

Chapter 4

“The Sweepings of Lamia”: Transformations of the Myths of Lilith and Lamia

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Christian religious polemics have often employed animal imagery to denigrate the Jewish “other.” John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407) compared Jews to pigs and goats because of their wanton habits,¹ to stallions because of their lustfulness,² to dogs,³ to hyenas,⁴ and, generally, to wild beasts only fit for killing.⁵ By contrast, members of the Church are gentle lambs or sheep guided by the Good Shepherd, who alone can protect his flock from the predatory habits of this beastly enemy. Although the violence of John Chrysostom’s metaphors may surpass that of other Christian polemicists, his imagery is quite typical. However, as one evaluates such animal images in anti-Jewish religious polemics, the modern reader must not overlook classificatory distinctions that were fundamental to the medieval reader.

Animals could be classified under a variety of rubrics. Especially once thirteenth-century scholars rediscovered Aristotle’s biological treatises, animals would be categorized according to their various means of reproduction; according to their anatomical differences; according to their diverse means of locomotion; according to their habitats; according to whether they were wild or domesticated, and so on. Whereas this taxonomy rooted in ancient philosophy provided one means of grouping different animals and their attributes or properties, another model was available from the Bible, wherein animals are clearly separated into three major genres: creatures of the land, of the water, and of the air (cf. Gen. 1:20–25). These three animal

genuses will be subsumed under two broader rubrics: clean and unclean (cf. Lev. 11).

These two rubrics—clean and unclean—are in one sense exhaustive, covering all the animals created by God. Yet in another way these categories extend even beyond created nature, and force one also to take into consideration a third group, a true *tertium quid*: hybrid or monstrous beasts which transgress the boundaries of the natural order. The hybrid and the monster are not necessarily one and the same. For example, in the medieval bestiary tradition the mule is a hybrid that comes from a horse and an ass, created by human intervention and experiment in cross-breeding. According to the twelfth-century *Book of Beasts*, “Anas himself, the son of a great-grandchild of Esau, was the first man to cause herds of horses to be covered by asses in the desert—so that thence this new kind of animal [the mule] might be born from many of them, against nature.”⁶ Other examples of “adulterous mixture” have resulted from human industry, creating true hybrids. Precisely because the hybrid mixture is “against nature,” it falls under the category of the unclean.⁷

Monsters are unclean as well, but typically they are not viewed as the product of human intervention or experiments in cross-breeding, but as the result of some flaw in nature—for example, a flaw in the material employed in generation.⁸ Precisely because they are permitted but not willed by the Creator, and because they represent a falling away from Nature, they too must be classified among unclean animals.

One should not be surprised at the frequency with which Jews are compared to unclean animals in nature—like dogs and pigs—since biblical purity laws amply demonstrate that such animals, either when consumed or from contact with their carcasses, are obstacles to holiness.⁹ For Rabanus Maurus, the Jew and the pig are closely related both because of the latter’s uncleanness and because of its attributes, that is, its wantonness and gluttony.¹⁰ Bruno of Segni (d. 1123), in a fascinating allegorical exegesis, suggests that in truth Christians are like clean, ruminant animals because they—and not the Jews—twice digest the text of Scripture, locating in it the spiritual and not merely the literal sense.¹¹ This image finds an echo in Hermann of Cologne’s (ca. 1107–81) account of his conversion from Judaism to Christianity. Since Jews, he laments, have been content only with a literal interpretation of Scripture, they are like beasts of burden, whereas Christians, using reason, refresh themselves with a spiritual understanding. Animals that do not chew the cud are unclean, whereas after having adopted Christianity Hermann “transferred to the stomach of memory for frequent rumination” whatever edifying lessons he learned from the Bishop of Munster.¹²

As Christians would identify themselves with the clean animals of Scripture, so too these animal images suggested that contact with Jews is contact with uncleanness. As Christian theology allegorized biblical purity

laws, uncleanness came to represent moral danger. At the same time, these animal images were useful instruments that implied the Jews’ intellectual (and not merely moral) shortcomings. Such animal imagery was easily transferred to medieval art and iconography. Although the *Judensau* motif is perhaps best known,¹³ at times Jews are also depicted in association with other animals with a suspect or threatening nature: cats,¹⁴ owls,¹⁵ and scorpions.¹⁶

John Chrysostom had acknowledged that although the Jews’ behavior made them *like* the animals mentioned, they had not been transformed into animals in their essential nature.¹⁷ They remain for him human beings, though of the worst sort. Some modern historians, however, suggest that by the twelfth century in the Latin world, the failure of philosophical polemics to persuade Jews of the error of their views had led some Christian polemicists to infer that perhaps Jews were more than simply *like* animals: in their very nature, in reality, they *are* beasts, or, perhaps, part-beast, which is demonstrated no more clearly than by the fact that for them reason seems to have no sway. Recently, Odo of Tournai’s *Disputation with the Jew, Leo, Concerning the Advent of Christ, the Son of God (Disputatio contra Judaeum Leonem nomine de adventu Christi filii Dei)*¹⁸ has been seen as preparing the way for later twelfth-century polemicists like Peter the Venerable, whose *Against the Inveterate Stubbornness of the Jews* could only explain the Jews’ rejection of Christianity by insisting that they had lost the capacity to reason and, as such, were more bestial than human.¹⁹

With such a shift, metaphor became reality. In one way, this shift occurred as a result of centuries-old polemical traditions; in another way, it was perhaps a “reasonable” conclusion reached by those who had begun to despair of the success of rational polemics. Here, however, we would like to examine another animal image employed in anti-Jewish exegesis and polemic—an image that associates Jews not merely with unclean animals but instead with those hybrid creatures, quasi-beasts, or monsters that arose as accidents of nature.

It has been argued that for the Middle Ages, the defining quality of a monster is to be found especially in its violation of the boundaries that ought to separate animal from human. Thus, Charles Stewart has remarked, “Typically, monstrosity involves a combination of animal and human features . . . Importantly, monstrosity involves more than just form. It entails an affront to the moral order.”²⁰ As a flaw appearing in the order of nature, the monster is on the most superficial level an affront to the good order of creation. But more than this, a monster unites in itself a more perfect with an inferior species and typically displays the characteristics of its inferior nature. In this way, the monster is an affront to the ontological order as well.

Besides this, a monster is not only a flawed nature that displays the imperfection of its matter;²¹ a monster is, most often, also a creature that withdraws from moral standards and *acts* monstrously, offending our sense of order.

Medieval observers understood too that monsters exist, but *ought not* to exist. They are liminal objects that present a perplexing paradox. As Timothy Beal notes, "Monsters are in the world but not of the world. They are paradoxical personifications of *otherness within sameness*. That is, they are threatening figures of anomaly within the well-established and accepted order of things. They represent the outside that has gotten inside, the beyond-the-pale that, much to our horror, has gotten into the pale."²² One response to the monstrous presence, which has violated nature's good design, is demonization.

Beal's description of monsters as "paradoxical personifications of *otherness within sameness* . . . threatening figures of anomaly within the well-established and accepted order of things . . . the beyond-the-pale that, much to our horror, has gotten into the pale" could equally well describe the Jew in medieval society. One should not be surprised, then, to discover Jews assimilated to monstrous creatures in medieval tradition.²³ An example is the Lamia, a monster of uncertain and sometimes contradictory attributes, who, despite her classical antecedents, comes to symbolize the Jews in medieval texts. For medieval Christendom, the Lamia is dangerous, sexually ambivalent, part-human and part-beast. Straddling the secure taxonomies of the natural world, the Lamia threatens it with disorder, just as she threatens all human moral values.²⁴ The development of this complex and cross-culturally contaminated description is the result of centuries of cultural interplay. By tracing the development of the Lamia legend in classical and medieval sources, we intend here to shed some light on the way in which this monstrous creature began as a cultural symbol for the Greeks, helping them define and reinforce several aspects of their social fabric, became confused by biblical exegetes with a preexistent Jewish bogey, and emerged, ironically, to serve theological and political purposes designed to demonize medieval Jews, heretics, and others.

Lamia According to Ancient and Classical Sources

Now this story has not been made up for some child, in order to make it less wild and more controllable, but rather for those with greater and more thoroughgoing thoughtlessness than this.

Dio Chrysostom, Discourse²⁵

The Latin *Lamia* is certainly a direct transliteration of the Greek λάμια. The ultimate origin of the Greek name, however, is a matter of controversy.

Some have sought its roots in ancient Mesopotamian demonology;²⁶ others, however, have defended Lamia's Greek rather than Oriental origins, deriving the word λάμια from the same root as Greek words for "gullet" (λαίμωσ, less commonly λάμωσ), a reference to the Lamia's voracious, consuming, and devouring nature.²⁷

Lamia appears frequently in Greek mythology and folklore and, based on her early appearance in the literature (as early as Stesichorus—sixth century BCE) and on her widespread citations throughout antiquity, we can be assured both of her antiquity and popularity. As her history is pieced together from various sources, Lamia is said to be a female or hermaphroditic demon who lives in caves and ventures forth to devour children or young men she has seduced. She has an ugly face and removable eyes, is distinctly foul smelling, has unwashed testicles, farts when caught, and has large pendulous breasts.²⁸ In some sources, Lamia was the daughter of a Libyan king who was seduced by Zeus and bore him several children. When Hera discovered her consort's infidelity, she sought out Lamia's children by Zeus and murdered them. Thus deprived of maternal joys, Lamia saw to it that others would feel the same grief and began to devour children, even snatching them from the womb itself.²⁹ Her grief transformed utterly her appearance, so that her face reflected the bestial savagery in her heart. Presumably, like her fellow demons Empusa, Gorgo, and Mormo, she was commonly invoked to convince wayward youngsters of the wisdom of behaving well.³⁰

We have one further source for the role Lamia played in her earliest manifestations, for several images of demons are preserved on Greek vases which, despite the cautions raised by Boardman, are almost certainly either Lamia herself or some similar monster. In either case they give us some insights into which of the Lamia's many subsequent attributes were most important to early Greeks. Two of the vases, both Attic black figures, date from ca. 500 BCE or slightly thereafter. In the first, the monster confronts a sphinx. She is depicted as hairy, with prominent breasts and enormous talons—all salient characteristics of Lamia. The other shows a grotesque scene in which a naked woman, bound to a palm tree, is being tortured by satyrs. She has enormous breasts, a sagging belly, and, on close inspection, two prominent fangs. The Satyrs pull out her tongue with tongs and burn her genital area from below. Boardman claimed that the kneeling satyr "scorch[es] her pubic hair," but Halm-Tisserant³¹ had previously pointed out that incised lines on this portion of the damaged vase show that the figure had an erect phallus. As already noted, Aristophanes endows Lamia with testicles. The phallus surely points us to Lamia, and the palm tree, like the Sphinx in the previous vase, puts the scene in Libya, her favorite haunt.

A third vase is in the comic Kabirion style and shows a stunted man running from a hairy monster with prominent breasts and even more

prominent talons.³² While we would dearly love to have an inscribed picture of Lamia, or to be aware of a literary source from which these scenes may have come, two facts are probably secure—Lamia and child-killing demons like her were well-established in the high period of Greek culture and her lively iconography betokens an equally lively presence either in oral narrative or, most likely, in comic productions.³³

These features were soon invoked for the moralizing needs of the philosophers, and later authors. As late as the fifteenth century, the author of a treatise entitled "Lamia" remarked that fabulous tales—even old wives' tales like the stories of Lamia—are sometimes the beginning of or a tool of philosophy.³⁴ Scobie has noted an often overlooked tale told by Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40–15 CE) which, while not using the term Lamia, is clearly a Lamia tale.³⁵ Dio stresses that the tale is not "made up for a child, to make it less wild and unmanageable" but is a real story that can be put to good philosophic use. The tale is set in Libya, a favorite setting for the Lamia.³⁶ The creatures were said to be a type of *θηρίον*, or beast, and were beautiful women from the waist up who used their breasts to fill sailors with a desire for intercourse with them. Yet once on shore, the sailors were eaten simultaneously by the creature's upper and lower half, the latter being serpent-like and ending in a serpent's head.³⁷ It should be noted that these creatures lived in caves, and smelled terribly.

A closer description of the Lamia would be hard to find, yet her purposes have changed remarkably. Johnston has argued persuasively that the Lamia and her kind were originally creatures that helped to define negatively what a female in early Greek society should actually be: She should mate with, and not kill, young men and should produce, not devour, children.³⁸ This makes excellent sense for a culture which so regulated and controlled its female population. Yet here we see that Dio, writing a minimum of six centuries after the Lamia's first appearance, has begun one of many modifications in the Lamia. He has taken it over as a model, he says, for teaching us about our desires and appetites—what appears at first as attractive and seductive ends in ruin and corruption. A later sophistic writer, Flavius Philostratus (born ca. 170 CE), writes in much the same vein when he discusses the Lamia bested by the wonder worker Apollonius of Tyre. In his *Life of Apollonius* Philostratus tells us that the lamiae's powers of seduction were great for they, and related demons, "are lascivious creatures, and their passion is for making love and especially for the flesh of young men. They use the pleasures of sex as a decoy for those on whom they wish to dine."³⁹

Apuleius, a third sophist, who wrote slightly earlier than Philostratus, also has an intriguing Lamia tale, but Apuleius is more prone to indulge his love of the wondrous and the magical than to point out directly the moral lessons of his tale.⁴⁰ His bawdy tale of Lucius, who turns into an ass through

an overly active curiosity, begins with a fairly lengthy story concerning a young man, ironically named Socrates, who was seduced by an "old but relatively attractive" woman named Meroe.⁴¹ "Inflamed by lust" she brings him to her bed and keeps him a virtual hostage. Socrates claims she is a witch who uses her wiles to force any man she desires to fall in love with her and who has changed many of her enemies and former lovers into animals.⁴² At last free of her, but broken in body and spirit, Socrates meets an old friend who rescues him and brings him to an inn. Here, however, Meroe and her sister Panthia burst in the doors at night. Meroe stabs Socrates in the neck, drains his blood into a bottle, pulls his heart out through his throat and inserts a sponge to stop up the wound. They then squat over the friend, urinate on him copiously with an especially foul smelling urine, and depart. It is at this stage that Apuleius calls the sisters "lamiae."⁴³

The next morning Socrates is miraculously still alive, though clearly enervated. Only when they are once more on the road and Socrates tries to take a drink at a stream does the sponge fall out and Socrates dies. The story is well told and appropriately frightening. Meroe is a type of humanized Lamia, for she and her sister display many of the traits of Lamia such as lusting after young men, a foul smell, and vampirism, but they have been reduced from the status of demon to that of witch, a subject which greatly interested Apuleius. Such is the change that during his recounting of the famous Cupid and Psyche tale, Apuleius can have Cupid call Psyche's sisters *illae lamiae*, with the approximate meaning of "those bitches."

Before moving on to Lamia's later manifestations, there remains one further Greek example of Lamia, for Aristotle seems to mention her twice. In *Nicomachean Ethics* 1148b, describing how some basic natures can become perverse and almost bestial, he uses as an example "the woman who, so they say, tears open pregnant women and devours their children." This would seem clearly to be Lamia who, in this instance, is seen more as a deranged female (e.g. at the start of her story) than as the subsequent monster.⁴⁴ Later, Aristotle tells us that there is a shark called the Lamia, and from Oppian we get further evidence of its fierceness and voraciousness.⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that the she-demon Lamia had so entered the classical framework of references that she could be used by transference for a real, natural object that participated in lamian attributes. One need only look to English terms such as "Devil Fish" to recognize the tendency.

By comparison with the Greeks, the Romans mention Lamia infrequently. Varro knew of Euripides' *Lamia*, Horace briefly mentions her, and Apuleius was quite taken with her. But interest in the Lamia as a monster for didactic use is renewed principally among Christian authors whose view of the Lamia represents an aggregate drawn from Greek and Jewish traditions adapted to their own needs. An example is offered by the text of the

first Vatican Mythographer, dated to perhaps between 875 and 1075 CE.⁴⁶

Crotopus was a king of the Argives whose daughter was violated by Apollo. Whereupon the indignant father killed his daughter because she was a Vestal priestess and had to preserve her virginity forever. As revenge, Apollo sent a horrible monster which a certain very courageous youth, Coroebus, slew. Statius describes this very well in his history. This monster was named Lamia, for *lamiae* are the furrows of fields filled with foul corruption or the whirlpools of rivers, whence this most ferocious beast is known as Lamia.⁴⁷

In fact, Statius' story of Crotopus and Coroebus makes no mention of Lamia, but the story is clearly the one to which the mythographer refers.⁴⁸ Crotopus's virgin daughter, Cynthia, does indeed have an affair with Apollo, resulting in the birth of a child. Shamed and afraid of her father's disapproval, Cynthia left her infant son in a sheep pen for shepherds to raise. Later, wild dogs seized the child and killed it. When she learned of her son's fate, Cynthia at last disclosed to her father the source of her greatest grief, whereupon Crotopus put his daughter to death for her amorous transgression. To avenge her death Apollo does indeed send an unnamed monster with distinctive lamian characteristics who was conceived beneath the river Acheron in the foul lair of the Furies.⁴⁹ She has the face and the breast of a woman, but has a serpent rising from her forehead. She displays lamian behavior as well, for she steals into bed chambers at night and snatches nursing infants away from their mothers' breasts, devouring them. After the monster has terrorized the Argive countryside, Coroebus and his followers finally slay her.

Whether Statius actually had Lamia in mind or not is immaterial. What is important is that later commentators were prone to interpret such passages in lamian terms, putting her to the uses they saw fit.

Jewish Contributions to Lamia

And Lilith will find repose there and find a place of rest.

Isa. 34:14

ἐκεῖ ἀνπαύσονται ὄνοκένταυροι, εὔρον γὰρ ἀνάπανσιν
There the ass-centaurs will take their rest, for they have found their rest . . .

Isa. 34:14 (LXX)

ibi cubavit Lamia et invenit sibi requiem.

There the Lamia lay down and found her rest.

Isa. 34:14 (Vulg.)

In Isa. 34, the Hebrew prophet presents an apocalyptic scenario in which Edom is chastised by the Lord on the "Day of Yahweh," a time when its land and rivers are turned to smoking pitch, becoming a wasteland, a habitat fit only for wild dogs, wildcats, jackals, satyrs, and for the demon "Lilith."⁵⁰

Moving from the Hebrew text to the Greek Septuagint (LXX), however, we find that the "ass-centaur" has replaced Lilith. When Isa. 34:14 was translated centuries later by Symmachus,⁵¹ the cast of characters has again changed dramatically and the Hebrew "Lilith" and the LXX's "ass-centaur" appear as Lamia, and Lamia was then carried on in Symmachus's Greek translation, in the *Vetus latina*,⁵² and in Jerome's Latin Vulgate, which in turn preserved "Lamia" for later Latin readers. This fact is obscured by modern English versions in which Lilith-Lamia is rendered as "night hag," "night monster," or "night fairy," and in others still as a "screech owl."⁵³

How is it that Lilith in the Hebrew text of Isa. 34:14 is rendered by Symmachus's Greek text and by the Latin Vulgate as Lamia? It is our contention that certain traits or characteristics shared in common by Lilith and Lamia encouraged Latin and Greek translators to make this equation.

As early as the seventh century BCE an incantation appears on a Syrian tablet designed to protect women during childbirth by chasing away Lilith. Later rabbinic sources add to the tradition of Lilith, often attributing to her characteristics she shares with the Lamia. In the Talmudic period, Lilith was identified as Adam's first wife.⁵⁴ When Adam wished to have intercourse with her in the "missionary" position, Lilith refused to lie beneath him because, both having been created from the dust of the earth, they should be equal, and one should not lie above the other. When Adam attempted to force himself on her, she uttered the magic name of God and flew off to the desert around the Red Sea, where she gave birth to numerous demons. When God ordered her to desist, she agreed only on the condition that she should have power over newborns—males until the eighth day (the day when male infants are circumcised) and females until the twentieth day.⁵⁵ Again, Lilith threatens newborns much as Lamia may snatch them away and devour them and, as in Greek legends, she dwells in deserted regions.

Despite her refusal to obey Adam, Lilith returns to him after the expulsion from Eden and has intercourse with him against his will. As penance, Adam promised to refrain from intercourse with Eve for one-hundred thirty years. But he could not control involuntary nocturnal emissions, caused by female spirits who coupled with him and who then gave birth to demons and *lilim* (masc. pl. of Lilith). Patai finds additional information in Aramaic incantation texts which, though they date from 600 CE and later, probably reflect popular beliefs from an earlier period. In these texts, Lilith appears, like Lamia, as a ghostly paramour. Female Liliths join with men at night and male *lilim* join with women.⁵⁶ But, jealous of their human mate's progeny,

they are wont to suck their blood and strangle them. According to one medieval Jewish narrative, Elijah once encountered Lilith. When he asked her where she was going, she replied "I am on my way to drink the blood and eat the flesh of young children."⁵⁷ *Numbers Rabbah* also notes that Lilith may, when finding no others, even turn upon her own children.⁵⁸ Lilith was a special danger to women during childbirth, menstruation, and before defloration. As a result, both mother and infant had to be protected from Lilith with special incantations and amulets. These beliefs persisted, for in medieval Jewish mystical texts the Adam-Lilith myth expanded. Not only are nocturnal emissions a sign that a man has been visited by Lilith, but Lilith may also seduce men when they are in a waking state. When she succeeds, she is transformed from a beautiful seductress to a cruel fury, and kills her victim.⁵⁹

Female demons were commonly held to threaten and feed upon children.⁶⁰ Lilith's characteristics, as seen earlier, allow for her equation with the Greek Lamia. Early modern Christian authors also note the persistence of the Lilith-Lamia myth in European Jewish communities. Johannes Buxtorf the Elder (1564–1629), author of the *Synagoga Judaica*, remarks that when a Jewish woman is pregnant and birth approaches, she takes a piece of chalk and draws a circle around her bed, on all the walls, and above the door, where she inscribes in Hebrew characters: Adam, Eve, away with Lilith! For his Christian readers, Buxtorf explains that Lilith is that one who appears in Isa. 34:14, and is translated sometimes in Latin texts as *strige*, that is, a screech owl—or as *Lamia*. Lamia he describes as an animal or nocturnal specter presenting the face of a woman, although in reality it is a demon (*empusa*) accustomed to kill or steal away male infants before they are circumcised.⁶¹

Jewish and Greek mythology is brought together, then, through a Greek translation of Isa. 34:14 that results in the identification of Lamia and Lilith. Having viewed the history of both creatures, one may understand how this happened. They shared very similar appearances, dwelled in deserted areas and were perceived to be a threat to the unborn or newborns. Each seems to describe, if in a negative fashion, a paradigm for what a proper woman's role should be. For Jewish tradition, "Lilith . . . is the negative side, as the rabbis saw it, of woman. Lilith is assertive, seductive, and ultimately destructive; Eve is passive, faithful, and supportive."⁶² Lamia served the same purpose in Greek tales. Both Lamia and Lilith possess unclean sexual connotations and often suck the blood from their human progeny or lovers. The blending of the two traditions would have important consequences over time, for while the Lamia of Greek antiquity might be dismissed as a pagan phantasm, the status of the biblical Lilith-Lamia had the voice of authority behind it and had to be taken into account by biblical exegetes.

Lamia as Allegory among Christian Biblical Commentators

Lamia is the devil or demons, as in Jeremiah . . . Likewise, Lamia stands for a heretic or a hypocrite, as Isaiah says.

Rabanus Maurus, De Universo 8.2
(PL 111:226B)

In the Lamia the duplicity of the Jews and the fabrications of hypocrites are expressed.

Rabanus Maurus, Commentaria in Jeremiam 20.4
(PL 111:1249B–C)

Lamia has a human face but a bestial body. This is the flesh; this is the internal enemy.

Hugh of St. Victor Miscellanea 6.85
(PL 177:852B)

The substitution of Lamia for Lilith in Latin translations of Isa. 34:14 resulted both in curious exegetical strategies among Christian interpreters and in the near complete disappearance of Lilith from Christian tradition. Although Isa. 34 describes the destruction that God will bring to Edom, Jews and Christians understood Edom quite differently. For Jews, "Edom" can signify any number of Israel's adversaries.⁶³ Thus, Isa. 34 may be interpreted as a vision of the Lord's vengeance to be wrought against all of Israel's enemies. For many Jewish exegetes, at least from the fourth century CE, Edom had come to symbolize Rome itself, and therefore the text of Isa. 34 promised the destruction of the increasingly hostile Christianized Roman empire.⁶⁴ This interpretation was certainly known to Jerome, who died 420 CE and who remarks that the Jews (*Hebraei*) contend that Isaiah's prophecy of devastation refers to the destruction of the Roman empire, just as some Christian interpreters view the beast of the Book of Revelations, understood "literally" (*iuxta litteram*), as a prophecy of Rome's destruction (cf. Rev. 13:1ff).⁶⁵

For Christian interpreters, however, Edom does not designate Rome or foretell the destruction of the Christianized empire. Rather, in its polemics with Judaism, the Church identified itself with the younger Jacob/Israel, while the older Esau/Edom symbolized the Jews, who had lost the blessing not only of their father Isaac but of God the Father. Consequently, Jerome's *Commentarii in Isaiam*, in a remarkable tour de force, treats the destruction brought to Edom not only as a figure for the devastation of the historical

Jerusalem—in ruins following the disastrous wars of 66–72 CE and 132–135 CE—but also as a sign of divine wrath poured forth against (and not in defense of) the Jews themselves.⁶⁶ The various demons Isaiah said dwelled in Edom, for example, the ass-centaur (*onocentaurus*) and Lilith-Lamia, refer, tropologically, to the Jews themselves or to various demonic phantasms sent to pursue and punish them in the ruins of Jerusalem. John Cassian, a contemporary of Jerome who died after 430 CE, explains that Isaiah did not give the names of animals to these various demons by accident—calling them sirens, *lamiae*, ostriches, hedgehogs, dragons, scorpions, and others—but because the names truly reflect the wild and savage nature of the demons signified by them.⁶⁷ Although the Jews, claims Jerome, would treat Isaiah's description of devastation and Edom's possession by wild beasts as having a (perhaps future) historical reference, for Jerome and other Christian interpreters the presence of Lamia and the other demons in Edom and nearby Jerusalem symbolizes the present condition of the Jews, who incurred the judgment of the Lord, were exiled from the Holy City, and now live in desolation like wild beasts.⁶⁸

The only other passage in the Vulgate in which Lamia appears is Lam. 4:3: "But even the *lamiae* have bared the breast and nursed their whelps."⁶⁹ Both this passage and Isa. 34:14 became important for the transmission of the Lamia myth to Western literature. However, neither Lamia nor Lilith appears in the Hebrew text or Greek translation of Lam. 4:3. How, then, did Lamia appear in the Vulgate versions of this passage? The Hebrew text of Lam. 4:3 is not without its problems. It reads "*Tanin* draw out the breast as they suckle their young ones." *Tanin* would normally refer to serpents or dragons, and sometimes to a primordial water monster or dragon. This, however, presents a problem to a potential commentator, for these creatures are not mammals and could not therefore nurse their young.

One solution to the problem was provided by Jewish commentators who noted a marked similarity between *tanin* and the pl. form *tanim*.⁷⁰ The *tan* (pl. *tanim*) is a wild canine (probably a jackal; cf. Jer. 51:37 and Isa. 34:13). Since Lam. 4 follows a lengthy description of the desolation that has befallen Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians, it would be unremarkable to see jackals (*tanim*) suckling their whelps where previously princes of Judah and priests of the Temple had walked. Consequently, although the written Hebrew text provides *tanin*, it is emended for public reading to *tanim*. This equation is reflected too in Origen's *Hexapla*, in which the Heb. *tanin* of Lam. 4:3 is rendered in Latin as *canes feri*.⁷¹ Jewish exegetes who emended the text were employing a common solution, for this is not an infrequent phenomenon. There are between 1000–1500 instances in the Hebrew Bible in which the written text is vocalized differently in public reading, the best known involving the vocalization of the tetragrammaton, but extensive lists of other instances exist.⁷²

This emendation was not adopted by the translators of the LXX who, by using *drakon*, preserve the sense of the original Hebrew text. Nonetheless, later rabbinic commentators seem to have become aware of a linkage between a wild dog and the Greek *λαίμῶς*, from which lamia may be derived. In tractate Shabbat of the Babylonian Talmud, R. Abba said in the name of the third-century R. Simeon ben Lakish that in Greek a dog is called *lamos*, while the editor's note suggests *λαίμῶς* as a possibility.⁷³ Perhaps, then, after the codification of the LXX, an equation of the Hebrew for wild dog or jackal and the Greek lamia had become accepted and understood.

For the Christianized society of the later Roman Empire, there is no single lamian characteristic that justifies the identification of the biblical Lamia with its classical antecedents. Jerome is quite aware that Lamia finds her origin in the vain imaginings of pagan poets.⁷⁴ Yet he does not dismiss the biblical Lamia as the invention of poets. It remains the composite, hybrid, or monstrous nature of the older Lamia-Lilith that enables him and others to identify Jews and heretics with Lamia. Her voracious, poisonous, predatory, sexually ambivalent, infant-killing, and theriomorphic nature—part woman and part animal—lies beneath his inclination to equate Lamia with the Jews. As descendants of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Jews are corrupted at their mother's (Lamia's) breast with poisonous milk and, consequently, they speak "poisoned" words against the Lord, Jesus.⁷⁵ As such, they are a danger to the "true" children of Israel, that is, the Church, for they exist outside of it and contradict its teachings. In this way, *lamiae* (i.e. Jews) "poison" the young with seductive doctrines and, spiritually, kill them.

This reading is reiterated by later medieval commentators, although with the addition of other elements of the Lamia myth. For example, Rabanus Maurus (d. 856 CE) identifies the Lamia as a creature having a human face but a beast's body. This composite Lamia becomes a type for heretics and Jews, who, says Rabanus Maurus, display a human face and claim that they serve God.⁷⁶ In reality their hearts are of a bestial character and they are far removed from the love of God. They "bare their breasts" when they preach their error abroad, and they "nourish their whelps" when they introduce others to their impiety.⁷⁷ Similarly for Haymo of Halberstadt, commenting on Isaiah 34 the Lamia is a monster having the face and body of a woman, but the hooves of a horse.⁷⁸ For Beatus Liebanensis Lamia has a human face but a tail like a dragon.⁷⁹ In her partial theriomorphism she represents Jews and heretics, and when she "bares her breasts" she publicly preaches her error, nourishing her "young" on impiety. Her form accords with that of the great beast in the Book of Revelations that "spoke like a dragon (Rev. 13:11)." In contrast to Lamia's poisoned milk, Christian exegetes commonly cited the nourishing milk of mother Church, whose twin breasts signify the Old and New Testaments. It is the

“breasts” of the Church or of the Virgin Mary, and not of Lamia—that is, Jews or heretics—which Solomon describes as “beautiful” (see Song of Songs 4:10).⁸⁰

This identification of the Jews with Lamia is strengthened by the next verse in Lam. 4:3 (Vulg.): “The daughter of my people is cruel like an ostrich (*struthio*) in the desert.” Like Lamia, the ostrich is understood to refer to Jews and to hypocrites. This identification of the *struthio* with the Jews is accomplished by a reading of Job 39:16, where the ostrich is an animal that, failing to incubate her own eggs, treats her young (*fili*) carelessly and is hardened toward them (*duratur*) as if they were not her own. Similarly, according to Rabanus Maurus’s *Commentaria in Jeremiam*, the Jews were hardened (*indurata*) toward the apostles, who were sons of this same people.⁸¹ The proximity of *Lamia* and *struthio* in Lam. 4:3 assured that both would be understood as references to the Jews. At the same time, the ostrich’s disregard for her eggs is linked to Lamia in another way. Isaac of Stella (1110/20–ca. 1169 CE) explains that any mother forgetful of and without compassion for her progeny is more cruel, more inhuman and bestial than the Furies, since “even the *lamiae* have bared the breast . . . (Lam. 4:3).”⁸² Whereas Lam. 4:3 indicates that Lamia nourished at least her own young, the *struthio* threatens every positive image of the nourishing mother. She is crueler and more inhuman than the Furies. She is a mother who is not a mother, having carelessly abandoned her young. She is the Jew writ large.

For Paschasius Radbertus (d. ca. 860 CE) too the composite character of the Lamia is an allusion to the cruel nature of the scribes and Pharisees who offer the teat of perverse doctrine to the children of the synagogue. In his *Expositio in lamentationes* he attempts to support this allegorical interpretation with a false etymology derived from Isidore of Seville, linking *Lamia* to *lanio* (to “tear,” “rend,” or “butcher”).⁸³ The Pharisees do not bare their breasts in order to provide nourishment to the sons of the synagogue; rather, like the ostrich, they abandon their young. They “tear apart” (*lanio*) the people of God with their perverse doctrine. Paschasius adds that just as Lamia is clearly known in ancient myths (*in fabulis*) to be more cruel than all other beasts, so also the Pharisees are the most cruel of beasts, like the ostrich who as soon as she lays her eggs deserts them and cares so little for them that she fails to incubate them.⁸⁴ In the same way, the perversity of the Jews is such that the Jews do nothing less than rend and tear the people away from God, keeping them from eternal life. Although he acknowledges that according to some natural scientists (*physici*) the ostrich does at least bury her eggs in the warm sand so that the sun may incubate them, Paschasius Radbertus contends that the doctors of the law do not show even this measure of concern for their “young.”

Rupert of Deutz, who died ca. 1129–30 CE, employs this same false etymology to suggest that the Jews have not only abandoned their young like the ostrich but have actually butchered them,⁸⁵ as they butchered Jesus on the Cross, saying, “His blood be upon us and upon our children . . . (Matt. 27:25).”⁸⁶ Perhaps Rupert here recalls the response of some Jews to the violence of the first crusade: rather than surrender their children to forced baptism, in ritual fashion they killed them—as well as themselves—as they would slaughter an animal according to the dietary laws or *kashrut*.⁸⁷ Although Lamia is a monstrous creature, Rupert adds, it displays nevertheless a natural affection for its young when it bares its breast. But the “daughter of my people” (Lam. 4:3), the Jews, is crueler than even the monstrous Lamia.

A further confusion led Christian exegetes to identify Lamia with the Furies. Jerome had insisted that Lamia is the Hebrew Lilith (cf. Isa. 34:14), because for the Jews Lilith-Lamia is one of the Furies, known antiphrastically as the *Parcae* because they spare (*parcant*) no one.⁸⁸ In the same way, the Jews and hypocrites spare no one with their sacrilegious blasphemy—not the prophets and especially not the Church, the daughter of the people of Israel. This equation of Lamia with the Furies is transmitted from Jerome to Paschasius Radbertus, Isaac of Stella, and others.⁸⁹

The lasciviousness associated with Lilith-Lamia also reappears in this medieval amalgam. According to Hincmar of Rheims (d. 882 CE), unsuspecting men may copulate with *lamiae* (i.e., female spirits), just as women may be ravished by spirits that assume the appearance of those men whose love they desire.⁹⁰ Equally disconcerting, then, is that the power of *lamiae* to adopt various human guises blurs the boundaries not only between the human and the animal but also between the demonic and the human. According to Peter Damian (278) (d. 1072 CE) sexual promiscuity or sexual perversion prepares one as a dwelling place for unclean spirits, nymphs, *lamiae*, and sirens.⁹¹ It should not be surprising that for medieval Christianity unrestrained sexual desire—a symbol of the Fall—becomes the gateway between the human world and the demonic realm through which Lamia enters.

Lamia among the Natural Philosophers

The Lamia . . . is a large and very cruel animal . . . called lidit in Hebrew, and the Jews think that it was one of the Furies, which are called the Parcae, because they spare (parcant) nothing.

Thomas of Cantimpré, De natura rerum 4.56

Lamiae . . . are said to be types of monkeys, and they are said to have the head of a maiden, the body of a pig, the feet of a horse, and, as the historians relate, they are very cruel.

Albert the Great, Super Threnos 4.3

Gervais of Tilbury (ca. 1150–1220), who composed his *Otia imperialia* between 1210–14 for the instruction and entertainment of the excommunicate emperor Otto IV, records a number of popular folktales and legends of the Lamia. Precisely because it does not invoke the biblical evidence, this text seems a good place to begin a discussion of the “secular” medieval Lamia. Gervais remarks again that some say that *lamiae* are women who enter houses at night, snatch infants from their cribs, and attack sleeping persons.⁹² Others treat *lamiae* as dragons that assume human form to snatch lactating women from the riverbanks in order to nurse their own offspring, or to feed on men. However, Gervais also acknowledges another account, which he attributes to natural philosophers (*physici*), for whom *lamiae* are nocturnal phantasms that have the power to torment sleeping persons, owing to the coarseness of their humoral complexion, and seem able to drink human blood and to move infants from one place to another.⁹³ Gervais’s nod to the *physici* is another indication, however, that as the influx of ancient knowledge grew ever greater, it became increasingly important to give an account of *lamiae* that restored them, in some measure, to the natural world.

Michael Scot, the early thirteenth-century translator of Aristotle’s *Historia animalium*, mentions Lamia only in passing, and associates her with other monstrous creatures like the minotaur or hippocentaur.⁹⁴ But Lamia’s problematic and elastic properties are perhaps best illustrated in the work of the premier natural philosopher of Christendom, Albert the Great (d. 1280 CE) and his disciple, Thomas of Cantimpré. Albert discusses the Lamia in two places in his monumental *De animalibus*. In the first, in the context of a discussion of marine animals based on his reading of Aristotle, he refers to the Lamia:

Further, the one that is called *malakye* in Greek, as well as the *agrals*, fishing frog and the *lamyae*, are also in the sea, and they all copulate by mounting as we have related. This has also been seen by a number of different people and it is through their tales that this is believed to be so. The *lamiae* have women’s faces, or so many have said.⁹⁵

This sea creature, however, later will be identified with a nocturnal land animal when the Lamia receives its own entry in Albert’s catalogue of beasts:

LAMIA. The Lamia is a large, very cruel animal which comes out of the woods at night, enters gardens and breaks trees, scattering them about. For it

has strong arms suited for every sort of act. When men come upon it, according to Aristotle, it fights with them and wounds them with its bite. One who has been wounded, however, is not healed from its bite until it hears the voice of the same animal roaring. This animal delights in living in deserted, ruined places. It has something of a woman’s shape to its face and is quite devoted to its young when it nurses them. Some say, however, that there are some *lamiae* in Chaldea of the same size which are domesticated and which are rich in milk.⁹⁶

The Lamia, then, provides an interesting challenge for Albert the natural scientist. It is clear that several of the “old” lamian traits are here, for these versions of Lamia variously bite, fiercely attack the human world from abodes in the wilderness, and have a mixed female and animal shape. Yet they also give milk and are devoted to their young. He even has echoes of Aristotle’s shark. All these traits have been met earlier, but in this context Albert will not resort to allegory. He is trying rather to act as a proper natural scientist and his first instinct is to treat the various types of Lamia presented to him much as Aristotle would have done—by fitting them into understandable *taxa* which give sense to the natural world.

Yet Albert was both a natural scientist and biblical exegete. As the latter he could readily resort to an allegorical interpretation of Lamia when appropriate and equate Lamia and the devil.⁹⁷ Likewise, Albert suggests in his commentary on Lam. 4:3 that *lamiae* are a kind of monkey with the head of a maiden, a pig-like body, and a horse’s hooves. He adds that historians (*historiographi*) report that it is the cruelest of all beasts and especially enjoys ripping fetuses from the wombs of pregnant women to eat them. “This signifies the prelates of both synagogue and Church, who mutilate the concepts of the Church in its womb and devour them while they nurse their patrons on to sin.”⁹⁸ Note also Albert’s pun, since the *conceptos* ripped from the womb can equally be rendered as “fetuses” or “concepts.” Elsewhere he cites a medieval Greek commentator on Aristotle, the elusive Michael of Ephesus, for the claim that *lamiae* live in Lydia [*sic*] and cut open the bellies of pregnant women to eat the fetuses.⁹⁹ Here too Albert, in his guise as an exegete, adds “So too are some people who devour those who are still tender in their faith, not granting any concession to their infirmities, but rather spending the viscera of the poor on their own pleasures.”¹⁰⁰

Albert’s identification of quite disparate candidates for the name Lamia parallels what one finds in the work of a contemporary and disciple from whom he borrowed a great deal, namely Thomas of Cantimpré (*De natura rerum* 4.56):

The Lamia, as the *Liber rerum* says, is a large, very cruel animal. It comes out of the woods at night, enters gardens and breaks trees, scattering the branches

about. For it has strong arms suited for every sort of act. When men approach it in order to stop it, it fights with them and wounds them with its bite. Its bite is marvelous beyond all measure, however, just as Aristotle reports. One who has been wounded by the Lamia's teeth is not healed from its bite until it hears the voice of the same animal roaring. . . . We do not know if these are the *lamie* about which Jeremiah says in *Lamentations* (4.3) "The *lamie* have bared their breasts and have nursed their young" . . . Yet this can well be believed according to the gloss on this passage in *Lamentations*, because the gloss says that this beast is very ferocious yet offers its breasts to the young seeking them and nurses its progeny. This animal is called the *lidit* in Hebrew and the Jews think it was one of the Furies, which were called the *Parcae*, since they spare (*parcant*) no one. I have heard from someone that *lamie* are beasts in the Orient in the vicinity of those areas which contain the Tower of Babel in the field of Sennaar. And these beasts are larger than goats and are replete with milk. They are domesticated by humans, are led to pasture and are useful because of their abundant milk . . .¹⁰¹

This passage is very similar to one in the work of Vincent of Beauvais.¹⁰² It is well to remember that Vincent had been a student in Paris, and entered the newly recognized Dominican order ca. 1220. All three—Thomas, Vincent, and Albert—provide information on the Lamia which recalls her ancient, classical origins as well as her biblical roots. Yet each also strives to enter into the new Aristotelianism by accounting for the Lamia within "scientific" *taxa*, be it that of monkeys, sharks, or goats. The results are not universally successful by modern standards, but we are quite far from using the Lamia merely to frighten children, chastise clerics, or stigmatize Jews. These other uses of course persist. For example, Angelo Poliziano (d. 1494) reports that his grandmother used to frighten him as a boy with stories of *lamiae* who dwell in solitary places and devour crying children.¹⁰³ The effort to "naturalize" Lamia, to restore her to the natural world, appears all the more impressive for the persistence of these other fabulous accounts.

Conclusion

The Lamia has not fallen from the contemporary imagination. Her name lives in Greece today where, at least until recently the sudden death of a child was referred to with the proverbial "Lamia has strangled the child."¹⁰⁴ Perhaps ironically, things have come back to the point from which they began, for the Lamia is fairly devoid of metaphorical or allegorical allusions in Greek folklore. She is once more a symbol of deformity and slovenliness, so much so that "the sweepings of Lamia," is proverbial for untidiness. Her

tendency to devour young men reemerged in Greek folktales, although she can be fooled into sparing them if they treat her with respect.¹⁰⁵ That Lamia still lived in caves is demonstrated by the fact that a Lamia supposedly lived in a cave near to the village of Kephlovryso in Aetolia. The Lamia-shark has even endured, for later Greeks have a Lamia of the sea, a sort of dangerous mermaid. Still, when all is said, despite the fact that a land Lamia was supposedly shot in Attica and measured three fathoms in length, Lawson concludes that the *lamiae* "occupy a place in popular belief such as she held of old . . . bogeys which frighten none but children."¹⁰⁶

In her article on the Lamia, Johnston writes most insightfully that, "Demons are clay with which people mold images of their fears and anxieties." She claims correctly that "a society marginalizes that which is undesirable by labeling it demonic and then further marginalizes the demonic by attaching to it other marginal traits such as biformism."¹⁰⁷ Although Johnston is largely interested in the lessons Lamia had to teach the Greek world about the role of the female, the present survey has in many ways corroborated her account. Certainly, the allegorical equation of Lamia with Jews and heretics was meant to transfer to them her monstrous, theriomorphic nature and to suggest in them the absence of normal human—and especially maternal—instincts. This equation may also recall medieval narratives, circulating from the twelfth century, that accused Jews of ritual cannibalism and convicted them both of drinking the blood of Christian infants and of sexual predation.

Lamia's enduring and lively presence is attested from Stesichorus to modern times. Her basic attributes of dangerous, sexual predation and her role as a threat to children have amazingly remained recognizable over the centuries despite the accretions of qualities drawn from diverse sources and from the desires of those who have used her to frighten children, teach moral lessons, sermonize about Church abuses, engage in religious polemic, or help reestablish the natural sciences in the consciousness of the West. Demons are indeed our clay. But it is the basic human desire to mold that clay and to make it conform to our needs, desires, and interests, that so intrigues us.

Notes

We wish to express our gratitude to the Center for Hellenic Studies, the American Academy at Rome, and the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, whose directors, resources, and staff contributed greatly to the completion of this article.

1. *Homily* 1.4.1. The *Homilies* can be found in *Patrologia Graeca* 48: 843–942.
2. *Homily* 4.6.3.

3. *Homily* 1.2.1, and quoting Phil. 3: 2.
4. *Homily* 1.3.1. The association of Jews and the hyena becomes common in the medieval bestiary since, as the hyena was alleged to dig up buried corpses, so too Jews were said to give themselves over to dead idols. See T. H. White, ed., *The Book of Beasts* (New York: Dover Publications, 1984), 31. For the *Physiologus*, the hyena was also a beast that alternated its sex: "At one time it becomes male, at another a female, and it is unclean because it has two natures. . . . Thus double-minded men are compared to the brute. . . . The sons of Israel are like this animal." See *Physiologus*, trans. Michael J. Curley (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), 53. For the frequency with which Jews were compared to hyenas, see especially Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), ch. 13; 145–55.
5. *Homily* 1.2.4; 1.2.6.
6. White, *Book of Beasts*, 89.
7. *Physiologus*, 53. Cf. Albert the Great, *Quaestiones super de animalibus* 16.19, ed. Ephrem Filthaut, in *Opera omnia* 12 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1955).
8. Cf. Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus* 18.1.6.46–54, ed. Hermann Stadler, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 16 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1920). For English translation, see *Albertus Magnus On Animals: A Medieval Summa Zoologica*, 2 vols., trans. Kenneth F. Kittell Jr. and Irvn Michael Resnick (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 2: 1303–07.
9. On the relationship between the laws of *kasbrut* and the notion of impurity in Judaism, see the helpful study of Hyam Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and its Place in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), ch. 6.
10. Rabanus Maurus, *De universo* (PL 111: 206D).
11. Bruno of Segni, *Expositio in Leviticum*, 11: "Ruminare quid est, nisi sanctam Scripturam diligenter investigare et cordis sensu minutissime frangere, et ad spiritualem intelligentiam diutissime volvendo perducere? Judaei ergo neque unquam dividunt, neque ruminant, quoniam neque utrumque Testamentum recipiunt, neque quod suscipiant ruminando spiritualiter intelligunt; litteram enim solum et integram deglutientes, nihil aliud quam litteram sapiunt." PL 164: 414C. See also his *Expositio in Genesim*, 24, PL 164: 201D–202A.
12. Hermann of Cologne, *A Short Account of his Own Conversion*, in *Conversion and Text: the Cases of Augustine of Hippo, Herman-Judah, and Constantine Tsatsos*, trans. Karl F. Morrison (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 79.
13. For the *Judensau* and its appearances in medieval iconography, see Isaiah Shachar, *The Judensau: A Medieval Anti-Jewish Motif and its History* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1974). For a fascinating ethno-anthropological study, see Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *La Bête singulière: les Juifs, les chrétiens, le cochon* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1994), available in translation as *The Singular Beast: Jews, Christians, and the Pig*, trans. Carol Volk (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
14. See Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance. The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), ch. 4.

15. Again, the *Book of Beasts* (134) reports that "Owls are symbolical to the Jews, who repulse our Saviour when he comes to redeem them . . . [because] They value darkness more than light." Cf. *Physiologus*, 11. See also Mariko Miyazaki, "Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism," in Debra Hassig, ed., *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999): 23–50.
16. Shachar, *The Judensau*, 1.
17. *Homily* 4.6.3.
18. For a study and translation of this text, see Odo of Tournai, *On Original Sin and A Disputation with the Jew, Leo, Concerning the Advent of Christ, the Son of God: Two Theological Treatises*, trans. Irvn M. Resnick (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). For the view that Odo helped pave the way for the conclusion that Jews suffer an intrinsic irrationality, like brute beasts, see Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 191; and Anna Sapir-Abulafia, "Christian Imagery of Jews in the Twelfth Century: A look at Odo of Cambrai and Guibert of Nogent," *Theoretisches Geschiedenis* 16(1989): 383–91.
19. See Peter the Venerable, *Adversus Judeorum inveteratam duritiem*, ed. Yvonne Friedman, CC CM 58 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), 57–58. For a consideration of this text, see Anna Sapir Abulafia's "Twelfth-Century Renaissance Theology and the Jews," in Jeremy Cohen, ed., *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien, 11 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996), 135–37; and her *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 115–17.
20. Charles Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 180.
21. For a formal definition of a "monster" as a flawed nature resulting from a shortcoming in the matter on which its efficient cause must operate, see Albert the Great's *Quaestiones super de animalibus*, 18.5–6.
22. Timothy Beal, *Religion and its Monsters* (New York, London: Routledge, 2002), 4.
23. For a treatment of medieval depictions of Jews and the monstrous races, see Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, & Jews* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), ch. 3.
24. For a discussion of ambivalent or heightened sexuality as a mark of the monstrous, see too Debra Hassig, "Sex in the Bestiaries," in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999), 71–98.
25. Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 5.16. The Greek text may be found in *Dio Chrysostom*, 5 vols., trans. J. W. Cohoon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 1: 242. Translations are our own.
26. David R. West, "Gello and Lamia. Two Hellenic Daemons of Semitic Origin," *Internationales Jahrbuch für die Altertumskunde Syrien-Palästinas* 23 (1992): 366.
27. Such is the opinion of the scholia to Aristophanes' *Vespae* 1035 as printed in F. Dübner, *Scholia Graeca in Aristophanem* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1877), 158, but omitted for brevity in W. J. W. Koster, *Scholia in Vespas; Pacem; Aves et Lysistratam: Fasc. 1, Continens scholia vetera et recentiora in Aristophanis Vespas*

- (Groningen: Bouma, 1978), 165. For a later version, see Faustinus Arevalus's notes to Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, at PL 82: 922B, n. 102. There he argues that the Greek *lamia* may be derived from *laimos*, Lat. *ingluvies*, suggesting again a crop, a gaping maw, and a voracious quality. These, and other theories of the Greek etymology of *λαμια* are discussed by Sarah Iles Johnston, "Defining the Dreadful: Remarks on the Greek Child-Killing Demon," in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 380; Émil Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grec*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Klincksieck, 1938), 553–54, s.v. *λαμός*; Hjalmar Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1961), 80, s.v. *λαμυρός*; and Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grec. Histoire des mots* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968), s.v. *λαμυρός*.
28. The earliest recounting of the story, as opposed to a mere reference, is in the scholia to Aristophanes *Pax* 758, readily found in D. Holwerda, *Scholia in Vespas; Pacem; Aves et Lysistratam. Fasc. II, Continens scholia vetera et recentiora in Aristophanis Pacem* (Groningen: Bouma, 1982), 118–19. Another cohesive version is that of Diodorus Siculus *Library* 20.41.1–6, who wrote under Caesar and Augustus. But he may be following the lost works of the historian Duris who lived ca. 340–260 BCE. Cf. Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923–58), 76 F 17. Diodorus also cites a lost play of Euripides. Less accessible sources for these stories are found in scholia to Aristophanes and in lesser known authors from antiquity. For full citations, see H. W. Stoll, "Lamia" in *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, vol. 2.2, ed. W. H. Roscher (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965; reprint 1894–97) 1818–21; Emily Vermeule, "Herakles Brings a Tribute," in Ursula Höckmann and Natje Krug, eds., *Festschrift für Frank Brommer* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1977), 295–301; and Johnston, "Defining the Dreadful," 367–68.
29. Horace, *Ars poetica*, 340. See the notes of C. D. Brink, *Horace on Poetry: The Ars Poetica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 356–57. As Horace is citing this as the sort of thing that should not be shown on the stage, it may be that he has deliberately phrased his statement to reflect, not an actual belief, but an extreme to which an unscrupulous playwright might go. Pausanias 10.12.1, writing in Greek, but in Roman times, records the odd variant that the original Sibyl was the daughter of Zeus and Lamia. See Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 5 vols., trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 4: 431. Frazer makes a strong case for her nationality being Libyan. See Pausanias's *Description of Greece*, 2nd ed., 6 vols., trans. James Frazer (London: Macmillan and Co., 1993), 5: 288. Clement of Alexandria seems to preserve the same tale. See *Clement of Alexandria Stromateis Books One to Three*, 1.70.1, trans. John Ferguson (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 75.
30. She was still so used as late as Lucian, *Philopseudes* 2; Diodorus Siculus 20.41; and Strabo, *Geography* 1.2.8. Porphyry, commenting on Horace, *Ars Poetica* 340, states "haec ad infantes terrendos solet nominari." Cf. Johnston, "Defining the Dreadful," 365–69.
31. Monique Halm-Tisserant, "Folklore et Superstition en Grèce Classique: Lamia Torturée?" *Kernos* 2 (1989): 76 and pl. I.a-b.

32. These vases are discussed and dates and bibliography are offered by John Boardman, "Lamia," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1992) 6.1: 188–89, with plates 6.2: 90–91, and Monique Halm-Tisserant, "Folklore et Superstition," 67–82. Vermeule, "Herakles Brings a Tribute," offers one or two other possible illustrations of Lamia. Cf. Johnston, "Defining the Dreadful," 372–73.
33. Monique Halm-Tisserant, "Folklore et Superstition," 77–79.
34. See the *Lamia* of Angelus Politianus, in *Opera omnia*, 3 vols., ed. Ida Maçer (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1971), 1: 451.
35. Alex Scobie, "Some Folktales in Graeco-Roman and Far Eastern Sources," *Philologus* 121(1977): 7–10. The tale forms the entire body of Dio Chrysostom's fifth discourse. Since Dio's creature is ultimately exterminated by Herakles and is compared closely to a sphinx, it should be added to the testimonia so masterfully treated by Vermeule, "Herakles Brings a Tribute," note 6.
36. Vermeule, "Herakles Brings a Tribute," 297, claims that Euripides may have been responsible for the location of the Lamia tale in Libya.
37. Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 5.12, 240.
38. Johnston, "Defining the Dreadful," 366–67.
39. *Life of Apollonius* 4.25.
40. For Apuleius' status as a philosopher, see James Tatum, *Apuleius and the Golden Ass* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 122–34.
41. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1:1–17. Cf. David Leinweber, "Witchcraft and Lamiae in 'The Golden Ass,'" *Folklore* 105 (1994): 77–82.
42. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1: 8.
43. *Ibid.*, 1:17.
44. Rackham translates the phrase as "the creature in human form," and considers that this may well be Lamia. See *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 400. René Gauthier and Jean Yves Jolif quote an anonymous commentator who definitely equated this reference with Lamia. See *L'Éthique à Nicomaque* (Louvain: Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1959), 2: 627. John Burnet cites Fritzsche as in favor of the equation but calls it "very doubtful." See John Burnet, ed., *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London: Methuen, 1990), 311. The fact remains that the Greek seems to indicate a single individual who routinely (present tense) performs this crime. A single action of an anonymous female does not seem to make sense.
45. Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* 540b17; cf. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 9.40.78. The *lamna* of Oppian *Haliëutica* 1.370f. is surely the same creature and its ferociousness and tendency to bite are clear; see D'Arcy Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Fishes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 144.
46. Nevio Zorzetti and Jacques Berlioz, *Le premier mythographe du Vatican* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1995), xi–xii.
47. "Crotopus rex fuit Argivorum cuius filiam Apollo vitiavit, quod pater indignans filiam interemit quia Vestae sacerdos fuit et in virginitate semper perdurare debuit. In cuius ultione Apollo horribile monstrum misit quod Cor ebus iuuenis quidam fortissimus occidit. Et hanc historiam Statius decentissime scribit. Ipsum enim monstrum Lamia vocabatur, Lamiae sunt enim fossae

- camporum proluviis plene uel uoragines fluminum, unde ipsa ferocissima bestia Lamia dicebatur." Zorzetti and Berlioz, *Le premier mythographe du Vatican*, 93.
48. Statius, *Thebaid* 1.554ff, in *Statius. Silvae-Thebaid I-IV*, 2 vols., trans. J. H. Mozley (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1928), 1: 382-85.
49. Statius, *Thebaid* 1.597-99, 384.
50. The origin and meaning of the name "Lilith" at Isa. 34:14 is much debated. See for example, Vincent Tanghe, "Lilit in Edom (Jes. 5-15)," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 69.1(1993): 125-33; G. R. Driver, "Lilith," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 91 (1959): 55-57.
51. Patristic sources are in disagreement over the identity of Symmachus, who likely worked about the end of the second or beginning of the third century. According to Epiphanius, Symmachus was a Samaritan who later became a convert to Judaism. Eusebius regarded Symmachus as a member of the Ebionite community, and therefore as a sort of half-Christian, as does Jerome. For a discussion of the divergent views on the identity of Symmachus, see August Bludau, *Die Schriftfälschungen der Häretiker. Ein Beitrag zur Testkritik der Bibel, in Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen*, 11.5, ed. M. Meinertz (Münster: Ashcendorff, 1925), 14-16.
52. See Roger Gryson, ed., "Esaias," *Vetus latina, die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel* 12.1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1987-93), 709.
53. See James Hastings, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 3: 122. For the owl as a frequent companion of witches in antiquity, and for witches turning themselves into owls, see Alex Scobie, "Strigiform Witches in Roman and Other Cultures," *Fabula* 19 (1978): 74-101. On the *strix* itself and its changes through time, see Samuel Grant Oliphant, "The Story of the Strix: Ancient," *TAPA* 44 (1913): 133-49, and "The Story of the Strix: Isidorus and the Glossographers," *TAPA* 45 (1914): 49-63.
54. See Walter Krebs, "Lilith—Adams erste Frau," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 27.2 (1975): 141-52.
55. This myth may also be found fully elaborated in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, a Hebrew biblical commentary written between the seventh and tenth century CE, and also translated into Latin. For a discussion of rabbinic and talmudic sources for the Lilith legend, see also A. M. Killen, "La légende de Lilith," *Revue de littérature comparée* 12 (1932): 277-311.
56. According to Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 68, in the *Targum Yerushalmi*, the priestly benediction of Num. 6:26 becomes "The Lord bless thee in all thy doings, and preserve thee from the Lilim."
57. Gershom G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965), 73.
58. *Midrash Rabbah: Numbers*, 16.25, 2 vols., trans. Judah J. Slotki (London: Soncino Press, 1983), 2: 694.
59. Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 3rd edition (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 233.

60. See *The Chronicle of Abimaaz*, 12a, trans. Marcus Salzman, Columbia University Oriental Studies, 18 (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 81.
61. Johannes Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica* (Basel: E. König, 1680; reprint Hildesheim; New York: G. Olms, 1989), 81 and 85.
62. Howard Schwartz, "Jewish Tales of the Supernatural," *Judaism* 36 (1987): 343. Precisely because Lilith represents a socially constructed negative image of the female, she has become in modern times a symbol of feminist liberation in interpretation and literature. See Michèle Bitton, "Lilith ou la première Ève: un mythe Juif Tardif," *Archives de sciences sociale des religions* 71 (1990): 113-36.
63. Cf. 2. Kgs. 8:13-14 and 14:7, where David defeats the Edomites in the "Valley of Salt."
64. On the identification of Rome and Edom, see Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in the Matrix of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 73-87. Thus, Isa. 34:14 was understood to mean that when the Lord will lay waste to Rome, Lilith will dwell there in repose. See for example *Zohar* 3, 19a, in *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3 vols., trans. David Goldstein, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 2: 540.
65. "Hebraei, ut supra diximus, haec de romano imperio prophetata contendunt, et in ultionem sion, uastitatem quondam regni potentissimi praedicari, quod iuxta litteram plerique nostrorum etiam in apocalypsi ioannis scriptum putant." Jerome, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 10.34.8, CC SL 73, ed. M. Adriaen (Turnholt: Brepols, 1963), 421.
66. *Ibid.*
67. John Cassian, *Collationes*, 7.3.2, ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 13 (Vienna: 1886), 212.
68. "Haec iuxta hebraicum et explanationem historicam dicta sint. Ceterum qui tropologicam sequuntur, expulso populo iudaeorum sub bestiarum et portentorum nominibus, idololatrias et variis superstitionibus seruietes in hierusalem habituros esse confirmant; et hos esse onocrotalos et hericicos, ibin et coruum, dracones et struthiones et onocentauros, et daemonia et pilosos et lamiam (quae hebraice dicitur lilith; et a solo symmacho translata est Lamia, quam quidam hebraeorum ἐπιωνν id est furiam, suspicantur)." Jerome, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 10.34.8, 422.
69. "Sed et lamiae nudaverunt mammam, lactaverunt catulos suos . . ." Lam. 4:3 (Vulg.)
70. For a discussion of Lam. 4:3 see Marc Epstein, "If Lions Could Carve Stones . . .: Medieval Jewry and the Allegorization of the Animal Kingdom. A Textual and Iconographic Study" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1992; Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1993), 250-51 and 298-99. *Tanin* taken as a primordial water dragon helps to explain the New English Bible translation of this passage: "Even whales uncover the teat." One should compare this to Gen. 1:21 where *taninim* is usually translated "sea-monster"; Deut. 32:33, where it is a poisonous serpent; and Jer. 51:34 where *tanin* is a dragon (Vulg. *draco*).
71. See *Origenis Hexaplorum, quae supersunt: sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta*, 2 vols., ed. Frederick Field (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875) 2: 758.
72. See Harry M. Orlinsky, "The Origin of the Kethib-Qere System: A New Approach," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 7 (1959): 184-92; W. Emery Barnes,

- "Ancient Corrections in the Text of the Old Testament (*Tikkun Sopherim*)," *Journal of Theological Studies* 1(1900): 387–414; Dominique Barthélemy, "Les Tiququnê Sopherim et la critique textuelle de l'Ancient Testament," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 9 (1963): 285–304; Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1962), 25ff; and William McKane, "Observations on the Tikkunê Sôperim," in Matthew Black and William Smalley, eds., *On Language, Culture, and Religion: In Honor of Eugene A. Nida* (The Hague; Paris: Mouton, 1974), 53–77.
73. B. T. Shabbat 63a-b. For the editor's footnote, see *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Shabbat*, trans. R. Dr. H. Freedman (London/Jerusalem: the Soncino Press, 1987). Our thanks to Professor Joshua Schwartz of Bar-Ilan University for drawing our attention to this passage.
74. "Onocentauri, et pilosi, et Lamia, quae gentiliū fabulae et poetarum figmenta describunt." Jerome, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 10.35.1, 424.
75. See Paulinus of Aquileia [d. 802], *Contra Felicem Urgellitanum* 3.10 (PL 99: 442Df).
76. Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in Jeremiam* 20.4 (PL 111:1249C).
77. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Moralia* 19.18. 9–10, 27 (PL 76: 116A), *Moralia* 23.29.36, 53 (PL 76: 707f), and *Moralia* 33.29; Herveus of Bourgueiu, *Commentaria in Isaiam* 5.34.15 (PL 181: 329A).
78. Haymo of Halberstadt, *Commentaria in Isaiam*, 34 (PL 116: 893C).
79. Beatus Liebanensis and Eterius Exomensis, *Adversus Elipandum libri duo*, 2.15, ed. B. Löfstedt, CC CM 59 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1984), 114.
80. See Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermones in Canticum Salomonis* 30.9 (PL 184:160); and, John of Ford, *Super extremam partem Cantici canticorum sermones cxx*, 111.9, eds. E. Mikkers and H. Costello, CC CM 18 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1970), 755. Contrast this image of *Lamia* with the portrait of the Virgin presented in the popular *alma mater redemptoris*.
81. Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in Jeremiam* 20.4 (PL 111: 1249C).
82. Isaac of Stella, *Sermones*, 40.5, ed. A. Hoste and G. Raciti, *Sources Chrétiennes* 339 (Paris:Les éditions du cerf, 1987), 14.
83. Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in lamentationes Hieremie, libri quinque*, 4.3, ed. B. Paulus, CC CM 85 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1988), 252. Cf. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, 8.11.101, 2 vols., ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911).
84. *Expositio in lamentationes*, 4.3, 253.
85. Rupert of Deutz, *De Trinitate et operibus eius, in Jeremiam Prophetam*, 1.83 (PL 167: 1414A–B).
86. Cf. his *Commentaria in Job* 29.13 (PL 168: 1090B). For a similar gloss on Lam. 4:3, see Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale* 19.65 (Douai: 1624; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1964–65), 1418.
87. For translations of Hebrew chronicles of the First Crusade, which describe the practice of *kiddush ha-Shem* or self-martyrdom, see the Appendix to Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). For interpretation see also Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying*

- the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
88. For the claim that the *Parcae* are so called by antiphrasis, see Jerome, *Epist.* 50.2 (PL 22: 474); *Commentarius in librum nominum Hebraeorum* (PL 23: 1515C–D); Augustine, *Contra Mendacium* 1.10.24 (PL 40: 534); Eugippius, *Thesaurus*, 191 (PL 62: 846D); Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 1.37.24, Rabanus Maurus, *Enarrationes in librum Numerorum* 4.8 (PL 108: 821A); John Scotus Eriugena, *De praedestinatione*, 15.7 (PL 122: 415C); and Rupert of Deutz, *De Trinitate et operibus eius, in Numeros Commentariorum*, 2.31 (PL 167: 915A).
89. Jerome, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 10.35.1, 422; Paschasius Radbertus, *In Lamentationes Jeremiae*, 4 (PL 120: 1205B); Isaac of Stella, *Sermones*, 40.5.
90. Hincmar of Rheims, *De divortio Lotharii Regis et Theutbergae Reginae*, ed. Letha Böhringer, *MGH: Concilia*, 4.1 (Hanover: Hahn, 1992), 206: "Quidam autem a lamiis sive genichialibus feminis debilitati, quaedam etiam feminae a dusiis in specie virorum, quorum amore ardebant, concubitum pertulisse inventae sunt."
91. "Venite itaque, audite me, scorta, prostibula savia, volutabra porcorum pinguium, cubilia spirituum immundorum, nimphae, sirenae, lamiae, dianae, et si quid adhuc portentis, si quid prodigii reperitur, nomini vestro competere iudicetur." Peter Damian, *Epistula* 112, in *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Kurt Reindel, *MGH: Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit* 4, 3 (Munich: 1983–93), 278. Note too that sirens were depicted in the Middle Ages as part woman, part fish, fowl, or horse. Beryl Rowland states that the siren also seduced men and adds that "A Hellenic relief of a winged and bird-footed woman sitting astride a sleeping traveller shows the fundamental conception of the siren as *incuba*." *Birds with Human Souls* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 155. Cf. John Pollard, *Birds in Greek Life and Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 188–91.
92. "lamiae dicuntur esse mulieres, quae noctu domos penetrant, infantes ex cunis extrahunt, et nonnunquam dormientes affligunt." *Otia imperialia* 3.85, 38. Cf. John of Salisbury, *Polycraticus* 2.17 (PL 199: 436), where the *lamiae* are still treated as demonic phantasms said to be capable of devouring the limbs of infants.
93. *Otia imperialia* 3.86, 39–40.
94. Michael Scot, *Liber phisionomiae*, 20. We have used the Venice edition (1477). The *Liber phisionomiae* constitutes the third book of his tripartite *Liber introductorius*, and follows after the *Liber quattuor distinctionum* and *Liber particularis*.
95. Albert the Great, *De animalibus*, 5.1.2.15, vol. 1: 414. The animals' names in this passage are based, if corruptly, on Albert's source for this passage—Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* 540b18f.
96. Albert the Great, *De animalibus*, 22.2.1.112(64), vol. 2: 1409.
97. Albert the Great, *Sermo de tempore*, 62.1, in *Opera omnia*, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris: L. Vives, 1891), 13: 243.
98. Albert the Great, *Super Threnos*, 4.3, in *Opera omnia*, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris: L. Vives, 1893), 18: 317.

99. Michael accurately recalls many of the features of the ancient Greek Lamia when, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, he remarks: "Lamia was a certain woman of Pontus who, because she had lost her children, ate the young of other women" and he later accurately identifies Lamia as a certain ruler of Libya who devoured embryos ripped from the womb. See *Eustratii et Michaelis et anonyma In Ethica Nicomachea Commentaria, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, ed. Gustavus Heylbut (Berlin: Reimer, 1892), 20: 427, 547. Michael's biography is obscure and his dates uncertain. He likely lived before 1100 and was a member of the circle of Anna Komnene in Constantinople, where he was instrumental in Aristotle's revival. He completed commentaries to Aristotle's *Generation of Animals, Nicomachean Ethics, Politics, Rhetoric, Sophistical Refutations*, and *Metaphysics*. See "Michael Ephesus," *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 2: 1369.
100. Albert the Great, *Super Threnos* 2.21, 288.
101. *Liber de natura rerum*, 4.56, ed. H. Boese (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973). "Sennaar" is the place name referring to Mesopotamia in Gen. 10:10 and 11:3 (Heb. Shinar; Sennaar in the LXX). According to Gen. 11:1-9 it is indeed on the plain of Shinar/Sennaar that the tower of Babel was constructed. For a discussion of Thomas's passage and its roots in medieval folk traditions, see Claude Lecouteux, "Lamia-holzmuowa-holzfrowe-Lamich," *Euphorion* 3 (1981): 360-65. Despite the odd properties of this beast (it has strong arms, for example) a late fifteenth century illustrated text of Thomas of Cantimpré's *De natura rerum* (fol. 19va) shows the lamia very much like a wild dog. This, and the reference to Lam. 4:3 may be responsible for the translator's error, rendering lamia as jackal. See Thomas of Cantimpré, *De natura rerum (Lib. IV-XII): Tacuinum Sanitatis*, codice C-67 (fols. 2v-116r) de la Biblioteca Universitaria de Granada, comentarios a la edición facsimil, 2 vols., ed. Luis García Ballester (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1974). Volume 1 contains a long historical introduction, followed by Charles Talbot's English translation (251-326); vol. 2 contains a facsimile edition, with 611 illustrations.
102. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, 19.65, 1418.
103. "Mihi quidem etiam puerulo avia narrabat, esse aliquas in solitudinibus Lamias, quae plorantes glutirent pueros. Maxima tunc mihi formido Lamia erat, maximum terriculum." Angelus Politianus, *Lamia*, 451.
104. John Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1964), 162-76.
105. R. M. Dawkins, *More Greek Folktales* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 63-64.
106. John Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore*, 176.
107. Johnston, "Defining the Dreadful," 371, 381; cf. 361-63.

Chapter 5

Cross-Dressing and Female Same-Sex Marriage in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures

Sahar Amer

The presuppositions we make about sexed bodies . . . are suddenly and significantly upset by those examples that fail to comply with the categories that naturalize and stabilize that field of bodies for us within the terms of cultural conventions. Hence, the strange, the incoherent, that which falls "outside," gives us a way of understanding the taken-for-granted world of sexual categorization as a constructed one, indeed, as one that might be constructed differently.

Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 110

The title of Jacqueline Murray's essay "Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible," in Bullough and Brundage's *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* is revealing of the status of the medieval lesbian in contemporary scholarship.¹ In this essay, Jacqueline Murray decries the fact that the medieval Western lesbian has been regularly elided in most literary criticism first under the rubric "homosexual" in mainstream woman history, and under the rubric "woman" in studies of medieval homosexuality which have focused almost exclusively on male homosexuality. She observes: "Of all groups within medieval society lesbians are the most marginalized and least visible" (191).

My research indicates that one fundamental reason why lesbians as a category of analysis or as evidence of a certain textual (or social) reality have been occulted is the fact that much of medieval French literary writings continues to be read in isolation from the cultural context of interaction,