Marijana Nestorov

KILLING AND BEING KILLED

THE MEDIEVAL CROCODILE STORY

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2013

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By

Marijana Nestorov

(Serbia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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I, the undersigned, **Marijana Nestorov**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, __ May 2013

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Signature

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When somebody decides to write an MA thesis about crocodiles it is bound to mean that they will have a lot of fun doing that. However, underneath the fun there is a serious amount of research and work.

I would like to thank my teachers from Belgrade who sent me to CEU, Vojin Nedeljković and Marjanca Pakiž, for teaching me what serious work is, but also that the point of doing research is something to be enjoyed. My next thank you is to the Department of Medieval Studies for having me and enabling me to work on this lovely topic. It is my pleasure to thank these people for having fun together with me during this year:

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*All websites accessed in May 2013.

INTRODUCTION

When speaking in terms of using animals in daily life, food and clothes are probably the first things that come to mind. However, the presence of animals in our thought and speech is vast and extensive – yet it stays unnoticed unless deliberately analyzed. A study by George Lakoff and Mark Johnsen from 2003 discusses how people mainly think and therefore also speak in metaphors.[1] The authors do not provide many examples concerning animals, but their interpretation is applicable to animals as well: one "throws a bone" to somebody, one behaves "like a dog with a bone," one waits for something until "growing horns," one should "keep one's paws off" something, etc. One uses animals to designate people on the basis of their behavior or looks: a dirty or a messy person is a pig, a good-looking woman can be designated as a fox, and a handsome man as a stud.[2] I think that, when studying the past, it is essential to draw parallels with the present, where possible; in the case of animals, not only is it possible to compare the usage, but much of our understanding and perception of them derives from antique or medieval roots. Some animal symbolism did not survive until modern times, some of it changed, but some of it is the same as it was thousand or more years ago. "Manuals" for interpreting animals such as the *Physiologus*, bestiaries, or moralizing encyclopedias might not be used today as they were in the Middle Ages, but meanings and expressions discussed in such works entered modern languages and thought, and are being used unconsciously now. To quote Steve Baker with a sentence which refers to modern times, but might serve well for medieval animal perception as well: "...ours is a

[1] George Lakoff and Mark Johnsen, *Metaphors We Live By* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
[2] For animal metaphors used for people, especially women, see: Irene López Rodríguez, "Of Women, Bitches, Chickens and Vixens: Animal Metaphors for Women in English and Spanish," *Culture, Language and Representation* 3 (2009): 77-100.

culture in which animal references can be employed in any context, and in which animals can apparently be used to mean anything and everything."[3]

Some medieval imagery and perception might at first seem funny from a contemporary perspective, but research on the ways people lived with their animals in the past compared to the somewhat different way one lives with them today is quite rewarding. The study of the crocodile and other exotic or mythological animals is more rewarding and interesting still, as it sheds light on how people perceived things they might have never seen, but which were still familiar and ordinary to them. Thus, when one reads a sentence like: "Among some curiosities, there is the medieval superstition that crocodile ointment[4] returns youth and good looks, which is why it was used by old women of loose morals and prostitutes,"[5] which is the first reference to the medieval crocodile I ever came across, one thinks that this is a topic worth looking at in more depth. The results of the research, the differences in the perception of the object in question that develop with time, the various meanings applied to the same thing over a certain period, and the rising awareness about one's own language and thought patterns may just come as a surprise.

When I decided to do research on the medieval crocodile, all on the basis of the "dung sentence," I feared it would never be enough for a fifty-page thesis. It turned out, however, that a fifty-page thesis is not nearly enough to accommodate the crocodile story. Due to matters such as time and writing space, this thesis will concentrate to some extent on

- the influence of ancient authors on the medieval knowledge of the crocodile,

[3] Steve Baker, *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity and Representation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 4. Baker's book speaks about modern-time imagining of animals, about why and how one speaks about human identity in terms of animals, symbolic and rhetorical uses of them. It sheds light on the unconscious uses of language and thought specifically in relation to animals.

[4] Referring to an ointment made of crocodile excrement.

[5] *Med drobnimi zanimivostmi omenimo še srednjeveško vražo, da krokodilja mast vrača mladost in telesno privlačnost, zato so se z njo mazale postarane lahkoživke i prostitutke*. Tine Germ, *Simbolika živali* [Animal symbolism] (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2006), 102.

- the development of the symbolic interpretation of the animal which was stimulated by Christianity,
- a case study of an eyewitness perception of the crocodile, where the eyewitness, namely, Felix Fabri, had vast previous knowledge about the animal, and an audience to entertain in his travel report.

The "hanging crocodiles" which one can still see today in the Brno Town Hall or the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie near Mantua, for example, are only touched upon in order to bring the crocodile story to a more or less organic end.

Each chapter will contain a certain number of visual representations which are mostly used to illustrate and support the text. With images such as these, most of which come from illuminated bestiaries, there is not much detailed analysis to be done. The reader will notice that some of them are comparable as they come from the same groups of bestiaries or follow a similar reading of the text. In some cases the text has nothing to do with the image, as the authors' words describe the animal in one way and the illuminators present it in another way. To read such images one needs to see them from the point of view of a medieval reader and beholder. These images were not photographs. Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, in her *Animals, Gods and Humans*, makes a brilliant comparison with René Margitte's "This is not a pipe" picture, as the picture only helps recognize an object and is not that object itself.[6] The introductory remark of Richard de Fournival in his bestiary, which was meant to be illuminated, supports this interpretation deeply.[7] He stated that images are necessary to remind the reader of how a certain creature looks. This reminding process, however, might look utterly confusing when it comes to the crocodile due to the diversity of the shapes in which it is presented.

Studies of animals in the Middle Ages in general, and this study of the crocodile in particular, should serve, and do serve the purpose of a better understanding of medieval life

[6] Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans* (London: Routledge, 2006).

and culture as a whole. As nothing ever serves the purpose for itself, but only in context and connection with other things, I hope that this thesis will find its place among previous and future works trying to approach medieval men's perception of the world they lived in, and can help to add a piece to the puzzle which might show an image of the medieval world.

[7] Jeanette Beer, trans., *Master Richard's Bestiary of Love: And Response*, 2.

CHAPTER I
SOURCES

When working on a thesis such as this one, it is impossible not to consult written sources. Moreover, it is impossible not to base the research on them. If one strives, as I do in this work to approach a medieval mind's perception of a given object or concept as closely as possible, it is necessary for him or her to read into everything available that is connected to the subject.[8] This is so especially considering that the amount of extant information is sadly small in comparison to what we know existed, and especially to what might have existed all those centuries ago.

Still, in contrast to other topics, mentions of the crocodile are numerous enough, so that a certain picture can be drawn of its "life" in the Middle Ages. There are a number of written sources which deal with the crocodile for one reason or the other, but there are also visual representations which help reconstruct the image of this animal as it was in the mind of at least some representatives of the medieval period, like, for example, illuminators. Today, one has problems imagining some instances from the past due to a temporal distance. In the case dealt with here, the difficulty in imagining the crocodile, and the strange shapes it took in the pictorial or textual references arose from the geographical distance. One of the aims of this research is to try and bypass the difficulties caused by the lack of evidence resulting from this temporal distance, and to present a part of what the crocodile was thought to have been – on the basis of extant evidence. In many situations, as in this one concerning the image of the crocodile in the Middle Ages, the research begins with the ancient written sources, because this is what the medieval knowledge was based on.

As for the previous research of the topic, which is supposed to be the second step of research, not many scholars dealt with the crocodile in the Middle Ages. The largest work

[8] By "everything" here I mean texts as much as images and objects if available. The research, in my case, only begins with the written material.

written solely about the crocodile is an article by George C. Druce from one century ago.[9] Although Druce does touch upon the main aspects of the crocodile, the accent of his paper is on the symbolism, and moreover on the scene of the Harrowing of hell for which he claims is in fact an image of the crocodile. Another short article covering the period from the sixth until the thirteenth century and concentrating on zoology was done by Claudia Radogna.[10] Some narrower research concerning the crocodile has been done by Ignacio Malaxecheverría[11] and Thomas L. Burton,[12] in connection with two other animals that have to do with the crocodile, namely the hydrus and the trochilus respectively. Otherwise, references to depictions of the crocodile, its symbolism or to its place in the bestiaries can be found in works that deal with animals in the Middle Ages in general, with animals in art, with bestiaries themselves, etc.[13]

The Jaw, the Tongue, and the Impenetrable Armored Back

The oldest known Greco-Roman source to make mention of the crocodile is Aesop (seventh/sixth century BCE) in his fable about the fox and the crocodile.[14] Although the system of describing the crocodile and viewpoints of ancient writers differed from those of the medieval authors, it is somewhat striking that one encounters the crocodile for the first time in a moralizing context with an exemplary function, which is, in fact, where the animal is most often found in the medieval texts. In ancient texts, however, with the exception of

[9] George C. Druce, "The Symbolism of the Crocodile in the Middle Ages," *Archaeological Journal* 66, (1909): 311-338.
[10] Claudia Radogna,"La zoologie médiévale : le crocodile entre historia et ratio," in *L'animal dans l'Antiquité*, ed. Barbara Cassin, Jean-Louis Labarrière and Gilbert Romeyer-Dherbey (Paris: Vrin, 1997), 519-532.
[11] Ignacio Malaxecheverría, "L'Hydre et le crocodile médiévaux," *Romance Notes* 21 no. 3 (1981): 376-380.
[12] Thomas L. Burton, "The Crocodile as the Symbol of an Evil woman: A Medieval Interpretation of the Crocodile-Trochilus Relationship," *Parergon: Bulletin of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 20, (1978): 25-33.
[13] E.g., John Ashton, *Curious Creatures in Zoology* (New York: Cassel Publishing, 1890); Robert M. Grant, *Early Christians and Animals* (London: Routledge, 1999); Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and their Users in the Middle Ages* (Phoenix Mill, UK: Sutton Publishing, 1998).
[14] Aesop, *Corpus fabularum Aesopicarum*, vol. 1, ed. A. Hausrath and H. Hunger (Leipzig: Teubner, 1970), fable 20: *Ἀλώπηξ καὶ κροκόδειλος*.

Aesop, the crocodile usually does not serve as an exemplar.[15] Clearly, its appearance, behavior, and nature were far more obscure to the beholder, than that of, e.g., a dog, a fox, a turtle, or any other animal which was a part of the everyday life in ancient Greece or Rome. This statement is best supported by the fact that Herodotus, being keen on discussing unusual and unexplored topics, felt the need to describe the crocodile in two whole chapters of the second book of his *Histories*.[16]

The first full report of the appearance and behavior of the crocodile available today is that of Herodotus in the fifth century BCE. He seems to have drawn some data from Hecataeus of Miletus,[17] but most of the observations he probably made himself in the course of his travels.[18] Thorough reports were given later by Aristotle, Pliny, Aelian, Solinus, and somewhat less detailed by Strabo, Diodorus of Sicily, and Ammianus Marcellinus.[19] I have decided to draw the line between Antiquity and the Middle Ages after Marcellinus, for the purpose of this thesis, since the next important account of the crocodile was given by Isidore of Seville in the sixth/seventh century, whose work served as a starting point for most of the medieval authors dealing with animals.[20]

[15] Only rarely do authors mentioning the crocodile draw parallels to what could be interpreted as human traits. However, even if such characteristics like greed, malice, etc., are mentioned in the context of the animal, they are not compared to the same occurrences in people. Instead, the animal itself is presented as such. (For example Aelian lists it as wicked, evil and malicious. See: Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals*, trans. A. F. Schofiled (London: Heinemann, 1958-1859), 5, 23; 10, 24.)

[16] Herodotus, *Historiae*, ed. Henric Stein (Berlin: Weidmann, 1869), 2, 68-69.

[17] Hecataeus was a Greek historian whose fragments are extant and collected by F. Jacobi, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Leiden: Brill, 1923-1958, repr. 1954-1969). He is famous for having provided a map based on Anaximander's world map.

[18] See Grossen-Steier, "Krokodile und Eidechsen" in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterumswissenschaft: neue Bearbeitung*, Vol. 11, Half-vol. 22, ed. Georg Wissowa (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1922).

[19] Aristotle, *Historia animalium*, ed. David Mowbray Balme (Cambridge: CUP, 2002) and *De partibus animalium*, ed. Bernard Langkavel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1868); Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, ed. L. Ian and C. Mayhoff (Leipzig: Teubner, 1892-1902); Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals*, trans. A. F. Schofiled (London: Heinemann, 1958-1859); Gaius Iulius Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, ed. Theodor Mommsen (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895); Strabo, *Geographica*, ed. A. Meineke (Leipzig: Teubner, 1877); Diodorus of Sicily, *The Historical Library of Diodorus the Sicilian in Fifteen Books*, vol. 1-2, trans. G. Booth (London: W. M' Dowal, 1814); Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, ed. W. Seyfarth, L. Jacob-Karau, I. Ulmann (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978).

[20] Isidore of Seville, *Ethymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. Wallace Martin Lindsay (Oxford: OUP, 1911).

It is not surprising to hear that of the above-listed authors, it was Aristotle who made the biggest breakthrough speaking in terms of animal anatomy. Oddly enough, his detailed research and devotion to the field of biology, to use the term loosely, does not present much new data when it comes to the crocodile. The greatest difference between him and Herodotus, as well as between him and all the subsequent authors, is that he recognizes the existence of something resembling a tongue in the crocodile,[21] whereas starting with Herodotus, and until the early modern times, one of the distinctive features of the crocodile was the false notion that it has no tongue. The other completely false assumption which posed as a well-known fact until it was refuted in the early modern times, was that the crocodile has an immobile lower jaw.

I do not want to go into details concerning ancient authors' accounts of the crocodile, although there is enough material for a discussion, because the main focus of this thesis is on the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, ancient sources supplied the core material used by medieval authors for their accounts of the crocodile and I present here the results of the research conducted on the ancient sources. In order to avoid retelling source by source, I have devised a mosaic compilation that consists of recapitulated parts of the most important sources dealing with the crocodile, and covering the period from the fifth century BCE until fourth century CE. This compilation should serve as an example of the knowledge about the crocodile one would have had if he or she had access to all of the mentioned sources.

[21] Aristotle addresses the question of the crocodile's tongue several times in the *History of Animals* and *On Parts of Animals*, and it seems that this matter was not completely clear to him. In the latter work he suggests that although attached to the lower jaw instead to the upper, since the jaws are inverted, there is a tongue in the crocodile's mouth. Other times when he speaks of the crocodile's tongue, he compares it to a fish's tongue. Also, Aristotle says that in a river crocodile there is just an empty space instead of a tongue. See PA. 660b, 690b. This information got repeated only by the authors who literally copied Aristotle.

Ancient Sources about the Crocodile: A Paraphrase

In Aquis Nili Vivunt Crocodili.[22]

The crocodile is a vile four-legged animal which lives in the Nile. It is black in color, just like the chameleon.[23] It stays on the land during the day, but it spends the night in water, because it cannot stand the cold air. It can be up to eleven meters long. It has no tongue, and it is the only creature which moves only its upper jaw, while the lower jaw is immobile. It has eyes like those of a pig, but it does not see well in water, while on land it sees very well. It has no ears, only passages for hearing.[24] It has a scaly back which cannot be pierced at all, and stones bounce off if you throw a rock at it. Its stomach is a lot softer, though, and it is the animal's week spot. The crocodile lays sixty eggs, after a gestation period of sixty days. By divine providence it lays the eggs above the rising line of the Nile, so that they would not be covered with water. The eggs are the size like those of a goose, and both male and female take turns to incubate them. This creature becomes the largest from the smallest. During the four winter nights it hibernates, and there are other seven days in the year when it does not hunt nor hurt anybody. This is during the feast in the honor of the birth of the Nile.[25]

In Egypt they call it *χάμψας*, and in some parts of the land they love and worship it, while in others they hunt and hate it. For example in Arsinoe, around the Moiris Lake, and in Ombos, the crocodile is worshiped, and in some temples there can be found tamed crocodiles whom the priests and occasional visitors feed. In Elephantine on the other hand, as in the city of Hercules and Apollonopolis, they hate the animal, and in some places they even eat its flesh. Apollinopolis is a district of the Tentrytes, and these people detest the crocodile. They kill the crocodiles for sheer contempt of them, and the animal is afraid even of the smell of

[22] This sentence was taken from what seems to be an Italian handbook for Latin, but other than the sentence itself and students asking for help with the translation to Italian on various Internet sites, I could not trace the actual handbook, wherefore I cannot quote it.
[23] Specific to Aristotle HA, 503b. Pliny also draws a parallel between the crocodile and the chameleon, but not concerning the color. The comparison he gives is based on the roughness of their skin. (Plin. HN, 8, 51.)
[24] Arist. HA, 503a.
[25] Plin. HN, 8, 81 and Amm. Marc. 22, 15.

the Tentrytes. These Tentrytes know various ways to kill the crocodile, and they even ride it as a horse by jumping on its back.[26] They swim freely in waters infested with crocodiles, because the crocodiles never dare attack them.

Now, of other creatures that possess the ability to confront the crocodile and survive, there are the Nile dolphin and the ichneumon. The dolphin is a smart animal, and it knows that the only way to beat the crocodile is to swim underneath it, and then rip through its soft stomach by means of its sharp back fin. The ichneumon, which is a kind of weasel and also a water animal, acts in two ways to get the better of the crocodile.[27] For one, it destroys the eggs deposited on the shore, for no apparent reason, other than to liberate the world from a number of these pests. Its other characteristic is that it has a unique technique of killing the beast: it enters the crocodile's stomach through the mouth while the crocodile is lying in the shore with its mouth open, it perforates its bowels, and safely comes out by piercing its belly at the other end. This ichneumon is a very useful animal for the human race, since it acts against the asp as well. It is worshiped in Heracleopolis, where, as mentioned before, the inhabitants hate the crocodile.

There is one other animal in Egypt which comes in contact with the crocodile. This is a bird called *trochilus* in Egypt,[28] it can be also called *κλαδαρόρυγχος*,[29] while its Latin name is *rex avium*.[30] This clapper-bill lives in peace with the crocodile, because it does him good. When the crocodile opens its mouth, it comes and cleans its teeth of leeches and leftover food. At the same time that is how the trochilus obtains food. Also, because it is in such a good relationship with the crocodile, it stands guard and warns the crocodile when it sees the

[26] This passage from Pliny (HN 8, 91) might have caused some misunderstandings in the medieval literature; it is discussed lower.
[27] A substantial part of this thesis is devoted to the ichneumon and all its other potential names and forms. I only introduce it here, since in the antiquity it was still more or less clear what this animal looked like and how it behaved. In later literature a significant confusion arose concerning the Egyptian mongoose, as it is known today, and it shall be discussed in detail in the chapter about the crocodile and the hydrus.
[28] Solinus calles it *strophilos*. *Collectanea*, 32, 25.
[29] Ael. NA, 12, 15.
[30] Plin. NH, 10, 203.

deadly ichneumon approaching. Certain parts of the crocodile are used as medicine for various diseases and problems in humans.

***

I have composed this account of the crocodile based on the data most common to all the sources. Each of my sources does not contain all of the attributes I used for the account, but most of the information I have provided can be found in at least two different authors. When a certain trait was mentioned by only one author, I have appended a footnote. I have excluded some of the specifics mentioned by one author only, so as not to overburden the story. Also, it was my intention to give an overview of the qualities ascribed to the crocodile which might have constituted general knowledge about the animal, wherefore listing irrelevant exceptions does not serve the purpose.

One important aspect that I did not include in the compilation is that there are two reports of the crocodile being seen in ancient Rome. The reports are written by non-eyewitnesses. Namely, Pliny mentions that the first time a hippopotamus and five crocodiles were exhibited in Rome was at the time when Marcus Scaurus became aedile in the year 58 BCE. Supposedly he had organized public games to celebrate his promotion.[31] The other source which makes mention of the crocodile included in games is the *Historia Augusta*, which says that Antoninus Pius imported a crocodile from Egypt for the purpose of his games in 148.[32]

One certainly has to be cautious when reading sources and not take any statement in them for granted, especially if the source is anything like the *Historia Augusta*, where *corocottae* and crocodiles are put next to each other as equally realistic,[33] or where the writer

[31] Plin. HN, 8, 96. Also Solinus mentions this, but he copies Pliny (Solinus, *Collectanea*, 32, 31).
[32] *Scriptores historiae Augustae*, vol. 1, ed. G. P. Goold, trans. David Magie (Cambridge MA: HUP, 1991), Pius, 10, 6.
[33] I say this fully aware that what is realistic to us today is not the same as what was realistic to people living two thousand years ago. But it is exactly this awareness that should refrain the modern reader from using the sources as factual evidence.

states that Firmus swam with the crocodiles with only their fat as protection from an attack by the animals.[34] Still, although there is not much pictorial evidence from this period showing the crocodile, the images that do exist confirm that it was in all probability not a complete unknown to the eye of the individual living in antiquity.

The period of the Roman conquest of Egypt, when the contact with the province-to-be increased, resulted in the development of a clearer idea about the appearance of the Egyptian crocodile, among other things deriving from that part of the world. The Nilotic mosaics from Praeneste and Pompeii serve as good examples of the pretty clear image of the crocodile in the period preceding August's conquest of Egypt (see figures 1.1. and 1.2.).[35] Coins from a somewhat later date provide evidence of this clarity.[36] The famous Nile statue in the Vatican museum shows recognizable crocodiles, and even an ichneumon;[37] Hadrian's villa in Tivoli is said to have had several statues of crocodiles in the Canopus, symbolizing Egypt.[38] Somehow, as time passed by, the clear image started to fade away, and the Middle Ages brought to light a slightly different image of the crocodile.

The Yellow-Skinned Monster Cometh

The Middle Ages saw a new literary development in the form of encyclopedic works. The first large encyclopedia was that of Isidore of Seville. As I mentioned above, his work served as a starting point for all the other encyclopedists. For some of them it was also the ending point. Isidore's *Etymologies* were widely used and copied for all their diverse topics, but the topic of interest here is his twelfth book on animals, and even more so the parts of that book that deal with the crocodile. One usually finds these parts in all other genres and pieces of medieval writings that take the crocodile into consideration.

[34] HA, *Firmus, Saturninus, Proculus et Bonosus*, 6, 2. Firmus was an usurper at the time of Aurelian's reign.
[35] Since it is not in the purview of this thesis to deal with an in-depth analysis of ancient material, for further insight into the topic of the Praeneste mosaic refer to Paul G. P. Meyboom, *The Nile Mosaic of Palestrina: Early Evidence of Egyptian Religion in Italy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995).
[36] See figures 1.3. and 1.4.
[37] Figures 1.5.-1.7.

Other encyclopedias that I found useful are those of Rabanus Maurus, Vincent of Beauvais, Alexander Neckam, Barholomew the English, and Albert the Great.[39] I would denote these encyclopedias as parallels to the works of the ancient authors. The layout is clearly different and the topics covered are more diverse, but the general idea behind them is the same: to find out as much as possible about the subject. Another difference is in the methodology. For my compiled quasi-antique account of the crocodile I used mostly information provided by two or more authors. Nevertheless, all of the authors contain something that is specific only to them. This shows that each of them strived to some kind of originality. Their success in providing accurate data depended on the resources, but that is beside the point. The point is that they felt the need to say something of their own, and to make a contribution to the existing knowledge individually. This is not always the case with the authors of medieval encyclopedias. They rarely show traces of independent thought and a critical approach to the existing texts, as does for example, Albert the Great. Most often they acted as compilers, and at best they performed their work thoroughly by trying to collect all available sources. Vincent of Beauvais is an exquisite example of how this work should be done. It is another matter whether these encyclopedia writers thought that by only copying Isidore they provided all the information necessary (e.g., Rabanus Maurus), or whether they knew of other sources, or just did not want to pursue further investigation. This we cannot know, and it is pointless to guess and speculate about it. What we do know is that the general intention was to provide knowledge about a certain topic by stating facts just as contemporary encyclopedias do,[40] and in this context I think that the similarity with the ancient sources

[38] Figure 1.8.

[39] Albert the Great, *Animalium libri XXVI*, ed. Augustus Borgnet (Paris: Ludovicus Vivés, 1891); Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum*, ed. T. Wright (London: Longman, Roberts and Green, 1863); Rabanus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*, Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 111. Ed. J. P. Migne. Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1852-86; Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum quadruplex sive Speculum maius: Naturale, Doctrinale, Morale, Historiale*, vol. 1 ed. Baltazar Bellerus (Douai: 1624), (Facsimile reprint: Graz, Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1964).

[40] As much as the notion of the meaning of the word "fact" in the ancient/medieval and modern sense might be an interesting topic for discussion, I do not want to address that question here. My comparison is for the purpose

shows. On the other hand, such things as moralized encyclopedias also existed, where biological traits were exhibited, but then a moral lesson was provided. This was the way of Alexander Neckam and Thomas of Cantimpré in the thirteenth century for instance. These moralized encyclopedias have a parallel in another group of sources which contains information about animals.

The *Physiologus* and its derivatives, the bestiaries, stress the importance of animals based on traits other than physical appearance. They all contain descriptions of animals according to their lemmata, but that is the less important part of the entry. The important parts of the description for the writers were those which can serve as a comparative example. This is why some attributes of an animal are always present, while others were discarded as useless for the cause of comparison with the human nature (in most cases), and therefore unnecessary. In these writings the accent is not on what a given object is, but what it is like. Animals serve the purpose of teaching although this time not as protagonists of fables, but within a new genre, and from a new perspective, namely, Christian thought.

Up until the writers of the bestiaries nobody had paid much attention to the crocodile demonstrating traits inherent to human beings. The part from Aelian quoted above says that the crocodile itself is wicked because it lies hidden in wait for its victim to come. He also gives an example of some things the crocodile does which make him evil and malicious, but in no way does Aelian allude to these traits being manifest in humans, thus making them similar to the crocodile.[41] In bestiaries on the other hand, the reader is warned not to behave in the way the crocodile does. The crocodile is not alone in the chapters pertaining to it. It is always paired with the hydrus or with the human, and most often with both of them. It is greedy, fallacious, a hypocrite, and avaricious which are qualities a Christian should never possess.

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of illustrating that encyclopedias contain facts as known to the writer and/or the reader at the time when they are being composed.

As for the appearance of the crocodile and its lifestyle, not much was added to the ancient accounts, and a great deal of the information was disregarded. What is new in the medieval accounts is Isidore's interesting but false etymology, that the crocodile derives its name from the Latin word for the saffron color.[42] This sentence of his is found at the beginning of almost every crocodile account written after Isidore's time. Also, starting with Isidore, the partly obscure notion of the ichneumon became even more puzzling, since Isidore introduced a Latin name for it.[43] Along with its name its alleged appearance also started to change.

Of the attributes that remained from the ancient sources, one reads about the crocodile spending the day on the shore and the night in the water, about the male and female both guarding the eggs, the report of the scaly back is almost always present, and the immobile lower jaw is one of the key qualities. Mentions of the missing tongue survive, but are not as frequent. The imagery of the crocodile in the Middle Ages was, however, vastly different in comparison to the ancient one.

One becomes used to seeing the crocodile in all the different shapes it could take, like the shape of something that most resembles a fish (fig. 1.9.), a bird (3.3., 3.8.), a wolf (1.10.) etc. One feature remains striking, namely, that it was sometimes shown with an inverted head (figures 1.10. and 1.11.). George C. Druce, in his article about the symbolism of the crocodile suggests[44] that a passage from Pliny might have led the illuminators to show it with its head upside down, and Florence McCulloch seems to agree.[45] I am, however, not completely convinced. The passage from Pliny that speaks about the Tentyrites, the native people of an

[41] Ael. NA, 5, 23.
[42] *Crocodillus, a croceo colore dictus*... Isid. *Etym*. 12, 6, 19.
[43] *Enhydros bestiola ... quae si invenerit dormientem corcodilum, volutat se in luto primum, et intrat per os eius in ventrem ... Ichneumon Graece vocatus*. (The *enhydros* is a small beast... which if encounters a sleeping crocodile, it first rolls itself into mud, and then enters its stomach through its mouth... It is called ichneumon in Greek.) Ibid. 12, 2, 36-37.
[44] Druce, "The Symbolism of the Crocodile in the Middle Ages," 318.
[45] McCulloch, 197.

island in Egypt[46] is not that common in medieval sources, although can be found in the very detailed encyclopedias. Part of the story told by Pliny and repeated by other authors is that the Tentyrites had a way of hunting crocodiles, and even riding them, by bridling them after climbing on their back. Although a plausible explanation, I would not say that the phrase *resupino capite*, meaning "(the crocodile) turning its head (in order to bite the man standing on his back and trying to bridle him)" was widely used by the writers, illuminators, or readers of the bestiaries. Druce believed that the misinterpretation of this sole phrase resulted in the unconventional image of the crocodile in some illuminations. Moreover, the pictorial evidence he provides is from Richard de Forunival's *Bestiary of Love* (fig. 1.9.), which does not even go into the full common description of the crocodile, since it is not concerned with the appearance but rather deals with the behavior of the animals.[47] McCulloch suggests that the place in Pliny might also have influenced some illuminators to show the crocodile lying on its back (fig. 2.7.), an interpretation already rejected by Druce. I agree with Druce about this latter explanation being too far a stretch, since it is much more probable that the animal is lying on its back simply to show that it has been killed by the hydrus. I disagree, however, that this short and not even popular piece from Pliny had such an influence on the imagery of the crocodile. Instead, the image of the crocodile moving only its upper jaw might have raised some questions in the imagination of the reader, let alone the person who was supposed to turn a theoretical description into a comprehensible visible shape.[48] Since the crocodile is almost always shown in a different manner, only some of its shapes can be interpreted and traced in the textual sources,[49] and the search for an explanation is not always

[46] *Sed adversum ire soli hi (Tentyritae) audent, quin et flumini innatant dorsoque equitantium modo inpositi hiantibus resupino capite ad morsum.* (But these are the only people who dare go against the crocodile, and they swim into the river, and in a manner of horsemen they climb the back of the animals which gape and toss their head to bite them.) Plin. 8, 38.

[47] Another example showing the crocodile with an inverted head is shown in figure 9.

[48] I am not alone in this opinion. For a confirmation of this standpoint, see: Charles Cahier and Arthur Martin, *Mélanges d'archéologie, d'histoireet de littérature* 3, ed. Ve Poussielgue-Rusand (Paris: 1853), 216.

[49] I mention later the confusion with the cockatrice, and Guillaume le Clerc's remark that the crocodile resembles an ox.

fruitful. However, the sources discussed here were not looking for the perfectly exact shape of the animals they described – they were interested in the meaning and the symbolic use of the objects they treated.

A New Dimension to Perception

Although one can speak about travelogues in terms of pilgrimages to the Holy Land, which most often include a visit to Egypt where the crocodile is found, already from the beginning of the Middle Ages, the early reports do not say much about the crocodile. John Wilkinson, in his collection of translated pilgrimages before the crusades speaks about the extant sources, none of which are actually relevant for our study, except for the pilgrim report of Arculfus, a seventh century bishop of Gaul which was later written down by Adomnan, Abbot of Iona.[50] Donald R. Howard in *Writers and Pilgrims* writes: "travels are fictions to the extent that the traveler sees what he wants or expects to see."[51] Then, some pages later he says: "None of the pilgrim authors were poets or artists, and they weren't writing fictions."[52] Fiction or not, I would rather not call it that, I agree with Howard that the pilgrim authors wrote to teach and entertain, as well as that their curiosity played great part in what they wanted to see and describe.[53] Were it not so, we probably would have no descriptions of the crocodiles in their reports at all.

The travel reports that do mention the crocodile, whether by means of a long description, or just a note, almost always contain the statement that they saw a lot of crocodiles. I argue in the chapter devoted to the crocodile in the travel reports, that this sentence, along with descriptions including commonplaces about the crocodile have to do with the expectations of the audience. Chapter four of this thesis is a case study of Felix Fabri's German and Latin reports about the crocodile which I found suitable for a study of

[50] John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd, 2002).
[51] Donald R. Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and their Posteriority* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1980), 10.
[52] Ibid. 53.

perception, as they contain two of the most often discussed traits of medieval travelogues: the eyewitness observation and descriptions found in popular literature. Although I realize that, for example, the fictional travelogue of John Mandeville was a popular piece of literature, that it therefore influenced the perception of its audience, I do not think that it added much to the image of the crocodile in the Middle Ages. On the other hand, a closer reading of Felix Fabri can tell something about his own perception, and more importantly something about the novelty in the medieval writing, and by this I mean the freer use of personal observations, and the stepping away from the "mimesis type" of book-writing which was so popular in the Middle Ages. Of course, the long tradition of mimesis among the medieval authors is not something that could be erased at once, but Fabri is an exquisite example of how one can freely handle their vast knowledge and incorporate it in their work to serve the purpose of what they want to express, and not only to copy unsubstantiated information possibly adding some minor additions. Some other travelogues, like that of Pedro Tafur, or Marco Polo's report do not contain commonplaces known to the readers of the bestiaries or medieval encyclopedias, wherefore they do not show traces of this gradual change in writing or in perception.

[53] Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE HELL-RIPPER

> And the Crocodile said, "I'll tell you the truth,
> I have a terrible ache in my tooth,"
> And he opened his jaws so wide, so wide,
> That the dentist, he climbed right inside...[54]

The crocodile, an ugly, scary, carnivorous animal apparently did not have enough attributes to serve as an exemplar on its own. It needed to be paired with another so as to exhibit its negative traits in comparison to something else.

Ichneumon, id est, hydrus

The animal to which the present chapter is devoted is, in all probability, what is known today as the Egyptian mongoose, or more precisely, *Herpestes ichneumon* (fig. 2.1.).[55] The Egyptian mongoose feeds mainly on meat, but also eats fruit and eggs and is still kept as a pet in some parts of Egypt; in ancient times it was connected to the Egyptian gods Atum, Wadjet, and Horus (fig. 2.2.).[56] It was valued as a killer of serpents and believed to be resistant to the snakes' venom.[57] Herodotus relates that they were buried like dogs, in the place where they died, laid in sacred caskets, whereas cats were embalmed and taken to a different city.[58]

Pliny, Aelian, and other ancient authors contributed greatly to building the medieval image of the ichneumon. However, the image provided by the ancient authorities is somewhat different than that which appears in the medieval sources. Namely, the physical

[54] Shel Silverstein, *The Crocodile's Toothache*.
[55] A concise description of the animal, its appearance and habits, can be found at: http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Herpestes_ichneumon/ (acessed: April 2013). Written by Lee Ann Bies, this short article about the Egyptian mongoose also offers a number of references for further reading.
[56] Lorenza Campanella and Barbara Wilkens, "Una Mangusta Egiziana (*Herpester Ichneumon*) dall'Abitato Fenicio di Sant' Antioco,"*Rivista di StudiFenici* 32, no. 1 (2004): 25-48.
[57] It was venerated in some cities, like Heracleopolis (Cf. Strabo, *Geographica*, 17, 1, 39).
[58] Her.2, 67.

description of the animal given in the older texts can more or less be traced to the Egyptian ichneumon. Some of them describe it as a kind of weasel,[59] while some compare it to a dog,[60] but are still much closer to the known shape of the animal then the medieval sources.

Initially, the mongoose was seen as the nemesis of the asp, which makes sense as it does fiercely attack cobras, and the *asp* in those sources might well be translated as *cobra*.[61] The other trait of the ichneumon was that it destroyed crocodile's eggs by breaking them. Diodorus of Sicily explicitly states, that it does not eat them, but rather does the world a favor by killing a number of these deadly pests before they are hatched.[62] Other authors do not seem to share this viewpoint. It is sometimes presented as destroying the eggs of the asp, and also as an enemy of the crocodile. Diodorus of Sicily, in the first century BC, is the oldest source to present the ichneumon as the enemy of the crocodile. These inconsistencies in the ancient sources notwithstanding, lines were drawn in the Middle Ages and thus the ichneumon became the worst enemy of the crocodile exclusively, while the asp drifted off to its own story in the bestiaries.[63]

It is fairly difficult to follow the story of the ichneumon through the sources due to the significant number of names that could have been, and in fact were, applied to it. It is not the goal of this thesis to track the ichneumon through all the sources one by one, but it is important to stress that the animal we know as the *ichneumon* now, is most often encountered bearing the name *hydrus* in the medieval sources. It is not completely clear why it happened that what was known as ἰχνεύμων or ἰχνευτής in Greek also acquired the name ἔνυδρις or ἔνυδρος, or rarely even ὕλλος, as a deminutive from ὕδρος. The word ἔνυδρις had two

[59] Amm. Marc. 22, 15.
[60] Plin.10, 83.
[61] Cf. e.g., Nicander, *Theriaca et Alexipharmaca*, ed. Otto Schneider (Leipzig: Teubner, 1856), verses 190-208.
[62] Diod. 1, 35
[63] For an overview of the story of the asp and for further reading, refer to the Medieval Bestiary site maintained by David Badke at: http://bestiary.ca/index.html. This site is also a good starting point for any research into the topic of animals in the medieval bestiaries.

meanings in Greek, namely, *otter* and *water snake*.[64]As for the term *ichneumon*, if used at all in Latin, it had the purpose of designating the idea of the Egyptian mongoose. Later, however, the usual name attributed to this animal was *hydrus* or *enhydros*.

Even though Timothy of Gaza at the beginning of the sixth century underlines the synonymy of all three terms,[65] it was Isidore if Seville who served as the template for most of the later authors dealing with animal topics. Isidore gives his view on the use of the two terms for the enemy of the crocodile which are most often found in Latin: ***Enhydros*** *bestiola ex eo nuncupata, quod in aquis versetur, et maxime in Nilo*. ... ***Ichneumon*** *Graece vocatus, eo quod odore suo et salubria ciborum et venenosa produntur*.[66] Then he goes on to describe an animal which is supposed to be the enemy of the asp and calls it *suillus*. Somewhat later in the same book he tries to clear things up by defining the disputable terminology: ***Enhydris*** *colubra in aqua vivens; Graeci enim aquam ὕδωρ vocant.* ***Hydros*** *aquatilis serpens, a quo icti obturgescunt; cuius quidam morbum boam dicunt, eo quod fimo bovis remedietur.* ***Hydra*** *draco multorum capitum, qualis fuit in Lerna palude provinciae Arcadiae*.[67] What happened was that either some of his followers did not read his work carefully enough or were confused by the number of similarly sounding words. The confusion manifested itself in interesting textual descriptions and even more interesting illuminations in the Middle Ages.

The Teachings of the Hydrus

In the *Physiologus*, which was the predecessor of the bestiaries, some doubts concerning the ichneumon also existed. This is why it happened that in the first group of the

[64] The term ἰχνεύμων was also used to denote a kind of small wasp that hunts spiders. Today a whole family of insects is known under the name *Ichneumonoidea*. For the ancient descriptions see, e.g., Arist. HA 5, 20 or Plin. 10, 95.

[65] Ὅτι ὁ ἰχνεύμων ὁ καὶ ἔνιδρος καὶ ὕλλος καλούμενος λέχεται...Tim. 43. M. Haupt ed. "Excerpta ex Timothei Gazaei libris de animalibus," *Hermes* 3, vol. 1 (1869): 1-30.

[66] [The **Enhydros** is a small beast, so named because it dwells in water, and especially in the Nile...It is called ichneumon in Greek, because it cand discern healthy from poisonous food by its sense of smell.] Isid. 12, 2, 36-37. In Greek *ἰχνεύειν* means to track, trace. All translations are mine, unless otherwise specified.

[67] [The **Enhydris** is a snake which lives in water; namely, the Greek say ὕδωρ for water. **Hydros** is a water serpent from whose bite people swell up. This disease is called bull's disease, because it is cured by bull's dung.

Greek version of the *Physiologus* there were two chapters, one about the *enhydros*, the enemy of the crocodile, and the other about the *ichneumon*, now exclusively assigned to the serpent which might be interpreted as asp or dragon (from the Greek δράκων).[68] Accordingly, the Y version[69] of the Latin *Physiologus* has two chapters for the same thing, one under the heading *niluus* (another name for the Egyptian mongoose) – fighting the crocodile,[70] and the other under *echinemon* (another spelling of the original *ichneumon*) – the enemy of the dragon. In the subsequent bestiaries and other medieval literature the ichneumon lost the significance of what it denoted in the first place, and if it was mentioned it was merely as the nemesis of the dragon. Some diligent compilers who read and copied Isidore thoroughly might still have used the term in its archaic meaning, so to speak, but the commonly accepted name for the animal became *hydrus*.

The crocodile did not have its own place in the *Physiologus*, but was part of the hydrus story.[71] In medieval bestiaries, however, one can find the crocodile under two headings, namely, that about the hydrus, and that about the crocodile separately. Not all of the bestiaries contain the double entry, but some do, for example: MS Royal 12 C XIX (ff. 12v, 12r, 67v), MS Harley 3244 (ff. 43, 62r, 66r) from the British Library, and the Aberdeen bestiary (ff. 69r, 73v).[72] There have been some suggestions as to why this happened, one of

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Hydra is a monster with several heads, and this monster lived in the swamp od Lerna, a province of Arcadia.] Ibid. 12, 4, 21.

[68] A wonderfully clear overview of all the versions of the *Physiologus* in the form of tables and lists is given by Alexandre Vermeille, "Physiologus. De l'Orient à l'Occident: Un Patchwork Multiculturel au Service de l'Écriture," in *Mémoire de latin*, ed. M. Jean-Jacques Aubert, professeur à l'Université de Neuchâtel (Neuchâtel, 2006), downloaded from: http://hostmysearch.com/?prt=pinballtbfour01ff&keywords=PHYSIOLOGUS+De+l%E2%80%99Orient+%C3%A0+l%E2%80%99Occident+Un+patchwork+multiculturel+au+service+de+l%E2%80%99%C3%89criture&errUrl=www.yahoo.com. Lists for the Latin *Physiologus* are also given by McCulloch, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 26-27.

[69] Francis J Carmody edited the two versions: *Physiologus latinus: Éditions préliminaires versio B*. Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1939, and "Physiologus Latinus Versio Y," *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 12, no. 7 (1941): 95-134. A modern translation translation is made by Michael J. Curley, *Physiologus*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[70] The *niluus* is, interestingly, described to have a shape similar to that of the dog.

[71] It appears under its name only in the third group of the Greek manuscripts, cf. Vermeille, app. VII.

[72] These manuscripts have been digitized and can be found at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_12_C_XIX for MS Royal 12 C XIX, at

which states that the reason might be that writers of the bestiaries were copying from various sources.[73] Since it so happened that some information got repeated at the distance of only few lines, this hypothesis might stand. One example of repeated information occurs in the Royal MS 12 C XIX, where the chapter about the crocodile follows the first chapter about the hydrus (there are two chapters about the hydrus), and in that crocodile chapter on folio 67v the hydrus story is briefly recapitulated, without making any reference to the same story on the preceding folio. The hydrus/crocodile is not the only animal noted to occur twice in some bestiaries. Such is the case with the lizard, crow, ostrich, and some other animals as well.[74] Most of the double entries concerning the crocodile belong to the second family of bestiaries.[75]

Repeated or not, with some variations in different sources, the general allegory about the hydrus goes that this animal, which lives in the Nile, covers itself with mud in order to easily enter the throat of the sleeping, unsuspecting crocodile, which thereafter swallows it. Having entered the beast's stomach, the serpent-like creature perforates its entrails and exits unhurt through its belly. As the point of the *Physiologus* and the bestiaries likewise was to provide a moral to the story, the moral of this one was that like the hydrus rolls itself in mud, in the same manner Christ took up human form to enter hell, save those who were there unjustly, and to lead them out.[76]

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_3244 for MS Harley 3244, and http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/bestiary.hti for the Aberdeen bestiary (all accessed in April 2013).

[73] Cf. Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideolatry* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 95.

[74] Ibid.

[75] McCulloch, in the work cited above, thoroughly analyzes and systematizes all the bestiary families and provides lists of the animals which occur in each group.

[76] Three days before the submission of this study, I read from a paper I printed before and completely forgot about it: *Gens vero ista sc. Tentyri significat Christum*... [These people, namely the Tentyri signify Christ...] This sentence found in Pierre Bersuire, a fourteenth century author, continues to explain how Pliny's Tentrytes are actually holy people, because even though small in built, they confront the crocodile which is the devil, and they make it vomit the corpses it had eaten, which is comparable to the Biblical story of Iona. See: Pierre Bersuirem, "Reductorii moralis," in *Opera omnia* 1 (Antwerp: Joannes Keerbergius, 1609), 9, 24. I never came across such an interpretation before, but although it is interesting and new, it does not change the image of the crocodile anyhow, but rather supports the popular notions on the basis of a different example.

As a case study for Latin bestiaries, what follows are a transcription and a translation of a piece of the Royal 12 C XIX, a manuscript from the beginning of the thirteenth century. This bestiary manuscript contains excerpts from books 12 and 14 of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, some medical recipes and some religious texts. This text is the first entry related to the hydrus, on folia 12v and 12r (fig. 2.3. and 2.4.).

> *Aliud animal est in Nilo fluvio q[uo]d dicitur hydrus. Physiologus dicit de eo quod satis est hoc animal inimicu[m] cocodrillo et hanc habet naturam et consuetudinem: cum videt cocodrillum in littoribus fluminis dormientem aperto ore vadit et involvit se in limum luti q[uo]d possit facilius illabi in faucibus eius. Cocodrillus igitur de subito excitans vivu[m] transglutit eum. Ille autem dilanians omnia viscera eius exit vivus ex visceribus eius. Sic ergo mors et infernus figura[m] habent cocodrilli, qui inimicus est Domini Salvatoris n[ost]ri.Ideoq[ue] et D[omi]n[u]s n[oste]r Ih[esu]s Hr[istu]s assumens terrena[m] carnem n[ost]ram descendit ad infernu[m] et diru[m]pens om[n]ia visc[er]a eius eduxit om[ne]s q[ui] ab eo devorati detinebant[ur] in morte sic[ut] testat[ur] ev[a]nglista. Et monum[en]ta ap[er]ta s[un]t et resurexer[un]t multa corp[or]a s[an]c[t]o[rum]. Mortificav[it] [i]g[itur] ip[s]am morte[m] et ip[s]e vivens resurrex[it] a mortuis dicens p[er] p[ro]pheta[m]: O mors, ero mors tua. Mors[us] tuus ero inferne.*

> Of a different sort[77] is the animal which lives in the river Nile and is called the hydrus. The Physiologus says about it that this animal is quite an enemy of the crocodile,[78] and that its nature and behavior are such that when it spots a crocodile on the banks of the river, sleeping with its mouth open, it goes and rolls itself in mud so that it can more easily slip into the crocodile's throat. The crocodile then, having suddenly awoken, swallows it alive. And the hydrus exits through its entails alive by tearing them all into pieces. This is how death and hell take the form of the crocodile, who is the enemy of Our Lord the Savior. In the same way Our Lord Jesus Christ, taking on our earthly flesh, descended into hell, and, tearing out all of its entrails, led out all who were devoured by it and held in death, just as the evangelist testifies.[79] And the tombs opened and bodies of many saints resurrected. So he destroyed death itself and he himself was resurrected alive from the dead, saying through the prophet: "O death, I shall be your death! O hell, I shall be your sting!"[80]

[77] Different compared to the hyena, which is discussed in the paragraph preceding this one.

[78] The Latin form of the name for crocodile here is *cocodrillus*. This is the most common form, but the spellings and forms of this word were almost as numerous and confusing as those of its little enemy. Unlike the names of the hydrus, whole studies are devoted to terms relating to the crocodile, See: Laurence A Breiner, "The Career of the Cockatrice," *Isis* 70, no. 1 (1979): 30-47. For a detailed examination and search for the root of the original form and meaning and a firmly linguistic approach, see: Manuel García Teijeiro, "Origen y Etimología del Nombre Cocodrilo,"*Archivum* (1975): 427-444.

[79] Hoseah 13-14

[80] For a translation of full bestiary, see: Terence Hanbury White, trans. and ed. *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts, Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*. (New York: Capricorn books, 1960) or a

This piece of text is followed by the selection from Isidore about the hydra being the mythical dragon with many heads slain by Hercules, followed by the text about the crocodile. Half a page through the text comes the sentence: *Hunc ydr[us] deglutit[us] dentibus et unguib[us] int[er]imit et vivus inde exit.*[81]

Almost immediately after this the text on folio 67v goes: *Est animal in Nilo flumine q[uo]d dicitur ydrus, in aqua vivens.* This sentence is followed by Isidore's explanations about the water snake and Hercules's Larnean hydra. The space devoted to the hydrus and the crocodile in this bestiary ends with a repetition of everything that has already been said in the text transcribed above. The differences are negligible, except for the spelling of the protagonist's name. This time it is spelled *idrus*.

Even though they struggled with the spelling, the Latin bestiaries mostly manage to make a distinction between the animal which kills the crocodile, the water snake, and the mythological monster. The shape of the animal is not discussed, the text only says *animal*, or if it is preceded by descriptions of the other "-ydr-" beings, than it continues with *et* ***hic*** *hydrus* meaning "this, our hydrus we want to talk about now." It must not have been easy for the illuminator to work with such a description, or without a description, to be more precise.

In the illumination pertaining to the text cited above, the hydrus resembles the weasel to a surprising extent, if one disregards the tail and the wings. It is puzzling why some of the illuminations show these animals with wings, and I have not yet been able to find an acceptable solution for this curiosity. None of the texts I examined speak about wings, so as in many other cases of animal presentations it is not possible to find a reasonable explanation for this occurrence. This is not the only example of the hydrus having wings. For more winged hydri see figures 2.6. and 2.7.

newer edition Willene B. Clark, *A medieval book of beasts. The second-family bestiary: commentary, art, text and translation*, (Woodbridge: Boydell. 2006).

Picturing the relations

In some other visual representations, the crocodile also tends to have wings (fig. 2.8.), and two winged creatures are shown in conflict with each other.[82] As in many other instances with the crocodile and the hydrus, there is no other probable solution for showing this situation other than the illuminator's choice. As can be noted in figure 2.9., some of them took the wings of the hydrus and left the pink crocodile the only flying creature in the story. I cannot find words to generalize the imagery of the crocodile more accurately than McCulloch: "The only consistency in the portrayal of the crocodile is that it usually has four legs."[83] The hydrus does not even have that. It can have four legs, or two, or no legs at all. The only consistency in its portrayal appears to be that it has a head.

The oldest of the French bestiaries is that of Philippe de Thaon. It is considered to be the closest to the Latin bestiaries of the first family,[84] and one of the traits that gives it away is precisely the crocodile story, since Thaon's bestiary makes no mention of the crocodile's jaw, while the illumination in the Kongelige Bibliotek copy of it (fig. 2.10.) shows the crocodile with an inverted head.

This verse bestiary, dedicated to King Henry I's wife, Adelaide of Louvaine, and therefore considered to have been written some years after 1121, which was the year of their marriage, presents the hydrus (idrus) as a beast which resembles a snake (which is obvious in figures 2.10. and 2.11.), swims with a strange force, and inhabits an island where it often encounters the crocodile, whom it strives to slay. Philippe de Thaon introduces a new

[81]The hydrus he had swallowed kills it by means of its teeth and claws, and exits there alive. Note the spelling: *ydrus*.
[82] A clever but hardly acceptable explanation given by Krešimir Kužić about winged crocodiles has been pointed out to me by my esteemed colleague Franka Horvat. He suggests, in relation to saints defeating dragons that dragons were in fact crocodiles, and they had wings because travelers to Egypt did not see well and were ignorant, and they mistook the wings of little birds which stand on the crocodile for crocodiles' wings. See: Krešimir Kržić, "Vjersko stanje na hrvatskoj obali prema putopisima njemačkih hodočasnika (14. do 17. st.),"[The Religious Situation on the Croatian Coast according to the Travelogues of German Pilgrims (From the Fourteenth until the Seventeenth Century)] in *Zbornik radova HAZU* 28 (2010): 49-66, 65.
[83]McCulloch, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries*, 107.
[84] Ibid., 50 ff.

property of the crocodile, caused by the hydrus, namely, greed. The crocodile is often described as greedy in medieval literature, but Thaon sees this trait being manifested in the crocodile swallowing the hydrus once it had entered his mouth, precisely because of its greediness.[85]

This moralization is somewhat expanded, although in principle it is the same as the one encountered in the Latin bestiaries: the hydrus symbolizes Christ entering hell. The author develops the etymology of mud and slime in comparison to flesh. Also, he underlines the image of hell symbolized by the crocodile, especially since it sleeps with its mouth open as hell keeps its mouth open and not closed.[86]

The Bestiary of Gervaise from the thirteenth century does not say anything new concerning the hydrus and the crocodile. The few verses devoted to them repeat the well-known story in a compressed version, but with the same meaning.[87] Gervaise calls the hydrus a beast, but Guillaume le Clerc sees it as a serpent again.[88] The rubric in figure 2.12. explicitly identifies a snake (*Ce est le cokadrille e la serpente*), and yet on the picture there is a dragon-like creature opposing the crocodile, and then something that might look like a snake coming out of the beast on the other side. It is debatable whether both figures represent the animal trying to kill the crocodile. The illumination in MS Français 14970 (fig. 2.13.) is

[85] See the bilingual edition by Thomas Wright, "The Bestiary of Philippe de Thaon," originally published as part of *Popular Treatises on Science During the Middle Ages in Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, and English* (London: Historical Society of Science, 1841). Digital edition by David Badke in 2003: http://bestiary.ca/etexts/wright1841/bestiary%20of%20philippe%20de%20thaon%20-%20wright%20-%20parallel%20text.pdf.

[86] The allegory told by Thaon in verses 322-340 in the above cited edition.

[87] This bestiary is extant in only one manuscript kept in the British Library: Additional MS 28260. It contains the image of the crocodile, but I was not able to see it. An edition of the manuscript is available at: http://bestiary.ca/etexts/meyer1872/meyer%20-%20le%20bestiaire%20de%20gervaise.pdf which is a digital edition prepared by David Badke in 2004, from the original edition by Paul Meyer, "Le Bestiaire de Gervaise," in *Romania* 1 (1872): 420-443.

[88] For the text of the bestiary with a French recounting of the story and analysis see: *Le Bestiaire Divin de Guillaume, Clerc de Normandie, Trouvère du Treizième Siècle*, ed. and trans. Célestin Hippeau (Caen: A. Hardel, 1852). For an Old French version edited by collation of all the manuscripts, see: Robert Reinsch, ed., *Le Bestiaire: Das Thierbuch des normannischen Dichters Guillaume le Clerc, zum ersten Male vollständig nach den andschriften von London, Paris und Berlin*, in the series: Altfranzösische Bibliothek Vol. 14 (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1892). This edition served for George Druce's English translation, *The Bestiary of Guillaume le Clerc* (Ashford: Headly Brothers 1936).

in fact a snake, judging by its tail. In contrast, the hydrus in the Français 1444 (fig. 2.14.) has its classical legs and wings, thus, as usual, it is impossible to make any generalizations when it comes to illumination of the animal. What is interesting regarding the text of the bestiary is that Guillaume le Clerc presents the hydrus as wise because it knows how to inflict damage upon the crocodile, a trait that is not usually attributed to it.

The *Bestiary of Love* by Richard of Fournival is an especially interesting French verse bestiary, not because it marks both the crocodile and the hydrus as serpents, but because its author fell victim to the various interpretations and shapes of the hydrus. In this bestiary the serpent which kills the crocodile is none other than the mythological hydra with several heads.[89] The author uses this multiple-head situation to prove the point to his loved one that such is a person who has many lovers.[90] An illustration true to the text is provided in the Morgan library copy of this bestiary (fig. 2.15. and 2.17.). Another novelty in this piece is that Fourival interprets the crocodile's sadness after having eaten a human being as a reason for afterward swallowing the hydrus – as he no longer cares what he eats. He compares this characteristic to a woman who also pays little attention to what she eats, which alludes to her lust. However, one can see that not all illuminators follow the text so closely, as not all depictions have the Lernean hydra coming out of the crocodile's stomach, like that in figures 2.16. Since the bestiaries of Gullaume le Clerc and Richard of Fournival are together in the BnF manuscript Français 1444 (to which fig. 2.16. belongs), however, and the illuminator is clearly the same, the crocodile is presented in the same manner every time, independently from its description in the accompanying text.

One often wonders what the purpose of certain images in medieval manuscripts actually was. Did they serve only for decoration, were they supposed to have an educational

[89] It seems that in the Catalan bestiaries the hydrus is also seen as the monster with several heads. See: Alida Ares Ares "Sobre el término medieval cocatriz, variantes y acepciones," *Revista de Lexicografía* 111 (1996-1997): 7-30.

purpose, or did they maybe pose reminders for the insufficiently skilled as to what the text was about? Richard of Fournival gives one possible solution: "Also, this composition is of such a nature as to need pictures, for animals and birds are naturally more recognizable when depicted than when described."[91]

Another group of sources dealing with animals, and therefore with the hydrus-crocodile story, are medieval encyclopedias. Several of them are relevant here besides the one written by Isidore of Seville and already quoted. They all date to the twelfth or thirteenth century apart from the one by Rabanus Maurus, who literally copies Isidore.[92] Vincent of Beauvais in his *Speculum naturale* copies not only Isidore – he copies them all. This systematic compilation includes all the major references; he even quotes Avicenna about the crocodile bite.[93] His other sources are Aristotle, Pliny, Solinus, and he also mentions the *Physiologus*. Allegories about the animals are most deeply developed in Alexander Neckam's *De naturis rerum*. In the part about the crocodile he elaborates on all the traits it was believed to symbolize, but he does not mention the hydris. He adopted the part where the hydrus should be from Solinus:[94]

> *Strophilos avis parvula est: ea reduvias escarum dum adfectat, os beluae huiusce paulatim scalpit et sensim scalpurrigine blandiente aditum sibi in usque fauces facit. Quod ichneumon conspicatus penetrat beluam populatisque vitalibus erosa exit alvo.*
>
> The strophilus is a tiny bird: while it tries to reach the pieces of food, it scratches the mouth of the beast (crocodile) little by little and gradually makes way for itself into its throat by gentle scraping. The ichneumon, having spotted this, penetrates the beast and exits through its entrails having gnawed its stomach.

[90] Jeanette Beer trans. *Master Richard's Bestiary of Love: And Response* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999), 23-24.
[91] Jeanette Beer trans. *Master Richard's Bestiary of Love: And Response*, 2.
[92] Rabanus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*, Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 111, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1852-86), Book 8 of the encyclopedia is on animals, and the hydrus in chapter 1 under *De bestiis*. For the *cocodrillus* see chapter 5, *De piscibus*.
[93] Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum quadruplex sive Speculum maius: Naturale, Doctrinale, Morale, Historiale*, vol. 1 ed. Baltazar Bellerus (Douai: 1624), (Facsimile reprint: Graz, Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1964). In the *Speculum Naturale*: crocodile 17, 106; hydrus 19, 54.
[94] Solinus, 32, 25.

In Neckam, however, these sentences were somehow mixed, and it turned out that the trochilus is the one killing the crocodile:

> *Strofilos avis parvula est, quae dum escas affectat, os cocodrilli paulatim scalpit et sensim scalpurrigine blandiente aditum sibi usque in fauces facit, populatisque vitalibus erosa exit alvo. Sic et adulatio, fraus blanda, venenum dulce, plures seducit.*
>
> The strofilos is a tiny bird which scratches the mouth of the crocodile little by little while it reaches for food, and gradually makes way for itself into its throat by gentle scraping and exits through its entrails having gnawed its stomach. In the same way flattery, the gentle deceit, the sweet venom, seduces many.

Other thirteenth-century encyclopedists, too, tend to attribute some attributes of the hydrus to the little bird. This bird, usually known as trochilus, is not a novelty in connection to the crocodile, as it appears already in all the ancient sources like Aristotle, Pliny, and even Plutarch, although their relationship is more commonly an example of the proverbial expression "I scratch your back, you scratch mine." Sometimes it is even said that it warns the crocodile of the ichneumon approaching, but other times it is believed to actually make way for the mongoose by making the crocodile keep its mouth open. The ambiguity of the little bird is to some extent dealt with by T. L. Burton.[95] As for the medieval encyclopedias, if they do feature the trochilus killing the crocodile they also have the hydrus in the same role. Bartholomew of England, for example, introduces a bird which perforates the crocodile's bowels, followed by the serpent hydrus which the crocodile eats unaware while going around bushes searching for nice herbs to nibble on, followed by another bird which helps the crocodile by cleaning its stomach of the vicious worms.[96] Thomas of Cantimpre describes the crocodile inviting the trochilus to clean its teeth and to feed on the rest of food there, but then ruthlessly devours the bird. This is to signify people who carry peace on their lips but are evil

[95] Thomas L. Burton, "The Crocodile as the Symbol of an Evil woman: A Medieval Interpretation of the Crocodile-Trochilus Relationship," *Parergon: Bulletin of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 20, (1978): 25-33.
[96] Bartholomew of England, De proprietatibus rerum, (Johannes Koelhoff: 1483).

in their hearts.[97] He mentions the hydrus in a separate chapter in book *De serpentibus*, but adds nothing new to the known story, and even refrains from moralizing.[98]

The struggle of the crocodile and the hydrus is the only side of the crocodile to be shown in the church carvings.[99] This topic has been processed by Tisdall in *God's Beasts*.[100] In the presented carvings the hydrus is always shown as a snake, and the crocodile is hardly identifiable, so mostly dog-like or wolf-like. The most recognizable is a stone carving on the outside of the church in Kilpeck. This crocodile resembles very much the crocodile waterspout from the nineteenth century Pena Palace in Portugal, with that it has a rolled-up hydrus in its mouth (fig. 2.18.).[101] George C. Druce in his paper about the symbolism of the crocodile also deals with church carvings, and he includes representations of the Mouth of Hell as crocodile images.[102]

Having seen only some of the varieties the hydrus-crocodile, it is evident that one cannot and should not even try to draw firm conclusions about why certain details are presented in a certain manner. It is possible to track some sources, textual as well as visual, but there is certainly no way to establish what was in the authors' minds when they were drawing wings on a snake or describing the mongoose as a snake, let alone why a mongoose, a snake, or a dog-like creature would be imagined as an enemy of the crocodile. Apart from being impossible, it is also irrelevant. One could use animals for food, one could use them for

[97] Thomas de Cantimpré, *Liber de natura rerum,* ed. Helmut Boese (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1973), 6, 7.
[98] Ibid. 8, 21.
[99] Another option, although not in carvings but rather in icons or frescoes, are depictions of saints prevailing over dragons, like Saint George for example where the dragon can be argued, and is sometimes argued, to be in fact a crocodile. The crocodile also appears in churches in the later Middle Ages, as itself – stuffed and suspended from the dome (see the *Epilogue* about this).
[100] M. W. Tisdall, *God's beasts*, (Plymouth: Charlesfort Press, 1998).
[101] The problem with Tisdall's work is that it has no dates, or a list of images. The photographs of the carvings themselves are black and white and made in very poor light, so that it is not possible to see all the contours in some of the images in the original of the book. Therefore I did not scan the images and insert them in this paper.
[102] Cf. George C. Druce, "The Symbolism of the Crocodile in the Middle Ages." I was not at all convinced by Druces arguments, but representations of the mouth of hell are not in the scope of this thesis. For a more thorough research into this topic see e.g., Gary D. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell. Eighth - Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1995). Schmidt suggests in one place only (page 47) that among other things the Leviathan could look partly like a crocodile.

clothing or work, and in this case one used them to make a point about mankind.[103] This pair was an exemplar of Christ entering hell to save humankind and triumphing. The crocodile was a symbol of something evil, of the devil himself, and it received other negative attributes along the way. The hydrus, or whatever its name and shape, represented Christ in his endeavor to defeat death and save the ones unjustly held by it. It might also have picked up some other related meaning. The instances where certain authors seem to have an agenda for showing the world of nature from a scientific point of view are far less frequent and are not independent from the influence of the animal lore as perceived in the Middle Ages.

[103] Although not dealing with the crocodile or the hydrus per se, an interesting view on animals through categories of property, food, and human traits represented by animals is given by Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge: 1994).

CHAPTER III

THE HYPOCRITE

Food

The Latin bestiaries do not devote much space to the crocodile-human relationship in the text, but they do offer images of the man-eating crocodile. What is more, it can even happen that there is no mention of the crocodile eating the human at all, but the image stands joined to one of the two crocodile chapters. This is the case of the British Library MS Harley 3244, f 43 (fig. 3.1.).

Joyce E. Salisbury has suggested that this image showing the human being eaten and the hydrus exiting the crocodile at the same time is supposed to serve as a moral lesson about what happens with hypocrites, and she says that it "shows the deep medieval fears surrounding eating and being eaten."[104] I would add to this that since there is no textual reference to the human at all, it is probable that the parable was popular enough not to need mentioning. Also, not to say that the fear of being eaten was not present in the life of a medieval man, on the contrary, but in this particular example in the medieval literature the idea of the human being eaten really has no significance. The crocodile is the protagonist and the human is merely an object used to make a point about the protagonist. As wonderfully non-anthropocentric this might seem, the overall point is still the human. It is his traits that are being represented through the behavior of the crocodile.

The Latin texts concerning the eating of the human usually contain an "if clause" with regard to the human: the crocodile will eat the human, if it can overcome him. MS. Bodl. 764 (fig. 3.2.) is a rare specimen showing the man trying to defend himself, or at least showing an attempt at resistance, and this condition *si poterit eum vincere* is manifested in it.[105] The BnF

[104] Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, 111.
[105] The full Latin sentence is quoted below.

Latin 3630, f 80r might also show traces of unsuccessful attempt of human resistance (fig. 3.12.). Usually in the images the crocodile is either already half way through eating the man, whose upper or lower part sticks out of the crocodile's mouth, or in extreme cases, only the human's head is left in the crocodile's jaws (fig. 3.3.). The third case is when the crocodile is about to commence feasting on its human dish. The human is sometimes naked (fig. 3.4-3.8), and other times dressed (fig. 3.9.-3.13.), but almost always passive. In Paris BnF Latin 14429 [ff. 96-118], MS. Douce 308, f 99r, and Morgan Library MS M.890, f 5v for instance, he even appears to be sleeping (fig. 3.8.)

Sleeping

One modern notion of the crocodile, especially often mentioned to children in the context of zoological parks, is that the crocodile plays dead so as to attract innocent observers, and then when one comes close enough, it jumps up and attacks the curious visitor. Thomas of Cantimpré stresses this deceitful manner of the crocodile two times in the chapter about the crocodile in his *De natura rerum*. Both of the entries are associated with fooling little birds into approaching it to feed on the bits of food in the beast's mouth.

The first time Cantimpré mentions this instance is at the very beginning of his description of the crocodile, and he links this tale with the observation that the crocodile spends its days on land, and nights in water: *Per diem in terra frequentius requiescit et hoc adeo immobiliter, ut, nisi consuetudinem bestie precognoscas, eam mortuam credas, hiatu aves pabuli gratia invitans*.[106] [During the day it rests mostly on land, and it is does not move at all, so that unless you are familiar with this manner of the beast, you would think it dead. By keeping its mouth open it invites the birds to feed.] Only a few lines below, he states again: *Oculus autem clausis se dormire simulat, os patulum et apertum habens. Aves autem quasi ad escam descendentes eas perimit et transglutit*. [And it pretends to be sleeping, its

[106] Cantimpré, 6, 7, 2.

eyes closed, mouth held wide open. And when the birds descend to eat, it kills them and gulps them down.] This is not a popular entry in medieval literature. I have found the latter reference only in Beauveais quoting *De nautra rerum*.[107] Nevertheless, the idea of what the crocodile represented did not change to the least. This just adds to it. It is hypocritical, deceitful, and fraudulent, as always.[108]

Dung

De bestiis et aliis rebus, a text printed by Migne in Patrologia Latina 177 under the name of Hugh de Foullioy, whose authorship is disputed,[109] gives an account of the crocodile which Carmody says that it is not related to the Latin *Physiologus*. Regardless of that, it gives a nice interpretation of another scene where the crocodile is used to denote hypocrisy. The notion of the crocodile's dung being used by people for various purposes (mainly medical) is nothing new, since Pliny lists the contents of the crocodile's bowels as a therapeutic ointment.[110] These medical usages are repeated in some of the medieval encyclopedias,[111] but the most famous use of crocodile excrement, which is almost always mentioned, was as a kind of facial mask for women. The sense is always the same, whether the story is told in the bestiaries or in other literature. For the sake of example, the piece from *De bestiis et aliis rebus* which elaborates on the parable goes as follows:

> *Stercus ejus fit unguentum, unde vetulae et rugosae mulieres facies suas perungunt, fiuntque pulchrae donec sudor defluens faciem lavet. Cujus figuram portant hypocritae sive luxuriosi atque avari, quia, quamvis vento superbiae inflentur, tabe luxuriae maculentur, avaritiae morbo offuscentur*

[107] Beauvais, 107.
[108] A positively fabulous and original example of the deceitfulness, malice, but also premeditation of the crocodile is given by Aelian. The story says that the crocodile had the power of discerning the path which people would take to get down to the river, so it fills the path with water in order to make it slippery causing the people to fall and become easy prey, see: Ael. 12, 15.
[109] About the authors of *De bestiis* and the influence on this text, as well as its influence on others, see: Francis J. Carmody, "*De Bestiis et Aliis Rebus* and the Latin *Physiologus*," *Speculum* 13, no. 2 (1938): 153-159.
[110] Plin. 28, 108: *...ob id intestina eius diligenter exquiruntur iucundo nidore referta; crocodileam vocant, oculorum vitiis utilissimam*. [... for this reason its intestines are in great demand, as they are full of some pleasantly smelling stuff; they call this (matter) *crocodilea*, and it is extremely useful for defects of the eyes.] The list of possible usages of this substance continues.
[111] E.g., Vincent of Beauvais quotes Pliny, and also Avicenna, who recommends this excrement for eye-disease, see: *Spec*. *Nat*. 17, 108.

> *tamen rigidi ac velut sanctissimi in sanctificationibus legis coram omnibus incedere hominibus sese ostendunt.*[112]
>
> Its excrement is made into an ointment which old and wrinkled women apply on their faces, and they become beautiful until the pouring sweat washes the face. Such is the image of hypocrites, or wantons and the greedy, because, as much as they might be inflated by the wind of arrogance, they are stained by the pestilence of luxury, [they are] obscured by the illness of greed, still they present themselves before all other people as firm and almost the holiest in consecrating the law.

It appears from these examples that besides from being an image of hell and the devil, one of the most pronounced human qualities sketched by means of the crocodile in the medieval literature is in fact hypocrisy. Today one does not use animals for exemplars as much as they did in the Middle Ages, especially not consciously. Some phrases entered the language from fables or other literature containing moral messages, and one uses them without actually thinking about their origin or why they mean what the speaker wants to express. This of course happens with other types of sayings and phrases, not only animal ones. One just associates certain animals with certain traits, and only for some of them one remembers that the phrase might come from a fable, e.g., sly as a fox, or slow as a turtle. There are also phrases people use in everyday language which do not come from fables, for instance "swan song" or "crocodile tears." It is hardly common knowledge that some of the idiomatic expressions are rooted much deeper in the past than the language in which contemporary speakers voice the idiom.[113] Concerning these two expressions, it is known that Clytemnestra uses the expression "swan song" in the tragedy *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus already in the fifth century BCE.[114] The crocodile shedding false tears is a somewhat newer notion, but it was still popular throughout the Middle Ages.

[112] Hugh de Foullioy, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, in Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 177, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1879), 2, 8.
[113] Several people from different countries, not uneducated at all, had told me when I mentioned this part of my work that they thought these expressions were specific to their own language, and that they are an invention of their respective languages.
[114] See: John Philip Harris, "Cassandra's Swan Song: Aeschylus' Use of Fable in Agamemnon," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 52 (2012): 540–558.

Tears

In the Latin bestiaries the hypocrisy of the crocodile is rather attributed to the animal spending half of the day in water, and the other half on land, but even though not explicitly stated in the bestiaries, it is clear from the encyclopedic literature that the same applies for its habit of crying while (or before or after) eating its human prey. Some other bestiaries, like the British Library MS Royal 12 C XIX dedicate only one sentence to the matter in question: *Hic du*[*m*] *invenit hominem si pot*[*er*]*it eum vinc*[*er*]*e comedit p*[*ost*] *et semp*[*er*] *plorat eum.* [When it comes across a human, it eats him if it can defeat him, and after that he mourns him forever.]

The oldest known mention of the crocodile crying is in Aelian (second/third century), where he reports a curiosity related to the people of Apollinopolis, who having caught a crocodile, hang it up on a tree and then beat with sticks while it cries, and later eat it.[115] This in my opinion has no bearing on the later development of the imagery of the crying crocodile, what is more it seems to me that the parallel is closer to the pig crying before being slaughtered.[116] Although it is not certain where the expression appeared first,[117] it is certainly clear that it spread in the West first through bestiaries, and then through the moralizing encyclopedias.

Of the French bestiary writers, Philippe de Thaon, in the spirit of Latin bestiaries, also only writes his version of the short sentence about the crocodile eating a human and then crying over him (quoted above). Guillaume le Clerc stresses the part a bit more where the crocodile remains inconsolable for the rest of his life, but only Richard de Fournival elaborates on the crying part of this parable. He puts more stress on the human-crocodile

[115] Aelian, 10, 21.
[116] For what seems to be a different opinion, cf.: Gary L. Ebersole, "The Function of Ritual Weeping Revisited: Affective Expression and Moral Discourse," *History of Religion* 39, no. 3 (2000): 211-246, p. 226.
[117] Some guess it might have been in Photius' *Library*. See: А. К. Богданов [A. C. Bogdanov],"О крокодилах в России. Очерки из истории заимствований и экзотизмов,"[Crocodiles in Russia. A History of Exoticism and Loan Words], *Новое литературное обозрение* (2006): 146-181, 153. McCulloch refers to a sermon by bishop

relationship than on the one about the hydrus, as he wishes his loved one to cry for him in the way the crocodile cries after devouring his victim. Richard says to his woman that in the same manner she had devoured him. The lamenting crocodile is the first argument he uses for comparison with women, although he disregards the notion that the crocodile's tears are actually false. He does note, however, that it is easy for a woman to find a substitute for the man she once used to mourn.[118]

Vincent de Beauvais and Bartholomew of England quote the *Physiologus*, which contains the same sentence as the bestiaries, only the latter stresses the temporal sequence of the crying and eating: *Et primo plorat super eum, et postea devorat eum*.[119] Alexander Neckam sees all this as an example of deceitful human nature connected to the church and a pious appearance: *Et vide quod cocodrillus hominem vorat, et plorat. Sic et sunt quidam qui devoti videntur esse in ecclesia, et turpibus lucris et questibus inhiant*.[120] [And look how the crocodile devours the human and cries. Such are the people who seem to be committed to the church, but in fact yearn for plundering and foul riches, and complaints.] Thomas of Cantimpre adds an epilogue to this story by saying that having killed the human, the crocodile keeps on living for some time with its heart torn out, which is contrary to any being whose life is sustained by its heart.[121] This unusual reference is also to be found in Vincent of Beauvais, except that he does not tie it to the killing of the human, but rather makes this statement independently.[122] In Vincent's work this sentence follows an entry from Pliny and precedes that from Aristotle, so that it seems it is in fact a part of Pliny's report. This is not so. Pliny makes no mention of such an occurrence, therefore it is not clear where the authors

Asterius of Amasenus from year 400 where he compares his flock to crocodiles in regard to tears. (McCullch, 107)

[118] Jeanette Beer's translation, 23.

[119] Barholomew of England, *De proprietatibus*, cocodrillus.

[120] Neckam, 101.

[121] *Cocodrillo avulso corde postea aliquantulum vivit, quod utique est contra omne animal quod vitam habet a corde*. Cantimpre, 6, 7, 18.

[122] Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, 17, 107.

got this information. The next sentence in both of these encyclopedists is about the Saracens eating the flesh of crocodiles, and after this the texts go their own ways.

It appears that the phrase *to cry crocodile tears* entered the English language trough the translation of Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, which was first printed in England in 1499.[123] He reports that these serpents (that is, crocodiles) weep while eating the man they hae slain.[124] Shakespeare's comparison of a woman's tears with those of the crocodile from *Othello* is famous, and he also uses the "mournful crocodile" in *Henry the Sixth*.[125]

I recall hearing an interpretation of the crocodile's tears different from the hypocritical expression of false remorse: that the crocodile cries in order to attract its victims. To me this sounded quite illogical thinking that nobody would be careless enough as to approach a crocodile in order to establish why it is crying. However, the article by Clifford B. Moore reveals that such a belief, too, existed earlier. Namely, in the sixteenth century, Polydore Virgil appears to explain in his *Adagiorium Liber* (or *Proverbiorum libellus*) that the proverbial expression was used for people who raise false pity in others, as do crocodiles when they provoke people to come closer to them to check on them.[126]

To the question of the crocodile tears in the bestiary illuminations, the only crocodile which to me seems at least sad is the one from the Meermanno Museum manuscript (fig. 3.15.). Otherwise, the crocodile is never depicted actually crying, that is to say: shedding tears. Actually, the crocodile's tears are never explicitly mentioned but are implied through the action of crying or mourning (*deplangere, plorare, lugere*, etc.)

I have tried to show in these two chapters, as concisely and as understandably as possible, that other than in the context of being tricked and killed by the hydrus, thereby seen

[123] *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville: The Version of the Cotton Manuscript in Modern Spelling*, ed. A. W. Pollard (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1900).
[124] Mandeville, 31.
[125] Othello, Act IV, Scene I; *King Henry the Sixth*, Second Part, Act II, Scene 1.
[126] Clifford B. Moore, "The Grinning Crocodilian and His Folklore," *The Scientific Monthly* 78, no. 4 (1954): 225-231, 228.

to mimic the relation of Christ and hell, the crocodile is represented textually as well as pictorially demonstrating its hypocritical nature in eating the human. What strikes me the most is how unimportant the role of the human-object is in this story. One would think that at least one of the authors would try to do something with the human figure, to give it some kind of meaning. It is apparent by now that the medieval writers were not great innovators, but some of them did add a special feature to the texts, like a deeper interpretation of a known scene or a new trait to some of the objects they dealt with – like Guillaume le Clerc describing the hydrus as wise. This way the crocodile might have been said to eat something other than a human and cry afterwards. For some unexpressed reason it was expected that the crocodile realizes it is wrong to eat a human being, and what the human being eaten felt or how he behaved is unimportant. The crocodile was not represented as a scary monster that might eat a man, and therefore used to scare children into eating their lunch or going to bed as it might be used today. The most terrifying thing about the crocodile is that one might discover a crocodile in himself, as at this point death is not important, but how one lives his life before death comes.

CHAPTER IV

DID YOU SEE A CROCODILE?

When looking at the images of the crocodile from the medieval period, a modern observer might get the impression that some of them look much like dragons, especially in the case of such crocodile images as shown in Paris, BnF Latin 2495 B (fig. 3.11.). However, the idea of the dragon one has today cannot simply be transferred back to the idea medieval observers had, and even if one has a medieval image of the dragon as an argument that this is what dragons "looked like" in the Middle Ages one could not claim that it was the image of the dragon exclusively. Moreover, there has been no remark in the literature presented in this paper until this point which would suggest that either the writers or the illuminators, or even the readers had any problem distinguishing the dragon from the crocodile. Admittedly, the crocodile from BnF Latin 6838 B (fig. 3.3.) resembles the dragon from the same manuscript (fig. 4.1.), but there are two dragons painted in this manuscript, and they look different from each other – the dragon in the elephant picture has no legs (fig. 4.2.). What is more, there are other creatures which are depicted in a similar manner to the ones discussed here (compare the depiction of the seps, fig. 4.3.). In contrast, in some manuscripts the dragon is completely different from the crocodile, as in the Meermanno museum copy (fig. 4.4.). Besides from their visual appearance, which as is not a solid base for drawing any conclusions, the stories about the dragon and the crocodile never crossed paths. The dragon is the enemy of the elephant, its strength is in its tail, and it cannot endure the smell left by the panther's breath.[127] It could symbolize the devil as the crocodile did, but so did other animals such as the serpent or the frog, hyena, wolf, cat, etc. Therefore, one needs to be careful when making

[127] For a short description and a large bibliography, see: http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast262.htm.

strict comparisons, as it is important on what basis one makes them – the modern perception or the medieval one.

As noted above, there was no confusion in the Middle Ages between the crocodile and the dragon. But, there is a genre of literature where one finds a reference to the similarity between these two, namely, travelogues. In the fourteenth century one finds entries in some travelers' reports from Egypt that link the crocodile to the dragon; however, not all of them do.

Travelers

Most of the travel reports from various journeys to the Holy Land do mention crocodiles, but rather in passing, only to make a note of spotting the animal. One such early example is Antoninus Martyr, who made his journey in the second half of the sixth century: *Inde descendentes, in naviculis per stagnum venimus Alexandrìam. In ipso stagno vidimus multitudinem crocodillorum*.[128] [Descending from there in our little boats, through the swamp, we arrived in Alexandria. In that same swamp we saw a large number of crocodiles.] A somewhat longer entry from the seventh century is from the travels of Arculfus, written by Adamnan:

> *Crocodili ut Arculfus refert, in Nilo fluvio aquatice commorantur, quadrupedes bestie non grandes, valde edaces, et in tantum valide, ut una ex eis, si forte equum vel asinum vel bovem iuxta ripam fluminis herbas carpentem invenire potuerit, subita irruptione emergens invadat, vel etiam, animantis unum pedem mordens et sub aquas trahens, penitus totum devoret animal.*[129]
>
> Crocodiles, as Arculf reports, which dwell in the waters of the river Nile, are four-legged beasts not large in size, very voracious. And they are of such strength, that one of them, if it can find a horse, or a donkey, or an ox grazing near the bank of the river, suddenly bursts out emerging (from the water) and attacks it. Also, it can even completely devour the entire animal by dragging it under the water having caught it by its leg.

[128] Antoninus Martyr, *De locis sanctis*, in *Itinera hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae bellis sacris anteriora et latina lingua exarata*, Societas illustrandis Orientis latini monumentis vol. 1-2, ed. Tobler Titus and Molinier (Geneva: Jules-Guillaume Fick, 1879), vol. 2, 117.
[129] Arculf *De locis sanctis scripta ab Adamnano*, in ibid., 190.

From a description such as this one, one can see the great difference between this description based on experience and the types of sources quoted in the previous chapters – whether bestiaries or encyclopedias. This is an independent observation which does not use authorities or knowledge acquired from typical books and stories, therefore it has no phrases or pieces of the phrases one normally encounters ever and again when reading other medieval sources about the crocodile. At this point it is unimportant whether the scene described in the quotation is a precise verbal repetition of something Arculf saw, meaning that he was the direct eyewitness or whether it was someone else who saw the scene Arculf relates. Little is known about this bishop, who set off upon his journey around the year 670, but for the purpose of this thesis it is irrelevant who he was or when he visited Egypt, or even if it was really him who saw the events described in the source. The point is that this description is emphasized as being an eyewitness report and is unburdened with previous knowledge the eyewitness might have had about crocodiles. Even if he did learn anything from Pliny or Aristotle, or came across a copy of the *Physiologus*, they did not influence his report about the crocodile in the Nile. Arculf is certainly not the only pilgrim to write in such a way. A stream of independent thought appears in travel reports, but it is of interest in this paper to see how the transition from mimesis to the autonomy of the author developed.

The existence of such a down-to-earth and "objective" perspective in a travelogue does not mean that all of the authors of the travelogues were a kind of medieval travel magazine correspondents. It could well have happened that the reporter saw one thing and the traveler visiting the same place after him saw something completely different thing. The crocodile report of Felix Fabri is a wonderful example of a coherent mixture of acquired knowledge and eyewitness report.

Felix Fabri: a Case Study of Perception and Dissemination

Felix Fabri undertook two pilgrimages to the Holy Land, in the years 1480 and 1483. He wrote about his experiences in both Latin and German for different types of audiences. The Latin report was meant for the educated members of the monastic community, and the German one was for the laypeople, and as it says in the title of the German work, it is meant to be entertaining and funny, so *kurzweilig* und *lustig*.[130] The difference between those two is the greatest in that he does not use his previous knowledge almost at all in the German report, while the Latin one contains quite a lengthy description of the crocodile where the author combines what he saw and experienced with what he read in the sources. The way in which he accomplishes this is astonishing, since he combines in one sentence other authors' quotes and his own observations, while making everything sound as all of if it was his own thoughts. In the Latin text there are, however, other pieces of information regarding the crocodile which are outside of the description about the creatures of the Nile, and these other bits are not burdened with anything beyond Fabri's own remarks. These pieces are the ones that have parallels in the German edition.

As far as I can tell, the parts in the travel reports which contain the phrase "I saw," are the most telling. They can either lead the reader to think that the author never visited the place described, if the text is just a compilation of commonplaces, or they can speak in favor of the author by means of his or her original observations. Fabri's work contains all of this, but the source references, it seems to me, serve an educational purpose, and possibly another agenda, discussed below. He would use a commonplace and elaborate on it, say if it is true (by his standards), or just disregard it. He rarely refutes what could be considered a misconception.

[130] Felix Fabri, *Eigentlich beschreibung der hin vnnd wider farth zu dem Heyligen Landt gen Jerusalem, vnd furter durch die grosse Wüsten zu dem Heiligen Berge Horeb vnd Sinay darauß zuuernemen was wunders die Pilgrin hin vnd wider auff Land vnd wasser zu erfaren vnd zu besehen haben ; Vber die maß kurtzweilig vnd*

In the Latin version Fabri introduces the crocodile from the eyewitness-only standpoint: *Eadem nocte vidimus cocodrillos, ingentes bestias de littore se in aquam praecipitantes seque in aqua revolventes, et audivimus eos sub aqua gementes et eructuantes*.[131] [That same night we saw some crocodiles, giant beasts, throwing themselves from the bank into the water wallowing in it, and we heard them sighing and exhaling]. The German version of this sentence[132] explains the verbs *gemere* and *eructare* and allows a translation such as this one, instead of searching for onomatopoeic forms of the sounds crocodiles are supposed to make: *Viel Cocodrillen schwebten umb das Schiff unnd huben die köpffe uber das wasser auff und wenn sie also die meuler heraus streckten so thaten sie eben* ***als wenn ein mensch achzet*** *oder mit stim seuffzet*.[133]

The German text actually lacks the descriptive chapter about the Nile and the one about creatures of the Nile which the Latin edition has, but other instances where the crocodile is mentioned are somewhat more elaborated in the German, like the one when the fellowship of the pilgrims saw a baby crocodile. In the Latin text Fabri only says that a boy brought with him a little crocodile two palms long and that they were amazed at how such a small beast could become such a giant monster. The German text contains the whole story, which says that one of the pilgrims from his fellowship had purchased the said crocodile, and also something called an Egyptian mouse, which Fabri says that it had the size of a half-year old cat. Interestingly enough, the crocodile died the next day, and the mouse survived, but the

lustig zulesen, Mayerische Staatsbibliothek, digitized manuscript: Rar. 1777. Available on: http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0007/bsb00070765/image_358. (assessed: May, 2013).

[131] Frater Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium in Terrae Sancta, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinatio*, ed. Konrad Dietrich Hassler vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Literarischer Verein, 1849), 109.

[132] These sentences are not compatible in the sense of the place where Felix Fabri uses them, but they are compatible in the meaning. There is another sentence in the German edition which is a part of the entry for the night of October 20, but it does not describe the sounds that the crocodiles make. It is quoted some lines later when speaking about the shape of the crocodile.

[133] Felix Fabri, *Eigentlich beschreibung der hin vnnd wider farth zu dem Heyligen Landt gen Jerusalem, vnd furter durch die grosse Wüsten zu dem Heiligen Berge Horeb vnd Sinay darauß zuuernemen was wunders die Pilgrin hin vnd wider auff Land vnd wasser zu erfaren vnd zu besehen haben ; Vber die maß kurtzweilig vnd lustig zulesen*, Mayerische Staatsbibliothek, digitized manuscript: Rar. 1777, f 181v. Available at http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/%7Edb/0007/bsb00070765/image_358. (accessed: May, 2013)

pilgrim decided not to take it to Venice with them.[134] Although the ichneumon is also known as the Pharaoh's rat it is not certain that this mouse is a reference to it especially as Fabri mentions the ichneumon/hydrus in the Latin text and treats it as a worm.[135] The reference point here, however, is not this bit, but the one where Fabri uses the word *draco* to designate the crocodile. The German text makes no mention of a dragon in this part, but in Latin Felix Fabri says: *...quod tam parva bestia in tam ingentem draconem proficit*.[136] This does not mean that he implies the crocodile looks like a dragon. In my opinion, the *draco* here stands for *bestia*, but since he uses the latter noun all the time to designate the crocodile, he just needed a stronger word to stress the monstrosity and atrocity of the animal. This is to say that the word *draco* in Latin did not necessarily mean *dragon* in the sense of a flying reptilian, as it does not mean this in the sources quoted in the previous chapters, where the Lernean hydra was described as *draco multorum capitum*. He says explicitly that the crocodile is of the same form as a lizard, but of a very different size: *Est... formae aequalis lacertae, quantitate tamen multum dissimilis*.[137] On the other hand, the idea of a dragon-like creature being comparable to the crocodile is expressed in the German text: *...unnd sind eben gestalt als Edexen oder Lindwürme denn das sie nicht flügel haben*.[138]

Travelogues from the end of the thirteenth and the fourteenth century offer comparisons between the crocodile and the dragon. Hayton, in his *Histories of the East*, and Symeon Simeonis in his travel report about the Holy Land mention the crocodile briefly, and concerning its appearance they say it is similar to a dragon. In fact, these two works contain the same text, only in different languages, the point being that one could praise the Nile

[134] In the Latin edition: page 111; German text: f 181v.
[135] *Nam inter herbas, quas vorat, latitat nonnumquam vermis, qui emdros* (sic) *dicitur, quem simul cum herbis devorat, qui interiora ejus radit et interimit et repletus exit illaesus*. [Namely, among the herbs it devours there lies quite often a certain worm, which is called *enidros*, which the crocodile devours together with the plants, and which perforates its bowels, kills it, and exits unhurt.] Latin edition, 134.
[136] Ibid., 111.
[137] Ibid. 133.
[138] Rar. 1777, f 181r.

immensely if it were not for the awful beasts resembling dragons, namely, crocodiles, living in it.[139] And this is all they say about the animal.

Felix Fabri also reports about Gyrovagues[140] selling crocodile skins as if they were dragon skins. In connection to that, he speaks about the inhabitants of a certain island in the Nile, who are skilled in hunting the crocodile, and it seems to me that this is comparable to Pliny's Tentrytes:

> *Hanc insulam et ejus littora fugiunt cocodrilli, quia homines illius insulae illos capiunt et domant. Habent enim tuguria super littus fluminis et latitant in eis; si quando autem cocodrillus in aqua natans ibi appropinquat, mox homo repente de tugurio exsiliens in aquam super cocodrilli corpus saltat eumque ferro frenat et ducit quo vult...*[141] *Aegyptii, praecipue in Delta insula, artem habent captivandi in aqua hanc bestiam, ut dictum est Fol. 113. Captam autem excoriant et pellem, quae durissima est, vendunt. Has pelles circumferunt quandoque Gyrogavi (sic), dicentes esse pelles draconum*.[142]
>
> The crocodiles avoid that island and its coasts, because the inhabitants of the island catch them and tame them. Namely, they have their cottages on the bank of the river, and they hide inside them, and when a crocodile swimming in the river would approach, the man would suddenly spring out of the cottage into the water and jump onto the crocodile's back, and bridle it by means of iron, and he would take it wherever he wishes... In Egypt, and above all on the island of Delta, they have a way of capturing the beast, as mentioned on folio 113. Having caught it, they strip off its skin which is extremely firm and they sell it. The Gyrovagues carry these skins around from time to time saying that they are dragon-skins.

This is all Felix Fabri says about dragons in connection to the crocodile. As for the skins, he makes a note in the German version that the fishermen who catch the crocodile sell the skins to merchants expensively.[143] The practice of crocodile hunting and drying became a

[139] *On pourrait louer sans réserve ce fleuve du Nil s'il ne contenait une sorte de bête, semblable à un dragon, qui dévore hommes et chevaux, dans l'eau ou sur la rive; cette bête est appelée crocodile*, see: Hayton, "La fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient," in *Croisades et pèlerinages. Récits, chroniques et voyages en Terre Sainte, xiie-xive siècle*, ed. Danielle Régnier-Bohler, trans. Christiane Deluz (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997), 803-878, 866. *His autem fluvius posset in multis aliis a predictis commendari, nisi esset quod quedam animalia pessima resident in eo, que sunt ad similitudinem draconis. Devorant quidem equos et homines in flumine si inveniant, et etiam super ripam devorare non postponunt. Et ista animalia cocatrix vulgariter appellunt*, see: Symon Simeonis, Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis ab Hybernia ad Terram Sanctam, ed. Mario Esposito, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae vol. 4 (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for advanced Studies, 1960), 66.

[140] *Gyrovagi* was originally the pejorative designation for wandering monks, later also for travelling salemen. with a bad reputation among the Christian community.

[141] Latin ed. 110,

[142] Ibid. 134.

[143] *Die Cocodrillen fahen die Fischer un[d] verkeuffen die heutte thewer den kauffleuten*. Rar. 1777, f 181r.

more popular and more frequent entry in the travelogues of a somewhat later period. Until the fifteenth century, at least to my knowledge, stuffed crocodiles, especially those posed as dragons, were not really a commonplace. Authors dealing with the animal to any greater extent were still interested in its appearance, habits, and habitat.

For example, Bernard of Breydenbach, who made his pilgrimage in the same year as Felix Fabri, and whose work is similar to that of Fabri, devotes only a short piece of text to the crocodile when dealing with Egypt.[144] He provides much less information than Fabri. He does not provide general information, but rather speaks of their size, and horrible looks, mentioning that they can only be found in the part of the river below Cairo, and in the Sea of Galilee.[145] He also mentions skins being sold to merchants by the fishermen as dragon-skins. Breydenbach's *Peregrinatio*, which is the first printed and illustrated travelogue, offers an image of the crocodile, among other creatures, "as they saw them in the Holy Land" (fig. 4.5.).

It is difficult to put oneself into the position of a person who had never seen a crocodile and to imagine what they would have imagined after reading Breydenbach's description:

> *...erantque aliqui grossi valde et longi ad staturam hominum duorum pertingentes. Aliqui etiam majores alii vero minores habentque bestie ille sordidos et horribiles aspectus, corpus vero durissimis squamis undique compactum atque contectum, in modum thoracis quarum forme sive figure alias lacertis in capite presertim caudibusque pedibus assimilantur*.[146]
>
> ... and some of them were quite large and long, reaching up to the height of two men. So, some of them larger and some again smaller, those beasts have foul and horrible looks and their body is made of and covered by extremely hard scales all over, just like armor, but otherwise they have the form of a lizard, particularly concerning the head, the tails, and legs.

[144] There is an old edition of Breydenbach's Latin text about Egypt only, accompanied with a French annotated tranlation. This bilingual edition is made on the basis of the 1490 edition, see: Bernard von Breydenbach, *Les saintes pérégrinations (1483)*, ed. and trans. F. Larrivaz (Cairo: Imprimerie nationale, 1904).
[145] Felix Fabri has this part about the Galileian see also in his German version, but not in the Latin one. In the Latin text he says that crocodiles can only be found in the Nile.
[146] Bernard von Breydenbach, *Les saintes pérégrinations (1483)*, 27.

Trying to read this piece of text as an impartial observer, to rid myself of any modern knowledge about the crocodile in order to imagine the creature Breydenbach is describing and not to accommodate his description to my vision of the crocodile, I realized it is not at all easy to put oneself outside of the framework of his or her own knowledge. It appears that Breydenbach was successful in separating his previous knowledge from that newly acquired. Felix Fabri, however, tried to reconcile the two in the part unique to the Latin text, that is to say – the part for his learned audience. Strangely enough, some of the contemporary misconceptions remain in his report:[147]

> ***Ova enim in terra fovet, quae sunt ovis anserum paullo majora**, ex quibus procedentes vix habent palmae longitudinem, sed ab ea hora, qua vivere incipit, **crescit, semper proficiens in longum et latum quamdiu vivit** et, si viveret centum annis, semper cresceret, **pervenitque ad longitudinem XX cubitorum** quandoque, nec est aliquid aliud, ut dicit Albertus de animalibus, quod ex **tam parva origine in tam immanem bestiam proficiat**. **Dentium et unguium immanitate armatus est cocodrillus**, quos adeo acutos habet, sicut serra ferrea, et **ad apri modum habet culmos**; tantam etiam **habet cutis duritiem, ut, quamvis fortium lapidum ictus in tergo recipiat, nihil curare videatur**. Est autem cutis rugosa grisei coloris, ad latera tarnen ad croceum tendit colorem, **ventrem habet valde mollem**; **ideo pisces, serratam cristam** habentes, tenera ventris ejus desecant et ita interimunt. Oculos habet claros, profunde in foraminibus capitis jacentes, quibus acute videt. **Rictus oris ejus est usque ad loca aurium et morsum habet venenosum**. Gulosum animal est multumque comedit et in tantum se replet, quod jacet ructans et in aqua ructat ac si gemat. Crura habet brevia, ideo non multum velox est et homo expeditus praecurrit ei. **Nocte in aqua manet, die vero in terra greditur**, quaerens rapinam et pastum, **in hieme vero se abscondit et nihil penitus comedit**. Cibus suus in aqua sunt pisces et alia animalia aquatica, extra aquam vero herbas bonas quaerit, quas manducat. **Hominibus maxime insidiatur et yisum hominem insequitur, quem dum apprehenderit primo eum interficit et mox super infectum plorat et deploratum devorat**. Lac ejus effusum induratur ut lapis.*
>
> It lays its eggs in the ground, and they are somewhat larger than those of a goose. When it hatches from these eggs it is barely the size of the palm of a hand, but from the time when it is born, it keeps growing, all the time spreading in length and width for as long as it lives, and if is lives for a hundred years, it still grows at times reaching up to twenty cubits. As Albert says in *De animalibus*, there is none other which originally so small, comes to be such a huge beast. The crocodile is armed by a force of nails and teeth which are as sharp as an iron saw, and it has tusk in the likeness of a boar. His

[147] Latin edition: 133-134. I bolded the bits of Fabri's sentences which are the most common when the medieval crocodile is in question.

> skin is so hard that however powerful a hit by a stone it receives, it does not seem to mind. Its shriveled skin is of grey color, but it becomes saffron on the sides. Its stomach is quite soft which is why some fishes that have a serrated fin cut into its soft belly and kill it in this manner. Its eyes are bright, lying deep in the dents of its head, and it sees sharply. Its mouth stretches up to its ears, and its bite is venomous. It is a gluttonous animal, it eats a lot and it fills itself up so much that it lies groaning, and it groans in the water so that he sounds like it is sighing. Its legs are short which is why it is not that fast and a man in good condition can outrun it. It spends the nights in the water, and the days on land searching for rapture and food, but during the winter it hides and eats almost nothing. In water it feeds on fish and other aquatic animals, and except for them it searches for nice plants and eats them too. It always lies in wait for humans, and it keeps its eye on the human whom when it catches, kills him and mourns the deceased, and once it had mourned him, it eats him. Its milk when drained becomes as hard as stone.

Considering that Fabri does use these clichés, it may be unexpected not to encounter a reference to the jaw of the crocodile or to the non-existing tongue. At first sight it seems that he chose to use only the non-disputed information, but everything else aside, he does say that the crocodile resembles a boar. Actually, a great deal of this entry looks more like Bartholomew of England than like Albert the Great, whom he quotes. The sentence *culmos habet ad modum apri* is in all probability taken from Bartholomew.[148] I am not sure what to make of this comparison, unless some of the crocodile's larger teeth (like its fourth teeth in the lower jaw) are considered to resemble the tusk of a boar. However, comparing the crocodile to an ox is specific to Guillaume le Clerc.[149] Also, Felix Fabri does not avoid mentioning that the crocodile's bite is venomous. This is not a completely uncommon piece of information,[150] but he might as well have skipped it, since he says nothing about the jaw, which means that he did make some kind of selection among his sources.

Considering that Fabri's German edition contains none of these spurious "facts" about the crocodile, it seems to me that the difference between the two types of audiences is in the audiences' expectations. The focus group of the German version being the uneducated

[148] *Dentes habet horribiles ad modum pectinis sive ferre at culmos ad modum apri*. Bartholomew of England, De proprietatibus rerum, (Johannes Koelhoff: 1483).
[149] *Buef resemble aques de facon*. See: *Le Bestiaire Divin de Guillaume*, 19, 1580.
[150] See, for example, Beauvais quoting Avicenna and Pliny on how to treat the bite: *Speculum Naturale*, 17, 106.

laypeople, the potential readers did not have great expectations since they were supposed to have no background knowledge, and it was the author's choice what to include in his report. On the other hand, the readers of the Latin version might have had some expectations. The same reason, expectations, that is, I believe lie at the roots of the almost unavoidable sentence in the travelogues making mention of the crocodile: "We saw a lot of crocodiles."

If people knew anything about Egypt, in all probability they knew that crocodiles lived there which were a kind of a symbol of Egypt. The likely question one would ask someone who had visited Egypt then, is whether they had seen a crocodile there. Therefore, when addressing a not-too-educated audience, it was important to say that there were in fact many crocodiles in Egypt, and possibly describe some impressions of the author's own choosing. In contrast, an educated audience had higher expectations as their knowledge was broader, therefore at the mention of Egypt, they would not only ask if the visitor had seen a crocodile, but also whether he saw that the animal is covered with scales, or if they saw some crocodile eggs, and so on. Presumably none of the pilgrims to the Holy Land spent his or her days researching the crocodile's ways, so some of the information, if they wanted to include it, had to be supplemented based on their previous knowledge.

There is one more feature of Felix Fabri's report that deserves a mention: crocodiles as proof of someone's sainthood.[151] This has nothing to do with perception in the *Evagatorium*, as it is rather a display of Fabri's erudition, but as Georgia Frank notices in her article about The History of Monks in Egypt, "In a work that combines biographical detail with travel descriptions, it is easy to forget that the ancient audiences would have read the History of Monks as a pilgrim's report."[152] Fabri simply relates two stories from the *Vitae patrum* which are connected to crocodiles. Both stories are comparable to Rufinus's

[151] This topic is dealt with by Dominic Alexander, *Saints and Animals in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008). The mentions of the crocodile, however, are rare.

translation of the *Historia monachorum*.[153] This *Historia monachourm* can really be seen as a piece of travel literature, as it was originally written by a Jerusalem monk upon his visit to several of the monasteries at the end of the fourth century.[154] The first of Fabri's retellings speaks of a group of monks travelling to Nitria, an Egyptian village, who, on their way, came across a number of crocodiles sleeping in the sun. They mistook the crocodiles as dead and approached. The awakened animals raging towards them were repelled by God's grace.

The first is rather a proof of God's love for his children; the second story is really an example of crocodiles being tamed by holy men. I present here Fabri's version, which is essentially the same as Rufinus', but told in a somewhat different tone:[155]

> *Aliud legitur: quidam sanctus Aegypti monachus, dictus Helenus, de eremo venit in monasterium multorum monachorum, quod juxta Nilum erat, ut illo die, quia dominica erat, missam audiret, sed non erat sacerdos, qui celebraret, in monasterio. Qui dum de hoc miraretur et causam quaereret, dixerunt, quod sacerdos eorum haberet habitationem trans flumen nec venire posset propter metum magni et saevi cocodrilli, qui super littus Nili discurrit et omnibus nocere contendit, sed et non paucos occidit. Hoc audiens Helenus ad Nilum ivit, ut sacerdotem advocaret et ecce bestia quasi latro de fruticetis prodiens furiosa occurrit Heleno, quam ut homo Dei vidit, oravit et fiducia accepta ad bestiam intrepide accessit et super dorsum ejus insiliit et in aquam duxit, qui magistrum habere se sentiens cum tranquillitate eum ad aliam partem fluminis duxit. Adiit ergo Helenus ad domum presbyteri et hortatus eum rogare coepit, ut veniret ad dicendum missam dominicalem. Cum causaretur sacerdos de bestia et de naviculae carentia, dixit Helenus: nil verearis pater, sed veni securus et Deus providebit nobis de vehiculo. Sequebatur ergo sacerdos fratrem et dum ad aquam venissent, exclamavit voce magna Helenus, cocodrille veni. Qui ad hanc vocem festinus accurrit et dorsum placide praebuit. Prior ergo Helenus adscendit, invitavit presbyterum a longe stantem; ut consederet sibi in dorso bestiae, sed ille a bestia territus et miraculo consternatus appropinquare nulla ratione ausus fuit. Sanctus autem Helenus, sicut venerat in tergo bestiae, sic rediit. Sed ubi descendit, secum pariter in siccum bestiam eduxit dicens ei: melius est tibi mori, quam tot scelerum, tot homicidiorum involvi reatu. Ad haec verba protinus corruit et exspiravit. Multa talia in Vitis Patrum legimus.*[156]

[152] Georgia Frank, "Miracles, Monks and Monuments: The *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* as Pilgrims' Tales," in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, ed. David Frankfurter (Leiden: Brill, 1998) 483-505, 487.
[153] Rufinus, *Historia monachorum latine uersa et retractata*, in *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* 0198 P, ed. E. Dekkers (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), *Epilogus*, 14, 387, 41.
[154] Georgia Frank, "Miracles, Monks and Monuments: The *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* as Pilgrims' Tales," 484.
[155] For a comparison see: Rufinus, "Historia monachorum latine uersa et retractata," 11, 9.6, 327.
[156] Felix Fabri, 134-135.

> Another story says that a blessed Egyptian monk named Helenus came from the dessert to a monastery near the Nile, where there were a lot of monks, in order to hear the mass on that day, namely it was Sunday, but there was no priest in the monastery who would celebrate the mass. When, surprised by this, he asked why this was so, they said that their priest lives on the other side of the river, and cannot come for fear of the great and furious crocodile which runs to and fro along the beach and strives to hurt everyone, and they said it is not a small number of those whom it kills. When he heard this, Helen went to the Nile to call for the priest, and beware the furious beast emerges like a marauder from the bushes and appears in front of Helen! And the man of God, when he saw it, he started to pray, and having received confidence, he approached the beast fearlessly, stood on its back and launched it into the water. The beast calmly realizing it has a master now, took him to the other side of the river. Helen went to the home of the presbyter and he started to encourage him and to ask him to come and say the Sunday mass. When the priest made a pretext about the beast and the lack of a boat, Helen said: "Do not fear, father, but come confidently, and God shall provide a vehicle for us." And so the priest started following the brother, and when they reached the water, Helen exclaimed loudly: "Crocodile, come!" The crocodile quickly came running on the sound of his voice and calmly offered its back. So Helen climbed up first and called the presbyter who was standing quite far away, to sit next to him on the back of the beast, but the priest dared approach by no means, terrified by the beast and shocked by the miracle. And the blessed Helen returned the same way he came – riding on the back of the beast. But when he got off, he led the beast to dry land telling it: "It is better for you to die than to be accused of so many crimes and homicides." Hearing those words, [the crocodile] fell before him and passed away. We can read a lot of such stories in the *Vita patrum*.

Fabri is right in suggesting that these are not the only examples of such stories. One of Pachomius' lives, for example, relates how the saint repelled a crocodile,[157] and there is an example from the *Apophthegmata patrum* about a holy man being tested by his brother, who got a crocodile to lick his ankles.[158]

Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, in her article about the crocodiles and saints of the Nile, notes that the hunt for crocodiles is in fact a novelty of the Christian era.[159] As crocodiles were venerated during the Pharaonic era, this makes a great deal of sense. During the Middle

[157] Adalbert de Vogüé, ed., "The Bohairic Life of Saint Pachomius," in *Pachomian koinonia* 1, trans. Armand Veilleu (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 43.
[158] *Verba seniorum*, in *De vitis patrum*, Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 73. ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1849), 5, 14, 17.

Ages the Egyptians used to hunt them, and they used them for magic, and also for apotropaic purposes. She sees the saints appearing as vanquishers of the fierce beasts in Egypt as a Christian substitute for the pagan talisman which was believed to keep the crocodiles away from Lower Egypt, where apparently crocodiles are much rarer. She discusses Muslim and Coptic saints as well and provides a nice interpretation of the development of the crocodile's status in Egypt in the post-Pharaonic era, all of which is not in the scope of this thesis. The importance of the saint-crocodile relationship is used here for the purpose of taking at least a glance at the possible contexts in which the crocodile could appear in literature available to a Western European audience in the Middle Ages.

To conclude this chapter, although not discussed here, there are other medieval travelogues mentioning the crocodile, like the accounts of Fetellus in the twelfth-century,[160] and by the fifteenth-century Spaniard, Pedro Tafur,[161] but it seemed a better choice for me to analyze more detail Felix Fabri's report, which combines all the various aspects and ways of approaching the topic of travel literature, than to list various other reports with similar characteristics.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century travelers to Egypt often mention the large numbers of dried, and also stuffed crocodiles that one could find almost anywhere in Egypt.[162] Mayeur-Jaouen also notes that the Egyptian custom of hanging the crocodiles on

[159] Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "Crocodiles et saints du Nil: du talisman au miracle," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 217, no. 4 (2000): 733-760.
[160] *Fetellus*, trans. Rev. James Rose Macpherson, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society 5 (London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1896). The crocodile is described on pages 47 and 48 of this edition, but it is a standard medieval bestiary-encyclopedia summary.
[161] Tafur's report is refreshingly original, and the 1926 translation by Malcolm Letts is available at: http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/tafur.html#ch8. He describes the hunting of the crocodile colorfully and vividly in the eighth chapter, and his description of the crocodile skin is so sincere and wonderful that it is impossible not to quote it here: "I was received with much honour by the Governor of Damietta, to whom I carried letters from the Sultan's chief interpreter, and I sent to enquire if he had a crocodile skin to send to the King of Cyprus who had asked for it. He offered me one which had recently been killed, but it smelt very rank, so that for my part I would rather have carried away the Governor's pretty daughter who was there, than the skin of that crocodile." Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures (1435-1439)*, trans. and ed. Malcolm Letts (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1926).
[162] For the follow-up on the dried crocodiles see: Johannes Tripps, "Paul de Limbourg malt einen Drachen oder: Getrocknete Krokodile und Lindwürmer im geistlichen Leben der Spätgotik," in *Engel, Teufel und Dämonen.*

walls of their houses, or above the doors has disappeared only recently, but that one can still see stuffed lizards in some parts of Egypt as substitutes for the crocodile.[163] Some specimens of stuffed crocodiles reached Europe during this period, some possibly earlier, and had their own stories as royal gifts, designators of alchemist of pharmaceutical space, or actually played the role of a dragon in some local myths.

Einblicke in die Geisterwelt des Mittelalters, ed. Hubert Herkommer and Rainer Cristoph Schwinges, (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2006), 131-139.

[163] Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "Crocodiles et saints du Nil: du talisman au miracle," 746-747.

EPILOGUE

When I was 5 years old
my grandfather gave me this 'stuffed' baby crocodile.
It was already a very old specimen.
He claimed it was found on the banks of the Nile in 1904.[164]

From the seventh century BCE until the fifteenth century CE, which is the period dealt with in the present paper in more or less detail, the crocodile was used as an exemplar, it was studied and dissected – in theory not in practice – it was described, depicted, and mentioned in countless ways and contexts. Generally, save in some of the ancient sources, is that it was seen in a dark and negative light.

In this study, it was my intention to show, on the basis of textual and pictorial examples, how Europeans of the Middle Ages experienced the crocodile and how they lived with the knowledge they could acquire about this exotic animal. I think it is safe to say that, except for the notion about the crocodile living in the Nile,[165] which is itself in Africa, there is nothing in the texts to suggest that it was perceived as the "exotic other," especially in the moralizing literature.

I decided to elaborate on the two most common situations where the crocodile appears, namely, its relations to the hydrus and the human, because for the longest part of the Middle Ages the crocodile did not exist in literature without the one or the other. At the same time one can truly follow a development and changes in perception by means of close reading of the sources. The naturalistic approach of the ancient authors was replaced by symbolic interpretations applied to the animals, making them human in essence, which were then substituted for the more objective and materialistic eyewitness reports in travelogues. Aristotle's and Pliny's methods with the development of science eventually evolved into

[164] Alexis Turner (http://theheirloomproject.co.uk/node/43).
[165] The Nile, although by far the most often mentioned habitat of crocodiles, was not the only place where these animals were believed to live. Already Pliny mentions crocodiles in India and Caesarea. Both of these places are mentioned later in relation to the crocodile. Mandeville, for example, appends the usual description of the crocodiles to the Indus, and Fetellus relates how crocodiles came to live in the rivers of Caesarea. Also, an

early modern natural histories and biology, but the ways of the moralizing encyclopedias and bestiaries still influence the manner one lives with animals today. This is most obvious in the metaphorical registers of modern languages, and even in animated movies and children's literature. The eyewitness reports, I think, except for putting a stop at looking at the world through other people's eyes (or words in this case) exclusively, made way for most of the non-scientific literature that came afterwards, as they presented a mixture of memory based on personal experience and knowledge, and possibly some imagination.

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Since this study started *ab ovo* with the crocodile in the Greco-Roman literature, and since I finish the close reading of the texts with a fifteenth-century example, it is in order to at least mention some other appearances the crocodile made in the Western world after the period discussed.

Stuffed crocodiles as objects in private or public space are a completely different topic, but nevertheless, so as to close the crocodile story in this paper in a more or less organic way, mention should be made of some differences in the perception of the crocodile and the instances where it could be found after the fifteenth century.

As far as textual references are concerned, one could read about the crocodile in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century in the contemporary natural histories of Conrad Gesner, Ulisse Aldrovandi, or Edward Topsell, for example. These works are quite similar in that they combine all the available sources in the manner of Beauvais, only in more detail, and adding to it. Gesner,[166] for example, devotes fourteen pages to the crocodile in his illustrated *History of Animals*, dealing first with its name in various languages, including Persian and

interesting study by Marco Masseti shows that crocodiles possibly lived in Sicily as well, see: Marco Masseti, "In the Gardens of Norman Palermo, Sicily (Twelfth Century A.D.)," *Anthropozoologica* 44(2009): 7-34.

[166] Conrad Gesner, *Historia animalium*: *De quadrupedibus oviparis* 2 (Frankfurt: Johan Wechel, 1586), 2, De crocodilo (9-23).

Arabic,[167] and comparing the forms of the crocodile's name to the names of other animals. He goes on to describe in detail (still based on all possible sources) the appearance of the animal, remedies derived from it, touches upon the etymology, and even its imagery, along with listing toponyms that bear the name of the crocodile.

Beside these attempts to look in more depth into the precise biological composition of the animal, the novelty of this later period was that the crocodile was put in another context, and this can be understood literally as well as metaphorically – namely, it was put in the context of hanging from the ceiling in various premises.[168] "Hanging crocodiles" could be found in churches, town halls, alchemist's cabinets, pharmacies, and even butcher shops.[169] Some of these crocodiles arrived in Europe with travelers, and others were presents from high officials. One of the oldest known dried crocodiles in Europe was a gift from the Sultan of Egypt to King Alfonse X of Castile in the thirteenth century, and has now been replaced with a wooden statue in the Cathedral of Seville.

With the hydrus out of the picture in this period, the crocodile was left to speak for itself in the matter of symbolism. Even though it was not compared to another object, it was still used to denote hell, the devil, and evil in general. Crocodiles as gifts had an initial symbolism of respect and appreciation. Later, however, the same specimens, if used to adorn a public space, came to symbolize evil conquered by human strength, like, for example, the crocodile in Brno.[170] This crocodile, now a trademark of the city, in the same way as other examples from Spain, and an even later example from Mallorca, entered stories about wandering heroes who saved the respective city from the monster/dragon in a local river/well

[167] For a detailed discussion of the name of the crocodile with an agenda to show that it is in fact the Biblical leviathan (*leviathan qui palam est crocodilus*), see: Samuel Bochart, *Hierozoicon sive De animalibus Sanctae Scripturae* 2, ed. Ern. Frid. Car. Rosenmüller (Leipzig: Libraria Weidmannia, 1794), 4,1.

[168] An article by Marcell Sebők speaks in much more detail about the function of the crocodile in private collections, cabinets of curiosities, and what could be called early museums: "A Crocodile is on the Ceiling. Collecting and Displaying "Others" in Early Modern Europe" (in press).

[169] Masseti, "In the Gardens of Norman Palermo, Sicily (Twelfth Century A.D.)," 18.

[170] For more about the crocodile of Brno, see: František Sláma, *Brněnský krokodil* [The Crocodile of Brno], (Brno: Slezska Kronika, 1909).

which was ravaging the population.[171] These stories are not unlike the saints' stories mentioned above, only in them the human protagonist had no help from divine providence, but, on the contrary, prevailed over these fierce creatures of God by means of his strength and courage.[172]

There has been an important development and change in perceptions of the crocodile since the Middle Ages, and the crocodile was still never only a crocodile. In shops and cabinets it was a symbol of one's profession, in gift-giving situations it was a symbol of respect, in the hero tales it posed as a conquered dragon, and even in the churches it symbolized defeated evil. One could perhaps speak about the crocodile appearing as itself in the encyclopedias and natural histories, even though the early encyclopedias were often influenced by allegorical interpretations. Another place where crocodiles might have been considered to be only crocodiles would have been menageries, had there been any in them.[173] Otherwise, in all the periods, in all the sources and literature, and therefore presumably in the eyes of the beholders, the crocodile was always something else other than simply an oviparous quadruped.

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When I was five years old, and I remembered this just recently, my father used to sing me a song by a Yugoslav rock band which speaks about a huge crocodile from the deep waters of the Nile which grabbed a small boy who was walking by, and demanded from the boy's parents a roasted ox as ransom. Then, when I was twenty-five years old, and preparing to undertake the writing of this study, I dreamt that I would have to take care of the famous

[171] A number of these occasions are presented in an article by Michal Ajvaz from 2009, called "Dragon Invasion" at: http://riowang.blogspot.hu/search/label/Ajvaz%3B%20Michal.

[172] Whether the crocodile be the leviathan from the Bible or not, the hero stories are completely opposite the saints' stories and the description of the leviathan from the book of Job. According to the book of Job, man cannot defeat God's most terrifying creature on his own, and in these local legends this is precisely what happened.

[173] Gustave Loisel, in his extensive research of menageries lists the crocodile only rarely. Actually, until the eighteenth century he mentions a crocodile only in the possession of Louis XIV, and in antiquity it appears that the Emperors Augustus and Elagabalus were considered to have had some specimens. See: Gustave Loisel, *Historie des Ménageries de l'Antiquité a Nos Jours* 1-3 (Paris: Octave Doin et Fils, 1912).

Belgrade zoo crocodile named Muja – is the oldest known specimen of its kind – in my bathtub. We, Serbians, as a people, are very proud to have this crocodile, which came to Belgrade in 1937 as an already grown animal. It survived three bombardments and the Second World War. The only problem is that Muja the crocodile is actually an alligator.[174]

[174] This is not only a mistake people make in speech without thinking. At: www.021.rs/Info/Srbija/Krokodil-Muja-svedok-istorije-Beograda.html there is an article with a title: *Krokodil Muja svedok istorije Beograda* [Muja the **Crocodile**: A witness to the History of Belgrade], and the text goes on to say: *Tri bombardovanja, Drugi svetski rat, nebrojano kriza, nestašice i sankcije osetio je Muja na svojoj debeloj koži, ali ne samo da je preživeo, već je ovaj aligator iz beogradskog zoološkog vrta postao zvanično najstariji pripadnik svoje vrste u zatočeništvu*. [Muja has felt on his thick skin three bombardments, the Second World War, countless crises, shortages and sanctions, and not did he only survive, but **this alligator** from the Belgrade zoo officially became the oldest specimen of its kind in captivity.]

IMAGES

Figure 1.1. The Nile mosaic of Palestrina. 120/110 BCE. Museo Nazionale Prenestino, Palazzo Barberini. http://waterculturepower.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/scala_archives_103108410561.jpg

Figure 1.2. The Nile mosaic from the House of the Faun. First century BCE. National Archaeological Museum, Naples. http://www.hermeticfellowship.org/Graphics/Images/NileAnimals.jpg

Figure 1.3. Octavian's denarius. 28 BCE.
Pergamon Museum, Berlin.

http://www.vroma.org/images/mcmanus_images/indexcoins.html

Figure 1.4. Brass coin from Nimes (Nemausus, Gaul). Period of Augustus's reign.
Pergamon Museum, Berlin.
http://www.vroma.org/images/mcmanus_images/indexcoins.html

Figure 1.5. Nile statue. First century CE (probably a copy of an earlier Hellenistic statue). Vatican Museum.
http://www.thehistoryblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/The-River-Nile.jpg

Figure 1.6. Nile statue, detail. Ichneumon.
http://farm8.staticflickr.com/7239/7176133575_1b6a7d99cf_z.jpg

Figure 1.7. Nile statue, detail. Crocodile.
http://hawkebackpacking.com/images/pictures/europe/vatican_city/vatican_museum/vatican_city_vatican_museum_14.jpg

Figure 1.8. Crocodile from Hadrian's villa in Tivoli. Second century.Vatican museum. https://resources.oncourse.iu.edu/access/content/user/leach/www/c414/net_id/rome/caracalla/croc1.jpg

Figure 1.9. Fish crocodile. The Hague, KB, 76 E 4, f 64r. Jacob van Maerlant, *Der Naturen Bloeme*. c. 1450-1500 Koninklijke Bibliotheek. http://manuscripts.kb.nl/show/images_text/76+E+4/page/58

Figure 1.10. Crocodile upside down. Français 1444, f 265r. Richard de Fournival, *Bestiaire d'Amours*. Second half of the thirteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France. http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100959&E=101&I=102255&M=imageseule

Figure 1.11. Crocodile-hydrus upside down. MS. Laud Misc. 247, f 152v. Bestiary. Second quarter of the twelfth century. Bodleian library. http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/

Figure 2.1. Ichneumon. Photo by Eyal Bartov, 2009. http://www.treknature.com/gallery/photo203658.htm

Figure 2.2. King and Ichneumon. Bronze. 664-332 BCE. Brooklyn Museum, photograph taken 2006. http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3856/King_and_Ichneumon

Figures 2.3. and 2.4. The bestiary crocodile story I. MS Royal 12 C XIX, ff. 12v, 12r, Bestiary. 1200-1210. British Library.
http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8813&CollID=16&NStart=120319

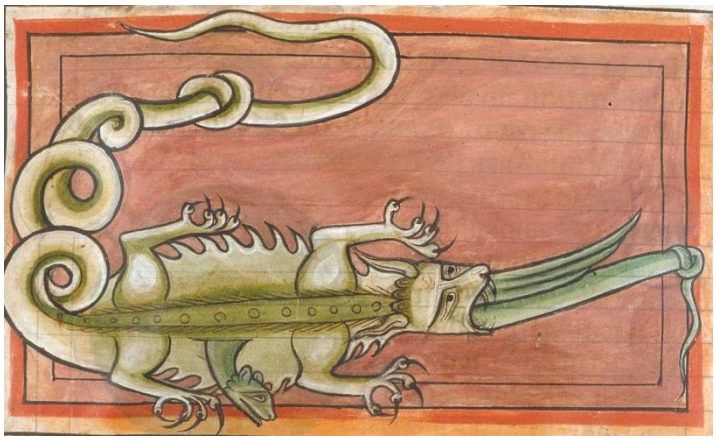

Figure 2.6. Green crocodile, winged hydrus. Harley MS 4751, f 62v. Bestiary. c. 1230-1240.British Library.
http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8797&CollID=8&NStart=4751

Figure 2.7. Crcodile dead. Aberdeen Bestiary, Univ. Lib. MS 24 f 68v. c 1200.
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/68v.hti

Figure 2.8. Dragon-like crocodile. Latin 2495 B, f 32. First quarter of the thirteenth century.
Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=07895450&E=1&I=163112&M=imageseule

Figure 2.9. Pink crocodile. Latin 14429 [ff. 96-118], f 110v. Third quarter of the thirteenth century.
Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100963&E=40&I=71949&M=imageseule

Figure 2.10. Crocodile-hydrus. GKS 3466, f 21. Bestiary of Philippe de Thaon,. c. 1300. Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.
http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/225/

Figure 2.11. Doglike crocodile, snakelike hydrus. MS. 249, f 4r. Bestiary of Phillpe de Thaon. Thirteenth century. Merton College.
http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=merton&manuscript=ms249

Figure 2.12. Double hydrus? Français 14969, f 31r. . Bestiary of Guillaume le Clerc. Third quarter of the thirteenth century.Bibliotheque national du France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100361&E=26&I=47317&M=imageseule

Figure 2.13. Goat-like crocodile and hydrus. Français 14970, f 15. Bestiary of Guillaume le Clerc. c. 1285.Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100362&E=19&I=47398&M=imageseule

Figure 2.14. Winged hydrus killing crocodile with head upside down. Français 1444, f 248r.
Bestiary of Guillaume le Clerc. Second half of the thirteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100959&E=37&I=102170&M=imageseule

Figure 2.15. Hydra/hydrus and crocodile. MS M.459, f 16r.
Richard de Fournival, Bestiaire d'Amour. c. 1290. Morgan Library.
http://utu.morganlibrary.org/medren/single_image2.cfm?page=ICA000171707&imagename=m459.016r.jpg

Figure 2.16. Hydrus-crocodile-human. Français 1444, f 262v. Richard de Fournival, Bestiaire d'Amours. Second half of the thirteenth century.Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100959&E=92&I=102242&M=imageseule

Figure 2.17. Sleeping hydrus, hungry crocodile. MS Douce 308, f 99v. Richard of Fournival. First quarter of fourteenth century Bodleian Library..
http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~41620~111695:Bestiaire-d-Amour-?qvq=q:MS.%2BDouce%2B308;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=38&trs=174.

Figure 2.18. Crocodile-shaped water spout at Palacio de Pena 1842-54.
http://www.flickr.com/photos/21000745@N02/6173160402/

Figure 3.1. Human entering, hydrus exiting. Harley 3244, f. 43. Bestiary. c. 1236-1250. British Library.
http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8798&CollID=8&NStart=3244

Figure 3.2. *Si eum vincere potest*... MS. Bodl. 764, f 24r. Bestiary. Second quarter of thirteenth century. Bodleian library.
http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~35114~106965:Bestiary-?qvq=q:MS.%2BBodl.%2B764;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=17&trs=99

Figure 3.3. The crocodile and the head. Latin 6838 B, f 9v. Bestiary.
Thirteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100969&E=15&I=65933&M=imageseule

Figure 3.4. Serrated crocodile devouring upside-down naked human. MS M.81 f 70r. Bestiary.
Morgan Library. c. 1185.
http://utu.morganlibrary.org/medren/SearchResults.cfm?%0A%09%09imagename=m81.070r.jpg&subject1=crocodile&subject2=&boolean=OR%0A%09%09&queryname=SearchResults&totalcount=13&current=2&page=ICA000095318.

Figure 3.5. Serrated crocodile devouring upright naked human. Northumberland Bestiary, MS. 100, f 49v. Bestiary. c. 1250-1260. J. Paul Getty Museum.
http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=305959&handle=li

Figure 3.6. Happy crocodile licking sleeping human. MS M.890, f 5v. Bestiary. c. 1325-1350. Morgan Library.
http://utu.morganlibrary.org/medren/print_single_image2.cfm?imagename=m890.005v.jpg&page=ICA000187185

Figure 3.7. Surrender to the crocodile. MS M.459, f 15v. Richard de Fournival, Bestiaire d'Amour. c. 1290. Morgan library.
http://utu.morganlibrary.org/medren/SearchResults.cfm?%0A%09%09imagename=m459.015v.jpg&subject1=crocodile&subject2=&boolean=OR%0A%09%09&queryname=SearchResults&totalcount=13&current=4&page=ICA000171681

Figure 3.8. Cocodrillus-Cockatrice. Latin 14429 [ff. 96-118], f 110v. Bestiary.
Third quarter of the thirteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100963&E=41&I=71950&M=imageseule

Figure 3.9. Soundly sleeping human about to be eaten by crocodile. MS. Douce 308, f 99r. Richard of Fournival. First quarter of the fourteenth century. Bodleian Library.
http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~41620~111695:Bestiaire-d-Amour-?qvq=q:MS.%2BDouce%2B308;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=38&trs=174

Figure 3.10. Flying doglike crocodile about to eat human. Français 15213, f 83v. Second quarter of the fourteenth century. Richard of Fournival. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100363&E=80&I=47682&M=imageseule

Figure 3.11. Dragon-like crocodile eating passive human. Latin 2495 B, f 32v. Bestiary. First quarter of thirteenth century.Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=07895438&E=1&I=163113&M=imageseule

Figure 3.12. Stabbed crocodilian swallowing human. Latin 3630, f 80r. Bestiary. Third quarter of the thirteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100513&E=22&I=63066&M=imageseule

Figure 3.13. Porcine-like crocodile eating human. MS. Douce 88, f 96v. Bestiary. c. 1300. Bodleian library.
http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~44046~117760:Bestiary-?qvq=q:MS.%2BDouce%2B88;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=54&trs=104

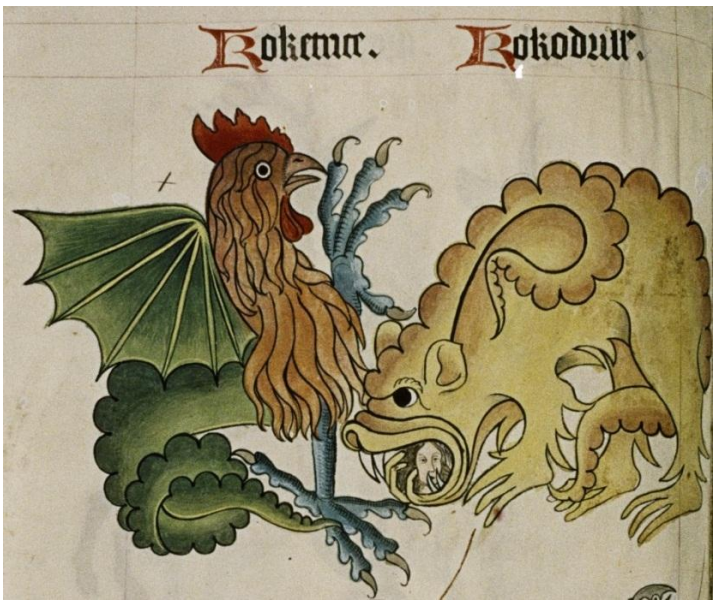

Figure 3.14. Kokatrice-Kokodrill. MS. Ashmole 1504, f 38v. The Tudor Pattern Book. c. 1520-1530. Bodleian library.
http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~31059~107661:-The-Tudor-Pattern-Book-?qvq=w4s:/what/MS.%20Ashmole%201504;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=81&trs=104

Figure 3.15. Et primo plorat super eum, et postea devorat eum. The Hague, MMW, 10 B 25, f 12v. Bestiary. c. 1450. Museum Meermanno.
http://www.mnemosyne.org/mmw/fullsize/mmw_10b25_012v_min_2.jpg

Figure 4.1. The dragon. Latin 6838 B, f 30v. Bestiary. Thirteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=COMP-2&I=101&M=imageseule

Figure 4.2. Legless dragon. Latin 6838B, f 4r. Bestiary. Thirteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=COMP-2&I=79&M=imageseule

Figure 4. 3. The seps. Latin 6838 B, fol. 34r. Bestiary. Thirteenth century. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Mandragore&O=08100969&E=58&I=66011&M=imageseule

Figure 4.4. King dragon. The Hague, MMW, 10 B 25, f 39r. Bestiary. c. 1450.Museum Meermanno.
http://collecties.meermanno.nl/handschriften/showillu?id=16058

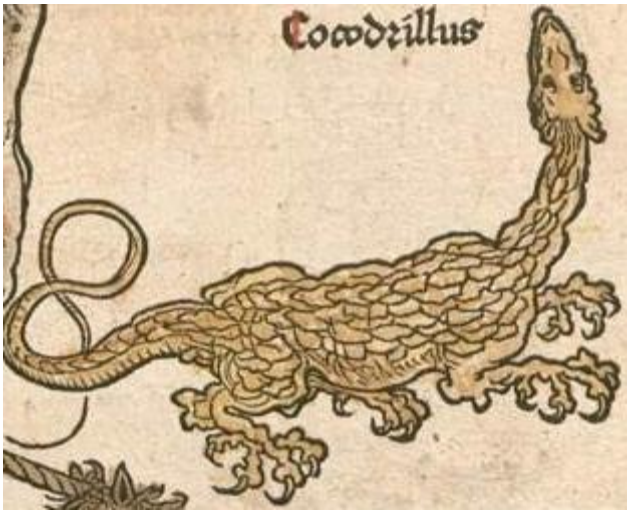

Figure 4.5. The crocodile as it was. Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Die heyligen reyßen gen Jherusalem zuo dem heiligen grab Mit Widmungsvorrede des Autors an Berthold von Henneberg, Erzbischof von Mainz. Holzschnitte von Erhard Reuwich* (Mainz: Erhard Reuwich, 1486), 109v.
Digitized Shelf Number: 2 Inc.c.a. 1727.
http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0005/bsb00051699/image_268

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