

The Antonian Zoo: Use of Animal and Human Traits in Medieval Sermons*

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Abstract: *In the mid 1220s Anthony of Padua, who had lectured on Sacred Scripture for a year at a Franciscan School that he had established in Bologna, was asked to write out his lectures. Instead he wrote a resource book for preachers. This contained material for all Sundays of the year and its major feast days, a more practical treatise for fledging preachers because it also contained pointers on how to preach. Among the resources are comparisons between characteristics of animals, plants, and minerals with human characteristics. This paper investigates what influenced Anthony, analyzes his probable resources, and lists all the creatures from his general animal “zoo” together with examples of his contrasting of animal and humans characteristics.*

During the ten year period, Spring 1221 to June 13, 1231, the Franciscan known as St. Anthony of Padua, although the Portuguese call him St. Anthony of Lisbon because he was born there—this Friar Minor was a most popular preacher in northern Italy and southern France.¹ About the year 1224 he started a school of theology near the University of Bologna for young friars. At the conclusion of the first year he turned the continuance of the school over to an Oxford trained friar, Haymo of Faversham, and went to southern France to preach and teach. Sometime during this period he was encouraged to write down his theological lectures. Instead he composed a resource book for preachers.² It consists of sermon material for every Sunday of the year and twenty-four major feasts, some eighty topics, a few Sundays being provided with alternate topics.

Throughout this set of resources are reference to minerals, plants, and animals. For instance,

The sapphire represents contempt of the visible and contemplation of the invisible. The emerald typifies tearful compunction that accompanies confession of sins. . . The door of the

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¹ Born in Lisbon about 1190 he entered the religious group known as Canons Regular of St. Augustine and was ordained a priest. Their work was in and around cathedrals: preaching, teaching, and caring for their parishioners. In 1220 he transferred to the group now known as Franciscans, then simply called friars. What he saw as his vocation as a friar led him to northern Italy where the event described here took place. He died in Padua in 1231. The best brief biography of Anthony in English is probably that by Michael Cusato, OFM in *Early Franciscan Movement* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 2009), 317–338, reprinted from *The Cord* 52, 2 (March–April 2001), 58–61 and *The Cord* 52, 3 (May–June 2001), 106–113.

² Beniamino Costa, Leonardo Frasson, Ioanne Luisetto, & Paulo Marangon (edd. 1979). *S. Antonii Patavini Sermones Dominicales et Festivi ad fidem codicum recogniti*, 3 vols. Padua: Edizioni Messaggero. References to this edition are noted by volume and page numbers and appear first in the citations. There are two translations that I reference: Giordano Tollardo OFM Conv. (trans. ed. 2005). *I sermoni di Sant’Antonio di Padova*. Padua: Edizioni Messaggero 4th edition. References to this translation are in the second place and are marked by the letter S followed by page number(s). And, Paul Spilsbury (trans. 2007–2010), *Sermons for Sundays and Festivals*, 4 vols. Padua: Edizioni Messaggero. References to this translation are in the third place and are marked by the word Sermons followed by volume and page numbers. All translations are mine from the Latin edition. Mine too are the additions in square brackets. First-time readers of the translations are well advised to remember that any translation is an interpretation.

church militant through which one enters into the kingdoms of heaven is made from the sapphire of the apostles and the emerald of the martyrs (II 243, S 709, Sermons II 419).

For plant life,

The bad tree represents bad will. Its root is cupidity, obstinacy is its trunk, perverse works its branches, its leaves are poisonous words, and its fruit is eternal death (I 566, S 538, Sermons II 195).

For animals,

When elephants are under attack, they take particular care of the wounded by putting them within a circle together with the weak. So too should you put your neighbor and those who are ill within the center of your love (I 566, S 538, Sermons II 195).

In preaching the use of parallelisms between characteristics of animals and of humans had to be clear in the minds of preachers and audience. The purpose of such a relationship was stated succinctly by Maureen A. Tilley: “The behavior of the animals was anthropomorphized to provide object lessons for Christians in acquiring virtues and avoiding vice.”³ Her synopsis was fleshed out by Debra Hassig:

In his treatise on the art of preaching, the English theologian Thomas of Chobham (d. 1236?) eloquently expressed the medieval belief that the natural world of beasts and birds is a book of lessons written by God for the edification of human beings. Medieval bestiaries were books about nature written by human beings for their own edification. The bestiary words and pictures represented evidence to their readers of Christ and the devil in the world around them and offered behavioral advice for people who sought to live their lives more perfectly in the eyes of God.⁴

Even if Anthony might never have heard or read the works of Thomas of Chobham, he certainly lived in his environment.

While reading Anthony’s resource material for preachers, I created a list of most of his fellow creatures. He made at least 365 references to them, including some 50 mammals, 24 birds, 4 aquatic creatures, and 14 insects of diverse kinds, not to overlook 8 reptiles and 8 mythological creatures, to highlight human characteristics. Most of Anthony’s uses can be classified under one of what I call the four Zambon categories (more on him below).

(1) *precision or enrichment for a specific spiritual example*: The locust is called such because its feet seem as long as rods. The caterpillar is all mouth. A blight can destroy crops. And the palmer-worm that gnaws on leaves can get inside a person to cause an itch in the flesh. Thus the locust signifies pride, the caterpillar gluttony, the blight anger and envy, and the palmer-worm lechery. These are the things that destroy our good works (II 403, S 844, Sermons III 150).

³ “Martyrs, Monks, Insects, and Animals,” in Joyce E. Salisbury (ed. 1993), *The Medieval Book of Nature A Book of Essays* (NY: Garland), 102.

⁴ *Medieval Bestiaries Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge 1995), xv.

(2) *contrast of two animals with opposite characteristics whereby an antithetical environment is emphasized*: The elephant represent the just person; the snake is the devil. They are always in conflict. The demons set traps for the feet (the affections) of the just person. With these same feet the elephant kills the snake (I 499, S 481, Sermons II 122).

(3) *display of the Bestiary in miniature*: Pliny's *Natural History* informs us that there are just four beings that exist solely on the four elements of nature, one for each: the anchovy survives only on water, the chameleon on air, the salamander on fire, and the mole on earth. Now charity, the life of the soul, implies four specific acts: compunction of the heart, contemplation of glory, love of neighbor, and mindfulness of one's earthly origin. The anchovy, smallest of all fish, represents the humble penitent who lives solely from the water of tears of contrition. From these tears, happily, will arise good works until eventually the most Blessed Trinity will grant him pardon. The chameleon represents the contemplative who lives on the sweetness from contemplation. It is as though this one has been changed into air, never to be bothered with anything of the flesh. The salamander is the type of the charitable person who lives solely from the fire of love. All one's works and words burn like a torch. The mole is the solitary person who lives solely off the land because he knows himself as an earthly sinner in the blindness of his exile. Looking down on no one else and nothing else except his own sin, he seeks only to abide in the heart of Jesus (II 389–94, S 832–6, Sermons III 134–39, condensed).

(4) *masterful originality*: The hypocrite resembles the ostrich that has wings but because of its great size it cannot fly. The hypocrite has grown stout from attachment to earthly things. Yet he imagines himself a sparrow hawk, as though on the wings of false religiosity he can lift himself to the height of contemplation (I 69, S 84, Sermons I 82).

All of these I have arranged with their characteristics applicable to humans into what I named "The Antonian Zoo."

A question to be considered is where did Anthony find such parallels? In the library at the Cathedral of Coimbra, where Fernando as he was called trained for the priesthood, there were two books that he might have consulted. The first is *Expositio in librum Job sive Moraliū* by St. Gregory the Great. It offers highly practicable material that can serve as mentor for a young preacher. Assuming that Anthony developed the craft of preaching from his previous knowledge and ongoing experiences, he may have found in this treatise just about all that a beginning preacher would need to know about the craft. St. Gregory's *Moralia* recommends these five components for good preaching: recognition of diverse audiences, tonal quality that fits material and audience, variety of interpretation of material, use of familiar imagery, and the spiritual foundation that sustains the preacher. Even if Anthony heard preachers use as familiar material the characteristics of animals to drive home a point, St. Gregory certainly reinforced their use in the *Moralia*.

For what is designated by the name of the raven and its young ones but the Gentile world blackened with sin? (XXX 28)⁵

Why is it then that blessed Job is questioned concerning the bringing forth of the wild goats and the hinds, except that by wild goats and hinds is signified the character of spiritual

⁵ The indented quotations from Gregory's work are by J. H. Parker & J. Rivington (trans. 1844), *Morals in the Book of Job by St. Gregory the Great*; better known as the *Moralia*Ex (online: www.lectionarycentral.com/GregoryMoraliaIndex.html). Roman numerals identify chapters, Arabic numerals paragraph numbers.

masters? For they in truth bring forth as wild goats in the rocks; because by the teaching of the fathers, who are called rocks for their solidity, they bring forth souls to conversion (XXX 36).

The wild ass that dwells in solitude signifies, not inaptly the life of those who dwell far removed from the crowds of people (XXX 50).

Two additional resources both available in the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra were *De bestii et aliis rebus*⁶ and St. Isidore's *Etymologiae*.⁷ Other resources for animated creatures that he used, although not mentioned in the book lists for the monastery schools where he trained hence consulted elsewhere after he had become a friar, are Aristotle's *De historia animalium*, Solinus' *Polyhistor rerum toto orbe memoraliū*, Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, both *Glossa*, *Physiologus*, and an unidentified "*naturalia*." Anthony was in good company for selecting animal characteristics to highlight similar characteristics in humans. His best known contemporary was St. Francis of Assisi, with his counseling of the wolf of Gubbio and his sermon to the birds.⁸

The task was given to Adam to name all the creatures in Paradise.⁹ While we do not have his nomenclature, we do have the names of all the creatures I found that Anthony discussed in his sermon material. His names, all of which are in my Latin dictionary,¹⁰ occupy the first place within the parentheses that follow the English names assigned as their translations. In second place within the same parentheses lies the Italian translation of the Latin term, as each appears in the Italian translation of the sermon resource book. If an English word appears, then it is from Spilsbury's English translation to signal a different word from what I use.

In perusing this list keep a word of caution in mind: expect inconsistent attributions of animal characteristics, especially with generalizations. For instance, commenting on the line from 1 Kgs 4:33, ". . . he spoke of beasts of burden, birds, reptiles, and fish . . ." Anthony wrote:

The beasts of burdens are gluttonous and lechers, the birds are so proud, the reptiles are greedy, and the fish are busybodies (I 486, S 469, Sermons II 108).

Elsewhere in the story of Jesus and the coin for the Temple Tax (Matt 17:27), he would use the fish to describe what a sinner was expected to do:

The coin was a stater weighing three pieces of silver that represent contrition, confession, and satisfaction. It was found in the mouth of a fish . . . a sinner hooked by a preacher and pulled from the river of worldly delights. In its mouth was the stater of penance that frees body and soul from the tribute of fault and the punishment of hell (I 540, S 57, Sermons II 167).

⁶ Francis Carmody discussed its incorrect attribution to Hugh of St. Victor in "De Bestiis et Aliis Rebus and the Latin Physiologus," *Speculum* 132 (1938): 153.

⁷ Francisco da Gama Caeiro, "Fonti portoghesi della formazione culturale di Sant'Antonio," in Antonio Poppi (ed. 1982), *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani* (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero), 162 & 164.

⁸ The work of William Short OFM ties together the two groups in a masterful way; see his "Saints and Animals." New York: Now You Know Media, Inc., 2010.

⁹ See Gen 2:19–20.

¹⁰ C.T. Lewis & C. Short (eds.), *A Latin Dictionary founded on Andrews' edition of Freud's Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon, reprt 1962.

In short, Anthony used the figures as he thought applicable for a given time and place.

One of the widest uses Anthony made of animals and their characteristics occurred in his sermon material for the first Sunday of Lent. This was an idea developed from Isa 34:13–15:

[The desert] shall be the lair of lizards and an abode for ostriches. Evil spirits shall infect the onocentaur, and hairy goats shall shout at one another. The vampire shall dwell there and find its rest. And the hedgehog will dwell there to feed its young in its own shadow.

This is what Anthony offered his readers:

There are seven kinds of animals: lizard, ostrich, onocentaur that is the offspring of an ass and a bull, hairy goat, vampire, and hedgehog. In these seven beasts, we see seven kinds of sins. All must be revealed exactly in confession together with whatever may be like them and how they were committed, whether in mind or in act. We see in the lizard the malicious poison of hate and defamation, in the ostrich hypocrisy, in the ass lust, in the bull pride, in the hairy goat avarice and usury, in the vampire¹¹ perfidious heresy, and in the hedgehog whining excuses for sin (I 68–69, S 83–84, Sermons 81).

Thereafter Anthony devoted a paragraph or so to each of the animals and the sin it represents (I 69–71, S 84–87, Sermons 81–84).

Among the scholars who have discussed Anthony and his creatures in considerable detail, three have been chosen for this report. The first in chronological order is Samuele Doimi OFM Conv., who placed his investigation within the framework of natural science.¹² After beginning with a systematic description of the theme from a physiological viewpoint, he considered Anthony's resources for the natural sciences: the same authors and works that I noted above. Then he paid particular attention to themes and figures that he considered proper to the sermons of Anthony. He consulted eleven authors who had written on Anthony's works and learned that they were in agreement: the special characteristic of the *Sermons* was homiletic. (Could he have expected anything different for a resource book for preachers?) In his zoological section after discussing a few creatures in detail, such as the lion, he named with references 23 mammals, 16 birds, and 4 reptiles, in my estimation his major contribution. His general conclusion was that St. Anthony had a vast knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of humans, animals, and plants, not to overlook a fair amount of mineralogy.¹³

The second authority, Francesco Zambon, focused on animal symbology in Anthony's sermons.¹⁴ His major contribution was a fourfold categorization of parallels between humans and animals that I have utilized above. In addition to placing greater emphasis on Anthony's coupling of animal/humans characteristics with a passage from sacred Scripture he paid considerable attention to *Physiologus* as a source for similarities. Additionally he disagreed with

¹¹ See footnote 35 for explanation of word *vampire*.

¹² "Le scienze naturali in Sant'Antonio," in Carlo Balic OFM and Lorenzo di Fonzo OFM Conv. (edd. 1947), *S. Antonio Dottore della Chiesa Atti delle settimane antoniane tenute a Roma e a Padova nel 1946* (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot), 437–459.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 458.

¹⁴ "La simbologia animale nei 'Sermones' di Sant'Antonio," in Antonio Poppi (ed. 1982), *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani* (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero), 255–68.

Costas *et al* on the attribution of the passage on the Siren: they preferred the *Etymologies*¹⁵ and he sought to establish the *Elementaria Doctrinae Rudimentum* of Papias as the source.¹⁶

Finally is the general study of Fernando Uribe, “Natura, creato.”¹⁷ After beginning with a review of 14 pertinent articles including the two above, he offered an overview of *Le fonti* in which there is nothing new. In accord with other writers he affirmed that Anthony used the symbols to convey moral applications. Indeed he enlarged on Zambon’s fourfold categorization, concluding with the comment that “Anthony is quite systematic in applying his methodology.”¹⁸ More than my other two authorities he details Anthony’s concordances, a method different from mere symbolization that emphasizes parallels to which Anthony wished particular attention paid. His second most important contribution is his observation that Anthony’s originality lie not only in his procedures but also in his interpretations. The massive presence of natural elements found throughout the *Sermons* is an exception to contemporary works of the same genre.¹⁹ His most important contribution in my thinking is the extensive list of resource one finds in his *Note* and *Bibliografia*.

Hereafter follows *The Antonian Zoo*. As in any well-organized zoo the inhabitants are sheltered in their own compounds, the Aviary obviously being the tallest and the Reptilium being the shortest. The compounds are in this order: *The Mammalry*, *The Aviary*, *The Reptilium*, *The Insectry*, *The Aquarium*, *The Mythicarium*, and *The Appendix*.

1. The Mammalry

Mammals (formally *Mammalia*) are a class of air-breathing vertebrate animals characterized by the possession of hair, three middle ear bones, a neocortex, and mammary glands functional in mothers with young.

Beast of the Field (jumentum/bestia agri, giumento, beast)

concupiscence

The beasts of the field are the demons. The instincts of the flesh are typified by those beasts that devour the Church and faithful souls (I 470, S 457, Sermons II 93)²⁰. The *Book of Nature* tells us, “When a beast of the field is in heat, you can calm it by cutting its hair.” It is the same thing with our bodies: when they want to indulge in an abundance of temporal things and the pursuit of fleshy desires, we ought to cut off our hair like is done with idiots (I 190–91, S 666, Sermons II 364).

Anteater (formicarum leo, leone delle formiche)

grim reaper

[Because of the ant’s very small size alone and with the help of the context that follows the reference,] Prelates who ignore their charge to preach and live the life of Jesus Christ will be turned into ants whom the great ant-eater, the devil, will devour (I 474–75, S 460–61, Sermons II 96).

Antelope see **Gazelle**

¹⁵ Costas, *Sermones*, II 56.

¹⁶ Op.cit., 262.

¹⁷ In Ernesto Caroli (ed. 2002), *Dizionario Antoniano Dottrina e Spiritualità dei Sermones di Sant’Antonio* (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero), 513–552.

¹⁸ Ibid., 529.

¹⁹ Ibid., 535.

²⁰ Sets of numbers are separated by commas, the first set being from the Latin edition, the second from the Italian translation, and the third from the English translation.

Ape (simia, scimmia)**pompous, unstable**

Apes that mimic human actions but remains beasts typify converts from paganism who seem to have a hold on the faith yet deny it by their actions (I 493–94, S 476, Sermons II 117). Commenting on Gen 1:11, “He ruled through his servant.” The reigning servant is the prelate, who built up by the spirit of pride has an ape under his roof as he presides over the people of God (II 14, S 555, Sermons II 218). Their reactions to whatever are controlled only by the phases of the moon. In the full moon they exult with carnality. In the 3rd quarter they are depressed beyond care. The unstable person reacts exactly the same (III 93, S 1153, Sermons IV 103).

Ass (asinus, asino)**worldly, unwilling, stupid, carnal**

The ass is ignorant. So too the person interested only in his own comfort has lost all wisdom that would otherwise keep him from falling into frequent carnality (I 70, S 85, Sermons I 82–83). Commenting on 2 Kgs 6:25, “As the siege continued, the famine in Samaria became so great] that the head of an ass was sold for 80 shekels of silver.” The head of the ass represents the wisdom of the world that is stupidity before God (see 1 Cor 3:19) (I 538–39, S 516, Sermons II 166).

Ass Eastern or Wild Ass see Donkey**Bat** (vespertilio, pipistrello)**carnal, worldly**

The bat symbolizes the carnal person because its wings, which should enable it to fly to the heavens, are tied to its feet that typify the earth or what is carnal (II 463, S 889, Sermons III 216). And it does not see at night because its eyes lack a crystalline humor and its wings are tied to its feet. Consequently the wings representing good works that ought to fly a person to heaven do not, because they are tied to its feet; that is, the pull of the flesh that delights in being praised by others (II 463, S 889, Sermons III 216).

Bear (orsus, orso)**greedy, lecherous**

Because bears are greedy and lecherous, they roar to get honey, the sweetness of temporal things. Just as their heads are weak, so do the minds of prelates lack all strength to resist temptation (I 472–73, S 458–59, Sermons II 95). Stronger yet is the humility whose strength David remarked about to Saul, “I your servant have bested the lion and the bear” (I Kgs 17:36). The humble servant has conquered the lion of pride and the bear of lechery, because no one can conquer the drive of lechery unless first he has striven to expel the spirit of pride from the entrance to his heart (I 144, S 141, Sermons I 159–60).

Beaver (castor, castoro)**self-denying, self-satisfying**

In Pliny’s *Natural History* one reads that the beaver [called *castor* in Latin] has testicles thought to be medicinal for the cure of paralysis. Consequently the animal is hunted for them. Knowing this the beaver castrates itself and throws them away. For this reason it called *castor*. But the foolish person does the opposite. For the sake of his testicles he trades himself to the devil for lechery (II 227 S 695, Sermons II 402).

Bull (taurus, toro)**proud**

The bull typifies the proud person delighting in his possessions, who crucify Jesus anew in their lack of love of neighbor (I 70, S 85, Sermons I 83). Commenting on Isa 51:33, there will be “great death in Edom, “which is interpreted as bloody or earthly, namely . . . the bulls (mitered bishops having two horns on their heads like bulls). All of these lacking true repentance for their sins shall go down into hell with the powerful (the secular rulers) because of their malicious pride (II 471–72, S 896, Sermons III 226).

Burro see Donkey

Calf (vitulus, vitello)

lascivious, petulant

Samaria is likened to the church, whose calf (the prelate) lascivious and petulant, walking with head erect and puffed up, is thrown out by the Lord. As a spider's web is torn and scattered by the wind, so the calf (the petulant clergy) is reduced to nothing (II 406 & 408, S 846 & 848, Sermons III 153 & 155).

Camel (cammellus, cammello)

avaricious

"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle" [the name of a gate in Jerusalem] because by its nature it can lower itself, than can a rich man who can lower himself only by the grace of God (II 75, S 608, Sermons II 288). [Yet in another place Anthony wrote] The camel signifies avarice because it cannot walk through the eye of a needle. The avaricious cannot live in the poverty of Jesus Christ (II 533, S 991, Sermons III 303).

Capon (capo, cappone, cock) *see* **Fox**

Cat (felex, gato)

sneaky

The two demons are the wisdom of the flesh and the cunning of the world. They vex and tire a person. The wisdom of the flesh is the devil at night. The Cunning of the world is the noonday devil. The former is blind, even if it thinks itself to have the sharp sight of a cat at night (III 240, S 352–53, Sermons IV 252).

Cock (gallus, gallo)

preacher

"They deny God with their actions," wrote the Apostle. As the cock crows (the preaching of the Divine Word), they repent. In the slight of penance, they have the strengths of the Blessed Peter to confess three times, "I love you, I love you, I love you." I love you with my heart through faith and devotion. I love you with my tongue through confessing my faith and edifying my neighbor. I love you with my hand by the integrity of my work. Amen (III 278, S 1212–13, Sermons IV 291).

Cow (vacca, vacca/giovenca)

wanton

So said Hosea, "Like a wanton cow, Israel has gone astray" (Hos 4:16). The wanton cow runs about with a stupid look on its face, does not eat, sees not the bull that mounts her, and is broken under his weight while delighting in the pleasure. Thus the flesh surfeit with delights, goes about places of licentiousness, ignores food for the soul, does not see the devil that mounts it, and is broken by the weight of sin amid burning pleasure (I 227, S 262–63, Sermons I 302).

Cow, Wild (vacca agrestis, vacca selvatica)

self-serving

These animals have horns turned in on themselves and typify proud people who destroy themselves (I 142, S 139, Sermons I 158). [Regarding unworthy prelates, Anthony wrote] You blind preachers! Because you fear the scandal of the blind, you blind your souls. You are like the will cow in the *Book of Nature*. It sees hunters approaching, so it shoots its dung on them from afar, so while they are cleansing up, it escapes. Prelates bestow on the hunters (the preachers) the dung of temporalities to avoid criticism (I 365, S 333, Sermons I 399–400).

Deer *see* **Doe, Fawn, Roe Deer, Stag**

Doe (cerva, cervina, hind)

prudent

The *Story of Nature* tells us that the doe gives birth along a well-traveled place because it knows that the wolf avoids places frequented by humans. So the most lovely doe, the Blessed Mary, gave birth to her Son in a well-traveled place, a stable. Her child was born

full of grace. He was given to us freely and at the right time (I 159, S 152–53, Sermons I 175).

Dog (canis, cane)

beneficial

Commenting on the story of Lazarus and the dogs licking his wound: Keep in mind that the tongue of a dog has medicinal powers. Equally the tongue of the preacher brings medicine to the sinner (I 401, S 398, Sermons II 18). Every hunter (penitent) needs a horn, a dog, and a javelin: the horn to announce its sins clearly, a dog to bite its conscience, and a javelin to inflict upon oneself appropriate blame or satisfaction (I 115, S 120, Sermons I 130).

Donkey or Burro (onager, onagro)

laborious

The donkey typifies St. Paul because he was like a donkey working in the field of the early church. Fields were used for seeding, cultivating trees, pasturage, for beautifying with flowers. St. Paul did all four of these things for the church. Like a wild donkey harnessed to work in a field, St. Paul was harnessed by Christ to work in the field of the Gentiles (III 290, S 1222–23, Sermons IV 304).

Elephant (elephantus, elefanto)

righteous

The elephants represent the just person; the snake is the devil. They are always in conflict (I 499, S 481, Sermons II 122). When elephants are under attack, they take particular care of the wounded by putting them within a circle together with the weak. So too should you put your neighbor and those who are ill within the center of your love (I 237, S 231, Sermons I 260).

Fallow-deer *see* **Gazelle**

Fawn (hinnulus, cerbiatto)

docile

The fawn represents [Jesus'] humanity at the beck and call of his mother, from womb to his thirtieth year. Especially from his twelfth year he was subject to her (I 521, S 500, Sermons II 146–47).

Fox (vulpes, volpe, jackal)

selfish

Commenting on Ps 63:10, “They shall be prey for foxes,” See! Your property goes to clever foxes (relatives) who quarrel over the skin of a dead ass (I 564, S 537, Sermons II 193). As the deceitful fox carries a capon to its den to feast on, so the false concupiscence of the flesh carries the soul through the senses to lower things (III 128, S 1166, Sermons IV 137).

Frog (rana, rana)

lecherous, eloquent

Pitom [Babylonian king] symbolizes lechery, the mouth of the abyss. . . The Psalmist speaks of this abyss, “Depth calls upon depth” (Ps 41:8). That is to say, lechery calls for more lechery, like a frog calling for another frog (I 357, S 326, Sermons I 390). The head of the idol or statue is of gold and silver. The gold indicates the insipid wisdom of the flesh that is foolishness before God (see I Cor 3:19). The silver symbolizes eloquence, the frog of Egypt (II 382, S 826, Sermons III 126).

Gazelle (damula, gazzella)

timid, lazy

A timid, meek fawn of a fallow-deer or antelope that flees at the approach of any danger. It symbolizes the timid, lazy sinner that turns away from its heavenly Father (I 241, S 233, Sermons).

Goat *f* (capra, capra), *m* (caper, capro)

penitential, sinful

The Lord appeared on a mountain of Galilee (perfect penance). The Eleven Disciples also appeared (the penitents), rightly numbered as eleven because there were eleven mantles of goats' hair, as related in the Book of Exodus (26:7), to cover the roof of the Tabernacle. The

mantles of goats' hair signify two things: the roughness of penance and the bad smell of sin (I 225, S 212, Sermons II 247).

Goat kid (haedus, capretto)

sinful

The kid represents [Jesus'] divinity that sees everything (I 521, S 500, Sermons II 146–47). [On the other hand] The kid symbolizes the stench of sin. In three kids are the three species of sin into which a person more frequently falls: pride of heart, shamelessness of the flesh, and attachment to the world. Whoever wishes to ascend the mountain of light must carry these three kids, that is, acknowledge oneself a potential sinner in these three sin (I 88, S 99, Sermons I 102).

Hedgehog (ericius, riccio)

obstinate

The hedgehog is covered with spines. If anyone tries to pick it up, it rolls into a ball with head and mouth inside. The mouth has five teeth. The hedgehog represents the obstinate sinner, completely covered with the spines of sin. It has five teeth in its mouth, and they are five kinds of excuses for sin. Thus the obstinate sinner always has an excuse to stay in sin (I 71–72, S 86, Sermons I 84).

Horse see **Appendix**

Hyena (hyaena, iena)

hypocrite

The hypocrite wears a sheep's skin like a hyena. Many wonderful things are said of the animal. It is small, rustic, loves the night, prowls cemeteries to dig up and eat the flesh of the buried. It imitates the voice of humans, sounding like a man retching. This attracts dogs that like human vomit and captures them. If it walks around an animal three times, the animal cannot escape. Thus the hypocrite acting humbly, saying sweet things that attract others, especially women, consumes them. He simulates confession, accusing himself of sins for which he is not sorry. He deceives pious people by his false piety. He circles people three times with stories of false sanctity rendering them incapable of doing good (I 557–59, S 51–52, Sermons II 186–88).²¹

Jackal see **Fox**

Lamb (agnus, angello)

meek, filial

More than any other animal the lamb is said to recognize its mother. Thus it represents Jesus Christ, who hanging on the cross recognized his Mother among thousands of Jews and entrusted the Virgin to a virgin (II 342–43, S 794, Sermons III 82). Commenting on the passage, “Take two lambs . . .” (Lev 14:10): The two lambs represent meekness of body and soul . . . which every religious must offer to God to cleanse oneself of sin (II 592, S 1061, Sermons III 372).

Leopard (pardus, leopardo)

precipitous

A ferocious beast the leopard is excited by the scent of blood and leaps to its death. . . When sick it seeks and eats human excrement. . . Thus the leopard represents the proud man covered with the spots of its sins. Inflamed by the poison of diabolic suggestions, it seeks the offal of worldly things, to eat them and thus become one with them (II 281, S 379, Sermons III 14).

Lion (leo, leone)

inflexible, usurious

Commenting on the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Lk 18:10–12): Behold the dead lion and the living dog of whom Solomon spoke, “Better a living dog than a dead lion” (Eccl 9:4). In other words, one is the humble publican and the other the proud Pharisee (II 62, S 590, Sermons II 273). The humble servant kills the lion of pride and the bear of

²¹ This passage is a reduction of a lengthy description, perhaps the longest in the text.

lechery. Note that the lion is killed first, then the bear, because no one can mortify lechery within oneself unless he has worked to expel the spirit of pride from the entrance to his heart (I 144, S 141, Sermons I 159–60).

Lioness (leaena, leonessa)

concupiscent

[Commenting on] “The lazy one shouts, ‘There’s a lion on the road and a lioness in the streets.’ He is like a door swinging on its hinges” (Prov 26:14–15). The lion is the devil and the lioness is concupiscence of the flesh. The lazy one is a glutton and a lecher, unable to withstand temptation from the devil or repress concupiscence of the flesh, and not willing to do anything such as penance; he swings in the pleasure of the flesh like a door on its hinges (II 318, S 772, Sermons III 53).

Mole (talpa, talpa)

solitary, bitter, despised

Without eyes the mole is blind and lives in the earth. So too the entirely earthly person is blind to everything of God. He despises not other sinners and thinks bitterly on his own sins. The mole is also a figure of the person ever mindful of the initial Lenten admonition, “Remember, man, you are dirt, and unto dirt you shall return.” He recognizes that he is a sinner, who longer sins, and wishes only to be lodged “in the very being of Jesus”²² (Phil 1:8) (II 394, S 836, Sermons III 139).

Monkey *see* **Ape**

Mouse (mus, topo)

timid, glutinous

Elephants are said to flee from the odor of a mouse that in turn is said to be born of the stuff of the earth. . . In this context the elephant signifies the Blessed Virgin more humble and obedient than others. She adored the king whom she bore. Mouse signifies lechery that comes from the stuff of the earth that is the pleasure of gluttony. Not only did the Blessed Virgin flee this but also its odor (II 111–12, S 1082, Sermons III 397).

Mule (mulus, mulo)

echerous

The mule represents lechery, as the Psalmist says (Ps 31:9), “Do not become like the horse and the mule” (II 533, S 991, Sermons III 303).

Ox *see* **Appendix**

Panther (panthera, pantera)

attractive, enticing

The panther has an odor so strong that other animals will seek it out. So too Jesus Christ is so beautiful that just person delight in his presence (III 85, S 1146–47, Sermons IV 95).

Pig (porcus, porco)

glutinous

Commenting on Isa 65:4: “Who eats the flesh of a pig!” This is the filth of gluttony. “Who carries dirty broth in his bowls.” These are filthy thoughts. All those who do these things contradict the meaning of the Lord’s Passion (II 539, S 995, Sermons III 310).

Rabbit (lepus, lepre, hare)

timid, lecherous

As Aristotle remarked “Animals with large hearts are timid . . . like rabbits.” Thus it is with the lecherous. They have large hearts to plot and commit great evil and grand lechery. Yet they are timid, unstable, and unreliable in all their ways (I 70, S 85, Sermons I 83). The proud have big hearts. And they are timid because the fire for the love of God and neighbor is low even cold. Consequently they easily pull back because they are quickly afraid (III 192, S 1176, Sermons IV 204).

²² Literally “in the bowels of Jesus Christ” from the Vulgate “in visceribus Jesu Christi.”

Rabbit, Young (*lepusculus*, *leprotto*)**poor in spirit**

The timid little rabbit represents the poor in spirit. They are immune to every injury because they dwell and sleep in the house of hope that is built on the rock of faith and assessable by the ladder of charity (III 35, S 964, Sermons IV 38).

Ram (*aries*, *montone*)**proud**

The horned ram represents the spirit of pride. It butts against the West; it tramples underfoot the poor and children. It butts against North; it contemns its equals. It butts against the South; it mocks and derides its betters (I 140, S 138, Sermons I 156). In the day of judgment, the sword (power) of the Lord will avenge itself on its enemies (see Isa 34:6–10). It will drip with blood and thick fat (sins and carnal opulence) . . . from the marrow of rams (fat abbots and priors) (II 471, S 894, Sermons III 226).

Rhinoceros (*rhinoceros*, *rinocente*)**ferocious**

The rhinoceros is a squat animal like a billy goat (!) that has a horn atop its nose. It typifies St. Paul who with flaming threats made his way to Damascus. (I 256, S 245, Sermons I 281). But like a rhinoceros struck behind its neck St. Paul was struck by the Lord and fell to the grounds (III 91, S 1152, Sermons IV 102).

Roe Deer adult (*caprea*, *caprea*)**sharp eyed**

[St. Anthony made a play on words. He thought the Latin *caprea* was formed from the Latin *ardua capere*, grasping the difficult.] The roe deer has acute vision. The herbs it likes are in the heights. Thus the roe typifies the just person who seeks hard thing in its desire for heaven. This sustains him. He has the sharp eye of faith, choosing food for eternal pasture (III 251, S 360, Sermons IV 262). As Jesus Christ is God and man, so the roe typifies his divinity because it sees all (I 521, S 500, Sermons II 146).

Roe Deer fawn (*capreolo*²³, *capriolo*)**amicable**

The twin fawns feed among the lilies, the twofold love. The love of God influences one to enjoy chastity of mind and body. The love of neighbor influences one to maintain good behavior (III 251, S 360, Sermons IV 262).

Sheep (*pecora*, *pecora/agnello*)**humble, simple**

Rachel is described as a person who looked on things from the viewpoint of faith, with the humility and simplicity of sheep (III 201, S 1183, Sermons IV 213). The Lord was silent when he was led like a sheep to his passion (II 470, S 895, Sermons III 225).

Sow (*porca*, *porca*)**senseless, stupid**

Commenting on Prov 11:22, “Like a golden ring in a sow’s nose is a beautiful woman lacking good sense.” The beautiful, senseless women are the clerics. *Women* because of their gaudy dress and crowd of nephews (multiple prebends). *Senseless* because they spend the day chanting in church like barking dogs. They do not understand themselves. Their bodies are in the choir but their hearts are in the marketplace. They don’t understand the sermons they hear; so there is no point preaching to them. Although they wear the golden ring of knowledge and eloquence, they do not respect themselves. And so like sows they wallow in the offal of lechery and avarice (II 41, S 579, Sermons II 249–50).

Stag (*cervus*, *cervo*)**naïve**

Of two men hunting deer, one sings a song that attracts the deer and draws it near him. When close enough, the other kills the deer. So the world and the devil: the world attracts as

²³ The Latin text shows *hinnuli*, *id est capreoli*; but *hinnuli* means *fawns* and *capreoli* means *kids*. This difference may be due to an editorial interpretation of the manuscript.

person with its lures and pleasures that keep the persons enthralled until the devil can pull it down to hell (III 147, S 71, Sermons IV 156).

Stallion (emissarius,²⁴ cavallo/predatoro)

proud, lecherous

The prophet spoke of these prelates of the church and proud ministers at the altar, “They will violate my arc. As stallions they enter and contaminate it (Ex 7:22). The stallions are the proud lecherous clerics who violate the arc of the Lord, that is the Body of Christ, and despise all that is within themselves and contaminate the holy Church (II 360–61, S 807, Sermons III 100).

Toad ([rubeta],²⁵ raganella)

sly

The *Book of Nature* tells us of a certain small animal that goes to places frequented by bees. There it puffs itself up as much as possible to await them. And when some come by it seizes and eats them. Thus the sly proud person goes to places frequented by bees; that is, he considers the life and habits, words and deeds of just people whereby they seek to enter the kingdom of heaven. Then he puffs up, that is he seeks to damage what they do by flattery or downsizing (II 279, S 737, Sermons III 12).

Weasel (mustela, donnola)

fearless

The basilisk is a snake of singular evil power, feared by all. By its breath it kills plants and other animals. Only the weasel is unafraid and can kill it. So the weasel that can conquer the cruel lord, inflamed by a diabolic spirit and a stranger to himself, is the poor in spirit, for they have nothing to lose (I 524, S 503. Sermons II 149–50).

Wolf (lupus, lupo)

hypocrite

The wolf typifies hypocrites who assume the appearance of sheep so to deceive us (II 471, S 895, Sermons III 226). The wool of our flesh, derived from sheep (Adam and Eve) who were torn apart by the devil wolf, is filled with the worms of basic desires and rots (II 117, S 1087, Sermons III 403; see **Fly**, **Doe**).

2. The Aviary

Bird (avis, uccello)

A bird has two wings, like faith and hope in the soul that raise a person up above mundane things. Faith and hope are about invisible matters. Therefore they raise us from the visible to the invisible (III 63, S 1010, Sermons IV 70).

Cock (gallus, gallo)

repentant

“They deny God with their actions,” wrote the Apostle. As the cock crows (the preaching of the Divine Word), they repent. In the slight of penance, they have the strengths of the Blessed Peter to confess three times, “I love you, I love you, I love you.” I love you with my heart through faith and devotion. I love you with my tongue through confessing my faith and edifying my neighbor. I love you with my hand by the integrity of my work. Amen” (III 278, S 1212–13, Sermons IV 291).

Crane (gru, gru)

considerate, devote

Characteristically the crane will protect its aging parent when attacked by a hawk. True Christians take care of one another (I 187, S 173, Sermons). We too are softhearted like the crane. When it approaches a new nesting place, it flies as high as possible for a good view of

²⁴ Anthony should have written *admissarius* for the horse that is used to sire special progeny.

²⁵ Anthony wrote only “quoddam animal parvum” (a certain small animal). The editors identified it as a species of toad that exists in bramble bushes.

the terrain about where it will keep its offspring safe. When we have attained the height of life, we provide for ourselves and others: the ignorant, the sick, the poor (I 461, Sermons I 204).

Crow (corvus, corvo)

sorrowful

Thus says Isaiah, “The Lord of Hosts shall raise a whip against him (Assur who represents the devil) like when he struck the Madians at the rock of Oreb” (Isa 10:26). The Book of Judges says that Gedeon conquered the fortress at Madian with lamps, trumpets, and broken jars (see 7:19–21). Gedeon is the penitent who in the light of contrition, the sound of confession and with broken jar (mortification of the flesh) conquers the devil at the rock of Oreeb (dryness or crow). Thereby his firm purpose of amendment dries up the humor of lechery and puts on sorrow and self-reproach signified by the crow (II 344–45, S 796, Sermons III 84).

Dove (columba, colomba)

contrite, loving

Because the intestines of the dove are full of bile, it seems to groan as it makes its sound. The groaning comes from an excess of bitterness. So too the penitent: he groans because he is bitterly contrite (III 102, S 1119, Sermons IV 112). At the end of life the soul burns with the desire to see God, passing from hope to vision. So the psalmist, “The end of the dove is splendid in it gold like appearance” (Ps 67:14). The end of the soul is eternal beauty, splendid in its reflection of gold, contemplation of divine majesty (I 500, Sermons II 124).

Eagle (aquila, aquila)

just person

Because the eagle’s sight and beak are sharp, it symbolizes the just person who in keen contemplation can look into the beauty of the true sun. If the beak of an aging eagle loses its sharpness, the bird can sharpen its beak by rubbing it against a stone. So too, if a sin blocks one’s accustomed experience of the sweetness of contemplation, the person can immediately restore its keenness against the rock of confession (I 63, S 79, Sermons). On the other hand] the eagle that can fly higher than all other birds represents the proud man, who out of arrogance and vainglory would appear socially higher than anyone else (I 41, S 53, Sermons I 52).

Falcon (falco, falco)

inconsiderate, hateful

The falcon will attack aging birds in their nests (I 187, S 173, Sermons I 204).

Gerfalcon (herodius, cicogna, heron)

elegant, proud

The Lord God will drag down into hell those bishops, and prelates, abbots and false religious, who deck themselves out with the striking feathers of the famous sparrow hawk and gerfalcon. They now “sleep on ivory framed beds,” as Amos the prophet said, “and play wantonly on their couches” (Amos 6:4) (II 83–84, S 616, Sermons II 298). Religious who adorned themselves “with the feathers of sparrow hawks and gerfalcons” (see Jb 19:13) grow in pride (II 345, 796, Sermons III 84–85).

Hawk see Sparrow Hawk

Hen (gallina, chiozza)

concerned, responsible

A hen becomes ill when its chicks are sick. It keeps calling them to feed until it become hoarse. It protects them under its wings against the sparrow hawk. So too Christ: he became weak for our sake who are weak. He calls us to eat of sound teaching until he is hoarse. To protect us he spread his arms on the cross (III 23–24, S 955, Sermons IV 25).

Kite (milvus, nibbio)

rapacious

Robbery is common among the upper class, theft among the lower. These are the two wings of the kite the lives by robbery. [The Latin word for kite is] *milvus* based on *mollis* and *avis*

[supple bird] in both strength and flight. It is the most rapacious bird that preys on domestic birds (II 41, S 857, Sermons III 169).

Ostrich (struthio, struzzo)

hypocrite

In the ostrich that flaps wings but cannot fly, we find the falseness of the hypocrite (II 56, S 593, Sermons II 266). Weighed down by earthly things, he feigns to be like a sparrow hawk aloft in contemplation (I 69, S 84, Sermons I 82).

Owl (ulula or bubo, gufo)

detractor

The owl takes its [Latin] name [ulula] from the sound it emits. Thus it symbolizes the person called a Christian, so named solely from “Christ” but lacking the force of the name, that is, the humility and charity of Christ (III 205–06, S 1186–87, Sermons IV 218). In the owl is distraction and flattery because like owls flying about at night, they fawn upon those whom they had spoken badly in their absence (II 56–57, S 593–94, Sermons II 267).

Partridge (perdix, pernice)

earthly, rotten, vain

Hypocrites and false religious are like winking stars that bring ship wreck and eternal damnation to others. These sinners are typified by the partridge. It is a sad, unclean bird, with adulterous eyes looking insatiably for sin. The devil moves it to lay eggs that produce love of earthly vanity (I 320, S 296, Sermons I 349).

Peacock (pavo, pavone)

perfect

The peacock is covered with marvelous feathers that typify the perfect. These have been purified in the fires of tribulation and therefore are adorned with a variety of grand virtues (I 494, S 476, Sermons II 117). [On the other hand] when the peacock displays its magnificent feathers and turns around, it uncovers shamelessly its posterior. So too the hypocrite: when he shows the feathers of the sanctity he seems to have and turns about, saying he has done such and such, he demonstrates how foul is his ugliness (I 69–70, Sermons I 82).

Pelican (pellicanus, pellicano)

self-sacrificing, loving

The pelican is a small bird that delights to be by itself. Legend has it that having killed its own offspring and having mourned for three days, it restores them to life by pouring its own blood over them. Thus Christ became small out of humility and a solitary for the sake of prayer. Sadden over the death of the human race he restored it to life by pouring out his own blood (III 51–52, S 980, Sermons IV 57–58).

Plover (charadrius, calandra)

beneficial, deadly

If a plover looks directly in the face of a sick person, immediate relief of the ailment is at hand. But if it looks away from the sick person, then this is a sign of imminent death. So too with sinners. If the sinner keeps his resolution firm, recognizes sin for what it is, and believe in (Jesus), then he will not die. If she looks aside, dissimulates by hiding some sin and makes light of others, then these are signs of eternal damnation (I 126 fn 19, S 127, Sermons I 141–42).

Raven (corvus, corvo, crow)

diabolic, worldly

The raven is the devil. Its offspring are people who live in moral sin, taking their black color from their father (I 293, S 275, Sermons I 321). The raven symbolizes lechery and love of the world (II 345, S 796, Sermons III 84). Whoever wishes to maintain the profit from the spirit of prayer and repentance must keep oneself from the corpse of ill-gotten money for which the avaricious watch like ravens seeking corpses, and separate oneself from lascivious groups (III 445, S 1036, Sermons IV 84).

Scops-Owl (bubo, nibbio) *see Owl*

St. Anthony used the same description for both types of owls.

Skylark (calandrius, calandra, curlew)**beneficial**

An entirely white bird, if the skylark fixes its gaze upon a person suffering from cataracts, the bird draws the illness out into itself. It then flies up into the rays of the sun where it scatters and destroys the illness. So Jesus our friend is totally white because he is absolutely immune to even the shadow of sin. With the blood from his side he cures the weakness in our souls that kept us from seeing clearly before (III 221-22, S 336, Sermons IV 234).

Sparrow (passer, passero)**avaricious, greedy**

The sparrow suffers from epilepsy, but this does not cause it to fall down. Rather it falls from eating the seeds of henbane that freeze the brain and the bird collapses. It signifies the avaricious and poor who ache so much for riches that their minds freeze and they fall weeping and gnashing their teeth (II 346-47, S 798, Sermons III 87).

Sparrow Hawk (accipiter, sparrowhawk)**ethereal**

The sparrow hawk that seizes another bird only with its claws and both in flight represents the just person. The just person grasps things only out of love and only those that are “flying” or above the earth, having no care for the mundane (I 63-64, S 79, Sermons I 76). Having caught the bird the sparrow hawk takes its heart first and eats it. So God savors nothing, loves nothing in men and women except their hearts where lies the law of love (I 343-346, S 315, Sermons I 376).

Stork (ciconia, cicogna)**loving, respectful**

Let us his children love God our Father as the child of a stork loves its father. Legend has it that the child of a stork loves its father so much that when the parent has grown old, the child supports and feeds it. Thus we need to support and feed the old, poor, and indigent among us (I 333-34, S 307, Sermons I 364).

Swallow (hirundo, rondine)**proud**

Because of their swift flight to the heights of the sky and falling so fast, the swallow typifies the devil who would be the Son of God. They fly so high above the clouds that they resemble the proud who think themselves the equal of the Father and similar to the Son (see Isa 14:13-14) (I 45, S 56, Sermons I 56). It is said that if a swallow loses an eye, it can grow another. So too with the penitent, having lost the eye of divine love, by sincere lament can regain it (III 102, Sermons IV 113).

Swan (cygnus, cigno)**sorrowful**

As a swan is dying it seems to be crying out. A sorrowful melody seems to be coming from a feather in its throat. The converted sinner is like such a swan. At the moment of death he may well sing of sin out of bitterness of heart. The feather in the throat of the swan symbolizes one's recognition of sin and the need for confession. From this arises the sorrowful chant (I 129, S 129, Sermons I 145).

Turtle Dove (turtur, torora)**penitential**

The voice of the turtledove suggests that it is a shy bird. Deprived of its mate, it seeks no other. Winter time finds it deplored and living in the hollow of a tree in the valley. With feathers restored in the summer it flies to the heights of the mountain. Thus the true penitent: shy from continence of mind and body he does not associate with sinners. In the winter of our present misery he is shorn of mundane things and is content with the ordinary. When the summer of eternal brightness comes, he will climb the mountain of the heavenly fatherland (III 101-02, S 1118, Sermons IV 111).

Vulture (vultur, avvoltoio)**inconsiderate, deadly**

Like vultures who let their parents die of hunger, false Christians go about lying to the Lord, violating their baptismal promises, stoning Jesus in those who are Christians, in an attempt to kill the faith in others (I 187, S 173, Sermons I 204). [In the story of Judith and Agar] Agar stands for a vulture symbolic of the soul that excited by bodily attractions goes out of its way to indulge in the flesh, like vultures perching on carrion (II 246, Sermons II 424–25).

3. The Reptilium

Reptiles are characterized by breathing air, laying shelled eggs, having skin covered in scales and/or scutes, and crawling on the ground with or without short legs.

Asp (aspis, aspide) and **Viper** (vipera, vipera)**sneaky, clever**

The asp is a small snake that typifies hidden temptation of the devil. The viper is a longer snake that once born moves violently. The asp's head (the beginning of a temptation) is born in the heart, where once discovered it can be pulled out only with great effort. If on the other hand, the sinner sucks the head (encourages the temptation), the viper kills him because he has willingly accepted the beginning of the hidden temptation. (II 209, S 681, Sermons II 383).

Dragon (draco, dragho)**angry, crafty**

Having left the cave of their own consciences angry and envious people, like dragons, cannot control themselves. They fill the air with words, they excite other by shouting, and they stink with blasphemy (II 56–57, S 593, Sermons II 265). The mind or conscience of a sinner is a den of dragons of hate and detraction that inebriate and poison the minds of all who listen to them (I 69, S 84, Sermons I 81–82). Dragons lie in wait to attack the feet (the feelings) of the just (I 499, S 481, Sermons II 123; see also **Elephant**).

Chameleon (chamaeleonte, cameleonte)**fearful, timid**

Because the chameleon said to survive on air alone, it describes the contemplative who seems to survive solely on the sweetness of contemplation (II 389–90, S 834–35, Sermons II 137). It is fearful and timid because it lacks blood. It changes its color at the approach of danger. It typifies the penitent who is fearful that he does not have enough grace to withstand temptation (III 209, S 1189, Sermons IV 221).

Salamander (salamandra/stellio, salamandra/lucertola)**charitable**

The salamander is called *stellio* because its body is covered with star-like brilliant points (II 390, S 833, Sermons III 135). The salamander is the type of the charitable person who lives solely from the fire of love (II 394, S 836, Sermons III 139). Since it is said to live solely in fire, it also typifies the lecher. The fire of lechery gives birth to the fires of hell (II 347, S 798, Sermons III 86–87).

Serpent (coluber, serpente)**lecherous, deadly**

This serpent prefers to lie in the shadows. While it flees from a stag, it will kill a lion. It typifies lechery that grows in darkness, like persons who are tepid and lazy (II 81–81, S 614, Sermons II 296). “The serpent (the devil) that lurks in dark places (looking for sinners) will bite whoever breaks through a hedge (breaks the law)” (Eccl 10:8) (I 15, S 32, Sermons I 21; see also II 342, S 793, Sermons III 81).

Snake (serpens, serpente)

anger, envy

Lying in wait for a victim the snake typifies the detractor who whispers behind another's back. Either he speaks ill of one whom he hates, or for fear of being found out, he speaks ironically, like "He would be so good if only he would [with reference to some evil habit]" (II 257, S 721, Sermons II 435–36). On judgment day the Father in the Son will visit the Leviathan, that is, the devil and his followers. They are called serpents because they are astute (III 166–67, S 1142, Sermons IV 175–76).

Viper (vipera, vipera)

anger

In the land of tribulation and hardship (see Isa 30:6), where beasts of burdens trample about and drop their dung, are the lionesses of lechery, the lions of pride, the vipers of anger, and the flying serpents of envy and vainglory (II 534, S 991, Sermons III 304; see also **Asp**).

Worm (vermis, vermo)

Called "the intestines of the earth" worms contract themselves in order to move forward by extending themselves. So the humble person contracts, shortens oneself in order to extend oneself forward to reach eternal glory (I 143, S 140, Sermons I 159). Worldly power is like a gourd. When ripe its fruit is very edible; but then it dries and becomes like wood. So it is with sin: at first enjoyable, but this passes and guilt remains. When the sun rises (a burst of grace), this gourd dries and the teeth of the worm of conscience gnaws at all worldly glory (II 410, S 849, Sermons III 157–58).

Tirio (thirius, tirio)

Tirio is an antidote distilled from the skin of a snake for anyone bitten by any venomous snake (III 101, S 1118, Sermons IV 111). The *Etymologies* lauds it with the remark, "by a pest is a pest conquered."²⁶

4. The Insectry

Insects have a chitinous exoskeleton, a three-part body (head, thorax, and abdomen), three pairs of jointed legs, compound eyes, and two antennae.

Ant (formica, formica)

frivolous

[Because of the ant's very small size alone and with the help of the context that follows the reference,] Prelates who ignore their charge to preach and live the life of Jesus Christ will be turned into ants whom the great ant-eater, the devil, will devour (I 474–75, S 460–61, Sermons II 96; see also **Fly**). Unhappy because their worldly way of life was criticized, these people deceived themselves by turning to ants, that is to frivolous and trifling things whose false pleasures they believed to be their cure all (ibid.).

Bee (apis, ape)

meek, determined, focused

The most beautiful of all the creatures that fly, the bee is very small, round, solid, and compact. Further the bee creates the food that sustains its life. It is so small out of humility, round for concentration, solid for charity, and compact because of poverty. All of these typify the Blessed Virgin Mary who said, "He has regarded the humility of his handmaiden." Round from concentrating on heavenly glory that has neither beginning nor end, she was solid from loving the divinity who resided within her for nine months and compact because of the purity in which she excelled. Further, she was giving life to the one who gave her life. (III 109–10, S 1124, Sermons IV 119).

²⁶ PL 82:183.8.

Beetle *see* **Scarab****Bumblebee** (*apis ornata*, *ape bella*)**vain, frivolous**

The bumblebees represent the vain, tepid religious who glory in their fancy habits and simulate holiness of life, but in reality all this is external for within they are full of filth and dead men's bones (I 155, S 149, Sermons III 171).

Caterpillar (*bruchus*, *bruco*)**gluttonous**

The caterpillar is all mouth, a blight that can destroy crops (II 403, S 844, Sermons III 150). The caterpillar typifies the glutton who also seems to be all mouth and stomach. He attacks a plate of food as though he were besieging a fortress and does not leave the table until he has devoured everything. (I 83, S 95, Sermons I 95²⁷).

Fly (*musca*, *mosca*)**irresponsible**

The person whose mouth is ever open to swallow wealth, glory, or public acceptance [can close it only as easily as it is possible to] separate wolves from carrion, ants from grain, and flies from honey (II 527, S 986, Sermons III 295). Like a spider wrapping with more thread a fly caught in its web, so the evil wraps the sinner who consents to the first suggestion of evil in further delightful images. If a person dedicated to the pleasures of the flesh with full consent of one's heart falls like a fly into the web of the devil's suggestions, he really ought to be called a fly. For the devil immediately begins to bind him with other temptations that wrap him in darkness until his mind becomes weak. Then the devil takes that fly (the sinner) and dumps him in a place where he does bad things to him (I 136, S 135–36, Sermons I 152).

Leech (*sanguisuga*, *sanguisuga*)**self-satisfying**

Solomon wrote, "The leech has two daughters, who are always crying, 'Give me, give me'" (Prov 30:15). The leech is the devil who thirsts for the blood of our souls and wants to suck it up (I 105, S 112, Sermons I 120). Commenting on Abdias 1:8, "I despise the wisdom of Idumea and the prudence of Mount Esau," The Idumeans are the legalists and decretalists who suck the blood of the poor. They are the two daughters of the leech (that is, the devil), who always say, "More, More!" and never say, "Enough!" (II 592–93, S 1062, Sermons III 373).

Locust (*locusta*, *locusta*)**self-satisfying**

The locust is called such because its feet seem as long as rods. Thus the locust signifies pride (II 403, S 844, Sermons III 150). Because of their ability to jump the locust represents all religious. With their two legs of poverty and obedience they must jump to the heights of eternal life. Unfortunately, however, by jumping backwards from the smoke of the pit they end up on the earth, as Exodus remarks, "They will cover the face of the earth" (10:5). There is not a market day on which you will not find monks and religious, buying and selling (I 106, S 112–13, Sermons I 121).

Moth (*tinea*, *tignola*)**deadly**

Like the moth that is born in a garment and consumes it to grow, so the Son of Man resides within the soul to consume the fires of concupiscence and lead the soul to penance (III 245, S 355, Sermons IV 255–56). [Commenting on a passage from Lam 5:6, "We have made a pact with Assyria and Egypt," Anthony identified their leaders as Phiston and Ramasses.] Ramasses stand for avarice. Like the moth that eats away clothing, so avarice corrupts the mind (I 357–58, S 326, Sermons I 390).

²⁷ Here *locust* is used.

Moth (tinea, tarlo²⁸)**lecher**

The cedar tree represents the just person whom the moth of deadly concupiscence cannot destroy (I 485, S 469, Sermons II 108). The prelate must be like the gentlest termite. Like a termite boring into wood and corroding it, he attacks those fixed in evil and sterile without good works. Yet he is most gentle in dealing with the humble and penitent (I 458, S 446, Sermons II 78–79).

Palmer-worm (eruca, ruga)**doubtful**

When Jesus appeared to the disciples on the eighth day of his resurrection he removed all doubt from the heart of Thomas. So too when we celebrate the eighth day, he takes from us the palmer-worm of doubt (I 222, S 210, Sermons I 244²⁹). The palmer-worm can get inside a person to cause an itch in the flesh. Thus it signifies lechery (II 403, S 844, Sermons III 150).

Scarab or Beetle (scarabaeus, scarabeo)**all seeing**

The scarab is a little insect with eyes atop its head and it can fly. So too with Jesus: he was little out of humility (cloaking divinity with humanity) but he could fly with the power of his divinity. As though he had eyes atop his head, by divine power he could see every creature (III 136–7, S 1173, Sermons IV 145).

Spider (arcana, ragno)**subtle tempter**

The Latin word for spider, *aranea*, is from two words, *aria* (air) and *neo* (weaves) because it weaves its thread, as it were, from the air. Thereby it typifies those proud of heart who being of heavenly origin spend every effort to penetrate the mind of those dedicated to spiritual matters. How sad! When honey becomes foul, the spider is born. The rotting of the integral sweetness generates the spider of pride. (II 52, S 589, Sermons II 261). The devil like a spider attracts a person through his weakness to become entangled in a web of mortal sin (I 135–36, S 134–35, Sermons I 151).

Scorpion (scorpio, scorpione)**deceiver**

Sitting on the palm of one's hand a scorpion will only lick it, not injure it. The tail has two stingers with which it hurts and instills poison. The palm of the hand is hairless. The hand represents good works and the palm good intentions. Hair in the palm or in one's eye signals bad intentions. The scorpion is the devil who at first flatters with suggestions and then stings with his tail. Blessed is he who works with the palm of right intentions that devil cannot harm (III 231.9, S 344, Sermons IV 242–43).

Termite (vermiculus, tarlo)**meek, determined, focused**

When the termite attacks wood, none resists it. When the termite is touched, nothing is more pliant. And so the preacher: with the word of the Lord he must penetrate the hearts of his audience forcefully. Similarly when he becomes the object of an injustice, he must show himself sweet and affable. (III 131, S 1168, Sermons IV 139).

Woodworm see **Termite**

²⁸ The Italian text shows *tarlo*, which means *termite*. The division and selections were chosen according to the Italian word.

²⁹ Here *wrinkle* is used.

5. The Aquarium

Fish (piscis, pesce)

Fish swim through the seas like the charitable persons searching the world for those whom they may help (I 21, S 37, Sermons I 29). The eyes of fish are necessarily wet in order to have acute vision amid the huge mass of the sea. Thus the fish in water are like contemplatives in tears. The latter need wet eyes to see . . . the great salvation of God (III 107–08, S 1123, Sermons IV 118).

Alec see **Anchovy**

Anchovy (alec, alice)

humble

A very small fish, it represents the humble penitent who lives solely in waves of tears (II 390, S 833, Sermons III 135).

Oyster (concha, ostrica/conchiglia)

single minded

Early in the morning the oyster gathers a drop of dew, from which a pearl is formed typifying the Blessed Virgin Mary overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, becoming pregnant with Christ the Savior (III 164, S 1140–41, Sermons IV 173). There is only one pearl in an oyster much as in the mind of a just person everything is “yes” or “no,” never having two minds about a topic. Let us be solicitous about maintaining unity of spirit much as the oyster takes great care of its one pearl (II 288, S 745, Sermons III 25).

Sea-dragon or Stingeree (draco marinus, drago marino)

deadly

The stingeree is a ray with a sharply pointed bone in its tail.³⁰ It represents the detractor that seeks to destroy anyone not to overlook his filling the air with blasphemies (II 55–56, S 592–93, Sermons II 268³¹).

6. The Mythicarium

Basilisk (basiliscus, basilisco)

hateful

A legendary serpent whose breath or glance could kill was feared by all other creatures, the basilisk represents the person so consumed by anger that all people avoid such a one. He befouls the air (that is, religious life). Although as wild a master as any one alienated from oneself and inflamed with a diabolic spirit, he is not feared by weasels (the poor in spirit), because having nothing to lose, they conquer him (I 523–24, S 503, Sermons II 149–50; see **Weasel**).

Faun (pilosus/incubus, fauno/incubo)

avaricious

The faun is half human above and half beast below in its hairy body (II 58, S 592, Sermons II 265). The avaricious and usurers are called hairy [like fauns or satyrs] because they are covered with money (I 71, S 84, Sermons I 83). They are the avaricious and simonious red face clerics³² in their capes and makeup who dance and play about in the church of Christ (II 57, S 594, Sermons II 267).

³⁰ The Latin text has the stinger (*aculeum*) in its arms (*in brachiis*) after the definition in Isidore's *Etymologies* XII 6:42, PL 82:455. If Anthony meant this to be a mythological animal, then it should be in the house of mythological creatures.

³¹ Here the name of the creature is omitted.

³² The sentence does not contain the word *clergy*, but the context discusses the evils amid the *prelates*.

Flying Serpent (regulus volans, drago volante)

envious, vainglorious

In the land of tribulation and hardship (see Isa 30:6) where beasts of burdens trample about and drop their dung, are the lionesses of lechery, the lions of pride, the vipers of anger, and the flying serpents of envy and vainglory (II 534, S 991, Sermons III 304³³).

Onocentaur (onocentaurus, onocentauro)

proud, lecherous

This animal is a combination of the bull and the ass and typifies the proud lecher. The ass represents the ignorant, lazy fearful person who lacks all common sense. The bull represents the proud person, surfeit with material things. At heart both of these seek solace with the devil. It is also the demon that meets souls at the moment of death to take them to hell (I 70–71, S 85, Sermons I 82–83).

Pyralis³⁴ (vermis parvus, vermo)

insidious

The pyralis is a winged insect born as a little worm in a beehive; it is supposed to live in fire. So the worms of glutton and lechery incline a person to fly to harmful concupiscence. One should not wonder that a mixture of these two adulterates the contemplative life or a pure conscience (II 307, S 762, Sermons III 41).

Satyr (satirus, satiro) *see* **Faun**

Siren (sirena, sirena)

temptatious

The sirens are deadly sea animals. From head to belly they appear to be human; but the lower half is that of a bird. Singing the sweetest, most attractive song, they draw seafarers from afar to themselves where after putting them in a deep sleep they tear them to pieces. In reality they are much like prostitutes who leave their clients in misery. [Also] in the siren lie gluttony and carnality (II 56, S 593, Sermons II 265).

Unicorn (unicornis, unicorno)

egocentric

The unicorn symbolizes a singular type of proud person; the one who wishes to be preeminent in one's own way. The unicorn also represents the proud hypocrite, who masks pride under the appearance of being very devout (I 140–41, S 139, Sermons I 157).

Vampire (lamia,³⁵ sciacallo³⁶)

perfidious

The vampire has the face of a human and the butt of an animal. It represents heretics because in order to deceive people more easily, it pretends to look like a human and to speak smoothly. As Jeremiah lamented (Jer 4:3), “Even the vampires bare their breasts and nurse their young.” Heretics bare their breasts when they preach their sect. They nurse their offspring when they supply them with perfidious instruction (I 71, S 86, Sermons I 84).

The primary purpose of any sermon is to convey a message in words, phrases, and examples that fit the knowledge and experience of one's audience in order to enhance their behavior, altitudes, or beliefs. Anthony of Padua realized this objective by comparing and contrasting animal and human behavior in his resource book for preachers. Mindful that his reading audience included student preachers, he offered a wide assortment of animals and their characteristic, as known in early 13th century Europe, to illustrate human virtues and vices.

³³ Here *flying basilisk* is used.

³⁴ This name was selected from the choice of two (the other was *clerum*) named by the editors of the critical edition; see II 307, n. 84.

³⁵ Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), 1031c, lists three translations in this order: a witch who is said to suck children's blood, a sort of flat fish, and a species of owl. Because of the physical description in the text and the operational description in the dictionary, I prefer *vampire* to *witch*.

³⁶ The Italian translation uses *jackal*, which hardly fits.

Appendix

Two passages that employ parallels with animals to good effect are added here because they are best appreciated in full length. The first speaks about the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the second on St. Anthony's division of humanity into four groups.

In the final part of a fourfold interpretation of the scriptural passage depicting the return of the unclean spirit, who brought with him seven spirits worse than it (see Lk 11:24–26), St. Anthony transits to seven beautiful fat oxen that signify the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord (see Isa 11:2–3). He wrote:

These gifts are similar to seven beautiful fat oxen because of the charm in their way of life and the fruit of their virtues that they give to those upon whom they rest. Their faith in Jesus Christ made them well formed like a full ear of corn. He was the seed of the grain, its fullness that represents the maturity of the twins loves of God and neighbor. These Seven Gifts of the Spirit bespeak seven years of great fertility because the seven fold gift of grace fertilizes the mind in which they rest, over a seven way pilgrimage that abounds with a huge harvest.

Unfortunately and alas! Look at the seven thin malformed cows, sick with seven itching plagues. Seven spirits worse than the unclean spirit that had been expelled in order to clean the house have entered and devoured the seven gifts of the Spirit. *Now the man's condition has become worse than it was before.* The seven worse spirits are called thin and malformed because they have deformed a person made in the image and likeness of God. They have stunted the love that builds up the soul. From the bad odor of his crimes he is sick with the sevens itching plagues that stink like burnt rubbish. With all this evil infecting his miserable mind, his good works became sterile. The seven years without merit note only a miserable house holder (II 155–56, S 149–50, Sermons I 171–72).

Of special interest are the four colored horses from the seventh Sunday after Pentecost. They are reminiscent of the classic movie, *The Wizard of Oz*. There the change of color was entertaining; here color is significant. The tract begins with a quotation from Ps 40:10.

“In the middle of your temple, O Lord, we received from your softheartedness.” Note the four parts of the Temple: the outer court, portal, middle court, and oratory. In the outside court are the false brothers. At the portal stand the recently converted. In the middle court are those on the way. And in the oratory are the perfect. The four horses from the Apocalypse typify these four groups. You see the pale and black horses. Who sits on a black holds a steelyard in one's hands. To the one who sits atop the red horse has been given a huge sword to bring peace upon the earth. The one sitting on the white horse holds a bow (see Rev 6:2–8).

The pale horse identifies the false brothers, full of pretense and cunning. They provoke the wrath of God upon themselves. They are in the outside area described in the Apocalypse (Rev 11:2), “The atrium is outside. Do not measure it.” The false hypocrites, whom the measure of truth measures not, are thrown outside the city of Jerusalem and the gates are shut.

The black horse stands for the recently converted. They have laid aside false candor and donned the black of penance, as Jeremiah remarked in the Lamentations (5:10), “Our skin like a bread holder has been blackened by fire.” That is to say, by bodily mortification their skin has been burned in the fire of contrition and satisfactory works. . . . Having cast aside the uncleanness, lechery, and iniquity that their members used to serve, each must hold in one’s hand a steelyard to signify that one’s members now serve the justice that leads to sanctification, the consummation of everything good. They stand at the portal of the Temple.

Those atop the red horses are on the way, fervent in spirit, joyful in trial. With Christ they have crucified their bodies with its vices and concupiscence, to bring peace on earth, their flesh. They hold the great sword. It signifies the discretion they must have in works of penance. They stand in the middle court of the Temple that is wide with love, in which they experience the softheartedness of the Lord.

The white horse recognizes the perfect, standing in the oratory. They view the glory of the cherubim and savor the manna of divinity encased in the golden urn of humanity. They hold in their hands the bow of victory, triumphant over the world, the flesh, and the devil (I 541–43, S 518–19, Sermons II 169).³⁷

While there was ample precedent for Anthony to use animal characteristics to convey a human point, one may well wonder what was his attitude towards creatures, whether mineral, plant, or animal? Vergilio Gamboso, OFM Conv. offered this response at the conference celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of Anthony as Doctor Evangelicus. “In Anthony’s spiritual world, creatures were not simple objects for warm mutual affection, but providential means of apostolic action accompanied by strong feelings of fraternal tenderness.”³⁸

³⁷ Some scriptural phrases and enlargements thereon are not included here.

³⁸ “[N]el mondo spirituale di antonio le creature non sono partners di un caldo affetto reciproco, bensì provvidenziali mezzi di azione apostolica, pur non mancando palpiti di tenerezza fraterna,” from *Le creature nelle fonti agiografiche antoniane* in Fernando Uribe OFM (ed.), *Il “Liber Nature” nella “Lectio” antoniana* (Rome: Edizioni Antonianum 1996), 279.