4 Prehistory 3: Pre-Patristic Traces of the Hellenisation of Biblical Animal Ethics

After the deportation of the Jerusalem upper class into Babylonian exile from 587 BC to about 545 BC, some of the deportees did not return to Israel, but scattered throughout the Near and Middle East and the Mediterranean. From this time onwards, there is a notable "Jewish" diaspora (although the term "Jewish" only appears in the Hellenistic period)—first in the Persian empire of King Cyrus and his successors, then from 333 BC in the Greek empire of Alexander the Great and his successors. From this moment on, an intensive encounter and confrontation between the Israelite-Jewish religion and Greek culture and its philosophy takes place.

But this encounter does not take place at eye level. It is not symmetrical, as if two cultures with equal rights and equal strength were meeting here. Rather, Greek culture is already dominant in purely quantitative terms. Today we would call it a "leading culture". The Jewish diaspora thus absorbs Greek culture, while the reverse process does not take place.

This is precisely what is called Hellenism. It means the spread of Greek culture and language, but also of philosophy beyond the Greek heartland and its penetration "into all areas of life: in language and literature, religion and philosophy, science and art, politics and economics, education and upbringing" (Michael Tilly 2005, 42). No one can completely escape this influence "in the long run [...]" (Michael Tilly 2005, 43). Hellenism is thus a cultural and historical rather than a political phenomenon, although it presupposes Alexander's world empire as a political framework for its enormous spread. Yet it remained the dominant cultural trend until late antiquity, that is, until a time when the Greek world empire had long since been replaced.

As a designation of a historical epoch, the term Hellenism has only been in use since the 19th century. However, in the sense of imitating the Greek way of life in language, costume and customs, the noun ἑλληνισμός and the verb ἑλληνίζειν were already used in antiquity. The New Testament calls Greek socialised Jews ἑλληνισταὶ (Acts 6:1; 9:29; 11:20).

The Hellenistic world encompasses a vast area, from Sicily and Lower Italy (Magna Graecia) to Greece, India and present-day Afghanistan, as well as from the Black Sea to Egypt. The Hellenisation of the Oriental popula-

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tion ensures that, at least until the 7th century, a simplified form of Greek, Koiné (from κοινός, common), was used alongside Aramaic by the urban population of Syria. In Asia Minor, this even lasted considerably longer. The cultural traditions of Hellenism also survived the political collapse of the Roman Empire and continued to have an effect in Rome and the Byzantine Empire for centuries.

Relatively early on, Hellenism also gained considerable influence over Diaspora Judaism. From the 3rd century BC to the 1st century AD, the so-called Apocrypha emerged, religious writings in the Greek language that seamlessly followed the Hebrew books of the Jewish Bible in time and had a high status. Although they were probably never canonised in Judaism, the fact that some of them found their way into the canon of the "Old Testament" in Christianity presupposes their high esteem in Hellenistic Judaism.

Of even greater importance for the Hellenisation of Diaspora Judaism is the Septuagint, a translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, which was produced from about 250 BC onwards, mainly in Alexandria, the largest metropolis in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and the centre of early Hellenistic Judaism. It was a project of the century. By about 100 BC, most of the books of the Hebrew Bible had been translated, with the rest to follow by 100 AD. The motivation for producing a Greek translation of the Bible may have been, internally, the strengthening of the identity of Diaspora Jewry, and externally, the self-confident presentation of one's own tradition in the plural discourse of society (also symbolised by the fact that the Jewish Bible was thus able to find its way into the world-famous library of Alexandria, cf. Siegfried Kreuzer 2016, 46–49). "With the Septuagint, Judaism entered into a public discourse with Hellenistic world culture." (Heinz-Josef Fabry, in: Erich Zenger et al. ^{9}2016, 61).

At the same time, a fundamentalist resistance movement was forming in Greek-ruled Israel: The Maccabees. Their emergence was triggered by the erection of a statue of a god in the Jerusalem Temple at the behest of the Greek Diadochi ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes. For devout Jews, this meant the desecration of the most sacred aspect of their religion. But beyond this open disregard for religion by the ruler, Maccabean ideology also fed on a broad cultural unease about the increasing Hellenisation of their environment. For example, the fact that Greek men play sports completely naked was anathema to them. The "clash of civilisations" was fundamental in their view.

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In this way, intra-Jewish conflicts arose between the Hebrew or Aramaic-speaking Jews of Israel and the Greek-speaking Jews in the Diaspora. As the movement of Jesus of Nazareth gradually became internationalised after Easter, these tensions quickly spread to it. Even the early Church in Jerusalem experienced a fierce dispute that could only be resolved by doubling the Church leadership and creating a separate governing body for each of the two parts of the Church: the Hebrew-Aramaic and the Hellenistic (Acts 6). And the fact that there is a tense atmosphere between Paul and the circle of the Twelve appointed by Jesus himself throughout his life is also due to this. While the Twelve are all Aramaic-speaking Galileans, Paul comes from the Hellenistic Jewish community of Tarsos. He does not understand the Aramaic mother tongue of Jesus, and the Hebrew way of life is foreign to him. "Paul uses the LXX, not the Hebraica. This means that he was not able to read the Old Testament in its original language. Rather, he was dependent on the translation that made the Old Testament accessible to him in his mother tongue: the Septuagint." (Peter Pilhofer [4]2019, 19).

With the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple in 70 AD, Judaism and the Jesus Community experienced a further surge in Hellenisation. The language of the entire New Testament and most of the writings of the early Church Fathers was Greek. The centre of young Christianity shifted from the one Hebrew centre of Jerusalem to several Greek and Latin centres: Rome, Antioch, Alexandria and Edessa. "Hebrew", or more precisely Aramaic-speaking Jews, made up a smaller and smaller proportion of those who joined the Christian community, until at some point they disappeared altogether. Thus, in summary, "'non-Hellenised' Christianity has never existed [...]" (Peter Gemeinhardt 2022, 3).

In Judaism, however, there was a remarkable turnaround: After the Bar Kochba uprising against the Romans and the expulsion of the Jews from Palestine in 135 AD, Judaism henceforth existed only as Diaspora Judaism. In the territory of Palestine, it was as good as extinct. But the Palestinian Jews then took over the leadership of Diaspora Jewry. This increasingly distanced itself from its Hellenistic currents—at least where it recognised Hellenistic ideas as such—, forbade the use of the Septuagint, which it increasingly perceived as a "catastrophe" (Heinz-Josef Fabry, in: Erich Zenger et al. [9]2016, 62), and withdrew entirely to its Hebrew and Aramaic traditions. Therefore, almost all Hellenistic-Jewish writings have survived only in Christian manuscripts and codices. Hellenistic Judaism perished.

Christianity, on the other hand, soon became so embedded in Hellenistic culture that it no longer perceived it as foreign or coming from outside but

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regarded it as a genuine heritage. Like Hellenistic Judaism before it, it read the Bible with Greek paradigms—but not vice versa: Greek philosophy with biblical paradigms. A dialogue with rabbinic Judaism, which continued regionally, could not stop this trend in its entirety.

In addition, there is a fundamental difference: while Judaism never proselytised in its entire history, Christianity sees itself as a missionary religion from the very beginning. In its opinion, the whole world ought to hear and accept the Gospel (Mt 28:16–20). But if you wanted missionary success, you had to engage with the surrounding culture. The message of Jesus had to be inculturated.

Christianity did not succeed immediately. For about two hundred years it remained a vanishingly small minority of less than one percent of the population (Kyle Harper 2020, 231). Only after the "Cyprianic Plague", presumably an Ebola pandemic named after its most prominent reporter, Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, which raged from about 245 to 265 AD, did the community of Christians grow in leaps and bounds. People saw that Christians lovingly cared for their sick relatives and that this led to a much lower mortality rate than in the population as a whole. So all of a sudden many people joined Christianity. By 300 AD, Christians already comprised 15 to 20 per cent of the total population, making them a "mass phenomenon." (Kyle Harper 2020, 231). When Emperor Constantine came to power a little later, he converted to the most dynamic and successful religious movement of his time.

In order to understand the assimilation of Stoic anthropocentrism by early Christianity, an additional consideration is important: when a small religious community sets out to become a "mass phenomenon", it is easier to persuade the majority who do not yet believe to adopt new beliefs than to adopt a new ethos. We will prove this with the example of ritual slaughter in chapter 4.3.4. It is much easier to accept Jesus as the Saviour of the world than to eat only kosher slaughtered meat from now on. The success of Christianity in the 3rd and 4th centuries was also due to its flexibility in adapting to the morals and laws of the Greco-Roman world. It is obvious that in the long run this can diminish the credibility of one's own message.

4.1 The late Old Testament texts

In the Old Testament, as it is used in Christianity, there are some books from the time of Hellenism that are still written in Hebrew, some also in

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Aramaic, and some that are written in Greek. The latter were obviously highly esteemed in early Hellenistic Judaism but were never included in the Jewish Bible due to its decline after the Bar Kochba revolt. Christianity, on the other hand, included them in the canon of its sacred writings.

Among the *Hebrew writings of the Old Testament,* there are four that fall in passages or entirely into the period of Hellenism, namely the Book of Proverbs and the Books of Job, Qohelet and Jonah. Of these, at least one deals directly with Hellenism, namely the Book of Qohelet. The books are briefly presented in the order of their dating, especially with regard to the perception of animals and the question of anthropocentrism.

The *Book of Proverbs*, also called Proverbs of Solomon, collects countless short sayings of wisdom from a period of around 600 years. The most recent of them date back to the 3rd century BC. Among them, a few deal with animals and emphasise above all their role model function vis-à-vis humans. "Thus, Prov 6:6–8 praises the wisdom of the ant, which in harvest time provides for its food in winter and sets it as an example for the lazy to emulate. The numerical verse Prov 30:24–28, on the other hand, puts together four animal species, the ant, the clipper, the grasshopper and the gecko, which make up for their smallness and weakness with a special measure of wisdom that guarantees their survival." (Peter Riede 2010, chap. 1.9). These sayings reveal a certain closeness to Greek philosophy, which also often presents animals as models for humans. Unlike Greek philosophy, however, there is no reference in the Book of Proverbs to human reason, which the Greeks always emphasise. Similarities to the Greeks are again discernible in Prov 30:29–32, where kings are admonished not to strut around as vainly as the lion, the cock or the lead goat. Here too, however, there is no reference to human reason or the reasonlessness of animals.

The greatest fame may have come from Prov 12:10: "The righteous has mercy on his cattle, but the heart of the wicked is unmerciful." Literally, it actually says: "The righteous knows the soul/desire (נֶפֶשׁ—nepeš) of his cattle", while the concept of mercy (רַחֲמֵי—raḥămê) is only found in the second half of the sentence. Whoever wants to do justice to an animal must know its needs—an intellectual condition—and be moved by them—an emotional condition. Here, animals are quite naturally the recipients of justice—they belong to the legal community, which constitutes a fundamental difference to Greek philosophy.

The *Book of Job* was written between the 5th and 3rd centuries BC. A short passage from it pays tribute to the animals who can teach people about God's creative power: "But only ask the animals, they will teach

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you, / The birds of the sky, they will tell you. / Or speak to the earth, it will teach you, / The fish of the sea will tell you. / Who of them all would not know / That the hand of the LORD has made this? / In his hand rests the soul of all life (נֶפֶשׁ כָּל-חָי—nepeš kāl-ḥāy) / and every man's body spirit (רוּחַ כָּל-בְּשַׂר-אִישׁ—rûaḥ kāl-bəśar-ʾîš)." (Job 12:7–10). One need not take the "asking" and "telling" literally at all. And yet the text speaks of a self-evident respect for animals as God's creatures as well as the perception of a fundamental equality with and difference from human beings: On the one hand, the "souls of all life" rest in God's hand. On the other hand, the rûaḥ is attributed to humans alone.

Towards the end of the book, in Job 38–39, the theology of creation is unfolded in an address by God to the suffering and questioning Job. Its structure follows the dichotomy of the creation of the foundations of life and living beings familiar from Gen 1. In Job 38:4–38, God emphasises his greatness and wisdom as the creator above all of light and water as the two elements most necessary for life. Unlike in Gen 1, the living spaces and plants do not appear here. God's speech then culminates in Job 38:39–39:30, where he substantiates his greatness and wisdom by referring to the diversity and talents of animals. He, and not man, is the Lord of the animals. His caring providence is not only for human beings but also for animals. The contrast with the Stoa is abundantly clear here, even if there is no sign of a conscious demarcation.

The third Hebrew text from Hellenistic times is the *Book of Qohelet*, which dates back to the second half of the 3rd century BC. "According to the instructions in Qoh 11:9–12:7, Qohelet [...] may have been a wisdom teacher or a scribe who taught young men of the Jerusalem upper class in early Hellenistic times. [...] The aim of the preacher is to provide guidance for a successful life in the face of the ambivalence of life's experiences. The starting point is not least social and economic upheavals in Syria–Palestine, prompted by Hellenism spreading across the Near East." (Markus Witte 2006, chap. 3.4). The Book of Qohelet shows great intellectual "proximity to Near Eastern wisdom texts and to Greek philosophy from the Pre-Socratics to the Stoa and Epicurus" (Markus Witte 2006, chap. 3.1). The central question of happiness in Qohelet is also discussed in the Greek schools of philosophy.

The fulcrum of Qohelet's specific response is creation theology. "Qohelet's world, like that of the other biblical writers, is a dying world. Ecclesiastes only says this more clearly than those with his motto 'it is all transitory'. Man and animal have the same fate of death (Qoh 3:19). With

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this assessment, Qohelet is in line with the traditional Old Testament notion of death as an absolute limit and at the same time sets itself apart from eschatological and apocalyptic notions that emerged in the 3rd century BC. More forcefully than other biblical witnesses, he emphasises the absolute dependence of human beings on life spaces and life cycles opened up by God." (Markus Witte 2006, ch. 4).

A clearly anti-Stoic and anti-anthropocentristic punch line is contained in the passage in Qoh 3:18–21: "As for individual human beings, I thought to myself that God singled them out and that they themselves must realise that they are actually animals. For every human being is subject to destiny and the animals are also subject to destiny. They have one and the same destiny. When they die, so do those destinies. Both have one and the same breath. There is no advantage of man over the animal. For both are a breath of wind. Both go to one and the same place. Both are born from dust; both return to dust. Who knows whether the breath of individual human beings really rises upwards, while the breath of animals sinks down into the earth?" The closing question of this impressive paragraph resonates with a deep scepticism about the Stoic thesis. "Who knows?" asks Qohelet, doubting the strict divide between the rational soul of human beings and the reasonless soul of animals. Rather, he recognises an "animal-likeness of man" (Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger 2004, 282; cf. Peter Riede 2017, 119).

The fourth book of the Hebrew Bible from the time of Hellenism is the *Book of Jonah*. It dates back to the time around 200 BC and is thus clearly located in Hellenism and no longer in the Persian period, to which the Book of Jonah looks back with a transfigured gaze. As fairytale-like as the book may seem, it is nevertheless an impressive teacher's tale that admonishes Hebrew Jews not to look down disdainfully on other cultures and religions. What is interesting is the emphasis twice on the role of animals in the city of Nineveh. Thus, animals are quite naturally seen as equal addressees of Jonah's sermon on repentance: "All men and beasts, cattle, sheep and goats, shall not eat, nor feed, nor drink water. They shall clothe themselves in robes of repentance, both man and beast." (Jonah 3:7–8).

And just as the animals are obliged to fast and repent, so in the end, since they obediently obey the call, they will be pardoned by God just as humans are. For God has compassion on them: "Then the LORD said: You have compassion (חַסְתָּ—*ḥastā*) on a castor bean bush for which you did not work and which you did not raise. Overnight it was there; overnight it died. Shall

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I not then have compassion on Nineveh, the great city, where there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot distinguish between right and left—and so many cattle besides?" (Jonah 4:10–11). This concluding question is the most important passage in the book and the punch line of the narrative. God not only has compassion on the people who are so unreasonable that they cannot even distinguish right from left, but also on the animals who—the text suggests—are far more reasonable and insightful. Now, as I said, the objective of the text is not the refutation of other cultures, but their fundamental appreciation by Hebrew Judaism. The book is not concerned with refuting the aloga thesis. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that it is far from the authors' intention to devalue animals in comparison to humans. They are included in the legal community of the great city of Nineveh with equal rights and obligations.

Like the Book of Job, the *Book of Jesus Sirach* was written around 200 BC. Until the first fragments of its Hebrew text were discovered in the synagogue in Cairo in 1896, which were accompanied by finds from Qumran and Masada in 1947 and 1964 respectively, it had been assumed for almost 2000 years that the book had been written in Greek. However, the original Hebrew text can no longer be completely reconstructed, so that the Greek text of the Septuagint is used here[12]. The Book of Sirach takes a very critical view of the emerging Hellenisation of Israel. To counteract the loss of Hebrew or early Jewish identity, Rabbi Ben Sira gathers young people around him in a "house of learning" (Sir 51:23). His theology of creation seems to do without animals for long stretches. Thus, in the great praise of the Creator in Sir 42:15–43:33, the "multitude of living creatures" is mentioned only once (Sir 43:25). Otherwise, the text is about the sun, moon and stars as well as the different aggregate states of water (snow, clouds, hail, hoarfrost, ice and mist). Not even human beings are mentioned. Their creation, on the other hand, is dealt with in detail in Sir 33:7–15—a kind of interpretation of the formation of man from clay in Gen 2 and a deeper reflection on the earthbound nature of human beings.

Ben Sira offers a comprehensive interpretation of the Creation narratives in Gen 1–9 in Sir 16:24–17:23. After the introductory verses (Sir 16:24–25), it is first emphasised that God's order of creation, in which all creatures have each been assigned their own "domains" (ἀρχαί), lasts forever (Sir 16:26–27a). In the creative peace of Paradise, all creatures respected this

12 A synopsis of the fragments of the Hebrew text is currently being compiled by a group of researchers led by Saarland University.

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order. There is no competition and no hunger among them (Sir 16:27b-28). Nevertheless, all living creatures return to earth as created by God (Sir 16:29–30). Ben Sira does not yet know the idea of an eternal life.

The larger part of the treatise—and this is very symbolic—is devoted to the creation of man and his special place in creation (Sir 17:1–23): First, it is emphasised again that he too is created from earth and returns to earth (Sir 17:1–2a). However, the entire rest of the text then reflects his special position. And here something remarkable happens: for the first time, the image of God is reinterpreted in the sense of Greek thought. The functional–relational statement that man was created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) becomes the essence–ontological statement that he was created in His image (κατ᾽ εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς; Sir 17:3). This is the exact rendering of Gen 1:27 according to the Greek Septuagint, which, as I said, was produced by Hellenistic Judaism in Alexandria. It would be most exciting to know whether the original Hebrew text of the Book of Sirach still remains in Hebrew and relational–functional thinking or whether it too already thinks in categories of Greek essence ontology.

Further on, in describing the relationship between humans and animals, the ideal situation in Gen 1:28 is then mixed with the conflictual real situation in Gen 9:3: “He has put the fear of him on all living creatures / and power to command wild beasts and birds (κατακυριεύειν θηρίων καὶ πετεινῶν).” (Sir 17:4). This blending blurs the tension between a real fear-based and an ideal peaceful form of rule, which is the clincher in Gen 1–9—morally a highly problematic process. In what follows, human beings are then ascribed, entirely in the ductus of Greek essence ontology and in a very imprecise orientation to the Stoa (Johannes Marböck 2010, 214), gifts that obviously constitute their God-like image (Sir 17:6–23): decision-making ability (διαβούλιον), speech (γλῶσσα), understanding (διανοεῖσθαι), knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), insight (σύνεσις) and the ability to know God. Even if it is not explicitly stated that the image of God is given in the ability to reason, this conclusion is very obvious. After all, man is morally committed to the care of all living creatures: Sir 17:12 refers to the “everlasting covenant”, presumably the Noah covenant (cf. Johannes Marböck 2010, 216), which is summarised in Sir 44:18, quoting Gen 9:11 thus: “Never again shall all living creatures be destroyed by a flood.” Here the arc is closed that began in Sir 16:26–28 with the description of a comprehensive creation peace between humans and animals.

Paradoxical as it may seem, it is Ben Sira, who is extraordinarily critical of Hellenism, receives Greek anthropology. The essentialisation of Gen

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1:27 is a paradigm shift that is encountered here for the first time and remains unique within the Christian Bible. And even if the juxtaposition of human reason and the reasonlessness of animals does not appear explicitly, it resonates perceptibly in the background. Nevertheless, the old biblical ideal of peace between humans and animals is still present and softens the otherwise steep anthropology of the book.

The *Book of Wisdom* was written directly in Greek. Scholars locate it in Egypt, probably in Alexandria, and date it back to the time between the Emperor Augustus' assumption of power in Egypt in 30 BC and a letter by the Emperor Claudius to the Jewish community of Alexandria in 41 AD. It was thus written practically at the same time and place as the work of Philon of Alexandria, which we will analyse in the following section.

The Book of Wisdom thinks very anthropocentristically. God takes the whole of creation into his service for the sole purpose of educating man. Even the animals, which are referred to here as aloga for the only time in the Bible, appear exclusively as God's teaching tools for the education of man. In the background is the Egyptian worship of animals as gods (Wis 12:24; 15:18–19), "the worst form of idolatry" (Luca Mazzinghi 2018, 319), which God seeks to eliminate "homeopathically" with the same remedy, that is, with animals, that is, animals that torment man (Wis 16:1, 5–14; 19:10) as well as with helpful animals that comfort man (Wis 16:2–4; 19:11–12). The frogs, locusts, biting flies and snakes torment, while the quails are comforting. The examples are thus taken without exception from the Exodus narrative—only too understandable for an Egyptian scripture. Like in a preview, it says at the beginning: "As a punishment for their unintelligent and unrighteous thoughts (λογισμόι), / By which misled they worshipped reasonless (ἄλογα) creeping animals and insignificant beasts, / You sent them a multitude of reasonless animals (ἄλογα ζῷα). / You should realise: One is punished by that by which one sins." (Wis 11:15–16). The disdainful term "creeping things and beasts (ἑρπετὰ καὶ κνώδαλα)" was probably a "commonplace of polemics against the Egyptian animal cult, which was not limited to Jewish literature but was also practised by Greek philosophers" (Luca Mazzinghi 2018, 319 and 324).

But from the point of view of the Book of Wisdom, people are not very reasonable either. Rather, their unreasonableness is constantly emphasised. God must constantly intervene with punishment and encouragement so that they get back on the right path. God lays on them "like reasonless children (ὡς παισὶν ἀλογίστοις)" punishments (Wis 12:25). The aloga term is thus also applied to people.

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Finally, a biocentrist or even ecocentrist counterpoint is set by the passage in Wis 11:24–26: "You love all that is, (τὰ ὄντα πάντα) / and abhor nothing of what you have made; / for if you had hated anything, you would not have created it. / How could anything endure without your will / or how could anything be preserved that was not called into existence by you? / You spare everything because it is your own, Lord, you friend of life (φείδῃ δὲ πάντων, ὅτι σά ἐστιν, δέσποτα φιλόψυχε)." God is thus literally a lover of all that exists and a friend of animate beings. Such formulations do not occur anywhere in the texts of the Stoa. In Greek, the φιλόψυχος is actually the one who clings to life in a cowardly manner. "The Book of Wisdom here turns the sense of the word around and makes it an adjective with a positive meaning." (Luca Mazzinghi 2018, 318). God is like "a householder who has the highest regard and respect for the lives of his subjects" (Luca Mazzinghi 2018, 323).

The chronological passage through the Old Testament books from the time of Hellenism thus makes it clear, first of all, that early Judaism remains resistant to Greek paradigms for quite a long time. These are found only in the books of Jesus Sirach and Wisdom—the two latest books of the Christian Old Testament considered here, which are not included in the Hebrew Bible of Judaism. But even in these two, the harsh theses of Stoic anthropology and its deep divide between humans and animals are still tempered by traditional beliefs of the Hebrew Bible. This does not give them great weight.

4.2 Philon of Alexandria

In the texts of the Book of Wisdom, we have already become acquainted with the early Hellenistic Jewish community of Alexandria. For a long time, it was the origin and centre of Hellenistic Judaism, but it largely perished during the revolt in the years 115 to 117 AD. Its most important representative is probably Philon of Alexandria (15 BC-40 AD). Philon, whose mother tongue is Greek and who does not understand Hebrew, can be considered a salient example of the symbiosis of Hellenism and Judaism in 1st century Diaspora Judaism. On the one hand, he is firmly rooted in the Jewish tradition; on the other hand, he is deeply influenced by Greek education (and not only by the Stoa, as it might seem in the following!). Three influences are significant for him (Beatrice Wyss 2018, 379):

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- his great loyalty to Judaism,
- his acceptance of Greek culture and philosophy, whereby it can hardly be overestimated how deeply this "influenced the thinking of this devout Jew (... a pattern for the Christian thinkers who follow in his footsteps)" (Jacobus C.M. van Winden 1988, 1258), and
- his deep aversion to Egyptian culture, which is "known or even infamous throughout antiquity for its animal worship" (Beatrice Wyss 2018, 397). Philon rejects the Egyptian animal cults and their theriomorphism simply because of the Jewish prohibition of images, but also because, for him, the incomprehensible divinity cannot be experienced or recognised in an animal.

In the following, we will devote ourselves to three of Philon's works: first, the already cited philosophical work on animal reason De animalibus, and then two works that try to defend the Torah against Greek culture and prove it reasonable: De virtutibus, which deals with the legal texts of the Torah, and De opificio mundi, which deals with the Creation narratives of the Jewish Bible.

In his predominantly philosophical *work on animal reason De animalibus*, which, as mentioned above, has only survived in an Armenian translation (cf. chapter 3.6.1), Philon refutes the anti-Stoic and anti-anthropocentristic arguments of his nephew and son-in-law Tiberius Iulius Alexander: "It is the anthropocentric view of the cosmos, that all things—including animals—were made for man's sake, that is challenged by Alexander and defended by Philo." (Abraham Terian 1981, 36; on De animalibus in general: Otto Kaiser 2015, 125–126).

As for Alexander's thesis that animals could speak, Philon distinguishes between the movements of the tongue and mouth on the one hand and their control by the rational soul on the other. Animals also had the first, but only humans the second (Philon, De animalibus 73). What we hear from animals are "meaningless and insignificant sounds made by animals" (Philon, De animalibus 98)—worse than the sounds of human stutterers (Philon, De animalibus 99).

With regard to the alleged capacity of animals for technology and artistry, Philon emphasizes, as in a Stoic textbook, that art is an acquired ability, but that spiders and bees do not acquire it, but have their abilities like all animals "from nature, not from learning" (Philon, De animalibus 78). Nor do their activities occur through free will: "Whatever they do

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is done non-voluntarily because of the peculiarity of their constitution." (Philon, De animalibus 80).

Finally, Philon also flatly denies animals the ability to think. The behaviour of the hunting dog mentioned by Alexander only looks like syllogistic reasoning, but this is a deception (Philon, De animalibus 84). Philon then sets the bar for reasoning at maximum height: "Surely animals have no share in the ability to reason, for this refers to a variety of abstract concepts in the mind's perception of God, the world, laws, provincial practices, state, affairs of state, and numerous other things that animals do not understand." (Philon, De animalibus 85).

But if animals possess neither language nor artistry nor thought, then a deep chasm opens up between reasonless animals and rational humans: "To raise animals to the level of humankind and to grant equality to unequals is the height of injustice. To ascribe serious self-restraint to indifferent and almost invisible creatures is an insult to those whom nature has gifted with the best part." (Philon, De animalibus 100). Philon could hardly be more consistent in advocating Stoic cosmology. In doing so, he does not seriously address the empirical evidence of his nephew; rather, his own theses remain without in-depth scientific underpinning.

The style of those works in which Philo interprets the Torah and defends it against attacks from Greek culture is quite different. Here he tries to prove the compatibility of his religion with the Hellenistic "leading culture". In doing so, he cannot avoid advocating theses that are not to the liking of the Stoa in individual cases.

His *treatise on the virtues, "De virtutibus",* is to be read along these lines. In it, Philon takes up four virtues recognised in Greek culture and shows how broadly they are found in the instructions of the Torah: bravery, humanity (φιλανθρωπία), repentance and nobility. Humanity occupies the most space in his account. It includes mildness (ἐπιείκεια), gentleness (ἡμερότης), goodness (χρηστότης) and mercy (ἔλεος) (Walter T. Wilson 2015, 208). In the Torah, according to Philon, humanity is directed against Jews and pagans, the free and slaves, friends and enemies, and animals and plants (Katell Berthelot 2002, 49; Walter T. Wilson 2015, 208)[13]: "He [Moses] not only presented consideration and gentleness as fundamental

13 The similarity to a footnote in Jeremy Bentham's magnum opus is striking. Bentham writes there almost 1800 years after Philon: "The day has come, and I am grieved to say that it has not yet passed in many places, when the greater part of the species, under the appellation of slaves, have been treated by the law on exactly the same basis as, for instance, in England the lower species of animals are still treated.

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to the relations of men to their fellow men, but poured them out richly with a lavish hand on the nature of the reasonless animals (πρός τὰς τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων φύσεις) and the various species of cultivated trees." (Philon, De virtutibus 13, 81). As many as 23 of the 227 sections are devoted to humanity towards animals—about one tenth of the entire book.

In detail, the treatise is about five commandments of the Torah (cf. also Robert M. Grant 1999, 1–14):

- "When an ox, a sheep or a goat is born, the young one should stay with its mother for seven days." (Lev 22:27; Philon, De virtutibus 25, 126–133). Here Philon impressively describes the emotional and physical pain of the mother when the young is taken away from her too early.
- "You shall not slaughter an ox or a sheep or a goat in one day at the same time as its young." (Lev 22:28; Philon, De virtutibus 26, 134–140).
- "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk." (Dt 14:21b; Philon, De virtutibus 26, 142–144).
- "You shall not muzzle the ox for threshing." (Dt 25:4; Philon, De virtutibus 27, 145).
- "You shall not harness an ox and an ass together to the plough." (Dt 22:10; Philon, De virtutibus 27, 146–147).

The exciting question now is how Philon, as an author influenced by the Stoics, justifies these animal ethical commandments. And here two figures of argumentation can be discerned (Katell Berthelot 2002, 50–54):

1) *There are analogies between humans and animals*: Thus, Philon first interprets Dt 22:10 appropriately as a commandment of animal ethics in such a way that the donkey, as the weaker of the two, is to be protected from being overtaxed: "It thinks of the weaker and does not want them to suffer discomfort or oppression at the hands of a superior force." (Philon, De virtutibus 27, 146). He then transfers this animal ethical principle per analogiam to human beings, and there per allegoriam to the relationship of the Jews to the Gentiles. The ox, as a pure animal in the sense of kashrut, represents Judaism, the donkey, as an unclean animal, represents paganism. The commandment in the Torah therefore

Perhaps the day will come when the remaining creatures will acquire the rights which could never, if not by the hand of tyranny, have been withheld from them." (Jeremy Bentham 1828, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. A new edition, corrected by the author, London, vol. 2, 235–236; German translation based on Alberto Bondolfi (ed.) 1994,78).

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admonishes the Jews to treat pagans justly as well. "Those whose souls have ears can almost hear it saying in a clear and distinct voice that we should do no wrong to the people of other nations if we can accuse them of nothing but difference of race, which is no grounds for accusation, since nothing that is neither vice nor of vice justifies reproach." (Philon, De virtutibus 27, 147). Now the principle of analogy includes similarities and dissimilarities. But although the dissimilarities between rational human beings and reasonless animals are considerable for Philon, animals may nevertheless insist on just treatment because they can suffer similarly to human beings. This conclusion clearly stands out from the Stoic argument.

2) *The comparison of animals and humans follows the logic "a minori ad maius"*: If in the case of animals, the mother is not killed at the same time as her child (Lev 22:28), then this applies all the more to humans. Thus, according to Roman law, pregnant women condemned to death would only be executed after the birth of their child. Philon sees a form of clever pedagogy at work here: "Moses [...] extended the duty of just treatment (ἐπιεικές) to reasonless animals (ἄλογα ζῷα) as well, so that by practising on creatures of other kinds we can show humanity to a much fuller extent towards beings similar to ourselves." (Philon, De virtutibus 26, 140). In Philon, this analogising a minori ad maius is not an expression of anthropocentrism (against Abraham Terian 1981, 45), but its mitigation. For Philon, just behaviour towards animals retains its own moral value.

Thus, he can conclude: "You see how great the goodness (χρηστόν) that he shows is, and how generously he has extended it to every species, first to men, even if they are strangers or enemies, then to reasonless animals, even if they are impure, and lastly to sown crops and trees. For he who has first learned the lesson of justice in dealing with the unconscious forms of existence will not offend those endowed with animal life, and he who does not engage in molesting the animal creation is implicitly exercised to extend his care to rational beings." (Philon, De virtutibus 29, 160).

In *"De opificio mundi"*, Philon finally interprets the first chapters of the Bible. For the first time, core ideas of Stoic cosmology and ontology are intertwined here with those texts that were used a little later for almost 2000 years to justify Christian anthropocentrism. I would like to pay particular attention to four aspects of content in the following: The Stoic scala naturae must be related to the biblical structure of God's seven-day work. The Stoic

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view of animals as reasonless beings must be introduced into the text in the first place since the Bible does not know this classification. The Stoic view of man as a rational being must be thought of together with the biblical category of the image of God. And Stoic anthropocentrism must be linked with the biblical mandate to govern man.

In Gen 1, the order in the creation of the animals is determined according to habitat, as we saw above (chapter 2.2). The spatially closer a group of animals is to the human habitat, the temporally closer it is created to man. Philon, on the other hand, interprets the arrangement according to the Stoic *scala naturae* ontologically in terms of a progression from the creation of the "lower" to the creation of the "higher" animals, with the quantitative measure of "soul", i.e. of central sensation and control, determining the assignment. On the whole, Philon finds "that it is a very beautiful (πάγκαλος) sequence of stages in which the creation of living creatures took place according to his instruction. The crudest and least developed soul is assigned to the genus of fishes, the most perfect and in every respect the best to the human race, and that lying midway between the two to the race of land animals and air-walkers; for the latter is more sentient than that of fishes, but weaker than that which prevails in man. For this reason, as the first animate beings, he created the fish, which possess more of the bodily than of the spiritual substance and are, as it were, living beings and not living beings, moving inanimate creatures, since something soul-like was added to them only for the preservation of the body [...] After the fish he created the birds and land animals; for these are already more sentient and show more clearly in their design the peculiarity of their animate nature. Lastly, as has been said, he created man, to whom he gave as a special privilege the spirit, as it were a soul of souls (ψυχῆς τινα ψυχὴ")." (Philon, De opificio mundi 21, 64–66). And again Philon affirms, "But in the origin of individual beings the order is this, that nature begins with the most insignificant and ends with the very best." (Philon, De opificio mundi 22, 67).

If one follows Philon's account, one has to assume that the water animals were created on the fourth day, the air and land animals on the fifth and only man on the sixth. But this is not how Genesis 1 tells it. There, only two groups of living beings are distinguished between: On the fifth day, those creatures are created that do not live in the habitat of man, and on the sixth day, those creatures that live in the habitat of man—including man himself. Philon deliberately ignores this division of the biblical text because it does not correspond to the tripartite concept of the Stoic scala naturae, which he, however, wants to follow. "Philon [...] reads the results of the research

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of his time into the Pentateuch." (Beatrice Wyss 2018, 384). In a time when theories about the beginning of the world are in great demand, he wants to prove that the biblical Creation narrative is compatible with current natural philosophy (Beatrice Wyss 2018, 385).

The (unbiblical) *qualification of animals as aloga,* which is emphasised in the following quotation, among others, fits coherently into the Stoic scala naturae: "Among existing things there are first of all those which have nothing to do either with virtue or with wickedness, such as the plants and the reasonless animals (ζῷα ἄλογα), the former because they are inanimate (ἄψυχά) and not endowed with imagination (ἀφαντάστῳ φύσει), the latterbecause spirit and reason (νοῦς καὶ λόγος) are absent from them; but spirit and reason are, as it were, the house in which wickedness and virtue dwell. Then again, there are those who possess only virtue and have no part in wickedness, like the heavenly bodies; for these, it is said, are living beings, and sensible living beings at that, or rather each one entirely sensible, each one thoroughly virtuous and impervious to all evil. Finally, there are beings of mixed nature, such as man, who absorbs all opposites within himself: Reason and lack of reason, modesty and lack of discipline, bravery and cowardice, justice and injustice, to put it briefly, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, virtue and vice." (Philon, De opificio mundi 24, 73). From this passage it is clear that the Stoic scala naturae includes as its fourth and highest level the celestial bodies, which, as living beings of pure reason, are superior even to man. In the biblical narrative, on the other hand, the heavenly bodies are not created *after* man, as one would now actually expect, but on the fourth day and thus even *before* the air and water animals. The fourth day, like the first and the last, is dedicated to the temporal order. So the heavenly bodies do not have an ontologically justified place in the Bible, but a functionally determined one: they serve to determine time.

But now Philon moves on to reflect on the *special position of man* and thus to the interpretation of Gen 1:26–28: "But one might ask the reason why man is the last piece in the creation of the world. [...] Now those who have penetrated more deeply into the meaning of the laws, and have investigated their contents as thoroughly as possible, give as their reason that God, by granting man reason (μεταδοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἀνθρώπῳ τῆς λογικῆς), which was, after all, the best gift, made him that related to himself, and therefore did not wish to begrudge him all the rest, that therefore he provided beforehand for him, the most kindred and dearest living creature (οἰκειοτάτῳ καὶ φιλτάτῳ ζῴῳ), everything in the world, because he willed that immediately

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Diagram: Structure of the creation of living beings according to Gen 1 and according to Philo

Gen 1	**Philon, De opificio mundi 21, 64–67.73**
Fourth day: The stars as time indicators (no living beings)	Pisces: more body than soul
Fifth day: Air and water animals—those creatures that do not live in the human habitat	Birds and land animals: more clearly animate
Sixth day: Land animals and humans—those creatures that live in the habitat of humans	Human being: Spirit as soul of the soul, but only partly reason
	Stars: still above human beings, ensouled, all reason

after his creation he should lack none of the things necessary for life and for the good life (πρός τε τὸ ζῆν καὶ τὸ εὖ ζῆν)." (Philon, De opificio mundi 25, 77; cf. Jonathan D. Worthington 2011, 145). On the one hand, this interpretation of Gen 1 reveals the central role Philon ascribes to man's endowment of reason completely without reference to the biblical text; on the other hand, it echoes a form of anthropocentrism that makes man the goal of creation rather than the Sabbath, as is the logic of the biblical narrative.

It follows logically from what has been said that the *image of God in Gen 1:26–27* is interpreted with participation in the divine nous or logos: "Reason is man's special prerogative, whereby he is made superior to other animals." (Abraham Terian 1981, 38)[14]. Here Philon vacillates between the relational–functional interpretation of man *as* God's image and representative on earth and the essence–ontological interpretation of human reason *in the* image of divine reason.

14 The idea that human reason is fashioned in the image of divine reason is found throughout Philon's work: De opificio mundi 6, 24–25; 23, 69; 46, 134–48, 139; Legum allegoriae 1, 31; 1, 42; 3, 96; Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat 80–85; De plantatione 18–19; Quis rerum divinarum heres 56–57; 230–231; De fuga et inventione 71; De somniis 1, 74; De vita Mosis 2, 65; De decalogo 134; De specialibus legibus 1, 81; 1, 171; 3, 83; 3, 207; De virtutibus 37, 203–205; Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin 1, 4–5 (cf. Abraham Terian 1981, 131).

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For the relational–functional interpretation, which is entirely in the sense of the Hebrew text of Gen 1, there are comparisons of a human being with a charioteer and helmsman, but above all with a governor of the divine king, who should be there in a caring way for the other creatures. Thus, Philon writes: "*As* a charioteer and helmsman, therefore, the Creator last of all created man, that he might guide the reins and steer the government over all earthly things, and take care (ἐπιμέλεια) of the animal and vegetable world. as it were *as* governor of the first and highest king (ὕπαρχος τοῦ πρώτου καὶ μεγάλου βασιλέως)." (Philon, De opificio mundi 29, 88).

The second, essence–ontological interpretation, which does not correspond to the original Hebrew text of the Bible, is based on the Septuagint translation and reads as follows: "After all other creatures, therefore, as has been said, man was created, and done so, as it is said, '*in the* image of God and *after* His likeness' (κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, Gen 1:26). Very true; for no earth-born being is so like God as man. But this likeness must not be supposed in the peculiarity of the body (σῶμα); for neither has God human form, nor is the human body God-like. That likeness refers only to the guide of the soul, the spirit (κατὰ τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμόνα νοῦν); for according to the only guiding spirit of the universe as the archetype, the spirit was formed in each individual human being, who is therefore, as it were, the god of the body, bearing it in himself as a divine image. For what the great Governing Spirit is in the universe, that is probably the human spirit in man." (Philon, De opificio mundi 23, 69).

Philon quotes Gen 1:26 literally from the Septuagint. There the preposition κᾆτα is used in the accusative. It denotes a goal towards which something is done, or a resemblance to a model. But this does not correspond to what the Hebrew text says. Georg Fischer translates it very literally like this: "We want to make 'man' *as* our statue, *as* our likeness!... And God created man *as* his statue, *as the statue of God* he created him." (Georg Fischer 2018, 148 and 153). Fischer thereby interprets "as our statue" in the sense of a close *relationship* and "as our likeness" in the sense of an abiding difference (Georg Fischer 2018, 152). Philon, on the other hand, like the Septuagint, makes a similarity out of it in terms of being and names its content: it is the nous (cf. Jonathan D. Worthington 2011, 144–145). The controlling function of the human nous, however, is not related to creation, but, in the sense of the Stoic hegemonicon, to the human being alone.

In his interpretation of the second, older Creation narrative Gen 2, Philon returns to the idea of the similarity between God and man. Now

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he uses the terms λόγος/ λογισμὸς instead of nous, but otherwise remains entirely on the path once taken: "But that he was also excellent with regard to the soul is equally clear; for for its formation God used as a model not one of the things present in creation, but, as has been said, solely his own reason (λόγος); whose image and imitation (Gen 1:26), he says, man became when he breathed into his face (Gen 2:7), where is the seat of the senses with which the Creator animated the body; but having established reason as the ruler (τὸν δὲ βασιλέα λογισμὸν), he gave over to that leading part (τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ) the senses..." (Philon, De opificio mundi 48, 139). On the whole, then, the interpretation of man's being made in the image of God prevails in the sense of an essence ontological statement: man has reason, with the bestowal of which God created man *in* his image.

Finally, Philon also interprets the so-called "*dominium terrae*", i.e. the governmental mandate over the earth in Gen 1:28: "For this reason also the Father, since he created him as a being by nature fit to rule (γεννήσας αὐτὸν ὁ πατὴρ ἡγεμονικὸν φύσει ζῷον), not only actually, but also by an express word of God, appointed to rule (βασιλέα) over all that lives under the moon on the land and in the water and in the air" (Philon, De opificio mundi 28, 84)[15]. Unlike De opificio mundi 29, 88, it is not governorship but dominion that is spoken of here.

The interpretation of the second Creation narrative in Philon is also exciting. Three aspects are of particular importance for our topic: First of all, Philon sketches a picture of perfection of Adam (without Eve, who comes off very badly in Philon's work!): "But that first man, the earth-born one, the progenitor of our whole generation, was, as it seems to me, the best of all (ἑκάτερον ἄριστος), both in soul and body, and greatly surpassed his descendants." (Philon, De opificio mundi 47, 136).

As evidence of the perfection of the soul, Philon then cites the image of God from Gen 1:26–27, albeit in terms other than those mentioned in the Septuagint. For him, this image of God is also recognisable in the fact that the human soul, unlike the body, is not created from existing matter, but by breathing on it. Finally, he sees Stoic anthropology confirmed at its best in the biblical scene: Reason is the queen and guide of the senses: "But that he was also excellent as regards the soul is equally clear; for for its formation

15 That human dominion over animals is conferred on man by God is an idea often quoted in Philon: De opificio mundi 28, 83–29, 88 and 52, 148–150; De specialibus legibus 2, 69; Legum allegoriae 1, 9; De mutatione nominum 63; Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin 1, 18–23; De Abrahamo 45 (Abraham Terian 1981, 45).

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God used as a model not one of the things present in creation, but, as has been said, solely his own reason (μόνῳ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ); whose image and imitation (ἀπεικόνισμα καὶ μίμημα), he thus says, man became, since he was breathed on in the face, where is the seat of the senses, with which the Creator animated the body (ἐψύχωσεν); but after he had appointed reason as queen (τὸν δὲ βασιλέα λογισμὸν ἐνιδρυσάμενος), he gave over to that leading part (τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ) the senses, that he might be served by them [....] to be served." (Philon, De opificio mundi 48, 139).

This so perfect Adam is described by Philon in the second step of his interpretation as a cosmopolitan in the house of the world. "This picture of a worldwide state in which man rules as God's governor had already been sketched out by Philon in his interpretation of Gen 1:26." (Gerhard Büsing 1998, 200). However, the hierarchy in this house of the world is rather steep, for the animals have to cower and obey. They are not citizens and consequently have no rights: "But we will express ourselves quite truthfully if we call that forefather not merely the first human being, but also the only citizen of the world (μόνον κοσμοπολίτην). For house and city was the world to him (ἦν γὰρ οἶκος αὐτῷ καὶ πόλις ὁ κόσμος), since no building had yet been carpentered by human hands out of building materials of stone and wood; in it he dwelt, as in his native land, with perfect security and without fear, since he was worthy of dominion over the earth-world (περιγείων ἡγεμονίας ἀξιωθεὶς), and all mortal beings cowered before him and were instructed or compelled, to obey him as their master (ὑπακούειν ὡς δεσπότῃ)." (Philon, De opificio mundi 49, 142).

The cosmopolitan right of citizenship belongs to Adam solely on the basis of his kinship with the divine logos, from which it is well explained Stoically why the animals are not entitled to citizenship. "His descendants, however, who share his peculiarity, must also preserve the characteristics of kinship with the ancestor, albeit in a clouded form. But in what does this kinship consist? Every man, in respect of his spirit, is related to the divine reason (πᾶς ἄνθρωπος κατὰ μὲν τὴν διάνοιαν ᾠκείωται λόγῳ θείῳ), being an image, a particle, a reflection of its blessed essence; but in the structure of his body, he resembles the whole world." (Philon, De opificio mundi 51, 146).

Philon now places the naming of the animals by Adam in this context. To this end, he reflects the "courtly custom" (Gerhard Büsing 1998, 200), according to which the ruler must address the subordinate first and not vice versa. "Aptly he also ascribes to the first man the naming (τὴν θέσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων); for this is a matter of wisdom and kingship (σοφίας

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καὶ βασιλείας); but he was a wise man by self-teaching and by his own instruction, being created by the hand of God, and also a king; but it behoves the Lord to address every one of his subjects. But an extraordinary ruling power (δύναμις ἀρχῆς) naturally surrounded the first man, whom God formed with care, and dignified with the second rank, by appointing him his governor (ὕπαρχον αὑτοῦ) and lord of all the others (ἄλλων ἁπάντων ἡγεμόνα), since even men living so many generations later [....] still command over the reasonless (δεσπόζουσι τῶν ἀλόγων)" (Philon, De opificio mundi 52, 148).

Now, given the multitude of terms for man's dominion over creation, one could easily be inclined to grant man unlimited power. However, this is by no means Philon's intention. On the contrary: "Philon understands the naming of the animals according to Gen 2:19f. as an expression of man's outstanding wisdom and special intellect." (Gerhard Büsing 1998, 201). Like a pupil before his teacher, man must prove that he recognises the nature of the animals and gives them appropriate names: "He says, then, that God brought all the animals to Adam, because he wanted to see what name he would attach to each (Gen 2:19), [...] He tested him as a teacher tests a pupil, awakening the faculty dormant in the soul and calling it to one of the business incumbent upon it, that he might by his own power give the names, not improper and unsuitable ones, but such as express the qualities of things very well. For since the power of thought was still unclouded in the soul, and no weakness or disease or passion had yet penetrated it, it received into itself in full purity the ideas of bodies and objects, and gave them their proper names, since it well divined what they signified, so that by their naming at the same time their nature could be discerned (νοηθῆναι τὰς φύσεις αὐτῶν)." (Philon, De opificio mundi 52, 149–150).

Let us take stock of the analyses of De opificio mundi:

– The Stoic scala naturae, the biological state of the art at this time is the dominant paradigm for the interpretation of God's seven-day work. For their sake, Philon even gives the impression that certain tasks took place on different days than the Bible tells us (the water animals on the fourth day instead of the fifth, the land animals on the fifth day instead of the sixth, the heavenly bodies on the seventh instead of the fourth). While the Bible uses the spatial proximity to humans and thus a non-hierarchical category of relationships as a principle of division, Philon interprets the text in terms of an essence–ontological hierarchy, a scala naturae.

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- The Stoic view of animals as reasonless beings, which is foreign to the Bible, determines Philon's view of living beings. However, it has far fewer ethical consequences for him than for the Stoics. In any case, the conclusion that humans can use animals indefinitely is not to be found in his work. On the contrary, Philon binds human rule to his insight and wisdom—it obliges.
- Philon recognises the Stoic view of man as a rational being in the biblical discourse of the image of God. Here he marks a momentous shift from a relational–functional interpretation of man as God's governor on earth to an essential–ontological interpretation of man as the only rational being. This shift, as we have seen, was already in the offing in the Septuagint. But as far as I can see, Philon is the first to document it extensively and explicitly. It is all the more remarkable that he sometimes continues to speak of man as the governor of the divine King, even making this governorship a leitmotif of his account in the interpretation of Gen 2.
- The biblical mandate to govern is thus already addressed. It is remarkable that there are no traces of hard anthropocentrism in the texts examined here. Although Philon unhesitatingly follows the "rational divide" between rational and non-rational beings, the ethical consequences remain limited. Here, in the light of De virtutibus, the animal-friendliness of the Torah is evident. Philon holds fast to it and defends it against attacks from outside.

Philon is the first (tangible) writer to read the Jewish Bible and religion through the lens of Greek and especially Stoic philosophy. He and his Jewish diaspora community in Alexandria initiated many of the decisive paradigm shifts that early Christianity was to adopt a short time later. Not only at this point, but also after it, did he become the link between Greek philosophy and early Christian theology—with enormous consequences for the newly emerging religion and its development over at least two millennia.

4.3 The testimonies of the New Testament

As in the Old Testament, the New Testament is full of animals. However, most passages in the Gospels deal with the relationship between shepherd and flock as a metaphor for the relationship between God or Christ and His own flock. Or the animals appear as a resource (fish) or a backdrop (the pigs in the parable of the merciful father). For our question about New

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Testament animal ethics and the origin of Christian anthropocentrism, only a few relevant passages remain. First, we will look at some statements that can probably be attributed to Jesus himself. Then we will focus on Paul and the evangelists. Finally, we will look at the way the early church dealt with the commandment to ritual slaughter, probably the most recalcitrant animal ethical commandment in the Torah. In this way, the very first developments in New Testament times can be adequately traced.

4.3.1 Jesus of Nazareth

What does Jesus of Nazareth himself think about animals? What place do they have in his theology of creation and his ethics? His statements on this question are not very rich—it is not the focus of his preaching. However, some of his impulses, which are primarily not aimed at animal ethics but at interhuman ethics, allow us to draw conclusions about his reception and interpretation of Old Testament animal ethics. Three words from Jesus, which, apart from differences in details, are found in Matthew and Luke in the same wording, i.e. come from the so-called Logia source Q, are relevant for this. Two of them are inspired by the Old Testament (pre-Hellenistic) tradition of wisdom; one responds to the contemporary Torah interpretation. In all three, those two figures of argumentation appear that we have already observed in Jesus' contemporary Philon: the analogy between humans and animals and the argument a minori ad maius. The following Jesuslogies are at issue:

- Mt 6:26 (par Lk 12:24) says: "Look at the birds of the air: They do not sow, they do not reap, they do not gather provisions into barns; your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?" First of all, the birds are cited here as a testimony to God's faithful care, which he bestows completely independently of whether someone sows and reaps and gathers provisions or not (Ulrich Luz [5]2002, 479). Luke reinforces this statement by speaking of "ravens", i.e. birds that live off the seeds and food waste of man and therefore did not enjoy a good reputation at the time (Francois Bovon 1996, 304). This is followed by Jesus' argument in the form of the question of whether humans are not worth much more than birds. As emphasised above, both lines of argument presuppose similarities and dissimilarities between humans and animals. Therefore, the sentence cannot be used as evidence in favour of anthropocentrism. God cares for animals out of pure love as their

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creator—in his eyes they have a value of their own. The sentence thus underpins biblical biocentrism.

- Mt 10:29–31 (par Lk 12:6–7) goes in a similar direction: "Do you not sell two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's will. But with you, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid! You are worth more than many sparrows." Again, Jesus first makes the analogy between sparrows (two in Matthew, five in Luke) as almost worthless economically, because they were the cheapest edible birds on the market (Ulrich Luz 1990, 128), and human beings: God's care is for both, just as both are dependent on God. Utility is obviously not everything and not even the decisive factor—a clear rejection of the temptation of anthropocentrism. Then, as in the passage interpreted above, the argument a minori ad maius emerges.
- Finally, Mt 12:11–12 (par Lk 14:5) reads: "Which of you, having one sheep, will not seize it and pull it out when it falls into a pit for him on the Sabbath? How much more is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful on the Sabbath to do good." For the analogy between sheep (an ox in Luke) and man to work, one must assume that both are helped for their own sake. The animal is thus primarily pulled out of the well not because it has a high economic value for its owner, but because it is suffering[16]. Luke further emphasises this by mentioning not only the ox as a living creature that has fallen into the well, but alternatively also one's own son (Walter T. Wilson 2015, 204): "Which of you, when he falls into the well, will not immediately pull out his son or his ox, even on the Sabbath?" Consequently, Luke omits the surpassing argument a minori ad maius, which could hardly be brought into application for the son–man analogy. The equality between ox, son and sick person is thus emphasised even more strongly. All in all, the closeness of thought to Philon is unmistakable. "While Philo interprets laws about the treatment of animals in terms of their implications for the treatment of people, Matthew addresses a legal question about the treatment of people with

16 This becomes even clearer when one considers that the practice of pulling the animal out of the well on the Sabbath is by no means uncontroversial at the time of Jesus. The Essenes forbade such help for animals, while the rabbis squirmed by either only allowing animals to be fed or making it a condition that a person only help himself and that the animal climbs out of the pit with its own strength. For Jesus, on the other hand, there is absolutely no question that one must help the animal and, as a practitioner from the land, does help (Ulrich Luz 1990, 238).

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an illustration about the treatment of animals." (Walter T. Wilson 2015, 221)

Jesus thus presents animals and humans as equally needy beings, dependent on the loving care of the Creator, but at the same time caringly loved by God—and draws analogous ethical demands from this for human behaviour towards both. "Although the statements in Matt 6,26, 10,29–31, and 12,12 are couched in arguments a minori ad maius, they do not have the effect of setting human beings on a different plane of existence vis-á-vis non-human beings. Instead, attention is drawn to the mutuality of people and animals as members of creation, which, as such, are united in their dependence on God's provision, which extends even to individual members of each species." (Walter T. Wilson 2015, 220). This logic could hardly be further from anthropocentrism.

4.3.2 Paul of Tarsos

Things look different when we go through the letters of the Apostle Paul (c. 5 AD Tarsos-65 Rome). Paul, born and raised in Tarsos and thus a representative of Hellenistic Diaspora Judaism, which uses the Septuagint as its scriptural basis, is not overly influenced by Greek philosophy. However, on some ethical issues, including animal ethics, he is significantly influenced by the Stoa. This is evident, on the one hand, in his magnificent anthropology of conscience (Rom 2:14–15), in which he combines Deuteronomic theology of the heart with the Stoic doctrines of conscience and the normativity of human nature. On the other hand, his negative evaluation of homosexual behaviour (Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 11:14) is clearly Stoic-influenced, for again a reference to nature or unnaturalness, which is untypical of the Hebrew Bible, appears. The typically Greek, but biblically completely unknown expression of the "use" of sexuality also reveals the origin of these Pauline thoughts.

Paul rarely refers to animals in his letters. What is remarkable, however, is his interpretation of the animal ethical commandment of the Torah from Dt 25:4 "You shall not muzzle the ox for threshing". As a reminder, Philon had interpreted this commandment in De virtutibus 27, 145 in such a way to demonstrate that the Creator shows his kindness and care to all creatures regardless of species (cf. chapter 4.2). Jesus does not interpret this commandment anywhere, but in his attitude towards animals he moves along the same line as Philon in De virtutibus. Paul, on the other hand, writes in

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1 Cor 9:9–10: "Does God care about oxen? Does he not speak everywhere for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written: Let both the ploughman and the thresher do their work expecting to receive their portion." Paul thus explicitly excludes the use of analogy and replaces it with an allegorical interpretation: the ox in Dt 25:4 is only an image for the working man. In comparison with Philon and Jesus, this represents a striking shift: "Paul disputes the literal sense of the Old Testament regulation by pointing out (in the form of a rhetorical question) that God does not care for oxen [...] According to Paul, what is said in Dt 25:4 about this context—the threshing ox must also be able to eat while working—cannot be said for the sake of the animal, because God's care for the ox is excluded." (Gerd Häfner 2019, 314). So here Paul thinks much more Stoically than Philon and negates the actual meaning of the Old Testament commandment. That is already a strong piece of anthropocentrism.

What is more difficult is the question of how Paul sees the role of animals in the resurrection of the dead. On the one hand, animals do not appear in his large chapter on this subject in 1 Cor 15. "Certainly, on the one hand, the evaluation of such an omission is open to attack: That Paul does *not* comment on certain aspects may be justified in the given problem. If the idea of a resurrection body was at issue, Paul would simply have had to focus on it." (Gerd Häfner 2019, 315). On the other hand, 1 Cor 15 reveals that the fate of animals is not a very pressing concern for Paul.

Nevertheless, the redemption of animals occurs at least as a "collateral benefit" in Rom 8:18–23. There it says: "For I am convinced that the sufferings of the present time mean nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us. For creation eagerly awaits the manifestation of the sons and daughters of God. Certainly, creation is subjected to nothingness, not of its own will, but by Him who subjected it, in hope: For it too, creation (κτίσις), shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption to the freedom and glory of the children of God. For we know that all creation groans and lies in birth pangs to this day. But not only that, but we too, though we have the Spirit as our firstfruits, we too groan in our hearts, waiting to be revealed as sons and daughters with the redemption of our bodies."

In this passage, does "creation" include animals? This is affirmed in the exegesis: "In the past, there has been intense debate about who or what Paul means here by κτίσις. In the meantime, however, a certain consensus has emerged, according to which the extra-human nature and creature are being spoken of here." (Michael Wolter 2014, 509; cf. also Gerd Häfner 2019, 309). Through the different attributes he assigns to human beings

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on the one hand and to the extra-human creation on the other, Paul does reveal that he thinks anthropocentristically in orientation towards the Stoa and does not assign an intrinsic value to creation like Gen 1–2 (Michael Wolter 2014, 514; similarly also Gerd Häfner 2019, 313). Nevertheless, for the sake of human beings, he assumes that non-human creatures will also be freed from death and impermanence (Gerd Häfner 2019, 312), because human beings are “permanently dependent on the renewed creation and cannot exist without it” (Michael Wolter 2014, 514). To put it bluntly: for humans heaven without plants and animals would not be heaven, but hell. Therefore, Paul gathers the entire non-human creature under the cross of Christ: in suffering, but also in hope. “The universal perspective of redemption shows that there is a community of solidarity among the created, not only with regard to their origin from God, but also with regard to the (eschatological) future.” (Gerd Häfner 2019, 317). Even a hardened anthropocentrist like Paul cannot avoid this insight.

4.3.3 The Gospels

At first glance, it seems as if the oldest evangelist *Mark,* who wrote his Gospel shortly after 70 AD, presumably in Rome or near Rome, did not pass on any impulses relevant to animal ethics, for he does not know the three Jesuslogies from the source Q, and nothing more relevant has been handed down from the mouth of Jesus. Nevertheless, it is Mark who gives his Gospel a biocentristic or even cosmocentristic perspective at two key points: in the prologue and at the final climax of the narrative.

Mark 1:12–15 reads: “And immediately the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. Jesus stayed in the desert for forty days and was tempted by Satan. He lived with the wild animals and the angels ministered to him. After John was delivered up, Jesus went to Galilee; he preached the gospel of God and said, ‘The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel!’“ These sentences, which are placed immediately after the narrative of Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan, have a programmatic character in Mark’s Gospel as part of the prologue. In particular, the small subordinate clause “he lived with the wild animals”, which is often read over or passed over, has great theological significance since it is a reference back to Gen 1–2: in Christ, the new Adam, the Messianic age dawns, which brings the peace of creation already laid out in Paradise. In him God’s reign and kingdom dawns—a kingdom that includes not only human beings but

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all creatures. In him the cycle of violence against creation is broken and man is given the opportunity to live as a new creation himself. For Mark, Christ is the new Adam, the true human being whose humanity tames wild animals. In his presence, they shed their menace and become peaceful. But they can only do this because Jesus confronts them differently than Adam. With the Fall of Man, the first human being also massively disturbed the relationship with animals. Since then, it has been fraught with tension and conflict. Jesus, however, gets along well with the wild animals even under the extreme conditions of the desert.

Now, with the Christ–Adam parallel, only half the potential of this passage has been exhausted, for then it immediately says: "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand". For Mark, this means that where a person lives in peace with animals, God's reign has begun. The talk of the "kingdom of God" means a reality that embraces not only human beings, but all creatures. Praying for the coming of this kingdom in the Lord's Prayer (to which Mark alludes in the Olivet Narrative, Mark 14:32–42) is the same as praying for peace between man and man, man and animal, and man and creation. For Mark, wherever the kingdom of God is spoken of, animals are to be taken into consideration. Without them, the kingdom of God is not complete.

Mk 15:33 must be read not only biocentristically, but cosmocentristically. Mark tells us here that on the day of Jesus' crucifixion, from the sixth to the ninth hour, darkness came over the whole land. This is not an astronomical fact, but a theological interpretation: if it becomes dark at the sixth hour, i.e. at noon, when the sun normally shines brightest, then with the crucifixion of Christ the order of creation from Gen 1 is turned upside down. It is a cosmic catastrophe, as announced in Am 8:9 (Joachim Gnilka 1979, 321). The whole of creation is drawn into the disaster caused by the crucifixion of Jesus. At the same time, however, the whole of creation receives a perspective of hope for salvation through the one crucified.

Mark thus places the event of Jesus as the Christ narrated in his Gospel in a universal creation horizon. Both in his programmatic prologue and at the climax of his narrative, the crucifixion, he explicitly refers to the Creation narratives in Gen 1–2. Jesus as Christ came for the sake of all creation and all creatures. There is no trace of anthropocentrism.

Matthew as well as *Luke*, who write between 80 and 90 AD and largely adopt Mark 1:12–15 in their Gospels, delete the half-sentence about Jesus' life with wild animals—presumably because the short reference is no longer comprehensible to their audience. They receive the darkness during Jesus'

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crucifixion, on the other hand. Finally, both of them take the three animal ethically significant Jesuslogies from the Logical source Q that is available to them, which we have already discussed above (chapter 4.3.1).

A passage that has the highest significance for the justification of Christian animal ethics is Mt 7:12: "All things, therefore, that you expect of others, do also to them. This is what the Law and the Prophets consist in." In this sentence from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus quotes the so-called "Golden Rule" in its positive version. Matthew, however, adds a second half-sentence to this, which is not found in the source of the Sermon on the Mount (Luke does not convey it, cf. Lk 6:31), and claims: Whoever keeps this rule thereby fulfils everything that the Torah and the Prophets demand. Now, as we have seen (chapter 2.3), the Torah includes a considerable number of animal ethical rules, and Matthew knows this. So he is claiming no less than that animal ethics also follow the Golden Rule. This is a strong claim. For the border between species does not, in this logic, mark a limit to human responsibility. Humans have the ability to empathise with a non-human living being—at least to the extent that they can derive sufficient guidance for action from it—and this obliges them. Christian ethics include animals.

The fourth and latest Gospel according to *John,* which was probably written in Asia Minor around 100 AD, does not contain any direct references to animal ethics due to its very "mystical" orientation. Nevertheless, it already ascribes cosmic significance to the Christ event in its first sentences, namely in the powerful Logos hymn (Jn 1:1–18).

The parallels to Gen 1 are obvious: both texts open with "In the beginning". In both, the semantic fields "word"/ "speak" and "become"/ "create" play a central role. At the centre of Jn 1:1–18 is the Logos, who is before all creation and uncreated because he is God. "All things came into being through the Word, and without it nothing came into being that has come into being" (Jn 1:3). Of this Word, verse 14 says: "And the Word became flesh (σάρξ) and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." For many centuries this phrase has been interpreted as "the incarnation of God". This is not wrong, and yet it is only half the truth, for: "The absolute σάρξ is not paraphrasing for 'man' [...], but [...] expression for the earthly bound (3:6), the perishable (6:63) [...] in the incarnate Logos heaven descends to earth." (Rudolf Schnackenburg 1981, 243).

Throughout the Old Testament, "flesh" always means that which is creaturely or also creatures in their entirety. With the incarnation of the divine

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Word, the whole of creation becomes the body of God. The Word made flesh is "the body of the universe" (Sallie McFague 1993, 131) and incarnation is "God's becoming creature" (Michael Rosenberger 2001, 20–21). Pope Francis aptly summarises this Johannine thought in his 2015 encyclical Laudato si': "For the Christian experience, all the creatures of the material universe find their true meaning in the incarnate Word (verbo encarnado), because the Son of God took into his person a part of the material universe into which he placed a seed of definitive transformation." (LS 235).

4.3.4 The late New Testament epistolary literature

The latest texts of the New Testament, which were written well after 100 AD in the sphere of life of Hellenistic Jewish Christians, already use the aloga thesis as a matter of course—precisely when it comes to comparing immoral people with animals. More precisely, there are two passages, the second of which is probably literarily dependent on the first.

The first passage is found in the Epistle of Jude, one of the shortest writings in the New Testament. The letter is linguistically and stylistically of high quality, but at the same time extraordinarily polemical. It was written between 100 and 120 AD, possibly in Asia Minor. In any case, its author is a Jewish Christian and writes under the pseudonym of the (long-dead) Lord's brother Judas. He is concerned with the sharp demarcation of the church from "opponents". Of the latter he writes: "These, however, blaspheme what they do not know; but what they understand by nature, like reasonless animals (φυσικῶς ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῷα ἐπίστανται), on this they perish." (Jud 10).

The Second Epistle of Peter is also a pseudepigraph, written in good Greek and testifying to Hellenistic learning. Since it is partly literarily dependent on the Epistle of Jude, it can only have been written after the latter, approximately in the first third of the 2nd century AD. Very similarly to the Epistle of Jude, it states: "those who let the filthy lust of their bodies rule them and despise the power of the Lord [....] are like reasonless animals, born by nature to be trapped and perish (ὡς ἄλογα ζῷα γεγεννημένα φυσικὰ εἰς ἅλωσιν καὶ φθορὰν)." (2 Pet 2:11–12).

Both passages take up classical topoi from Greek and especially Stoic philosophy. The immoral human being, like reasonless animals, does not recognise qua reason, but qua nature. Instead of approaching God and

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striving upwards, he approaches those creatures that are below him in the scala naturae. In doing so, he betrays his vocation and gift.

4.3.5 The Early Church's Detachment from the Commandment of Ritual Slaughter

If we take the texts of the New Testament together, it is easy to see that the Hellenistic influences in them are kept within narrow limits. By far the most of it is to be found in the only Hellenistic Jew among the New Testament authors, Paul. His anthropocentrism is clearly recognisable and far surpasses that of Philon, if we only think of both their different interpretations of Dt 25:4. Nevertheless, the question of non-human creation is a marginal question in Paul, more marginal than in the Gospels and infinitely more marginal than in Philon. That Paul is the (main) source of early Christian anthropocentrism seems unthinkable. It is more likely to be Philon and early Hellenistic Judaism in Alexandria.

In order to understand how the Hellenisation of early Christianity took place, it is helpful to reconstruct its handling of that commandment which can, without question, be described as the hardest ethical chunk from the bedrock of Jewish tradition: The commandment to ritual slaughter (cf. Michael Rosenberger 2019), for it is an excellent illustration of how strong the pressure on young Christianity was in the Hellenistic environment to break away from the specific commandments of the Torah, where these were not compatible with the Hellenistic ethos. At the same time, the law of ritual slaughter illustrates how persistently and energetically the Hebrew Jewish Christians, who were increasingly becoming a minority, resisted giving up the core of their Jewish identity.

That I still place this section in chapter 4 is not compelling. The processes I describe in the following range from the late New Testament to the early post-New Testament period. So the section could also be placed at the beginning of chapter 5. However, since it contributes essential insights for a better understanding of the transitional phase, I present it as the last point in chapter 4.

In terms of content, the ritual slaughter commandment represents a ritual of reverence towards the animal to be killed. The slaughterers know and acknowledge that they are taking the life of a fellow creature and that this is anything but a matter of course. With the blood completely drained away, the most precious thing belonging to the animal is left untouched: its

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lifeblood. The Old Testament rules even go so far as to say that the blood of sacrificial animals must also flow out completely before they are offered to God. Not even God is allowed to take possession of the blood—it belongs entirely to the animal itself.

This contrasts with the thoroughly profane slaughter of Greco-Roman culture. For them, slaughter is a secular matter because, unlike in the Bible, animals do not belong to the legal community. If the commandment to ritual slaughter meets pagan Hellenists in the context of the early Christian mission, this cannot but lead to a complete lack of understanding. The symbolic *form* of the ritual is not understood; the symbolic *content* of the legal community of God, humans and animals is not shared.

In the New Testament, we still find evidence of the fact that the prohibition of blood consumption is one of the few instructions from the Torah that seem non-negotiable for (Hebrew-Aramaic) Jewish Christians. For although in the context of the mission to the Gentiles the entire Torah is declared not to be binding for Gentile Christians, and even circumcision is not required, this rule is adhered to: two of the four exception clauses of the "Apostles' Council" from around 48 AD, which Luke lists in Acts 15:20, namely the abstention from meat sacrificed to idols and fornication, blood and strangled food, concern the prohibition of blood consumption, which thus becomes valid for Gentile Christians[17]. Burkhard Jürgens recognises in these clauses an inner structure of two commandments twice: The first two commandments of abstaining from meat sacrificed to idols and fornication refer to the sole worship of God (Burkhard Jürgens 1999, 163); the next two of abstaining from blood and choking refer to his creative power: No one shall take blood or the life breath from an animal—the vitality of creatures is inviolable (Burkhard Jürgens 1999, 164). Seen in this light, the Palestinian Jewish Christians would explicitly use the commandment of ritual slaughter against Greek anthropocentrism.

Paul does not agree with the exception clauses from the Apostles' Decree. The Letter to the Romans testifies that, for him, eating unkosher meat is not a reprehensible act, but is possible in principle in the freedom of the gospel (Rom 14:14). It is only because it would cause offence to the "weak", who still cling to the traditional commandments, that the "strong" are to abstain from eating unkosher meat. It seems piquant that Paul refers to the

17 Paul claims in Gal 2:1–10 that there were no exception clauses at all. Historically, however, it is at least clear that such exceptions were subsequently practised in many Christian communities.

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(Palestinian?) Jewish Christians as the "weak" and the Hellenistic "Gentile Christians" as the "strong". In Philo's interpretation of Dt 22:10, it is exactly the other way round. All in all, Paul's statement must have been regarded as tremendous provocation for Jewish Christians: "The condemnation of any observance of the purity laws must have sounded to them like a motto to practical godlessness." (Ulrich Wilckens 1982, 91). And the slaughtered animals? It is obvious that Paul does not think about them for a moment. They are like air to him. And because that is the case, he, although a Jew, does not like the commandment to ritual slaughter. But at first, Paul does not succeed with this breach of tradition.

Justin (c. 100 Flavia Neapolis = Nablus/Palestine-165 Rome), for example, in his dialogue with the Jew Tryphon, recognises the validity of the comandment of ritual slaughter without further ado (Justin, Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo 20). And even for Tertullian (160–220 Carthage, see chapter 5.3), the abstention from animal blood is self-evident (Tertullian, Apology 9, 13). He does not refer to Acts 15:20, but to the Noahide covenant in Gen 9:4 (Tertullian, De ieiunio 4) or to the "beginning" of human history (Tertullian, De monogamia 5). Tertullian obviously knows the decree of the Apostolic Council in a modified version, in which only idolatry and fornication as well as the murder of human beings are mentioned and in which the prohibitions of blood and asphyxiation are missing (Tertullian, De pudicitia 12). While the older Alexandrian text retains Acts 15:20 with all four original prohibitions, the more recent Western codex, which Tertullian has in Carthage, changes the decision of the Apostolic Council—obviously to justify the more liberal and secular practice common in the West (Franz Böhmisch 2007, 47–48). Nevertheless, Tertullian exhorts us to hold fast to the Jewish prohibition on the consumption of blood. And in Alexandria, the Christians seem to have held on to it even longer. But at some point, it was no longer practised among them either.

The opening of the young church to the Gentile mission thus leads to the abolition of the Jewish commandment to ritual slaughter within a few generations in all (!) traditions, despite fierce resistance from the Palestinian Jewish Christians. Christian slaughter is thus at least formally profaned—a step that is understandable in view of the dynamics of the mission to the Gentiles, but with serious consequences. Even today, its consequences for the Christian attitude towards animals can only be guessed at in outline. The Church unwisely relinquished its influence on the slaughter of animals: "This more or less conscious sense of the ethical religious significance of animal killing, which only finds a tolerable form for humans

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by being clothed in rites of worship, has no equivalent in the Hellenistic Christian, and thus in the Western industrial tradition." (Heike Baranzke 2003, 314).

4.4 On the threshold from the biblical to the patristic period

If we look back at the traces of the incipient Hellenisation of biblical interpretation in pre-Patristic times, we see that the transition from biblical biocentrism to Hellenistic anthropocentrism is prepared by numerous small shifts. The following facets contribute to this:

- The *adoption of the Stoic scala naturae* can only be found in Philon. It is found neither in the late Old Testament nor in the New Testament. And yet this essence–ontological hierarchy will soon play an important role in the Christian doctrine of creation and cover the spatial–relational order of creation of God's seven-day work in Gen 1.
- The Stoic view of *animals as reasonless beings,* which is foreign to the Bible, determines the view of the early Jewish Diaspora community of Alexandria. It already became decisive in the Book of Wisdom, and even more so in Philon. From Hellenistic Judaism, it reached early Christianity a little later and established the momentous "rational divide" in Western ethics to this day.
- Alexandrian Judaism (in the Septuagint, the Book of Wisdom and the writings of Philon) unanimously interprets the biblical reference to the *image of God* in Gen 1:26–27 as referring to man's ability to reason. The book of Jesus Sirach, which has only been preserved in Greek, although is originally from Hebrew Judaism, also takes this position (whether it was also contained in the original Hebrew text is as yet unknown). It marks a momentous shift from a relational–functional interpretation of man as God's governor on earth to an *essential–ontological interpretation* of man as the only being endowed with reason. At the same time, man's connection back to God and his instructions is made invisible: man is now no longer God's representative, but a ruler by his own authority.
- It is remarkable that in the texts examined here, *traces of hard anthropocentrism* can only be found in Paul and very marginally. Although Hellenistic diaspora Judaism follows the Stoic "rational divide" between rational and non-rational creatures, the ethical consequences of this remain narrow for the time being. Here, the animal-friendliness of the Torah continues to have an effect. It is upheld and defended against

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> attacks from outside. Early Christianity, on the other hand, gradually bowed to the pressure of the Hellenistic environment in the context of the mission to the Gentiles. Thus, the last bastion of biblical animal ethics dissolved.

These very simplified processes of the history of ideas are unlikely to have been consciously controlled. The fact that there were fewer and fewer "Hebrew" (i.e. presumably Aramaic-speaking, Israel-born) Jewish Christians among the Christians who can keep the Old Testament and Jesus legacy alive was due to the dynamics of the early Christian mission. At some point, in most communities there was simply no one left who came from Hebrew culture. Thus, Hellenistic culture with its paradigms became the basic framework of Christian ethics without anyone questioning or reflecting on it. Local but frequent hostilities between (re-Hebraised) Jews and (fully Hellenised) Christians may have accelerated these processes.

The point here is not to evaluate the penetration of Christian theology by Greco-Roman philosophy as a whole. For animal ethics, however, it caused considerable collateral damage that continues to this day. When the texts of the early Church Fathers are analysed in the following chapter, we will be able to understand this penetration process even more precisely.

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