

Slavs and Dogs: Depiction of Slavs in Central European Sources from the Tenth-Eleventh Centuries

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Introduction

The economic, legal, cultural and symbolic aspects of the animal world have attracted growing interest in the humanities in recent years. Animals played a role in medieval literary genres such as bestiaries and hagiography where, among other functions, they often served as term of comparison to different peoples and societies. In this preliminary examination of how animals and peoples were depicted, my aim is to shed light on the ways in which the comparison was employed to characterise peoples and construct identities in Central European sources during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Specifically, in the narrative sources (chronicles, passions of martyrs, and lives of saints)¹ related to the Christianisation of Central Europe selected, I contextualise concrete references in order to show how certain depictions of non-Christian Slavs as dogs served both to negatively characterise pagans by comparing them to animals and to bolster the identity of Christians confronting alien cultures.² My sources in this article are the following:

¹ I am not going to deal with the specificity of the genres mentioned above but instead limit myself to referring to them in general terms.

² This approach to the subject of animals and social identity, which I hope to explore further in the future, is not my first experience with topics related to the animal world: I examined certain facets of the relationship between animals, sin, and penance in Burchard of Worms' *Decretum*. I explored the thematics of animals and sin in two papers: Andrea Vanina Neyra, "Los animales y la penitencia: responsabilidad y reparación frente al pecado," in *Palimpsestos: Escrituras y reescrituras de las Culturas Antigua y Medieval* (Bahía Blanca: Ediuns), 221-236; eadem, "Penas contra animales en el Corrector de Burchard de Worms," unpublished ms., *Jornadas de Jóvenes Investigadores en Historia Medieval y Moderna*, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, October 20-21, 2011; see http://www.conicet.gov.ar/new_scp/detalle.php?keywords=&id=27564&congresos=yes&detalles=yes&congr_id=1199104. In Burchard's *Corrector* animals may either perform a sin or be a victim or instrument of a sin committed by men. There are three mentions of dogs in the *Corrector*. Two of them do not imply a characterisation of people as animals, but rather prescribe penances for sin in some way related to dogs. The first is the use of *lig-*

- *Passio sancti Venceslavi martyris Gumpoldi Mantuani episcopi*
- *Passio sancti Adalberti martiris Christi*
- *Chronicon* by Thietmar of Merseburg

They are representative of three different genres: passions of martyrs, lives of saints, and chronicles. Other sources have been taken into consideration and will be researched in further studies.

The uses of the image of dogs for characterizing the other

Animals have been compared to individuals or collective groups throughout history. My aim in this presentation is to show how the comparison of dogs with Slavs pejoratively portrays the otherness of both, while at the same time

aturas and spells in order to liberate dogs (or animals in general) from an illness (Burchard von Worms, *Decretorum Libri XX. Ex consiliis et orthodoxorum patrum decretis, tum etiam diversarum nationum synodis seu loci communes congesti*, ed. G. Fransen and T. Kölzer (Darmstadt: Scientia Aalen, 1992), 193v; the other one has to do with eating meat from an animal which had been killed by a dog or a wolf: *Comedisti morticina, id est animalia quae a lupis seu a canibus dilacerabantur, et sic mortua inventa sunt? Si fecisti, X dies in pane et aqua poenitere debes* (Burchard von Worms, *Decretorum Libri XX*, 197v). This refers to the topic of contact with animals resulting in impurity, which will be mentioned later. Thirdly, there is a penitential question dealing with incest, where the sinner's behaviour is compared to that of a dog who returns to his vomit: *Accepisti uxorem cognatam tuam, vel quam cognatus habuit, separari debes ab ea, et poenitere juxta modum cognationis: Quia sancti Patres, et sancta illorum statuta, incestis conjunctionibus nil prorsus veniae reservant, neque numerum generationum definiunt. Sed id statuerunt, ut nulli Christiano liceat de propria consanguinitate seu cognatione uxorem accipere, usque dum generatio recordaretur, cognosceretur, aut memoria retineretur. Quia sanctus Gregorius dicit: Si quis de propria cognatione, vel quam cognatus habuit in conjugium duxerit, anathema sit. Quapropter scire debes, quia non est ita ut multi sacerdotes multos seducunt, dicentes quod in ipso peccato poenitentia esse possit. Verbi gratia, si tu modo haberes cognatam tuam, vel uxorem alterius, vel aliquid tale quod licitum non esset, et velles in eo peccato permanere, et tamen in poenitentia esse: verbi gratia, si hodie quadraginta dies in pane et aqua pro unoquolibet peccato peractos haberes in poenitentia, et iterares prius peccatum, nihil valeret poenitentia quam fecisti, juxta id quod dicitur: Sicut canis qui redit ad vomitum suum, et sues ad volutabra sua, ita erit et peccatori, qui redit ad peccatum prius confessum: Quapropter scias vere, dum in ipso peccato fueris, poenitentia ejusdem peccati nihil valet. Burchard von Worms, *Decretorum Libri XX*, 192v. Despite the excerpt having come from the genre of penitentials (in this case a normative citation from a canonical collection), unlike the narrative instances analysed herein, this representation of a sinner who repeats his fault in the guise of a dog returning to his vomit (a pig is another animal frequently referred to for pejorative purposes) is noteworthy. The quotation derives from Proverbs 26, 11: *sicut canis qui revertitur ad vomitum suum sic inprudens qui iterat stultitiam sua*. The proverb is also cited in 2 Peter 2, 22: *contigit enim eis illud veri proverbii canis reversus ad suum vomitum et sus lota in volutabro lut*. Quotations from the Bible come from the New Revised Standard Version, ed. Zaine Ridling (USA: Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 1989).*

casting adversaries as a kind of monster.³ In general terms, this type of depiction can be based on either physical or moral characteristics or on both. But in all cases the common thread is the view that one culture is, in some way, superior to another as bearer of a truth – Christians as opposed to infidels, pagans or heretics, for instance.⁴ And by contrast, any characterisation of the other necessarily involves a characterisation of the self as well.⁵

³ “Como ha expresado Jeffrey Jerome Cohen en *Monster Theory. Reading Culture*, el monstruo es una criatura que habita a las puertas de la diferencia, es la diferencia hecha carne que reside entre nosotros. Las diferencias que pueden encarnar estas figuras pueden ser de índole cultural, política, racial, económica y sexual.” Dora Barrancos, Preface to Dora Barrancos et. al., *Criaturas y saberes de lo monstruoso* (Buenos Aires: FFyL, UBA, 2008), 13. Additionally, Michael Uebel explains the relationship between monsters and boundaries in the world of myth: “Monsters, as discursive demarcations of unthought, are to be treated not exclusively as the others of the defining group or self, but also as boundary phenomena, anomalous hybrids that constantly make and unmake the boundaries separating interiority from exteriority, historical world from fictional otherworld, meaning from nonsense. Because they blur categorical distinctions with their heterogeneity and mobility, monsters are especially symbolic of displaced, hence threatening, matter. Aversion to the ambiguity of such boundary phenomena falls under the famous category of ‘pollution behavior,’ a ‘reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications.’ Monsters, by inhabiting the gap between exclusive zones of intellectual or social meaning, deliver a threat to the zones’ integrity, or, more precisely, to the assumption that such zones can be delimited in the first place. In other words, monsters expose classificatory boundaries as fragile by always threatening to dissolve the border between other and same, nature and culture, exteriority and interiority. It is therefore understandable why monsters are at home in the belief structures of myth. They are mythic creatures in the precise Levi-Straussian sense: as figures of liminality or in-betweenness, monsters, like the structures of myth circumscribing them, are at the same time charged with the insoluble task of resolving real social contradictions and with the function of inventing symbolic solutions to imaginary contradictions.” Michael Uebel, “Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity,” in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 266.

⁴ The *infidelitas* – implied in the pejorative use of the term “dog”, as it will be discussed below – “fue entendida en la Edad Media como negación u oposición a la *fides* religiosa. Así, se considera en dos sentidos: en el primero, negativo, es la propia del que es infiel en cuanto que no tiene fe por no haberla conocido. Es la de los paganos o *gentiles*. Obviamente, no hay culpa personal en esta clase de *i*. En el segundo sentido, positivo, se entiende como oposición a la fe religiosa y, entonces, es infiel quien desprecia o directamente rechaza las proposiciones de la *fides*, como el hereje.” Silvia Magnavacca, *Léxico técnico de Filosofía Medieval* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 2005), 366. In Burchard’s *Decretum* (mentioned above), which is a normative source from the same period considered here, it is possible to observe how there is some kind of assimilation among heresy, *infidelitas*, and superstition, which are, in some instances, interchangeable concepts used to invigorate the preaching of clerics against what the Church considered dangerous beliefs and practices. Andrea Vanina Neyra, “El *Corrector sive medicus* de Burchard de Worms: una visión acerca de las supersticiones en la Europa medieval,” PhD diss. (Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2011).

⁵ The existence of monsters (or peoples characterized as such) “... real or imagined, has done nothing less than place in question the self-identity of humans. Where does the human begin

The idea of otherness and monstrosity is relative to each culture, and consequently must be understood in context. In his classical study on monsters, Claude Kappler maintains that there is no single definition of a monster, but rather descriptions vary according to author and epoch. However, it should be noted that, in general, definitions do bear a relationship to the norm: “Resulta claro que no existe *una* definición del monstruo, sino *diversos* intentos de definición, que varían según los autores y, sobre todo, según las épocas. En el sentido más amplio, el monstruo se define *con relación* a la norma, siendo ésta un postulado de sentido común; el pensamiento no atribuye al monstruo con facilidad una existencia *en sí*, mientras que la concede espontáneamente a la norma. Así, pues, todo depende del modo en que se define esa norma.”⁶ Taking as point of departure the sources cited above deriving from the Christianisation Age of Central Europe in the tenth and eleventh centuries, it becomes clear that “the monstrous other”, “the dog”, is the non-Christian.

As part of the general context, it should be mentioned in passing that monsters with dog-like attributes are present in the imaginary of the Middle Ages. For example, Claude Kappler explains that *cynocephali* stand out among hybrid monsters (animal-headed with a human-body)⁷ in the medieval times: “En nuestros días, uno de los más conocidos es el minotauro, pero en la Edad Media entre los más célebres figuraban los cinocéfalos. Es categoría muy difundida por todo el mundo, y pueden incluirse en ella todas las divinidades

and the monster leave off?” David Gordon White, *The Myths of the Dog-Man* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1. “... la historia del sujeto puede leerse en el trazado de sus formas de subjetivación, formas que no dejan de confrontar con sus versiones pesadillescas, con sus dobles, con los límites que siempre las rebasan hasta el punto de enfrentarlas con ellas mismas y con los nuevos y renovados modos de exterminio en los que, histórica y faltamente, parecen expresarse.” Dora Barrancos, Preface to Barrancos et. al., *Criaturas y saberes de lo monstruoso*, 10. Similarly, Gerardo Rodríguez, who studied the image of the Muslim-“other” in three Carolingian narrative sources, stating: “Las imágenes de sí y del otro que crea y recrea cada sociedad están íntimamente vinculadas a objetos, actos o acciones a las cuales se adjudican determinados valores y sentidos – y también la carencia de ellos. Cada persona se define y, a su vez, es definida por los demás, con relación a un ‘nosotros’, pero también a un ‘ellos’/‘otros’. Esta definición colectiva sobre el mundo natural, el universo y el contexto histórico-cultural particular está indiscutiblemente ligada a lo simbólico y lo imaginario.” Gerardo Rodríguez, “La construcción histórica de la imagen del otro en las narrativas carolingias de la novena centuria,” in *Historia, literatura y sociedad: aproximaciones al mundo medieval desde el siglo XXI*, dir. Gerardo Rodríguez (Mar del Plata and Bahía Blanca: Cultura Fusión and Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones de las Culturas Antigua y Medieval del Departamento de Humanidades de la Universidad Nacional del Sur: Ediuns, 2010), 123.

⁶ Claude Kappler, *Monstruos, demonios y maravillas a fines de la Edad Media* (Madrid: Akal, 1986), 235.

⁷ “Designamos con este término genérico de hibridación a todos los seres constituidos por elementos anatómicos dispares que alteran el aspecto físico normal... Los monstruos ‘híbridos’ más frecuentes son, precisamente, seres en que se mezclan elementos humanos y animales.” Kappler, *Monstruos, demonios y maravillas a fines de la Edad Media*, 167.

egipcias, como Anubis, el dios-chacal (muy cercano a los cinocéfalos); Amón, el dios con cabeza de carnero; Horus, con cabeza de toro, etc. (...) En la imaginería religiosa hay representaciones de estos ‘monstruos’. Existen más concretamente incluso en la escenificación de los dramas litúrgicos – o misterios – de varias civilizaciones de la Antigüedad: las danzas con máscaras de los magos o de los *medicine-men* tienen lugar desde la prehistoria. En las representaciones de los mitos, los actores visten a menudo como animales y llevan máscaras apropiadas.”⁸ In the case at hand, Slavs are not viewed as *cynocephali* or given the physical features of animals, but they do bear the name and may even “bark”⁹ instead of speaking in a human language, which is a cultural product.¹⁰ Thus, my focus here will be on the cultural and religious implications of using the word “dog” to refer to the other.

The Bible provides us with numerous examples of references to dogs (literal and symbolical) in textual contexts where, as in The Book of Psalms,

⁸ Kappler, *Monstruos, demonios y maravillas a fines de la Edad Media*, 170. The author mentions several examples of cynocephaly and affirms the relevance of the myth: “Hay pocos monstruos que se presten a variaciones tan numerosas, lo que prueba la riqueza y la importancia de este mito;” *ibidem*, 172. The examples given include the following: “Más cerca de nosotros, en fin, se encuentran santos cristianos con cabeza de animal; es el caso de ciertas representaciones de los cuatro evangelistas, así como, más en especial, el de San Cristobal. Señala G. Lascault a propósito de los cinocéfalos que ‘existe una curiosa imagen en ciertos íconos, un San Cristóbal con cabeza de perro; L. Réau presenta ejemplos de este ‘Cristóbal cinocéfalo desde un código del siglo XII hasta los íconos populares del XIX’;” *ibidem*, 171; Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (c. 1182?-1252), an Italian franciscan missionary relates “... que tienen pezuñas de buey y que su lenguaje es en parte humano y en parte canino: ‘Pronunciaban escasas palabras al modo humano, el resto era como un ladrido de perro, mezclando aquéllas y éste para hacerse entender’;” *ibidem*, 172; “... Odorico pretende que en la isla de Vacumerán (sin duda Nicobar) ‘las gentes tienen rostro de perro, tanto los hombres como las mujeres’, extendiendo así este fenómeno a los dos sexos, y Mandeville, al contrario que Hethoum, afirma que ‘son razonables y de buen entendimiento’;” *ibidem*, 172.

⁹ The anthropologist David Gordon White briefly examines the etymology of the English term “hound”, the form of either a widespread morpheme among Indo-European, Semitic, and also central Asian languages or the onomatopoeic sound of a bark. White, *The Myths of the Dog-Man*, 13. Additionally, after pointing to Central Asia as the “primal vortex” of the world mythology of cynanthropic and cynocephalic races, he adds in a note that “A perennial description of Dog-Men has them barking rather than speaking, or barking after a few words of human speech: this echoes the place of the hellhound in Indo-European mythology, whose growl places it on the threshold between silence and speech. In Sophocles’ play, the noble Philoctetes craves human speech as much as he does anything else in his desire to free himself from savage nature;” *ibidem*, 217.

¹⁰ Inversely, the line between humans and animals seems to be transgressed in the apocryphal Acts of Peter, when a stray dog starts to speak. The Acts of Peter, IX, *Apocryphal New Testament*, ed. J. K. Elliot (Oxford, OUP, 2005), 408. For some examples of talking animals in apocrypha, see: Dominic Alexander, *Saints and Animals in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2008), 23.

praises to God are sung, along with pleas for salvation from the enemy,¹¹ the impious¹² and evildoers.¹³ In the Book of Revelation, dogs share the same fate as sorcerers, the immoral, murderers and idolaters, all of whom are left outside the gates of the Christian city.¹⁴ What is the origin of this association? The Bible judges dogs to be impure: dogs eat meat torn from beasts in the field (Ex 22, 31); they eat human corpses (1 Kings 14, 11; 1 Kings 16, 4; 1 Kings 21, 23-24; 2 Kings 9, 10; 2 Kings 9, 36);¹⁵ they lick blood flowing from corpses.¹⁶ There is therefore a link between impurity – which prevents entrance into the Temple and participation in certain rituals – and unbelieving – which means that the infidel is (far) away from God; on the contrary, Christians are united in Eucharist, in Christ.

¹¹ “Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies. To the leader: Do Not Destroy. Of David. A Mik-tam, when Saul ordered his house to be watched in order to kill him. Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; protect me from those who rise up against me. Deliver me from those who work evil; from the bloodthirsty save me. Even now they lie in wait for my life; the mighty stir up strife against me. For no transgression or sin of mine, O LORD, for no fault of mine, they run and make ready. Rouse yourself, come to my help and see! You, LORD God of hosts, are God of Israel. Awake to punish all the nations; spare none of those who treacherously plot evil. *Selah* Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city. There they are, bellowing with their mouths, with sharp words on their lips – for “Who,” they think, “will hear us?” But you laugh at them, O LORD; you hold all the nations in derision. O my strength, I will watch for you; for you, O God, are my fortress. My God in his steadfast love will meet me; my God will let me look in triumph on my enemies. Do not kill them, or my people may forget; make them totter by your power, and bring them down, O Lord, our shield. For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips, let them be trapped in their pride. For the cursing and lies that they utter, consume them in wrath; consume them until they are no more. Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob. *Selah* Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city. They roam about for food, and growl if they do not get their fill. But I will sing of your might; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been a fortress for me and a refuge in the day of my distress. O my strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.” Ps 59.

¹² “But God will shatter the heads of his enemies, the hairy crown of those who walk in their guilty ways. The Lord said, ‘I will bring them back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea, so that you may bathe your feet in blood, so that the tongues of your dogs may have their share from the foe’.” Ps 68, 21-23.

¹³ “For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shriveled...” Ps 22, 16.

¹⁴ “Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.” Rev 22, 15.

¹⁵ The topic of impurity after touching a human or animal corpse is found in Lev 5, 2; Lev 11, 35; Lev 11, 39; Num 19, 11; Num 19, 13; Num 19, 16.

¹⁶ The topic of dogs licking blood appears in: 1 Kings 21,19; 1 Kings 22, 38; Ps 68, 23, while the impurity of blood and the prohibition consigned to it is found in: Lev 3,17; Lev 7, 26-27; Lev 12, 4; Lev 12, 7.

Due to spatial limitations, I cannot quote or comment at any length on these scriptural precedents.¹⁷ Nor is it possible to provide an in-depth examination of the question of the appeal to negative connotations when recognizing or delimitating identities in other contexts. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to mention that contacts between Christendom and Judaism or Islam are also relevant in this regard. In fact, “Visual and literary constructions of otherness in medieval Christian (as well as Jewish and Muslim) societies often employed animal metaphors in a process of graphic dehumanization.”¹⁸

In his book on ritual murder, Kenneth Stow explores “... the scenario presented in Matthew 15: 26: Matthew’s statement, put in the mouth of Christ, that ‘the bread’ that he, Christ, has brought for ‘the children’ should not be ‘thrown to the dogs’... Exegetically, this verse was transmogrified into an image of Christian children hungering for the Eucharist, which ‘Jewish dogs’ incessantly plot to steal, consume, savage, or pollute. This identification dates from no later than the fourth century. Yet... often imagined Jewish plots against the Eucharist were expressed in later times in terms of ritual murder or blood libel, the victims called martyrs, and every martyr considered a Eucharistic surrogate. As though by definition, all imagined Jewish assaults against ‘innocent children’ came to be identified as assaults against the Eucharist. It is the perennially perceived interchangeability of martyr-victim with Eucharistic purity and its defence, or simply the idea of defending Eucharistic purity against its pretended enemies, that unites centuries of thinking.”¹⁹ Additionally, the author states that “This

¹⁷ The precedents for the link between the idea of impurity and dogs extend back to Hittite society (18th-12th century B.C.): “Yet purity and its conservation is not a Christian invention. It has been a central theme throughout the human past. It featured already in Hittite conceptions of the Temple Gate as early as the second millennium b.c.e. But so, tellingly, did the dog. Who might pass through the gate? Neither pigs nor dogs, for they were considered foci of impurity. No attempt will be made here directly to trace the transmission of this Hittite concept to the future. Yet one cannot but note the parallel to the prophet Isaiah, who contrasts the antinomies of proper sacrifice, an ox or a lamb and incense, with the unclean sacrifice of a dog, a pig, or idolatry. Adepts of the ancient Dead Sea Sect, too, may have used the canine image as a marker of impurity. That members of this sect linked the sense of their own purity with the idea of being chosen goes without saying.” Kenneth Stow, *Jewish dogs: an Image and Its Interpreters: Continuity in the Catholic-Jewish Encounter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 17.

¹⁸ Aleksander Pluskowski, “The dragon’s skull: How can zooarchaeologists contribute to our understanding of otherness in the Middle Ages”, in *Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages. Perspectives across disciplines*, ed. Francisco de Asís García García, Mónica Anna Walker Vadillo, and María Victoria Chico Picaza (Oxford: BAR, 2013), 109. On this point Pluskowski refers to Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 198.

¹⁹ Stow, *Jewish dogs*, XIV-XV: Actually, “... the arch-locus of impurity, dogs – read here, ‘Jewish dogs’ – were to be kept from entering ‘the temple’, now, the Christian temple. They must especially be kept away from (Matthew’s [15:26]) ‘bread.’ Were not Hittites admonished: ‘let not a pig or a dog stay at the door of the place [the temple] where the loaves are broken?’ And were they not further told: ‘Since a dog approached the [altar]

sense Matthew 7:6 reinforces, warning believers not to give the holy to dogs, their ‘pearls’ to swine. About the tenth century, this last verse was applied directly to Jews. The images of dogs (and pigs) and (Eucharistic) loaves (regardless of Matthew’s original intention) seem almost destined to become focal points in Christian confrontational teachings regarding Jews.”²⁰ These ideas expand to include references to barking²¹ and, I might add, to other peoples.

Encounters between Christians and Muslims are also marked by reciprocative characterisations of infidels as dogs.²² Islam challenged the existence of Christianity from the late seventh century on. In “Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity”, Michael Uebel wonders how identity can be configured as both effective limit and collapsible boundary.²³ In such a context he argues, “Like the monstrous race of Cynocephali (dog-headed men) with whom they were often identified, Saracens and their religion symbolized the blurring of ideal boundaries, such as those separating rational man from animal or civilized man from barbarian.”²⁴ Such appreciations

table and consumed the daily [sacrificial offering of] bread, they ‘consume’ [destroy] the table’.” The near identity of Matthew and the Hittite texts is breath-taking. Kenneth Stow, *Jewish dogs*, XVII.

²⁰ Stow, *Jewish dogs*, XVII.

²¹ Kenneth Stow quotes events from the Modern Age to support the idea of this continuous use of the image, Stow, *Jewish dogs*, XVII-XVIII.

²² Muslims have also used the term “dog” to refer to Christians as was proved by Soha Aboud-Haggar, “En Granada sólo quedó el llanto”, in: *La aventura de la Historia*, Año 4, Nº39, enero 2002, 63-66. After the fall of Granada, the 16th-century poet al-Daqqun manifests: “A comienzos del año noventa y siete, / el sol de al-Andalus desaparecido quedó, / Y el pero alcanzó / su objetivo porque a nadie / se encontró que nos defienda; / Que la voluntad de Allah se cumpla, / pues todo de Allah depende; Que cada desdichado se encierre / sobre su tristeza, y que Allah / nos proteja de todo mal.” This topic was explored in Gerardo Rodríguez, “Denominar y denostar. La injuria en *Los Milagros de Guadalupe* (España, siglo XV),” *IV Jornadas Internacionales de Historia de España "Tierra. Hombres. Culturas"*, Fundación para la Historia de España, Buenos Aires, September 9-10, 2004.

²³ In the preface to his book, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen summarizes that “Michael Uebel (“Unthinking the Monster”) unpacks how this process of identity formation was conducted in ... the writing of horrifying anti-Muslim polemic that purported to give an accurate account of the interaction between Christendom and Islam. By monsterizing Saracen alterity, Christians constructed their image of Self; Uebel turns to this field of ‘unthought’ (what is abjected in the process of becoming Christian, what is constructed as monstrous) to build a theoretical framework for the reading of monsters more generally.” Cohen, ed., *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, XII.

²⁴ Uebel, “Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity,” 268. Additionally, the author remarks that “One of my favourite examples is the famous Borgia *mappa mundi* that pictures northern Africa as a cynocephalic king of the Saracens seated on a throne and holding court for two subjects as monstrous in appearance as himself” and that “The conflation of Saracens and dogs occurs frequently in the French *chansons de geste*, where the Muslims are frequently portrayed as barking like dogs when they rush into battle.” He suggests the following reading: C. Meredith Jones, “The Conventional Saracen

become exacerbated during the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and the long Spanish Reconquista, as well as during the Crusades,²⁵ because “Islam threatens the preservation and renewal of sacred history by setting up an alternative, deviant history”,²⁶ distinguished by error, deviant practices, disorder, and monstrosity. Gerardo Rodríguez explored the subject of “los perros moros” in a paper about injury in *Los Milagros de Guadalupe* (s. XV),²⁷ where he outlines the chronology of the three-stage process of building the concept: “Este proceso de construcción de ‘lo imaginario’ no es ni uniforme ni rápido ni simple, todo lo contrario. Es un proceso múltiple, que se nutre de imaginarios diversos y que atravesó tres fases en su proceso de construcción: nacimiento – siglos VIII al XI –, difusión – siglos XI al XIV – y declinación – siglos XIV/XV.”²⁸ The initial steps of this periodization (birth and dissemination) coincide chronologically with the use of the image “Slav dogs” in the early days of the Christianisation process in Central Europe.

On the other hand, the studies of authors such as Peter Dinzelbacher on legal proceedings against animals or Michel Pastoureau’s research on symbolism examine the concept of the animal in general, while another area of analysis of otherness is zooarchaeology, where Aleksander Pluskowski considers “... whether variables in animal exploitation can be linked to the deliberate promotion of group identity...”,²⁹ contributing to “breaking down the notion of a single, simple medieval attitude to the natural world, and the values attached to differ-

of the Songs of Geste,” *Speculum* 17 (1942): 205. In addition, he points out that the fact of the identification of cynocephalics with Muslim ‘Turks’ shows the extension beyond the Latin tradition of popular folktales and romances, as shown by White in *The Myths of the Dog-Man*, where the anthropologist refers to the “... Slavic folk identification of Turks with dog-headed man-eaters”; Uebel, “Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity,” 284, footnote 18. Furthermore, Uebel refers to southern Slavs and the word *pesoglavci* to name the Turks: “To understand, for example, monsters and Saracens in the Middle Ages as figures of abjection who constitute in the cultural imaginary the limits of Christian identity, we must see these figures as boundary phenomena inseparable from their place at the territorial edge and inside the symbolic structure”; Uebel, “Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity,” 267.

²⁵ According to Uebel, “Such border anxiety in crusade literature often takes the form of an obsession with preserving the purity and fixity of origins.” Uebel, “Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity,” 269.

²⁶ Ibidem, 270.

²⁷ *Los Milagros* can be found at Archivo del Real Monasterio de Guadalupe.

²⁸ Rodríguez, “Denominar y denostar. La injuria en *Los Milagros de Guadalupe* (España, siglo XV),” 9.

²⁹ Pluskowski, “The dragon’s skull: How can zooarchaeologists contribute to our understanding of otherness in the Middle Ages,” 110. The author concludes that his paper “... has suggested how zooarchaeologists can and are contributing to furthering our understanding of heterogeneity in medieval European society on either side of the widespread acceptance of Christianity, by mapping the development of cultural norms through the study of the varied treatment of animal remains in the context of religious self-identification,” ibidem, 120.

ent species.”³⁰ The French historian Michel Pastoureau explains that there are two, apparently contradictory, currents of thought regarding animals’ status during the Middle Ages:³¹ the first current leads to a symbolic thinking of the animal, but also toward the repression of any behaviour which may involve confusion between the human and animal species (this includes practices such as dressing up like animals or using masks);³² the second current, reflecting Aristotelian and Pauline influences, holds that there exists a community of living creatures. Additionally, Dinzelbacher identifies two different periods related to the conception of the animal during the Middle Ages: “... In der Antike und im Mittelalter bis ins 13. Jahrhundert wurden Mensch und Tier als auf ganz unterschiedlichen Stufen befindlich gesehen. Tiere galten keineswegs als Mitgeschöpfe, sondern als von Gott klar und ausschließlich zum Gebrauch und zur Beherrschung durch den Menschen geschaffen.”³³ However, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there is a process of humanization of animals, which leads to the appearance of phenomena such as *Tierprozesse*.³⁴

With regard specifically to dogs, the anthropologist David Gordon White published a book that traces the transformations of the Dog-Man theme in various cultures (European, Indian, and Chinese), all sharing the image of otherness.³⁵ The author considers what these monsters were intended to warn about or monstrate (quoting Isidore of Seville’s identification of monsters with the ideas of monstrations (*monere*) or warnings (*monare*). He argues that “In all of the three traditions we will address in these pages, monsters are ideologically... construed as marginal groups that haunt the boundaries of human, civilized people”.³⁶ Additionally, “Ultimately, the dog, with its ambiguous roles and cultural values, its constant presence in human experience coupled with its nearness to the feral world, is the alter ego of the man himself, a reflection of both human culture and human savagery. Symbolically, the dog is the animal pivot of the

³⁰ Pluskowski, “The dragon’s skull: How can zooarchaeologists contribute to our understanding of otherness in the Middle Ages,” 120. The author mentions here Vicki Ellen Szabo’s book, *Monstrous Fishes and the Mead-Dark Sea: Whaling in the Medieval North Atlantic* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

³¹ “Por un lado, hay que oponer con la mayor claridad posible el hombre, creado a imagen de Dios, a la criatura animal, sumisa e imperfecta, si no impura. Pero, por otro lado, se percibe en varios autores la idea más o menos difusa de la existencia de un vínculo entre los seres vivos y de un parentesco – no sólo biológico, sino también trascendente – entre el hombre y el animal.” Michel Pastoureau, *Una historia simbólica de la Edad Media occidental* (Buenos Aires: Katz, 2006), 28-29.

³² According to the theology derived from the Fathers: “hay que oponer con la mayor claridad posible el hombre, creado a imagen de Dios, a la criatura animal, sumisa e imperfecta, si no impura.” Pastoureau, *Una historia simbólica de la Edad Media occidental*, 28.

³³ Peter Dinzelbacher, *Das fremde Mittelalter. Gottesurteil und Tierprozess* (Essen: Magnus Verlag, 2006), 152.

³⁴ Ibidem, 153.

³⁵ White, *The Myths of the Dog-Man*.

³⁶ Ibidem, 1.

human universe, lurking at the threshold between wilderness and domestication and all of the valences that these two ideal poles of experience hold.”³⁷ Nevertheless, there are also saints who have a dog’s characteristic attributes, among them, Saint Christopher³⁸ and Saint Guinefort, the venerated French dog whose cult, prohibited by the Church, was studied by Jean-Claude Schmitt.³⁹

The ambivalence is also remarked upon by Elisa Anti, who researched the topic of saints and animals in the Italian Padan Plain between the 4th and 12th centuries. The author explores the prohibition of hunting: “È anche significativo il fatto che la caccia vietata agli ecclesiastici –e anche, va sottolineato, alle badesse– fosse proprio la caccia nobile, quella che si distingueva dalla caccia contadina per l’utilizzo del cavallo, del cane e del falcone. Questi animali, appunto tipici e caratterizzanti della nobiltà, finirono inevitabilmente coinvolti nel clima di condanna che coinvolgeva l’intera attività venatoria.”⁴⁰ The dog, “... già in precedenza segnato da una connotazione quantomeno ambivalente” was “animale della soglia” (the threshold) in Mediterranean religions.⁴¹

Regarding the subject at hand in light of the aspects discussed above, how is this other, this monster, the Slav, framed in Christian sources dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries? Constructions of the other canalise the view and assessment of both the other and the self. In my view, traces in the sources I have examined merit consideration. In the next section I will analyse the images of Slavs as dogs depicted in them and discuss the implications.

³⁷ Ibidem, 15.

³⁸ See above, Kappler, *Monstruos, demonios y maravillas a fines de la Edad Media*, 171. See also White, *The Myths of the Dog-Man*, 34-36.

³⁹ Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Der heilige Windhund. Die Geschichte eines unheiligen Kults* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982).

⁴⁰ Elisa Anti, *Santi e animali nell'Italia padana (secoli IV-XII)* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1998), 150.

⁴¹ Ibidem. The author adds: “Il demone dei morti in aspetto canino ha origini antichissime e, in tutte le mitologie, questo animale appare associato alla morte, agli inferi, al mondo sotterraneo, tanto che la sua prima funzione mitica è quella de psicopompo. Nella cultura ebraica il cane, così come lo sciacallo, è caratterizzato da una fama del tutto negativa: animale impuro, esso è, nelle Scritture, immagine di ciò che è volgare e spregevole,” ibidem, 150-51. However, the dog also carries a positive image, that of fidelity and preachment: “Gli autori cristiani confermano, nei loro scritti, tale immagine duplice del cane. Isidoro di Siviglia, trattando di questo animale, pone l’accento sulle sue qualità positive, ricordandone l’assoluta fedeltà al padrone, di cui non abbandona nemmeno il corpo morto. Rabano Mauro aggiunge a queste caratteristiche positive anche quelle più negative, rammentando come il cane possa farsi simbolo dei Gentili, dei Giudei e degli eretici, mentre in Ugo di San Vittore torna a prevalere la connotazione positiva. Negli autori monastici, al contrario, il cane resta animale del tutto negativo, vera e propria ‘immagine dell’immondezza’;” ibidem, 151.

Slavs as dogs: irreligiosity, *infidelitas*, and identity in narrative sources

At this point, I would like to indicate some references which particularise how Central European Slavs are presented in narrative sources from the region written during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The sources selected are inscribed in different documental genres: chronicles, lives of saints, and *passiones* of martyrs. In the present article I will limit myself to references in three sources where the word “dog” was used to allude to Slavs (in general or to a particular people). My aim in subsequent research will be to systematically extend the temporal scope to include source material from twelfth-century texts in which the comparison is still found.

Although written within the boundaries of the Ottonian Empire, the three sources discussed here come from its geographical fringes. All three focus on encounters between Christians and non-Christian or superficially christianised peoples in an area where the population was mixed. These texts reflect the obstacles to imposing Christian culture on all aspects of life.

I will begin with the *Chronicon* of Thietmar of Merseburg,⁴² a chronicle written between 1012 and 1018 during the reign of Henry II, when the author was the bishop of the see (1009 and 1018). The chronicle’s objective was to recount the history of Merseburg – a see which was part of the Archdiocese of Magdeburg –,⁴³ as well as the history and deeds of the Saxon kings.⁴⁴ Real dogs are present in diverse contexts in this source: during Henry I’s conquest, Northmen and Danes were “recalled from their ancient error”, which involved the sacrifice of human beings, horses, dogs, and cocks on January 6 every nine years as an offering to their gods;⁴⁵ protagonist of a “miraculous event”, a dog performed an act of “justice” when it bit off the hand of the man who had killed its master;⁴⁶ ravenous dogs guarded hostages,⁴⁷ while ferocious dogs that disturbed a sick countess with their barking inexplicably and miraculously stopped bark-

⁴² I am using the English translation of the chronicle: *Ottonian Germany. The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. David Warner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), hereafter *Thietmar*.

⁴³ Magdeburg was created as a border-see from where christianising attempts of the Slavs were launched. Helmut Beumann, *Theutonium nova metropolis. Studien zur Geschichte des Erzbistums Magdeburg in ottonischer Zeit* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2000).

⁴⁴ I dealt with the topic in an article where, focusing on the prologues of the books in Thietmar’s *Chronicle*, the aim was to show how the author perceived the deeds of the Ottonian kings from the perspective of the interests of his own see. Andrea Vanina Neyra, “Glorias y aflicciones del imperio ottoniano: la *Crónica* de Thietmar de Merseburg”, *Revista electrónica anual: Actas y Comunicaciones del Instituto de Historia Antigua y Medieval* 9 (2013): 1-12.

⁴⁵ *Thietmar*, I 17.

⁴⁶ The dog’s victim recognizes he is paying for his crime because “... no criminal can hide from judgement without penalty, whether in this world or the next.” *Thietmar*, I 27.

⁴⁷ *Thietmar*, IV 25.

ing at the death of this holy servant of God;⁴⁸ and finally, furious dogs attempting to hunt down a bishop appointed in Burgundy (Archbishop Bertald of Besançon) by William (“the most powerful man in those parts”), were thwarted when he managed to escape by making the sign of the cross over his tracks and letting the dogs smell his scent.⁴⁹

Of particular interest is chapter 17 in the third book: Thietmar narrates the Slavic uprising started by the Liutizi in the year 983.⁵⁰ The bishopric sees of Havelberg and Brandenburg were attacked and destroyed. Brandenburg was abandoned by Bishop Folkman and his warriors, but the clergy were captured and the tomb of Dodilo (the second bishop of that see) plundered. The event is recounted, using terms emphasizing the violence of the episode and its consequences, as interpreted by Thietmar: “The second bishop, Dodilo, was dragged from his tomb. He had been strangled by his own people and, though three years in the grave, his body and priestly vestments were as yet uncorrupted. The greedy dogs then plundered him and carelessly threw him back again. They also stole all of the church’s treasures and brutally spilled the blood of many. Thus various cults of demonic heresy were venerated instead of Christ and his fisherman, the venerable Peter. And not only the heathen praised this sorrowful change, but also Christians!”⁵¹

The last sentence shows clearly the impressive damage done by the Liutizi as a consequence of Margrave Dietrich’s arrogance – which is detected as the cause of the uprising:⁵² pagans and Christians have united. In fact, the chapter

⁴⁸ *Thietmar*, IV 34.

⁴⁹ *Thietmar*, VII 28. Some questions arise: why do the dogs leave “as if propelled by a great whirlwind”? Because of the scent (of holiness)? Were they “converted” somehow? If so, can peoples depicted as dogs be converted? We assume these questions should be answered affirmatively.

⁵⁰ I will not go into detail about the uprising. It has been thoroughly researched by Christian Lübke, “Konflikte zwischen Sachsen und Slawen vom 10. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert,” in *Politische, soziale und kulturelle Konflikte in der Geschichte von Sachsen-Anhalt. Beiträge des landesgeschichtlichen Kolloquiums am 4./5. September 1998 in Vockerode*, ed. Werner Freitag, Klaus Erich Pollmann and Matthias Puhle (Halle, Saale: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1999), 12-21. Also, Christian Lübke, “Ein Fall von ‘challenge and response’? Die autochthonen Bewohner des südlichen Ostseeraums gegenüber Macht und Pracht des Christentums”, in *Glaube, Macht und Pracht. Geistliche Gemeinschaften des Ostseeraums im Zeitalter der Backsteingotik. Beiträge einer interdisziplinären Fachtagung vom 27. bis 30. November 2007 im Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg Greifswald*, ed. Oliver Auge, Felix Biermann and Christof Herrmann (Rahden/Westf.: Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2009), 39-47.

⁵¹ *Thietmar*, III 17.

⁵² “Während sich Heinrich I. noch mit der bloßen tributären Abhängigkeit der Elbslawen begnügt hatte, intensivierte sein Sohn Otto der Große die Herrschaft über die ihm qua Kriege als Königsland zugefallenen Gebiete: Er sorgte nicht nur für den Ausbau militärischer Stützpunkte und den organisatorischen Anschluß an die Reichskirche, sondern er förderte auch die Verflechtung der neu entstandenen Elbmarken mit dem Altsiedelland und das Ausgreifen kirchlicher Institutionen und sächsisch-thüringischer Adelsgeschlechter

opens as follows: “Margrave Dietrich’s arrogance so irritated peoples who had already accepted both Christianity and the status of tribute payer in regard to our kings and emperors that their members unanimously decided to take up arms.”⁵³ The attackers are called “greedy dogs”: Slavic in origin, some christianised and others not, but all infidels (infidelity interpreted as either denial or opposition to religious *fides*)⁵⁴ living on the margins – geographical and cultural: they destroy the work of the Church in the area, plundering its property out of rage, infidelity, and greed, as well as desecrating the tomb of an uncorrupted former bishop⁵⁵ and leaving him unburied, in defiance of the sacred character of the body itself,⁵⁶ the sacrality of the place of burial, and the authority of the Church represented by the space and the episcopal office. “Greedy dogs”, these Slavs are impure infidels; they are a threat to Christian society.⁵⁷

Written only a few years earlier than Thietmar’s *Chronicle*,⁵⁸ the *Passio sancti Venceslavi martyris Gumpoldi, mantuani episcopi* by Bishop Gumpold of

nach Osten. Als all diese Elemente schließlich die noch intakte slawische Selbstverwaltung auf lokaler Ebene sowie die kulturelle Autonomie erstickten, formierte sich im nördlichen Bereich der Elbslawen, im östlichen Mecklenburg, wirksamer Widerstand, der 983 in einen großen Slawenaufstand mündete und die ottonische Kirchen und Markenorganisation östlich der Elbe hinwegfegte.” Lübke, “Konflikte zwischen Sachsen und Slawen vom 10. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert,” 15. The tax pressure by the Church and the Empire is also referred to by Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages 800-1056* (Longman: London and New York, 1998), 178.

⁵³ Thietmar, III 17.

⁵⁴ See above: Silvia Magnavacca, *Léxico técnico de Filosofía Medieval*, 366.

⁵⁵ “Christian accounts of corporeal integrity and purity were inevitably expressed in terms of the body as a site, a topography of licit and illicit areas. Indeed, the renunciation of the natural body in Judeo-Christian thought only served to reaffirm its ideological centrality. Thus an elaborate system of analogies developed between the physical body and the political or collective body. The body often served to map political and religious hierarchies.” Uebel, “Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity,” 277.

⁵⁶ “Purity also referred to the physical purity of holy spaces and objects. These, too, had to be defended. No less important was the desire to demonstrate purity’s merits. Here, martyrdom and its commemoration played a particular role. So essential was the testimony of martyrdom to demonstrate Eucharistic resilience and purity that martyrs were fictionally created. To this, the repetition of ritual murder tales over the centuries both contributed and unerringly attests.” Stow, *Jewish dogs*, 16.

⁵⁷ Lübke, “Ein Fall von ‘challenge and response’? Die autochthonen Bewohner des südlichen Ostseeraums gegenüber Macht und Pracht des Christentums,” 39-47.

⁵⁸ I am using the English translation published by the Central European University Press. In terms of previous and current editions, Marina Miladinov summarises in her preface: “Gumpold’s life was first edited by Josef Dobrowsky in *Kritische Versuche, die ältere böhmische Geschichte von späteren Erdichtungen zu reinigen*, 3 (Prague, 1819), 53-115, and then by G. H. Pertz in *MGH SS IV (Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini ex Saxonici)* (Hanover, 1841), 211-23, whence it was taken over by J. Emler, FRB I, 146-66. The most recent critical edition is that of Jana Zachová, who in some cases adopted a different reading with respect to the previous editors. This is the edition we have chosen for our basic text, and in cases where I considered her divergences from the previous editions

Mantua,⁵⁹ commissioned by Otto II,⁶⁰ describes the royal martyr Wenceslas's murder in 935 at the instigation of his own brother, Boleslav.⁶¹

The *Passio* starts with a portrayal of the state of Bohemia as inhabited by a cruel and pagan population, where the Christian faith –although predestined to rule– has advanced less than in other parts.⁶² Gumpold recounts Wenceslas' early years and his willingness to devote himself to "heavenly things"; evidence of which was that, even when elected as his father's (Vratislav) successor to ducal rule,⁶³ he encouraged the expansion of Christianity through his deeds and the recognition of ecclesiastical rights.⁶⁴ In spite of his brother's desire to abandon secular power, Boleslav was full of rage and, incited by the devil, sought to acquire his kingdom.⁶⁵ This fraternal envy led him to prepare a plot against

of interest to the reader, they have been indicated in the notes below the Latin text." Marina Miladinov, Preface to "Passion of Saint Wenceslas by Gumpold of Mantua," in *Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth-Eleventh Centuries)*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay, trad. Cristian Gaspar and Marina Miladinov (Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2012), 25-26.

⁵⁹ "... apart from the authorship of this legend, virtually nothing is known about Bishop Gumpold. Jana Nechutová has presumed that he spent some time in Prague before taking up his office in Mantua, which may explain his full knowledge of details and his precision in the spelling of Slavic names." Miladinov, Preface to "Passion of Saint Wenceslas by Gumpold of Mantua," 22.

⁶⁰ "A number of Wenceslas's legends were written soon after the prince's martyrdom, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, both in Latin and Old Slavonic. In the late 970s most likely, and certainly before his death in 983, Emperor Otto II commissioned a new hagiography of the Bohemian saint from Bishop Gumpold of Mantua. The most famous manuscript containing Gumpold's work is the one preserved in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel (Cod. Guelf. II.2 Aug 4°, fol. 18v-37v), which has the particular value of being roughly contemporary with the composition of the legend itself. It was ordered by Emma, daughter of Adelaide of Burgundy and wife of Boleslav II, at the time of her widowhood and exile before her death in 1006. The codex contains 109 folios and its first section (fol. 1-37) contains three legends of various saints, among which Gumpold's is the oldest." Miladinov, Preface to "Passion of Saint Wenceslas by Gumpold of Mantua," 21. On Otto's agenda and Gumpold's text, see: Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400-1050* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001), 195-97.

⁶¹ "The cult of the royal martyr spread quickly throughout the Empire, contributing to the intentional creation of Ottonian dynastic cults." It is celebrated each September 28. Miladinov, Preface to "Passion of Saint Wenceslas by Gumpold of Mantua," 20.

⁶² "But although some pagans were, after erring on a tortuous side-path for a long time, guided back to the straightness of the normal way by the sacred illustration, still not all the nations of the world, even though predestined, obtained equally the gift of this grace; by the order of the celestial majesty, it reached those regions gradually, as if the devil were meant to be ruined step by step. Among such lands I will refer to one, which is inhabited by a Slavic people and will be described with the simplicity of this pen. It is a northern region, more savage and more belated in faith than others..." "Passion of Saint Wenceslas by Gumpold of Mantua," 33.

⁶³ Ibidem, 35.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, 53.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, 55.

Wenceslas, early attempts of which were hindered by “God’s orders” and divine protection.⁶⁶ Even though Wenceslas showed mercy to his brother and his companions, the man who had hidden “like a wolf in his cave”⁶⁷ attacked him, again, unsuccessfully, with his sword. When the right time came, however, in the end the duke was martyred: “‘Don’t you see, you dismal man?’ he said, ‘Your mischievous cruelty could turn against you now. There! What prevents me from becoming the one who spills his brother’s blood? But I do not want, my brother, that your blood should be asked from my hand at the last judgment. Take the sword, complete the sacrifice; do not postpone any longer what is to be done!’ As the irreverent brother received back his sword, he cried out loudly, as if in fear of being defeated, and called upon his companions to help him, pretending that he was compelled to fight back and that he was first wounded by his brother’s attack. The companions immediately came running, attracted by the great outcry, and asked their lord what was the reason for the tumult, as if ignorant of the crime, feeling his ardent rage. As the author of the crime shattered the holy head with the blow of the sword for the fourth time, everyone grabbed their weapons at once and eagerly pierced Wenceslas’ limbs with their lances and swords. The injured body fell prostrated upon the earth, half dead. Again and again, savage blows of swords were falling; guiltless blood was flowing; the body, free of sin, was torn in small pieces as if by dogs. The most sacred soul, liberated under so many tortures of wounds from the enclosure of its fleshly dwelling and given over to the hands of angels in noble triumph, entered the jubilant divisions of the heavenly kingdom forever on 28 September, in order to gaze at the face of the supreme remunerator in joy and sit among the glorious orders of martyrs in eternity.”⁶⁸

As a consequence, Wenceslas became a martyr who performed miracles,⁶⁹ and his cult spread, attracting the attention of the Emperor, who commissioned this hagiographical piece.⁷⁰ On the other hand, rage gripped the murderers: “As it has been truthfully related to us many times, after the triumph of the most steadfast athlete, all those who spilt his innocent blood were struck by anger from above and were either seized by the power of demons and never appeared again among people, or they changed their nature and began to bark like dogs instead of speaking, imitating the dog’s bite by gnawing their teeth; or again, they withered in pitiful dryness of body and, forever deprived of their hearing, soon ended their hateful life.”⁷¹ The image of dogs is again used here as an incarnation of infidelity, since the martyrdom was performed by pagans against

⁶⁶ Ibidem, 59.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, 61.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, 61-63.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, 63-75.

⁷⁰ See above.

⁷¹ “Passion of Saint Wenceslas by Gumpold of Mantua,” 65.

a merciful, Christian leader, partly because of the brother's ambition and partly because he was distorting the order, leading it away from the ancient customs.

The last source I have selected is *Passio sancti Adalberti martiris Christi*, which relates the life and office of Bishop Adalbert of Prague (983-989 and 992-994).⁷² The document has a complex tradition and transmission history,⁷³ well researched by the Polish editor Jadwiga Karwasińska⁷⁴ and her critics, such as Johannes Fried and Jürgen Hoffmann.⁷⁵ The *Vita prior* (X),⁷⁶ written in 999 in Rome, was reworked three times (versions A, B, C), all of which have elements taken from the lost original.⁷⁷ The well-known *Life of Saint Adalbert* starts with Adalbert's family background and a brief description of Slavonia: "There is a place in the parts of Germany, rich in resources, most mighty in arms, and ferocious men called Slavonia by its inhabitants. The greatest part of this land, held fast in pagan error, worships the creature instead of its Creator, sticks and stones instead of God."⁷⁸ Thus, at the very beginning of chapter 1 it is stated that Slavonia is part of Germany (margin) and the inhabitants are pagans (error). The text continues: "And, moreover, many among them, Christians in name

⁷² "Life of Saint Adalbert Bishop of Prague and Martyr," in *Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth-Eleventh Centuries)*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay, trad. Cristian Gașpar and Marina Miladinov (Budapest and New York : CEU Press, 2012), 77-182.

⁷³ I am using the English translation published in the Central European Medieval Texts volume, which is based on version A (Ottonian version) with additions from B and C (which might have been part of the original). The translator checked previous translations to the Polish and Czech languages by Abgarowicz and Zachová, respectively, while translations by Kürbis and Weinrich are disregarded. Cristian Gașpar, Preface to "Life of Saint Adalbert Bishop of Prague and Martyr," 90-94. The Preface also summarises the transmission history, 82-94.

⁷⁴ Jadwiga Karwasińska, *Les trois rédactions de 'Vita I' de S. Adalbert* (Rome: Angelo Signorelli editore, 1958).

⁷⁵ There are two recent efforts to reconstruct the "original" of the source, which the translator considers a step backward: Johannes Fried denied Karwasińska's conclusions and proposed a Western origin in the see of Lieja for the manuscript tradition, and Jürgen Hoffmann produced a new edition based on Fried's theory, taking into account a small group of manuscripts. Cristian Gașpar, Preface to "Life of Saint Adalbert Bishop of Prague and Martyr," 88-90.

⁷⁶ On the authorship of the first *Life*: "The numerous examples of formulae quoted verbatim or creatively adapted from the works of classical Latin authors, and especially the poetic tags which he so evidently favors, suggest that our author had received a solid classical training before taking on the monastic habit. At the same time, his familiarity with the works of Gregory the Great and especially John Cassian, as well as his constant reference to the *Rule* of St. Benedict, all point towards a man who was deeply conversant with staple authors of the monastic tradition. All these indications reinforce the hypothesis that the original version of the *Life of Adalbert*, best represented, perhaps, by its earliest surviving Ottonian version, originated in a monastic milieu and was the work of Iohannes Canaparius." Gașpar, Preface to "Life of Saint Adalbert Bishop of Prague and Martyr," 91.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, 81 and 88.

⁷⁸ "Life of Saint Adalbert Bishop of Prague and Martyr," chapter 1, 97.

only, live according to the rites of the pagans...,”⁷⁹ which implies contact between Christians and pagans, dangerous cultural encounters, margins, and superficiality of beliefs.

Right from the start Adalbert was different from others: he was more handsome than his brothers, pious,⁸⁰ chaste, and well-educated at the cathedral school in Magdeburg. When Dětmar (Thietmar), the Bishop of Prague died (992), Adalbert was chosen by the “desolate” flock and the ruler of Bohemia to take charge of the office – a decision supported by Emperor Otto III and Archbishop Willigis of Mainz⁸¹ and confirmed by a man possessed by the devil who said he only feared the person who would occupy the seat of the bishop.⁸² The arrival of Adalbert in Bohemia serves as an excuse for the author to introduce the reader to Wenceslas’ martyrdom: “... where that most famous duke Wenceslas had once reigned and had led an admirable life in God’s service. Later, however, after consummating his noble martyrdom by the sword of his impious brother, to this day he has never ceased revealing his merits through manifest proofs and remarkable miracles.”⁸³ Even though the Duke’s brother is not depicted as a dog here, he is referred to as an impious person responsible for Wenceslas’ martyrdom as discussed above.

Adalbert was appointed to and intended to serve this same region “... for a long time, yet with little gain to implement the rule of Christianity among his flock.”⁸⁴ The inhabitants were reluctant to follow their shepherd and continued committing all kinds of crimes and sins,⁸⁵ making the Bishop feel that he was wasting all his efforts and decide to try a life of contemplation in Rome⁸⁶ in the company of his brother Gaudentius.⁸⁷ Archbishop Willigis initiated a complaint against him, and Adalbert was obliged to return to the “society of evildoers”.⁸⁸ Chapter 19 is central to the subject discussed here: the wife of a nobleman, who was accused of having committed adultery with a cleric, applied to the Bishop for help “When, according to the barbarian custom, her disgraced husband’s relatives started searching for her in order to cut her head off...”⁸⁹ Then “that godless handful of people” demanded that the Bishop deliver the woman to them, promising to avenge the offense on Adalbert’s brothers, their wives and children if he acted otherwise. The man who threatens the future martyr is described as

⁷⁹ Ibidem, chapter 1, 97.

⁸⁰ In his free time, Adalbert used to visit the dwellings of sacred martyrs, such as Saint Maurice, whose relics were venerated in Magdeburg. Ibidem, chapter 4, 103.

⁸¹ Ibidem, chapter 8, 115.

⁸² Ibidem, chapter 4, 113.

⁸³ Ibidem, chapter 8, 117.

⁸⁴ Ibidem, chapter 9, 117.

⁸⁵ Ibidem, chapter 12, 123-27.

⁸⁶ Ibidem, chapter 13, 127-29.

⁸⁷ Ibidem, chapter 16, 141.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, chapter 18, 145.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, chapter 19, 147.

“the rabid Slav (who) was barking such things against the bishop.” The passage shows that “godless people,” the ones who continue under the rule of their “barbarian practices” bark like dogs, since they are untouched by Christian culture as represented by the bishop’s office.⁹⁰

Abandoning the “sick flock” once again,⁹¹ Adalbert was told to go back to his land by Archbishop Willigis, where he learned that all his family had been murdered by that “wicked nation”⁹² which did not receive him again because “We are all sinful, a people of iniquity, a stiff-necked nation. You, on the other hand, are a saint, the friend of God, a true Israelite... Such a great man and one of this kind can hardly endure the company and the society of sinners!”⁹³ Relieved, Adalbert decided to preach among the Prussians,⁹⁴ finding his martyrdom among them: “The spineless crowd gathered from all sides and stood by watching with rabid snarls, like dogs, what would happen to him.”⁹⁵ Next, “Savage barbarians... cut off his noble head...”⁹⁶ Slavs and Prussians alike are considered dogs, the former because of their irreligiousness and their clinging to prior practices, and the latter for these same reasons and for being guilty of his martyrdom.

Is the Slavs’ monstrosity reflected in their visible appearance in the sources? Unfortunately, no detail in the descriptions supports this view. Only their ferocity, savagery, and fury are made explicit to the reader. However, above and beyond physical features, monstrosity here is a question of morality: paraphrasing Claude Kappler, are monsters intelligent? Do they have a soul? If so, can they be virtuous?⁹⁷ If these questions are answered affirmatively, then the process can be reversed,⁹⁸ a major premise in all the sources considered above, which take into account the Christianisation undertaken on the outer fringes of Europe.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ Ibidem, chapter 19, 147-51.

⁹¹ Ibidem, chapter 20, 151.

⁹² Ibidem, chapter 25, 165.

⁹³ Ibidem, chapter 26, 167.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, chapter 27, 169.

⁹⁵ Ibidem, chapter 28, 171.

⁹⁶ Ibidem, chapter 30, 179.

⁹⁷ “... la Edad Media se preocupa igualmente por su naturaleza moral. Los monstruos, ¿son inteligentes? ¿pueden ser buenos, virtuosos? ¿tienen alma?” Kappler, *Monstruos, demonios y maravillas a fines de la Edad Media*, 251.

⁹⁸ Dominic Alexander mentions a motif of the vita of Saint Finán and a particularity in the Cainnech version: a wolf that had devoured a calf guards the cows as if a “humble dog.” This wolf becomes socialised, leaving his wildness, just as dogs can also adopt human social rules. Alexander, *Saints and animals in the Middle Ages*, 77.

⁹⁹ Claude Kappler mentions Augustine’s classification of monsters in two categories in *The City of God*, (XVI.8): creatures who are *rationalia mortalia*, such as men, and others who are *magis bestias quam homines*, such as cynocephaly: “Duda en incluir estos últimos – hombres por su cuerpo y perros por su cabeza – entre los seres humanos por tener como único lenguaje un *latratus*, un ladrido. Así, pues, es en buena medida la lengua, en tanto

Concluding remarks

In a world characterised by Christian cultural expansion and domination marked by encounters among different cultures, the sources written within the territories of the Christian Ottonian Empire reflect the boundaries and interaction created by intensive contact which serve to define the self and the other: "... imagining otherness necessarily involves constructing the borderlands, the boundary spaces, that contain – in the dual sense of enclosing and including – what is antithetical to the self."¹⁰⁰ Social and cultural differences are emphasised by means of the projection on humans of animal characteristics: animals and monsters – or human beings acting like them – become a cultural threat.

Slavs, or rather non-Christian Slavs, are depicted as dogs in the sources chosen, which were written by ecclesiastics during the Christianisation age of Central Europe. These infidels are the other who should be converted to the true religion – which is, in fact, a feasible deed, as shown by martyrs Wenceslas and Adalbert; they are monsters who live on the fringes (geographical and cultural) of civilization. The authors resort to the images they have at hand to portray the unfaithful as barbarian, savage, animal-like monstrous peoples. Slavs become, in consequence, dehumanised, their fierceness, savagery, and "barking" corresponding to their unbelief and the menace they represent to the Church, its leaders, and the Christian world.

que testimonio de pensamiento, de razón, lo que decide la naturaleza humana, moral de los monstruos." Kappler, *Monstruos, demonios y maravillas a fines de la Edad Media*, 252. This means that language is central to the definition of human nature. Additionally, David Gordon White states that "Thanks to Augustine, the Cynocephali were seen to be a part of the economy of salvation, albeit a fallen or exiled part; and so it was that they become widely allegorized and moralized as a quarrelsome, morally dumb, or even demonic race that was nevertheless redeemable". White, *The Myths of the Dog-Man*, 30.

¹⁰⁰ Uebel, "Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity," 265.

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Vorwort

In diesem Heft von *Medium Ævum Quotidianum* zeigt sich im Besonderen die Internationalität, die sich heute in Forschungen zur Kultur- und Alltagsgeschichte des Mittelalters erkennen lässt. Jene Situation kann zur Hoffnung Anlass geben, dass sich auch die internationale und kontinentenübergreifende Kooperation in Zukunft in ähnlicher Weise verstärken wird.

Die zwei ersten Beiträge von Autorinnen aus Argentinien und Frankreich, Andrea Vanina Neyra und Marina Viallon, basieren auf Vorträgen, die am International Medieval Congress in Leeds im Jahre 2014 in einer Sektion zu „Animals and Identity“ präsentiert wurden. Anne M. Scott von der Western Australian University analysiert die Exempla des englischen Gilbertinermönches Robert Mannyng (ca. 1275-ca. 1338) in dessen *Handlyng Synne*. Der vierte Beitrag der rumänisch-ungarischen Wissenschaftlerin Andrea-Bianka Znorovszky konzentriert sich auf das Phänomen des Cross-Dressings von heiligen Frauen und dessen Repräsentation im visuellen Befund.

Gerhard Jaritz