel, see Sluiter E.J., "Vertumnus en Pomona door Hendrick Goltzius (1613) en Jan Tengnagel (1617): Constanten en contrasten in vorm en inhoud", *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 39 (1991) 386–400.

26 For examples, see Hond J. de, "Outcasts of Creation. Medieval Associations with the Devil, Sin and Death", in Hond J. de – Jorink E. – Mulder H. (eds.), *Crawly Creatures: Depiction and appreciation of insects and other critters in art and science* (*Exhibition catalogue Rijksmuseum*) (Amsterdam: 2022) 27–35.

> In order to enrich it [the bear's nature] and to accompany it with something contrary to it, the artist, if he wants something that seems more significant, will add a carcass, a corpse, or a dead body, which the bear abhors and detests. In this way, when a man meets a bear, he immediately throws himself on the ground, holds his breath and pretends to be dead, thus avoiding the danger of this animal, which will not touch him, but will leave him for dead after smelling him.[27]

Boillot goes on to provide a fascinating illustration of a bear being attacked by a human skeleton (Fig. 5.3), while this phobia of the bear was also the subject of an Aesopian fable that also appears in *De Warachtighe fabulen*.[28] Cornelis' bear, looking at Adam and Eve, seems to foresee their human mortality, of which he is afraid.[29]

The bear's gaze does not embrace Adam and Eve alone, however: it also encompasses the viewer. This leads us back to a feature we have already observed in Cranach's paintings, and to what might be called the rhetorical component of this particular painting. The question we must ask is: how Cornelis seeks to manipulate the viewer? The answer to this question lies in the 'focus' of the protagonists, i.e. the directions in which Adam, Eve and the animals are looking. Adam looks at Eve, Eve focuses on the Devil, and some of the animals look at the scene of the Fall. For example, the wise owl looks at the folly of man, and the fox looks at the devil (with whom he has been associated in traditional symbolism since the early Middle Ages).[30] Some of the animals do not look at the scene of the Fall, but directly out of the picture at the viewer, and thus at fallen man. The dog does so worryingly or reproachfully, as do the lion, the monkey, and the cat. The bear's gaze, however, encompasses both Adam and Eve and the viewer, reminding him of both the Fall of Man and, aware of the symbolic antipathy of the bear with human corpses, of his mortality and the skeleton he will one day become.

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27 Boillot, *Nouvaux pourtraitz*, fol. [Ciiij v]: 'Pour l'enrichir & accompagner de quelque chose a luy contraire, l'ouurier y applicquera s'il veult quelque [...] chose qui pourra sembler estre plus propre a signifier vne charoigne cadaure, ou corps mort, que L'ours abhorre & deteste. Si bien que l'homme se rencontrant a vn ours, se iettant incontinant a terre, s'il se garde de respirer, & qu'il sache bien contrefaire le mort : il euitera le danger de ceste beste, qui ne le touchera point, ains l'ayant odoré le lairra comme estant mort.'

28 *Beer ende twee Vrienden* (The Bear and the Two Friends), *WF* 55.

29 This symbolism does not correspond to the symbolism of the bear we addressed in Cranach's paintings (chapter 4).

30 See, for instance, T. H. White, *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* (New York: 1960) 54.

FIGURE 5.3 Joseph Boillot, *Bear attacked by a Human Skeleton*, woodcut in Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [...] (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592), fol. [Ciiiiii r]. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-V-385
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By focusing on the humans – namely Adam, Eve, and the picture's viewer – the animals reverse the traditional focalisation usually present in fable books, which typically present man beholding the animals. This widespread theme, which links fable writing to the art of staging and performance,[31] is plainly visible on the illustrated title pages of some fable books affiliated with *De Warachtighe fabulen*, the titles of which speak for themselves: *Esbatement moral des animaux* (*esbatement* is a little piece of theatre), *Théâtre des animaux*, and *Theatrum morum*. The typical illustration for this kind of title page displays a platform, with animals as actors and a human audience; sometimes Aesop is represented as the stage manager. In Cornelis' painting, however, the situation appears to be reversed: here the animals observe the tragedy of man as it unfolds, and thus assert a type of moral authority over him.

31 See, for instance, Jean de La Fontaine, who typifies his fables as follows: 'Une ample comédie à cent actes divers / Et dont la scène est l'univers' ('A vast comedy in a hundred different acts / And whose stage is the universe') (La Fontaine, Jean de, *Œuvres complètes I Fables, contes et nouvelles*, ed. J.-P. Collinet (Paris: 1991) 178 v, 1, v. 27–28).

CHAPTER 6

Du Bartas' Fifth Day: Birds in the Perspective of Natural History and Biblical Typology

Early modern man's image of the book of Genesis is shaped not only by painting, but also by literature. In early modern literature, the story of the Fall is grouped into two genres: drama and so-called hexameral poetry. Of the first category, which is, along with the Old French *Jeu d'Adam* (12th century), deeply rooted in the Middle Ages, the best-known early modern examples are: Hans Sachs, *Tragedia von Schöpfung fal und ausstreibung Ade auss dem paradeyss* (1548), and Jacob Ruf, *Adam und Heva* (1550) (both in German); Hugo Grotius, *Adamus exul* (1601) (Neo-Latin); Giambattista Andreini, *Adamo* (1613) (Italian); and Joost van den Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap* (1664) (Dutch). Early modern hexameral poetry is usually considered as starting with the two *Semaines* (Weeks) in French of Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas. This genre includes two other highlights: Torquato Tasso, *Le sette Giornate del Mondo creato* (1600) (Italian), and John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667) (English). The two genres are not strictly separated: Vondel's play is strongly inspired by Du Bartas' epic, while Du Bartas and Vondel, and probably also Andreini, were sources of inspiration for Milton's epic.[1]

In these pages, we will deal with just two highlights from these two, intertwined traditions. From the dramatic tradition, chapter 9 will address the animal theme in Vondel's play on the Fall, considering it alongside an Adam-and-Eve engraving of his famous contemporary and compatriot Rembrandt; this chapter is devoted to the animals, and especially the birds, in Du Bartas' epic poem about the Week of Creation.

1 Du Bartas, His *Semaines* and Their Afterlife

A brief introduction to his person and work is necessary, as today Du Bartas (1544–1590) is an almost forgotten poet. A native of Gascony, Du Bartas trained

1 For an overview of the genre and of the intertextual relations between Du Bartas, Tasso, Andreini, Vondel, and Milton, see Thibaut de Maisières M., *Les poèmes inspirés du début de la Genèse à l'époque de la Renaissance* (Louvain: 1931).

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as a lawyer in the southern French town of Toulouse. Originally a Catholic, he converted to Protestantism. He spent most of his career in the service of the Protestant King Henri de Navarre, who was later crowned Henri IV of France. As a diplomat, he was sent to Denmark and Scotland, among other places. Du Bartas was an active poet: he became famous for the biblical epic *La Judith* (1574), but above all for his *Semaine*s. The latter work has a complicated history: the first volume, *La Sepmaine*, covered the story of the first Week of Creation, and was first published in 1578. This work is a remarkable form of amplification, as Du Bartas develops the first book of Genesis, and a handful of verses from book two, into a poem of some 6,500 lines: each day gets around 1,000 lines, except for the seventh day which, being a day of rest, is a little bit shorter. The poem's second edition, published in 1581, was considered important enough to be the subject of learned commentaries by Simon Goulart (1581) and Pantaleon Thevenin (1585), who positioned *La Sepmaine* in a scholarly context. Before Du Bartas, the only poet in France to receive the honour of a learned commentary during his lifetime was Pierre de Ronsard. I will return to these comments in detail, as they steer Du Bartas' interpretation in a scholarly, natural-historical direction, which, as we will see, does not quite match the content of the work.

La Seconde Semaine was published in 1584. Its title is somewhat misleading, as rather than encompassing the entirety of the second biblical 'week', it merely considered its first two 'days': the 'Day of Adam' and the 'Day of Noah'. Du Bartas divided each of these days into four sections, with the Day of Adam comprising *Eden*, *L'Imposture*, *Les Furies*, and *Les Artifices*, and the Day of Noah *L'Arche*, *Babilone*, *Les Colonies*, and *Les Colomnes*. Du Bartas devoted 5,600 lines to these two days – had he carried on, he would have needed 19,600 lines to complete the entire second week – three times more than he had devoted to the first week. He would never finish the work, and died in 1590.

While both works, and especially *La Sepmaine*, were immediately popular in Du Bartas' native France, their success was short-lived: rarely read past the early years of the 17th century, by 1650, and the rise of classicism, they were entirely forgotten. Outside of France, the picture was different. Abroad Du Bartas' poem had great success not only at the end of the 16th century, but also during the entire 17th century. The work was translated three times into Latin (1579, 1583, 1609 – the 1583 edition was reedited in 1616 and 1635), and further into Italian (1592; reeditions in 1599 and 1613), Spanish (1610, and another translation in 1612 in a Jewish-Spanish context in Amsterdam), English (three translations including Joshua Sylvester's famous, many times reprinted translation), German (1631) and no less than three times into Dutch (1609, 1616, 1622). Translations in Danish (1661) and Swedish (1681, four reeditions, the last one

in 1857) followed later in the century.[2] In Italy, *La Sepmaine* was emulated by none other than Tasso. One of his greatest admirers, King James VI of Scotland, invited Du Bartas to his court, translated some of his works and wrote poems inspired by him which were published in collections with the fine titles: *The essayes of a prentise, in the diuine art of poesie* (1584) and *His Majesties Poeticall Exercises at vacant houres* (1591).[3] The great English poet John Milton would later draw inspiration from Du Bartas for his poem *Paradise Lost* (1667), while in the 18th-century, the German poet Johann Wolfgang Goethe would wonder in amazement as to why the French treated one of their great poets with such disdain.

There are three reasons for Du Bartas' continuing popularity outside France. The first was the moderate tone of his work. Indeed, his poetry was not polemical, something quite exceptional at the time of bloody Wars of Religion which tore France to the bone. Because the work did not call for violence against the Counter-Reformation, against the Roman Church, the Pope, and/or the French king, it was not vilified by either side of the religious divide, and was as safe to own and read in Protestant countries as it was in Catholic.

The second reason for Du Bartas' popularity lay in his use of language. Du Bartas presents the biblical story in a sweeping baroque style, bursting with examples of linguistic virtuosity, not least of which are the numerous instances of periphrasis and his inventive use of compound words: He calls the sun *l'astre du jour* (star of the day), while describing the earth as *porte-fleurs* (flower-bearing), and the sky as *porte-flambeaux* (torch-bearing). His name for the sea, the abode of the fish, as: *le flottant séjour* (the flowing, or floating, abode), has an in-built paradox – the firmness of the word *séjour* combines with the unfixed feel of *flottant* – but allows the poet some stylistic flexibility. Du Bartas turns it into one of his favourite word forms, the onomatopoeia, by repeating the first syllable, *flo-flottant séjour* (a trick he repeats with the wind, *sou-soufflant*, and the heart *ba-battant*).

The best-known example of onomatopoetic language is his rendering of the song of the lark. The lark's song is described as follows in Peterson's unsurpassed *Field Guide*: 'Song, a high-pitched, musical outpouring, *very long sustained*, in hovering and ascending or descending flight.'[4] Du Bartas makes the following of the bird's song:

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2 See Bellenger Y., "Introduction", in Du Bartas Guillaume, *La Sepmaine ou Creation du monde*, vol. 1, eds. J. Céard a.o. (Paris: 2011) 33–35.

3 See Auger P., *Du Bartas' Legacy in England and Scotland* (Oxford: 2019).

4 Peterson R.T. – Mountfort G. – Hollom P.A.D., *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, Fourth Revised and Enlarged Edition (London: 1983) 147–148 (italics Peterson's).

> La gentile Alouete avec son tire-lire,
> Tire l'ire à l'iré, et tirelirant tire
> Vers la vouste du Ciel: puis son vol vers ce lieu
> Vire, et desire dire Dieu adieu, adieu Dieu.
>
> *Sepmaine* 284, ll. 615–618

Joshua Sylvester, Du Bartas' English translator, renders this as follows:

> The pretty *Lark*, climbing the Welkin clear,
> Chaunts with a cheer, *Heere peer-I neer my Dear*;
> Then stooping thence (seeming her fall to rew)
> *Adieu* (she saith) *adieu, Deer Dear adieu.*
>
> *Weekes* 67, ll. 672–675

Du Bartas' contemporaries considered his use of language quite wonderful. In 1631, the Leiden professor Thomas Erpenius published a booklet in which he advised his students to take a study trip to France. In preparation for this, he suggested they would need to improve their French language skills – for that, reading Du Bartas was enough.[5]

The third cause of Du Bartas' popularity outside France was the encyclopaedic nature of his *Semaines* through which it linked the two books God had given to Mankind, the Bible and the Book of Nature. Let us take as an example the Fifth Day of Creation, the day when the fish and the birds were created. The few lines that Genesis 1:20–23 devotes to the creation of the fish and the birds are spun out into a long description of 1,000 lines, split neatly into two halves: the first 500 lines describe the fish and other *aquatilia*, the second 500 are devoted to birds. In these twice 500 lines, Du Bartas compiled great lists of birds and fishes into which he interspersed descriptions of varying lengths, all of which sang to the greatness of Nature, and thus the greatness of God. With unwavering enthusiasm, Du Bartas described the variety of Nature and its peculiar, bizarre, sometimes monstrous creatures, a few examples of which will be given later. These descriptions were, for instance, very much to the liking of the many, mostly well-to-do Dutch readers, who, if they had neither Latin nor French, were lucky enough to have three Dutch translations to choose from.[6] These Dutchmen saw their religious beliefs, literary tastes and

5 'Ex Poëtis solus *Bartasius* suffecerit', Erpenius Thomas, *De peregrinatione gallica* (Leiden, Franciscus Hegerus: 1631) 5.

6 *De Eerste Weke der Scheppinge der Werelt* [...], transl. Theoderick van Liefvelt van Opdorp (Brussels, Rutgeert Velpius: 1609); *De Weke* [...], transl. Zacharias Heyns (Zwolle, Zacharias

natural-historical curiosity (to which the country's numerous *cabinets de curiosités* testified) perfectly combined and expressed in Du Bartas.

2 Du Bartas: Natural History

Quite apart from its religious contexts, Du Bartas' works gave prominence to contemporary scientific discourse. The commentaries written by Goulart and Thevenin demonstrate this clearly as they placed *La Sepmaine* into both its natural historical and its theological contexts. For example, the indices of the Classiques Garnier edition of 2011 suggest that for Du Bartas' Fifth Day, Thevenin's commentary mentions Pierre Belon eleven times, Conrad Gessner twenty-four times, and Guillaume Rondelet thirty-five times; for the commentary by Goulart, the figures are even higher: Belon is mentioned fifty-three times, Gessner twenty-nine times, and Rondelet forty-seven times.[7] Such figures ought to treated with caution, however, as a mention in Thevenin or Goulart may not refer to actual source. While both Thevenin and Goulart did sometimes succeed in identifying Du Bartas' sources, in general this was not their primary aim: both commentators were more concerned with suggest further natural historical resources for the interested reader, and wished to present Du Bartas as *poeta doctus*, situating him in the discourse of contemporary science.

The same conclusion can be drawn from Du Bartas' ichthyological descriptions from the first part of the Fifth Day.[8] In the much-quoted passage in which Du Bartas argues that the sea harbours the counterparts of land animals, he

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Heyns: 1616); *Vertalinghe vande eerste Weeck der Scheppinghe des Werrelts* [...], transl. Wessel van den Boetselaer (The Hague, Aert Meuris: 1622). See my "Du Bartas aux Pays-Bas", *Œuvres et critiques* 29.2 (2004) 39–61.

7 Consulted editions: Goulart Simon, *Indice*, in Du Bartas Guillaume, *La Sepmaine*, vol. 2, ed. Y. Bellenger (Paris: 2011); Thevenin Pantaleon, *Annotations* in Du Bartas Guillaume, *La Sepmaine*, vol. 3, ed. D. Bjaï (Paris: 2011).

8 The term "ichthyology" is used for facility. In fact, this term is anachronistic: if its occasional first usage was in the 16th century (first use in book title: Figulus Carolus, *Ichtyologia seu dialogus de piscibus* (Cologne, Eucharius Cervicornus: 1540)), it came into common use only in the 18th century. The term used more frequently in the 16th and 17th centuries is "(natural) history of fish", including the study not only of fish, but of all forms of aquatic animal life, such as marine mammals, sea turtles, crustaceans, shellfish, and (nonexistent) sea monsters. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same can be said about ornithology (first occurrence in Latin in the second half of the 16th century). Early modern ornithology not only studies birds, but also bats, which are flying mammals.

writes: 'The sea has its own lion, its horse, its elephant, its calf'.[9] 'This one verse is reason for Goulart to write an extensive learned commentary with a multitude of natural historical references on the sea-lion (Pliny, Rondelet, and a certain Albert Krantz (Crantius) are mentioned),[10] and the sea-horse (where he mentioned Pliny, Belon, Gessner, 'et autres modernes', as well as the explorer Jacques Cartier).[11] About the sea-elephant (i.e. the walrus) and the sea-calf (i.e. the seal)[12] he says:

> Rondelet speaks [of this animal] in Book 16, chapter 23, and quotes what Pliny says about it in chapter 5 of Book 9. [Ambroise] Paré gives an illustration of it in the first part of the *Book on Monsters*, page 971 of his *Œuvres*.[13]
>
> Rondelet in book 16, chapters 6 and 7, distinguishes two species, one found in the Mediterranean Sea, the other in the ocean. These species are very different from each other. It is a fish that lives both on land and in the sea, and is so called both because of its shape, which resembles that of a land calf, and because of its call, for it lows and moos like a calf.[14]

It is indeed very unlikely that Du Bartas had consulted all the sources mentioned by Goulart for each individual 'fish' he mentioned. As we have observed,

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9 My translation, as this verse is not literally translated by Sylvester. Original text: '[La mer a] [...] son lion, son cheval, son éléphant, son veau' (*Sepmaine* 259, l. 42). Du Bartas' names of the *aquatilia* do not match the modern names. Du Bartas' 'sea pig' is probably a porpoise, and the 'sea lion' is not a sea lion, because this animal was at that time not known in Europe, but an imaginary animal. Du Bartas' unspecified 'seahorse' can be the mythological seahorse (Neptune's horse), the huge hippopotamus, or the tiny hippocampus. His 'sea elephant' is not the current elephant seal, because this species was also unknown in contemporary Europe, but the walrus (because of the ivory tusks that elephant and walrus both have), and the sea calf is the name for "seal", because the seal has the form of a calf, and makes the sound of a calf, as Goulart explains in his commentary.

10 Goulart, *Indice* 49.

11 Goulart, *Indice* 100.

12 Or more precisely: one of the two Atlantic species, grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) or, more probably, the harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*), and the Mediterranean species, the monk seal (*Monachus monachus*).

13 Goulart, *Indice* 165: 'Rondelet en parle au 16. Liv. cha. 23, et allegue ce qu'en dit Pline au 5. chapitre du 9. livre. [...]. A. Paré en represente le pourtrait en son 1. Livre des Monstres, au feuillet 971. de ses Œuvres.'

14 Goulart, *Indice* 403: 'Rondelet au 16. livre chapitre 6. et 7, en fait de deux sortes, l'un qui vit en la mer Mediterranee, l'autre en l'Oceane, assez differens l'un de l'autre. C'est une poisson qui vit sur terre et en l'eau, et qui a ce nom, tant pour sa forme, qui approche de celle du veau terrestre, que à raison de son cri, car il bugle et mugit comme un veau.'

Goulart was mainly concerned with positioning Du Bartas as a *poeta doctus*, which he undoubtedly strove to be, but not entirely so.

2.1 *Away from Natural History*

One of the most important areas in which Du Bartas distances himself purposefully from contemporary natural historical discourse concerns the description of species absent in Gessner and Belon. This is particularly clear in the case of insects, especially butterflies and bees. Descriptions of bees and their society are an important feature of Du Bartas' 'ornithological' passages. This may seem strange considering that there was no place for insects in Belon, but insects had been associated with birds in older natural histories from the beginning of the 16th century, as well as in a book of emblems entitled *Second livre de la description des animaux, contenant le blason des oyseaux* (1550),[15] written by Guillaume Guéroult.[16]

More striking than Du Bartas' discussion of bees and other insects was his inclusion of mythological animals, whose existence is explicitly denied by Gessner and Belon. Belon even made a point of this when dedicating his book to the King, writing: 'We have omitted on purpose to speak about griffins, as this is a trivial and fabulous topic'.[17] Du Bartas, however, describes the griffin at length.

In similar fashion, when Du Bartas discusses the pelican, he expounds on its mythical ability to resurrect its young, if killed by a snake, by feeding them blood that it pricks from its own chest. If Belon feels obliged to briefly mention this peculiarity – 'because of the holy books; by which everybody has heard something about this, as well as by the pictures made on this topic, which

15 On this emblem book, see Saunders A., "The Evolution of a Sixteenth-Century Emblem Book: The *Decades de la description des animaulx* and *Second Livre de la description des animaux contenant le blason des oyseaux*", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 38 (1976) 437–457.

16 This book is all the more interesting because it served as model for the re-release of the illustrations of Pierre Belon's *Histoire des oyseaux* (Paris, Guillaume Cavellat: 1555) in the form of an emblem book, published under the title *Portraits d'oyseaux, animaux, serpens, herbes, arbres, hommes et femmes, d'Arabie et Egypte* [...] *Le tout enrichy de Quatrains* (Paris, Guillaume Cavellat: 1557). See my article "Deux recueils d'illustrations ornithologiques : les *Icones* avium (1555 et 1560) de Conrad Gessner et les *Portraits* d'oyseaux (1557) de Pierre Belon", in Garrod R. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *The Poetics and Epistemology of Natural History in Early Modern France* (Leiden: 2016) 18–45.

17 Belon, *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* 82: 'Nous avons expressement laissé à parler des Griffons, comme de chose oyseuse, & fabuleuse'.

make everyone talk about this on all occasions'[18] – it seems he is doing so reluctantly, and he seems to hastily bring this story back into the rational discourse of empirical 'science', referring to the bird's habit of nesting on the ground as the reason why 'the serpent attacks the young, when the fathers are absent.'[19] Equally, Belon only mentions the exemplary virtue of the stork, which Du Bartas praises at length, en passant before moving abruptly to a more standard ornithological discourse: 'It is said about the stork that the children feed their parents when they are old. Its bill and its legs are red.'[20] Even the phoenix, which for Du Bartas was the most important of birds, is treated with great caution by Belon: 'not knowing if what one says is fable.'[21]

2.2 *Du Bartas: Animal Typology*

Du Bartas was strongly minded to replace scientific discourse with typology. While his descriptions are often too brief to positively identify his exact sources, the sources of his typological discourse are only broadly known, namely the hexameral writings of Basil and Ambrose. In the case of the phoenix, however, Du Bartas' source description is readily identifiable: it is the *De phenice* by Lactantius (ca. 250–ca. 325). Although the bird is mentioned in a large number of other texts, some lines of Du Bartas remain incomprehensible without recourse to Lactantius' text. Consider the following lines, which describe the rebirth of the phoenix in a rather enigmatic manner:

> [...] out of her ashes springs
> A Worm, an Egg then, then a Bird with wings.
>
> *Weekes* 66, ll. 644–645[22]

The order worm – egg – bird is not only illogical but atypical for literature on the phoenix. For instance, Belon follows Pliny, writing quite logically and conceivably: 'first a worm is born, from which the young of the phoenix emerges.'[23]

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18 Belon, *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* 154: 'à cause des saincts escrits; parquoy chacun en a entendu quelque chose, tant par les peintures qu'on en fait, que par ce qu'on en parle à touts propos.'

19 Belon, *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* 154: 'le Serpent face oultrage aux petits en l'absence des peres.'

20 Belon, *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* 201: 'La Cigogne a bruit [...] que les enfants nourrissent les peres en vieillesse. Son bec, ses iambes sont rouges.'

21 Belon, *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* 331: 'ne sçachant si c'est fable ce qu'on dit.'

22 *Sepmaine* ll. 589–599: '[...] de ce cendreux monceau / Naist un ver, puis un œuf, et puis un autre oiseau.'

23 Belon, *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* 331: 'il naist premiërement un verm, dont puis est engendré le poulsin du Phenix.'

Consultation of the text by Lactantius gives us the explanation of Du Bartas' strange order of worm, egg, and bird:

> Hence an animal is said to arise, first without limbs, and it is said to be the milky color of a worm. It grows, but for a certain measure of time it sleeps and gathers itself into the shape of a smooth egg. And, just as field caterpillars, when they are held by a thread to the rocks, are wont to change to butterflies, thence the shape which it was before is formed again, and the phoenix sprouts forth when the shell has broken.[24]

The 'egg' is in fact a chrysalid in the form of an egg.

It is Lactantius who gives the basic structure to the series of Du Bartas' bird descriptions. In Lactantius' text, the flight of the phoenix invites all birds to join with it:

> Every kind of flying creature draws itself together in meeting, nor is there any remembrance of prey nor any fear. Thronged by a chorus of birds she flies through the heights.[25]

Du Bartas co-opts Lactantius' description of the flight of the phoenix to discuss the birds, and to link their different descriptions to its flight:

> The *Phoenix*, cutting th'unfrequented Aire,
> Forth-with is followed by a thousand pair
> Of wings, in th'instant by th'Almighty wrought,
> With divers Size, Colour, and Motion fraught.[26]

When Du Bartas conceived his humorous image of the ostrich attempting to join the flying multitude –

> There, I perceive amid the flowry Plain
> The mighty *Estridge*, striving oft in vain
> To mount among the flying multitude,

---

24 Lactantius, *The Phoenix*, in *The Minor Works*, trans. M.F. McDonald (Washington, DC: 1965) 217.

25 Lactantius, *The Phoenix* 219.

26 *Sepmaine* 283, ll. 599–602: 'L'unique oiseau ramant par des sentes nouvelles, / Se void bien tost suivi d'une infinité d'ailes / Diverses en grandeur, couleur et mouvement, / Ailes que l'Eternel engendre en un moment.'

> (Although with feathers, not with flight indu'd),
> Whose greede stomack steely gads digests;
> Whose crispéd train adorns triumphant crests.
>
> *Weekes* 69, ll. 900–905[27]

– he was perhaps remembering Lactantius' lines, and thus evoking a direct link:

> Her greatness the winged creature which is sprung from the land of the Arabians can scarcely match, whether that be beast or bird. However she is not slow, as are the birds who by reason of their great bodies have sluggish movements from their heavy weight.[28]

Aiming to emphasise certain aspects of typology, Du Bartas' order of animals deviated from that commonly followed in natural history. It was usual practice to begin a description of the land animals with the lion and that of birds with the eagle: these were considered the two kings of the animals, to which must be added a third, the dolphin, king of the aquatic animals. This was a quite traditional classification, and can be seen in a well-known illustration by Marcus Gheeraerts representing an eagle, a lion and a dolphin, which served as frontispiece to the illustrated fable book *De Warachtighe fabulen der dieren*, (see Fig. 10.5). Belon opened his book on birds with a description of the eagle, as does Gessner in his *Icones avium*. Du Bartas knew this full well, and departed from it deliberately: 'Though last, not least; brave *Eagle*, no comtempt / Made me so long thy story hence exempt' (*Weekes* 69, ll. 966–967).[29] Indeed, the three monarchs of the animal kingdom – dolphin, lion, and eagle – are put at the end of their respective lists, not at the beginning.

This change had consequences for those animals subsequently promoted up the order, so to speak – the phoenix for the birds and the elephant amongst the land-animals – as they acquired a surplus typological value.[30] The phoenix presages Man's death and rebirth in Christ: 'Teaching us all, in *Adam* here to

27 Sylvester's last three lines are an addition to the French original: *Sepmaine* 295, ll. 839–842: '[…] J'aperçoy dans la plaine / L'oiseau digere-fer, qui vainement se peine / De se guinder en haut, pour, gaillard, se mesler / Parmi tant d'escadrons qui voltigent en l'air.'

28 Lactantius, *The Phoenix* 219.

29 *Sepmaine* 297, ll. 901–902: 'Aigle, ne cuide pas qu'un superbe mespris / M'ait gardé de coucher ton nom dans mes escrits.'

30 It is also remarkable that the first place among the fishes, left vacant by the dolphin, is not filled in neatly.

die, / That we in Christ may live eternally' (*Weekes* 67, ll. 654–655).[31] This typological symbolism of the bird stems from early Christianity.[32] The elephant's symbolism is also ancient, originating from Pliny's *Natural History*. Du Bartas' powerful but gentle elephant gives to future Man a model of wisdom, prudence, obedience, and even religiousness:

> Or else his Prudence, wherewithall he seems
> T'obscure the wits of human-kinde sometimes:
> A studious Scholar, he self-rumineth
> His lessons giv'n, his King he honoureth,
> Adores the Moon [...].
>
> *Weekes* 72, ll. 42–46[33]

Moreover, Du Bartas gives a new typological interpretation to Pliny's story of the elephant and the dragon.[34] The dragon attacks and kills the elephant, but is itself crushed by the weight of the crashing pachyderm. This fight, where both adversaries perish, is seen by Du Bartas as a harbinger of the bloody Wars of Religion that will tear apart the once-blissful France:

> Like factious *French-men*, whose fell hands pursue
> In their own brests their furious blades t'embrew,
> [...]
> Making their Countrey (as a Tragick Tomb)
> T'enter th'Earth's terror in their hap-les womb.
>
> *Weekes* 73, ll. 86–87; 92–93[35]

31 *Sepmaine* 283, ll. 597–598: 'Nous monstrant qu'il nous faut et de corps et d'esprit / Mourir tous en Adam, pour puis renaistre en Christ.'

32 Nigg J. *The Phoenix. An Unnatural Biography of a Mythical Beast* (Chicago – London: 2016), part II , "The Bird of God".

33 *Sepmaine* 309, ll. 29–33: '[...] Ou soit qu'on mette en jeu ceste prudente adresse, / Dont il semble obscurcir des humains la sagesse. / Escolier studieux, il rumine à part-soy / La leçon qu'on luy baille, il revere son roy, / Il salue la Lune [...].'

34 Pliny, *Historia naturalis* 8.34.

35 *Sepmaine* 311, ll. 73–74; 79–80: 'Semblables aux François, dont les dextres mutines / Sanglantent leurs couteaux dans leurs propres poitrines, [...] Faisant de leur patrie un funeste tombeau, / Où gist avec ses os du monde le plus beau.' The comparison between the Wars of Religion and the struggle of the two animals does not quite ring true, because neither the serpent nor the elephant dies of *internal* strife.

The translator Joshua Sylvester is so taken by Du Bartas' political interpretation of Pliny's story that he cannot resist adding a *simile* relating to the Wars of the Roses in his own country:

> *Or, like our own* (*late*) York *and* Lancaster,
> *Ambitious broachers of that Viper-War;*
> *Which did the womb of their own Dam deuour,*
> *And spoil'd the freshest of fair* England's *Flowr*.
>
> *Weekes* 73, ll. 94–97; italics of Sylvester

3 Ordering and Antipathy

The order in which Du Bartas places the other animals was far from arbitrary, and Goulart highlighted it in his own edition with short marginal notes. For the section on birds, these notes read as follows: "Divers autres oiseaux paisibles"; "Oiseaux de proye"; "Oiseaux solitaires et nocturnes"; "Oiseaux aquatiles"; "Oiseaux admirables", and "Oiseaux charitables". These notes show that this arrangement only partially corresponds to that of early modern natural history: the qualifications 'de proye', 'nocturnes', and 'aquatiles' correspond to the classifications of Belon and Gessner, while 'paisibles', 'admirables', and 'charitables' point to a different, anthropomorphising classification of the bird kingdom.

What does emerge unequivocally from early modern natural history is the importance Du Bartas attached to the theme of natural antipathy. This is the case for the falcon, which he presented as 'expert in catching partridges'.[36] Here, in order of appearance, are the other antipathies between the birds mentioned by Du Bartas: the two nightingales fighting life and death with their singing; the *bennaric*, eaten by men (*Sepmaine* 286, l. 657); the griffins and the humans, who want to steal the griffins' gold; the little owl mobbed by the other birds (*Sepmaine* 289, l. 712); the *lange* and the whale (*Sepmaine* 290, ll. 732–734); the pelican and the snake (*Sepmaine* 292, ll. 769–772); the cranes and the pygmies (*Sepmaine* 294, ll. 817); and the rooster and the lion (*Sepmaine* 294, l. 836). The list of antipathies was even longer for fish and terrestrial animals: elephant versus rhinoceros; elephant versus dragon; dog versus wolf; beaver versus hunter; weasel versus basilica; ichneumon versus aspic, and crocodile versus wren.

These natural antipathies were a well-known topos, as we have seen in the previous chapters. In his description of the antipathies between birds, Du

36 Translation mine; no translation given by Sylvester; cf. *Sepmaine* 286, ll. 662–663: 'expert / A batre le Perdris.'

Bartas constantly changed perspective, often anticipating antipathies that were not possible at the time of the creation of the birds: indeed, some 'enemies' of the bird – snake, lion, and men, including the pygmies – had not been created by the Fifth Day. On the other hand, other antipathies seem to have already existed at the time of the Creation. Birds of prey 'did not take notice of their prey',[37] while they escorted the phoenix, to the point of forgetting their fierce nature and 'caressing' its flight, taken as they were by universal sympathy. While Du Bartas did not grant this sympathy to fishes and land animals in *La Sepmaine*, he would more than make up for this omission in the description of the Garden of Eden found in the *Seconde Semaine*.

4 The Birds in the *Seconde Semaine*

Du Bartas' description of Eden was based on the idea of a universal sympathy which, after the Fall, changed into general antipathy. Du Bartas' editor, Simon Goulart, explained this in the summary of the 1589 edition:

> in order to accentuate the mischief made by Mankind, the Poet represents by way of a beautiful comparison the happy situation of the world before the sin, in the accord of Mankind with God, and of all the creatures with Man. But ever since, the creatures have fought against each other, and all have fought together against Man.[38]

This description works by flashing back (analepsis) rather than by flashing forward (prolepsis). As Joshua Sylvester remarked in the margins of his translation: 'The Sympathy yet appearing between certain Creatures, is but as a little shadow of the perfect union which was among all creatures before Man's fall' (*Weekes* 115, *in margine*).[39] Current sympathies were pale imitations of those prevailing in the Earthly Paradise. This 'hidden love', that 'units so well' (*Weekes* 115, ll. 66 and 69),

37 Translation mine; no translation given by Sylvester; cf. *Sepmaine* 286, l. 663: 'peu soigneux de leurs proyes'.

38 *Seconde Semaine* 137–138, "Sommaire de l'édition de 1589": '[…] afin d'agraver davantage le forfait de l'homme, le Poete represente par une belle similitude l'heureux estat du monde avant le peché, en l'accord de l'homme avec Dieu, et de toutes les creatures avec l'homme. Mais depuis, les creatures se sont eslevees les unes contre les autres, et toutes ensemble contre l'homme.'

39 *Seconde Semaine* 144, note 31: 'La sympathie qui aparoit encor entre quelques animaux, est un petit ombrage de la parfaite union qui estoit entre toutes creatures, avant le peché de l'homme.'

> Which brings together the eared bustard and the horse; which makes the parrot and the wolf live together; which links the francolin and the quick-footed deer, and the goat and the *sargus* (i.e. white seabream (*Diplodus sargus*)), and the partridge and the fallow deer,

> Is but a spark or shadow of the Love
> Which at the first in every thing did move.
> *Weekes* 115, ll. 81–82[40]

The harmonious sympathy of Paradise found its ultimate expression in birdsong:

> Where thousand sorts of Birds, both night and day
> Did bill and wooe, and hop about, and play,
> And, marrying their sweet tunes to th'Angels' layes,
> Sing *Adam's* bliss, and their great Maker's praise.
> For then, the Crowes, night-Rav'ns, and Howlet's noise
> Was like the Nightingal's sweet-tunéd voice;
> And Nightingals sung like divine *Arion*,
> Like *Thracian Orpheus*, *Linus*, and *Amphion*.
> *Weekes* 100, ll. 124–131[41]

40 *Seconde Semaine* 146, ll. 37–42: 'Qui l'Oustarde oreille, et le Cheval assemble: / Qui fait le Perroquet et le Loup vivre ensemble: / Qui joint le Francolin et le Cerf pié-soudain, / La Chévre et le Sargon, la Perdris et le Dain: / N'est rien qu'une bluette, une trace, un umbrage / De l'amour qui regnoit durant le premier âge.' The first four lines of the French text, which deal with some lesser-known sympathies, were deleted in some editions. Sylvester did not translate them. The prose translation of these four lines is mine. On the curious sympathy between the goat and the *sargus*, see Hendrikx S.M. – Smith P.J., "Connaissances ichtyologiques sous forme emblématique: le cas du *sargus*", *Rursuspicae* 4 (2022) 1–26. https://journals.openedition.org/rursuspicae/2258 (last consultation 25.04.2024).

41 *Seconde Semaine* 29, ll. 83–90: 'Où cent sortes d'oiseaux jour et nuit s'esbatoient, / S'entrefaisoient l'amour, sauteloient, voletoient. / Et marians leurs tons aux doux accents des Anges, / Chantoient et l'heur d'Adam, et de Dieu les louanges. / Car pour lors les Corbeaux, Oriots et Hiboux / Avoient des Rossignols le chant doctement doux: / Et les doux Rossignols avoient la voix divine / D'Orphée, d'Amphion, d'Arion, et de Line.'

After the Fall, things changed radically:

> Since that, the Wolf the trembling Sheep persues;
> The crowing Cock, the Lion stout eschews;
> The Pullein hide them from the Puttock's flight.
> *Weekes* 115, ll. 92–94[42]

Nevertheless, animals also helped Adam and Eve adjust to their post-Fall condition, and birds were no exception. Some birds introduced the beleaguered couple to medicine – the blackbird, partridge, and jay taught Man the medicinal properties of the laurel, while the ibis and heron showed him how to cure ocular diseases.[43] Furthermore, birds played a special role because they inspired Eve to manufacture Mankind's first aesthetic object: a garment made of bird feathers:

> *Eve*, walking forth about the Forrests, gathers
> *Speights'*, *Parrots'*, *Peacocks'*, Estrich' scatt'red feathers,
> And then with wax the smaller plumes she sears,
> And sows the grater with a white-Horse hairs [...]
> And thereof makes a medly coat so rare
> That it resembles *Nature's* Mantle faire [...]
> *Weekes* 123, ll. 156–163[44]

What follows is a long passage which relates how Eve 's'admire en sa besongne' ('Sh'admires her [own] cunning')[45] and offers it to Adam, who 's'étonne de la main qui si bien [...] tant d'habits d'oiseaux en un habit mesla' ('and in proud amaze / Admires the hand that had the Art to cause / So many severall parts to meet in one').[46]

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42 Du Bartas, *La Seconde Semaine* 148–149, , ll. 61–63: 'Le Coq depuis ce temps le Lyon espovante, / L'Escoufle le Poulet: la Brebis tremblotante / Fuit le Loup ravissant [...].'

43 *Seconde Semaine* 190–191.

44 *Seconde Semaine* 214, ll. 115–122: 'Elle fait un amas de plumages divers, / Que les Pans, Oriots, Papegais, et Pivers / Laissent choir en volant. Les moindres elle encire: / Elle cout les plus grands d'un beau crin qu'elle tire / Du col d'un blanc Cheval [...] Et trame un hoqueton si meslé, qu'il ressemble / La robbe de Nature.'

45 *Seconde Semaine* 215, ll. 127; *Weekes* 123, l. 168.

46 *Seconde Semaine* 215, ll. 138–139; *Weekes* 124, ll. 181–182.

This first human artefact is not without evocations of the adornments and clothing made with feathers by the Tupinamba of Brazil, as described in the travelogues of André Thevet and Jean de Léry[47] and represented in contemporary iconography. These artifacts were (and are) considered real works of art, at once naive and sophisticated,[48] and in this they are comparable to the 'cordon' theme of the ekphrastic poem of Tupi origin which the French philosopher Michel de Montaigne translated in his chapter *Des Cannibales*.[49] What applies to Montaigne and his Tupi poet applies also to Du Bartas: taking the manufacture of such an object of art as a topic allowed the poet to enhance the multilayered poetic quality of his ekphrastic text. He does so by thematising the *paragone* between the poetic text and the described object of art, and the rivalry between art (Eve's feather work) and nature (the birds' feathers). In addition, this shows how, at the end of the 16th century, the theme of the Earthly Paradise was closely related to descriptions of Man's idealized 'wild but happy' condition, announcing the 18th-century conception of the 'noble savage'.[50]

In brief, Du Bartas presents himself as a scientific poet, and his commentators try to hone this image. But this scientific discourse is undermined from within by the attention paid to the fabulous characteristics of some animals and by the addition of some imaginary creatures, such as the phoenix and the griffin, the existence of which was explicitly or implicitly questioned by naturalists like Gessner and Belon. The zoological discourse is partly overridden by a typological one borrowed from the Church Fathers and from Lactantius. The animal motif changes in the *Seconde Semaine*: here the description of the animals was used to emphasise the general sympathy which reigned in the Earthly Paradise before the Fall, and to contrast it with the cruel antipathy between the creatures after the Fall, thus giving a glimmer of hope to the fallen Man.

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47 See especially Léry Jean de, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Bresil 1578, 2e édition, 1580*, ed. F. Lestringant (Paris: 1994) 221–223.

48 See, for example, the illustrations in Polleroß F. et al. (eds.), *Federschmuck und Kaiserkrone. Das barocke Amerikabild in den habsburgischen Ländern* [...] (Schlosshof im Marchfeld: 1992) 28, 29, 114, 141, 247, and 248.

49 Montaigne Michel de, *Les Essais*, eds. J. Balsamo – M. Magnien – C. Magnien-Simonin (Paris: 2007) 220.

50 See for instance Theodore de Bry's engraving in Harriot Thomas, *Admiranda narratio fida tamen* [...] (Frankfurt, Theodore de Bry: 1590), representing a first nation Adam and Eve. Groesen M. van, *The Representations of the Overseas World in the De Bry Collection of Voyages (1590–1634)* (Leiden – Boston: 2008) 139.

4.1 *Du Bartas' Fifth Day in Context: Three Examples*

That Du Bartas' combination of a typology and natural history did not take place in a vacuum is best illustrated by considering three distinct works: Jacob Ruf's *Adam und Heva*; Marc-Antoine Chalon's annotated copy of *La Sepmaine*, and Maerten de Vos' illustrations of the Week of Creation. The first example is the German drama by Jacob Ruf, *Adam und Heva* (1550), which can be seen as a precursor and, given the many similarities, perhaps as a source for Du Bartas. The second example is the personal notes and drawings that a contemporary reader, a certain Marc-Antoine Chalon, made in the margins of his personal copy of *La Sepmaine*. The third example is the illustrations of the Week of Creation made by Maerten de Vos. These illustrations were probably inspired by Du Bartas and were used by later French publishers to illustrate Du Bartas' *La Sepmaine*. Maerten de Vos thus serves as a sort of bridge between Du Bartas' natural historical leanings and the Dutch and Flemish artists who dealt with the theme of Earthly Paradise.

4.2 *Ruf's Animals*

Jacob Ruf's *Adam und Heva* was printed by Christopher Froschauer in Zurich in 1550. While it is not clear whether Ruf was a real source for Du Bartas, their use of animals appears similar in many ways, showing a shared familiarity with certain texts, not least Gessner's *Historia animalium*. Ruf was a doctor in Zurich, a colleague and friend of Conrad Gessner. Ruf's piece was published by Froschauer at the same time as the first volume of Gessner's massive *Historia animalium* was being produced at Froschauer's press. Given the immediate impact of Gessner's work, it is not surprising that Ruf was the first hexameral author to make the natural history of animals a real theme.

Let's take a closer look. Just like Du Bartas, Ruf presented his animals in long series of descriptions. But unlike the French poet, he introduced his zoological descriptions not in the creation episode (Genesis 1:20–25), but in the one in which Adam names the animals (Genesis 2:20). In a long series of short apostrophes, Ruf's Adam addresses the animals presenting themselves before him: twenty-six land animals (plus a number of small animals) and twenty-four birds (sixteen of which are addressed collectively rather than individually). Amongst these, there is little specific evidence of influence from Gessner's *Historia animalium*, though there are exceptions, such as when Adam addresses the dromedary by saying 'Dem kämmel du glych g'ardet bist' (You have the same nature as the camel).[51] As far as I know, Ruf is the first, after Gessner, to distinguish between the dromedary and the camel.

51 Ruf, *Adam und Heva*, l. 797.

Similarly, when naming the birds, Ruf's Adam addresses the sparrowhawk and the goshawk separately, making an explicit distinction between them. He says to the sparrowhawk, 'Den habich, spärber, machst du glychen […]' (Sparrowhawk, you can resemble the goshawk), before also comparing it to the cuckoo: 'ouch, dem rüdigen vogel gleich, guggouch' (cuckoo, also resembling this wild bird). Ruf also distinguishes between two other birds, the quail and the partridge, and the following list of birds – especially the distinction between four species of thrushes (blackbird, fieldfare, redwing and song thrush) – shows that the author is well acquainted with birds, probably more than most of his readers:

> Nachtgall, hätzel, buochfinck, der spar
> Sittich, widhopff, struss und ouch star
> Fädermaus, gyr, zinssle und amsel
> Räckholter, meiss, wi[n]sel und trostel.[52]
>
> Nightingale, jay, chaffinch, sparrow,
> Parrot, hoopoe, ostrich, and starling also,
> Bat, vulture, tarin and blackbird,
> Fieldfare, tit, redwing, and song thrush[53]

Just as with Du Bartas, the order in which the animals are presented is deliberate. But, whereas Du Bartas put the lion at the end of his list, and the elephant, at the start, Ruf put them in a more traditional order: the lion, the king of the animals, first, followed by the elephant, the largest land-animal, and then two dangerous animals, the bear and the wolf. Ruf's ordering also takes into account antipathies between animals, as is the case with the deer-snake-unicorn sequence. According to an ancient tradition, the snake lives in constant enmity with the other two animals, the unicorn and the deer.[54] Other sequences are also noteworthy, because they are based on similitude: ox, buffalo and camel (beasts of burden); horse, sheep, dog, pig, cat and goat (domestic animals); marten and squirrel (furry, tree-living animals); hare and donkey (the protagonists of an Aesopian fable); and lynx and fox (predators, linked in Ruf's text by the rhyme *Luchs* and *Fuchs*).

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52 Ruf, *Adam und Heva*, l. 965–968.

53 To identify these ornithological species, we follow Kottinger's commentary in his edition of Ruff's work, p. 199. According to Kottinger, 'wisel' is a typographical error.

54 See chapters 2 and 3.

The birds follow a similar pattern: the list begins with the eagle, king of the birds, and then moves on to the most formidable bird, the griffon, which is an imaginary bird, just like the next one, the phoenix. Other sequences are based on similitude: raven and crow ('Dem rappen bist nit ungelych' (you [i.e. the crow] are not unlike the raven)),[55] or similitude and antipathy: heron, stork, crane, goose and duck (aquatic birds, among which he also placed their enemy, the goshawk); and rooster, hen, pheasant and partridge (galliformes, among which Ruf has placed their enemy, the *wyge*, i.e. the kite). This disposition shows the importance that Ruf attached to the ordering of his animals, and invites us to take full account of the order that Du Bartas gave to them.

Another important aspect in both Ruf and Du Bartas is typology. How do the animals listed and described by Ruf, and later by Du Bartas, symbolise the theme of the Earthly Paradise and the Fall? And how do they foreshadow the New Testament and, more generally, Man's miserable condition after the Fall? Through the voice of Adam speaking to the animals, Ruf gives the traditional typological meaning to the lion, the elephant, the deer and the unicorn, already found in the medieval bestiaries. The same is true of the birds. By apostrophising them, Adam ascribes to them the following characteristics, thus making them carriers of typological symbolism: the phoenix and the pelican (resurrection), the swan (death), the stork (love between parents and children), the crane (vigilance) and the dove (love). As for the pheasant, with its cry it chases away 'die schnoden wurm, vergiffle their' (the serpent, the poisonous animal). Negative animals also fit this typological interpretation: snake, wolf, marten, lynx, fox, goshawk, owl, raven, crow, cuckoo, hawk and kite. Ruf shows how natural history and biblical typology can go hand in hand – thus announcing Du Bartas' *La Sepmaine.*

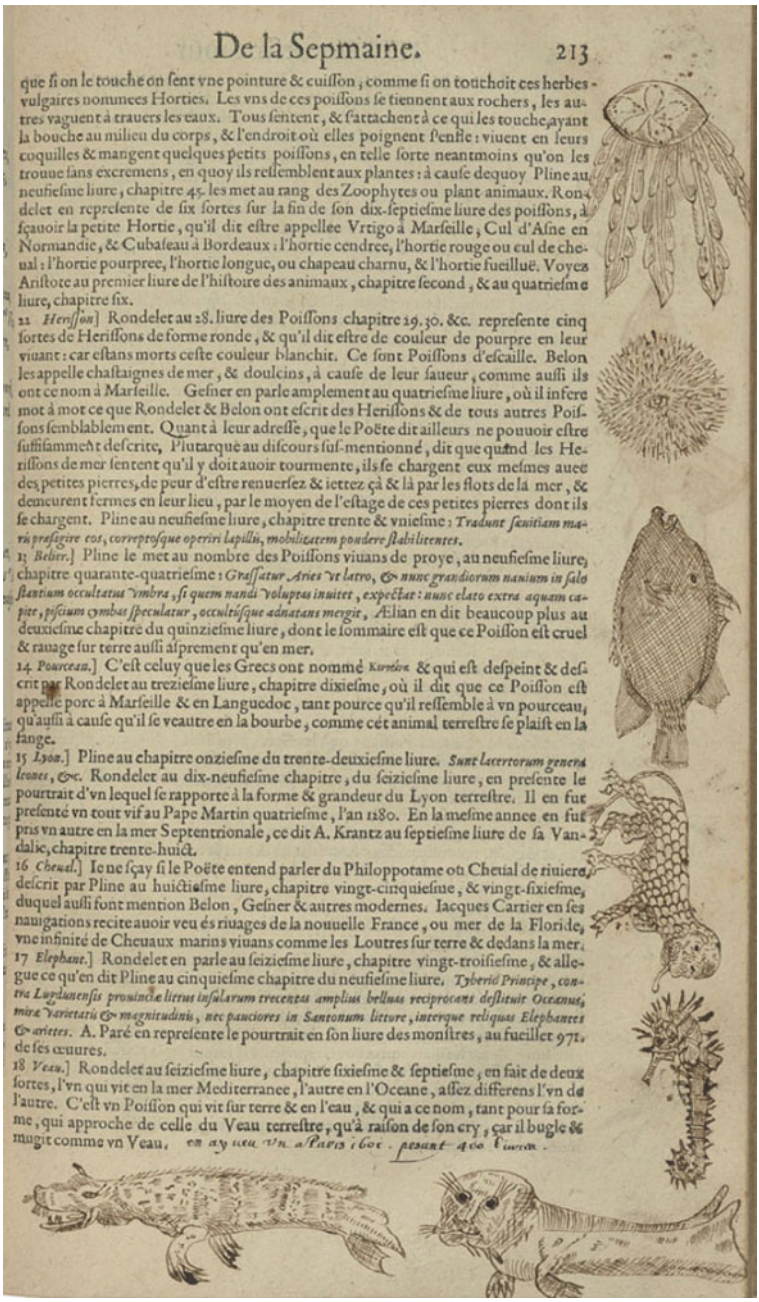
4.3 *A Reader of Du Bartas: Marc-Antoine Chalon*[56]

The merging of Bible reading, poetry and natural history was also to the taste of Marc-Antoine Chalon (also spelled 'Chalom'), Sieur de Gonté (before 1585-after May 1642), a not very well-known, but for our argument rather interesting, reader of Du Bartas.[57] In the margins of his copy of the 1611 edition

55 Ruf, *Adam und Heva*, l. 916.

56 This paragraph and the following are based on my article "Ichthyological Topics of the European Reception of Du Bartas", in Pouey-Mounou A.-P. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Ronsard and Du Bartas in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden – Boston: 2021) 255–279, here 259–266.

57 See https://gw.geneanet.org/noiretable?lang=fr&n=chalon&nz=boutin&ocz=0&p=marc+antoine&pz=christiane (last consultation 04.01.2024).



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que ſi on le touche on ſent vne pointure & cuiſſon, comme ſi on touchoit ces herbes vulgaires nommees Horties. Les vns de ces poiſſons ſe tiennent aux rochers, les autres vaguent à trauers les eaux. Tous ſentent, & ſ'attachent à ce qui les touche, ayant la bouche au milieu du corps, & l'endroit où elles poignent enflé: viuent en leurs coquilles & mangent quelques petits poiſſons, en telle ſorte neantmoins qu'on les trouue ſans excremens, en quoy ils reſſemblent aux plantes: à cauſe dequoy Pline au neufieſme liure, chapitre 45. les met au rang des Zoophytes ou plant animaux. Rondelet en repreſente de ſix ſortes ſur la fin de ſon dix-ſeptieſme liure des poiſſons, à ſçauoir la petite Hortie, qu'il dit eſtre appellee Vrtigo à Marſeille, Cul d'Aſne en Normandie, & Cubaſeau à Bordeaux: l'hortie cendree, l'hortie rouge ou cul de cheual: l'hortie pourpree, l'hortie longue, ou chapeau charnu, & l'hortie fueilluë. Voyez Ariſtote au premier liure de l'hiſtoire des animaux, chapitre ſecond, & au quatrieſme liure, chapitre ſix.

11 *Heriſſon.*] Rondelet au 28. liure des Poiſſons chapitre 29. 30. &c. repreſente cinq ſortes de Heriſſons de forme ronde, & qu'il dit eſtre de couleur de pourpre en leur viuant: car eſtans morts ceſte couleur blanchit. Ce ſont Poiſſons d'eſcaille. Belon les appelle chaſtaignes de mer, & doulcins, à cauſe de leur ſaueur, comme auſſi ils ont ce nom à Marſeille. Geſner en parle amplement au quatrieſme liure, où il infere mot à mot ce que Rondelet & Belon ont eſcrit des Heriſſons & de tous autres Poiſſons ſemblablement. Quant à leur adreſſe, que le Poëte dit ailleurs ne pouuoir eſtre ſuffiſammẽt deſcrite, Plutarque au diſcours ſuſ-mentionné, dit que quand les Heriſſons de mer ſentent qu'il y doit auoir tourmente, ils ſe chargent eux meſmes auec des petites pierres, de peur d'eſtre renuerſez & iettez çà & là par les flots de la mer, & demeurent fermes en leur lieu, par le moyen de l'eſtage de ces petites pierres dont ils ſe chargent. Pline au neufieſme liure, chapitre trente & vnieſme: *Tradunt ſanitiam maris præſagire eos, correptoſque operiri lapillis, mobilitatem ponderę ſtabilitentes.*

13 *Belier.*] Pline le met au nombre des Poiſſons viuans de proye, au neufieſme liure, chapitre quarante-quatrieſme: *Graſſatur Aries vt latro, & nunc grandiorum nauium in ſalo ſtantium occultatus vmbra, ſi quem nauis voluptas inuitet, expectat: nunc elato extra aquam capite, piſcium cymbas ſpeculatur, occultiſque adnatans mergit,* Ælian en dit beaucoup plus au deuxieſme chapitre du quinzieſme liure, dont le ſommaire eſt que ce Poiſſon eſt cruel & rauage ſur terre auſſi âprement qu'en mer.

14 *Pourceau.*] C'eſt celuy que les Grecs ont nommé Κυνὸδων & qui eſt deſpeint & deſcrit par Rondelet au trezieſme liure, chapitre dixieſme, où il dit que ce Poiſſon eſt appellé porc à Marſeille & en Languedoc, tant pource qu'il reſſemble à vn pourceau, qu'auſſi à cauſe qu'il ſe veautre en la bourbe, comme cét animal terreſtre ſe plaiſt en la fange.

15 *Lyon.*] Pline au chapitre onzieſme du trente-deuxieſme liure. *Sunt lacertorum genera leones, &c.* Rondelet au dix-neufieſme chapitre, du ſeizieſme liure, en preſente le pourtrait d'vn lequel ſe rapporte à la forme & grandeur du Lyon terreſtre. Il en fut preſenté vn tout vif au Pape Martin quatrieſme, l'an 1280. En la meſme annee en fut pris vn autre en la mer Septentrionale, ce dit A. Krantz au ſeptieſme liure de ſa Vandalie, chapitre trente-huict.

16 *Cheual.*] Ie ne ſçay ſi le Poëte entend parler du Philoppotame ou Cheual de riuiere, deſcrit par Pline au huictieſme liure, chapitre vingt-cinquieſme, & vingt-ſixieſme, duquel auſſi font mention Belon, Geſner & autres modernes. Iacques Cartier en ſes nauigations recite auoir veu és riuages de la nouuelle France, ou mer de la Floride, vne infinité de Cheuaux marins viuans comme les Loutres ſur terre & dedans la mer.

17 *Elephant.*] Rondelet en parle au ſeizieſme liure, chapitre vingt-troiſieſme, & allegue ce qu'en dit Pline au cinquieſme chapitre du neufieſme liure. *Tyberio Principe, contra Lugdunenſis prouinciæ litus inſularum trecentas amplius beluas reciprocans deſtituit Oceanus; mirę varietatis & magnitudinis, nec pauciores in Santonum littore, interque reliquas Elephantes & ariętes.* A. Paré en repreſente le pourtrait en ſon liure des monſtres, au fueillet 971. de ſes œuures.

18 *Veau.*] Rondelet au ſeizieſme liure, chapitre ſixieſme & ſeptieſme, en fait de deux ſortes, l'vn qui vit en la mer Mediterranee, l'autre en l'Oceane, aſſez differens l'vn de l'autre. C'eſt vn Poiſſon qui vit ſur terre & en l'eau, & qui a ce nom, tant pour ſa forme, qui approche de celle du Veau terreſtre, qu'à raiſon de ſon cry, car il bugle & mugit comme vn Veau. en ay veu vn a Paris 1600. pesant 400 liures.

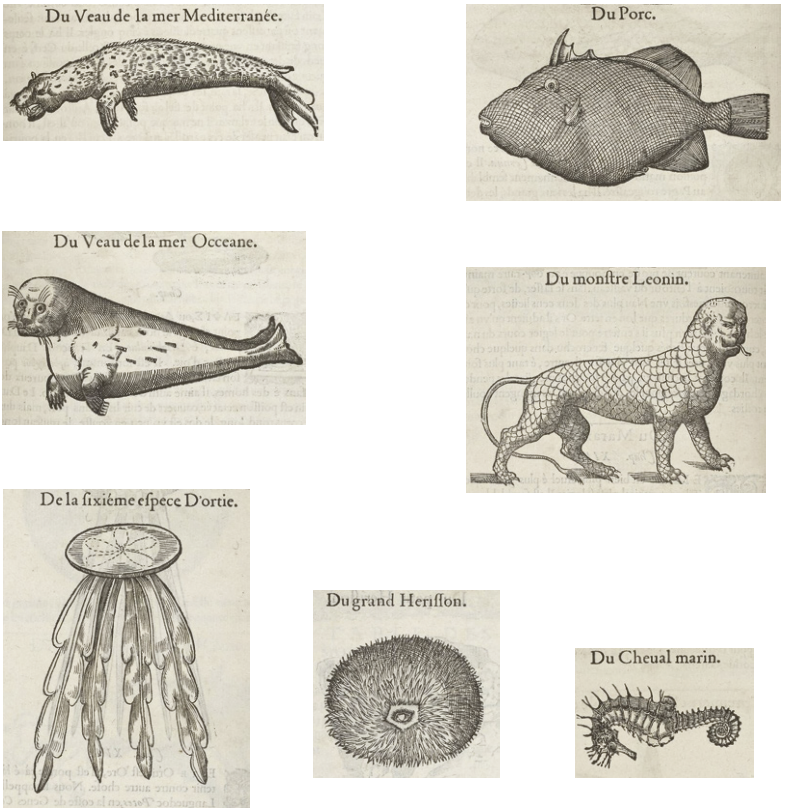


FIGURE 6.1 Guillaume Du Bartas, *Les Œuvres* [...] *auecq l'argument general et amples sommaires au commencement de chacun liure par S.G.* (Paris, Claude Rigaud: 1611) 213. Drawings by Marc-Antoine Chalon. Washington Folgers Shakespeare Library; and illustrations from Rondelet Guillaume, *La premiere et seconde partie de l'histoire entiere des poissons* (Lyon, Macé Bonhomme: 1558) First Part, p. 140, 341, 343, 360, 384, 417; Second Part, p. 79. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RESM-S-57

of Du Bartas' *Oeuvres*,[58] Chalon scribbled notes, commentaries, and even ten poems (which alone comprised 186 lines), all in praise of Du Bartas. Thus, on the opening of "Le Premier Jour", he writes

> Bartas ce iour chante
> La Creation grande
> De cest univers
> Comme[nt] Dieu le Père
> En toute sagesse
> Fit Ciel, Terre et Mers.[59]
>
> Du Bartas today sings of the great creation of this universe. How God the Father in all his wisdom created heaven, earth and seas.

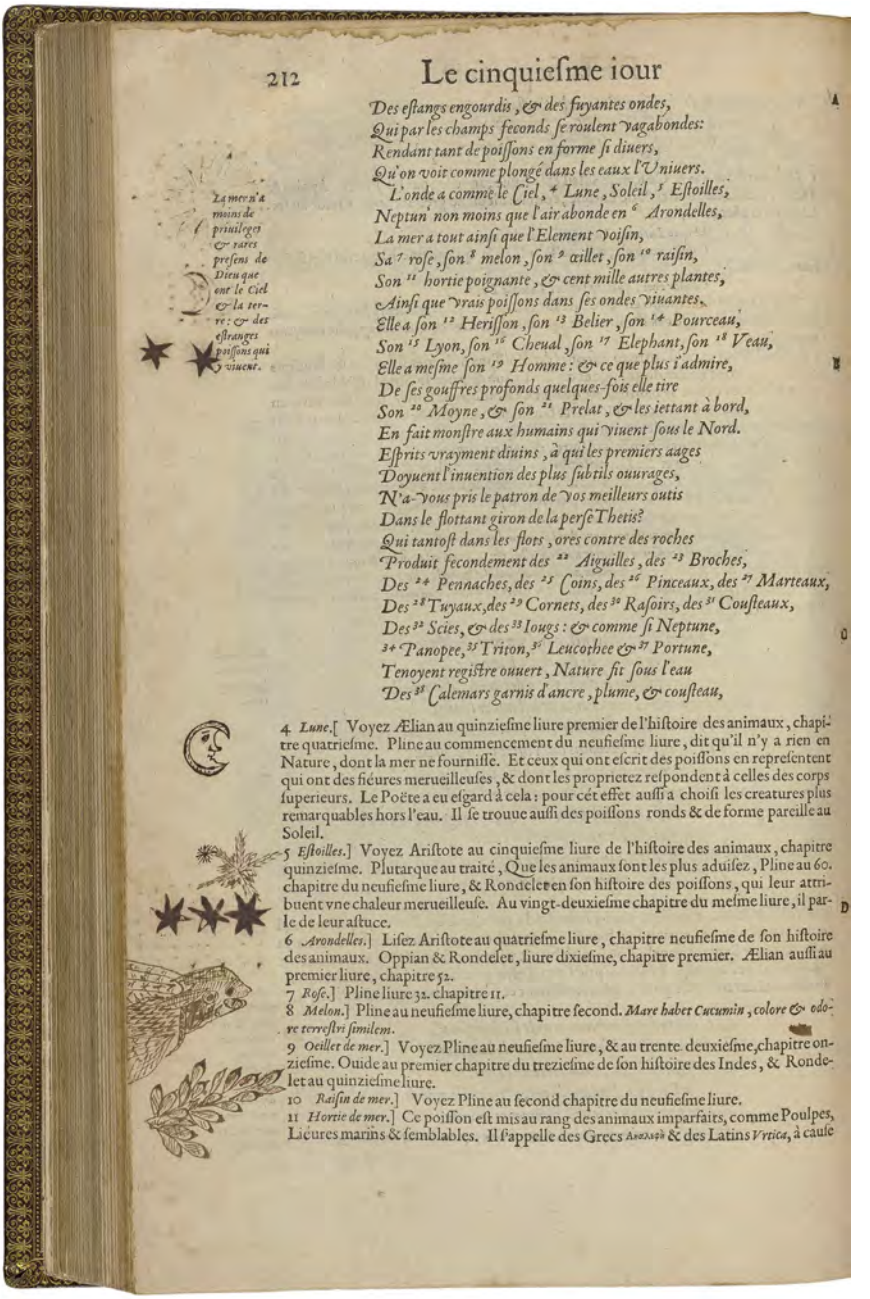
Chalon was presumably a lover of fish – while his focus was in general fixed on natural history, he paid particular attention to ichthyology. Indeed, his pen-and-ink marginalia were aimed not at Du Bartas' text so much as the scholarly, ichthyological commentary of Simon Goulart, who, as we have seen, himself referred extensively to Guillaume Rondelet's *Livres des poissons*. It is not surprising that, following Goulart's commentary, Chalon redrew the illustrations from Rondelet's fish book in the margins of his own copy of Du Bartas (Fig. 6.1). In the margins of page 213, we see, from top to bottom, a jellyfish, a sea urchin, a sea pig (which is not a porpoise, but, in accordance with Goulart's identification, a trigger fish), an imaginary sea lion, the seahorse, the common seal and a second kind of seal. There is also a handwritten observation about the seals: 'en ay veu a Pavis 1605, pesant 400 livres' (I have seen one in Pavia in 1605, weighing 400 pounds). Based on the region mentioned and the animal's weight, this was presumably a monk seal, a species found in the Mediterranean Sea, and which Chalon has seen in a menagerie or at a market in Pavia.

The following page (Fig. 6.2) sees the depiction of other strange creatures, also taken from Rondelet. These include a sea monk and a sea bishop (which shows that not only the animals but also men have their counterparts in the

58 Du Bartas Guillaume, *Les Œuvres* [...] *avecq l'argument general et amples sommaires au commencement de chacun liure par S.G.* (Paris, Claude Rigaud: 1611), since 2006 at the Folger Library, shelfmark: 262040.

59 Quoted from the information given to me by the Folger Library in a personal message.

FIGURE 6.2 Guillaume Du Bartas, *Les Œuvres* [...] *auecq l'argument general et amples sommaires au commencement de chacun liure par S.G.* (Paris, Claude Rigaud: 1611) 214
DRAWINGS BY MARC-ANTOINE CHALON. WASHINGTON FOLGERS SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY



212 Le cinquieſme iour

Des eſtangs engourdis, & des fuyantes ondes,
Qui par les champs feconds ſe roulent vagabondes:
Rendant tant de poiſſons en forme ſi diuers,
Qu'on voit comme plongé dans les eaux l'Vniuers.
L'onde a comme le Ciel, [4] Lune, Soleil, [5] Eſtoilles,
Neptun' non moins que l'air abonde en [6] Arondelles,
La mer a tout ainſi que l'Element voiſin,
Sa [7] roſe, ſon [8] melon, ſon [9] œillet, ſon [10] raiſin,
Son [11] hortie poignante, & cent mille autres plantes,
Ainſi que vrais poiſſons dans ſes ondes viuantes.
Elle a ſon [12] Heriſſon, ſon [13] Belier, ſon [14] Pourceau,
Son [15] Lyon, ſon [16] Cheual, ſon [17] Elephant, ſon [18] Veau,
Elle a meſme ſon [19] Homme: & ce que plus i'admire,
De ſes gouffres profonds quelques-fois elle tire
Son [20] Moyne, & ſon [21] Prelat, & les iettant à bord,
En fait monſtre aux humains qui viuent ſous le Nord.
Eſprits vrayment diuins, à qui les premiers aages
Doyuent l'inuention des plus ſubtils ouurages,
N'a-vous pris le patron de vos meilleurs outis
Dans le flottant giron de la perſe Thetis?
Qui tantoſt dans les flots, ores contre des roches
Produit fecondement des [22] Aiguilles, des [23] Broches,
Des [24] Pennaches, des [25] Coins, des [26] Pinceaux, des [27] Marteaux,
Des [28] Tuyaux, des [29] Cornets, des [30] Raſoirs, des [31] Couſteaux,
Des [32] Scies, & des [33] Iougs: & comme ſi Neptune,
[34] Panopee, [35] Triton, [36] Leucothee & [37] Portune,
Tenoyent regiſtre ouuert, Nature fit ſous l'eau
Des [38] Calemars garnis d'ancre, plume, & couſteau,

La mer n'a moins de priuileges & rares preſens de Dieu que ont le Ciel & la terre: & des eſtranges poiſſons qui viuent.

4 *Lune.*] Voyez Ælian au quinzieſme liure premier de l'hiſtoire des animaux, chapitre quatrieſme. Pline au commencement du neufieſme liure, dit qu'il n'y a rien en Nature, dont la mer ne fourniſſe. Et ceux qui ont eſcrit des poiſſons en repreſentent qui ont des figures merueilleuſes, & dont les proprietez reſpondent à celles des corps ſuperieurs. Le Poëte a eu eſgard à cela: pour cét effet auſſi a choiſi les creatures plus remarquables hors l'eau. Il ſe trouue auſſi des poiſſons ronds & de forme pareille au Soleil.

5 *Eſtoilles.*] Voyez Ariſtote au cinquieſme liure de l'hiſtoire des animaux, chapitre quinzieſme. Plutarque au traité, Que les animaux ſont les plus aduiſez, Pline au 60. chapitre du neufieſme liure, & Rondelet en ſon hiſtoire des poiſſons, qui leur attribuent vne chaleur merueilleuſe. Au vingt-deuxieſme chapitre du meſme liure, il parle de leur aſtuce.

6 *Arondelles.*] Liſez Ariſtote au quatrieſme liure, chapitre neufieſme de ſon hiſtoire des animaux. Oppian & Rondelet, liure dixieſme, chapitre premier. Ælian auſſi au premier liure, chapitre 52.

7 *Roſe.*] Pline liure 32. chapitre 11.

8 *Melon.*] Pline au neufieſme liure, chapitre ſecond. *Mare habet Cucumin, colore & odore terreſtri ſimilem.*

9 *Oeillet de mer.*] Voyez Pline au neufieſme liure, & au trente deuxieſme, chapitre onzieſme. Ouide au premier chapitre du trezieſme de ſon hiſtoire des Indes, & Rondelet au quinzieſme liure.

10 *Raiſin de mer.*] Voyez Pline au ſecond chapitre du neufieſme liure.

11 *Hortie de mer.*] Ce poiſſon eſt mis au rang des animaux imparfaits, comme Poulpes, Lieures marins & ſemblables. Il ſ'appelle des Grecs Ἀκαλήφη & des Latins *Vrtica*, à cauſe

FIGURE 6.3 Guillaume Du Bartas, *Les Œuvres* [...] *auecq l'argument general et amples sommaires au commencement de chacun liure par S.G.* (Paris, Claude Rigaud: 1611) 212
DRAWINGS BY MARC-ANTOINE CHALON. WASHINGTON FOLGERS SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

FIGURE 6.4 Johan Sadeler (I) after Maerten de Vos, *The Fifth Day of the Creation*. Print, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. RP-P-OB-5394
PUBLIC DOMAIN

sea) and a hammerhead shark and a sea needle (indicating that the existence of such equivalencies also applies to human tools such as a hammer and a needle). And finally, on p. 212, among other objects, there is Rondelet's flying fish (Fig. 6.3). Chalon's personal additions to his copy show how strongly Du Bartas and his commentators appealed to the intended readers' knowledge of natural history.

5 Maerten de Vos and the Fifth Day

Around 1587, the influential Flemish illustrator Maerten de Vos in cooperation with his compatriot engraver Johan Sadeler produced a series of images on the theme of Genesis, published under the title *Imago Bonitatis*.[60] Let's look at the print depicting the Fifth Day of Creation (Fig. 6.4). A number of the animals

60 On this series, see Herrin A.K., "Pioneers of the Printed Paradise: Maarten de Vos, Jan Sadeler I and Emblematic Natural History in the Late Sixteenth Century", in Enenkel

described by Du Bartas reappear in De Vos' work, such as the puffer fish, sawfish, shark, walrus, sea turtle, beaver, bird of paradise, and ostrich, behind the ostrich, the fabled animal griffin. Moreover, De Vos presents the viewer with a beaver sitting atop a turtle at the intersection of water and earth. These two animals were cited together in one single line by Du Bartas as examples of amphibian animals living in a double domicile, 'jouiss[ant] d'un double domicile'.[61] Given these thematic similarities, it is quite possible that De Vos had Du Bartas' *La Sepmaine* in mind, though this cannot be proven.[62] Be that as it may, the fact is that three printers in Paris, apparently saw a connection between De Vos' print series and Du Bartas' creation story, because they used his illustrations for their 1611 edition of *La Sepmaine*.[63]

De Vos' print gives a good idea of the knowledge of nature at the time, and from where Du Bartas and his intended readers acquired this knowledge. Their first port of call were the collections known as cabinets of curiosity. The puffer fish, the sawfish, the shell of a sea turtle, the shark and the bird of paradise were regularly to be found in such cabinets, as was the toucan, or at least its skull and beak. There was much speculation about what the rest of the bird looked like, including by Pierre Belon, who believed the beak came from a water bird.[64] In De Vos' print, the toucan is also depicted as a water bird. Books and print series were also a source of knowledge. For instance, the printmaker Adriaen Collaert (around 1570) depicted, among others, an African crowned crane and an ostrich, maybe de visu, because they could be seen in some menageries, and which also appear in De Vos' print. And Collaert's depiction of a grebe, shown in a very unnatural pose, namely standing upright on its legs, was also depicted in the same pose by De Vos.[65]

That the animals are not necessarily bound to any particular element is strongly emphasised by De Vos: apart from the beaver and the sea turtle, we see a flying fish, swimming birds, and large cursorial, that is ground-running, birds. It is not impossible that these crossings of elemental boundaries were

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K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Zoology in Early Modern Culture: Intersections of Science, Theology, Philology, and Political and Religious Education* (Leiden – Boston: 2014) 329–400.

61 *Sepmaine* 163, ll. 1113–1114.

62 At the time, Du Bartas was the most widely read French poet in the Netherlands. See Smith, "Du Bartas aux Pays-Bas".

63 Namely Jean de Bordeaulx, Toussaincts du Bray, and Claude Rigaud.

64 See my "On Toucans and Hornbills: Readings in Early Modern Ornithology from Belon to Buffon", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Early Modern Zoology: The Construction of Animals in Science, Literature and the Visual Arts* (Leiden-Boston: 2007) 75–119.

65 For the identification of the various birds in De Vos' print, see Herrin, "Pioneers of the Printed Paradise" 348–357.

FIGURE 6.5 Johan Sadeler (I) after Maerten de Vos, *The Sixth Day of the Creation*. Print, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. RP-P-OB-5396
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inspired by the theological writings of some of the Church Fathers, primarily Augustine. In his *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine explained that birds and fish were created on the same day because air was a less compact form of water, and thus birds moved through the air much as fish moved through water.[66] This transition from one element to another (which we have already seen with De Myle) was systematically exploited by Jan Brueghel, as will be shown in chapters 8 and 9.

De Vos' prints depicting the Sixth and Seventh Days also correspond to *La Sepmaine*, even more so than those of the Fifth Day. Because these depict Adam and Eve, unlike the preceding prints, a more direct link to the typological interpretations of the Earthly Paradise can be made. When illustrating the Sixth Day (Fig. 6.5), Maerten de Vos represents Adam and Eve surrounded by a

66 Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, transl. and ed. J.H. Taylor (New York, N.Y. – Ramsey, N.J.: 1982), vol. I, p. 83. See Ledegang F., *In dialoog met de natuur. Vroegchristelijke denkers over het scheppingsverhaal* (Eindhoven: 2022) 147 (on Basilius), 197, 217.

large number of animals depicted in the foreground. These animals – namely the snake, chameleon, unicorn, lion, peacock, hedgehog (or is it a porcupine?), and the weasel or stoat – were also mentioned by Du Bartas. The prominence given to these animals suggests a symbolic meaning. The Christological symbolism of the lion is well known.[67] So is that of the weasel depicted in the lower right. On his antipathy to the snake, depicted in the bottom left, Du Bartas wrote:

> Thou mak'st the Weazell, by a secret might,
> Murder the *Serpent* with the murdering sight;
> Who so surpriz'd, striving in wrathfull manner,
> Dying himself, kils with his bane his Baner.
>
> *Weekes* 74, ll. 256–259[68]

While on the chameleon, to the left of the snake, we read in Du Bartas that:

> But th' Ey of Heav'n beholdeth nought more strange
> Then the *Chameleon,* who with various change
> Receives the colour that each object gives,
> And (food-les else) of th' Aire alonely liues.
>
> *Weekes* 73, ll. 159–161[69]

Du Bartas described the hedgehog twice, praising the animal's curling itself up into a prickly ball as an effective protection against enemies,[70] and its habit of picking up fruits with its spines, thus taking them to its home for supplies.[71] In the latter case, Du Bartas argues that man should follow the example of the hedgehog, and think of the future. De Vos might also have remembered the hedgehog from the fable of *The Hedgehog and the Viper* (*WF* 33), illustrated by Gheeraerts, in which the hedgehog manages to chase away the reptile.

Of all the animals depicted by De Vos, only the unicorn differs from Du Bartas'. Du Bartas' unicorn is a ferocious, indomitable animal, belonging to a

67 For the symbolism of the lion, see Chapter 3.

68 *Sepmaine* 320, ll. 231–234: 'Tu [Dieu] fais que la Belete ait un secret pouvoir / De meurtrir le Serpent si dangereux à voir: / Qui, se voyant surpris, plein d'ire, s'esvertue, / Tuant de son venin le venin qui le tue.'

69 *Sepmaine* 314–315, ll. 133–136: 'Mais l'oeil du Ciel ne void chose plus admirable / Que le Chameleon, qui reçoit, variable, / Les diverses couleurs des corps qu'il a devant, / Et dont le sobre sein ne se paist que de vent.'

70 *Sepmaine* 314, ll. 129–132.

71 *Sepmaine* 395, ll. 648–652.

FIGURE 6.6 Johan Sadeler (I) after Maerten de Vos, *The Seventh Day of the Creation*. Print, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. RP-P-OB-5394
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series of dangerous animals that are listed briefly: bear, wild boar, lynx, leopard, tiger, unicorn, hyena and the monstrous mantichore. However, the unicorn in De Vos, like the lion, seems to stand calmly and quietly beside Adam, and also beside the lion, its most hated enemy,[72] thus expressing paradisiacal harmony. It seems likely that for De Vos, the animal's ancient Christological symbolism also plays a role.[73]

On the Seventh Day (Fig. 6.6), De Vos shows the harmony and general sympathy that exists between the creatures. The oncoming postlapsarian antipathy has yet to take root: later enemies such as the elephant and rhinoceros pay no attention to each other; the same goes for horse and ostrich, horse and dromedary, and horse and deer and the two unicorns, who after the Fall of Man cannot tolerate one another and so reside in solitude. There are echoes

72 On the subject of antipathy between lion and unicorn, see Fig. 9.7.

73 On this symbolism, see Einhorn J.W., *Spiritalis unicornis: das Einhorn als Bedeutungsträger in Literatur und Kunst des Mittelalters* (Munich: 1976).

of several of the fables illustrated by Marcus Gheeraerts: the frogs in the foreground have nothing to fear from the hares (*The Hares and the Frogs*, WF 31), nor is there any enmity between frogs and rats (*The Frog and the Rat*, WF 21), while in the lower right we can see the pairing of the monkey and fox. This allusion to the fable of the *Monkey and the Fox* (WF 36), in which the monkey tries to cheat the fox, appears to announce the Fall (as it refers to the cunning of the evil serpent) and the postlapsarian condition of Man, where lying and deception will be the rule.[74]

All these elements – natural history (along with the concepts of sympathy and antipathy), Aesopian fable and biblical typology – will be picked up and elaborated upon by Jan Brueghel. With the prints of his *Imago Bonitatis*, Maerten de Vos bridges the gap between the poetic work of Du Bartas and the Netherlandish nature painters of the next generation.

74 For another, ingenious interpretation of the monkey-fox pair, see Herrin. "Pioneers of the Printed Paradise" 373, who reads it like a pictogram of the artist's name: in Dutch *Maarten* designates "monkey", while *vos* signifies "fox."

CHAPTER 7

Jan Brueghel the Elder's First Paradise Landscape (1594)

In 1594, when he was a young, promising artist in the service of Cardinal Borromeo in Rome, Jan Brueghel the Elder (later known as the "Velvet Brueghel") painted his first Paradise landscape with animals (Fig. 7.1), a genre that was to become one of his specialities. Despite its small format, this work[1]

FIGURE 7.1 Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Earthly Paradise with the Creation of Man*, 1594, oil on copper, 26.5 × 35 cm. Trust Doria Pamphilj
PHOTO: ROMA, GALERIA DORIA PAMPHILJ. © 2020 AMMINISTRAZIONE DORIA PAMPHILJ S.R.L.

1 *Earthly Paradise with the Creation of Man*, 1594, Rome, Doria Pamphilj Gallery. For the little that is known about the painting, see De Marchi A.G., *Collezione Doria Pamphilj. Catalogo generale dei dipinti* (Rome: 2016) 79–80.

 | DOI:10.1163/9789004715271_009

holds a key position in the development of Brueghel's pictorial style. On the one hand, Brueghel places himself in an Italian tradition of landscapes, especially the landscapes by the Bassanos, father and son. On the other hand, he tries to distinguish himself from this tradition through his innovative *inventio* and *dispositio*, which he later would develop further.

This chapter addresses the young painter's choices by situating them within the dynamics of his artistic development. In doing so I will make use of some early modern concepts, literary and otherwise, which were briefly presented in the first chapter of the present book. Thus, in order to understand Brueghel's *inventio* with regard to the Bassano paintings, I will employ Jean-Claude Dubois' concept of "differential imitation",[2] a term created to distinguish it from other forms of early modern imitation ("direct", "ideal", "selective", and "competitive" [the so-called *aemulatio*]). Brueghel gave a new twist to the first form of imitation, 'direct' imitation, not only by rendering nature as faithfully as possible,[3] but also by making scientific topicality a theme within the painting – this latter aspect of Brueghel's work has only gained the attention it deserves since the work of Arianne Faber Kolb.[4] Finally, in a further attempt to distinguish himself from Bassano by way of his painting's *dispositio*, Brueghel turned to the early modern concept of sympathy and antipathy.

1 Imitating Bassano Differentially

While Brueghel's intention to specialise as a painter of animals is more than evident in this 1594 work, it is also plain that he was, as yet, only starting out: his creatures seem awkward in comparison with their later renderings. It is striking that this awkwardness is apparent not only in the more exotic animals, such as the guinea pig in the foreground – an animal that later, much more realistically represented, would become Brueghel's signature – but also to the more everyday creatures such as the grey or white horse on the right side of the painting. The horse is indeed poorly rendered: the eyes are too far forward and the neck is too heavy.[5] It was not until Brueghel fell under the influence

2 Dubois C.-G., "Imitation différentielle et poétique maniériste", *Revue de littérature comparée* 51 (1977), and id., *Le maniérisme* (Paris: 1979) 28.

3 See, for instance, Swan C., "*Ad vivum, naer het leven*, From the Life: Defining a Mode of Representation", *Word and Image* 11 (1995) 353–372.

4 Kolb A.F., *Jan Brueghel the Elder: The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* (Los Angeles: 2005).

5 I thank Boudewijn Commandeur for sharing his expertise on Brueghel's horses.

of Rubens that he would begin to produce more realistic horses, as can be seen in the dappled greys in his *Adam and Eve* (1612) or his *Ark of Noah* (1613), which appear to have been modelled on Rubens' horses. He also rendered the eyes of both the sheep and the seated cat rather clumsily, as he did in the *Fall* (ca. 1597–1598, Neuburg an der Donau) he produced with Hendrick de Clerck. As with his horses, Brueghel would not render them realistically until much later in his career. This is also true for a rare bird like the purple coot (*Porphyrio porphyrio*), which is often depicted in Brueghel's paintings: at first his coots were rather awkward, but later became much more realistic, probably from being rendered *ad vivum*, and would appear in various positions and attitudes.

The awkwardness in Brueghel's animals is remarkable, given that most of this in his 1594 painting were not of his own invention but derived from the works of Jacopo Bassano and his son Francesco – in particular an *Adam and Eve* of which only a black and white image is available (when it was painted, where it currently resides and whether it was painted by father or son are all unknown) (Fig. 7.2).[6] Indeed, many of the Bassano animals recur in Brueghel's work – the lamb on the right, two rabbits, two cats, one dog, two hounds, the cow, and the buck, and on the left, the turkey – all in roughly the same position and pose but awkwardly rendered.[7] It was not as though Brueghel could not do a better job with the animals, just that those he did render more realistically, such as the pair of deer in the middle or the ass to the right in the painting, were not inspired by Bassano. This difference between the rendering of the animals inspired by Bassano and those Brueghel introduced himself shows that his *inventio* did not lie primarily in the realistic depiction of fauna but in other features he either added to, or omitted from, Bassano's *inventio* – and these prefigured his future mastery in picturing this topic.

This ambivalent attitude that Brueghel displayed towards Bassano's exemplar corresponds to an important form of imitation in contemporary mannerisms in the visual arts and literature, as formulated by Claude-Gilbert Dubois. Although Brueghel certainly cannot unproblematically be labelled as

6 Oil on canvas, 95 × 136 cm, whereabouts unknown. Database Fondazione Federico Zeri, http://catalogo.fondazionezeri.unibo.it/scheda.jsp?decorator=layout_S2&apply=true&tipo_scheda=OA&id=46312&titolo=Bassano+%2C+Adamo+ed+Eva+nel+paradiso+terrestre (last consultation 19.05.2017).

7 Bassano's animals return in a much more realistic form, one that more closely resembles the Bassano model, in a later unsigned *Landscape with the Creation of the Animals*, attributed to Brueghel and his workplace. See De Marchi, *Collezione Doria Pamphilj* 86.

FIGURE 7.2 Jacopo or Francesco Bassano, *Adam and Eve*, date, technique, dimensions. And location unknown. Fototeca Zeri, Inventory number 97378

a mannerist,[8] he is close to his mannerist contemporaries in his urge for 'differential imitation', leading to the 'untrodden paths' mentioned by Dubois.[9]

How is this reflected in Brueghel? One of the differences between Bassano's painting and Brueghel's is the way that the depiction of nature seems to take precedence over that of the main, biblical topic – the Creation of Adam literally fades into the background. This phenomenon would apply to other biblical or mythological themes which are suitable for portraying animals, such as the entry of the animals into the Ark of Noah, and Orpheus and the animals,[10] and would become a primary characteristic of Brueghel's work. It is interesting

8 In art historical literature the "Velvet Brueghel" is often presented as an example of Netherlandish mannerism.

9 See Dubois' definition of mannerism, quoted in chapter 1 of this book.

10 See, for instance, Rikken M., "Exotic Animal Painting by Jan Brueghel the Elder and Roelant Savery", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Zoology in Early Modern Culture: Intersections of Science, Theology, Philology, and Political and Religious Education* (Leicden – Boston: 2014) 401–433.

to note that his collaborative works, such as those produced with Rubens or Hendrick de Clerck, the official subject of the painting would once more take its place in the foreground.

While Brueghel may have relegated the Creation of Adam to the background, the book of Genesis remains strongly visible in the disposition of the animals. Genesis 1:28 divides the animal world into three discrete categories: 'the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and [...] every living creature that moves on the ground.' This classification exposes one of the major differences between Bassano and Brueghel: whereas Bassano only depicts the creatures of the air and the earth (thus omitting the aquatic creatures), the biblical classification of the animal kingdom is at the heart of Brueghel's composition. But the young Brueghel does not hold back from making adjustments to this traditional model – in this he is once again very close to the pulse of excessive innovation, characteristic of the mannerist, who tries to distinguish himself from the master (or from the traditional norms) by distorting his model. Certainly, the attention Brueghel paid to the 'cross-border' cases in the animal world, thus opening up previously fixed categories to new expression is striking. Thus, the biblical 'birds in the sky' are not only represented in their official element, but also both on land and in the water, while fish seem to creep onto the land. Some terrestrial animals, meanwhile, such as the white unicorn at the background left, which is drinking not at a freshwater source, as is usual in the iconography of the animal, but at the seashore, straddle the boundaries between land and water. Another problematic animal is to be seen flying in the sky, that is, a mammal with wings – a bat (also generally a creature of the night yet here flying in broad daylight). Here, we are in the presence of a cross-boundary representation of fauna very characteristic of Brueghel's later works: freshwater animals are mixed with saltwater animals, night birds are mixed with diurnal birds, and animals from different continents are put together; in this painting the New World is represented by two birds recently introduced to Europe – namely the turkey and the Muscovy duck. In later paintings we can observe many other cross-boundary animals: flying fish, seals, sea turtles, otters, and penguins.

These frequent transgressions are similar to those depicted in Maerten de Vos' *Fifth Day*.[11] In the case of the apparently land-crawling fish and other aquatic animals, which Brueghel frequently depicts, Augustine could also be an indirect source of inspiration. Augustine writes: 'It seems to me, therefore, to be quite reasonable that the living beings inhabiting the waters are called

11 See Fig. 6.4.

creeping creatures just as birds are called winged creatures.'[12] For Augustine, this involves the larger question of whether fish, unlike birds, 'have no memory and no vital operation that resembles reason,'[13] as some otherwise unnamed authors allegedly claimed. Taken in this light, Brueghel, in both this work and elsewhere, seems to be suggesting that fish deserve as much attention as birds and land-dwelling animals – an idea that can also be seen in the work of some of his contemporaries.[14]

The terrestrial animals, of course, were accorded a further tripartite classification in Genesis 1:24, namely 'cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth.' Brueghel largely follows these classes, placing the cattle (horse, donkey, cow, he-goat, she-goat, sheep, cats, dogs, rabbits) on the right, the 'creeping things' (snake, toad, lizard, turtle, mice, insects, guinea pig …) in the foreground and the 'beasts of the earth' (lion, leopard, stag and hind …) in the painting's middleground. He cannot, however, resist introducing the occasional transgressional animal: some wild animals are mixing with the cattle – there is a wolf amidst the sheep – and in the foreground at the right of the painting we can see our old friends the monkey and the fox. Brueghel, it appears, is adjusting the biblical order of things in the light of other principles.

2 Sympathy and Antipathy

The most important of the principles used to arrange the animals in this painting were derived from the natural historical idea that all creatures were related to one another by sympathy and antipathy (see chapter 1). If the early modern poet or artist wished to depict the harmony of the earthly paradise from a typological perspective (*i.e.*, to see Paradise and the Fall as a foreshadowing of the New Testament or even of the Christian Church and the life of the individual Christian), he could do two things: either depict the animals in loving and intimate pairs of male and female, or group together those animals that will live in enmity and antipathy in the postlapsarian world. Brueghel made use of both strategies, portraying several pairs of animals – a stag and a hind, two hounds, a rooster and a hen, two pigeons, two cats, a male goat and a female

12 Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, transl. and ed. J.H. Taylor (New York, N.Y. – Ramsey, N.J.: 1982), vol. 1, p. 82.

13 Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* 81.

14 See my interpretation of his painting *Diana and the Nymphs after the Hunt* (ca. 1621; Neuburg an der Donau, Staatsgalerie): Smith P.J., "Introduction: a Cultural History of Early Modern Ichthyology", in Smith P.J. – Egmond F. (eds.), *Ichthyology in Context (1500–1880)* (Leiden – Boston 2024) 1–26.

goat – while also showing the future antipathies that would exist between the animals – the two deer with the two hounds, the wolf with the cattle, the same wolf with the dog, the same dog with the two cats, the cat watching the mouse in the foreground, the hawk with the songbirds, and the contrasting combination of the lion with the rooster.

3 The Aesopian Connection

As we saw in chapter 1, Erasmus mentioned the 'war between the beetle and the eagle, whose very natures provide the basis for a fable,'[15] in his colloquy *Amicitia*. In doing so, he referred to a genre based particularly on the principle of natural antipathy, namely the Aesopian fable. In the far right corner of Brueghel's painting are some animals that play an important role in fable literature. These include a monkey looking at a fox, perhaps referring to the well-known fable *The Monkey and the Fox*, which tells of a tailless monkey that tries to persuade a fox to give him its tail. Brueghel's fox, in turn, looks at a stork, which may refer to *The Fox and the Stork*, which tells of a fox that invites a stork to dinner. These fables, both illustrated by Marcus Gheeraerts,[16] aimed to teach the immutable moral that the deceiver will be deceived. The combination of wolf, goat and lamb seems to be taken directly from Gheeraerts' illustration of *The Little Lamb and the Wolf*,[17] with Brueghel giving them a disposition similar to that of Gheeraerts' animals (Figs. 7.3 and 7.4). On closer inspection, many of Brueghel's other animals are placed in the neighbourhood of those who will be their enemies after the Fall. Some of these animals also appear in the Aesopian fables illustrated by Gheeraerts: the fox and the hare,[18] the rooster and the lion,[19] the wolf and the sheep,[20] the horse and the donkey,[21] the dog and the ox,[22] and the bat condemned to fly in the dark.[23] There are many similarities to Gheeraerts' fables, but we must be careful not to interpret all these similarities in an Aesopian way. One often has the impression that the

15 Erasmus, *The Colloquies*, trans. C. R. Thompson (Chicago: 1965) 523.

16 *WF* 91.

17 *WF* 61.

18 *Fox Praising the Hare's Flesh*, *WF* 63.

19 *Du Lion et de l'Asne* (The Lion and the Ass), in Anon., *Esbatement moral des animaux* (Antwerp, Gerard Smits for Philips Galle: 1578) fol. 3v.

20 *The Wolf and the Little Lamb*, *WF* 75.

21 *The Ass and the Horse*, *WF* 42; *The Horse and the Ass Loaden with Wood*, *WF* 95.

22 *The Dog and the Ox*, *WF* 71.

23 *The Battle of the Animals and the Birds*, *WF* 51.

FIGURE 7.3 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *'tLammeken ende Wulf* [Lamb and Wolf], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 61. Bibliothèque nationale de France
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FIGURE 7.4 Detail of Fig. 7.1: Wolf, lamb and goat

painter did not have the fable and its moral in mind but only Gheeraerts' fable illustration which he used as an inspiring model.[24] This is also suggested by the paratexts of the fable books illustrated by Gheeraerts: both in the *Warachtighe fabulen* and in *Esbatement moral des animaux* (1578), painters and engravers are explicitly invited to come and admire the illustrations.[25]

In any case, natural antipathies continued to be very present in Brueghel's paintings, but not in the form of Aesopian fables. Within the animal theme in the work of Brueghel the Aesopian influence would slowly give way to natural history.

4 Natural History

The work of Arianne Faber Kolb is groundbreaking for Brueghel studies. She was the first to demonstrate that Brueghel's encyclopaedic paintings refer to the current voluminous encyclopaedias of the Renaissance (especially the *Histora animalium* of Conrad Gessner). She rightly concludes:

> The naturalistic description of animals certainly formed the basis of Brueghel's approach, but his ultimate quest for an appropriate framework within which to present various species led to his formulation of a novel type of encyclopaedian representation that incorporated the scientific, religious, courtly, and artistic language of his time.[26]

In order to evaluate the novelty of Brueghel's naturalistic encyclopaedianism, it is useful to return to Brueghel's visual sources: the Bassano paintings. It soon becomes apparent that Brueghel's widely praised mastery and precision in rendering birds was not always inspired by close observation of the birds *ad vivum*¸ but often came from direct imitation of the Bassanos' work. This aspect is, of course, not visible in the black-and-white reproduction we must rely on in this instance (Fig. 7.2), but there are some other paintings by the

24 Thus, in his position Brueghel's lion is reminiscent of Gheeraerts' (*The Lion and the Fox*, *WF* 20). This lion served as a stock image for Brueghel before the Rubens lions make their appearance in Brueghel's work: we find this lion in at least two other paintings: see the references in Woollett A.T. – Suchtelen A. van, *Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship* (Los Angeles: 2006) 136, and note 4.

25 'Viens, ò Peintre aussi, & Tailleur de figures' (Come, you painter too, and you, engraver). *Esbatement moral* n.p.

26 Kolb, *Jan Brueghel the Elder* 81.

Bassanos in which the birds are much more distinctive, and which may well be possible models for the Brueghel painting. This is the case with the woodchat shrike (*Lanius senator*) and the bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*). These birds are realistically rendered and very recognizable by their distinctive colours, despite their minuscule format – but this realism seems to come from the Bassanos, who depicted the same species in several paintings. There are, however, two other birds that are naturalistically and recognizably painted, but that, as far as I know, are not in Bassano, and that in some way or another relate to contemporary developments in natural history. The first is the Muscovy duck. This duck had only recently been imported from the New World, and was subsequently described and illustrated for the first time by Conrad Gessner. The second is the bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*), minutely but expertly and very recognizably rendered by Brueghel with only a few strokes. This species, which I have not found in the Bassano paintings, was the subject of some discussion in ornithological circles. It was first described by Pierre Belon in his *Observations de plusieurs singularitez et choses memorables* (1553) and his *L'Histoire de la nature des oyseaux* (1555), a description commented upon by Gessner in his own volume on birds (1555). Gessner continued to reflect upon this bird: in the first edition of his *Icones avium omnium, quae in Historia avium Conradi Gesneri describuntur* (1555), in the second edition of the same book (1560), and finally in the manuscript notes of his personal copy of the second edition, in which he corrected Belon's description.[27]

Brueghel's painting contains other, more spectacular references to the ongoing contemporary scientific and theological discussions. There is, for instance, the case of the unicorn at the seashore, represented on the left side of the painting. The very existence of this animal was being debated from the 1550s (by Gessner, Belon, André Thevet, and many others) until well into the 17th century. The only two reasons to believe in its existence were its mention in the Bible (which was later revealed to be a mistranslation of the Hebrew word *re'em*),[28] and the existence of its horn – which turned out to be the tusk of the narwhal.[29] The unicorn often features in pictorial representations of the

27 See Glardon P., "Gessner Studies: State of the Research and New Perspectives on 16th-Century Studies in Natural History", *Gesnerus* 73 (2016) 7–28 (here p. 23).

28 On this process of growing disbelief, see my "Rabelais et la licorne", *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 43 (1985) 477–503, and more generally Shepard O., *The Lore of the Unicorn* (London: 1930), and Gerritsen W., *Het spoor van de eenhoorn: de geschiedenis van een dier dat niet bestaat* (Leiden: 2011).

29 For some recent discussions of this discovery, see Roling B., "Der Wal als Schauobjekt: Thomas Bartholin (1616–1680), die dänische Nation und das Ende der Einhörner", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Zoology in Early Modern Culture: Intersections of Science, Theology, Philology, and Political and Religious Education* (Leiden – Boston: 2014) 172–196,

Earthly Paradise, as the belief that its horn was a powerful panacea that made it antipathetic to venomous animals and sympathetic with all the others. For instance, in his *Garden of Earthly Delights* (between 1500 and 1504, now in the Museo del Prado, Madrid), Hieronymus Bosch depicted a unicorn clearing venomous reptiles from a drinking area while surrounded by waiting animals. In all these cases the unicorn is depicted drinking at a freshwater source, however. By representing the animal at the seashore, Brueghel possibly hinted at the idea that the traditional terrestrial unicorn might, in reality be a sea unicorn, *i.e.* a narwhal?

Another hot topic in contemporary scientific and theological discussions is perhaps alluded to by the lion and the panther that take pride of place in the centre of the painting, in the foreground, and by the giraffe in the background, clearly visible on the horizon. The leopard (*leopardus*), was thought to be the offspring of a lion (*leo*) and a panther (*pardus*), as is indicated by its name, while this other animal, the giraffe or *cameleopardus*, was thought to be a cross between a camel and a leopard. The status and origin of hybrids had been debated since the 1590s. Their presence or otherwise in Eden was hotly contested – were hybrids a consequence of postlapsarian corruption, meaning that the only animals found in Eden would be pure and perfect.[30] It is almost certain that Brueghel was alluding to these discussions, but it is difficult to say what his own views on the subject were. Indeed, the subject continued to fascinate him: there are other early Brueghel paintings in which a lion and a panther interact in the foreground, as in a 1607 painting of Paradise, now in the Louvre (Figs. 7.5 and 7.6).[31] In the foreground of this painting, Brueghel depicted a presumably female panther attempting to seduce a male lion.[32] But in later works, Jan Brueghel and his workshop were usually careful to depict a pair of lions separately from a pair of panthers, as can be seen in *The Creation of Man* (now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts at Besançon (Fig. 7.7)), by Brueghel's son. In this example, next to the dabbled grey, another animal can be found, this time not only inspired by Rubens but also a true hybrid – the mule or hinny (Fig. 7.8). Contemporary theological discussions focused on the case of the mule: Were

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and Marrache-Gouraud M., "Du nouveau sur la licorne: le rôle des cabinets de curiosité dans l'avancée des savoirs", in Garrod R. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *The Poetics and Epistemology of Natural History in Early Modern France* (Leiden – Boston: 2017) 88–119.

30 On these questions, see Enenkel K.A.E., "The Species and Beyond: Classification and the Place of Hybrids in Early Modern Zoology", in Enenkel and Smith, *Zoology in Early Modern Culture* 57–148 (esp. 99–137).

31 Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Earth, or the Earthly Paradise*, 1607–1608, Oil on copper, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

32 For examples, see Kolb, *Jan Brueghel the Elder* 64–67. These later panthers and lions were inspired by Rubens.

FIGURE 7.5 Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Earth, or the Earthly Paradise*, 1607–1608, oil on copper, 45 × 65 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris
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FIGURE 7.6
Detail of Fig. 7.5: Lion and panther

FIGURE 7.7 Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Earthly Paradise with the Creation of Woman*, no date, painting on copper, 48.5 × 37 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Besançon
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FIGURE 7.8
Detail of Fig. 7.7: Horse (dabbled grey) and mule

there any mules in Paradise, or was the mule an artificial creation made by man after the Fall, as can be read in Genesis 36:24? Karl Enenkel resumes this discussion as follows, with reference to Juan Eusebio Nieremberg's *Historia naturae, maxime peregrinae* (1634–1635):

> Nieremberg uses Bible philology to contradict the widespread opinion that Ana was the inventor of cross-breeding. In a Hebrew version the Bible has that Ana 'brought his donkeys to the horses (jemin)'; Nieremberg argues that the correct Hebrew text should not be "jemin" ("horses"), but "jamin" ("waterholes"); and that "jamin" would make much more sense because Ana lived in the desert, ergo: "Ana brought his donkeys to the waterholes." Thus cross-breeding is not an invention by man, but part of nature or of God's creation.[33]

The appearance of these contested animals in his paintings is direct evidence of Brueghel's awareness of these zoological realities , even if his exact opinion of these realities remains unclear.

5 Conclusion

This painting marks the start of Brueghel's interest in natural history. It shows us a young Brueghel experimenting with different styles and techniques while exploring various discourses on natural history, including zoological (Gessner), hexameral (Bible), Aesopian (Marcus Gheeraerts), and pictorial (Bassano) ones. Modern insights from Dubois, Foucault, and Kolb into the early modern cultural and epistemological worldview are essential for understanding Brueghel's treatment of the theme of Paradise in his later works.[34]

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33 Enenkel, "The Species and Beyond" 100–101.

34 For Brueghel's later works in a natural-historical perspective, see Chapter 9. See also Rikken M. – Smith P.J., "Jan Brueghel's *Allegory of Air* (1621) from a Natural Historical Perspective", *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 61 (2011) 86–114, and Rikken, "Exotic Animal Painting by Jan Brueghel the Elder and Roelant Savery".

CHAPTER 8

Sympathy in Eden: On *Paradise with the Fall of Man* by Rubens and Brueghel

The topical development of Erasmus' *Amicitia* – his colloquy on natural sympathy and antipathy, from Man's Fall to individual friendship[1] – furnishes the background and the scope of this chapter: the principle of sympathy and antipathy in the *Paradise with the Fall of Man* (ca. 1617) by Jan Brueghel the Elder and Peter Paul Rubens, now in the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis in The Hague (Fig. 8.1). This painting received much attention during the exhibition *Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship*, held in 2006 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and at the Mauritshuis, The Hague.[2] Current scholarly attention is focused mainly on the collaboration between the two painters. Their joint production was situated in its historical, biographical, and intellectual context,[3] and analysed with the help of x-rays. It proved possible to determine each painter's contribution to *Paradise with the Fall of Man*. It was Rubens who initiated the working process by painting the figures of Adam (modelled on the Belvedere Torso, drawn by Rubens during his stay in Rome), Eve, the Serpent, and the brown horse behind Adam. Then the painting was moved from Rubens' studio to Brueghel's workplace, where it was finished: Brueghel first added the larger animals, and then filled the surrounding landscape with plants and smaller animals, working primarily from front to back. Brueghel's success in combining his own work with that of his friend is astonishing, and he achieved it largely through small details such as making his cat's ear overlap Eve's ankle, and by including a flying teal visible through her hair.

Rubens' involvement in the painting had one particularly important consequence – unlike Brueghel's other paintings of the Fall, this one

1 See chapter 2.

2 See Woollett A.T. – Suchtelen A. van, *Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship* (Los Angeles: 2006).

3 Honig E., "Paradise Regained: Rubens, Jan Brueghel, and the Sociability of Visual Thought", *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 55 (2004) 271–301. In the course of this chapter, I will return to the intellectual context of the pictorial collaboration between Rubens and Brueghel, referring in particular to Michel de Montaigne, whose *Essais* (1580) provides a useful philosophical background to the subject of their 'working friendship', as well as to various other related topics. For Montaigne's general importance, see also the conclusion of this book.

 | DOI:10.1163/9789004715271_010

FIGURE 8.1 Jan Brueghel the Elder and Peter Paul Rubens, *Paradise with the Fall of Man*, ca. 1617, oil on wood, 74 × 114 cm. Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN

foregrounded Adam and Eve. This implies a kind of emulative cooperation. Appearing on the same canvas as Rubens forced Brueghel to improve his already considerable facility with animals. He achieved this by producing images that were as naturalistic as possible – far more so than in his previous works – and by presenting *naturalia* in accordance with the latest zoological information available. On the other hand, Rubens' foregrounding of the theme of the Fall invited – or forced – him to charge his animal images with more symbolic relevance than usual, even though some of them were literal copies from either his own works or those of others. Brueghel's approach differed in the Mauritshuis *Paradise* because, unlike in his *The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* (1613, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum) or his *Temptation of Adam and Eve* (1612, Rome, Doria Pamphilj Gallery), the painting's subject could not serve as a mere pretext for painting animals and plants solely for their beauty or their zoological or botanical curiosity; it necessitated painting them for their symbolic value, also. The result of this was that every animal, whether it was copied or not, had to be rethought thoroughly: in terms of its placement, its aspect, its pose, its relationship to others, etc. Curiously, recent criticism has rarely touched upon the bi-valent implications of both zoological and symbolic interpretations of the animals present in this painting.

In this chapter, therefore, we aim to explore both the symbolic and the natural historical perspective of this painting. For the first part, considering the conventional symbolism of the animals represented in this painting, we will rely primarily on Sigrid and Lothar Dittrich's exhaustive *Lexikon der Tiersymbole*.[4] Secondly, we will develop the natural historical perspective represented in this painting by treating it as 'a visual catalogue of animals and birds function[ing] as a type of microencyclopedia', much in the manner of Kolb in her work on *The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark*.[5] By looking at the places the animals occupy in the painting – their *dispositio* – and their interaction (i.e. their suggested *convenientia*, *aemulatio*, and *analogia*)[6] we will focus specifically on their sympathy and antipathy. In this second part of the analysis, references will be made to the appropriate texts by Erasmus, Belon, Gessner, Aldrovandi, and Boillot, even though there is no hard evidence that either Rubens or Brueghel consulted them, and also to other pictorial representations of the Fall. While in many cases it is difficult to prove pictorial influences, it is likely that the two friends saw two important paintings on the subject, both praised by Carel van Mander in his *Schilderboek* (1604) – one by Frans Pourbus (1566), the other by Cornelis van Haarlem (1592)[7] – when they visited the city of Haarlem together in 1613, and it's as well to remember that Dürer's preoccupation with the Fall as a theme was uppermost in every artist's mind.

1 A Multitude of Diverse Animals[8]

Paradise with the Fall of Man presents the viewer with an extraordinary amount of zoological information, so much that some help is needed if we are to make sense of it all. There are over 60 relevant animals depicted in the painting, which are numbered and listed in Fig. 8.2 – these animals range from the serpent and horse painted by Rubens (nos. 1 and 2) to Brueghel's golden oriole

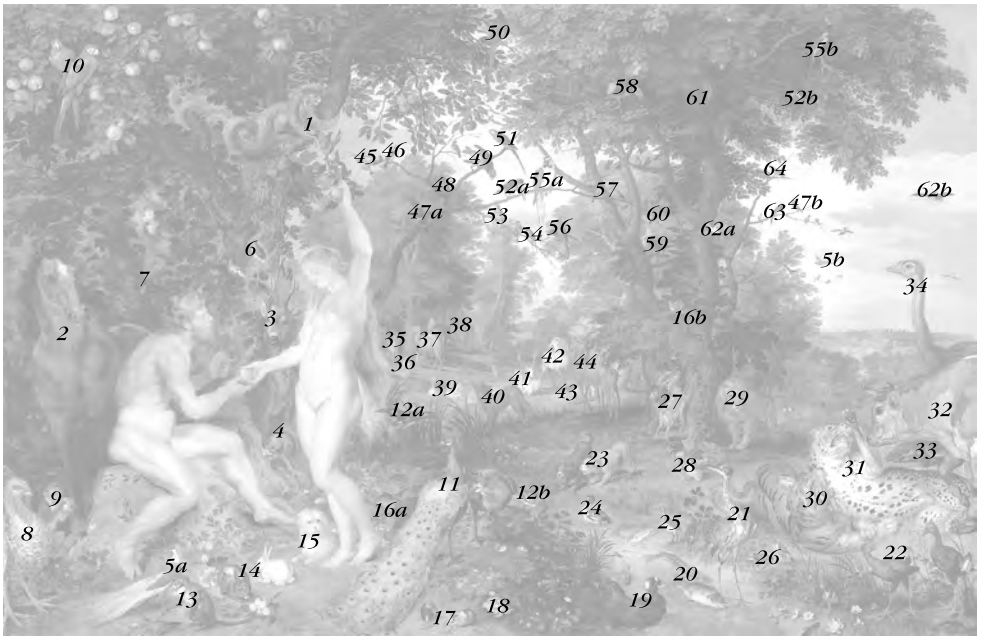
4 Dittrich S. – Dittrich L., *Lexikon der Tiersymbole: Tiere als Sinnbilder in der Malerei des 14.-17. Jahrhunderts* (Petersberg: 2004).

5 Kolb A.F., *Jan Brueghel the Elder: The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* (Los Angeles: 2005) 27.

6 See chapter 1 for these notions taken from Michel Foucault.

7 On *The Fall* by Cornelis van Haarlem, see chapter 5.

8 The quotation comes from Houbraken ('een menigte van allerhande Dieren'), quoted in Woollett – Van Suchtelen, *Rubens and Brueghel* 64.



The numbers indicate the most important animals depicted. To exclude confusion with similar species, the scientific name has been added where appropriate.

1. Serpent
2. Red horse
3. European Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)
4. European Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)
5a and b. Lesser Bird of Paradise (*Paradisea minor*)
6. Two Red-headed Lovebirds (*Agapornis pullarius*)
7. Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)
8. Turkey
9. Brown Capuchin Monkey (*Cebus apela*)
10. Two Green-winged Macaws (*Ara chloroptera*)
11. Two Peacocks
12a and b. Teal (*Anas crecca*)
13. Preuss's Monkey (*Cercopithecus preussi*)
14. Two rabbits
15. Little Lion Dog
16a and b. Cat
17. Two Guinea pigs
18. Tortoise
19. Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*)
20. Spike (*Esox lucius*) and some other fishes
21. Grey Heron (*Ardea cinera*)
22. Two Purple Coots (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)
23. Two dogs
24. Common Golden Eye (*Bucephala clangula*)
25. Two snipes (*Gallinago spec.*)
26. Two Rock Thrushes (*Monticola saxatilis*)
27. Two goats
28. Rooster and hen
29. Lion
30. Tiger
31. Leopard or jaguar
32. Bull
33. Crocodile
34. Ostrich
35. Llama
36. Two sheep
37. Two camels
38. Two elephants
39. Two Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*)
40. Wolf
41. Two Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)
42. White horse
43. Two pigs
44. Two Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*)
45. Two Great Tits (*Parus major*)
46. Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*)
47a and b. Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)
48. Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)
49. Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*)
50. Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)
51. Parakeet (*Psittacula spec.*)
52a and b. Red-billed Toucan (*Rhamphastos monilis*)
53. Two European Goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*)
54. Barn Swallow (*Hirunda rustica*)
55a and b. Blue-and-Yellow Macaw (*Ara ararauna*)
56. Two Glossy Starlings (*Lamprotornis spec.*)
57. Two Hawfinches (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)
58. Two Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*)
59. Goshawk or Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter gentiles or nisus*)
60. Bullfinch (*Pyrrhulla pyrrhulla*)
61. Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*)
62a and b. Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocops major*)
63. Magpie (*Pica pica*)
64. Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)

FIGURE 8.2 Identified and numbered animals from Fig. 8.1

(no. 64) (Fig. 8.2).[9] In instances of detached pairs (such as the two birds of paradise, one sitting in the foreground and the other flying in the background), the animals are distinguished as a or b. There are a number of other animals in the painting that have remained unidentified on account of their being too small or too far away in the background. In the case of a parakeet (51), which also figures in the *Allegory of Air* (1621), the species depicted is probably an unknown, now extinct species of the mainly Old World genus *Psittacula* (which includes the well-known rose-ringed parakeet, *Psittacula krameria*, that figures in Dürer's 1504 engraving).[10]

Exhibiting zoological variety seems to be one of the main aims of the zoological *convenientia* displayed by Brueghel. The animals placed in the foreground are meant to highlight not only Eden's natural variety, bringing together animals from all continents, but also the painter's knowledge of natural history, which seems to include the most recent discoveries in zoology. The following species are foregrounded (from left to right): a turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) (8) from North America; a brown capuchin monkey (*Cebus apella*) (9) from South America; a lesser bird of paradise (*Paradisea minor*) (5a) from New Guinea; Preuss's monkey (*Cercopithecus preussi*) (13), a kind of guenon from West Africa; two domestic rabbits (14); a couple of peacocks (11) from India; two South American guinea pigs (17); an unidentified tortoise (18); a surf scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) (19),[11] which is a North American sea duck; four fish species, of which one is a pike (*Esox lucius*) (20); a grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*) (21) from Europe; two red-and-bluish birds (perhaps the rock thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) (26) from Southern Europe);[12] some barely detectable amphibians; and two purple swamphens or purple coots (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) (22) from Southern Europe.[13] The animals not only hail from a wide variety of geographical origins, but they also represent different degrees of up-to-date zoological knowledge and potential symbolic meaning. The most striking up-to-date zoological feature is the representation of the bird of paradise: the bird is standing

9 I thank Hein van Grouw for his help with the identification of some difficult species: the glossy starling, snipe, and hawfinch.

10 This bird is not mentioned in modern handbooks on parrots. I consulted Juniper T. – Parr M., *Parrots: A Guide to the Parrots of the World* (London: 2003). But a hybrid specimen is not ruled out.

11 Both monkeys have been identified by Kolb, *Jan Brueghel* 11, and the surf scoter by Woollett – Van Suchtelen, *Rubens and Brueghel* 69.

12 This identification is not certain, because the rock thrush does not have the blue thigh feathers that Brueghel depicts.

13 Brueghel's zoological precision (which distinguishes, for instance, five species of parrots, three species of deer, and a dozen species of European songbirds) necessitates the modern scientific denomination of the animals. The animals mentioned here have been numbered and listed in Figure 8.2.

on the ground, thus correcting all preceding pictorial and textual representations of the bird (including Brueghel's own earlier paintings) that represent the bird without feet. This image of a footless bird of paradise was based on the footless skins, bought from and prepared by indigenous natives of New Guinea, that reached Europe. The subsequent belief that the bird spends its whole life flying in the air and living on dew featured in all contemporary ornithological treatises. Brueghel therefore seems to asserting the zoological accuracy of his painting by representing another bird of paradise (5b), this one flying and *with feet*.

Less striking, but also characteristic of Brueghel's keeping himself abreast with the latest developments in zoological thought, is his depiction of the green-winged macaws (*Ara chloroptera*) (10). While in both his *Allegory of Air* (ca. 1611, Rome, Doria Pamphilj Gallery) and his 1612 *Paradise with the Fall of Man*, Brueghel painted the better-known scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*), in his *Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* he seems to have struggled to choose between the green-winged macaw and the scarlet macaw (with yellow instead of green on its wings). By the time he came to paint his 1617 *Paradise with the Fall of Man* and his *Allegory of Air* (1621, Paris, Musée du Louvre) (the latter of which, it should be noted, displays an awareness of many up-to-the-minute ornithological innovations),[14] his macaw of choice was plainly the much rarer green-winged macaw.

As for their symbolism, well-known animals like the rabbit, peacock, tortoise, and heron could, of course, have specific traditional meanings in the context of the Fall – respectively lasciviousness (rabbit), seduction (peacock), patience (tortoise), and bringer of good luck (heron)[15] – meanings which newly discovered species did not and could not have, although here some caution is necessary, especially with regard to the animals near Adam and Eve. Indeed, the bird of paradise is related to the painting's theme simply by its name; the turkey has some symbolism attributed to it in recent emblem books;[16] the guinea pigs, which appear in other paintings by Brueghel, seem to function almost as the painter's signature, while the capuchin monkey and the guenon could carry significant, and primarily negative, symbolic within the pictorial representations of biblical scenes simply by being themselves, i.e. *monkeys*. These animals show that their function in the painting may not be restricted

14 See Rikken M. – Smith P.J., "Jan Brueghel's Allegory of Air (1621) from a Natural Historical Perspective," *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 61 (2011) 86–114.

15 On the heron and for further information on its symbolism, see chapter 4. For the symbolism of the peacock, see below.

16 See chapter 5 and below.

to one particular zoological or symbolic meaning, but that they are indeed open to being interpreted in different ways, forcing the viewer to actively 'read' rather than passively observe the scene.

2 Rubens' Red Creatures

As with the other paintings that Rubens and Brueghel produced in collaboration, it is Rubens' part which first strikes the viewer's eye. Rubens' contribution has the consequence that, contrary to Brueghel's other painting on the same subject, Adam and Eve are changing position with the magnificent white horse (42), which is relegated to the background between other white-coloured animals. What is remarkable about Rubens' contribution is the reddish glow of the painted figures. Adam and Eve are both red-haired (as are many of Rubens' figures in other paintings) and the shadows on their bodies are reddish, as is the ground on which Adam is sitting. Rubens' horse (2) is brown, or rather reddish brown. Brueghel seems to stress this colour, because most of the animals he added in the direct *convenientia* of Adam and Eve are wholly or partly red or reddish. The European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) (3) between Adam and Eve red-brown; the little animal between Adam's left shin and Eve's right thigh is a European red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) (4); the bird of paradise at Adam's foot (5a) has a red-brown back and wings; the two little parrots (6) between the heads of Adam and Eve are probably red-headed lovebirds (*Agapornis pullarius*);[17] and the almost imperceptible common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) (7), flying away between the horse's head and Adam's head, shows a flash of blue (the bird's back) and red (its belly). Other partly red, reddish, or (reddish) brown animals are the turkey (8), the capuchin monkey (9), the two green-winged macaws (*Ara chloroptera*) (10), the peacock (11), and the flying teal (*Anas crecca*) (12a); Brueghel painted the teal through Eve's red hair. By adding reddish animals, Brueghel might have intended to give a symbolic meaning to this colour, which is so common in Rubens' other paintings. In the case of Adam, the colour red may indeed have a specific meaning, because etymologically (in ancient Hebrew) the name 'Adam' means 'man of red earth'. His sitting position on the reddish ground

17 The birds are too small to be identified with certainty. The famous bestiary of Rudolph II contains a painting, representing what are probably the same birds in the same attitude, and they can definitely be identified as red-headed lovebirds. See Haupt H. et al., *Le Bestiaire de Rodolphe II. Cod. min. 129 et 130 de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Autriche* (Paris: 1990) 330–331 (Planche 114).

FIGURE 8.3 Peter Paul Rubens, *Ixion, King of the Lapiths, Deceived by Juno, Who He Wished to Seduce*, ca. 1615, oil on canvas, 175 × 245 cm. Louvre Museum, Lens
PHOTO: JAMAIN, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN

therefore stresses the *convenientia* with the material of which he has been made and to which he will return. In this context, it is interesting to compare the Adam of this painting with the mythological king Ixion, depicted in another painting by Rubens*: Ixion, King of the Lapiths, Deceived by Iuno* (ca. 1615, Louvre, Lens) (Fig. 8.3). Adam's pose – sitting and reaching for Eve's apple – corresponds closely to that of King Ixion, who Rubens shows in the act of his attempt to seduce what he thinks is Juno, wife of Jupiter. Unfortunately for him, the object of his unwanted affections was a cloud called Nephele disguised as Juno who Jupiter had sent to trick him. Ixion would be severely punished for his offence, born as it was of pride, just as Adam would be punished by God for the disobedience which had resulted from *his* pride. Ixion has dark brown hair, while Adam's is clearly red. The peacocks, which seem to symbolise female seduction in both paintings, also differ in that the peacock near Nephele lacks the reddish-brown sheen and the red-brown wing feathers that the peacock near Eve has. Colour appears to be doing rather more than simply fulfilling aesthetic demands.

The symbolism of the red-brown horse that Rubens painted is not directly clear. Traditionally, in iconography the horse can have both positive meanings

(faith and virtue) and negative ones (unrestrained lust, for instance).[18] When Brueghel puts a red-brown roe on the other side of Adam, he probably wants to suggest, by *convenientia*, some symbolic connection between the two animals. Is this connection one of sympathy or antipathy? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to look first at the traditional symbolism of the roe. This animal, in any case, has a positive symbolism: like other members of the deer family – one thinks of Dürer's elk, imitated by Brueghel in the *Garden of Eden with the Fall of Man*, which was painted in cooperation with Hendrick de Clerck (ca. 1597)[19] – the roe is endowed with antlers, which will be shed but grow back again. As such, the animal is a traditional typological symbol of Christ's Death and Resurrection, foreshadowed in the story of Man's Fall.[20] Moreover, according to naturalists since Pliny, the animal was in a state of antipathy with the snake, as we saw in our first chapter. In his architectural treatise *Nouvaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* (see chapter 2), Joseph Boillot represents three columns based on the antipathy between deer and snake. One of these columns is devoted specifically to the antipathy between the roe ('chevreuil') and the snake (Fig. 8.4). In the context of the Fall, the roe functions as a Christological symbol serving as a counterpart to the Devil-Serpent.

The relationship between roe/deer and horse is probably one of antipathy. While an antipathy between deer and horse is not to be found in works of natural history, their rivalry had been a theme of fables since Phaedrus' (first century AD). His well-known fable *The Stag, the Horse and the Man* is about a horse which, envious of the beauty of a stag, allows a man to ride on his back in order to catch the deer. The latter escapes, while the horse remains the slave of mankind forever, 'compelled,' as a Neo-Latin version of the fable, translated by Arthur Golding, puts it, 'to lead all his life after most miserably oppressed with intolerable toils and labors.'[21] With its echoes of the toils and labours of Mankind after the Fall, this widely known version[22] links the text of the fable to Psalms 7:15–16: 'He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.' It is left up to the viewer, who the

18 See Dittrich – Dittrich, *Lexikon der Tiersymbole* 360–361.

19 Now in Neuburg an der Donau, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen. See Woollett – Van Suchtelen, *Rubens and Brueghel* 138, who wrongly identify the awkwardly painted animal as an 'ass with antlers'.

20 See chapter 2.

21 Golding Arthur, *A Moral Fable-Talk*, ed. R. G. Barnes (San Francisco: 1987) 128–129.

22 On this version by Arnoldus Freitag, see my "Arnold Freitag's *Mythologia ethica* (1579) and the Tradition of the Emblematic Fable", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Visser A.S.Q. (eds.), *Mundus emblematicus*: *Studies in Neo-Latin Emblembooks* (Turnhout: 2003) 169–196.

FIGURE 8.4 Joseph Boillot, *Roe attacked by a Serpent*, woodcut in Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [...] (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592), fol. Hiiiii r. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-V-385
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artist might reasonably expect to be well-versed in the Scriptures, to apply the moral of the fable to the story of Adam and Eve.

If the relationship between horse and roe is indeed one of antipathy, and if the symbolic meaning of the roe is positive, we must conclude that the brown horse in the foreground must have a negative connotation, and thus belong to the group of negatively connoted animals surrounding the First Couple: the serpent, the devilish capuchin monkey behind Adam, the red squirrel between Adam and Eve, and the cat behind Eve's feet. This negative value is further hinted at by the fact that the brown horse has relegated the otherwise positive white horse into the background.

3 The Other Animals around Adam and Eve

The antipathy that was supposed to exist between the pairings of snake and roe and horse and roe invites the viewer to interrogate further the concept of natural antipathy in the context of Paradise, and to search for other cases of natural antipathy in the direct *convenientia* of the First Couple. The most evident example is the contrasting pair of the dog and the cat at Eve's feet, alluding to the proverb 'fighting like cats and dogs', which is known in many languages. This pair reminds us of other pairs of contrasting animals in comparable positions. One thinks, of course, of Dürer's engraving *The Fall* (1504), which displays a cat and a mouse silently facing each other, connected by their tails to, respectively, Eve's and Adam's feet, and waiting for the inevitable Fall, which will cause an outburst of violence between Eden's creatures.[23] The antipathy between cat and mouse is also proverbial ('playing cat and mouse') and fits in with another proverbial contrasting pair of animals present in the iconography of the Fall: a monkey and a cat, which in *The Fall* by Cornelis van Haarlem seem to express comparable proverbial material, well known in most European languages.[24]

While a cat always carries negative symbolism in Fall iconography, the dog is a polyvalent signifier. Its colour – white – shows that it belongs in this instance with the other white and light-coloured animals with a positive connotation seen in the background in the middle of the picture. Furthermore, the dog's attentive appearance can be seen as a reference to an earlier Brueghel work, namely his 1604 imitation of Dürer's watercolour *Madonna with a Multitude*

23 See chapter 2.
24 See chapter 5.

of Animals (1503). In this painting, Brueghel places a dog of the same breed (a 'little lion' dog) at the feet of the Virgin. Unlike the dog in Paradise, however, this dog is slumbering peacefully, in close proximity to the Holy Child. There is no danger in the near vicinity: the negative owls, recognisable as a barn owl (*Tyto alba*) and an eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), are hidden,[25] and the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*; traditionally the symbol of the Devil) is not menacing. The lion dog in Rubens' and Brueghel's *Paradise* serves as an iconological link between Man's Fall and Christ's Nativity.

Another animal in Adam and Eve's immediate vicinity that calls for a symbolic interpretation is the red squirrel. According to the *Lexikon der Tiersymbole*, this rodent often has a negative connotation, especially in the iconography of the Fall. The *Lexikon* mentions Michiel Coxcie's *Fall* (ca. 1550) and Maerten de Vos' painting on the same subject (1569), in which the squirrel symbolises sexual lust.[26] This does not mean that the squirrel could not carry a more positive meaning, as the *Lexicon* also suggests that the creature can also serve as a symbol of the search for divine truth. The squirrel cracks nuts to access the nutritious kernels within, tying it to the idea of a hidden, deeper truth represented by things that serve to obscure or protect, such as the bark or husk of tree, fruit or nut. In a painting produced by Jan Brueghel the Younger and Hendrik van Balen, the squirrel seems to have this positive meaning, namely in *The Virgin and Child in a Landscape* (ca. 1626, Hohenbuchau Collection). This painting features two squirrels. The first, which is next to the Virgin and Child, appears to be looking for something, while the second, taking stage in the foreground, looks directly at the viewer with bright, happy eyes. This squirrel seems to invite the viewer to reflect on the scene.[27] The monkey next to the squirrel, reminiscent of Jan Brueghel the Elder's positively connoted guenons (see below), also invites the viewer to imitate the example of Mary and her Son. This squirrel thus seems to have been promoted to a Marian symbol, perhaps in response to the introverted squirrel that appears next to Eve in the *Fall* painted by Brueghel the Elder and Rubens, as well, perhaps, as the generally introverted animals grouped around Dürer's *Adam and Eve*, waiting resignedly to see what will happen.

25 The same species of owl figure in the Tree of Life in the Rubens and Brueghel painting (58 and 60); there they are not hidden, and possibly do not (yet) have the negative postlapsarian connotation.

26 Dittrich – Dittrich, *Lexikon der Tiersymbole* 73–76.

27 The Lexikon gives another example of a squirrel in close proximity to Mary: Lorenzo Lotto, *Virgin and Child with Sts John the Baptist and Catherine*, 1522. Palma Camozzi Vertova Collection, Costa di Mezzate.

The rodent cracking a nut belongs to a group of other animals eating or gnawing in the vicinity of the First Couple. One of the rabbits is sniffing at the plums, which have probably fallen from the Tree of Life. The guenon (13) reaches for some other fruit. The other monkey, the capuchin monkey (9), is also eating a piece of fruit, but this one clearly comes from the Tree of Knowledge. The presentation of these animals is as if they were in an Aesopian fable: in spite of their 'brutish' animal nature, they edify the reader/viewer with an invitation to make the correct choice – follow the guenon and eat innocent fruit, or the capuchin and eat the proscribed fruit.

These active little animals give airiness to the dramatic scene of the Fall. This also holds for the two small red-headed lovebirds (6). Brueghel had depicted the same pair of lovebirds in other paintings, but here the birds seem to mimic the attitudes of the sitting Adam and the standing Eve in a humorous manner. Although their scientific name, *agapornis*, meaning 'love' (*agape*) and 'bird' (*ornis*), and their names in French (*inséparables*) and German (*Unzertrennlichen*) – the latter two because of the common belief that upon the death of one bird, the other would soon die – seem to date from the 18th century, their loving character and inseparability were certainly known earlier, for the birds were widely known in Europe and were kept as pets from the 1560s on.

Along with the two green-winged macaws (10) in the left corner of the painting, the two lovebirds (also a species of parrot) seem to symbolise love. This is confirmed not only by modern handbooks of iconography (which never fail to mention the positive symbolism accorded to the rose-ringed parakeet in Dürer's *Fall*), but also by contemporary zoological works. According to Aldrovandi, the lovebird knew only sympathy; it is, in fact, the only animal without any antipathy toward other animals. This observation, however, is contradicted by the illustration provided by Aldrovandi himself, which shows a parrot's panic at the approach of a snake (Fig. 8.5).[28] This natural enmity between parrots and snakes may well explain why Brueghel placed both parrot species – the lovebirds and the green-winged macaws – in the immediate *convenientia* of the serpent.

There are other animals near Adam and Eve which also have a traditional symbolic meaning. Contrary to the mainly negative connotations given to the turkey by the *Lexikon der Tiersymbole*,[29] Brueghel's radiant example (8) probably has a positive meaning (much like the white one depicted next to the divine

28 Aldrovandi Ulisse, *Ornithologiae, hoc est de avibus historiae libri XII.* Vol. I (Bologna, Francesco de Franceschi: 1599) 653.

29 Dittrich – Dittrich, *Lexikon der Tiersymbole* 541–546.

FIGURE 8.5
Anon., *Antipathy between Parakeet and Snake*, woodcut in Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae, hoc est de avibus historiae libri XII* (Bologna, Giovanni Battista Bellagamba and Francesco De Franceschi: 1599), vol. I, p. 653

cloud in Cornelis van Haarlem's *Fall*). It probably symbolises peacefulness and tolerance, a meaning attested to in the emblematic fable books illustrated by Marcus Gheeraerts and published in Dutch, French, Latin, and German after 1567.[30] The kingfisher (7) flying away from Adam is traditionally a positive symbol of resurrection in a theological context, and also of the renewal of Nature, and here it certainly signifies the imminent disappearance of the prelapsarian, peaceful, "halcyon" era.[31] The two rabbits (14) are to be interpreted much less univocally because of their very polyvalent symbolism. The white rabbit certainly has a positive meaning; the dark one may have a negative connotation; and as a pair connected with the First Couple just before the Fall, they may signify love, balancing between true love (white) and sinful lust (black).

Although plants are outside the scope of this chapter, there is one piece of botanical symbolism that is relevant here: the white grapes visible on the Tree

30 See Rikken – Smith, "Jan Brueghel's Allegory of Air" 103–114, and for the theme of the tolerant turkey attacked by an aggressive rooster, see Wepler L., *Bilderzählungen in der Vogelmalerei des niederländischen Barocks* (Petersberg: 2014) 141–175.

31 Dittrich – Dittrich, *Lexikon der Tiersymbole* 84–88. See Harms W., "Der Eisvogel und die halkyonische Tage. Zum Verhältnis von naturkundlicher Beschreibung und allegorischer Naturdeutung", in Fromm H. – Harms W. – Ruberg U. (eds.),*Verbum et signum: Beiträge zur mediävistischen Bedeutungsforschung* (Munich: 1975), vol. I, 477–515.

of Knowledge. These grapes are probably to be interpreted in a different, opposite manner from the wild vine visible on the right (or 'bad') side of Cornelis van Haarlem's *Fall*, which is neither supported by a tree or branch nor does it bear any fruit.[32] Unlike Cornelis' wild vine, Brueghel's full grapes, supported by the Tree of Knowledge, symbolise not only prelapsarian richness but also durable friendship and cooperation, one of the painting's main themes.

As our gaze moves away from Adam and Eve, animal symbolism becomes less compelling. Animals which traditionally have an overt symbolism in the pictorial representation of the Fall, such as the peacock (11), wolf (40), tortoise (18), pig (43), lion (29), etc., here seem to be devoid of any specific meaning because they are mingled with animals that are too recently discovered or too exotic to have any symbolism at all (for instance, the llama (35), sea duck (19), golden eye (24), etc.). With the exception of the light-coloured animals in the background, all of these animals call for a different, non-symbolic approach.

4 Other Animals

On first viewing *Paradise*, it appears that Brueghel arranged the many apparently non-symbolic animals by grouping them according to their traditional habitat: aquatic, terrestrial and celestial. These groupings also align with three of the four elements, namely water, earth, and air. Only the fourth element, fire, appears lacking, a feature *Paradise* shares with Brueghel's earlier *Allegory of the Elements* (1604). 'Interestingly, Brueghel does not depict any symbols of fire, such as the salamander and torch traditionally held by the deity, in this case Vesta,' Arianne Faber Kolb rightly observes when discussing the subject-matter of the *Allegory of the Elements*.[33] The absence of fire can be explained by ancient and contemporary ideas on cosmology: according to Heraclitus' cosmology, which was well known among Renaissance philosophers,[34] fire was

32 See chapter 6.

33 Kolb, *Jan Brueghel* 53.

34 As we can read in Montaigne's *Essais*: 'Heraclitus establissoit le monde estre composé par feu et, l'ordre des destinées, se devoir enflammer et resoudre en feu quelque jour, et quelque jour encore renaistre' (Montaigne, *Les Essais* 556, chap. 11, 12, "Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde"). Translation: 'Heraclitus laid down that the Universe was composed of fire and was destined one day to burst out into flames and burn it self out: it would be born again some other time' (Montaigne, *The Essays* 645). References to Montaigne are made to Montaigne Michel de, *Les Essais*, eds. J. Balsamo – M. Magnien – C. Magnien-Simonin (Paris: 2007). Translations are from Montaigne Michel de, *The Essays*, transl. M.A. Screech (Harmondsworth: 1991).

everywhere because it is the material of the soul and the principle of life. For Zeno of Citium, fire was the creative power in Nature, an idea quoted by Michel de Montaigne: 'If you ask Zeno what Nature is, he replies Fire – an artificer having as its properties generative powers and regularity.'[35] One of Montaigne's first readers, Pieter van Veen, brother of Otto Vaenius and a correspondent of Rubens, Lipsius, and many others, underlined this particular passage and illustrated it with an ink drawing crammed into the margins of his personal copy of the *Essais*.[36] According to these philosophies, the creatures of Rubens and Brueghel that are so full of life were all automatically emanations of fire.

The three animal kingdoms and their corresponding elements are not represented as closed, impermeable sets, however. The bird of paradise, a conventional symbol of air, is to be found both sitting on the ground (5a; bottom left) and flying (5b; top right). The pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) (50), a bird that lives on the ground, is here shown perched here higher than any other; monkeys are on the ground instead of climbing in a tree (as they are in Brueghel's *Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* and in his *Paradise* of 1612); and while the fishes are depicted as if lying or creeping on earth, one of Brueghel's two teals is shown swimming and the other flying. There are some other reversals. Despite their 'normal', nocturnal postlapsarian behaviour, the painting's owls are not afraid to show themselves in daylight, and they are not mobbed by the 'other, smaller birds' mentioned by Erasmus' Ephorinus.[37] The two woodpeckers (61a and 61b) are flying instead of adopting their typical tree-climbing position, and the barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) (54), shows a similar reversal of its usual behaviour as it perches upon a branch rather than flying. The surf scoter (19) is a sea duck, but here it is swimming in fresh water, and therefore is the only species to represent marine life in a freshwater environment.[38]

The animals also betray their different postlapsarian fates, as the species of the four continents all began life in the same, paradisiacal garden, Eden.[39]

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35 Montaigne, *The Essays* 600. The original French is given at *Les Essais* 516 : 'S'enquiert-on à Zenon que c'est que nature? 'Un feu, dict-il, artiste, propre à engendrer, procédant regléement"

36 See Kolfin E. – Rikken M., "A Very Personal Copy: Pieter van Veen's Illustrations to Montaigne's *Essais*," in Smith P.J. – Enenkel K.A.E. (eds.), *Montaigne and the Low Countries* (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 247–261, fig. 8 (ad p. 252).

37 See Chapter I.

38 This is also the function of the two gulls in the foreground of the *Paradise with the Fall of Man* by Roelant Savery and Cornelis van Haarlem (1618), who were visibly inspired by the Rubens and Brueghel painting.

39 I thank Pete Langman for this suggestion. This perspective suggests that none of the animals is exotic, only that they became so. This seems to hold true for every form of animal exotism addressed in the present book, including the exotic animals of Simon de Myle's Arch of Noach.

This is especially clear in the case of the birds: common (future) European species are intermingled with (future) exotic species from other continents. In two cases the animals represented seem to form a triangle involving the three 'exotic' continents: in the middle of the picture the three species of parrots, which seem to be interacting, represent Africa (the grey parrot *Psittacus Erithacus* at 49), the Americas (the blue-and-yellow macaw *Ara ararauna* at 55a), and Asia (the *Psittacula* species at 51). The other triangle of so-called 'exotic' species, on the right of the painting, is formed by the lion (29), the tiger (30) and the leopard (31) – or is it a jaguar, as suggested by the *Lexikon der Tiersymbole*?[40] This triangle has a much more polyvalent significance. Firstly, it combines three references to Rubens: the lion originates from his *Daniel in the Lion's Den* (ca. 1613, Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art); the tiger from his *Education of Bacchus by Silenus* (ca. 1610, Ithaca, College Medical School), and the leopard from his (lost) *Leopards*.[41] This combination of Rubens motifs not only serves as a homage to Rubens, and thus a token of their collaboration (just like the white horse in the background),[42] but is also a cheeky reminder of Brueghel's own virtuosity: in referencing and combining the three animals from Rubens, he gives them a significance together that they could not have carried in Rubens' original paintings, where they appeared alone.[43] If the leopard is indeed a jaguar, the triad formed by Brueghel's three big cats references all three 'exotic' continents as does that of the three parrots: the African lion watches the Asian tiger and the South American jaguar playing.

While the animals may appear at first glance to be arranged geographically, the most obvious aspect to their placement lies in their mutual sympathy. This sympathy is suggested by the fact that a number of animals are depicted in close pairs, including rabbits, macaws, lovebirds, guinea pigs, and purple coots, but also the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) (44), fallow deer (*Dama dama*) (41), he-goat and she-goat (27), and birds, like the great tit (*Parus major*) (45), the European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) (53), the snipes (*Gallinago* spp.) (25), the glossy starlings (*Lamprotornis* spp.) (56), the barn owl (58), the hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) (57), etc. Some of the creatures appear in separated pairs, like the birds of paradise, inviting the viewer to engage

40 The *Lexikon* suggests that this big cat is a jaguar, however. See Dittrich – Dittrich, *Lexikon der Tiersymbole* 282–283.

41 On this lost painting, see Woollett – Van Suchtelen, *Rubens and Brueghel* 237–238.

42 On this horse, see Kolb, *Jan Brueghel* 65–74.

43 This corresponds to Montaigne's playful practice of quoting: '[P]army tant d'emprunts, suis bien aise d'en pouvoir desrober quelqu'un: le desguisant et difformant à nouveau service' (*Les Essais* 1103, chap. III, 12, "De la Physionomie"). Translation: 'Among my many borrowings I take delight in being able to conceal the occasional one, masking it and distorting it to serve a new purpose' (Montaigne, *The Essays* 1197).

with the painting by searching for the lost partner elsewhere in the scene. This technique, in which Brueghel resembles Simon de Myle,[44] proves successful in the cases of the blue-and-yellow macaw (55a and 55b), the red-billed toucan (*Ramphastos monilis*) (52a and 52b), the hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) (47a and 47b), the great spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) (61a and 61b), and the magpie (*Pica pica*) (62a and 62b), but is unsuccessful in many cases, such as those of the heron (21), the woodchat shrike (*Lanius senator*) (46), the goshawk (or sparrowhawk) (*Accipiter gentilis* or *nisus*) (59), the eagle owl (60), two of the three species of duck (the common goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) and the surf scoter),[45] and the fishes. Brueghel repeats the trick with the mammals: some appear singly, while others, such as the horse (2, 42) and the cat (5a, 5b), are depicted in either close or detached pairs. This is all the more remarkable because a number of the mammals appeared in pairs in Brueghel's other great animal paintings, like *The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* and his *Paradise* of 1612.

This variation in presenting the animals singly or in pairs makes it possible for Brueghel to place his animals in such a way as to suggest the mutual antipathies which will oppose the species to one another after the Fall. While Brueghel often included the same animals, painted in the same manner, in his other depictions of the Fall, the antipathies discussed here only occur in this particular Paradise.

One form of antipathy yet to be enacted is that between predator and prey. For this reason, paintings of the Fall often place predator in close *convenientia* with its future prey: the heron and the pike are surrounded by fishes, the goshawk is perched between the songbirds, and the jaguar and the tiger are playing with the bull (32). In the case of the two dogs (23) this produces a comic scene: they are both barking at two ducks, which do not fly away, but instead quack back at them.

Boillot's treatise *Nouvaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* is an invaluable source for tracing other, more occult forms of (in this painting, latent) antipathy. The most famous one is that between the lion (29) and the rooster (28).[46] It is therefore not surprising that the animals represented in the immediate *convenientia* of the lion are the goat and the rooster, from which the lion looks away.[47]

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44 See chapter 5.

45 In fact, the third species, the teal, is represented by two males.

46 As we saw in chapter 2.

47 It is interesting to note that in his painting on the Fall (between 1635 and 1644) Simon de Vos, one of Brueghel's imitators, represented a lion facing a white rooster in front of Adam and Eve. See Anon. (ed.), *Het Aards Paradijs. Dierenvoorstellingen in de Nederlanden van de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Antwerp: 1982) 100.

Another case of antipathy is between the bull (32) and the crocodile (33), painted next to each other by Brueghel. Boillot's comment regarding the antipathy of the bull (32) and crocodile (33) – 'I tied the ox to a crocodile, as if he were seized by it, the crocodile being the enemy of the Bubalus, i.e. wild ox, according to Albert [Albertus Magnus], who had taken it from Avicenna' (Fig. 8.6)[48] – suggests that Brueghel's juxtaposition of this pair was anything but arbitrary.

Another placement that was less arbitrary than it might seem is that of the three owls (58 and 60) and a cat (16b) that sit above the goat that paws at the Tree of Life. Boillot wrote of the antipathy between the goat and the owl (chouette) which he also calls the cat-owl (chatz huans) (Fig. 8.7).[49]

Brueghel's depiction of the ostrich seems to suggest a touch of indecision on his part: the changing colour of the bird's long neck shows that it was painted on an already dry background at the very last moment, 'perhaps as an afterthought.'[50] This might have been because he wished to indicate an antipathy with the brown horse (2) which appears horizontally across the painting from it (much like the sympathy *à distance* between the two birds of paradise crosses the painting diagonally). Certainly, the ostrich's head appears to face this horse. Brueghel had painted an ostrich and a horse together before, in his first Paradise painting back in 1594 (see Fig. 7.1). Boillot was uncharacteristically ambivalent on the subject of the ostrich, writing:

> As for the ostrich that I have painted here and attached to the horse, I have not yet found an author who tells me that [the bird] is hostile to him, except Cardanus: [it is] because of the resemblance that this bird has with the camel, whose gaze the horse cannot bear – so much does he abhor it. (Fig. 8.8)[51]

48 Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz*, fol. [Aiiii v]: 'Ie l'ay attaché & comme saisy d'vn Crocodile ennemy du Bubale, cest a dire beuf sauuage, selon Albert [Albertus Magnus], qui l'a pris d'Auicenne.'

49 'des chouettes ou chatz huans [= cat-owl] oyseaux a luy fort contraires'. It is noteworthy that in his *Paradise* of 1612, Brueghel depicted the same he-goat standing against the Tree of Life, which was devoid of owls. The only owls in this painting are sitting in another tree, to the left in the painting.

50 Woollett – Van Suchtelen, *Rubens and Brueghel*, 238.

51 Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz*, fol. Bij v: 'Quant a l'austruche que iay icy peinte & attachee au Cheual, Ie n'ay pas encores autheur qui m'ayt appris qu'elle lui soit ennemie, sinon Cardan: auec vne ressemblance que cet oyseau a auec le Chameau duquel le Cheual ne peult souffrir le regard, tant il l'abhorre.'

FIGURE 8.6 Joseph Boillot, *Ox and Crocodile*, woodcut in Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [...] (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592), fol. [Aiiiii r]. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-V-385
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FIGURE 8.7 Joseph Boillot, *Goat and Owl*, woodcut in Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [...] (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592), fol. [Giiii r]. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-V-385
PUBLIC DOMAIN

FIGURE 8.8 Joseph Boillot, *Camel and Ostrich*, woodcut in Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [...] (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592), fol. [Biiiiii r]. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-V-385
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Other painters of the Fall such as Joachim Wtewael and Simon de Vos steer clear of the ostrich, preferring instead to depict the other case mentioned in the above quotation, the antipathy between camel and horse: these animals are placed together in such a way that they seem to be afraid to look at each other.[52]

5 The White Animals in the Distance

The only group of Brueghel's animals that have a clearly positive symbolic value are the white and light-coloured animals he painted in the background, both the pairs such as the mute swans (*Cygnus olor*, 39), sheep (36), camels (37), and fallow deer (*Dama dama*) (41), and the solitary creatures such as the white horse (42) and llama (35). This positive disposition, emphasised by the colour white, reminds us of Brueghel's *Paradise* of 1612, and once again of Cornelis van Haarlem's *Fall*. On its left side, Cornelis' painting features a number of white/light-coloured animals that surround the scene of Adam's creation. Brueghel changed Cornelis' narrative disposition, moving it from the left background to the centre background of the painting, which allowed him to make use of perspective. This type of landscape, one 'that recedes into the far distance', is, as Arianne Faber Kolb noted in her discussion of his *Madonna with a Multitude of Animals*, something of a Brueghel trademark.[53] In his *Paradise* the viewer's gaze is drawn towards the background until it rests upon the two vague shadows that stand for the elephant (38), the biggest of the terrestrial animals. The elephant in the background is a recurrent theme in pictorial representations of the Fall. It occurs in the *Fall* by Maerten de Vos (1569) and later representations by artists such as Simon de Vos and, of course, Rembrandt (1638). In the case of the Rembrandt etching, in which he transforms the snake into a dragon, the elephant's significance is also explicable from the viewpoint of natural antipathy. As can be seen in Boillot (see Fig. 9.3), elephant and dragon exist in postlapsarian enmity, a phenomenon recorded in all zoological works since Pliny. Rembrandt's interpretation of the theme shows us once again the success that artists had in representing the concepts of sympathy and antipathy – from Dürer and Granach, through Cornelis van Haarlem and Brueghel, until its artistic climax in Rembrandt's *Fall*.

52 For Wtewael see Fig. 10.2. For Simon de Vos, see *Het Aards Paradijs* 100.

53 Kolb, *Jan Brueghel* 44.

6 Conclusions

Paradise with the Fall of Man appears to be a reflection on the way animals should be rendered in the pictorial representation of Eden. Working within this rich iconographic tradition, Brueghel and Rubens had the original idea of arranging the animals in such a way as to suggest their future love and strife.

More generally, the themes introduced in the *Paradise* by Rubens and Brueghel appear to be of crucial importance to the development of Brueghel's *oeuvre* as a whole. This can be seen in his *Allegory of Air* (1621) (Fig. 8.9), which displays equal interest in zoological topicality as it does in the concept of sympathy and antipathy.[54] That is, like the 1617 *Fall*, the 1621 *Allegory of Air* depicts two birds of paradise, but has them both sitting. Likewise, in addition to the five species of parrots depicted in the 1617 *Fall*, there are five more spectacularly coloured species,[55] and to the left and right of the centre there are a couple of crowned cranes (*Balearica pavonina*) and a couple of Magellanic penguins (*Spheniscus magellanicus*). Brueghel's depiction of these birds can be seen as a correction to the authoritative *Exoticorum libri decem* (1605) by Carolus Clusius, which, while it contained the first mention of a penguin, did not describe it satisfactorily.[56] Most significantly, both penguins are put in *convenientia* with a bat breastfeeding two of its young. With this juxtaposition Brueghel seems to refer to the contemporary debate on whether either penguins or bats were truly birds at all. Penguins have feathers, albeit hairy ones, but cannot fly; bats, however, can fly but have no feathers, breastfeed their young and are viviparous. Brueghel accentuates this latter characteristic by making two eggs visible on the opposite side of the painting, to the left of the crowned cranes.

In addition to the topical zoological details displayed in the 1621 *Allegory of Air*, the concepts of sympathy and antipathy appear to have the same thematic importance they did in the *Paradise* by Rubens and Brueghel. Whereas sympathy and serene harmony seem to reign in most parts of the painting,

54 For a detailed analysis of the painting, see Rikken – Smith, "Jan Brueghel's Allegory of Air."

55 One recognises a yellow-headed amazon (*Amazona oratrix*), a Senegal parrot (*Poicephalus senegalus*), two yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*), a black-capped lory (*Lorius lory*), a canary-winged parakeet (*Brotogeris versicolurus*), and a blue-fronted amazon (*Amazona aestiva*) – the same specimen that occurs in Brueghel's *Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark*.

56 Clusius Carolus, *Exoticorum libri decem, quibus animalium, plantarum, aromatum aliorumque peregrinorum fructuum historiae describuntur* (Leiden, Ex Officina Plantiniana Raphelengii: 1605). The bizarre way Brueghel depicted the penguin's feet suggests that he used some awkwardly stuffed animals as models.

FIGURE 8.9 Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Allegory of Air*, 1621, oil on copper, 46 × 66 cm., Paris, Musée du Louvre
PHOTO © RMN-GRAND PALAIS (MUSÉE DU LOUVRE) / FRANCK RAUX

its centre is full of movement and conflict. The light falls on two mute swans arguing with a grey heron, and two enormous eagle-owls (a symbol of darkness), one of which has caught a rooster (a universal symbol of the sun)[57] and a hen – a scene watched by a (nocturnal) barn owl and a shining, light-coloured yellow-crested cockatoo. The centre also deploys another rooster, fighting with a turkey, and another heron, which is in the air and in conflict with a kind of eagle[58] – a conflict reflected by another heron and eagle in the air, high up and to the left in the picture. From the presence of all of these themes, the 1621 *Allegory of Air* can be seen as a logical step forward from the *Paradise* by Rubens and Brueghel.

With Erasmus' *Amicitia* in the back of our minds, we can ask ourselves whether the numerous allusions to sympathy, and the recurrent references to

57 Chevalier J. – Gheerbrant A., *Dictionnaire des symboles* (Paris: 1982) 281: 'Le coq est universellement un symbole solaire, parce que son chant annonce le lever du soleil' (The cockerel is a universal symbol of the sun, because its crowing heralds the rising of the sun).

58 Both conflicts are more or less conventional: a rooster attacking a turkey is a theme in the emblematic fable book in the tradition of Marcus Gheeraerts (*WF* 94), the other theme is often depicted in scenes of hawking.

Rubens, might be an allusion to the 'working friendship' between the artists. Certainly, this collaborative painting is the only one signed by both painters, probably even with paint from the same palette.[59] Such an observation once more calls Montaigne to mind, though perhaps his ideas on conversation rather than ideal friendship:[60] ideally the two partners in a conversation are emulative, spurring each other on to greater heights. In his essay *De l'art de conferer*, Montaigne compares the ideal conversation with such sports as fencing and wrestling: 'If I am sparring with a strong and solid opponent he will attack me on the flanks, stick his lance in me right and left; his ideas send mine soaring.'[61] Montaigne even mentions the meanings of the word *amicitia* suggested by Erasmus: conversation, friendship, love: 'I like a strong, intimate, manly fellowship, the kind of friendship which rejoices in sharp vigorous exchanges ['commerce'] just as love rejoices in bites and scratches which draw blood.'[62] The word *commerce* in Montaigne's *Essais* never loses its original mercantile connotation[63] and is therefore applicable to the 'working friendship' between Rubens and Brueghel, forcing each to outdo the other and resulting in a product both mercantile and highly artistic.

These multiple layers of meaning (zoological topicality, sympathy and antipathy, animal symbolism, friendship, collaboration, and emulation) are especially clear when one compares the 1617 painting with Brueghel's earlier *Paradise* (1612). The 1612 painting displays a lot of the same animals, which are portrayed in harmonious sympathy but without suggestion of their future antipathy, with less zoological topicality, and much less animal symbolism, surrounding the First Couple. Our painting therefore almost demands a 'close reading', like the one suggested by one of the first to write about it, Arnold Houbraken, in 1718:

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59 Woollett – Van Suchtelen, *Rubens and Brueghel* 66.

60 See Honig, "Paradise Regained" 279: 'The kind of friendship that resulted in collaboration was not, I think, Montaignesque. While the parties had to trust one another's artistic integrity, it mattered that their thoughts *not* be so fully shared.' Honig rightly mentions the possible influence of Guazzo's much read *Art of Civil Conversation*, which is, by the way, also one of Montaigne's sources.

61 Montaigne, *The Essays* 1045. 'Si je confere avec une ame forte, et un roide jousteur, il me presse les flancs, me pique à gauche et à dextre: ses imaginations eslancent les miennes' (*Les Essais* 967).

62 Montaigne, *The Essays* 1046. 'J'ayme une societé et familiarité forte, et virile: Une amitié qui se flatte en l'aspreté et vigueur de son commerce: comme l'amour, ès morsures et esgratigneures sanglantes' (*Les Essais* 968).

63 See Desan P., "Commerce", in Desan P. (ed.), *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne* (Paris: 2007) 215–217.

> The most outstanding in art that I have seen by him [Brueghel] is the so-called paradise at Mr. De la Court van der Voort's in Leiden, in which a multitude of diverse animals appear in the most ingenious way in a landscape painted no less ingeniously, with Adam and Eve rendered in the greatest of detail by Rubens.[64]

Houbraken's reaction to another collaborative work by Rubens and Brueghel, the now lost *Vertumnus and Pomona*, suggests how he 'read' the painting: observing it for hours 'without being satisfied'. In their *Paradise*, Rubens and Brueghel challenge us, the viewer, to unlock its secrets through detailed and painstaking close inspection.

64 Quoted in Woollett – Van Suchtelen, *Rubens and Brueghel* 64.

CHAPTER 9

Eden's Animals in Rembrandt and Vondel

As has often been noted, Rembrandt's etching *The Fall* (1638) (Fig. 9.1) breaks with tradition in many ways. Adam and Eve are not represented according to the aesthetic ideals of human beauty that Albrecht Dürer had pioneered in his *Fall* (1504) (and that were henceforth adopted by Cornelis van Haarlem, Rubens and many others). Rembrandt depicted the bodies of the First Couple as bearing the first signs of physical decay. The Devil hidden in the Tree of Knowledge does not take the form of an ordinary serpent, but of a menacing dragon. It is also striking that the only other animal shown is an elephant, which, as is often noted, is traditionally associated with courage and strength. This is all the information on this particular image that can be gleaned from the otherwise abundant literature on Rembrandt. The first part of this chapter aims to interpret these observations (which, while sparse, are correct in and of themselves) and to place them within a coherent whole. The second part of this chapter considers the tragedy *Adam in ballingschap* (1664) by Joost van den Vondel, the 'prince of poets' of the Dutch Golden Age. We will argue that Vondel's elaboration of the animal theme retrospectively gives us a new understanding of Rembrandt's treatment of the Fall.

1 Rembrandt's Dragon and Elephant

The combination of a physically unattractive Adam and the Devil as a sort of dragon was not unprecedented: it featured in Dürer's *Christ in the Limbo of Hell* (Fig. 9.2), a work that Rembrandt had acquired (along with the other engravings of Dürer's *Small Passion*) in February 1638, just before he engraved his *Fall*.[1] Dürer's youthful and attractive Eve accentuates the age and frailty of his Adam. His dragon has a forbidding head, bare wings and an iguana-like body with four clawed legs and a long tail. Rembrandt's *Fall* not only follows Dürer's in both of these points, but places the dragon in the same position, hunkered down on an object which frames the couple – in Dürer's case, a stone arch, while Rembrandt's dragon clasps the overhanging branch of a tree. The two artists portray the threat posed by the dragon in different ways, however.

1 Strauss W. – Van der Meulen M., *The Rembrandt Documents* (New York: 1979) 150.

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FIGURE 9.1 Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Fall* (*Adam and Eve*), 1638, print. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam RP-P-1961–992
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FIGURE 9.2 Albrecht Dürer, *Christ in the Limbo of Hell*, 1512, print. National Gallery of Art
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Durer's dragon points a spear at Adam, while the threat in Rembrandt's painting is displayed by way of the relative positions of the three figures: the perpendicular line that can be drawn from the dragon's head through the centre of the etching connects the monster with Eve's head, the forbidden fruit in her hand and her uncovered genitals – a connection Rembrandt accentuated by the incidence of light.[2]

Both the depiction of the characters and their mutual dispositions tells us something about Rembrandt's vision of the Fall. With his repulsive ugliness, the dragon has nothing in common with the ostensibly innocent seducer (the Devil is often depicted as a charming woman or child with a barely visible serpent's tail). Nor can the animal symbolize sexuality because of its repulsive ugliness, as the serpent depicted by other Paradise painters does.[3] The dragon may represent pure evil, but here is merely present rather than active as a seducer – it allows the first Couple to take the initiative. That Adam and Eve are in control of their fate is suggested by the etching's geometric structure: two horizontal lines run to the left of the vertical line connecting the snake's head, the apple and Eve's genitals; Adam's hands are on the same horizontal line as the apple Eve holds. Adam's gesture seems to warn Eve not to eat from the apple. In this act the dragon is no more than a feeder and remains aloof. The second horizontal line connects Eve's genitals with Adam's, his own genitals partially visible (in most contemporary images of the Fall, Adam's sex remains covered). In Rembrandt's vision, the Fall seems to be linked to (the discovery of) sexuality – but again, the hideous dragon does not play a direct role.

It is unclear why Rembrandt chose an elephant rather than the traditional stag or other *cervidae* (an elk in Dürer's *Fall*, a roebuck in Rubens and Brueghel's *Paradise*). The usual answer, that the elephant should be interpreted as the Christian symbol of courage and strength, remains somewhat unsatisfactory, especially when considered in comparison with the rich symbolism to be found in the image of the deer. We have already seen that the deer's antlers, shed and regrown, are a symbol of Christ's death and resurrection. We have also seen that the deer lives in enmity, or 'antipathy', with the serpent. As the Rembrandt critics noted, the presence of the elephant in Rembrandt's *Fall* can be explained by this natural antipathy.[4] The enmity between the elephant

2 See also Bevers H. – Schatborn P. – Welzel B., *Rembrandt: de Meester en zijn Werkplaats. Tekeningen en Etsen* (Amsterdam: 1991) 196.

3 See chapter 2 in the present book.

4 See Slatkes L.J., "Rembrandt's Elephant", *Simiolus. Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 11 (1980) 7–13. See also Boespflug F., "*Adam et Ève*, 1638: une gravure de Rembrandt", *Revue des sciences religieuses* 81 (2007) 541–561 (here 559).

and the dragon (or snake) had been a commonplace since antiquity, and was illustrated and commented on by Joseph Boillot: 'I have depicted him [the elephant] here with the dragon wrapped around him, [the dragon, who is] his mortal enemy, to whom he is subject') (Fig. 9.3).[5] This is the description in Pliny:

> The biggest [elephants are produced] by India, as well as serpents that keep up a continual feud and warfare with them, the serpents also being of so large a size that they easily encircle the elephants in their coils and fetter them with a twisted knot. In this duel both combatants die together, and the vanquished elephant crushes with its weight the snake coiled round it.[6]

This last detail – that the serpent itself dies when it kills the elephant – is generally ignored in Rembrandt criticism, even though it is essential for the interpretation of Rembrandt's *Fall*: just as the dragon and the elephant literally and figuratively drag each other down, so Adam and Eve drag each other down in their fall, and the Devil with them. Another detail in Pliny's account is important to Rembrandt's development of the theme: '[the serpent] keeps watch on the track worn by the elephant going to pasture and drops on him from a lofty tree.'[7] This is exactly what Rembrandt depicts: the gaze of Rembrandt's dragon is focused not only on Adam and Eve, but also on the elephant as a possible prey. As François Boespflug notes: 'And while he was completing his evil work on Adam and Eve, the serpent was already preparing to play a nasty trick on the elephant in paradise, killing two birds with one stone'.[8]

It is possible to determine more precisely what Rembrandt's model was. His elephant is not particularly realistic, and it does not really resemble the elephants he sketched elsewhere *ad visum* with great precision (Fig. 9.4).[9] This strangely spherical animal is reminiscent, in both form and posture (frontal view with trunk raised), of the elephant depicted by Marcus Gheeraerts

5 Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz*, fol. Av: 'Ie l'ay icy enuironné & assuietty du Dragon qui est son mortel enemy.'

6 Pliny, *Natural History*, ed. and transl. H. Rackham, vol. III, Cambridge, MA-London 1967, 8.32, p. 25–27.

7 Idem.

8 Boespflug, "*Adam et Ève*" 559: 'Et tout en parachevant son œuvre maléfique auprès d'Adam et Ève, le serpent s'apprêterait déjà à jouer un mauvais tour à l'éléphant du paradis, faisant en somme d'une pierre deux coups.'

9 For a different interpretation, see Roscam Abbing M., *Rembrandt's Elephant: The Story of Hansken* (Amsterdam: 2006) 42, and Slatkes, "Rembrandt's Elephant."

FIGURE 9.3 Joseph Boillot, *Elephant and Dragon*, woodcut in Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [...] (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592), fol. Aii r. Bibliothèque nationale de France
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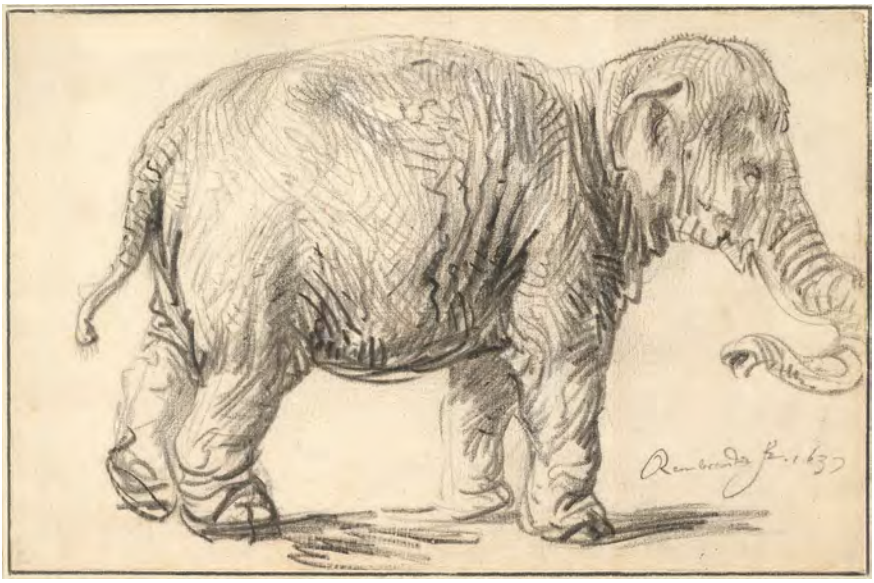

FIGURE 9.4 Rembrandt van Rijn, *An Elephant*, 1637, drawing. Grafische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna
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in the emblematic fable book *De Warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (1567) by Eduard de Dene (see Fig. 4.4),[10] and Gheeraerts' dragon (wings, claws and tail – and, behind the dragon, the large tree from which the monster jumped onto the elephant) is also similar to Rembrandt's dragon. The fable in question is *The Elephant and the Dragon*, in which De Dene had adapted Pliny's old tale. Gheeraerts' illustration of the elephant was well known. It was a leading model for works that had nothing directly to do with Aesop's fables, such as the drawing of an elephant that Pieter van Veen (the brother of Otto Vaenius) made in the margins of his personal copy of Montaigne's *Essais*,[11] and the one depicted by Jan Christoffel Jegher in the illustrations he made for Willem van der Borcht's *Sedighe Sinne-beelden*[12] (1642), and Simon de Myle's pachyderm in his *Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat*.[13]

10 *The Elephant and the Dragon*, WF 44.

11 See Rikken M., *Tekeningen in de* Essais *van Montaigne: de keuzes van Pieter van Veen* (BA thesis University of Amsterdam, 2004) 49.

12 See Buyens V., "A Zoological Emblem Book: Willem van der Borcht's *Sedighe Sinne-beelden* (1642)", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Early Modern Zoology: The Construction of Animals in Science, Literature and the Visual Arts* (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 547–566 (here 562).

13 See chapter 4.

Although it is not implausible that Rembrandt's motif of the dragon and elephant as symbols of the Fall was inspired by Gheeraerts' fable illustration, it is unlikely that he knew the Flemish text of De Dene or any of the 16th- and early 17th-century versions of the fable book in French, Latin or German. He had probably seen Gheeraerts' illustration in combination with Vondel's version of the fable, published in his *Vorsteliicke Warande der dieren* (1617, reprinted regularly until the 18th century), or in the illustrated adaptation by Etienne Perret, published under the title *xxv fables* (first edition in French in 1578; first Dutch translation in 1617, followed by several reprints in French and Dutch, including an elaborate adaptation by the poet-painter Adriaen van de Venne in 1632). The motto of Perret's/Van de Venne's version of the fable is directly applicable to Rembrandt's etching:

> Most of the evil that man encounters in his life falls on his head through his own actions.[14]

Rembrandt may have been inspired to depict the Fall through the battle between dragon and elephant by Vondel's version of the fable, which places a surprisingly strong emphasis on the physical aspects of the Fall:

> A terrible dragon fought with an elephant, and attacked him terribly with great speed: he twisted the elephant's body by its legs, and by his venomous bites the elephant's blood flowed from its body like a river. The elephant, exhausted, weak and limp from his powerless strength, fell on the dragon, killing him with his full weight.[15]

The elephant and snake are not the only couple Vondel describes as meeting their doom together – the moral this fable shows the roe deer dragging the hunter who attacks it into the abyss:

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14 Perret Etienne – Venne Adriaen van de, *Woudt van wonderlicke Sinne Fabulen der Dieren* (Rotterdam, Isaack van Waesbeghe: 1632):

'Meest wat de Mensch, voor quaet toekomt in't leven, / Door eygen daet, wert hem op 't hooft ghedreven.'

15 My Vondel quotations come from Vondel Joost van den, *De Werken* […], ed. J.F.M. Sterck et al. (Amsterdam: 1927–1937), 10 vols. Vondel, *Vorsteliicke Warande der dieren*:

'Een eysselijcken *Draeck* bevocht een *Oliphant,* / En heeft hem metter vlucht seer schricklijck angherant: / Omslingherde' hem zijn been, en met vergifte steken / Komt 'tbloed als een riviere uyt zijn groff lichaem leken, / Aemachtigh slap en flau door de'uytghemarchde kracht / Pofte' hij den *Draeck* op't lijf, doode' hem met gantscher macht' (*Werken*, 1, p. 741).

> Like the fast roe deer being chased by the hunter on the cliffs, climbing and scrambling in the hope of escaping him – the hunter is well equipped, cold-blooded and hard – the roe deer sees the deadly danger and suddenly jumps on his body. The hunter breaks his neck, arms and legs; the deer falls fearlessly to its death on the stones.[16]

This text is a free adaptation of a German fable from 1608, which was illustrated by Aegidius Sadeler (Fig. 9.5). In this fable, entitled *Vom Gembsen* and probably written by Sadeler himself, the protagonist is not a roe but a chamois:

> Seeing the deadly danger, the chamois leapt at the hunter and threw him off the cliff, breaking his neck and legs.[17]

Sadeler's illustration depicts the double fall of chamois and hunter with great drama.

The motif of the Fall in Vondel's fable, emphasised twice (by the elephant and the dragon, and by the chamois and the hunter), may have given Rembrandt the idea of depicting the Fall of Adam and Eve as a literal fall, just as Dürer had in his 1504 print and its references to the falling chamois and to epilepsy, 'the 'falling sickness'.

With regard to his predecessors, Dürer, Gheeraerts, Cornelis van Haarlem and many others, Rembrandt was an emulator: his aim was to re-iterate familiar themes and symbolism in a new and original way. By directly 'quoting' his predecessors, Rembrandt made his emulative intent clear to the viewer or reader, thus emphasising his mastery of the form. Rembrandt's most pronounced references are to Dürer (for both his *Christ in the Limbo of Hell* and his 1504 *Fall*) and Gheeraerts (for the combination of dragon and elephant). It is in this tradition of emulation that the animal symbolism of Rembrandt's Fall should be interpreted – and this is also true of Vondel's *Adam in Ballingschap*.

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16 Vondel, *Vorsteliicke Warande*:

'Gelijck de snelle *Rhee,* die op de steylle klippen / Den *Iager* had gejaeght, van meeninge' hem t'ontslippen, / Klimt, klautert, toegerust de Iager strengh en stijf: / De *Rhee* ziet s'doodts ghevaer, springt botz hem op zijn lijf. / De Iagher breeckt zijn hals, zijn armen en zijn beenen. / De *Rhee* valt onversaeght te barsten op de steenen' (*Werken*, I, p. 741).

17 [Sadeler Aegidius], *Theatrum morum. Artliche gesprach der thier* (Prague, Paul Sesse: 1608), no. 4:

'Alß die Gembß sach die höchst gefahr / Sprang sie starck auff den Jäger dar / Und stieß ihn von dem steig hinab / Daß er den Halß und Bein fiel ab.'

For Vondel as a reader of the *Theatrum morum*, see Smith P.J., "Wandelen in Vondels *Vorsteliicke Warande* (1617)", in Jaspers G. – Duijn M. van (eds.), *Jaarboek van het Genootschap van Bibliofielen 2017* (Amsterdam: 2018) 35–65 (here 52–54).

FIGURE 9.5 [Aegidius Sadeler II], *Vom Gembsen*, etching in [Aegidius Sadeler II], *Theatrum morum. Artliche gesprach der thier* (Prague, Paul Sesse: 1608), no. 4. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. RP-P-OB-5208A
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2 Vondel's Dragon

The animal theme in Vondel's "tragedy of tragedies", as the subtitle of his *Adam in ballingschap* (Adam in exile) (1664) reads, is rich. In addition to its main source, Hugo Grotius' neo-Latin tragedy *Adamus exul* (1601), Vondel may have been inspired to pay such attention to the fauna of Paradise by Du Bartas' two *Semaines*.[18] The thematic resemblance to Grotius' tragedy is superficial, however, since, with a few exceptions (see below), the animals mentioned by Grotius do not reappear in Vondel's work. Despite all its differences from Rembrandt's etching, Vondel's tragedy seems to confirm our interpretation on a number of points. This is most obvious with regard to the dragon. At the

18 Grotius Hugo, *Adamus exul* (The Hague, A. Henricus: 1601), especially 29–31.

beginning of Vondel's tragedy, the devils Lucifer and Asmodé discuss which animal would be best suited to deceive Adam and Eve. The first candidate is the eagle:

> Lucifer:
> A bird that flies in the air with its wings, like the spirits that float on their wings. Prefer the eagle, the prince of the birds, who is stronger in his ambition than any other bird, and who is not afraid to face the stinging midday light with his gaze. The eagle would spot his prey from afar if he had to go to war in a rage. He is armed with his beak and sharp claws.[19]

The second animal is the elephant:

> Or choose an elephant. His body is large enough to hide inside and to walk disguised without being detected. In the use of his mind he is the cleverest of the dumb animals, and with his trunk he can bring down a tree, or swing Adam in the air and catch him on his tusks.[20]

The third possibility suggested is the dragon:

> No other animal resembles man in his ingenuity, or is so useful in silently preparing an attack, as a scaly dragon, with his beautiful wings. He is adept at flying and hovering. His tongue, shaped to imitate human speech, can deceive, lie and cheat. This would be the best hawk to hunt and catch the innocent [doves, i.e. Adam and Eve] in flight.[21]

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19 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
Lucifer:
'Een vogel, die de lucht met zijne pen bezwier, / Gelijckt den geesten, die op hunne vleugels zweven. / Verkies den adelaer, der voglen vorst, in 't streven / Alle anderen te kloeck, en die met zijn gezicht / En ooghstrael niet ontziet het steeckend middaghlicht / Te tarten. d'adelaer zou zijnen roof ontdecken / Van verre, indien hy most verhit ten oorlogh trecken. / Hy is gewapent met den beck en scherpen klaeu' (*Werken*, x, p. 129–130).

20 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'Of kies een' elefant. zijn lichaem valt niet naeu / Om in te schuilen, en bedeckt te loopen mommen. / Hy is in reêngebruick de kloeckste van de stommen, / En maghtigh met zijn' snuit een' boom te slaen in 't zant, / Of Adam, in de lucht geslingert, op den tant / Te vatten [...]' (*Werken*, x, p. 130).

21 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'Geen dier is menschen in zijn kloeckheit zoo gelijck, / En ons zoo nut, om stil een' aenslagh uit te wercken, / Da[n] een geschubde draeck, voorzien van schoone vlercken. / Hy is in vliegen en omzweven uitgeleert. / Zijn tong, om 's menschen spraeck te volgen,

Following their deliberations, the two devils settle upon the dragon, though without elaborating upon their motives. On comparing the dragon's qualities with those of the eagle and the elephant, however, their choice becomes rather more comprehensible. The eagle is 'koen' (courageous) and can fly, but is rarely associated with deceit and flattery; the elephant is strong and intelligent, but also 'dumb', *i.e.* unable to speak. The dragon, however, contains all the qualities the devils require: it can fly (like the eagle), can speak and, above all, is cunning (the negative version of the elephant's intelligence) and courageous (like the eagle):

> The serpent is cunning and brave, two qualities that are very effectively chosen. The craftiness of this animal is innate by nature, as is his bravery. If these two go hand in hand, then the attack can be carried out, which will drag behind it such a long tail of wailing, through all the ages.[22]

Perhaps Vondel had Rembrandt's etching in mind when he composed this passage. Certainly Vondel's wordplay is intriguing when considered in this context – Rembrandt's striking depiction of the dragon's long tail[23] seems to be reflected in Vondel's description of its 'gift' to mankind, the 'lange staert van jammernissen' (literally: the long tail of wailing). Vondel's reference to the hawk's seizing of flying doves as akin to the dragon's seizing of the innocents (ie. Adam and Eve) returns later in the text when the Devil, taking the form of the serpent, apostrophises Eve, twice referring to her ambiguously as 'myn duifken' (my little dove): she is both his prey and his lover. This explicit comparison between the dragon and the winged hawk (as well as the implicit comparison between the dragon and the eagle mentioned above) confirms that Vondel's dragon, like Rembrandt's, has wings – this is in contrast to the countless wingless dragons and serpents depicted by Rembrandt's predecessors.[24]

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gebootseert, / Zou geestigh weifelen, en liegen, en bedriegen. / Dat waer de rechte valck om van mijn hant te vliegen, / En deze onnozelen te grijpen in hun vlught' (*Werken*, X, p. 130).

22 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'[…] de slang is schalck en koen, / Twee eigenschappen, niet onaerdigh uitgekoren. / De schalckheit is dit dier natuurlijck aengeboren, / Gelijck de stoutheit. zoo dees beide gaen gepaert / Wort d'aenslagh uitgevoert, die zulck een' langen staert / Van jammernissen, door alle eeuwen, na zal sleepen' (*Werken*, X, p. 130–131).

23 Especially when compared with the numerous artists who make the serpent's curling tail disappear into the foliage of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

24 Vondel was not alone amongst his contemporaries in using the terms 'serpent' and 'dragon' interchangeably. He does, however, occasionally appear to back off from favouring one term over the other. It is unclear whether, in the lines below, he is intent on making a true

The dragon's wings return at the tragedy's end, when the angel Uriel removes both them and its legs as punishment:

> Uriël:
> O serpent of the garden, cunning beast, now feel the divine wrath. Hated by all cattle and other animals, you shall henceforth crawl on your belly and have neither peace nor rest, and, driven into your cave, you shall feed on dust, your food, all your life.[25]

The winged and quadrupedal (or bipedal) dragon is thus reduced to a real, legless, belly-crawling serpent. In fact, Vondel and Rembrandt provide an answer to a theological question: What did the serpent look like before it was a serpent?

3 Sympathy and Antipathy in *Adam in ballingschap*

In the light of Rembrandt's interpretation of the theme, it is remarkable that Vondel mentions the dragon and the elephant one after the other, even though in his *Adam in Ballingschap* he remains silent about the antipathy between the two animals, which he had previously addressed in his *Vorsteliicke Warande*. Yet natural antipathy and its corollary, sympathy, are essential to Vondel's conception of nature before and after the Fall. Thus he explicitly mentions, in accordance with Genesis 3:15, that the serpent and the woman will be enemies forever:

> God's judgement will ignite an inextinguishable hatred between you and the seed of the woman, which will crush your head, although you, fierce in your defense, dare to bite this offspring in the heels.[26]

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distinction between the animals or merely using synonyms as metrical stopgaps: 'Doch eerwe ons in de leest van draeck of slang verstecken' (But before we hide ourselves in the form of a dragon or a serpent) (l. 770); 'Wy mommen best dan met de grijns van slang of draeck' (The best is to disguise ourselves with the grin of a serpent or a dragon) (l. 779).

25 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'O hofslang, listigh dier, gevoel nu 's hooghsten toren. / Gy zult voortaen, gehaet van allerhande vee / En dieren, op uw' buick voortkruipende, geen vre / Noch rust gevoelen, en, in uw spelonck gedreven, / Het gansche leven lang, by aerde, uw voedsel, leven!' (*Werken*, x, p. 168).

26 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'Het hoog gerechte zal een' onuitbluschbren haet / Ontsteecken tusschen u, en tusschen 't vrouwezaet, / Dat u het hooft verplet: hoewel gy, bits in 't wrijten / En wederstreven, dit durft in de hielen bijten' (*Werken*, x, p. 168).

This means that Vondel and Rembrandt, like Rembrandt's predecessors Dürer, Cornelis van Haarlem, Rubens and Brueghel, understood the creatures of Paradise in terms of sympathy and antipathy. The entire fauna of Paradise mentioned by Vondel can be interpreted according to this paradigm. The animals are depicted in pairs, united by the sympathy of love, such that male follows female – a state of being the devil Belial describes with undisguised jealousy:

> Belial:
> Thus it is seen that in Paradise animals of the same species come together. The dove follows the dove, the stag the faithful hind, the lion the lioness of the forest, the one husband dragging the other behind him: and is there any resistance when love charms a love?[27]

And elsewhere Adam says:

> Love is kindled and produced by love. You see how in love the dove and the cock-dove nibble at each other's beaks. The swan enchants the swan, which swims effusively. The strong lion is tamed by his lioness. The ivy embraces the elm. One plant is grafted onto another.[28]

Belial, taking the form of the serpent, explains to Eve how the stork and the dolphin are inexplicably 'driven by a hidden inclination and secret attraction'[29] to men, and the unicorn to women.[30] Eve should not, therefore, be surprised that the serpent is attracted to her too:

> Don't begrudge a snake the chance to wish you luck. I like dealing with men. Similarly, the peaceful storks nest around you in the trees high in the air. The dolphin pokes his head out of the salt water, driven to men and women by a hidden inclination and secret attraction. You see these

27 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
Belial:
'Zoo zietge in 't paradijs verzaemen d'eensgezinde. / De doffer volght de duif, het hart de trouwe hinde, / De leeu de boschleeuwin. d'een ga sleept d'andre voort: / En waer valt weêrstant, als de liefde een lief bekoort [?]' (*Werken*, X, p. 136).

28 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'De liefde wort door liefde ontvonckt en opgeweckt. / Gy ziet hoe minzaem duif en doffer treckebeckt. / De zwaen bekoort de zwaen, die bruizende aen komt zwemmen. / De stercke leeu laet zich van zijn leeuwinne temmen. / Het veil omhelst den olm. men ent de plant op plant' (*Werken*, X, p. 146).

29 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*: 'door een verborge zucht / En heimelijcken treck gedreven' (*Werken*, X, p. 147).

30 These are all well-known examples from natural history.

> birds [i.e. the storks] flying around you, and how the dolphin caresses and strokes the shore with his tail and fins, to win the heart of men and women for love. The wild unicorn would like to rest in your pure virgin lap, never touched by anyone, once you show him your presence.[31]

The sympathetic connection between different species, and within each species between male and female, is also found in Vondel's *Noach* (1667): the 'Boumeester' (architect) of the Ark tells the giant Achiman how the animals entered the Ark in pairs, shed their (postlapsarian) antipathy towards other species and, in a sense, returned to the sympathy of the earthly paradise:

> Boumeester:
>
> I couldn't believe my eyes when they arrived in pairs from all over the world, summoned at the same time. [...]
>
> Archiman:
>
> Is there no fight between pigeons, ravens and vultures, between lions and panthers, and between tame and wild beasts, and is there not unequal nature gathered under one roof? Does the wolf tolerate the lamb? Is the tiger tame?
>
> Boumeester:
>
> The king of the beasts, who fills the forests with terror, does not roar here. The dragons have no poison on their tongues. The snakes lurk, rolled up in a coil. If a bear dares to growl and scream, Noah knows how to silence it with a single glance.[32]

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31 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:

'Misgun geen' slange u heil te wenschen. / 'k Bemin den ommegang der menschen. / Zoo nestlen minzaeme oyevaeren / Rondom u, in geboomte en lucht. / De dolfijn steeckt uit zoute baeren / Het hooft, door een verborge zucht / En heimelijcken treck gedreven / Naer menschen, en het vrouwebeelt. / Gy ziet dees vogels om u zweven, / En hoe de dolfijn d'oevers streelt / En strijckt met zijnen staert, en vinnen, / Uit liefde om 's menschen hart te winnen. / Het zou den wilde' eenhoren lusten / In uwen zuivren maeghdeschoot / Noch van geen hant gerept, te rusten, / Gaeft gy uw aenschijn voor hem bloot' (*Werken*, x, p. 147).

32 Vondel, *Noach:*

Boumeester:

'Ik zagh my zelven blint, toenze alle in orde t'zaemen / By paeren herwaert aen, gelijk gedaghvaert, quamen, / Uit vier gewesten [...]' (*Werken*, x, p. 407).

Achiman:

'Verneemt men geenen strijt van duiven raven gieren, / Van leeuwen, luiperden, en tamme en wilde dieren, / En ongelijken aert, beschaduwt van een dak? / Gedooght de wolf het lam? en zit de tyger mak?'

Boumeester:

In *Adam in ballingschap*, sympathy between creatures is also found in the description given by the archangel Gabriel of the source of the earthly paradise. This passage may have been inspired by Grotius, who has the angelic choir sing God's praises:

> Ye maketh that there are springs high up in the mountains. At these springs the onagers[33] and the wild animals quench their thirst. Here the birds sing softly with sweet songs in the foliage of the trees.[34]

This short passage by Grotius is widely spun out by Vondel:

> There is the unicorn, mirroring itself in the spring. Here the sunflower follows the shine of the sun and seems to be inflamed in its heart by living rays. How many birds are there singing with their throats, imitating all the choirs of the angels! How rampantly do these fruits hang![35]

And a few lines more:

> Where the Tree of Life covers the clear spring from which a lion with his lioness drank at once, and so did many other animals.[36]

Let's take a closer look at Vondel's adaptation of Grotius' text, especially the adopted birdsong, the added plant – the sunflower – and the added animals: the unicorn and the lion. That Vondel adopted the birdsong theme should come as no surprise. After all, since the time of the troubadours, birdsong had

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'Der dieren koning, die de wouden plagh te vullen / Met yslijkheên, weet hier van brieschen noch van brullen. / De draeken neemen geen venijn op hunne tong. / De slangen sluimeren, gekrunkelt in een' wrong. / Indien de beer besta te grimmen en te gillen, / d'Outvader weet hem flux met een gezicht te stillen' (*Werken*, X, p. 407–408).

33 An indomitable kind of wild ass, sometimes represented as a kind of unicorn (see below).

34 Grotius, *Adamus exul* 29:

'Natos jugis in altis / Iubes salire fontes, / Quos cum feris bibentes / Sitim levent Onagri: / Ad quod aves sedentes / Dulci canent susurro / Sub arborum comâ.'

35 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:

'Daer staet d'eenhoren, die zich spiegelt in de bron. / Hier volght de zonnebloem het aenschijn van de zon, / En schijnt in 't harte ontvonckt van levendige straelen. / Wat vogels zingen daer alle engelsche kooraelen / Met hunne keelen na! hoe weeligh hangt dit ooft!' (*Werken*, X, p. 119).

36 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:

'Daer 's levens boom bedeckt den klaeren watersprongk, / Waer uit terstont een leeu met zijn leeuwinne dronck, / En zoo veel dieren [...]' (*Werken*, X, p. 122).

been the traditional symbol of spring, and was thus perfectly suited to express the eternal springtime of Eden. At the beginning of Vondel's play this is represented in the song of the nightingale – a particularly plaintive moment for Lucifer who appears to be speaking while in the grip of a moment of nostalgia for the heavenly beauty from which he is forever excluded:

> Where am I here? You can hear the loud nightingale,
> the harbinger of the sun and the bright rays of the morning.
> I hear the spring wind rushing through the golden trees.
> You hear four streams flowing from a spring and a waterfall,
> spreading out from a hill in all directions.[37]

Because of this emphasis, the disappearance of birdsong after the Fall is all the more poignant, as Adam and Eve plaintively cry out:

> The wedding music is now silent. The birds have stopped singing.[38]
> [...]
> Now the wedding music is silent. All the birds and animals are frightened.
> That's how you and I must celebrate the wedding feast.[39]

In contrast to the traditional presence of birds in Eden, that of the sunflower is striking. The sympathic attraction of the sunflower, a newly imported New World plant, to the sun would become a much-discussed phenomenon in botanical circles as the flower became better known in Europe. Joachim Camerarius the Younger made an emblem of it in his influential *Symbolorum et emblematum centuriae quatuor* (1590–1604).[40] This emblem can be found with the same Christological symbolism in Zacharias Heyns' *Emblemata* [...]

37 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'Waer ben ik hier? men hoort den schellen nachtegael, / Den voorbo van de zonne en heldren morgenstrael. / 'k Hoor levenwecker met een morgenkoelte opkomen, / En lieflijk klateren door klatergout en boomen. / Men hoort vier sprongen uit een bron en waterval / Van eenen heuvel zich uitspreien overal' (*Werken*, x, p. 108).

38 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'Nu zwijgt de bruiloftsgalm. De voglezang zit stom' (*Werken*, x, p. 163).

39 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'[...] nu zwijght de bruiloftswijs. / Nu schricken teffens al de vogels en de dieren. / Zoo past het u en my de bruiloftsfeest te vieren [...]' (*Werken*, x, p. 169).

40 Camerarius Joachim, *Symbolorum et emblematum ex re herbaria desumtorum centuria una* (Nuremberg, Johann Hofmann: 1590) 59.

Sinne-Beelden streckende tot christelicke bedenckinge (1625). Heyns gives the following explanation of this emblem, using a long quotation from Du Bartas:

> This sympathy, attraction or compassion should lead us to follow Christ, who is the real sunlight to which we should turn, showing (in Plato's words) that we are His plants. This is what the Christian poet Du Bartas says in his "Seventh Day of the First Week of Creation":
>
> *He! Peux tu contempler l'estroite sympatie*
> *Qui ioint le blond soleil & la blonde Clythie,*
> *Sans penser qu'il vous faut imiter tous les iours*
> *Du soleil de iustice, & la vue & le cours.*
>
> Canst thou the secret Sympathie behold
> Retwixt the bright Sunne and the Marigold,
> And not consider, that we must no lesse
> Follow in life the Sunne of Righteousness.
> *Weekes* 249[41]

By depicting the sympathy between sun and sunflower, Vondel gives the scene a Christological meaning.

The two wild animals that Vondel adds to the Grotius text – the lion and the unicorn – also have symbolic significance. That of the lion is well known. The lion and the lioness are a favourite theme in the depictions of Eden:[42] in the Earthly Paradise, even the most ferocious animal lives in love with its mate and in harmony with the other animals.

Compared to this relatively clear and well-known symbolism, the significance of the animal with which the quote begins, the unicorn, is more puzzling. It is probably Grotius' "indomitable onagers" that gave Vondel the idea of replacing these animals with another indomitable animal, namely the

41 Heyns Zacharias, *Emblemata* [...] *Sinne-Beelden streckende tot christelicke bedenckinge* (Rotterdam, Pieter van Waesberghe: 1625), fol. D2 v: 'Dese *Simpatia*, eentreckinge, ofte Medogentheyt, behoort ons te verwecken tot de navolghinghe Christi, sijnde Christus ons rechte Sonne-licht daer wy ons na te wenden hebben, thoonende (ghelijck Plato seyt) dat wy oock hemsche Planten sijn. Waer over onsen Christelijcken Poët *Bartas* seyt, in synen sevensten dach der eerster weken:

"[Du Bartas quotation] / He! Hoe kond ghy aensien de mede-dogentheden / Des Sons en goude-bloms, te saem so wel te vreden / Sond'reenich achterdocht, of wel te sijn bereyt, / Om volgen Godes Soon, Son der gerechticheyt.'"

42 See, for instance, the Paradise paintings by Jan Brueghel the Elder.

unicorn – which, according to tradition, is not only indomitable but also cannot tolerate conspecifics, although they do tolerate other animals in their vicinity. This substitution of onager for unicorn, incidentally, has a historical ground. The onager and the unicorn have been confused for one another since Ctesias in the 5th century BC.[43] The unicorn at the spring is a common theme in pictorial representations of Earthly Paradise. A similar unicorn, surrounded by waiting animals, can for instance be seen in Jan Brueghel's *Creation of Adam* (1594).[44] This theme, linked to the supposed anti-toxic power of the unicorn's horn, is common in medieval art and literature, and is associated with its antipathy towards poisonous animals, and its sympathy towards other animals. While Vondel mentions only the lion from the plethora of animals at the place of drinking, there is a clear reason for him to do so. British heraldry shows us that the lion and the unicorn were enemies, a relationship of antipathy that Joseph Boillot also mentioned – 'His great enemy, the one most opposed to him, is the lion'[45] – and depicted beautifully (Fig. 9.6). By putting the lion and the unicorn together as peacefully co-existing by the spring, Vondel reminds the reader that, before the Fall, all animals lived together in peace, even those seemingly implacable enemies.

There is another curious detail in Vondel's description of the unicorn. Why does he say that the animal *mirrors* itself? Is he unaware of the traditional iconography of the *drinking* unicorn? Or does he want to give a new twist to an old theme with his mirroring unicorn? Does he mean that even the unicorn, a wild and solitary animal, enchanted by the general atmosphere of sympathy in Paradise, is looking for a mate? Or is he thinking of the traditional Christological symbolism of the animal, known since the *Physiologus* (2nd century AD),[46] which is in line with the symbolism of the sunflower and fits in the general typological interpretation of the Fall? Like the stag or the mirroring roebuck in Cranach's 1526 *Adam and Eve* (see Fig. 3.2), the mirroring unicorn is an apt symbol of the coming of the Saviour.

This omnipresent sympathy within Eden is not exclusively positive, however: it has a dark side. We have already seen how Belial used the sympathy

43 Ctesias speaks of the horned wild asses from India. See Shepard O., *The Lore of the Unicorn* (New York: 1979; 1st ed. 1956) 26–32.

44 See chapter 7. See also Hieronymus Bosch, who depicted a unicorn in his *Garden of Earthly Delights*, as we discuss in our next chapter.

45 Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz*, fol. C v: 'Son grand ennemy, & plus contraire qu'elle ayt, est le Lion.'

46 On this symbolism see, for instance, Einhorn J.W., *Spiritalis Unicornis. Das Einhorn als Bedeutungsträger in Literatur und Kunst des Mittelalters* (Munich: 1976) (*Register*: 'Christus, Christologie').

FIGURE 9.6 Joseph Boillot, *Lion and Unicorn*, woodcut in Joseph Boillot, *Nouveaux pourtraitz et figures de termes* [...] (Langres, Iehan des Prey: 1592), fol. Cij r. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-V-385
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between humans – especially women – and animals such as the stork, the dolphin and the unicorn as a way in which he might approach and then deceive Eve. Eve, in her turn, would use the argument of sympathy (or love) between animals to persuade Adam to take a bite of the forbidden fruit:

> I take the garden and all the animals as witnesses of your evil nature. The cruellest lions bend under their lionesses. The tiger burns with love, waiting for the slightest look or word from his dear tigress. They drink from the same spring, eat the same food and walk together.[47]

This argumentative and psychological interaction between Adam and Eve depicted by Vondel is thematically closer to Rembrandt's depiction of the First Couple than to that of Dürer and some others whose works show little if any conflict between them.

4 Conclusion

The symbolism of the dragon and the elephant in Rembrandt's Fall seems to be rooted in a long tradition of natural history – a tradition that includes the more recent genre of the emblematic fable – which Rembrandt may have found directly in Vondel's *Vorsteliicke Warande* (with illustrations by Marcus Gheeraerts). On the other hand, Dürer's work also plays an important role in Rembrandt's animal symbolism. For his *Adam in Ballingschap*, Vondel himself might have found inspiration for his manipulation of animal symbolism (especially for the image of the dragon and the role of sympathy and antipathy) in Rembrandt's work. However, it is unlikely that Vondel expected his reader to recognise a reference to Rembrandt's etching in his *Adam in ballingschap*. Rembrandt's grimy, realistic, unidealised portrayal of characters hardly seems to fit with Vondel's great tragedy, and certainly not with the idealised history of Apelles, to which Vondel compares his play in one of his paratexts.[48] If there

47 Vondel, *Adam in ballingschap*:
'Ick neem den hof, en al de dieren tot getuigen / Van uwen wrevlen aert. de wreetste leeuwen buigen / Zich onder hun leeuwin. de tiger brant van min, / En ziet niet lievers dan zijn lieve tigerin / Naer d'oogen en den mont. zy drincken uit eene ader, / En eeten eene spijs, en wandelen te gader' (*Werken*, x, p. 156).

48 For this comparison, see Konst J., "Een levende schoon-verwighe schilderije. De tragedie als historiestuk", in Fleurkens A.C.G. – Korpel L.G. – Meerhoff K. (eds), *Dans der Muzen. De relatie tussen de kunsten gethematiseerd* (Hilversum: 1995) 103–115.

is a painter with whom Vondel would like to be associated, it would be Rubens rather than Rembrandt.[49]

The fact that Rembrandt may have been inspired by Vondel's *Vorsteliicke Warande*, and that Vondel's *Adam in ballingschap* shows some thematic similarities to Rembrandt's *Fall* is not, however, enough to allow us to speak of a dialogue between the two geniuses.[50]

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49 Porteman K., "Vondel schildert een Rubens", *Neerlandica extra muros* 41.2 (2003) 29–42.

50 Dialogue, or even polemics, as has been argued by Eva Schuss with regard to some of their other works. See Schuss E., "Dove verf? De relatie tussen Rembrandt en Vondel in historisch perspectief", *De zeventiende eeuw* 22 (2006) 225–246.

CHAPTER 10

By Way of Conclusion: Lines of Imitation and the Animal Turn

Were there animals in the Earthly Paradise, and if so, what was their function? Artists have found different ways of answering these questions. They could, of course, simply have depicted a Paradise without animals – a solution proposed by artists as diverse as Lucas van Leyden and Nicolas Poussin. Another solution was to depict the animals in their mutual relationships of harmonious sympathy, or threatened by the impending postlapsarian antipathy. Hieronymus Bosch, for example, dealt with this second solution in a special way. In the left panel of his triptych *Garden of Earthly Delights* (Madrid, Prado, between 1500 and 1504), Bosch depicts the animals as simultaneously before and after the Fall in a very heightened state of sympathy and antipathy: the unicorn, for example, is in sympathy with the other drinking animals, which it leads in order to purify the water, but in antipathy with the poisonous reptiles, which it drives away with its purifying horn. These poisonous animals can be seen crawling out of the water on the right side of the painting. Another example of antipathy is Bosch's cat holding a mouse in its mouth.[1] We have seen that, at about the same time, Albrecht Dürer found a very different way of representing the nature of animals before the Fall: he rendered his animals in a state of resigned, immobile apathy in the face of their future antipathy. Cranach, Cornelis van Haarlem and Jan Brueghel, on the other hand, put them in a more alert state, arranging the animals in such a way as to suggest both their future love and strife. Cranach and Cornelis van Haarlem make them focus not only on each other but also on the viewer outside the picture, using visual rhetoric to draw the viewer into the painting.

Despite all these differences between the artists, which are the subject of the case studies in our book, we can discern three general lines of development in the depiction of animals in Paradise. The first line is Dürer's work and its impact. The most striking aspect of Dürer's depictions of the Fall is his atypical combination of linguistic pun and traditional biblical typology. Dürer's hermeticism was certainly sensed, but perhaps not fully understood, by his followers. We have seen this particularly in Cranach, but it can also be seen in artists such as Baldung Grien or Herri met de Bles. Symbolic of Dürer's afterlife is his

1 For a detailed analysis, see Vandenbroeck P., *A suspect Paradise: studies on the left panel and detail symbolism of Hieronymus Bosch's so-called 'Garden of Earthly Delights'* (Louvain: 2018).

 | DOI:10.1163/9789004715271_012

elk. This animal, albeit perhaps poorly understood, reappears in other depictions of Paradise: we have seen it in Cranach, and at the end of the century it reappears, accompanied by other exotic hoofed animals, in the *Expulsion from Paradise* by Hans Hoffmann (ca. 1580–1590, Vienna Gemäldegalerie). There is also an elk to the left of Adam in an early Fall by Jan Brueghel, made in collaboration with Hendrick de Clerck (ca. 1597–1598, Neuberg an der Donau, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen). But both Hoffmann and Brueghel seem to quote Dürer's elk more as an homage to the master than as a manipulation of a symbol fully understood.

Indeed, many artists give their own interpretation of the work of their great model, Dürer. An interesting but rather isolated case of interpretive imitation is the anonymous double painting of the Fall, sometimes ascribed to Hans Baldung Grien, now in the Galleria degli Uffizi (Fig. 10.1). This double painting is an imitation of Dürer's 1507 painting, now in the Prado, but with the addition of several animals, two of which were copied from other Dürer works. The lion is a direct reference to the lion that appears in one of Dürer's engravings dedicated to Hieronymus. And the two parrots – the African grey parrot and the yellow-headed Amazon parrot from Brazil – are modern variants of Dürer's traditional rose-ringed parakeet. The other animals are not by Dürer, but were inspired by other paintings by Cranach. The stag, the pheasant and the two partridges are typical of Cranach, while a boar emerges from the shadow of the brushwood in the left foreground, its fierce gaze seizing the eye of the viewer. This boar, which here holds the same negative connotation as Cranach's boars, is not visible in the reproduction, which may account for its being often overlooked in modern studies.[2] The Dürer effect can still be felt in Rembrandt's *Fall*, in which he quotes Dürer while at the same time distancing himself from him.

Rembrandt brings us to the second line of imitation. In his depiction of the elephant and the dragon, we have noted the presence of the Aesopian fable, the standard images of which were provided by Marcus Gheeraerts. We have addressed several artists who were influenced by Gheeraerts (Simon De Myle, Cornelis van Haarlem, Maerten de Vos, Pieter van der Borcht), although it is not always clear whether his works acted simply as a supplier of pictorial motifs or as a transmitter of an Aesopian world view of postlapsarian cunning and cruelty.

In this respect Brueghel's paintings are extremely interesting as they bring us to the third line of imitation, that of nature. Not only does the influence of the Aesopian fable gradually diminish, but the main theme – the Fall or other

2 But not by Christian Schoen, who gives a thorough interpretation of the animals depicted: Schoen C., *Albrecht Dürer: Adam und Eva. Die Gemälde, ihre Geschichte und Rezeption bei Lucas Cranach d. Ä. und Hans Baldung Grien* (Berlin: 2001) 158–162.

FIGURE 10.1 Hans Baldung Grien (?), *Adam and Eve*, oil on panel, 212 × 85 cm (each panel), ca. 1520, Florence, Uffizi Gallery
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN

scenes from Genesis 1 and 2 (the Creation of Adam, the Creation of Eve, Adam naming the animals) – gives way to the depiction of nature: the main theme literally and figuratively recedes and even disappears into the background. This phenomenon, which also applies to other biblical or mythological themes suitable for the depiction of animals – such as the *Animals entering Noah's Ark* and *Orpheus and the Animals* – also occurs in the works of painters such as Roelant Savery. Whenever Brueghel collaborated with a fellow painter, such as Rubens or Hendrick de Clerck, the main theme was taken up again and brought to the fore.

This attention to nature does not imply a one-sided relationship between painting and natural history. This relationship appears to have been bilateral: painting not only reflected contemporary scientific interest in nature, but also sought to correct it. We have seen this in the depiction of the bird of paradise,

which Brueghel depicted *with* feet, whereas contemporary natural historians until Carolus Clusius assumed that birds of paradise were footless. Brueghel also tried to outdo them in his depictions of exotic birds such as parrots, featuring more species with more accuracy than his scientific competitors, with their uncoloured and relatively coarse woodblock illustrations, were able.

1 Wtewael's Eden

The three primary elements of influence identified here – the combined Dürer and Cranach *Nachwirkung*, the Aesopian fable, and natural history – come together in a lesser-known painting on the Fall (ca. 1610) by the Utrecht artist Joachim Wtewael[3] (Fig. 10.2). First of all, let us take a look at the disposition of the First Couple. This painting shows the First Couple in a pose strikingly reminiscent of Cranach's 1510 woodcut – Adam sits beside a gracefully standing Eve, his mouth near her right breast – but Wtewael introduces some notably modernising touches, accentuating the psychological interaction between them far more than Cranach had – Adam does not seem to be looking at the apple or at Eve's breast, but at her face, and Eve's grace is displayed according to the contemporary mannerist fashion of the *figura serpentinata*. There is also a reference to Dürer's 1504 print: the cat depicted next to Eve's left foot is looking fixedly at a mouse crouching by Adam's side. The colour scheme, with the blue-green light in the background and a number of white animals in the distance, is strongly reminiscent of Brueghel's Paradise landscapes.[4] Brueghel's influence, however, is particularly visible in the naturalistic display of the animals and their disposition – so much so that the painting has long been attributed to Brueghel. A number of animal pairs appear to have been included to emphasise the paradisiacal harmony: a sheep and a ram, a goat and a he-goat, two rabbits, two geese, and two swans. However, there are also pairs which seem to announce the imminent post-Paradise antipathies between the creatures: apart from the already mentioned cat and mouse, we see the dog and the cat, and the horse and dromedary – the horse looks away from the dromedary.[5] Wtewael's two dogs are also intriguing. The dog to the right sits quietly, paying no attention to the very large dog on the left, which, with its half-open

3 On this painting, see Clifton J. – Helmus L.M. – Wheelock Jr. A.K. (eds.), *Pleasure and Piety: The Art of Joachim Wtewael* (Washington, DC: 2015) 135–137.

4 On these and other particularities of Brueghel's landscape, see Prosperetti L., *Landscape and philosophy in the art of Jan Brueghel the Elder* (*1568–1625*) (Farnham: 2009), and Honig E.A., *Brueghel and the senses of scale* (Pennsylvania: 2016).

5 The antipathy between horse and the dromedary/camel is mentioned three times in Boillot's *Nouveaux pourtraitz*. See also chapter 8.

FIGURE 10.2
Joachim Wtewael, *The Fall* (*Adam and Eve*), ca. 1610–1615, oil on copper, 39.5 × 28.7 cm
PRIVATE COLLECTION

red mouth displaying large teeth and its red glowing eyes has an ominous air about it. This dog is reminiscent of a wolf. If this animal is indeed a wolf – or a dog meant to change into a wolf after the Fall – this explains its immediate proximity to the crane, which is right behind it. Crane and wolf can be found in a well-known Aesopian fable illustrated by Marcus Gheeraerts (Fig. 10.3).[6] With this (hypothetical) reference to the fable, Wtewael puts himself in the lineage of those artists who use Aesopian material to depict the animal world of Eden. The crane, of course, holds its own meaning as a symbol of vigilance,[7] illustrated here by the watchful gaze it casts over Adam and Eve. Crane and eagle may both have connotations with vigilance, but their postlapsarian connection is one of antipathy, as noted by both Gessner and Aldrovandi.

Furthermore, the animals visible in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil are closely related to those of Brueghel. Most of these animals are known for their imitative qualities: the three parrot species, the crow-like bird above the eagle (probably a jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), recognisable by its

6 *Wolf ende Crane*, WF 67.

7 Erffa H.M. von, "*Grus vigilans*. Bemerkungen zur Emblematik", *Philobiblon* 1 (1956) 286–308.

FIGURE 10.3
Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Wolf ende Crane* [Wolf and Crane], etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567) 67. Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-YI-19
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form, posture, grey-black colours, and striking white iris), and of course the monkey, for which the exact species is not identifiable. The monkey mimics the attitude of the sitting Adam, just as in Brueghel and Rubens' *Paradise with the Fall of Man* the two lovebirds imitate the attitude of Adam and Eve, and the monkey imitates their eating of the forbidden apple. Just as in Brueghel and Rubens, the birds seem to be chosen in order to emphasize the painting's natural historical topicality. At the very top is depicted one of the recently discovered species of lory, with a red body and green wings (*Lorius garrulus*?), and perched next to it is a green-winged macaw (*Ara chloropterus*), a species that was introduced into Brueghel's work around 1613. Wtewael's accuracy also makes it possible to recognize the goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), although it is insufficient to identify the bird next to the macaw – maybe a common redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*). Wtewael's realism goes so far that the serpent in the tree can be identified from the yellow collar behind the head as a ringed snake (*Natrix natrix*).

An undated drawing by Wtewael, *Adam in the Garden of Eden, Naming the Animals* (Fig. 10.4), confirms the all-embracing, syncretizing character of his work. We find again the contrasting pair of horse and dromedary, looking away from each other. In the background two other traditional antipathies are depicted: a stag is facing a lion, and a unicorn is turning away from that same lion. In the foreground a monkey, looking at the viewer, embraces a cat, a clear

FIGURE 10.4 Joachim Wtewael, *Adam in the Garden of Eden, Naming the Animals*, *ca. 1605–1610*, drawing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
PUBLIC DOMAIN

reference to Cornelis van Haarlem's painting of the Fall and to Gheeraerts' emblematic fable *The Monkey and the Cat*.

The example of Wtewael shows once again the importance of at least three forms of imitation: *direct* imitation (in the naturalistic representation of the animals), *selective* imitation (in the selective use of Dürer and Cranach, the Aesopian tradition, and Brueghel), and *emulative* imitation (in the artist's aim to match and surpass his referenced predecessors). These forms of imitation are at work, to a greater or lesser extent, in all of the works on the theme of the Fall treated here. They therefore form the very bedrock of the cases studied in this book.

2 An Animal Turn in Eden?

Coming to the end of this book, it is necessary to place it in the wider framework of the "animal turn" that has been present in literary and art historical discourse for several decades.[8] The term "animal turn" is mostly used when referring to the meta-level of 20th- and 21st-century art historical and literary publications on a particular (in our case, early modern) period, rather than the artistic and literary production of that period itself. However, let us step back from our time to see if any animal turn is present in early modern depictions of the Fall.[9] There does appear to be a change in the attitudes of artists and writers towards animals, but this development cannot be called a true "turn" or "shift", for the change occurs in a steady progression, beginning with Dürer. Placing the few exceptions to the rule to one side, before Dürer, those animals that did appear in depictions of Paradise served a merely decorative function. It was not until Dürer that they would gain the function as signifiers supporting the anthropocentric main subject, the Fall.

In Dürer's and Cranach's depictions of the Fall, man is superior to the animals: he rules over them. This imposing and even aggressive anthropomorphism goes back to the book of Genesis, especially Genesis 6:2, when God, after the Ark has landed on Mount Ararat, speaks to Noah: 'And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of

8 See the seminal article of Harriet Ritvo: Ritvo H., "On the Animal Turn", *Daedalus. Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Science* 136.4 (2007) 118–122.

9 Regarding the concept of "animal turn": A similar move from the meta-discourse of the present back to the primary discourse of the past is also made and discussed by Harris N., *The Thirteenth-Century Animal Turn. Medieval and Twenty-First-Century Perspectives* (n.p.: 2020).

FIGURE 10.5 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, Titlepage, etching in Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Bruges, Pieter de Clerck for Marcus Gheeraerts: 1567). Bibliothèque nationale de France RES-YI-19
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the sea; into your hand are they delivered.' This human dominion over the animal world is reiterated in Psalm 8:47, around which Marcus Gheeraerts created the illustrated title page for the fable book *De Warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Fig. 10.5). In this title print,[10] the traditional depiction of Aesop as poorly

10 This paragraph and the following one are taken from Smith P.J., "Title Prints and Paratexts in the Emblematic Fable Books of the Gheeaerts Filiation (1567–1617)", in

dressed and hunchbacked yet surrounded by animals or symbolic objects from his legendary life, has been replaced with the image of a handsome youth. The youth's crown indicates that he is the ruler of the three realms in the animal kingdom, as represented by their respective leaders: the eagle for the creatures of the air, the lion for the terrestrial animals, and the dolphin for the aquatic animals. This is evidently an illustration of the Psalm quotation on the title page:

> Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:
> All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
> The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
>
> *Psalm* 8: 8 – King James Version

In his left hand, Geeraerts' youth holds objects that symbolise his control over these three kingdoms: a bird net, a hunting horn, and a harpoon. In his right hand he holds a number of objects related to the making of the book. The artist's palette and the burin stand for the painter (inventor) and the engraver (executor), who in the case of the *Warachtighe fabulen* are united in a single person: Marcus Gheeraerts. The title print's wind instrument (an oboe) is a reference to the work's musical qualities, the result of De Dene's command of poetic meter. By holding in a single hand the attributes of poetry and painting, the youth symbolizes another major novelty of the book: the collaboration of the two sister arts. The title print thus clearly expresses an anthropocentric worldview, in which man is ruler of the animals.

However, the superiority depicted in Gheeraerts' title print will soon turn out to be flawed, as several fables from the same book proclaim precisely the opposite view, namely the superiority of animals over humans. This not only because some animals outsmart man (the guard dog is smarter than the thief),[11] or simply too strong (the lion is stronger than man),[12] but especially because here the animals *lecture* man, as emphasized in the threshold poem by the poet-painter Lucas d'Heere. These are the opening lines:

Bossier P. – Scheffer R. (eds.), *Soglie testuali. Funzione del paratesto nel secondo Cinquecento e oltre. Textual Threshholds. Functions of Paratexts in the Late Sixteenth Century and Beyond* (Rome: 2010) 157–200 (more specifically 163).

11 *The Dog and the Thief* (*WF* 56).

12 *The Man and the Lion* (*WF* 20).

> Come, you human animal, created in the image of God, and learn from the animals how things are in the world, how one should live in the right way – all this is contained here [in this book].[13]

In a number of cases, these human animals should follow the example of the non-human animals when it comes to religious matters. For example, at the end of the *Warachtighe fabulen* there are several edifying fables with birds as protagonists: *The Swan and the Stork* (*WF* 99) is about a dying swan who sings beautifully because he is about to exchange earthly life for eternal life; *The Stork and the Nestlings* (*WF* 107) concerns the stork who does not hesitate to sacrifice one of his young to God every year out of "piety"; and *The Phoenix* (*WF* 103) explains how the bird, like Christ – and the Christian – dies only to rise again.[14]

In the title print of the *Esbatement moral des animaux* (1578) (Fig. 10.6), the French adaptation of the *Warachtige fabulen*, Gheeraerts further depicts this leading role of the animals. This print represents a theatrical performance by a number of animal actors with an audience of human spectators. The most striking animal is the monkey, as it is the only one depicted wearing human clothes, even if they are those of a jester: a fool's hat and a bauble. This animal seems to be the link with the human spectator. His bauble points at the audience, and he is the only animal to look beyond the boundaries of the illustration, not so much at the audience in front of him (as the lion seems to do), but directly at the reader. The moral is clear: the animals, in their wise foolishness, can teach people (including the reader) a lesson.

Gheeraerts seems to have set a trend. From the painting of Simon de Myle onwards, the animal world gained in importance. Noah and his family almost disappear in the midst of the animals – and in the Paradise scenes of Jan Brueghel, but also of Roelant Savery, the First Couple literally and figuratively recede into the background. Adam and Eve become no more than an excuse to paint the animals – and the same goes for the mythical Orpheus, who is traditionally depicted as surrounded by a multitude of animals listening to his music. In Roelant Savery's and Jan Brueghel's Orpheus paintings, the mythical singer and musician gives the whole stage to the animals. And

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13 Lucas d'Heere, "Tot den Leser en Ziender" (To the Reader and Viewer), in FW, fol. A2 r: 'Comt ghi menschelick Dier, naer Gods beelde gheschepen / En van de Beesten leerdt, hoett met de weerelt staet: / Hoe men recht leuen sal, daert al in es begrepen.'

14 See my "Animal Fables of Contemplation", in Bussels S.P.M. – Enenkel K.A.E. – Weemans M. – Wise E.D. (eds.), *Imago and Contemplation in the Visual Arts and Literature (1400–1700). Festschrift for Walter S. Melion* (Leiden-Boston: 2024) 406–419.

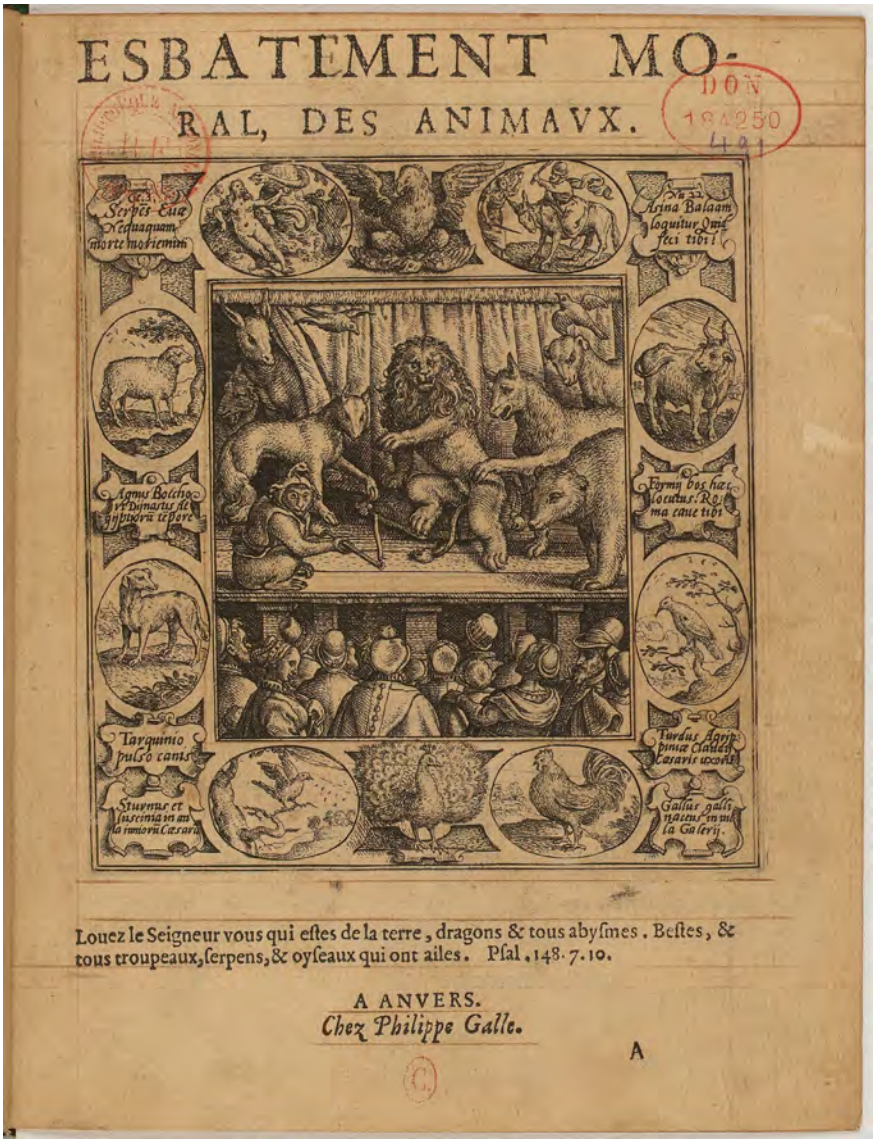

FIGURE 10.6 Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, Titlepage, etching in anon. *Esbatement moral des animaux* (Antwerp, Philips Galle: 1578). Bibliothèque nationale de France
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in a little-known, humorous painting, Savery replaced his beloved character Orpheus with the fable writer Aesopus, surrounding him with a large number of music-making and dancing animals which seem to have walked straight out of Aesopus' fables.[15] Savery's and Brueghel's paintings show a genuine interest in the animal, both as an aesthetic object and as an object of natural knowledge, even of science. However, in her recent book *Picturing Animals in Early Modern Europe: Art and Soul* (2022),[16] Sarah R. Cohen offers a different explanation for the disappearance of man into nature. She does so by referring to Michel de Montaigne's critique of the arrogance of the 'human animal' over the 'non-human animals' (the use of this actual terminology is not anachronistic, but justified when referring to Montaigne's point of view):[17]

> [W]e do not place ourselves above *other animals* and reject their condition and companionship by right reason but out of stubbornness and insane arrogance.[18]

As Cohen notes, Montaigne's most quoted passage on the equality of man and animal is his remark about his cat:

> When I play with my cat, how do I know that she is not passing time with me rather than I with her? We entertain ourselves with mutual monkey-tricks. If I have times when I want to begin or to say no, so does she.[19]

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15 Roelant Savery, *The Poet Crowned by Two Apes at the Feast of the Animals*, ca. 1623, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. See Smith P.J. – Wepler L. (2023), "Dancing animals in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam", in Meijer F.G. – Puttelaar C. van de – Wepler L. (eds.), *Art stories from the Netherlands and Italy, 1550–1800: Liber amicorum in honour of Gregor J.M. Weber* (n.p.: 2023) 317–327.

16 Cohen S.R., *Picturing Animals in Early Modern Europe: Art and Soul* (Turnhout: 2022).

17 For the expression "human animal", see also 'menschelick Dier' in Lucas d'Heere's preface in *WF*, fol. A2 r, and 'animal raisonnable' in Peeter Heyns, "Au Spectateur et Lecteur", in Anonymous, *Esbatement moral des animaux* [...] (Antwerp, Gerard Smits for Philips Galle: 1578), fol. A2 r.

18 Montaigne Michel de, *The Essays*, transl. M.A. Screech (Harmondsworth: 1991) 541 (cited by Cohen, *Picturing Animals* 21). Italics mine. Original text: '[C]e n'est par vray discours, mais par une fierté folle et opiniastreté, que nous nous preferons aux *autres animaux*.' Montaigne Michel de, *Les Essais*, eds. J. Balsamo – M. Magnien – C. Magnien-Simonin (Paris: 2007) 511. Italics mine.

19 Montaigne, *Essays* 505. Original text: 'Quand je me joue à ma chatte, qui sçait, si elle passe son temps de moy plus que je ne fay d'elle? Nous nous entretenons de singeries reciproques. Si j'ay mon heure de commencer ou de refuser, aussi a elle la sienne.' Montaigne, *Essais* 474.

FIGURE 10.7
Pieter van Veen, *A Man with a Cat*, marginal drawing in Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essais* (Paris, Abel Langelier: 1602). British Library C.28.g.7
PUBLIC DOMAIN

That this passage was already known to the first Dutch readers[20] is shown by the representation created by lawyer and artist Pieter van Veen – brother of the painter and emblematist Otto Vaenius – in the margin of his personal copy of Montaigne's *Essays* (Fig. 10.7).[21]

Can we now argue that the 'animal perspective' of Montaigne's cat is found in animal painting of the first half of the 17th century? This is certainly possible in the still lifes of Frans Snyders, Jan Weenix and their contemporaries, as Sarah Cohen and, before her, art historians such as Susan Koslow have argued with numerous references to Montaigne's 'theriophily' ('love of animals').[22] In these still lifes, the animals (cat, dog, monkey …) who watch the table on which the shot poultry and game are displayed play their role as acting protagonists, without any human characters visible. This is not the case in the many Paradise paintings we have considered, where the animals are not the protagonists. In

20 On Montaigne's *Essays* and its audience in the Southern and Northern Netherlands, see Smith P.J. – Enenkel K.A,E. (eds.), *Montaigne in the Low Countries (1580–1700)* (Leiden – Boston: 2007) and Boutcher W., *The School of Montaigne in Early Modern Europe: Volume II: The Reader-Writer* (Oxford: 2017).

21 On Pieter van Veen as a reader of Montaigne, see Smith P.J., "'Son dire au faict de la langue francoise est admirable.' Pieter van Veen, lecteur de Montaigne", in Giacone F. (ed.), *La langue de Rabelais – La langue de Montaigne* (Geneva: 2009) 569–586; Kolfin E. – Rikken M., "'A very special copy. Pieter van Veen's illustrations to Montaigne's *Essais*", in Smith – Enenkel (eds.), *Montaigne and the Low Countries* 247–261; Boutcher W., "From father to son. Van Veen's Montaigne and Van Ravesteyn's *Pieter van Veen, his son Cornelis and his clerk Hendrik Borsman*", in Smith – Enenkel (eds.), *Montaigne and the Low Countries* 263–303.

22 Koslow S., *Frans Snyders. The Noble Estate. Seventeenth-Century Still-Life and Animal Painting in the Southern Netherlands* (Brussels: 2006) 211–212. For a more general overview, see Wolloch N., *The Enlightenment's animals: changing conceptions of animals in the long eighteenth century* (Amsterdam: 2019).

these works, however, animals prove to be much more than mere carriers of meaning. They also serve to capture and direct the gaze of the human viewer, forcing us to reflect on the postlapsarian position of ourselves as descendants of Adam and Eve.

The focus on the 'animal perspective', generated by the current animal turn in contemporary art historical and literary meta-discourse, offers new possibilities for interpreting the numerous depictions of the Fall. This applies *mutatis mutandis* to the other perspectives defined and applied in the present study: differential imitation of the authoritative works of Dürer, Cranach, and Jan Brueghel; biblical typology; Aesopian fable writing; and natural history, including the key concepts of sympathy and antipathy. The case studies offered from this variety of perspectives will hopefully provide material for extrapolation and further research into the rich theme of the Fall in the visual and literary arts throughout Europe.

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Index nominum (historical persons before 1800)

Index of Animals

Note: this Index of Animals contains scientific and non-scientific English names. To exclude confusion with similar species, the scientific Latin name has been added where appropriate.

This book looks at early modern representations, both pictorial and literary, of the animals surrounding Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden at the dramatic moment of the Fall. Beginning with Albrecht Dürer's engraving *Adam and Eve* (1504) and ending with Rembrandt's etching *Adam and Eve* (1637), it explores the many manifestations of this theme at the intersection of painting, literature, and natural history. Artists such as Lucas Cranach and Jan Brueghel, and poets such as Guillaume Du Bartas and Joost van den Vondel, as well as many others, mainly from Germany and the Netherlands, are discussed.

Paul J. Smith is Professor Emeritus of French literature at Leiden University. He has published on French literature, on early modern natural history in relation to the visual arts, and he co-edited *Ichthyology in Context (1500-1880)* (Brill, 2024).

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