Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN

Studi sul Patrimonio Culturale – Cultural Heritage Studies

Ciclo XXX

Settore Concorsuale: 11/A6 - SCIENZE STORICO-RELIGIOSE
Scientifico Disciplinare: Settore M-STO/07 - Storia del Cristianesimo e delle Chiese

Gathering the Shepherds
Uses and Meanings of Pastoral Imagery and Shepherding Metaphors between 3rd and 6th Centuries

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Esame finale anno 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reality, Imagery and Metaphors

This work wants to be an essay on visual and literary transmission of pastoral imagery. The word "imagery" moves the field of study from anthropology and social studies of shepherding activities in Late Antiquity to a metaphorical plan: the actual shepherding activities, the figure of shepherds and the practices connected to cattle and flocks shall be analyzed as metaphors, as figures of speech used to convey determined messages. It is not surprising that the main activities of sustain such as shepherding gave birth to a set of mental images connected to that activity: for example, the actual use of shepherds to carry a sheep on the shoulders, holding its legs across the chest, gave birth to the popular image of the *kriophoros*, the ram-bearer shepherd: a famous example is the 6th century B.C. statue of a *moskophoros*, an calf-bearer found in Athens in the so-called Persian rubble (Figure 1). The *kriophoros* knew a great diffusion in Christian ages, both in sculpture, painting and even literature.

Figure 1

The fortune of Pastoral imagery endures throughout modern ages, since the church vocabulary related to bishops is shaped on shepherding metaphors: the church leader is called pastor and in modern English, the verb "to shepherd" means "to lead; to guide". Moreover, in Italian "pastorale" is the shepherd's crosier. Pastoral imagery conveyed also an enduring idyllic overtone, as it is clear in the music genre of "Pastoral", a genre of composition which main topic is the idyllic life of the countryside. These contemporary examples show that the images and the metaphors inspired by the bucolic realm of shepherds was polysemous and polymorphic.

This essays aims at outlining the development of such polymorphic imagery, focusing on the three centuries of late antiquity, especially on visual representation and metaphors of early Christianity.

Even if visual imagery is the main issue of this work, the literary imagery is taken into account as well. A multi-disciplinary approach to the topic is necessary for a typologic essay as this works aims at being: besides material culture and archaeologic evidences, anthropology, theology, history of exegesis and semiotics are considered as significative approaches for the history of pastoral imagery. It is fundamental, for example, to pay close attention to the recipient of this imagery: for example, Christian Fathers shall be considered as both sources and recipients of a tradition that they re-interpreted for the sake of communication; with this approach, and only paying attention to the role of viewers and addressees, it is possible to understand shepherding metaphors as part of a strategy, an useful tool of vivid speech, rhetorically employed to convey more effectively a given set of messages. As consignee of a message, the viewer is considered as a proactive viewer[1]. For this reason, a semiotic approach to images shall allow to consider these latter as figures of speech, arranged in a rhetoric way and used as metaphors as much as words.

From a structural point of view, a metaphor is a comparison of two elements, based on a common quality. Lamb's humbleness, shepherd's devotedness, flock's unity and other qualities and characteristics of bucolic realm come from an observation of the real world of shepherds; and become paradigms and archetypical elements employed in a metaphoric discourse. Therefore, the quiet and harmless lamb turns from a mere term of comparison into a kind of symbol of Jesus' sacrifice, leading to the creation of the symbol of the Lamb of God. Moreover, as we shall see, the shepherd figure becomes an antonomasia of philosophical and bucolic *otium* and is represented in some floor mosaics of *domus* in Aquileia, as an emblem of house's bliss, guaranteed by the household.

It is necessary to go beyond the analysis of images and focus on the idea of a wider imagery, in order to to grasp the cultural value of bucolic imagery: overcoming the idea that images have an inner meaning and sense, unchangeable and not influenced by contextual factors means to overcome the narrow boundaries of an art-history approach. A definition of imagery, according to Jean Jacques Wunenburger, is a system of images whose meaning is different from the meaning of the single images, a system intrinsecally polysemic, that thus opens up to a variety of possible interpretations. Imagery is, in other words, a system of images and texts that have a practical efficacy and that is part of the

[1] Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, *L'immaginario*, Opuscula 167 (Genova: Il nuovo Melangolo, 2008).

proactive imaginative activity[2]. According to Gilles Fauconnier, «polysemy derives from the power of meaning potential»[3] and this potential is determined, in my opinion, by its historical tradition: shepherding imagery dates back to the ancient near eastern cultures, from Babylonia and Assyria to Greece, through ancient Egypt to Roman Empire. All these cultures developed their own tradition of pastoral and shepherd imagery, each tradition with its own characteristic. From this variety of tradition, it comes the polysemy that characterizes pastoral imagery.

This essay aims at analyzing the development of pastoral imagery from late empire and rising of Christian culture, to the establishment of this latter, until 6th century. In this study, pastoral imagery, theological discussions, poetry rhetoric and topics and lexical analysis will be taken into account in order to draw the cultural imagery of shepherds' world. Early christianity inherited this imagery from the above mentioned tradition, enriching it by using that imagery for the communication of new meanings. In this panorama the polisemy and, in a sense, the ambiguity that characterize christian shepherding metaphors is not surprising.

Despite the semantic pluraltity, it is not impossible to outline the evolution and development of such imagery in early chrisianity; as we shall see, the attribution of meaning to some images is not based on any kind of structural and iconograohical analysis, it is rather a product of an *a priori* idea of blissfulness and positiveness of the shepherd figure. It is necessary, in my opinion, to focus on the structure of those images, in order to start a coherent and meaningful argument for the attribution of meaning of such images.

[2] See note 1.

[3] Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, "Polysemy and Conceptual Blending," in *Polysemy: Flexible Patterns of Meaning in Mind and Language*, Trends in Linguistics (Berlin & New York: Brigitte Nerlich, Vimala Herman, Zazie Todd, and David Clarke, n.d.), 2.

Nowadays many historic studies, both artistic and literary, consider pastoralism as a theme rather than as a cultural phenomenon: a study on bucolic imagery *tout-court* still doesn't exist, nevertheless bucolic realm appear as a literary theme and a visual subject-matter.

In order to have a wide and thorough comprehension of pastoralism as a cultural phenomenon, it is necessary to collect literary studies on one hand and artistic on the other. Pastoral literary genre has been studied thoroughly during the ages and it is worth remembering the main essays that contributed to the present study: Paul Alpers in his book entitled *What is pastoral?*[4] focuses on the aspects on which pastoral literary genre is based. Charles Segal focused on Poetry and myth in ancient pastoral, deepening the study of the masters of the literary genre, Theocritus and Virgil[5].

On the other hand, art history studies gave account of bucolic imagery as a mere representation of a literary genre or, in general, those studies conceived pastoral imagery only as an iconographic theme. When represented within other decorations, such as on mythological sarcophagi or accounts of historic events, bucolic vignettes are interpreted as genre scenes whose purpose is to create the set the scene in a countryside landscape, often idyllic[6]: as we shall see many sarcophagi representing the myth of Selene and Endymion were often decorated with pastoral vignettes and shepherd characters.

Bucolic scenes are often narrative images or genre depictions, inspired by a story or an event; these images are rarely divided into categories of narrative and non-narrative representations by studies. In many essays on Roman art, especially of imperial age, the representation of animal realm was functional and ancillar for the representation of religious episodes and sacrifices, as on the reliefs of Ara Pacis in Rome[7].

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[4] Paul Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?*, University of Chicago Press (Chicago and London, 1996).

[5]Segal, *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral: Essays on Theocritus and Virgil*. See alsoJames Thomas Teahan, *The Graeco-Italian Pastoral and Its Imitations in English Renaissance Literature*, University Microfilms International (Ann Arbor, 1977); Judith Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction : Theocritus to Marvell* (New York: Cambridge University Press, c1994), chapters I and II.

[6] Martin Henig, *A Handbook of Roman Art : A Survey of the Visual Arts of the Roman World*, Phaidon (Oxford, 1983). Paul Zanker and Bjorn C. Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2012).

[7] Jocelyn Toynbee M. C., *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973). Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006).

A particular case is the representation of the shepherd, most of all when it's isolated and apart from any bucolic vignette or genre scene: in this case, since this figure emerged during the years of the growth of Christianity, it is often considered a Christian creation, especially when it is represented as *kriophoros*.

Kurt Weitzmann divides bucolic images and representations, interpreted as images inspired by poetry, from the representations of the so-called good shepherd, considered as an abbreviated representation of Christian realm[8]. This tendency to separate bucolic representations and isolated shepherd, ascribing the former to the "pagan" realm and the latter to the Christian one, leads to a lost of continuity between the shepherd figure and bucolic representations. The differences of these two kinds of images are structural rather than of contents, as Lucien de Bruyne pointed out in his work on the "laws" of early Christian Art (1963)[9]: this study gave for the first time the definition of isolated image (image isolée) as an emblematic character impersonal and therefore repeatable. According to De Bruyne the shepherd, as well as the Orante and the fisher, was an isolated image. From this moment on, many studies will consider the shepherd as an emblematic and isolated representation, nevertheless not unconnected to the realm of bucolic imagery. Robin Margaret Jensen dedicated to the *Good Shepherd* a whole paragraph of the chapter on non-narrative images and Nikolaus Himmelmann in 1974 underlined how the so-called good shepherd, considered by the scholar as a Christian image, could not be understood separately from its bucolic background. Jennifer Awes Freeman shared the same opinion, arguing that «the Good Shepherd motif emerged from a context of high-culture bucolic imagery»[10].

Arnold Provoost in his work on the meaning of pastoral scenes of the 3rd century outlines a process of spontaneous symbolization of bucolic scenes that leads to the creation of the isolated shepherd, underlining how this latter is a product of a sort of "evolution" of

[8] Kurt Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality : Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978* (New York: The Metropolitan museum of art with Princeton university press, 1979).

[9] Lucien De Bruyne, "Les 'Lois' del l'art paléochretienne comme instrument hérmenetique," in *Rivista Di Archeologia cristiana* (Città del Vaticano: 1963, n.d.).

[10] Jennifer Awes Freeman, "The Good Shepherd and the Enthroned Ruler: A Reconsideration of Imperial Iconography in the Early Church Chapter Author(s)," in *The Art of Empire Book: Christian Art in Its Imperial Context*, Augsburg Fortress Press (Lee M Jefferson, R. M. Jensen, 2015), 182.

pastoral representations. Pierre Prigent[11] as well recognizes the so-called good shepherd as an emblematic image come out the bucolic realm, while Robin Margaret Jensen[12] relates the *kriohoros* to the ancient representation of Hermes *moskophoros*, underlining its meaning of guide in the afterlife[13]. Jennifer Awes Freeman[14], following Valentine Muller[15], tries to tell the story of the creation of the good shepherd figure, going back to the prehistory of humanity, to the paleolithic representations of ovine carriers.

The number of monographies dedicated to the single figure of the *kriophoros*, is wider and greater than the studies dedicated to bucolic scenes: the first of these studies was the book of Walter Nikolaus Shumacher (1977)[16], anticipated by the article of Theodore Klauser who in 1954 interpreted the Christian good shepherd as the personification of *philantropia*, reconsidering and discussing the interpretation of the figure as the representation of Jesus Christ based on the Fourth Gospel (Jn. 10)[17].

The Gospel of John is the source for the expression "good shepherd" that leads to some interpretation problems, when it comes to the approach of the visual representations of *kriophoroi*. Nevertheless, some studies on early Christian art prefer a formal understanding of "good shepherd", as describing the figure of a standing ram-bearer, with no further interpretation: Lucien De Bruyne, Nikolaus Himmelmann and Robin M. Jensen talk of the good shepherd as the *kriophoros* figure and Paul Corby Finney in the definition "Shepherd, Good" in the *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (1990) seems to identify the good shepherd as a species of the shepherd and remembers that many historians identified the *kriophoros* with the Johannine Good Shepherd instead. Some of

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[11] Pierre Prigent, *L'arte dei primi cristiani: l'eredità cultural e la nuova fede* (Roma: Arkeios, 1997).

[12] Robin Margaret Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, Routledge (London and New York, 2000).

[13] The figure of the ram bearer had an antecedent in Hermes, the guide to the underworld. When coupled with the Orante, the Good Shepherd may represent the fulfiller of the prayers of the soul (the praying woman) and have the function of a christian hermes psychopomp, recalling the bucolic bliss of the representation of paradise.

[14] Freeman, "The Good Shepherd and the Enthroned Ruler: A Reconsideration of Imperial Iconography in the Early Church Chapter Author(s)."

[15] Freeman; Valentine Muller, "The Prehistory of the 'Good Shepherd,'" in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, University of Chicago Press, vol. 3, 2 (Chicago, 1944), 87–90.

[16] Walter Nikolaus Schumacher, *Hirt und "Guter Hirt": Studien Zum Hirtenbild in Der Römischen Kunst Vom Zweiten Bis Zum Anfang Des Vierten Jahrhunderts Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung Der Mosaiken in Der Südhalle von Aquileja*, 1977.

[17] Theodor Klauser, "Studien Zur Entstehungsgeschichte Der Christlichen Kunst IV," in *JAC*, vol. 4, 1964, 128–36.

these scholars who identified the *kriophoros* with Jesus were Quasten 1946[18], who interpret this figure as a psychopomp; Kempf 1942[19] interpreted it as the *Logos* and Martine Dulaey (1973) recalls the parable of the lost sheep of the Synoptics Gospels[20]. In the nineties Giorgio Otranto[21] and Frederik Tristan[22] agreed with the christological interpretation of the Good Shepherd, but, as above mentioned, many other discussed this interpretation[23].

Nikolaus Himmelmann[24] represents a middle position in this panorama, identifying Christ in some shepherd that display some unequivocal Christologic features, as the Apostles or the long and curly hair.

The fortune of the isolated shepherd figure has been studied also in its decline by Boniface Ramsey (1983)[25] who sawn in the mosaic of Christ in the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia a transitional representation of the previous images of shepherds and the later depictions of Christ as the King.

«As early as the fourth century, visual depictions of the Good Shepherd began to decline in popularity, even as the Good Shepherd continued to be referenced in theological

[18] Johannes Quasten, "Der Gute Hirt in Fruhchristlicher Totenliturgie Und Grabeskunst," in *Miscellanea G. Mercati, Studi E Testi, 121* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946), 373–476.

[19] Theodor Kempf, *Christus Der Hirt, Ursprung Und Deutung Einer Altchristlicher Symbolgestalt* (Rome, 1942).

[20] martine dulaey, "la parabole de la brebis perdue dans l'église ancienne: de l'exégèse à l'iconographie," in *Revue Des Études Augustiniennes*, vol. 39, 1993, 3–22.

[21] Giorgio Otranto, "Tra Letteratura e iconografia: note sul buon pastore e sull'orante nell'arte cristiana antica (2-3 secolo)," in *Vetera Christianorum*, 26, 1989, 287–306.

[22] Frédérick Tristan, *Les premiers images chrétiennes: du symbole à l'icône (2-4 siècle)* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).

[23] Klauser, "Studien Zur Entstehungsgeschichte Der Christlichen Kunst IV"; Schumacher, *Hirt und "Guter Hirt": Studien Zum Hirtenbild in Der Römischen Kunst Vom Zweiten Bis Zum Anfang Des Vierten Jahrhunderts Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung Der Mosaiken in Der Südhalle von Aquileja*; Boniface Ramsey, "A Note on the Disappearance of the Good Shepherd from Early Christian Art," in *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 3, 76, 1983, 375–78; Graydon Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine* (Mercer University Press, 1985); Prigent, *L'arte dei primi cristiani: l'eredità cultural e la nuova fede*; Robin Margaret Jensen, *Face to Face. Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

[24] Nikolaus Himmelmann, "Sarcofagi Romani a rilievo: problemi di cronologia e iconografia," in *Annali della scuola normale superiore di Pisa* (Pisa, 1974).

[25] Ramsey, "A Note on the Disappearance of the Good Shepherd from Early Christian Art."

treatises and sermons»[26]. The literary interpretations of the good shepherd by Early Christian writers is often shaped on the imagery of John 10 and the lost sheep of the Synoptics but, as we shall see, pastoral imagery will be used as vocabulary of Church leaders and bishops.

This study is arranged in two different sections, in order to follow thoroughly the development of visual and verbal pastoral imagery; in the last section, these two parts will be related in order to build a coherent and widely cultural panorama of pastoral imagery in Late Antiquity.

The first section of this work takes into account the visual expressions of pastoral imagery of the centuries from 3rd to 6th. The first part of this section is a structural analysis of pastoral and bucolic representations, from the pastoral vignettes in mythological and narrative representations, to the depictions of isolated shepherds. The iconographic survey of shepherds gives birth to an iconographic database, named *Poimēn*, a catalogue of pastoral representations whose criteria and structure are explained in section 2.1.3.

This study focuses mainly on the anthropomorphic representations of shepherds and leaves the animal representations on a second plan. The study of the zoomorphic representations of Christ as the Lamb of God, would require a dedicated study and cannot find place in this work. In this study of pastoral imagery, animal representations will be instead taken into account as ancillary, even if telling, elements of the representations of shepherds.

The second part of the section on visual representations is the step after the structural analysis and comes to the interpretations of these images, considered as metaphors: the sections of this chapter take into account the representations of shepherds used as figures of speech (antonomasia), the hybrid identities of characters such as Orpheus, Peter and Jesus represented as shepherds, and the Christian representations of shepherds. Within the study of Christian shepherds, a special attention is payed to the analysis of the so-called Good Shepherd and its misinterpretation.

The study of the interpretations of images is possible only if we consider these images as part of a coherent system, that we can designate as imagery: following the definition of J.-J. Wunenburger, imagery is a system of visual products and images, both mental and

[26] Freeman, "The Good Shepherd and the Enthroned Ruler: A Reconsideration of Imperial Iconography in the Early Church Chapter Author(s)," 190; Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, 39–40.

material, that have properties and effects. Pastoral imagery is then a system of images inspired by the bucolic realm, that mean, nevertheless, something *more* than what they represent. Images bear multiple meanings, beyond their first signifier, because they have some relations with other contextual elements, such as material characteristics, viewer's cultural background and literature. All these elements convey and create imagery. In other words, the shepherd figure can represent something else beyond a poor and humble herdsman tending his flock. It is clear that allegory underlies the idea of imagery and, therefore, the creation of metaphor is almost inevitable

Imagery, as a cultural element, is something dynamic, always developing and never still, since it is fundamentally based on a tradition. Images are used for communication, even as metaphors, and these metaphorical use shape the creation of imagery itself. The study of pastoral images and metaphoric imagery are therefore two different steps of the study of pastoral imagery and this latter throws some light on allegorical meanings and the messages conveyed by the society that produced these metaphoric images.

The second section of this work takes into account pastoral imagery in its verbal expressions. In its first part, the analysis takes into account pastoral and bucolic vocabulary, while the second part is a survey of patoral imagery in literature. On one hand the Shepherd-Kings of Ancient Near East and pre-Hellenic cultures and the shepherds in Homer and Pastoral genre, such as the Idylls of Theocritus and Vergil's Eclogues; on the other hand the Bible shepherd characters and the shepherd titles and figures in Early Christian Literature.

The vocabulary analysis of pastoral imagery shows the development of the idea of bucolic realm and also some anthropological informations about the shaping of social roles expressed by bucolic metaphors. As we shall see, the title shepherd developed to become an antonomasia for a guide and leader[27]: beside actual shepherds, in the Bible, for example, the "shepherds" are the designated guides and leaders of groups of people and in Homer the expression *poimēn laon* is bestowed upon rulers and warriors. This use of the shepherd metaphor develops also in Church hierarchies and it is used to designate bishops and clergy members.

[27] Tertullian uses the expression *pastor moechorum* as an antonomasia for the *Shepherd* of Hermas to say that this book was a justification for bad costumes (Tert., *De Pud*. 10.11; 20.2) Joseph M Bryant, "Wavering Saints, Mass Religiosity, and the Crisis of Post-Baptismal Sin in Early Christianity: A Weberian Reading of The Shepherd of Hermas," in *European Journal of Sociology*, vol. 39 (1), 1998, 77.

On the other hand pastoral literature conveyed an idyllic and positive image of the bucolic realm, an overtone that will never abandon the interpretation of the shepherds: from Theocritus, the creator of the pastoral genre, to the pastoral stories of Longus shepherds are seen as idyllic figures and under this literary influence art creates a blend of philosophical, literary and idyllic figures, where the shepherds are sometimes represented as philosophers.

As we shall see in the conclusions, pastoral imagery is a blend of visual and verbal elements, and shall be taken as a cultural element. In this perspective literature shall not be considered as source for images, since there is a reciprocal influence of visual and verbal elements. The derivative relation of images from texts is overcome thanks to the approach to imagery in a wide sense, as a system that comprehends visual and verbal expressions.

The aim of this study is, eventually, to trace a history of the purposes of the metaphorical uses of pastoral imagery in order to understand what messages early Christianity needed to convey in its first centuries of life. This work is not only an essay on iconology, neither a survey of pastoral images in literature; it is therefore a history of the visual and verbal rhetorical strategies involving pastoral imagery. The choice of this kind of imagery rather than any other, like – for example – the maritime imagery or the imagery of royalty and leadership, lies in the importance and weight that pastoralism had in Early Christianity: this, in my opinion, best represents early Christians, since it conveys both *humilitas* and *dignitas*[28], the two main characteristics of Christian culture. The humbleness of shepherds, their tasks of protection and loving care, live together with the leading role of shepherds themseles. The image of Saint Apollinare in the eponym basilica in Classe (Ravenna) is representative of this idea: the bishop is portrayed as the Church leader in the apse mosaic, the central and most important part of the decoration, but it is flanked by a small flock of sheep, an image that echoes the humbleness of the shepherd task of the ministry.

In conclusion, the very purpose of this study is to show that through the study of the uses of pastoral imagery it is possible to obtain a history of imagery.

[28] This expression purposely recalls the title of a conference held in Rome in 2013 on the origins of Christian images. The acts of this conference are published in the book: Daniele Guastini, ed., *Genealogia dell'immagine cristiana: studi sul cristianesimo antico e le sue raffigurazioni* (Lucca: La casa Usher, 2014).

2. VISUAL

2.1 Pastoral & Bucolic Representations – a structural analysis

The following chapter is a survey on pastoral and bucolic visual imagery in Roman culture and Early Christianity. A complete and exhaustive catalog of *all* pastoral images would be inconceivable, nevertheless a categorization of image *types* is possible. This first part of the study on visual imagery is a structural analyses of the images of shepherds, that is to say, an analysis that focuses on the structure of images, their composition, their position within the decoration and other elements that can be drawn from the image itself. In a way I follow the distinction between *iconography* and *iconology* by Erwin Panofsky[1], but this analysis goes beyond iconography, since I already know that the images in exam shall only be shepherds; the issue is rather what makes of a generic human figure a representation of a shepherd. This section and especially the section 2.1.3 about the database *Poimēn*, focus and highlight categories and criteria on one hand and methodologies on the other hand of this structural analysis.

The first category of this structural analysis concerns the categorization of pastoral images in two groups: narrative representations on one hand, and emblematic on the other. The former are the images of shepherds represented doing any sort of activity, such as milking goats, nourishing them, talking to each other, etc., often placed in a determined landscape; the emblematic ones are the representations of isolated shepherds, often standing in a frontal view, with sheep and few other features[2].

Narrative pastoral images are not independent but rather functional to the representation of specific episodes, as noted by Arnold Provoost[3]: bucolic vignettes work as background of mythological epoisodes (Endymion; Orpheus; Attis; Mithra etc.), biblical representations (birth of Christ), and depictions of Virgilian Eclogues. It is on this kind of images, namely bucolic settings of narrative episodes, that the first section of this chapter focuses on, with a special attention to mythological episodes, genre scenes and the so-called sacral-idyllic landscape. The survey of these representation is arranged following

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[1] Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History*, Doubleday (Garden City, N.Y, 1955).

[2] See section 2.1.3.

[3] Arnold Provoost, "Il significato delle scene pastorali del terzo secolo d.C.," in *Atti Del IX Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana. Roma 21-27 Settembre 1975*, Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, vol. 1–Monumenti Cristiani Precostantiniani (Roma, 1978), 407–8, note 4.

the progressive stylization of the images, beginning with the "realistic" account of shepherds, and moving towards a more emphasized allegoric use of shepherds, whose representation alludes to, *stands for*, a peaceful and idyllic condition.

The emblematic shepherd marks the complete stylization of pastoral imagery and it represents the highest degree of metaphor. It is an emblem, independent from any other representation, to which it could be even paired, but without being subordinated to it, as some narrative vignette may be instead. The section on Emblematic Shepherds will take into account the different typologies of shepherds, their history and their features, such as panpipes, bags, vases, and other pastoral features. Those images shall be studied even from a semiotic point of view, in order to prompt the iconological discourse that will be developed in the following chapters.

Finally, the last part of this chapter will present *Poimēn*, a database of pastoral images. This database, takes in account the images that represent at least one shepherd: each record corresponds to one single shepherd that is thus considered as the minimum for any pastoral or bucolic representation. Focusing on the image of the single shepherd, as *Poimēn* does, is a way to determine the fundamental criteria for the definition of "pastoral image": such a definition is, in turn, a fundamental precondition for a further analysis of pastoral images and their classification as narrative or emblematic. Without a correct definition of "pastoral representation" it is impossible to understand the differences between a representation of, for example, Orpheus as a shepherd and the representation of an actual shepherd with music instruments or surrounded by wild animals (as the traditional representation of Orpheus): this distinction draws some light on the so-called representation of Orpheus as a Good Shepherd that, as it shall be shown, does not actually exist.

Moreover, *Poimēn* allows to understand and point out some structural differences between emblematic and narrative shepherds. This iconographical classification is, finally, the foreword for any further iconological discourse.

2.1.1 Bucolic representations in mythological settings, genre scenes, and sacral-idyllic landscape

Bucolic images, such as shepherds, sheep and kettles are often arranged in rustic landscapes. These bucolic vignettes may be the background for other scenes, such as mythological plays, or they can be enhanced and independent; in this latter case, pastoral world becomes the real subject-matter of the representation, as these images might have an allegorical meanings.

This kind of representations was common in private decoration, such as houses and tomb painting and sculpture: many mythological sarcophagi display bucolic vignettes and even houses were decorated with mosaics representing the countryside. In this widespread use of bucolic iconographies, the shepherd figure was represented in different attitudes drawn from herdsmen's everyday life, i.e. the milking scene, the thinking figure, etc. These figures became standard and popular and were employed in bucolic vignettes as well as in more allegoric scenes. The sitting shepherd, looking after his flock in the countryside, as it appears on Julius Achilleus sarcophagus (Figure 2), is of a different kind from the one of the upper right side of Lord Julius Estate mosaic in Tunisi(Figure 3), even if they're similar, if not identical. They both are meant to represent the shepherding activity, but while the latter is merely a representation of a rural activity that supposedly took place in the burgher's estate, the former is meant to display the tranquillity of the shepherding occupation, *alluding to* the afterlife tranquillity that Julius Achilleus' wife wishes for her deceased husband, *marito dulcissimo*[4].

Only external contextual elements can help the viewer to perceive the difference of meaning between the two shepherds, both sitting and holding pastoral tools; material, dimension, the weight of the image in the whole decoration, and the interaction with other figures, are the elements that make a shepherd protagonist of the decoration, or just one of the elements of the image.

[4] Paul Zanker and Bjorn C. Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2012), 167.

Figure 2

Figure 3

Another example of how media and contexts change the interpretation of one and same iconography is the shepherd caressing (or feeding) the hound: this very common type changes its meaning and importance whether it's represented on engraved gems[5], under the central tondo of sarcophagi fronts (see the sarcophagus of Baebia Hermofile[6]), or in the bucolic background of Selene's visit to Endymion[7].

Shepherds, as we see, can be the backdrop of another scene, or they can be protagonists of the decoration, as on the sarcophagus of Julius Achilleus, whose surface is all occupied by the cattle of the shepherds sitting on the sides of the slab. A comparison between these two images shall be deepened in the forthcoming section. See section 2.1.2, on bucolic subject-matter.

Figure 4

In this section the analysis focuses on the relation of images and their primal signifier, following the progressive of enhancement of images towards a more allegoric meaning. The process doesn't follow a chronological order, it rather proceeds following the shepherd image's increasing symbolic value, from genre scenes, in which shepherds are meant to display the actual shepherding activities, towards the evocative shepherds, such as those represented isolated, in a frontal view and before blank spaces on gravestones.

[5] Gisela Richter, *Cataloue of Engraved Gems of the Classical Style* (New York, 1920), 181, plate 80, n. 396.

[6] Sarcophagus of Baebia Hermofile, 290 AD (Zanker and Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, 171, figure 159).

[7] Zanker and Ewald, 340–44, figure p. 342.

It is necessary to begin this survey giving an account of pastoral scenes and representations of pastoral characters as they appear in genre scenes. In these images shepherds don't bear any symbolic meaning, their only function is to give a pastoral tone to the scene. In this case shepherds don't display a proper "pastoral imagery", for there is not an organic set of images and meanings.

Shepherds appear beside many other workers and characters within the representation of the activities connected to the river in the Nile mosaic in Palestrina (2nd century B.C., Figure 4): this mosaic was undoubtedly a gift offered by a wealthy man who enriched himself from trade in the area the mosaic portrays, as the accuracy of the landscape demonstrates. Here the herdsmen are blended with other characters, almost lost in a big and crowded decoration.

The same kind of shepherds are represented few centuries later, in the north Africa mosaic depictions of real estates of wealthy burghers, such as the mosaics illustrating the agricultural activities from Cherchel (c. 200-210) and the Lord Julius Estate (dated 4th century). Actually «genre subjects and scenes with natural settings, including scenes of country life, played an important part in Roman painting from the first century B.C. onwards, but they were slow to be adopted into the mosaicists' repertory. «Pastoral scenes of a conventional, idyllic type had a certain success as subjects for *emblemata*[8], and were subsequently used occasionally to fill small panels and compartments; but they do not seem to have been popular in Africa»[9]; in that country there was a general predilection for subjects taken from the real world rather than from mythology up to the early third century[10]: the mosaics of Zliten, dated at the 1st century C.E., with their representation of scenes of 'actual' rural activities are exceptional: it will be from the Severan age that a general fashion will sprang for realistic subjects. In the Zliten *emblema* with the peasant in the fields «le persone e le cose appaiono ora pienamente libere in

[8] An *emblema* is a picture inserted in the floor rather than a flat design on the surface, in a separate picture-panels, often directly imitating actual paintings. The whole of the rest of the floor was designed to show them off. An example is Pliny's description of the mosaic of the doves of Soso of Pergamon (Nat. Hist. XXXVI, 184). Katherine M. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 3 and note 16.

[9] Katherine M. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Icongraphy and Patronage* (Oxfod: Clarendon Press, 1978), 109.

[10] Roger Ling, "The Paintings of the Colombarium of Villa Doria Pamphilij in Rome," in *Functional and Spatial Analysis of Wall Painting. Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Ancient Wall Painting. Amsterdam, 8-12 September 1992*, edited by Eric M. Moormann (Leiden: Stichting Babesch, 1993), 94.

Figure 5

mezzo allo spazio, e veramente la luce le illumina e l'aria gira intorno ad esse»[11], but this does not give those figures any importance. When rural activities returned to favour (not until the advanced fourth century), the images were arranged to represent the luxury and the wealth of local patrons, exalted by the celebration of their estates and villas. In the Sousse Archaeology Museum in Tunisia a mosaic from the Estate of Sorothus it's displayed the wealth of the patron and his estate, with a particular attention to the description of the main crafts and businesses going on in the villa: the representation of racehorses shows the main activity of the domain, namely the animals breeding.

Genre scenes appear even in funerary context, such as the Villa Doria Pamphilij Colombarium wall paintings, alongside other mythological scenes. Like other Roman *columbaria* of the Augustan period, it was a communal tomb, in which families bought individual places. The "generic and anecdotal" scene comprehending school scenes, theatre, dancers, peasants going to market, and an animal-handler with a giraffe and a goat are normally alien to funerary art, and for that reason it is difficult to believe that they carried any funerary reference; even the myths don't have a sepulchral meaning, except for Endymion and Ocnus[12].

The arrangement of scenes, je juxtaposition of different subject-matters suggests that the representations of peasant life bears no further meaning: «their choice for the decoration of a tomb was scarcely more meaningful than their use in a triclinium. It was of course open to visitors to the tomb to put appropriate sepulchral interpretations upon them»[13]. These images simply aimed at beautifying the tomb. Roger Ling hypothesizes that the reasons for iconographic choices have to be searched in customers personal taste and fashion: one might have purchased one instead of another niche, depending on the

[11] Salvatore Aurigemma, *I mosaici di Zliten* (Roma-Milano: Società editrice d'arte illustrata, 1926), 263.

[12] Roger Ling registers 135 known scenes from walls (we still don't know if vaults were painted): 7 myth; 6 pigmies; 12 Egyptian waterscapes; 54 animal pieces; 39 landscapes; 3 still life (fish); 15 generic and anecdotal scenes Ling, "The Paintings of the Colombarium of Villa Doria Pamphilij in Rome."

[13] Ling.

aesthetic preference for one image rather than another, without further meanings implications.

Fashion must have played an important role in the decoration choice of everyday objects like gems, lamps, coins, vases and vessels, etc. Such media helped the widespread diffusion of these iconographic themes, and their communicative power were exploited by customers to broadcast messages and ideas. Shepherds with their hounds and flock appear on engraved gems of the 1st – 2nd century as the «ideal evocation of the tranquil world of the pastoral»[14]: as in other artistic media, the shepherds on gems are portrayed leaning on their sticks, or milking the sheep or goats.

According to Gemma Sena Chiesa some themes, such as the shepherd Faustulus leaning on a stick may have known an enhanced development, even if it was originally inspired by a single prototype, perhaps a relief or a painting. The discard of bucolic themes after their acme during the Augustan Age is due to the depletion of political interest in such iconographies, so used for political purposes during the empire of Augustus[15].

Figure 6

[14] Martin Henig and Arthur MacGregor, *Catalogue of the Engraved Gems and Finger-Rings in the Ashmolean Museum. II. Roman*, Archaeopress, vol. III, Bar International Series 1332 (Oxfod, 2004), 76–78.

[15] Gemma Sena Chiesa, "Gemme del museo di Aquileia con scene bucoliche," in *Acme: Annali della facoltà di filosofia e lettere dell'università statale di Milano. Omaggio a Luigi Castiglioni*, 1957, 175–92.

Figure 7

According to Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* 35th book on painting, the introduction of landscape painting was due to a painter named Studius, but – despite of any reference to mythic inventors – it must be acknowledged that the origins of this genre can be traced back to the end of the 2nd century B.C., maybe in the map illustrations imported from Alexandria[16].

Landscape was an absolute protagonist of Roman houses painting between the end of Second Style and the beginning of the Third. It found its expression in many different genres: friezes, *pinakes*, and other small framed panels. Houses were decorated with these landscape paintings and the panels could be big surfaces occupying the most of the wall, as in the House of the Small Fountain, and the house of Ceii, otherwise landscape could be painted in small framed panels, as in the villa in Boscotrecase (Figure 7). The small panels were often framed and placed in the centre of the wall of the most important room of the house, becoming the main focus of the decoration. When these iconographies were used as enhanced *quadri*, the landscape turned into a sacral-idyllic landscape: these paintings were not fully mythological iconographies, nor exclusively landscapes, but a convey of sacral features (sacred buildings, modest architectures and cult objects as small

[16] Ling, "The Paintings of the Colombarium of Villa Doria Pamphilij in Rome," 142.

altars, sacred gates, pillars, *hermae*, torches, vases, garlands, etc.) arranged into a countryside landscape, where shepherds often dwell. This iconography established within the Third Style fashion.

Even if the landscape seems to be the subject of these paintings, it must be noticed that the nature is never represented as a wild and untamed, it is never free from the presence of human signs and activities. Everyday human works are represented alongside and among buildings, sacred columns, *villae*, etc,: worshippers, fishermen, goatherds, shepherds with their flocks and cattle dwell surrounded by sacred buildings across the fields. It may be defined as an "anthropic" landscape. Shepherds are rarely absent, they are rather almost ubiquitous even in sacral-idyllic landscapes: in these paintings, architectures, figures, and natural backgrounds are well harmonized so that none of these elements is overwhelming: thin architectures and leafy trees are visually balanced by the teeming of sheep and shepherds, so that the viewer's eye is not caught by one only object. The importance of human figures, shepherds and goatherds, should not be underestimated because of their small scale: the human presence is fundamental for the representation of these landscape for these figures are those who experience the idyllic condition of the countryside. Human presence is revealed by the sacred buildings themselves, whose decorations, garlands, pinecones, and other features, give a sacral overtone to the landscape.

The union of sacred and bucolic imagery became more popular in the age of Augustus: during the 1st century C.E. pastoral began to grow its cultural, therefore iconographic importance, under the influence of contemporary bucolic poetry[17]. As Paul Zanker pointed out, «the pastoral idyll was in fact already part of the thematic repertoire of earlier wall painting, but merely as a genre scene, one of several kinds of landscape. Now [Augustan age] it becomes the principal subject, and always associated with statues of divinities, altars, votives, and cult activities […]»[18].

[17] See section 3.2.2 on Poetry

[18] Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, University of Michigan Press (Ann Arbor, 1988), 287.

On a relief of the Augustan Age, now in Munich[19] a peasant breeder and his cow are bigger, worked almost in the round, and in foreground: he is walking by an architecture against which a pillar with a Dionysian *liknon* is standing out; a dead branch peeks out from behind a gate and blooms miraculously in its part over the *liknon*, to show the Dionysian power of renewal of life. The farmer's strain and the partially dead tree contrast with the idea of plenty and renewal and, in this contrast, the *topos* of the idyllic pious farmer of the past is connected to the Augustan politic of restoration of those ancient temples and shrines related to the Roman ancient *pietas*[20].

Figure 8

A brief definition of what is *pietas* is worth it, in order not to misunderstand sacral-idyllic landscape representation with religious or mythological ones. *Pietas* is very different from *religio*: according to Jörg Rupke *religio* was a matter of orthopraxy, of rituals held by a priest (*pontifex*), strictly connected to the city of Rome and its society (the roman term that correspond to 'polis-religion' is *sacra publica*)[21]. The sphere of reference of *pietas* is wider than that of 'religion': piety implied purity and the term *sanctus* «was applied to anything inviolable and therefore pure. It was a quality that could apply to tombs as well as to sacred objects and, in certain cases, to the deities themselves»[22] and to spaces, as well. Thus the 'religious' elements represented in the sacred idyllic landscapes, where sacred is a translation of *sanctus*, do not represent anything that concerns the *religio* as much as the idyllic shepherds don't represent actual shepherds, but the ones 'created' by the bucolic poetry.

[19] Zanker, 289, fig 226.

[20]Eugenio La Rocca, Claudio Parisi Presicce, and Lo Monaco, eds., *I giorni di Roma: L'età della conquista, Catalog of an Exhibition Held at the Musei Capitolini, Rome, Italy, Mar.-Sept., 2010* (Milano: Skira, 2010), 310, ff.

[21]Jörg Rupke, *From Jupiter To Christ; on the History of Religion in the Roman Imperial Period* (Oxfod: Oxford University press, 2011). Jörg Rupke, *Religion of the Romans* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2007).

[22]John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion* (Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 26.

In these paintings, the idea of divine stillness is conveyed by the juxtaposition of sacred elements (*sancti*) and shepherds[23] and by placing this relation in a paradoxical space: shepherds are not sacred, they are rather those who enjoy the stillness given by what is sacred; they are meant to be real shepherds, and even if their attitudes appear mannered and they are placed in a "symbolic" environment, they do not represent anything else of what they are, goatherds and flocks watchers. Their idyllic overtone is given by their dwelling into a sacred landscape. The ideal condition of these *loci amoeni* is hinted by their stylistic realisation: the panels from the Agrippa's villa in Boscotrecase, decorated shortly after 11 B.C. in particular the North Wall of the Red Room (Figure 7),, display a white area that frames the landscape, giving a sense of unreality. If, on one hand, those paintings are elaborated representation, with a coherent enlightenment and perspective (as it was known in antiquity), on the other hand the white frame «prevents the beholder from understanding the landscape as "view through a window", it is the means by which the painter makes it clear that he does not pretend to render a realistic image of an actual landscape. [… it] induces the beholder to look at the picture as a mirage of a distant scene»[24]. It is clear that shepherds *in se* are nothing more of what they are and their idyllic overtone is given by their context.

In conclusion we can say that what makes these paintings symbolic sacral-idyllic landscapes is the combination of the three elements: nature, buildings and sacred features, and human figures. If one of these three components disappeared, suddenly the painting would turn from a sacral-idyllic landscape into something else, a genre scene, the representation of a sacrifice, or a simple still life. The shepherds have the fundamental role of providing the "idyllic" tone to an otherwise only sacral landscape, and they fulfill this task by only being what they are meant to represent.

[23] The peaceful rest in the villa is inherited by poetry: see, for example, the famous praise of the villa of Manlius Volpiscus of Statius, *Silvae*, I, 3.

[24]Peter H. Blanckenhagen and Christine Alexander, *The Paintings from Boscotrecase, Mitteilungen Des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Roemische Abteilung. Sechstes Ergänzungsheft*, F.H. Kerle Verlag, Heidelberg (Bullettino dell'istituto archeologico Germanico, Sezione Romana, 1962), 31,33.

Figure 9 a

Figure 9 b

As Romans changed their burial practices from incineration to inhumation, between the 2nd century and the half of the 3rd, Greek myths entered the repertory of tombs decoration, and began to be carved on marble sarcophagi[25]. Dyonisos and Ariadne, Selene and Endymion, Aphrodite and Adonis were the most common subject matter on sarcophagi reliefs, among other myths (Achilles, Alcestis, Hyppolitus and Phaedra, Niobids, etc.[26]). Pastoral imagery appears alongside the representation of Endymion asleep visited by Selene, and on the Dionysiac reliefs some shepherds appear in interstitial spaces or in small vignettes, among the members of *thiasos*, such as *sileni*, bacchantes, satyrs, and Pan, with their pastoral staffs and crooks.

[25] «Per la verità, l'inizio di un'inversione di tendenza anche in Italia comincia a manifestarsi molto lentamente in alcune necropoli durante il I secolo d.C. Non è chiaro, tuttavia, se ciò sia dovuto in parte almeno a particolari situazioni locali» maurizio paoletti, "usi funebri e forme del sepolcro," in *Civiltà dei romani: il rito e la vita privata* (Milano: Electa, 1992), 274. See also Glenys Davies, "Before Sarcophagi," in *Life, Death and Representation. Some New Work on Roman Sarcophagi*, Millenium Studies (Berlin & New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 21–22.

[26] Zanker and Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*.

What is the weight of pastoral vignettes and shepherds within the decoration? One could say that shepherds and their flocks are simply a bucolic setting for mythological episodes but, if we analyse the wealth of images on one and same sarcophagus, it is clear that a huge percent of the available surface is occupied by pastoral iconographies, and shepherds often appear as tall as mythological characters rather than being portrayed in a smaller scale in the background. Approaching the sarcophagus relief as a semiotic element, and analysing its syntactic structure, it appears a structural parataxis between bucolic and mythological representations, for shepherds are often mingled with other characters, without any a subordination between them.

Small pastoral vignettes appear on the short sides of mythological sarcophagi, as on the Niobids sarcophagus in Vatican Museums (dated 130-140[27], Figure 10): on the unfinished left side there is a nymph and a pastoral God or shepherd with a *pedum* in his left hand, the other raised in a gesture of speech[28]. The right short side of the sarcophagus shows a shepherd leaning on his stick, portrayed in a thinking attitude, looking at a mourning woman, probably Niobe herself, with the head covered; behind the characters there is a building that can be identified with a mausoleum.

Figure 10

These pastoral images are not a bucolic setting for the mythological scene, rather they are a sort of quiet counterpart of the turmoil of the slaughter of Niobids, a sort of caption of what the visitor of the tomb should do, that is to say, to pity the dead, honouring his memory with a sober empathy. The shepherd seems to be a suitable personification of these feelings.

On Endymion sarcophagus at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), dated around 210 C.E.[29] (Figure 9 a), the shepherds, portrayed on the front and on the back (Figure 9 b)

[27] Zanker and Ewald, 38–39.

[28] According to Paul Zanker, this vignette represents the *tòpos* of Nature sharing the grief. Zanker and Ewald, 373.

[29] Zanker and Ewald, 322–25.

of the sarcophagus, have the function of an idyllic *encadrement* of the myth[30]. Surely the fact that Endymion himself was told to be a shepherd gives the rationale for the presence of shepherds on these sarcophagi, but it is clear that bucolic is not merely a feature of the mythological account: in the back side of the sarcophagus «the herds shown to the left of the Nymphs are framed by two shepherds: the one on the left is resting stretched out on a rock like Endymion, while the one on the right is shown standing at ease. «The horses and cattle grazing in front of two gnarled trees, as well as the sheep in the upper left-hand corner, seem like forerunners of the great pastoral sarcophagi of the later third century»[31], where, as we shall see, the only subject-matter of the relief decoration is the bucolic representation. On the left side of the sarcophagus front, a sitting shepherd is grooming his hound, surrounded by ovine and personifications: behind him there are Amore and Psyche, and Aura and Tellus[32] ahead. The shepherd of the front is different from the ones on the back, for his being enclosed in a group of personifications: if the bucolic scene in the back evokes an idyllic condition, the other herdsman has a symbolic value, given by the context in which he appears. This figure, for its standing as an abbreviated representation of bucolics amongst myth characters and personifications, discloses the figure of isolated shepherds that we'll analyse in the forthcoming chapter.

[30] «When the back side of a sarcophagus was also decorated with a figured panel, the composition was even more visually fragmented, so that the rear relief fluctuated between an implied dependency on the front and an apparent autonomy» […] «the ends and the lids of Roman mythological sarcophagi are subordinate to the principal matter on the front of the box. These subordinate elements serve to explicate the principal subject or to extend its development in the sense of "before" and "after", but not necessarily either one or in chronological order. Like predelle, the end panels may be used to establish a casual network as a setting for the "main event" in the form of a subsequent explanation, or they may define the environment of an action or represent the theme symbolically, a dorm of restatement after the fact» (Richard Brilliant, *Visual Narratives. Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art*, Cornell University Press (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984, p. 126 and 162).

[31] Zanker and Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, 341.

[32] Tellus is laying down on her arm, her breasts naked, as the common representations of "ground personifications".

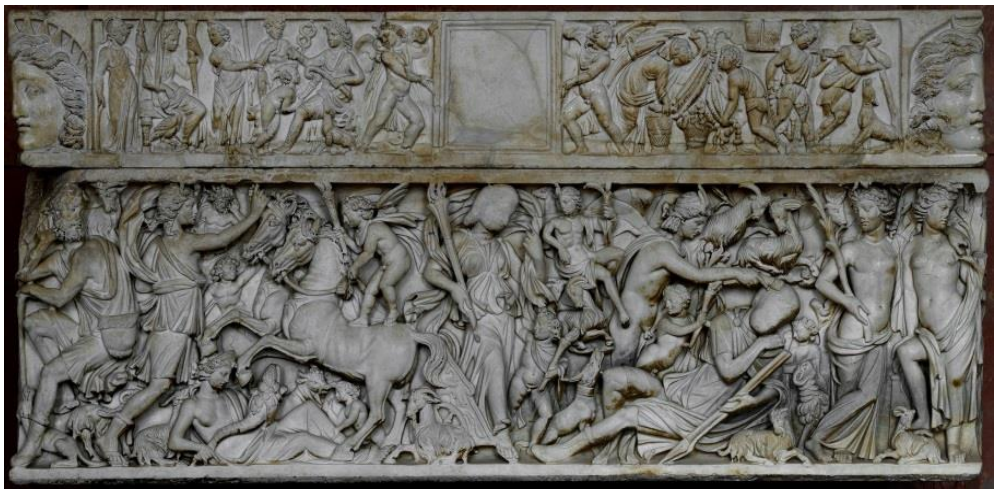

Figure 11

On another Endymion sarcophagus at Louvre Museum, dated 230 (Figure 11), the figure of a sitting shepherd, once again leaning his head on the right hand, probably functions as a personification, for its presence among other personifications, such as Tellus, Aura, Hypnos. The representation of Endymion as a hunter and not as a shepherd[33], emancipates the herdsman on the left of the front relief from being simply a character of the bucolic setting, and gives him a symbolic function. As a personification he represents synthetically one of the elements of the story: as Hypnos represents the sleep of Endymion and the small *genia loci* represent the location of the mythological play (maybe mount Latmos[34]), the shepherd represents the tranquillity of countryside and simple life, his gesture emphasizes this idea of restful peace. The shepherds have the function of representing the idyllic condition, as the sacral-idyllic landscape did. On an early Endymion sarcophagus, dated 130-40 at Museo Capitolino in Rome, the idyllic condition is represented synthetically by a small sacral elements, an herma; later in time, the idea of idyllic condition will be conveyed exclusively by shepherds and their realm, emancipated from any other sacral or mythological element[35].

The shepherds on the left short side and on the right of the right scene of the lid are formally very similar: they both are leaning on their walking stick, legs crossed, they both wear an *exomis tunica*. But as the latter is represented within a genre scene, with

[33] According to Paul Zanker the reason for this characterization is the fact that the connotations of hunter were considerably more positive and prestigious than those of the shepherd (Zanker and Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, 338).

[34] The place where Endymion fell asleep is on mount Latmos (Zanker and Ewald, 337).

[35] Ibid., 335–40.

youngsters and an elderly woman wavering garlands, the first is alone in his side frame, with his kettle (two goats, a ram, an ox and a dog).

According to Paul Zanker, the whole sarcophagus speaks of bucolic idyll, love and beauty as the judgment of Paris on the left half of the lid shows: as Paris' episode 'symbolizes' beauty, and Endymion the love, shepherds represent metaphorically the bucolic peace that here becomes one of the themes of the decoration.

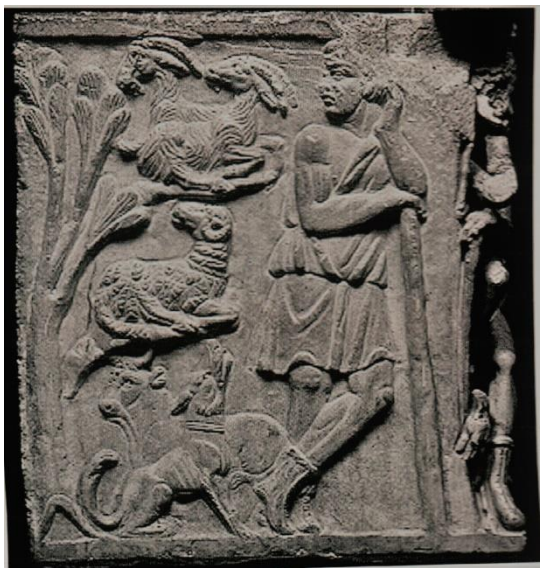

Figure 12

Bucolic idylls are displayed also on a Dionysiac sarcophagus in the Vatican Museo Chiaramonti (Rome, 230 C.E., Figure 13)[36], with the members of *thiasos*: goats are dwelling on the surface with panthers and snakes, and shepherds are portrayed amongst Sileni, Nymphs and Satyrs. According to Paul Zanker, this coexistence of tamed and wild animals, gives a peaceful tone to the whole decoration, where the presence of bucolics softens the usual wilderness of Bacchic *thiasoi*[37]. Zanker speaks of a blend of two genres, the Dionysiac and the bucolic, both having a similar evocative power, admitting therefore that Pastoral actually is an artistic genre.

Shepherds appear in both narrative mythological episodes (Selene's visit to Endymion, Figure 12) and on iconic/emblematic representations (Dionysiac thiasos) without any particular difference: even when surrounded by their flocks or represented milking a goat, these shepherd figures are not properly "genre scenes", shepherds are not represented in shepherding activities, aiming at displaying a bucolic scenery; rather, the repetition of such figures makes them appear as figures of speech, rhetoric *topoi*. Shepherds became a standardized stylistic element provided with a metaphoric value, arranged within a mythological subject-matter with the purpose of bearing a specific meaning.

[36] Zanker, 106.

[37] Zanker and Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, p. 779. The juxtaposition of tamed and wild animals appears also in Latin poetry: Alessandro Perutelli pointed out that in Vergil's Eclogues there is no contrast between wild and domestic nature. In Eclogue 10 (verses 52, ff.) the shepherd dwells into the wild nature.

Figure 13

The standardization and the repetition of the shepherds images had already provided the viewer's mind with a pattern that immediately evoked the idyllic idea of a blissful condition, attaching a precise symbolic reference to the shepherd figure. The funerary context of these images allowed the shepherds to become a sort of symbol and the pastoral imagery to be an *antonomasia* for a peaceful world[38].

Around 220-230 C.E. there was a complete discard of mythological themes and an emergence of new iconographies, which had been marginal until then. This process of demythologization corresponded to the rising of bucolic iconographies as major theme on sarcophagi reliefs[39].

Shepherds will be the only protagonists of the decoration of some sarcophagi, and the bucolic idyll, nuanced in its meaning, will be the main, if not the only, subject-matter, as on the allegorical sarcophagus of *vita attiva* and *vita contemplativa* at Museo Nazionale of Naples and the sarcophagus with the shepherd and Muses at Camposanto in Pisa (Figure 14); the sarcophagus of Julius Achilleus at Museo Nazionale Romano[40].

Before moving ahead to the isolation of shepherds, pastoral imagery in mythological sarcophagi functions as an allegorical *encadrement* of the mythological story, endowing it with additional allegorical meanings.

[38] See section 2.2.1 about the shepherds antonomasias.

[39] Zanker and Ewald, 254.

[40] Michael Koortbojian, *Myth, Meaning and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi*, University of California Press (Berkeley - Los Angeles - London, 1995), 81–83 and fig. 42,43 and 45.

Figure 14

As Koortbojian pointed out in his analysis of mythological sarcophagi, some images are rhetoric figures and have the fundamental function of giving metaphorical overtones to the whole representation: shepherds serve as allusions, enriching sarcophagus decoration with a bucolic idyll. Thanks to Theocritean tradition, bucolic representations evoke an idyllic condition of bliss, especially in funerary context. When juxtaposed, the motifs present a form of iconographic symmetry. While the erotic motif of Endymion and Selene literalizes the gaining of the gods' favour, the bucolic *tòpos* evokes the paradise of the afterlife by likening it to a recognizable scene of pastoral simplicity and charm.

Figure 15

As seen above, shepherds may be represented in a wider context as characters of the scenario of the wealth patrons villas, representing the activities "actually" going on in the estate. The shepherds and shepherding activities may be associated with seasons iconographies.

> «Les activités agricoles apparaissent aussi pour symboliser le rythme des Saisons […] il est rare cependant qu'il soit traité pour lui-même et le plus souvent il ne sert que d'encadrement aux quatre coins d'un pavement, autour d'un sujet central»[41].

In these representations shepherds are still an subservient iconography to another subject-matter, without any actual independence. In the House of Dionysus near Paphos, in Room 2, there is a Seasonal mosaic in which the Personifications are portrayed in the four panels, each associated with a genre representation: Spring is flanked by the representation of a goat gazing by a tree with a syrinx ganging from its bough[42].

Figure 16

Pastoral imagery often appears alongside seasonal-Dionysiac iconographies, that is to say the iconographies that appear as a blend of

[41] See Thérèse Précheur-Canonge, *La vie rurale en afrique romaine d'après les mosaïques* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1962).

[42] Chrisine Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine. Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 87–93 and figure 48. The music instrument may be an explicit reference to the idyllic overtone of the shepherding activity, inherited by bucolic poetry.

Dionysus *thiasos* and Seasons personifications. According to Paul Zanker the general overtone of the seasonal representations of Dionysus is the pleasure and blissfulness given to the deceased by the gifts of cyclic nature in its seasonal turning[43].

On the other hand, Dionysiac features characterize the season of Autumn, since all the Dionysiac activities, as grapes harvest take place in Fall[44].

Figure 17

Maybe a Dionysiac reference is the representation of *erotes* and grapevines under the central tondo, framed by the zodiac circle, with the portrait of the deceased spouses, of the famous Seasons Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks (Figure 17): among the two couples of young *Genii* there are two workers, represented in a smaller scale, the one on the right, partly lost, seems to be a peasant, the one on the left is a shepherd, milking a sheep. Within an emblematic and strongly symbolic context as this sarcophagus is, it is hard to think of the two workers as genre representations; on the other hand they don't seem to be fully symbolic, since their smaller proportions put them in a subordinated position in respect of the Genii. What do these workers, and the shepherd in particular, represent? It seems that the shepherd does not represent anything more of what it is, a milking farmer; this figure is not of an emblematic kind, given its proportion and position. Its presence within a seasonal iconography is meant to display the peaceful activities and the seasonal gifts of cyclic time: milk (the milking shepherd), wine (the *erotes* doing grapes harvest) and wheat (the worker on the right side of the marble relief).

[43] Zanker and Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, 166.

[44] «The normal attributes are derived from features of rustic life typical of the season: roses for Spring; ears of corn and sometimes a sickle for Summer; grapes and vine leaves, sometime a pruning knife or a Dionysiac attribute alluding to the vintage for Autumn; and for Winter olive-berries, reeds, sometimes a hoe, or one or two dead birds». Katherine M. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Icongraphy and Patronage* (Oxfod: Clarendon Press, 1978), 110.

The association of shepherding activities and Autumn is expressed by the erotes on a sarcophagus dated 260-80, held in the Legion of Honor in the Museum of Fine Arts in San Francisco (Figure 18)[45], and in the Parabiago plate the small Seasonal Erote of Autumn is carrying a sheep (Figure 19).

Figure 18

Figure 19

Figure 20

Sometimes shepherding is associated to other seasons: in the Nasonii tomb, Autumn is represented by a young man carrying an ovine on his shoulders (Figure 20), as well as in

[45] https://art.famsf.org/season-sarcophagus-54662.

The seasons are represented by tall winged Erotes, who are not actually Seasons Personifications, for they are ten and not four; nevertheless, but they all evoke the idea of the seasonal turn of time

the uncommon representation of seasons in the Calendar Mosaic in the Maison des mois at El Djem: here the roman religious feasts, grouped three per season, are associated with a season: the celebrations of the months of March, April, and May are associated with Spring, represented by a young in a tunic, carrying an ovine on his shoulders[46].

On a seasonal sarcophagus with a drunken Dionysus held up by a satyr, now in Museum of the Baths of Diocletian in Rome (dated 4th century, Figure 21), the ovine-carrier, the *kriophoros*, seems to be associated with Winter: on this relief each season is represented by a couple of figures, the last two of which are the al-dressed Winter and the *kriophoros*, flanked – as in other Dionysiac-seasonal iconographies – by small winged erotes picking up grapes in a vine.

The sheep bearing figures on the Parabiago plate, on the sarcophagus in the Baths of Diocletian, in the Nasonii tomb, and on El Djem mosaic of the calendar, are neither descriptive images of rural activities, nor abbreviated representation of them. These figures do not represent shepherds, but Genies and Personifications with pastoral features, namely the sheep, portrayed in a shepherding attitude, namely the *kriophoros* one.

While in the sarcophagus of San Francisco and in the Nasonii tomb the *kriophoros* is a short version of the seasonal shepherding activity, in the Parabiago plate and El Djem mosaic, the *kriophoros* is *himself* the Personification of the season, of Autumn and Spring respectively; the goat is a common feature of the Seasonal personifications of Spring and Autumn[47].

Figura 21

[46] Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Icongraphy and Patronage*, 110–11.

[47] Giulia Baratta, "La mandorla centrale dei sarcofagi strigilati. Un campo iconografico ed i suoi simboli," in *Archäologie Und Geschichte, Römische Bilderwelten Von Der Wirklichkeit Zum Bild Und Zurück. Kolloquium Der Gerda Henkel Stiftung Am Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Rom (15. – 17. März 2004)* (Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 2007), 200.

To sum up, the meaning of the first figures, the idea they are called to evoke, is still the representation of shepherding activities, even if in a shortened form; the latter Personifications of Seasons as *kriophoroi*, on the other hand, are not meant to display any rural activity, whose only reference is the vine on the figure's shoulder: these are not actual shepherds, but rather Personifications with pastoral features. The association of bucolic and pastoral attributes to not shepherds characters and personalities will be the subject-matter of the forthcoming chapter (2.1.3. and 2.2.2).

2.1.2. Isolated Shepherd and Shepherd Types

The previous section has taken in account pastoral pictures in which shepherds were considered as a part of a representation, a sort of *staffage* for mythological or genre scenes. This section will focus on bucolic representations that stand in no connection to other representations, but are themselves the subject-matter of the decoration.

The growing fortune of bucolic images and representations of shepherds throughout the centuries is undeniable: during the Empire, bucolic imagery became more popular in decorations thanks to the influence of poetry, and this popularity was about to grow even more in Early Christianity. The reasons for this fortune are iconological in a wide sense: given the polysemy of bucolic images, they can be employed for different purposes and in different contexts, especially private decorations.

For what concerns the funerary context, Paul Zanker explained the shift from mythological to bucolic iconographies on sarcophagi reliefs: «it seems that what changed was the idea about what constituted suitable imagery for the tomb, rather than a profound alteration in values»[1]. The position of Zanker is agreeable, since bucolic imagery appeared on different contexts, from sepulchral to everyday life objects decoration: the choice of pastoral images for these objects therefore can't be due to particular iconological meanings, given the diversity itself of the objects and contexts in which these images appear. The choice of shepherd iconographies for decorations was influenced by customers rather than by any particular meaning of the images themselves.

The purpose of this section is to highlight the structure of shepherds representations as subject matter and their development until the creation of the isolated shepherd, towards the representation of the emblematic shepherd: the meaning of such images will be put off the next chapters.

Pastoral representations emancipated from being merely bucolic settings of mythological episodes on sarcophagi, or a rural overtone of sacral-idyllic landscapes. Of course genre scenes, such as bucolic vignettes, were not new in western Mediterranean visual arts repertory, nevertheless it seems that their emancipation as subject-matter for decorations and the raising of pastoral as a theme had an acceleration during Augustan age, perhaps under the influence of Pastoral poetry.

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[1] Paul Zanker and Bjorn C. Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2012), 258.

Captions of bucolic life in the countryside broke their bond with other iconographies and were represented as the main subject of the decoration[2], without any significative formal difference from the other ancillary bucolic vignettes on mythological sarcophagi: shepherds are depicted in the usual shepherding activities, such as milking the sheep or herding a flock, surrounded by nature, in a more or less detailed landscape.

On the above mentioned sarcophagus of Julius Achilleus the surface is all occupied by cattle and shepherds sitting on the sides of the slab, and on the sarcophagus from Isola sacra in Ostia (dated around 300 A.D. Figure 22) five shepherds, as tall as the front of the coffin, talk to each other, among the trees. The question of the genre shall be raised, asking what of these decorations belongs to pastoral genre.

In a comparison of the sarcophagi reliefs and the Lord Julius Estate mosaic, one would think that the shepherds on the two sarcophagi belong to Pastoral genre, because they are the main focus of a pastoral image that is, actually, the subject-matter of the whole decoration. On the other hand, the shepherd of the mosaic is actually more pastoral in mood, or *mode*, according to Paul Alpers' definition of mode as the overall tone[3]; both its style and meaning are more fully pastoral. The shepherds on the two sarcophagi are evocative images, bearing some further significance, while the mosaic actually means what it represents. For this reason the Lord Julius Mosaic in Tunisi seems to belong to a pastoral genre, as it represents nothing but a herdsman in the countryside, while the shepherds on the Julius Achilleus and Isola Sacra reliefs evoke something more than what

Figure 22

[2] There are bucolic representations like these also on some fragments of sarcophagi lids dated between 2nd and 3rd century (see Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, vol. 1–Testo (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeoogia Cristiana, 1929), 66; Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, vol. II (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeoogia Cristiana, 1929), fig. tafel XLVII; LXXXV;).

[3] Paul Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?*, University of Chicago Press (Chicago and London, 1996).

they display: since they are the only subject of the decoration, it goes without saying that they are in charge of the transmission of meaning. In the two sarcophagi the intention of the decorator was to represent a pastoral idyll, a bucolic scene, while the mosaicist of Tunisi was in charge of represent the wealth of the Landlord by displaying its estate activities: the subject of the mosaic is wealth, while the sarcophagi represent the longing for an ideal bucolic condition with the means of bucolic iconography. Thus, the Isola Sacra relief and Julius Achilleus sarcophagus are both examples of pastoral genre, while the Tunisi mosaic is not, since – in my opinion – bucolic genre is a coincidence of pastoral subject-matter and pastoral *mode*.

It is clear that pastoral images belong to Pastoral Genre only when they are not subordinate to other iconographies, but in a paratactic relation with them.

This enhancement is the first step in the process towards the representation of the isolated and emblematic shepherd. The definition of pastoral genre comprehends the question of meaning and the structure of the image itself at the same time.

As Jocelyn Toynbee pointed out, the Julius Achilleus sarcophagus decoration is similar to a Christian sarcophagus excavated from via Prenestina and now at the Lateran Museum, where a herd is represented among a *kriophoros* and an Orante[4]. The bucolic representation is arranged in three rows and in the very centre of the relief six small herdsmen are represented in their shepherding activities; a shepherd with a sheep on his shoulders is carved on the left part of the surface in a bigger scale, *in pendant* to the Orante on the right hand. The subject-matter of the decoration is the central pastoral scene, probably alluding to a pastoral paradise, and the two lateral figures are a sort of emblematic framing of the pastoral iconography. According to Jocelyn Toynbee the two pastoral scenes are both representations of pastoral paradise, the first pagan, the latter Christian; from a structural point of view, the two images belong both to pastoral genre, whether they are pagan or Christian[5].

On a sarcophagus from the Catacomb of Priscilla (Figure 23), the tondo with the portrait of the deceased woman is surrounded by a pastoral scene: the shepherds are represented in many activities, one is drinking, one is sitting in a thinking attitude, and so on: the attention for details, for the arrangement of space, and the variety of attitudes of the

[4] Jocelyn Toynbee M. C., *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973), fig. 140 and 141 and pp. 283-4.

[55] Similarly on the sarcophagus of IULIA IULIANES the panel on the right half of the relief represents a flock of sheep (without shepherd), and the two sides are occupied by a *kriophoros* and an Orante.

figures show that the pastoral iconography was actually the subject-matter of the decoration, appointed to give a meaning in combination with the central portrait of the deceased[6].

Figure 23

On some pastoral sarcophagi, the figures of shepherds appear to be well-delineated and thoroughly described: on the above mentioned sarcophagus from Isola Sacra the shepherds are standing in a ordered composition, each of them has its own space, in a very paratactic composition. The two shepherds on the sides of the frieze are seated and proportionally taller than the standing three, insomuch as to fill the height of the panel, like the standing ones do. In the middle of the frieze a shepherd carrying an animal across his shoulders holds with his left hand a *pedum* and with the other hand he holds the animal's paw, following the archaic Greek archetype of *moskophoros*. This figure shall be discussed in the next sections, but so far I can only point out the suitability of such frontal image for emblematic representations: its symmetry and its composition allowed its rising as emblematic image.

The composition of the two bucolic sarcophagi mentioned by Toynbee appear confused: landscape, animals and shepherds themselves are represented in a *continuum* that doesn't allow a good distinction of the figures. The five shepherds on the Ostia relief are instead all separated, each figure is clearly and definitely described and the trees seem to frame each figure; this kind of composition is a sort of prelude of the isolation of the shepherd figure, as I will show later.

[6] Lucrezia Spera, "Un Sarcofago Con Temi Agro-Pastorali Dallo Scavo dell'Arenario Centrale Della Catacomba Di Priscilla," in *Rivista Di Archeologia Cristiana*, vol. LXXVI, 1-2 (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeoogia Cristiana, 2000), 243–84.

The same structure, a sort of juxtaposition of shepherds in a coral scene, characterizes a later Coptic *orbicula* from Antinöe, Egypt, (5th century C.E. Figure 24), now at Brooklyn Museum[7]. As on the Ostia sarcophagus, each shepehrd is well described in isolation from the others: one is sitting in a thinking attitude leaning on his stich, another one is playing the flute leaning on the ground, and a shepherdess carrying her baby in a scarf is overseeing the flock[8].

Figure 24

Human figure is protagonist, at the expense of the landscape, insomuch as in the Ostia relief shepherds are as tall as the relief and the only landscape details are the tiny trees, whose function is rather framing the figures in their different gestures than describe a landscape.

Shepherds attitudes became standardized: the most popular was the *kriophoros*, but also the thinking shepherd, the shepherd resting on his stick with the legs crossed and his head on the hand, and the milking one were popular iconographies. The choice of one of these attitudes on reliefs, paintings, oil lamps[9], funerary *stelae* depended on the suitability of the figure for the shape of the support.

For example the milking shepherd is suitable for oval gems[10] and for the space under the central tondo with the portrait of the deceased on sarcophagi[11]. This iconography survives

[7] https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/56955. Pierre Du Bourguet, *Coptic Art*, Methuen (London, 1971), 148.

[8] The representation of a shepherdess is present on a silver plate from Alexandria, dated 5th-6th century, now in Berlin. Kurt Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality : Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978* (New York: The Metropolitan museum of art with Princeton university press, 1979), 251, n° 231.

[9] Z. Kiss, "Une Lampe d'Alexandrie Avec Scène Pastorale," in *Alessandria E Il Mondo Ellenistico-Romano. In Onore Di A. Adriani*, vol. 2 (Roma, 1984), 296–99, LIII 4, 3.

[10] Paul Fossing, *Catalogue of the Antique Engraved Gems and Cameos* (Copemhagen: Thorvaldsen Museum, 1929), figs. 1004–1005; Adolf Furtwängler, *Beschreibung Der Geschnittenen Steine Im Antiquarium* (Berlin, 1896), 190, n. 4679–4683 and Taf. 34.

[11] See, for example, a strigilated sarcophagus with two spouses: under the central tondo the scheme of the milking shepherd on the left, the goat in the centre, and the standing shepherd leaning on his stick on the right, follows the bottom round line of the *clipeum*. Paolo Enrico Arias, Cristiani, and Abbas, *Camposanto Monumentale Di Pisa. Le Antichità*, vol. I (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1977), 148–9, and tav LXXXIX. See also Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, vol. 1–Testo (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeoogia

Figure 25

until the 6th century, on a tapestry said to be from Akhmim at St. Louis Art Museum[12]: the herdsman and the animal are represented under a grapevine, the whole scene is framed by four trapezoidal sections, decorated with birds and vegetal motifs. «The image of a single goatherd was a popular subject on Roman glyptic and is encountered in diverse engraving styles and details; it is also a favourite motif on local gems (to date a total of five gems have been published with three examples coming from Caesarea). The Bab el Hagwa goatherd stone, dated 4th to 6th century A.D., predominantly agricultural, settlement in Galilee (Figure 25) is a secure evidence that this rustic motif which probably reflects actual agricultural practices continued in the region well into Byzantine times»[13].

Figure 26

Milking shepherds appear also on an oil lamp in Ontario Museum, dated 3rd century (Figure 26)[14]: the motif may not be usual on lamps, but it must be noticed that lamps decoration usually imitated other medias decorations, such as gems, mosaics and coins, and all these objects were often decorated with bucolic motifs. «Toute l'habileté du potier va consister à adapter le motif choisi à la forme et aux dimensions de la cuvette et l'opération est plus aisée

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Cristiana, 1929), 140; Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, vol. II (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeoogia Cristiana, 1929), Tafel CXXXIV, 1,3; Tafel LXX, 4; LXXI,4; LXXXI,1.

[12] Florence Friedman D., *Beyond the Pharaohs. Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to 7th Centuries A.D.* (Rhode Island School of Design, 1989), 134, 43.

[13] *Gems of Heaven. Recent Research on Engraved Gemstones in Late Antiquity, C. AD200-600*, British Museym (London: Chris Emtwistle and Noel Adams, 2011), 112 and figures 32-33.

[14] John Hayes W., *Ancient Lamps in the Royal Ontario Museum I. Greek and Roman Clay Lamps. A Catalogue* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1980), n° 293, p.70.

Figure 27

lorsqu'il s'agit d'emprunts faits à des œuvres mineures»[15]. Shepherds portrayed in other attitudes are more frequent on lamps, especially the representation of shepherds and their flock: the shepherd is often portrayed in side view, sometimes leaning on his stick, while herding the sheep[16]; on a lamp held at British museum the potter added some details, like the moon on the upper right part and a figure at shepherd's shoulders, maybe Helios[17].

Another lamp at British Museum has a particular detail: the bearded shepherd is leaning on a staff, with left foot drawn back; the sheep in front of him are feeding on the leaves of a tree, where a bird is perched. On the upper left side there is inscribed the word TITYRUS, so the shepherd is certainly the one of the first Eclogue of Vergil[18]; the same inscription TITYRUS is associated with a shepherd on the first *folio* of *Vergilius Vaticanus*: the shepherd is playing a long flute, sitting on by tree, while his sheep are peeking out of the tree; another shepherd, supposedly Melyboeus (without inscription) is standing in front of him, his right arm raised in a talking gesture.

A difference between the lamp and the drawing must be pointed out: while the first is an emblematic image, the latter is an illustration of a text present below the figure. On one hand the shepherd on the lamp is a *typological portrait* of Tityrus, whose identity would not be recognizable without the inscription, while, on the other hand, the Tityrus of *Vergilius Vaticanus* is a *representation* of the Virgilian character, unmistakable thanks to the inscription and the context in which it is.

Another case of isolated shepherd recognizable as a given character is as the mythical Faustulus on the gem n° 922 of the Thorvaldsen Museum (Figure 28): he is represented with a long cloak and a tunic with a staff in his hands: this shepherd is surely Faustulus,

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[15] Abdelmajid Ennabli, *Lampes Chrétiennes de Tunisie (Musées Du Bardo et de Carthage)* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1976), 26.

[16] Kiss, "Une Lampe d'Alexandrie Avec Scène Pastorale," Plate LIII, 3-4.

https://archive.org/stream/catalogueofgreek00brit#page/n3/mode/2up

[17] Donald Bailey M., *A Catalogue of the Lamps in the British Museum* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd, 1975), 173, n° 1144.

[18] Ibid., 100–1 and n° 661. http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/108

because he is represented while finding the twins being suckled by the she-wolf, a clear reference to the mythic origins of Rome[19]. The bucolic image on gem 922 can be considered as a narrative representation, even if short and brief, of a mythological account, the legend of the birth of Rome.

Lamps and gems show the representations of isolated shepherds, that is to say, figures that stand in relation to other figures, without being dependent on them: if, on one hand, the emancipation of bucolic images from other iconographies marks the first step towards the creation of the emblematic shepherd, the isolation of pastoral images is the next step in this process. Such isolated shepherds can be in relation to other figures, in a paratactic way, such as the shepherd of the famous sarcophagus at Camposanto of Pisa (Figure 14), where the left panel is occupied by a herdsman with his flock, in *pendant* to Muses of the right panel; both these figures are oriented to the central portrait of the deceased woman and they equally contribute to the meaning of the decoration: the woman in the *clipeum* is accepted as the ninth of the Muses, and the shepherd gives an idyllic overtone of peace and rest to the philosophical-literary theme of the Muses[20].

As the shepherd figure gets isolated, the landscape tends to disappear: it is reduced, evoked rather than described, until it disappears completely. On some hypogea paintings the shepherd is portrayed with his flock, surrounded by trees and plants, in a detailed landscape[21], as on the lower part of Via Latina catacomb walls in cubiculum F. Similarly, in Domitilla catacomb and in a lunette of an *arcosolium* of Coemeterium Maius the shepherd dwells in a background where trees and other landscape features describe a countryside setting.

http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/66

http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/61

Similar to this latter shepherd is the one on the sarcophagus at Camposanto of Pisa, dated to the end of the 3rd century: the *kriophoros* stands in the centre of the front relief, his

[19] Some uncertainty is due to the other shepherds identified as Faustulus Paul Fossing, *Catalogue of the Antique Engraved Gems and Cameos* (Copemhagen: Thorvaldsen Museum, 1929),; p. 81, nos 409-12; and p.??? n° 922.

[20] Arias, Cristiani, and Abbas, *Camposanto Monumentale Di Pisa. Le Antichità*, I:53–54, and tav. II.

[21] William Tronzo, *The Via Latina Catacomb. Imitation and Discontinuity in Fourth-Century Roman Painting*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986, figs. 21–22.

arms are crossed, to mark the centre of the whole composition; the landscape is in lower relief, thus the shepherd appears to be in the very foreground[22].

The landscape disappears almost completely on a roundel fragment of glass, dated 4th century, held at Corning museum of glass[23], where a shepherd, dressed in a tunic, is playing a panpipe under a tree, while his flock is gazing in a field, shortly represented by small blades of grass and golden dots. On a Coptic wristband dated second half of 5th century (Figure 28), four shepherds are represented within the decoration, not in a countryside: one is leaning on a stick, his hand at his face in a thinking attitude; beside this, another shepherd is leaning, legs crossed; on the other side of the cloth band, one shepherd is walking, holding a stick across his shoulders, while the other one, walking himself, is using the stick as a sustain. The vegetal decoration is not a "realistic" landscape, it's rather a decorative pattern (the only realistic feature are two sheep, each flanking one shepherd)[24]: the four shepherds seems to be used as a decorative element, as well as geometric patterns and vegetable friezes, rather than figures of a bucolic representation.

In the so-called Arcosolio della ruota in the Coemeterium Maius the few vegetal elements lost their landscape connotation to serve as frame for the three figures of the milking shepherd, the Orante, and the kriophoros: these figures don't seem to have any logical connection, they only stand one besides the other as a combination of emblematic images.

http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/68

[22] Arias, Cristiani, and Abbas, *Camposanto Monumentale Di Pisa. Le Antichità*, I:158–9, and tavv. CV–CVI.

[23] http://www.cmog.org/artwork/roundel-fragment-shepherd-and-flock?search=collection%3A52bdf5de929dc7ea4436c2ac6a244e62&page=8

[24] Alexandra Lorquin, *Tissus Coptes Au Musée National Du Moyen Age - Thermes de Cluny. Catalohie Des Étoffes Égyptiennes de Lin et de Laine de l'Antiquité Tarfive Aux Premiers Siècles de l'Islam*, Réunion des Musées Nationaux (Paris, 1992), 112–115.

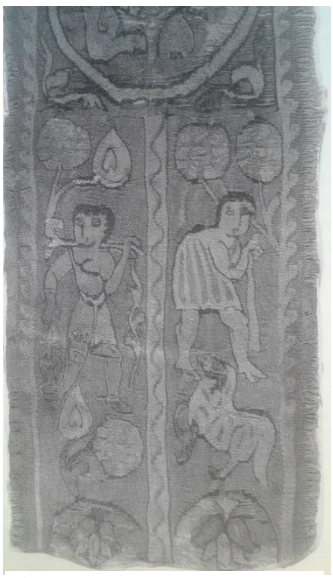

Figure 28a

Figure 28b

Depending on its gradient of isolation, an image can be more or less emblematic, thus evocative, or it can be a narrative image. "Narrative" differs from "emblematic" for the first displays a sort of action, while the latter is often a static figure, whose meaning does not lay in what it represent. An emblematic image is frequently an isolated figure, nevertheless it may stand in a logical relation to other figures: this kind of relation can be described as a *pendant.* Richard Brilliant, following Karl Schefold's *Vergessenes Pompeji* (186), makes a distinction between cycle and pendant:

> «by the term *cycle* we mean the interrelated motifs of decoration, arranged along the walls, while the term *pendant pictures* refers to the specific meaning that governs their association. Such pendants might even be taken from cycles, but they constitute more significant relationships than mere association in the course of the narrative»[25].

The shepherds, when isolated, can be intentionally combined into meaningful associations with other images. This is the case of some sarcophagi, on which the shepherd is one of the figures composing the decoration, but it is separated from the others by a framing device or a blank space. On the sarcophagus of Baebia Hermofile and her husband (around 290 C.E. Figure 29), a shepherd is represented under the central tondo with the portrait of the deceased spouses; the sarcophagus in Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome[26] also shows the image of one or two shepherds in the middle of

[25] Richard Brilliant, *Visual Narratives. Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art*, Cornell University Press (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 65.

[26] http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/7

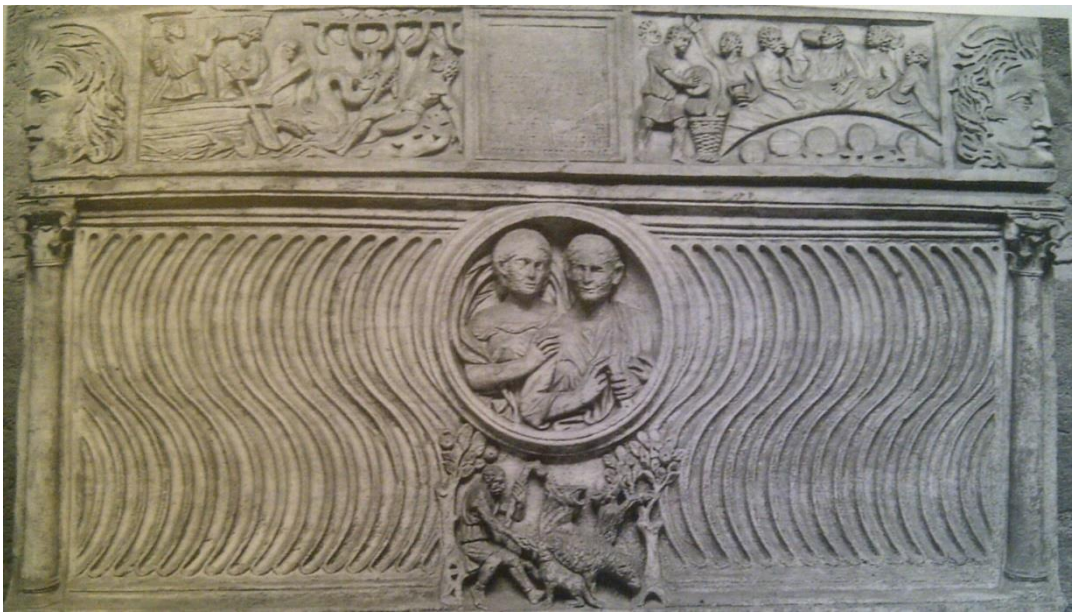

Figura 29

the panel, under a central tondo. A similar composition is the one of the sarcophagus in the Antikenmuseum of Basel, dated second half of the 3rd century: under the tondo there are two shepherds symmetrically arranged, one seems to be feeding the sheep, while the other one stares his flock; the relief decoration is completed by other shepherds, portrayed in different speech attitudes.

The model of shepherd below the central tondo is repeated in other definitely Christian sarcophagi, as those described in the book of Aringhi[27]: this means that there was a common artistic and stylistic taste for sculpture, shared by Christian and non-Christian people, that is to say, there was a common Roman taste.

[27] Aringhi, Paolo and Bosio, Antonio, *Roma Svbterranea Novissima: In Qva Post Antonivm Bosivm Antesignanvm, Io. Severanvm Congreg. Oratorii Presbytervm, Et Celebres Alios Scriptores : Antiqva Christianorvm Et Praecipue Martyrun Cœmeteria, Titvli, Monimenta, Epitaphia, Inscriptiones Ac Nobiliora Sanctorvm Sepvlchra, Sex Libris Distincta Illustrantvr Et Qvamplvrimae Res Ecclesiasticae Iconibvs Graphice Describuntur, Ac Multiplici Tum Sacra, Tum Profana Eruditione Declarantur : Cum Duplici Indice, Capitum & Rerum Locupletissimo : Opera Et Stvdio* 1651.

Figure 30

On some sarcophagi, especially the strigilated Christian ones, some shepherds are portrayed on one or both panels on the two sides of the front relief: in this case the logical bend between the two lateral figures is given by their symmetric arrangement. On a sarcophagus from Callistus catacomb (Figure 30), dated 3rd century the shepherds are all isolated: the two lateral figures, one leaning asleep on his stick and the other *kriophoros*, are portrayed in a smaller scale than the central one, that might be considered as an emblematic shepherd[28]. The *kriophoros* on the right side is not emblematic as the central one, for the different position they occupy within the decoration. The position of images and their weight within one and same object are elements that make an image as emblematic.

We have already seen the difference between an emblematic and a narrative image: in the latter case the shepherd is probably represented in some activity, while in the first it is often inactive and standing. Nevertheless, the isolated shepherd can be non-narrative and far from being emblematic at the same time. The difference between isolated and emblematic shepherds lies in the perception of images by the viewer: in order to understand this difference a semiotic approach is necessary. Sometimes an isolated *kriophoros* is not different from a narrative one, but they might be different from a semiotic point of view: as Umberto Eco argued about symbols, the observer can *perceive* that what he's looking at is a symbol and not a common image; this feeling has nothing to

[28] http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/41 Wilpert, Joseph, *I Sarcofagi cristiani antichi, I, Testo,* Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, Roma, 1929, pp. 96-97. Wilpert, Joseph, *I Sarcofagi cristiani antichi, I, Tavole,* Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, Roma, 1929, t. LXXVII,4.

do with emotions, but belongs to the mechanisms of perception[29]. The position of an image is the first hint: as the above mentioned sarcophagus from Callistus shows (Figure 30), the same image has different functions depending on its position within one and same object.

Beyond the central position, the high-up position influences the perception of the images, most of all because of its distance from the observer, and for forcing this latter to a proactive observation of the image and to raise his head. The shepherds in the centre of the funerary rooms ceilings are displayed in a highly meaningful position, for all the decoration seem to be oriented towards these central upper points. As we shall see, the image that is most frequently portrayed in the central tondo of the ceilings is the *kriophoros*: the structure of this image is strongly symmetric, its inner pattern allows it to be placed in a central position, especially when his arms are crossed[30]. One more thing should be noticed about the tombs ceilings: as in roman houses, the decoration of the walls and roofs of tombs were arranged by red and green lines, that divided the surface in portions. These lines worked as framing devices and created different spaces of decoration.

Frames and other framing devices (lines, bordures, cornices) can be considered as definitive marks of emblematic images: they isolate the image, enclosing its meaning and letting the figure speak for itself. Frames are definitely meaning makers.

A group of Italian semiologists, called "Gruppo μ", gave a definition of frame,

Figure 31

[29] Umberto Eco, "Simbolo," *Enciclopedia Einaudi* (Torino, 1981).

[30] Arias, Cristiani, and Abbas, *Camposanto Monumentale Di Pisa. Le Antichità*, I:158–9, and tavv. CV–CVI.

introducing the idea of "bordura": a border is «a device that defines a visual enunciation, isolating it in its proper space, as a consistent unit»[31]; everything inside the border has a common semiotic status. Within these frames the images are located in a space that may be blank, not determined. These neutral spaces function as epidictic devices, pushing the figure forwards, in a dimension of absence of space, therefore non narrative, an absolute dimension, loosening the bounds with other images. This phenomenon of abstraction of a blank background affects also sculpted images: the above mentioned images of milking shepherds under the central *clipeum* on sarcophagi take often place in a non-definite space, as well as other shepherds on strigilated sarcophagi. On some of these sarcophagi, at the encounter of the two rows of strigils there is often a *mandorla* with a shepherd (Figure 31). Its background is often not visible, since the space of the decoration inside the *mandorla* is very narrow, but also the rest of the decoration is a neutral space, being it made of strigils. Giulia Baratta in her study of the barrel iconography on sarcophagi showed that when the image - namely the cask – is isolated and in a preeminent position, it is probably a symbol, rather than a marker of a labour activity[32]. As Baratta's study pointed out, the shepherd is one of the most common iconographies for the *mandorla* on strigilated sarcophagi, being present on 9 of the 108 sarcophagi with a figurative *mandorla*. All the other iconographies, as the dolphin and the Erote with the upside-down funerary torch, have a symbolic value when they appear on this kind of sarcophagi; the fact that some *mandorlae* bear an inscription is a clue for the symbolic value of the iconographies they show. From a structural and functional point of view the shepherd

[31] «Contorno d'altro lato, è un percetto che interviene nella delimitazione delle unità e degli insiemi iconici e/o plastici; è, in altre parole, il tracciato immateriale che divide lo spazio in due regioni, dando vita allo sfondo e alla figura; percettivamente, per capirci, appartiene alla figura», Gruppo µ, *Trattato Del Segno Visivo: Per Una Retorica Dell'immagine* (Milano: Mondadori, 2007).

[32] «E' questa la differenza principale tra una concezione iconografica come può essere, ad esempio, quella della succitata stele di Lucius Cantius Acutus rispetto a quella che caratterizza i sarcofagi di Roma. Se è vero che in entrambi i casi sono raffigurate simbolicamente ed in una posizione privilegiata delle botti, nel primo una serie di simboli interagiscono tra di loro e, al pari degli elementi costitutivi di una frase, contribuiscono a formare un discorso che descrive un mestiere o almeno un ambito nel quale l'attività del defunto può essersi svolta. Questo invece non accade nei sarcofagi di Roma dove la botte è un simbolo isolato, e pertanto di più difficile ed incerta lettura, e dove il restante apparato iconografico in nessun caso è riferibile ad un mestiere». Giulia Baratta, "La Mandorla Centrale Dei Sarcofagi Strigilati. Un Campo Iconografi Co Ed I Suoi Simboli," in *Archäologie Und Geschichte, Römische Bilderwelten Von Der Wirklichkeit Zum Bild Und Zurück. Kolloquium Der Gerda Henkel Stiftung Am Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Rom (15. – 17. März 2004)* (Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 2007), 211.

Figura 32

represented inside of *mandorlae* can be considered as emblems:, the isolation, as well as the central position, the neutral background, and the framing[33] are clearly elements for the symbolic empowerment of images[34]. On some strigilated sarcophagi the central image is overlapping the strigils, as on this sarcophagus with lions protomes and the central *Kriophoros* at Louvre Museum. Carlo Roberto Chiarlo in his work on *lenos* sarcophagi argues that the lions heads, besides their Dionysiac reminiscence wine drainer of tanks for the pressure of grapes, could bear an apotropaic meaning and; moreover, the lions on these sarcophagi, especially the one at Louvre Museum (Figure 32), could represent an evil force from which the central shepherd is called to save the soul[35].

The shepherd is not framed, it's just flanked on his sides by two stylized trees, nevertheless he is placed in a neutral space, between the space of decoration and the real space of the viewer: his feet step on a ground that does not belong to the surface of strigils and the height of this figures exceeds the decoration. Be it apothropaical or not, it is undeniable that this shepherd, as well as the ones in the small *mandorlae* has a strong meaning: moreover, there is no other figure represented on the relief, but the two leonine *protomes*, both looking at the central image, underlining the importance of the central shepherd. Once again the central position is a device of signification.

[33] *Mandorlae* can have a decorative framing, and they are themselves framing devices for the pictures.

[34] For shepherds in the central *mandorla*, see Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II, Tafeln LXVIII,6; LXIX, 3. The one in Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II, Taf. LXVII,3 is framed by two columns, and the n°5 is standing in the foreground amongst the curve lines: this latter shows the powerful simmetry of the *criophoros* figure. See also Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II, Taf. LXXV-LXXX.

[35] Carlo Roberto Chiarlo, "Sul Significato Dei Sarcofagi a ΛΗΝΟΣ Decorati Con Leoni," in *Annali Della Scuola Normale Superiore Di Pisa. Classe Di Lettere E Filosofia*, vol. 4, III, 1974, 1317.

Composition of images is a pivotal issue for the definition of emblematic images. The term "composition" should be furtherly defined: it is possible to talk about composition when there is a grouping of images, such as the set of tools on the funerary stele of Q. Vibius Maximus Smintius (Figure 33)[36], in which hammer, forceps, and pickaxe are orderly displayed on the surface, confirming/restating the profession of the buried, *aerarius* (metalworker), already mentioned in the inscription above[37]. A combination is instead a juxtaposition, apparently without any logic, of emblematic images that make a complex expression whose meaning is fully determined by the structure and the meanings of the constituents of the complex itself: on the funerary gravestone, dated 226-275 (Figure 34), there is a juxtaposition of a short representation of Jonah rejected by the *ketos*[38], the *kriophoros*, a lion, and, under these, an anchor[39]. These images don't belong to a common logical field, since the objects represented in the Q. Vibius Maximus Smintius stele are all tools, nor these images mean what they actually represent: the combination of this set of images, makes them emblems, in a signification process that

Figura 33

Figure 34

[36] Giulio Ciampoltrini, "Le Stele Funerarie D'età Imperiale nell'Etruria Settentrionale," in *Prospettiva*, 1982, 5 and figure 11.

[37] For the inscription see https://www.eagle-network.eu/basic-search/#.

[38] This appears to be an emblematic mage drawn by a narrative episdode.

[39] http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/316; ICUR V, 15420. See also Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II, Taf. LXXVI,1.

takes place in contemporary viewer's mind. This kind of composition, that we can call "combination" is a device of signification, as well as frames. This kind of composition of images is a characteristic of Christian gravestones, where images are engraved on the surface, without any space hint nor frame[40].

With these images of isolated shepherd, the discussion will enter the question of emblematic shepherds. Once again, the analysis will pertain only the structural and functional field, nevertheless the question of the meanings of such emblems will be at least outlined.

It seems inevitable that the study of emblematic shepherds leads to a study of the *kriophoros* figure: its structure and its symmetry make this image a free-standing representation, so that marble statues of shepherds are only of the *kriophoros* type[41]: one at the Cleveland Museum – dated by Kitzinger at the 3rd century for analogy with shepherds on 3rd century sarcophagi[42] – and some at the Istanbul Archaeological museum; another is held in the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens[43]. For these statuettes and other sculptures worked in the round, Arnold Provoost argues a decorative or architectural purpose: some of the statues are unfinished in their back, some others have a pillar and some other have been found in the nearby of a fountain. This archaeological evidence shows that these sculptures were used as part of an architectural structure as a

[40] There are many examples of engraved shepherds in various attitudes: http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/24393; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/22586; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/22520; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/20508; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/16877; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/11118; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/4186; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/4183; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/4148; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/2067; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/2065; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/38016; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/33078; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/31516; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/27213 drawing of http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/32025; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/38750; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/39967; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/38759; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/38751 ; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/16400.

[41] Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, 1–Testo:71, ; Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II:Tafel LII.

[42] Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cleveland Marbles," in *Art Archaeology, and Architecture of Early Christianity*, Garland Publishing, Inc, Studies in Early Christianity. A Collection of Scholar Essays (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1993), 661.

[43] http://www.ebyzantinemuseum.gr/?i=bxm.en.exhibit&id=143. Robert Milburn, speaking of the youthful good shepherd of the Vatican Museum and the other at Cleveland Museum hypothesizes that «the statuettes of the Good Shepherd may have been thought useful in protecting houses from misfortune, for several other examples have come to light» (Robert Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), 80, and figures 48-49).

fountain, or conceived to be placed in a niche, in a strict relation to the architectural environment[44].

The difference between emblematic shepherd and narrative scenes is displayed on one and same front of a sarcophagus walled in Villa Doria Pamphilij in Rome of the end of the 3rd century (Figure 35).

Figure 35

On this relief the *kriophoros* stands in the front, surrounded on the two sides by other shepherds, smaller in scale, and their flock, dwelling in a countryside landscape[45]. The central shepherd, the *kriophoros*, is emblematic, for he is taller than the other herdsmen, in the two scenes, and his background is once again the blank space, as to point out that this figure does not belong to the same plan of the other shepherds on the surface. Moreover he is separated from the bucolic vignette of the left side by a tiny tree with a bird roosted on a branch: this and the two sheep at his foot are the common features of the emblematic shepherd, the trees are often two, one on each side. On the sarcophagus from Salona (end of the 3rd – beginning of the 4th century)[46] the group of the shepherd, tree and sheep, are arranged in the *acroteria* on the two sides of the coffin and on the

[44] Arnold Provoost, "Il Significato Delle Scene Pastorali Del Terzo Secolo d.C.," in *Atti Del IX Congresso Internazionale Di Archeologia Cristiana. Roma 21-27 Settembre 1975*, Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, vol. 1–Monumenti Cristiani Precostantiniani (Roma, 1978), 425.

[45] Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, 1–Testo:138; Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II:Tafel LXXXIII, 6.

[46] Nenad Cambi, "Attis or Someone Else on Funerary Monuments from Dalmatia," in *Romanisation Und Resistenz in Plastik, Arhitektur Und Inschriften Der Provinzen Des Imperium Romanum. Neue Funde undForschungen. Akten Des VII. Internationalen Colloquiums Über Probleme Des Provinzialrömischen Kunstschaffens. Köln*, 2001, 518 and figure 11.

stele of Antifonte[47], where the *kriophoros* is standing in the centre of the space, a tree on the left side and two sheep on the other. The tree disappears in other emblematic images, such as the fragment of the funerary stele of Tullia Asclepia, dated 3rd century, from the cemetery of S. Ermete[48], from a Sarcophagus of Jonah Copenhagen[49] and it is absent from the representations of the shepherds on the front side panels of some sarcophagi[50]. In the casket from Novalja, amongst other New Testament scenes and the representations of the Orante, the shepherd appears three times, framed, with the inscription PASTOR[51].

The tree becomes part of the emblem and it is, as it is reasonable to believe, an abbreviated representation of the idyllic landscape that characterized the representation of shepherds from ancient times; also, the tree can often be considered as a frame for the figures, since it is often used also for the Orante[52].

The presence of the tree in many representations of emblematic *kriophoroi* can be one of the arguments against their interpretation as Good Shepherds, that is to say Jesus Christ: the *kriophoros* appears as the most popular bucolic image in Early Christian art, so that past scholars were brought to believe that it was a genuine Christian iconography. This study agrees with the standpoint of Arnold Provoost, who showed the bucolic background for the *kriophoros*[53] because – as I will show extensively in the next chapter – the tree conveys a sort of idyllic overtone, that is unknown for the conceiving of Jesus. This does not mean that the *kriophoroi* without the tree, or trees, are representations of the good shepherd, but this will be object of the forthcoming section.

This section on bucolic representation focused on the structural elements of images, with the purpose of providing the basic tools for the definition of images.

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[47] Giovanni Gardini, "Una Cartolina per Antifonte," *Romagna 2016 Ricerche E Aspetti Inediti Di Storia Postale, Di Cartofilia, Di Numismatica Di Ravenna E Della Sua Provincia*, 2016, Circolo Filatelico Numismatico Dante Alighieri Ravenna. Editalia edition. For the transcription of the inscription see http://www.webdiocesi.chiesacattolica.it/pls/cci_dioc_new/v3_s2ew_consultazione.mostra_pagina?id_pagina=33927.

[48] Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, 1–Testo:74, 36.

[49] Wilpert, 1–Testo:85;90; Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II:tafel LIX, 2.

[50] Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II:Tafel CXXIV.

[51] Nenad Cambi, *Sarkofag Dobroga Pastira Iz Salone I Njegova Grupa (The Good Shepherd Sarcophagus and Its Group)* (Split: Arheoloski Muzej, 1994).

[52] Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, II:Tafeln XIX, 1.

[53] Provoost, "Il Significato Delle Scene Pastorali Del Terzo Secolo d.C.," especially p. 411.

Starting from the assumption that images have not a pre-given and univocal meaning, but they are rather polysemic, it is necessary to look for contextual information in order to reconstruct a plausible spectrum of meanings. The purpose of this work is to point out that the structure of the image itself is the first issue to take into account, in order to understand what kind of image is displayed before the observer. The determination of the structural differences between emblematic or non-emblematic *kriophoroi* is the precondition for understanding the meaning of that figure.

I have been talking about recognizable shepherds, about the Virgilian shepherd Tityrus and the herdsman Faustulus on oil lamps: without a structural analysis of these figures, the determination of the identity of a character – when not clarified by an inscription – and the meaning of that representation would be impossible or, worse, deceptive. In the forthcoming pages this topic will be deepened by the analysis of the features of shepherds: the clothes, the pastoral tools, and the presence of animals or natural details, will help to determine the identity of a shepehrd. The structural analysis introduced in this section will help to determine the eventual identification of Jesus Christ as a shepherd or, as some kind of artistic literature is used to call it, a "Good Shepherd"; eventually, it will be clear how this identification can be misleading if not sustained by a strong structural examination of the image itself.

Before moving to the chapter on the determination of meanings, the next pages will take into account the features and attributes that often are displayed in shepherd representations, defining the structural difference between a feature and an attribute.

2.1.3 Animals, crooks and clothing: from features to attributes

This section takes into account the features of pastoral representations, such as clothes, tools, and animals that enrich, and in some way define, the representation of shepherds. Some of these accessories are drawn from everyday life of actual shepherds: the clothes, the curved stick, as well as one or more sheep, were actually part of shepherds life in ancient (and even more recent) times. Some features as the panpipe (*syrinx*) are additional elements that may give different overtones to the image: the presence of the music instrument, for example, may recall the idyllic dimension of bucolic life, inspired by Theocritean and Vergilian poetry, or the singing traditions of ancient near east shepherds.

All tese features may have a symbolic meaning, depending on some contextual factors, such as the juxtaposition with others, the presence of a shepherd and the kind of image, narrative or emblematic. The presence of the vase with the milk (*mulctra*), an actual tool of actual herdsmen, is quite predictable in scenes of goat milking; nevertheless, if it is represented in bigger proportion, in a prominent position, without a milking shepherd, it earns an allegorical overtone: http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/104.

On this gravestone, for example, the milk vase is relevant in the economy of the representation, since it is the only tool of the shepherd who is not represented while milking his sheep. On the sarcophagus now in the monumental Camposanto of Pisa (Figure 36), *pedum* and *syrinx* are hanging from two trees in the side panels of the front relief.

Figure 36

Sometimes these features can become proper attributes, for example when they are represented with characters that are not actually shepherds, such as John the Baptist in the dome mosaic of the Arian Baptistry in Ravenna, or – as we shall see – some representations of Orpheus. The reason of the presence of the *pedum* in these contexts

might be due to some allegorical or metaphorical reasons, such as bucolic overtones in the portrait of the character, a misunderstanding, or more or less conscious blend of personalities.

It is necessary, to pinpoint these particular cases of allegoric uses, to define the "basic" type of shepherds representations: to a distracted eye, a ram-bearer dressed in a Phrigian garment could appear as a portrait of Orpheus as a shepherd, whereas an attentive observation of details leads to understand that this is not actually a shepherd, since the figure does not display the necessary requirement to be identified as a shepherd. Being a ram-bearer is not one of these latter.

The definition of features and attributes, eventually, helps solving some iconographic problems arised from the fusion of characters and pastoral elements, as, for example, the stucco of the underground basilica near Porta Maggiore (Rome, first half of the 1st century C.E.), where an oriental male figure holding a *pedum* is walking pulling the hand of a woman behind him.

A first definition of a shepherd figure is given by his apparel:

> «L'abito pastorizio, (σχῆμα ποιμενικόν), consiste di preferenza, come presso gli artisti pagani, nella veste dei lavoratori, la tunica esomide, alla quale presto si aggiunge come manto una leggera clamide fissata sull'omero destro, ovvero pendente comunque dalle spalle; molto più spesso, e fin dal secolo III, s'incontra la pellegrina (*alicula*) che predomina nel perìodo della pace; ordinariamente, e fin dalla seconda metà del secolo II, si vedono anche le fasce crurali o calze alte e stivali legati con lacci, non di rado con la pelle rivoltata in alto (ἐνδρομίδες, cothurni), calzatura propria delle persone addette alle occupazioni nella campagna o nei monti, perciò portata da cacciatori e da divinità campestri nell'arte classica; raramente, e solo su monumenti precostantiniani, i piedi sono nudi»[1].

Josef Wilpert in 1929 underlined the existence of a *skēma poimenikòn*, a scheme for the representation of shepherds. Shepherds were usually represented in a one-shoulder tunic, often with a short one-shoulder cloak (*tunica exomis*): the *exomis* with one sleeve was used to represent pagan gods or heroes, while the one sleeve tunica was characteristic for the lower classes and, for this, used by Early Christians for herdsmen. Later, the shepherd will dress a *colobium*, a short sleeves tunic, and the *tunica manicata*, a floating tunic, belted on the waist (half of the 3rd century). The shepherd tunic can be *exomis*, leaving one shoulder bare, but it can also cover both the shoulders and have red *clavi*, a red

[1] Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, vol. 1–Testo (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1929), 69.

decoration running along the vest: this kind of short tunic (*tunica exigua*) *clavata* is is the clothing of the shepherd in the extrados of the north-west niche in the mosaic of the San Giovanni in Fonte Baptistry in Naples, while in the vault of the Crypt of Lucina in Callistus[2] the *kriophoros* wears a white *tunica exomis exigua* with *clavi* and a cloak[3].

From the 3rd century, shepherds wear the *alicula*, a brown-red tunic, covering the shoulders and laced in the centre of the neck. Shepherds were rarely barefoot, and only in pre-Costantinian art: herdsmen usually wore ankle boots, *cothurni* or *endromides*, the latter leaving the toes bare; the *fasciae crurales* were a lower-class gaiters, laced from the ankle to the knee: this footwear was different from the hard gaiters of the upper-class, and was typical of rural workers or country gods and goddesses.

Basically these garments, *tunica* and shoes, are the minimum requirement for a shepherd figure, besides, of course, the sheep, that cannot be absent in a pastoral image.

The minimum requirement for a shepherd figure is the presence of an ovine and the shepherd apparel: this latter is the real identification mark of shepherds.

Shepherd garments can also be the so-called "oriental robe" characterized by the presence of the Phrygian cap, as the ivory statuette of a *Kriophoros* at Liverpool Merseyside County Museum, dated early 4th century[4].

The oriental Phrygian cap is a topic on which it is worthwhile to talk at length, since it is an issue for the representation of Orpheus, the Thracian musician. The identification of these shepherds with Orpheus based on the presence of the traditional cap may be misleading as one and only feature is not sufficient for determining the identity of a character as Orpheus: in a bowl from north Africa, dated 4th century and held at Mainz's Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (Figure 54), the big central *kriophoros* is dressed in a oriental *paludamentum*, with a sleeved tunic, a jewelled belt, and a cloak, as Orpheus is usually represented; nevertheless, this figure has no reference to music, there is no *lyra* nor plectrum. Since, as far as I know, there is no representation of Orpheus without a

[2] http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/58

[3] The four shepherds in the ceiling of the first room in Aurelii hypogeum are dressed with the *tunica exigua* and *clavi* (Aurélien Caillaud, "Criofori e pastore-filosofo nell'ipogeo degli Aureli," in *L'ipogeo degli Aureli in viale Manzoni. restauri, tutela, valorizzazione e aggiornamenti interpretativi* (Città del Vaticano, 2011), 214).

[4] Kurt Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality : Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978* (New York: The Metropolitan museum of art with Princeton university press, 1979), 520, n. 464.

Figure 37a

Figure 37b

music instrument, the interpretation of this figure as a convey of the mythical *kitharodos* and the shepherd is unconvincing – least of all with the Christian Good Shepherd[5].

The existence of shepherds dressed in oriental robe is a fact: Nenad Cambi in his study on funerary monuments from Dalmatia pointed out the existence of shepherds dressed in oriental garments: on the Stele of the Römisch-Germanisches Museum of Cologne, dated 3rd century, there are two shepherds, one, a *kriophoros*, dressed with a *tunica manicata* (Figure 37), and the other one is dressed in a oriental robe, he wears the Phrygian cap and is playing a panpipe (Figure 37b); sometimes shepherds can wear Phrygian cap and a western shepherd dress, as on a sarcophagus of 3rd-4th century held at Archaeological Museum of Split[6]. The Phrygian cap, as well as the oriental robe, must be interpreted as a marker of eastern provenance of characters (Dacians and Anatolians), rather than a unequivocal attribute of a given character, since that hat is worn by Attis, Orpheus, Paris and even the three Wise me, as the ones on the Sarcophagus of Catervus (Figure 63).

Sometimes a character is recognizable in the shepherd figure for the presence of his own and determining features: on a sarcophagus from San Lorenzo fuori le Mura (Rome, 4th century, Figure 59) there are three shepherds, one in the centre of the surface, the others on the two ends. All the shepherds wear a *tunica*, a short cloak (*alicula*), and high boots,

[5] For the hybrid identity of Orpheus as a shepherd see section 2.2.2.

[6] Nenad Cambi, "Attis or Someone Else on Funerary Monuments from Dalmatia," in *Romanisation Und Resistenz in Plastik, Arhitektur Und Inschriften Der Provinzen Des Imperium Romanum. Neue Funde undForschungen. Akten Des VII. Internationalen Colloquiums Über Probleme Des Provinzialrömischen Kunstschaffens. Köln*, 2001, 517, fig. 8; 14.

and they all hold a stick. The two lateral shepherds are portrayed in a profile view, while the central one is standing in frontal position. This shepherd has long hair, his head is haloed, and is surrounded by twelve people dressed in *tunicae*, corresponding to twelve sheep at their feet. Since the twelve are surely the apostles, for the two on the right and left hand of the central figure have the facial features of respectively Peter and Paul, the shepherd in the centre is undoubtedly Jesus Christ. The twelve sheep represent metaphorically the Apostles, and Jesus is, for the first and only time, representations of Christ as shepherd[7]. The identification of this shepherd with the ἀρχιποιμήν of *1Pt* 5,4 made by Wilpert is totally fitting[8]. The pastoral representation of Christ will be deepened in section 2.2.3, for now it is necessary to focus on the identification of the details that actually make the shepherd image. Only after this identification it is possible to prompt a discourse on hybrid identities of characters and pastoral figures.

An additional but meaningful feature of shepherds is the panpipe (*syrinx*): this music instrument, invented – accordingly to the myth – by the god Pan, who first undertook to join together many reeds with wax[9].

From Hellenistic age the panpipe has been the fundamental feature in every representation of the sylvan god, as in the statue of Pan and Dafni at the National Archaeologic Museum of Naples[10], until the present days. The famous silver plates from the Mildenhall Treasure show two canonical representations of Pan: the big plate (Figure 38a) is decorated with a Bacchic thiasos, where the panpipe appears twice, once in Pan's hand, and once on the planking level, under the feet of a jumping man who is holding a *pedum*. On the small plate, (Figure 38b) Pan is playing his *syrinx* with the left hand, and he is holding a *pedum* with the right hand.

[7] On the Brescia casket Figure 62) there is a representation of John 10, but Jesus wears a *pallium*, not the usual shepherd dress.

[8] Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, 1–Testo:95, and figure 26.

[9] «Mecum una in silvis imitabere Pana canendo / Pan primum calamos cera coniugere plures / instituit, Pan curat oves oviumque magistros», Virgil, *Eclogues* (II, 31-33). See also Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, I, 689-714.

[10] https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/VPC_search/record.php?record=35520

In the same museum there is a fresco of the 1st century from Pompeii, representing Pan with human legs, sitting in the centre of the scene amongst three women, and flanked by a goat

https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/VPC_search/record.php?record=35899.

Figure 38a

Figure 38b

The panpipe and the *pedum* are the most common shepherding features, besides the sheep; shepherds probably took Pan's features because the God was himself a shepherd, as he tells to Psyche in Apuleius' *Golden Ass*[11]. The presence of Pan's attribute in the representations of his worshippers, the shepherds, may recall the goat-god, as conveyed by Theocritean tradition: the shepherds in Theocritus' *Idylls* allude to Pan's piping and guarding sheep, even if the god in these poetries is never an active presence, but a verbal ornament, who takes not part in the action (as he will instead in the prose romances)[12].

Sometimes the two features can appear hanging from trees, especially when the shepherd is represented as a *kriophoros* holding the sheep's paws with both hands, as on the above mentioned sarcophagus at Camposanto of Pisa, or in the mosaic from via d'Azeglio in Ravenna (2nd-3rd century, Figure 39).

The *pedum* is the other most common feature of any shepherd from ancient times to nowadays: *pedum* is the shepherd's crook, a short stick with a curved end, similar to the ancient *lagōbólon*, a throwing stick used by hunters. Shepherds were represented with also another kind of stick, a straight and long one, used as a kickstand. The function of the two sticks are clearly different and it seems that *pedum* is more representative than functional, since shepherds are never represented using it and it is often laying besides the herdsman.

[11] Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God. His Myth in Modern Times*, Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Massachussets, 1969), 3 and note 9. Trad Graves, ch. VIII, pp. 135-6.

[12] Merivale, 2–3.

Figure 39

Depending on the kind of images and on the way it is represented, it is worth asking whether the *pedum* was a proper iconographic feature of the shepherd, or simply an actual herdsmen tool, represented for the sake of the bucolical contextualization.

In the above mentioned mosaic from Ravenna, the central shepherd is laying on his stick, while the *syrinx* is hanging from a tree: in this representation the stick is strictly functional, while the panpipe has an evocative function.

The shepherding features turn into a marker of identity as shepherd, when held by defined characters, that are not, or at least not only, actually shepherds, like Paris, Ganymede or Attis. The *pedum* can be a feature of seasonal personifications namely Autumn or Spring that are, as seen in section 2.1.1, the seasons in which shepherding activities actually take place: the presence of shepherd's crook in such seasonal iconographies evokes the shepherds world.

In this representations the *pedum* can be considered as a synecdoche, a single object used as an allusion of the whole pastoral realm in a non-pastoral context. Another example of this use is the portrait of Saint John the Baptist with the *pedum*, as in the dome mosaic in the Arian Baptistery in Ravenna (5th century), where he's dressed in a camel-skin rob, and the representation of John on a panel of a book cover now at Louvre Museum (430 C.E.)[13]. The connection of the desert wilderness, represented by the goat or camel skin

[13] Robert Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), 242–3, and figure 154.

(Matthew 3:4), and the shepherd's realm, represented by the crook, may be a visual expression of the exilic task of shepherds as guides of the flock out of that wilderness[14].

As John Baptist in the mosaic of the Arian baptistery, some other non-shepherd characters often display shepherd tools and features: Attis, for example, was often represented with *pedum* and *syrinx*; moreover, the representations of standing Attis seem to be shaped on the standard representation of resting shepherds, the chin resting on the hand, crossed legs, leaning on a stick.

Figure 40

Attis is always represented wearing the Phrygian cap and often dressed in oriental robe, marking his geographical provenance; his belly is often uncovered, probably an allusion to his eviration, and sometimes he appears winged. Another frequent feature of Attis iconography is Cybele, Mother of Gods and his devoted lover. On the Parabiago plate (Figure 18) Attis is sitting in «his ordinary shepherd's position, holding a long bent crook in his left hand and a syrinx in his right hand»[15]. Some doubts can be raised for the representations of Attis in which there are not unequivocal Attis features (Cybele, his nudity or the wings): such "neutral" figures may be simply representations of Phrygian shepherds, not necessarily Attis himself, but they could also represent «the head or busts of Ganymedes or Paris, both equally beautiful shepherds […] even the strong and heroic Mithras and, more often, the torch bearers Cautes and Cautopater are sometimes confused with Attis»[16].

[14]According to Timothy Laniak, there is a latent shepherd imagery present throughout the wilderness narratives. In so doing, we will begin to understand the paradigmatic value of the desert period for later readers and leaders (Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, Apollos (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 77.

[15] M. J. Vermaseren, The Legend of Attis in Greek and Roman Art (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 28 and Pl. XVII. moreover he is often represented with animals (Pl. X,2 and p. 20, note 7).

[16] Vermaseren, 13. For the literary tradition of the pastor, see Hepding, *Attis, seine Mythen un sein Kult* (RGVV, I), Giessen, 1903, 103, n.2

Figure 41

Figure 42

Ganymedes sometimes holds a *pedum*: in some depiction of the eagle kidnapping the beautiful young boy, he is holding a spear, as in the stuccoes in the underground Basilica near Porta Maggiore in Rome (Figure 41)[17] and in some other he holds a *pedum*, as in an ivory plaque from Egypt (3rd-4th century, Figure 42): according to Statius, Ganymede was a hunter, but according to Apuleius the young cup bearer was a shepherd, tradition accepted three centuries later by Nonnus, who in his Dionysiaca says Ganymede to be a beautiful oxherd[18].

Even Paris was represented as a shepherd, for he was raised by the herdsman Agelaus after the exposition on the mount Ida; Apuleius calls Paris the "Phrygian shepherd" in a description of a religious play depicting the Judgement of Paris held in Corinth *The Golden Ass* (10. 30, ff).

It seems that the *pedum* is not an attribute of a particular character, since many different ancient gods and heroes are represented with this feature; rather, it seems that the *pedum* is an unequivocal feature of "shepherdness" and is attained to some characters to remind their belonging to the countryside or – when attributed to non-shepherding characters – it gives a pastoral overtone to their representation.

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[17] Eugénie Strong and Noeah Jolliffe, "The Stuccoes of the Underground Basilica near the Porta Maggiore," in *Ancient Art : Roman Art and Architecture* (New York: Garland Pub, 1976), 233–79. Chrisine Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine. Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 134, ff.

[18] «Here the Phrygian hunter [Ganymedes] is borne aloft on tawny wings [of an eagle]» (Statius, *Thebaid* 1. 459, ff). For the tradition of Ganymedes as a shepherd: «With a Phrygian woven cap and saffron dress, looking like the shepherd-boy Catamitus [Ganymede] carrying a golden cup» *(*Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 11. 8). «There are herdsmen that lie in heavenly beds . . . He that pours wine for Zeus [Ganymedes] was an oxherd, whom high-soaring Zeus for his beauty carried off with tender hands» (Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*15. 279). «I see Ganymedes come here to pour the wine, that long-haired cowdrover […]" (*Dionysiaca* 8. 93). Ganymedes is called "cowboy" in *Dionysiaca*, 25. 430. http://www.theoi.com/Ouranios/Ganymedes.html

One example of this is the representation of the shepherd in the mosaic of Aquileia (Cossar plot), where a standing male figure is surrounded by two goats and holds a *pedum* with his left hand. This figure doesn't represent a shepherd, since the garments are of a wealthy man and not those of a humble herdsman. This iconography shall be examined in detail in the forthcoming section[19].

In the so-called subterranean basilica of Porta Maggiore in Rome there is a stucco with two figures walking hand in hand (Figure 43): the man on the right, dressed in a tunica and cloak pin on the right shoulder, he is turned to the woman behind him and is holding her wrist. The female figure is dressed in a long *stola*, a hood seems to be covering her neck. The male figure is wearing a Phrygian cap[20] and is holding a *pedum* in his left hand.

Figure 43

This figure is universally known as the scene of Orpheus and Eurydice, an interpretation that would fit the mysteric environment of the basilica. Nevertheless, the observation of details can shed new light on the identification of this figure: as far as I know, the *pedum* is never a feature of Orpheus, neither in Eurydice representations. An oriental character who is represented with Phrygian cap and *pedum* is Paris[21]: he was actually a shepherd, since after his exposure, he was raised by the herdsman Agelaus[22]. In this case, the woman could be Helen and the

[19] See *Hybrid identities*.

[20] This hat looks more like a pileus, even if it's different from the hat of the Dioscur of the close stucco, who is traditionally wearing that hat. http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pileo_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/.

[21] Hedreen, Guy, *Capturing Troy. The Narrative Functions of Landscape in Archaic and Early Classical Greek Art* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), fig. 44.

[22] Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero. A Psychological Exploration of Myth* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 15–16. At page 47 Rank shows the *tòpos* of the hero grown by lowly people such as shepherds, before he reveals his real identity.

scene could represent the getaway of Paris and Helen. Since there are representations of Paris with the lyre from early ages, as in the Athenian black-figure amphora at Munich Staatliche Antikensammlungen, but no representations of Orpheus with the *pedum* is attested, I think that this figure should be reinterpreted as the account of the abduction of Helen by Paris.

Moreover in the nave in which this stucco is placed there are no representations of mystery cults, as rather in the left and right aisles. In the central nave there are mythological iconographies: Jason and Medea, the abduction of Leucippides; the rape of Ganymede, the apotheosis of Herakles, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, a woman with the palladion, and Herakles and Hesione. Most of these scenes are related to the myth of Troy: Jason was chief of the Argonauts, among which there were the Dioscurides, kidnappers of Leucippides and brothers of Helen of Troy; Ganymedes was a Trojan prince, Iphygenia is the *condition sine qua non* for the sailing of Greek fleece to Troy; last, Hesione was a Trojan princess. In this context the figure of Paris and Helen would fit the Trojan general subject.

One last remark on the characterizing presence of the *pedum* leads to observe a particular case of juxtaposition: in one of the blank spaces in the geometric mosaic decoration of the floor of the Basilica of Aquileia (north room) there is a goat with a horn and a *pedum* hanged on its saddle (4th century) (Figure 44). The juxtaposition of shepherding tools and ovine is more ancient than the Aquileia mosaics and goes back to the 3rd century, in the catacombs frescoes: in Domitilla[23] and in the cemetery of via Labicana the sheep has a milk vase on his back, and in other catacombs the ovine has a pedum crossing his torso, with no saddle, as in the Aquileia mosaic instead[24].

[23] http://www.archeologiasacra.net/pcas-web/scheda/fotografico/PCASST0258643/Catacomba-di-Domitilla/Agnello-con-vaso-del-latte-nel-cubicolo-del-Buon-Pastore-particolare-di-Dom-G-11?page=1&query=storico_Catacomba-di-Domitilla&filter=catacomba&text=&jsonVal={%22filtersArchivio%22:[%22storico%22],%22filtersSoggettiArtistici%22:[%22Animali%20terrestri%20(pecore,%20capridi,%20cavalli,%20gazzelle,%20ecc.)%22]}

[24] Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, *Il Bestiario del cristo; la misteriosa emblematica di Gesù Cristo*, vol. 1 e 2, 2 vols. (Roma: Arkeios, 1994).

Figure 44

In other funerary frescoes from the hypogeum of Dino Compagni or the small villa in San Sebastiano[25], as well as in the ceiling mosaic of the Mausoleum of Santa Costanza, a sort of pointed stick or decorated rod seems to be passing through the animal, often a deer or a goat-like animal. Some of these sticks look like the Dionysiac *thyrsus* (namely one detail in the mosaic of saint Costanza, and some of the sticks in the cubiculum E in Dino Compagni), while some others seem to be *caducei*, in the small villa in san Sebastiano[26].

The visual pattern of an animal "pierced" by a staff is widespread in late antiquity, and it appears in important positions within the decoration, it often occupies the centre of framed blank spaces, without any other element. Therefore stating the decoration as the exclusive purpose of this pattern would be reductive, since this representation often occupied relevant position within the decoration.

The staff is often a sceptre, since both *thyrsus* and *caduceus* were symbolic rods, related to gods or cults. The same juxtaposition is made with the ovine and the *pedum*, that can

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[25] http://www.archeologiasacra.net/pcas-web/scheda/fotografico/PCASST0217918/Catacomba-di-S-Sebastiano/Camera-inferiore?page=1&query=sebastiano&filter=&jsonVal={}

[26] In the Jewish Catacomb of Vigna Randanini there is a ram staring at a stick that seems a *caduceus* , and in a fresco of Praetextatus catacomb, a deer is pierced by the same stick (Joseph Wilpert, *Le Pitture Delle Catacombe Romane, Illustrate Da Giuseppe Wilpert*, Desclée, Lefebvre, 1903, fig. 136). http://www.archeologiasacra.net/pcas-web/scheda/fotografico/PCASST0215292/Cimitero-ebraico-di-Vigna-Randanini/Parete-di-destra-riquadro-di-destra?page=12&query=Animali%20terrestri&filter=&text=&jsonVal={%22filtersSoggettiArtistici%22:[%22Animali%20terrestri%20(pecore,%20capridi,%20cavalli,%20gazzelle,%20ecc.)%22],%22filtersClasseOggettiArtistici%22:[%22Intonaci%20dipinti%22]}

likewise be therefore considered as a symbolic feature: surely it is not a divine feature, nor it alludes to the god Pan or Attis, but it is clear that the *pedum* has a symbolic power, it can be used as an emblem of the bucolic realm.

The post-facto proof that these images are more than decorative patterns is given by the early iconographies of the Christian Lamb of God: before the iconography of the lamb sitting on the seven seals book carrying the triumphal standard was established, there were many representations of a lamb "pierced" by a high cross, as in the sarcophagus from saint Apollinare in Ravenna[27]. These images of a lamb juxtaposed to a cross might have provided a formal precedent for the creation of the iconography of the lamb of God and that, in turn, the ovine with shepherd's crooks or *thyrsi* or *caducei* could be the prompt of all these iconographies.

Once more, the structural analysis can be revealing, if not for the meaning of an image at least, for the relations between images and symbols.

In the above mentioned juxtapositions of animals and sceptres, the pedum has not been considered as a sort of "shepherding sceptre": as we have seen, on one hand the *pedum* has a denotative function as shepherding tool, evoking with its presence the bucolic realm and the belonging of the *pedum*-carrier character to the realm of herdsmen; on the other hand the shepherd's crook is a denotation of power since it was actually used by herdsmen to lead their flocks. It can be therefore considered as a device of authority and a sign of leadership. As we shall see in the conclusions (4) this aspects is confirmed in Christian literature (Psalm 23) and maybe it is a basis for the comparison of *pedum* and bishop's crosier.

[27] Ester Brunet, "Note circa l'uso del simbolo dell'Agnus Dei nella scultura altomedievale (Italia centro-setterntrionale)," in *Veneia arti. Bollettino del dipartimento di storia delle arti e conservazione dei beni artistici "Giuseppe Mazzariol" dell'Università Ca'Foscari di Venezia* (Roma: Viella, 2007), 9, fig. 5 and following. In Deir Sanbil there is a relief with a lamb carrying a small cross on his back, in the same way of the above mentioned ovine carrying a vase of milk. See Henri Leclercq, "Agneau," *Dictionnaire D'archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie (DACL)* (Paris: Librairie Leouzey et Ané, 1938), fig. 208 col. 894.

2.1.4 Poimēn: a database of anthropomorphic pastoral images

Poimēn[1] is a relational database of shepherds images of the 3rd to the 6th century. The primary record of *Poimēn* is the figure of the shepherd, in its basical representation, a human figure recognizable as a herdsman by the shepherd apparel, defined in the previous section, and by the presence of ovine, considered as the fundamental feature.

It is not a database of works of arts, such as sarcophagi, gems, coins, glasses, etc., it just takes into account the images of shepherds that these objects dectoration displays. For example, the famous sarcophagus with a conversation of shepherds from Isola Sacra (Ostia, Figure 22) provides five entries to the database, instead of one, as many as the shepherds displayed on the relief. The sarcophagus, as well as a wall fresco or any other support of the shepherd image will be considered as a record of each database item, namely *Image-Object*.

Poimēn is a database whose records are conceived to highlight the structural characteristics of the shepehrds images. These characteristics are not necessaily the common art history categories, they rather point at defining the status of images, emblematic or narrative. Only the first three records belong to historical field, and provide the basic and necessary historical informations, such as the date and the context in which it was originally supposed to be: funerary, monumental, everyday context.

A narrative image is a story or a scene drawn from a literary, mythological or historical episode, with an action between one or two characters; an emblematic image is iconic, representative rather than descriptive.

The emblematic image is evocative: as portraits recall the memory of a person by showing its image in that moment, in which no temporal dimension is involved, so the iconic image synthetically elicits concepts and ideas in viewer's mind, whereas narrative images hold in themselves the time of the story they tell. Narrative images require a determined succession of instants to be read, «the presentation of visual narratives may develop both diachronic and synchronic modes of reading, the former determined by the

[1] The realization of this database has been possible thanks to the kind help and skills of professor Marco Orlandi. A special thank also goes to professor Alessandro Iannucci and Framelab, Laboratorio fotografico e multimediale per i Beni Culturali (Department of Cultural Heritage of Ravenna).

succession of images, the latter freed from those constraints»[2]. Emblematic images are as noun phrases, they *work as* predicative expressions.

This database aims at, and is restricted to, pointing out the structural elements that mark the differences between emblematic and narrative shepherds, in order to give rise to the forthcoming iconological discourse about the meaning and the sense of the two types of images.

The choice of the explicit definition of the type of images by the row *Kind of Image* is due to the fact that the characteristics of the images are not sufficient to define the structure of the image: for example, it is not possible to state every framed shepherd as an iconic one, even if frames are one of the most important ostensive devices. For this reason a database that simultaneously considers all the characteristics and key-elements for the definition of an iconic image, as *Poimēn* does with its records, is a useful tool for the iconographic study of structure and form of such images.

The databes records are: Attitude, Attributes, Recognizable, Frame, Background, Inscription.

Attitude describes the actions and gestures of the shepherd: he may be milking of a goat or caressing a hound, or a *kriophoros*, portrayed in a frontal view, in a symmetrical composition; this latter attitude may be a characteristic of the emblematic shepherd.

Emblematicity is also determined by the background and the presence of a frame or any framing device: on one hand, the more the background in undetermined, the more the image is emblematic; on the other hand, if the shepherd is represented in a wide countryside, with natural elements, such as trees, then the image may be a narrative image.

Shepherds often have some features that may be considered as attributes: these features are mostly shepherding tools, such as the bag, the shepherd's crook (*pedum*) and the milk vase. Sometimes shepherds are featured with other kinds of objects that work as attributes: the panpipe (*syrinx*), as a reference to music, may connotate the shepherd as an idyllic character, recalling the idea of a peaceful condition inherited by Theocritean poetry. Moreover, on a sarcophagus from San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura (Figure 59), the shepherd portrayed in the centre of the relief, is flanked by twelve sheep and twelve

[2] Richard Brilliant, *Visual Narratives. Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art*, Cornell University Press (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 19.

people, two of which are Peter and Paul: in this case the twelve are the Apostles, and they work as the istanza di riconoscibilità for the shepherd, recognizable as Jesus[3].

The record *Recognizable* will be marked with a YES/NO answer as the shepherd is recognizable as a character; if yes, the compiler will have to type the name of the character in the next row. If any inscription is present, then its transliteration will be typed in the dedicated row, quoting the source of the critical edition in the row *Bibliography*.

The *Position* of the image of the shepehrd within the whole decoration is a further mark for an mblematic image, as emblematic images are often represented in a central position. This record is inspired by the semiotic approach that, as mentioned above, is necessary for the identification and study of emblematic representations.

[3] On the other side, proprerly shepherding tools may idetify a given character as a shepherd. As told above, these images will not be items of this database, since it only takes in account genuine shepherds; nevertheless, the hybrid identities of characters portrayed as shepherds will be discussed in the end of the next chapter.

Image-Object: text field for the name of the object/artwork/support of the image (eg. Sarcophagus)

Context allows to choose one of the pre-determined contexts: FUNERARY, MONUMENTAL or everyday life.

Date: free text field for chronological informations.

Type of image the compiler can chose between NARRATIVE or EMBLEMATIC

Attitude descrbes by pre-compiled keywords the gestures and the actions of the shepherd. *Kriophoros* is one of the attitudes.

Attributes pre-compiled keywords of the features.

Recognozable: if the shepherd is recognizable as a detetrmined character, such as Jesus, Orpheus, David, Orpheus, etc., then the field will be completed with YES and the name of the character typed in the next record, otherwise the field will be compiled with NO.

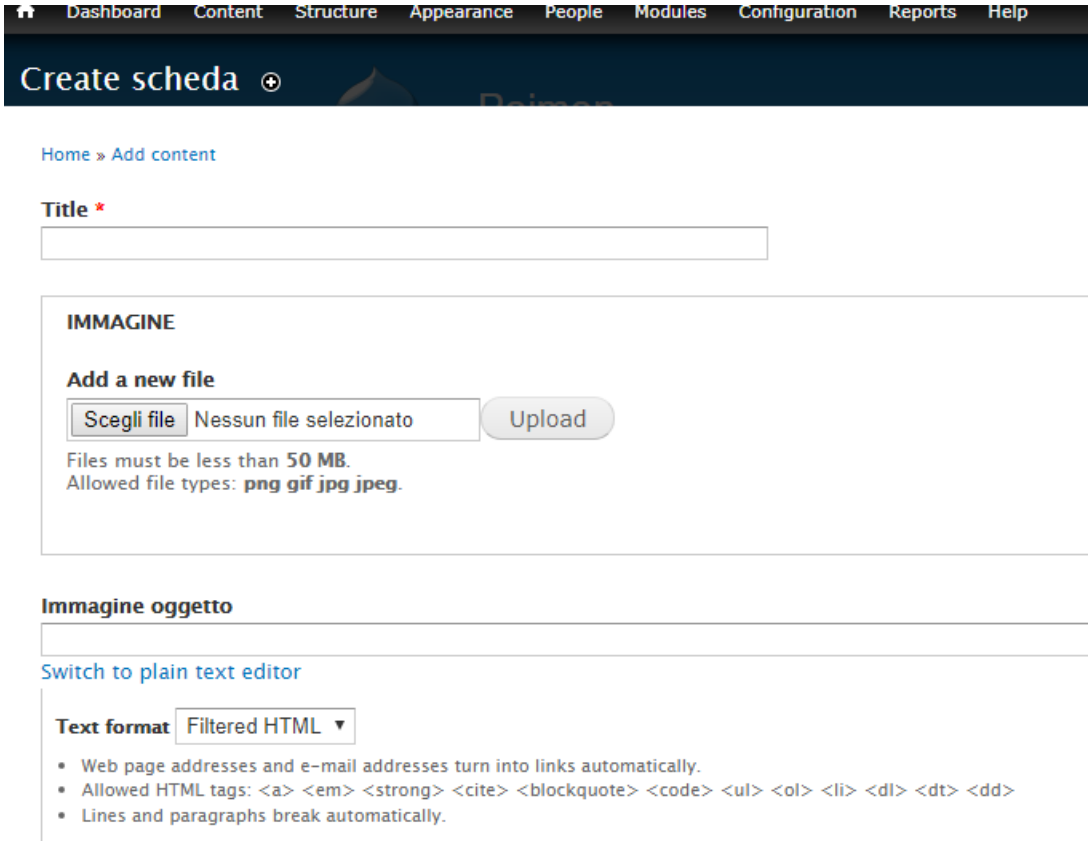
Frame this is a YES/NO field, whether the image is framed or not.

Background describes the determine or neutral space.

Position displays the position of the image within the decoration.

Inscription, it is possible to transcribe the inscription, if present.

Interface of Poimēn:



Contesto

- None -

Datazione

Tipo di Immagine

- N/A
- Narrativa
- Emblematica

Attitudine

Attributi

Personaggio

- Cornice

Sfondo

- N/A
- Neutro
- Determinato

Collocazione

- None -

Iscrizione

- N/A
- No
- Sì

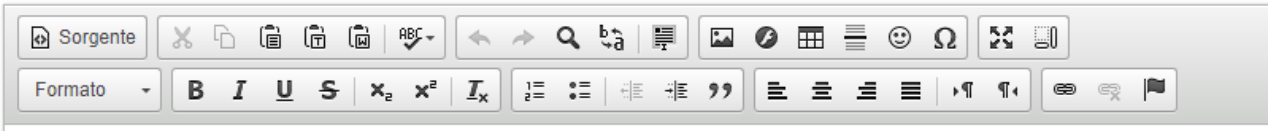
Link Iscrizione

Switch to plain text editor

Text format Filtered HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Allowed HTML tags: <a>   <cite> <blockquote> <code>   <dl> <dt> <dd>
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

Bibliografia



Note (Edit summary)

Switch to plain text editor

2.2 Pastoral metaphors and Imagery – Interpretations

The previous chapter showed the importance of garments, attitude of figures and location, in the definition of images on an *iconographic* plan: as we have seen, clothes can distinguish a simple herdsman from the divine "Phrygian Shepherd" Attis or Jesus himself. Before moving forward to the study of hybrid identities, the iconographies that show a (conscious?) attribution of shepherd characteristics and features to different personalities (Orpheus or Christ), this brief section wants to show how those features are crucial also for the *iconological* interpretation of images.

2.2.1 Antonomasia

Figure 45

Figure 46

A significant case study is the representation of a shepherd in a pavement mosaic of a *domus* in Aquileia, the so-called shepherd with unusual garments (Figure 45)[1]: this figure appears in the centre of a framed blank area, only the ground and some grass are sketched, he is surrounded by a goat, a sheep and a vase full of milk; a bird (maybe added during the restoration) stands beside his head. Surely not restored are the long *pedum* that the character holds in his left hand, and the main details of his garment:

[1] Fabrizio Bisconti and Matteo Braconi, "Il riuso delle immagini in età tardoantica: l'esempio del buon pastore dall'abito singolare," in *Antichità Altoadriatiche*, vol. 74, 2012, 231–40. The illustration underlines the restored parts, from Luisa Bertacchi, "Il mosaico aquileiese del buon pastore 'dall'abito singolare', in Aquileia e l'oriente mediterraneo," in *Atti della 7 settimana di studi aquileiesi (24 Aprile - 1 Maggio 1976)*, Arti grafiche friulane (Udine, 1977), 429–44.

trimmings and *orbiculi* decorate respectively the sleeves and the border of a short white tunic, tied on the waist by a gem belt; the legs are covered by *bracae*, and a crimson cloak covers his shoulders.

He is not actually dressed like a shepherd, nevertheless he is holding the *pedum*, and probably before the restoration he held a panpipe in his right hand, as Luisa Bertacchi hypothesized (Figure 46)[2]: both *pedum* and panpipe are, as seen above, markers of shepherd identity; moreover the ovine and the milk vase are additional elements that speak the shepherd language.

This mosaic is located in the first part of the floor of the main room[3], in a position that was visible at first glance by the visitors of the *domus*. Similarly, another image of shepherd is placed in the same position, in a house of the C.A.L. plot, also in Aquileia[4]: this shepherd is not richly dressed as the Cossar one, nevertheless its position shows the precise will of the household to display a shepherd iconography in the most important part of the floor of the main room[5].

We have already seen that bucolic iconographies were used in ancient mosaics to display wealth and affluence of rich patrons estates, as in the mosaic of Lord Julius in Tunisi (Figure 3). In these mosaics shepherds represent one of the rural activities of the property, the bucolic vignette was surrounded by other representations of the countryside works; conversely both the shepherd of C.A.L. and Cossar plots belong to

[2] The pointed brown detail a little below the figure's right arm has been interpreted as the ending point of a panpipe. See Bertacchi, "Il mosaico aquileiese del buon pastore 'dall'abito singolare', in Aquileia e l'oriente mediterraneo."

[3] daniela scagliarini corlaìta, "domus villae palatia," in *abitare in citta: la cisalpina tra impero e medioevo* (Wiesbaden, 2003), 13–172.

[4] Patrizio Pensabene and Enrico Gallocchio, "La domus del buon pastore nel fondo C.A.L. (Aquileia): fasi e contestualizzazione dei mosaici," in *Atti del xv colloquio dell'associazione italiana per lo studio del mosaico,* AISCOM, vol. 15 (Tivoli: Scripta Manent, 2010), 33–40.

[5] Sheperds appear also in other pavement mosaics, one in a roman villa in Desenzano (first half of 4th century) and one in the *domus* of via d'Azeglio in Ravenna (half of the 4th century – beginning of the 5th). Daniela Scagliarini Corlaìta, "La villa di Desenzano. Vicende architettoniche e decorative," in *Studi Sulla Villa Romana Di Desenzano* (Milano: ET, 1994); Mario Mirabella Roberti, "Un musaico col buon pastore nella villa romana di Desenzano?," in *Atti del v congresso nazionale di archeologia cristiana 22-29 Settembre 1982* (Roma: Viella, 1982), 393–405; Maria Grazia Maioli, "I mosaici del complesso di Via D'Azeglio in Ravena," in *Atti del iii colloquio dell'associazione italiana per lo studio e la conservazione del mosaico* (Bordighera: Istituto internazionale di studi liguri, 1996), 335–44; Giovanna Montevecchi, ed., *Archeologia urbana a Ravenna : La domus dei tappeti di pietra, il complesso archeologico di via D'Azeglio* (Ravenna: Longo, 2004); Maria Grazia Maioli, "Edifici di età repubblicana e augustea nel complesso archeologico di via d'Azeglio a Ravenna," in *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina XLII* (Ravenna: Edizioni del Girasole, 1995), 507–21.

the isolated type described above[6], they are framed in a blank space, with only few landscape details and a couple of domestic animals.

Scholars have observed in these shepherds the will of self-representation of the *dominus* as a *villicus*: the Cossar shepherd especially, for his noble and rich garments, has been read as a typological portrait of the household, willing to show his moral virtues and qualities[7]. Since the part of the head is completely restored, it is hard to determine whether the representation of the face had any physiognomy characteristic of a portrait, nevertheless the richness and the details of the garments of Cossar shepherd reveal a typological representation, blended with pastoral elements.

What can be the reason of such an iconographical blend of bucolic imagery with "urbanized" taste? Shepherds and bucolic imagery were part of everyday visual culture during the Roman Empire and Late Antiquity: pastoral representations were common on gems[8] and lamps since republican age[9], besides other different iconographies, from the erotica subject-matter to the Victories that usually belong to the "official" art. These everyday objects were used, during the Augustan age, as vehicles of imperial iconographies, since they were an affordable way for the average roman citizen to have high-class decorations for their objects and belongings[10]. As the imperial age roman imitated the official motifs, the third-century province household, like the Aquileia ones, must have looked after the contemporary fashion of house decoration and everyday object in vogue in the capital: in between these two ages, the bucolic imagery had become a trend for private decoration (houses and tombs), thanks to the influence of Virgilian poetry.

Under this influence, shepherds became in roman society *antonomasia* of a longed-for condition of peace and idyllic blissfulness. The visual establishment of such

[6] See section 2.1.2.

[7] Bisconti and Braconi, "Il riuso delle immagini in età tardoantica: l'esempio del buon pastore dall'abito singolare," 233 and note 15. See also Gian Luca Grassigli, "Scelta ed uso del mito nei mosaici della cisalpina," in *Atti del iv colloquio dell'associazione nazionale per lo studio e la conservazione del mosaico (Palermo, 9-13 Dicembre 1996)*, Edizioni del Girasole (Ravenna, 1997), 705–720..

[8] Gemma Sena Chiesa, "Gemme Del museo di aquileia con scene bucoliche," in *Acme: Annali della facoltà di filosofia e lettere dell'università statale di Milano. Omaggio a Luigi Castiglioni*, 1957, 175–92.

[9] Elena Di Filippo Balestrazzi, *Lucerne del museo di aquileia, vol ii, 2, lucerne romane di età repubblicana e imperiale* (Associazione Nazionale per Aquileia, 1988).

[10] Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, University of Michigan Press (Ann Arbor, 1988), 274–75.

iconographies is due to everyday objects and spaces: tombs, houses, as well as jewels and lamps, all these media were decorated with bucolic images and representations[11].

In this framework, the presence of a bucolic iconography for the floor decoration of Aquileia houses shall not surprise: on one hand the customer might have chosen bucolic iconographies for their positive sense, for the evocation of an idyllic condition; on the other hand, the "portrait" of the household with pastoral features must have been interpreted by contemporary viewers as the *antonomasia* for the good administration of the house, recalling the virtuous shepherd's good care of his flock. Be it or not a portrait of the *dominus*, the shepherd might have been represented to define the household as warrantor of the blissful condition of the house.

The choice of such iconography may reveal the will of a provincial citizen to look after and imitate the decorations in vogue in the capital: roman villas and tombs were, as we have seen, decorated with bucolic iconographies, since every Roman urbanized citizen must have read Virgil's Eclogues. It must be considered that Aquileia, chief city of the *X Regio* from Augustan Age, was a rich but marginalized reality, until the 3rd century, when it became capital of *Venetia et Histria* and where the governor and his court, as well as the emperor, used to sojourn, between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century. It goes without saying that this period corresponds to a urban renewal, of both public and private buildings: in these years the Basilica was under construction and the wealthy patrons are growing in power and social importance, insomuch that during the 4th century house decoration became a weapon in the battle for social affirmation[12]. These patrons must have been careful and well aware of the kind of decoration for their houses, that were semi-public spaces.

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[11] Beyond the positive connotation of shepherds, it must be considered the positive connotation of lamps themselves: they were good wishing objects, and gained a preminent position within roman society. In the house of via Fani in Perugia (1st century B.C.) the threshold is decorated with the image of a lamp, and to this iconography, due also to its position in the entrance of the house, is appointed the welcoming function. Massimiliano David pointed out the symbolic meaning of the oil lampa s light bearer in funerar context, see for example the marble gravestone of Ianuaria from Callistus catacomb (4th century), and the mosac of Quoddeus Senior (5th century). Massimiliano David, "Lucerne in incognito:immagini di lucerne in pavimentazioni musive romane edite," in *Lychnological acts, 1 : actes du 1er congrès international d'études sur le luminaire antique (Nyon – Genève, 29. IX – 4.X.2003)* (Editions Monique Mergoil, 2005), 61.

[12] Marta Novello, "Autorappresentazione delle élites aquileiesi nelle domus tardoantiche," in *Architettura privata ad aquileia in età romana. Atti del convegno di studio (Padova, 21-22 Febbraio 2011)* (Padova: Padova University Press, 2012), 222–42; Luisa Bertacchi, "I Ritratti Nei Mosaici Di Aquileia," in *Il ritratto romano in Aquileia e nella Cisalpina. Atti della 27. settimana di studi aquileiesi, 27-30 Aprile 1996*, Antichità Altoadriatiche (Trieste: Editreg, 1999), 81–103.

The representation of the shepherd with rich garments is not a celebration of the household, this latter is rather the purpose of the decoration; the Cossar shepherd surely reveals the desire of the household to follow the Rome fashion. The rich garments actually are an *unicum* in Aquileia shepherds representations, and there are some reasonable doubts in interpreting it as a portrait; nevertheless, it is surely a way to make the shepherd figure more noble. This shepherd, rather than being a portrait, even typological, of the household, is an *antonomasia* for something positive and good, namely the good administration of the house; this sense is given by the "urbanization" of the shepherd by his noble, rich, vogue garments.

A corroboration of such a precise desire of affirmation is given by a semiotic analysis of the mosaic: the shepherd is framed, isolated in a blank space, statement of its being close to the emblematic kind; moreover, the whole mosaic is arranged so that the visitor, when entering the house, was greeted and welcomed by this figure that should have theatrically introduced the guest to the host, who would have probably been sitting on a *triclinium* or any other kind of chair in the space decorated with geometrical lines just above the shepherd mosaic (Figure 47)[13]. This last remark shows the intention of the customers of the mosaic to show off this iconographies and reveal that pastoral iconographies and motifs were not only seen as a humble countryside idyll, but they could also enrich more official and representative decorations.

Figure 47

Another figure deserves to be considered as an *antonomasia*, the figure of the so-called philosopher-shepherd painted on the left side of the wall in the second room of the Hypogeum of Aurelii (Rome, Figure 48).

[13] Scagliarini Corlaìta, "Domus villae palatia."

This figure represent a sitting man, with long hair and beard, reading a scroll. He is dressed in a long *tunica* with red *clavi* and a *pallium*. A flock of goats and ovine, to whom the man seems not to pay attention, is surrounding him, who is sitting on a hill. It is clear that this man is not a shepherd, since he is dressed like a philosopher in a bucolic background. This shepherd can be defined as a *pastor palliatus*, following the definition of Nikolaus Himmelmann[14]

The decoration of the whole Hypogeum, dated after 240[15], is characterized by the presence of *figurae togatae*, philosophers, besides the figures of shepherds, that appear in the ceiling of the first room, where four *kriophoroi* are represented in the angular sections.

In this figure of *pastor palliatus* is realized a iconographic hybrid of the pastoral and philosophical theme: Adrién Caillaud recognized this iconographic blend also the sarcophagus of La Gayole, the one of Santa Maria Antiqua, and the one with the conversation of shepherds from Ostia (Figure 22)[16]. Some scholars tried to give a Christian interpretation of this image, as the account of the sermon of the mountain[17], or relating the Aurelii shepherd to the Good Shepherd of the Gospel of

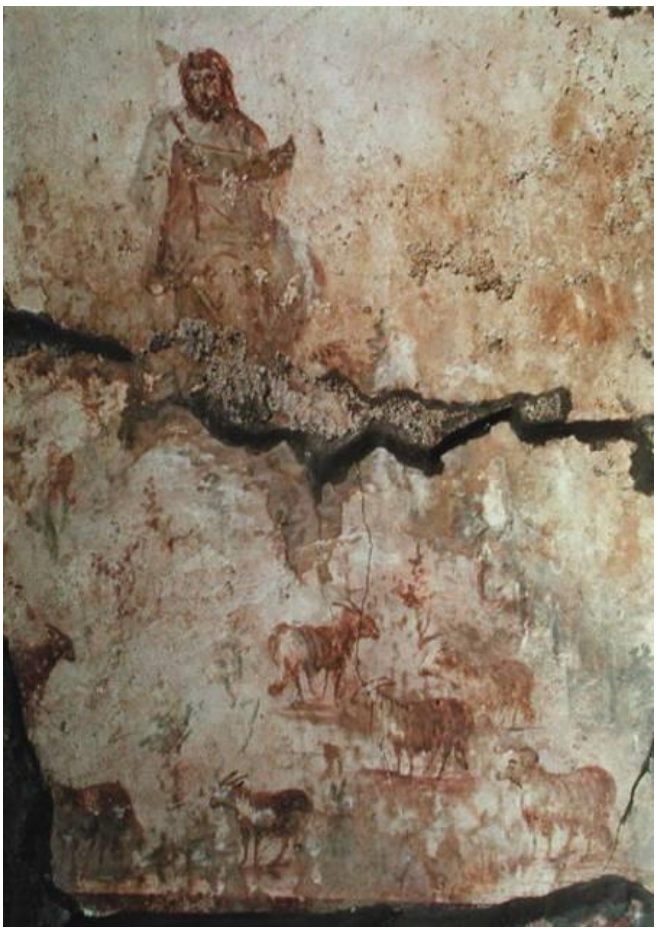

Figure 48

[14] Nikolaus Himmelmann, *Über Der Hirten-Genre in Der Antiken Kunst*, Opladen, 1980, 151–56.

[15] Agnese Pergola, "Il quadrante delle interpretazioni," in *L'ipogeo degli Aureli in viale Manzoni. Restauri, tutela, valorizzazione e aggiornamenti interpretativi* (Città del Vaticano, 2011), 81–123.

[16] Aurélien Caillaud, "Criofori e pastore-filosofo nell'ipogeo degli Aureli," in *L'ipogeo degli Aureli in viale Manzoni. Restauri, tutela, valorizzazione e aggiornamenti interpretativi* (Città del Vaticano, 2011), 213–21.

[17] Joseph Wilpert, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane, illustrate Da Giuseppe Wilpert*, Desclée, Lefebvre, 1903.

Jon[18], but the Christian interpretation seems to be not acceptable, since there is not any evidence of other Christian iconographies or hint that could ascribe the tomb to a Christian environment.

Rather, all the frescoes in the three-chambers hypogeum speak the language of philosophy, the same language spoken by shepherds and bucolic imagery in third century funerary art: Paul Zanker highlighted the change of taste for funerary decorations, pointing out that pastoral and philosophical imagery became established with the progressive dismissal of mythological themes[19]. In these years the representation of shepherds in resting postures became more and more popular, and the figure of the *pastor palliatus* became one of the favourite ways of self-representation of roman customers.

> «La volontà dei defunti di farsi rappresentare con i tratti del filosofo, fenomeno ben attestato dalla plastica funeraria, sembra quindi riscontrarsi anche nel nostro ipogeo, con la particolarità di un'ambientazione in un contesto ameno reso attraverso il monte popolato di capre, alla sommità del quale uno degli Aurelii è raffigurato nella posa dell'uomo sapiente, la cui cultura costituisce la chiave dell'immortalità»[20].

The *pastor palliatus* as well as the shepherd with rich garments of Aquileia show one of the uses of shepherd image and bucolic imagery in allegoric way: they are figures of speech, in this case an *antonomasia*. In other cases the figure of speech is simply a metaphor, a parallel of some characters that are portrayed *as* a shepherd, to highlight a particular shepherd-like characteristic. These metaphors give birth to what I call hybrid identities, that is to say, images of determined characters and personalities whose portrayal displays features and elements drawn by the shepherds world.

The forthcoming pages will show some cases of iconographic hybrids, their meanings and purposes.

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[18] For the interpretations given by scholars throughout the years, see Pergola, "Il Quadrante Delle Interpretazioni."

[19] Paul Zanker and Bjorn C. Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2012).

[20] Caillaud, "Criofori e pastore-filosofo nell'ipogeo degli Aureli," 220 and note 45.

2.2.2 Hybrid Identities

A metaphor is a figure of speech, whose purpose is to make the communication more effective: it aims at emphasizing the quality of an element by the comparison with another element's qualities.

This chapter takes in account the products of allegoric and metaphorical visual speech, especially those hybrid images that come from the bestowal of shepherding characteristics to given characters: some characters, such as Orpheus, Jesus and Peter the Apostle, are often represented with shepherd's features, such as the shepherding tools and garments, creating sometimes a figure that is a sort of "shepherd version" of the character. As we shall see, the hybrids are not all of the same kind: the character can keep his identity and be represented in a bucolic environment, with shepherd garments and attributes, sometimes the identity can be more blurred and the character can be unrecognizable.

These images are different from the antonomasias shown in the previous section, since Attis or Paris with shepherding attributes were *actually* shepherds, or characters related in a way to shepherds world, so they were not exactly hybrids of two different identities.

The characters taken into account in this section wouldn't have anything to do with the shepehrd world, they are just arbitrary related to the bucolic realm, in order to build metaphors. In other words, I'll try to understand the meaning and the purpose of the assignment of the "epithet" of shepherd to some characters, the reasons of these associations and the cultural background.

Figure 49

Figure 50

Figure 51

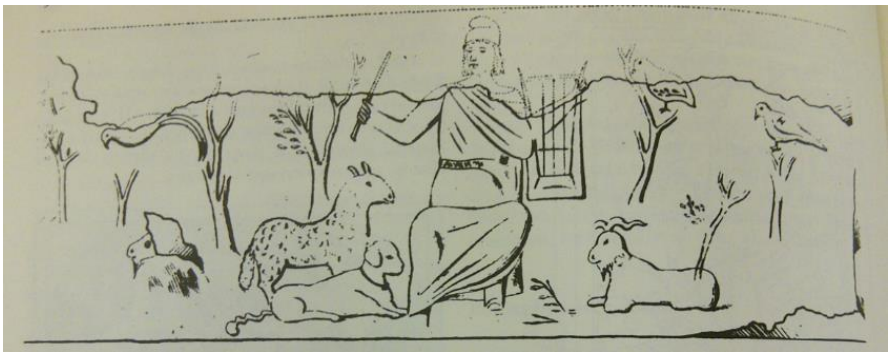

Figure 52

Figure 53

The most interesting and rich of examples case study is the character of Orpheus, whose identity is often blurred with the shepherd figure in many and different ways. No source speaks of Orpheus as a shepherd, he was rather a theologian, a writer[1] and, most of all, the mythical singer. The theme of Orpheus-singer appears early in literature: Simonides is the first (end of the 4th century B.C.) to talk about the power of the musician, and most authors focus on the peace created in the animal realm and the harmony between wild beasts and tamed animals by the Thracian's singer[2].

The representation of animals enchanted by Orpheus is the most popular theme in visual representations, besides the iconography of Eurydice, and among Christian artists.

The typical scheme is Orpheus sitting in the middle of many different animals, wild and domestic. The musician is always represented playing an instrument, his garments may change, but basically they belong to the oriental type, with Phrygian cap[3].

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[1] Laurence Vieillefon, *La figure d'Orphée dans l'antiquité tardive* (Paris: De Boccard, 2003); Marcel Détienne, *The Writing of Orpheus : Greek Myth in Cultural Contact* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

[2] Philostratus, *Imagines*, 6; Callistratus, *Statues*, 7; Claudian, Rape of Proserpine, II, Preface, vv.25-28.

[3] For the variations in Orpheus' iconography see Vieillefon, *La figure d'Orphée dans l'antiquité tardive*.

Some late antique representations display the musician surrounded only by tamed animals, like oxen, birds and sheep: these are the sarcophagus of Cacarens (beginning 4th century), a sarcophagus from the Basilica of San Gavino in Porto Torres, Sardinia (Figure 51), two sarcophagi from Ostia, a fresco from the catacomb of Callistus (Figure 53), one in saint Peter and Marcellino (beginning 4th century), and one in Priscilla (Figure 52)[4].

On the sarcophagi from Ostia and Sardinia the figure is standing, the left leg raised, stepping on a rock[5]; under a pillar, on which is the music instrument, there is a sheep (or ram) looking upwards to the musician. He is dressed in an oriental robe with Phrygian cap, he is touching the instrument with the right arm, while looking back. Behind this figure there is a tree.

In the three sarcophagi this basic scheme does not change, except for small details: on the strigilated sarcophagus at Museo Pio Cristiano of Ostia[6] (end 3rd – beginning 4th century) there is a bird on the tree and another sheep behind the musician, who's playing with a plectrum; in another sarcophagus in Ostia[7] contemporary to the latter, there is a sheep coming out from a bush (or a tree?) in the upper left part of the panel (part of the tree is missing). Both these sarcophagi are to be considered Christian, because of the inscriptions they bear; the inscription of the first is under the lid: HIC /QUIRIACUS/

[4] Vieillefont recognizes Orpheus in the *kriophoros* of a terracotta bowl from North Africa (4th ce): «terre cuite africaine du Musée de Mayence [C5], sarcophage de Cacarens [S2=end 3rd-beginning 4th ce; Phrygian Orpheus], sarcophages d'Ostie [S4-5- pl.XVI], fresques des catacombes de Callixte [P1-fig.12 cubiculum 9; Phrygian Orpheus], des sts Pierre et Marcellin I [P4 end 3rd-beginning 4th ce; cubiculum 64; Phrygian Orpheus], de Priscille [P6, 4th ce; cubiculum 29; Phrygian Orpheus]». (Vieillefon, *La figure d'Orphée dans l'antiquité tardive*, 55).

[5] In my opinion this pattern, recurring in every representation of the standing musician, may be an adaptation of the mountain or hill of the sitting kind; see Aurélien Caillaud, "Criofori e pastore-filosofo nell'ipogeo degli Aureli," in *L'ipogeo degli Aureli in viale Manzoni. Restauri, tutela, valorizzazione E Aggiornamenti Interpretativi* (Città del Vaticano, 2011), p.217, fig. 1.

[6] Ilona Julia Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic : An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to Its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, England: Archaeopress, 1997), 165a. See also Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann, Giuseppe Bovini, and Hugo Brandeburg, *Repertorium Der Christlich-Antiken Sarkophage. Bd. 1. Rom Und Ostia Tafelbd Unbekannter Einband* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1967), fig. 22, 70.

http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/10

[7] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic : An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to Its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity*, n. 165b. Deichmann, Bovini, and Brandeburg, *Repertorium Der Christlich-Antiken Sarkophage. Bd. 1. Rom Und Ostia Tafelbd Unbekannter Einband*, n. 1022, pl. 164; Valentine Muller, "The Prehistory of the 'Good Shepherd,'" in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, University of Chicago Press, vol. 3, 2 (Chicago, 1944), 4,6 and fig 8.

DORMIT IN PACE; the second one's inscription runs along the superior rim of the long side: FYRMI DULCIS ANIMA SANCTA[8].

In the sarcophagus from the Basilica of San Gavino in Porto Torres (Sardinia), dated between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century, there are two birds, in the upper corners of the panel, and there is another animal behind the male figure, maybe a griffin[9].

According to Julia Jesnick, these figures of Orpheus surrounded by tamed animals, as well as the fresco from Callistus catacomb (Figure 53)[10], are to be interpreted as representations of Christ-Orpheus; Vieillefont agrees, specifying that these don't correspond to the *whole* corpus of Christian representations of Orpheus. Peter Dronke agrees with this interpretation, speaking, for this fresco, in favour of a good shepherd interpretation:

> «L'arte paleocristiana a Roma ci mostra spesso Orfeo come figura di Cristo. In un affresco nella catacomba di S. Callisto (seconda metà del secondo secolo), Orfeo suona la sua cetra per due pecore: l'immagine del musicista si fonde con quella del Buon Pastore»[11].

Moreover Jesnick identifies some representation of Orpheus as the good shepherd[12], an iconography that will be replaced by the figure of the good shepherd itself by the end of the 4th century[13]. Vieillefon seems to agree, saying that the replacement of Orpheus-

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[8] Vieillefon, *La figure d'Orphée dans l'antiquité tardive*, 82; 192.

[9] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic : An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to Its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity*, 165c; Gennaro Pesce, *Sarcofagi Romani Di Sardegna* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretscheider, 1957), 102–3, n. 57, figg. 113-116.

[10] Ilona Julia Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic : An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to Its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, England: Archaeopress, 1997), 164a. Moreover, a musician of the sitting kind from the destroyed fresco from Priscilla Catacomb (second half of the 4th century), known only from a drawing Ibid., 164f. Vieillefon, *La Figure d'Orphée Dans l'Antiquité Tardive*, 6.

[11] Peter Dronke, "La persistenza dei miti musicali greci attraverso la letteratura mediolatina," in Musica e Storia, 1998, 56.

[12]The catalogue Age of spirituality interprets two fragments of statuettes of Phrygian kriophoroi as representations of Orpheus- good shepherd. Kurt Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality : Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978* (New York: The Metropolitan museum of art with Princeton university press, 1979), 520, 463; 521, 466.

[13] «L'assimilation d'Orhée au "Bon Pasteur", proposé dans plusieurs ouvrages, est sujette à discussion : l'image du Bon Pasteur appartenait à l'art chrétien depuis ses débuts, et se trouve parfois juxtaposée à celle

shepherd with Christ-Shepherd is made with a partial reuse of the profane scheme; but eventually she admits the unsustainability of this thesis, since there is not a shepherd in Christian "orphic" representations. Moreover the scholar insists on the contemporaneity of shepherds and Orpheus iconographies, saying the two figures developed in parallel, cutting off any possible filiation of the two images, that are, rather, independent[14].

Fabienne Jourdan, in her study on Christian Orpheus, refers to the good shepherd for the explanation of the presence of a pagan character such as Orpheus in catacombs paintings:

> «Bien qu'elle semble donner une raison satisfaisante à la présence des seules bêtes paisibles et surtout des brebis, cette thèse demeure inadéquate. L'art chrétien disposait déjà d'une représentation du Bon Berger et n'avait pas de raison de la remplacer par celle du chantre thrace»[15].

Jourdan explains the presence of only tamed animals as an evocation of bucolic realm and the shepherds amongst their flocks, sometimes represented briefly by one or two sheep; this explanation seems convincing, as well as the idea that the only presence of such animals is not sufficient to state an identity Orpheus-good shepherd. Nevertheless, I think that Jourdan's position should be nuanced: the fact that the iconography of the so-called good shepherd – I'd rather talk about the shepherd or the *kriophoros*, with no allusion to the biblical concept of 'good' shepherd – the fact, I said, that the shepherd was already established in Christian's mind, does not mean that there was not a need for a blending of figures: I would not talk about substitution or replacement of the shepherd figure with the Thracian singer, an idea held not only by Jourdan, but also by Jesnick and, partially, Vieillefon; I'd rather talk about a moment in which these two figures encountered and blended. The figures seen so far, with Orpheus playing among tamed animals are a first step in this process. The fact that they are all in Christian context does

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d'O. (167-169) (Stern 4,12). Le thème du « Bon Pasteur », ainsi que celui d'Adam placé dans un paradis d'animaux, plus proches du texte biblique, vont remplacer, vers la fin du IV[e] siècle le motif du Christ-O. (pour les statuettes de Bon Pasteur, *cf*. Weitzmann, *Spirituality* 408 ; pour Adam parmi les animaux, M. Th. Et P. Canivet, *CArch* 24, 1975, pl. 3. 4)» (Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic : An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to Its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity)*.

[14] «Quoi qu'il en soit, si on retient l'hypothèse de l'arrêt des répresentations chrétiennes d'Orphée au IVe siècle, il faut aussitôt se demander pourquoi. Plusieurs hypothèses ont été émises à ce sujet: les chrétiens ne veulent plus réutiliser de figures païennes, une fois la période de cohabitation entre les deux religions et les deux répertoires achevée; le schéma du Bon pasteur remplace celui d'Orphée aux animaux» (Vieillefon, *La Figure d'Orphée Dans l'Antiquité Tardive*, 85). See ibid. p. 89-90.

[15] Jourdan, Fabienne, *Orphée et les chrétiens. la réception du mythe d'Orphée dans la litérature chrétienne grecques des cinq premiers siècles. Tome I Orphée, du repussoir au préfiguration du Christ. réécriture d'un mythe à des fins protreptiques chez Clément d'Aléxandrie*. Vol. I. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010).

not mean that Christians were trying to represent Orpheus as Christ-Shepherd, since there is no explicit reference to Jesus in the representations of shepherds, nor in the Orpheus-shepherd figures. It is more believable that Christians were trying to communicate their ideas through bucolic metaphors, and the representations of Orpheus with shepherding features were suitable for this.

These images can be considered visual metaphors, since "shepherdness" and shepherding features are bestowed to characters that traditionally have nothing to deal with pastoral world, such as Orpheus, who – as reminded above – was never told to be a shepherd in literary sources. The attribution of a bucolic tone to a character that is not an actual herdsman, the representation of that character *as* a shepherd, means to build a comparison between the character and the bucolic realm, in other words, a metaphor.

For these images Vieillefon spoke of contamination of "orphic" and bucolic iconography, and this idea best explains the visual outcome of this metaphorical thinking. Some other images represent fittingly this hybridation and blending: one is the red earthenware bowl from northern Africa, with a Phrygian *kriophoros* (Figure 54), surrounded by two rams and juxtaposed to a thinking figure, maybe Jonah (4th century)[16]. The second is a mosaic from the Jennah Villa (5th century, Figure 55)[17] with a shepherd, holding a *pedum*, in the middle of a pavement of animals of all species, an unusual companion for a shepherd.

Figure 54

«[…] si le jeune homme avait une lyre, tout le monde crierait à l'Orphée mais l'allure pas trop pastorale de la figure nous fait réfléchir (le même problème

[16] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic : An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to Its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity*, n. 168; Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality : Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978*, 520, 465.; Mariarosaria Barbera, *Costantino 313 D. C., (Catalogo della mostra tenuta a Roma Nel 2013)*, Electa (Milano: Electa, 2013), n. 110. Vieille

[17] John Block Friedman classifies this figure as a good shepherd in an animal paradise, and dates the mosaic circa 475-500. John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), fig. 3 and plate IX.

existe pour le plat chrétien en terre cuite, d'origine africaine et conservé à Mayence [C5] qu'in montre aussi un Orphée pasteur, au-dessus de Jonas»[18].

Vieillefon properly points out the absence of the lyre, as of the pivotal feature for the identification of Orpheus: but if the figure on the bowl only has the oriental garment in common with Orpheus, the shepherd in Jennah shows something more. The recurrent motif of a man surrounded by animals, one for each species, can be considered an "orphic" feature, since this composition of animals appear only in representations of Orpheus. Moreover the man is stepping his right foot on a small rock, as the shepherds on the sarcophagi from Ostia and Sardinia, and that rock can be considered as a survival of the hill or mountain of the sitting representations of Orpheus.

The apparel of this figure is a combination of different kinds: as a shepherd, he holds a long stick and a white *tunica exigua*, but he wears also a red cloak; last, his shoes are the sandals worn by philosophers and sometimes Orpheus himself.

The *kriophoros* of the north Africa bowl and the Jennah character are both hybrids, and both can be interpreted as loans of Orpheus' features to a shepherd: on one hand the bowl displays a Christian shepherd *kriophoros* dressed in an oriental way, who could recall Orpheus just because he is the only oriental-dressed character in Early Christian iconography, but the music instrument is missing; on the other hand, the Jennah mosaic displays a shepherd who is surrounded by different animals as Orpheus used to be represented, but without Phrygian cap, music instrument, nor Thracian clothes.

In conclusion, we have seen a bestowal of bucolic features to the Orpheus figure, and equally, the bestowal of "orphic" characteristic to shepherds. The first representations of Orpheus among sheep may be a wish for the deceased to have the harmony of music and the peace of bucolic realm in his afterlife, since all the representations of this kind are found in funerary decoration; the bowl and the mosaic, on the other hand, may show the attempt to make the shepherds look like the ancient and popular figure of Orpheus, evoking the peace of the bucolic realm, but with different taste and fashion. The oriental *kriophoros* reminds a bronze statuette from Volubilis, with an oriental shepherd sitting on a rock and carrying a sheep. According to Vermaseren, this statuette is the only representation of Attis as *kriophoros*, nevertheless it is impossible to tell, since there are, as in the red north African bowl, no references to, nor attributes of, the character, be it

[18] Vieillefon, *La figure d'Orphée dans l'antiquité tardive*, 100.

Figure 55

Attis or Orpheus[19]. I would rather consider the terracotta, the bronze statuette, as well as an ivory statuette of a *kriophoros* with a Phrygian cap from Egypt (early 4th century)[20] and a fragment of bicolored marble with a young *kriophoros* with Phrygian cap from Egypt (1st half of 5th century)[21], as oriental shepherds, without identifying them with a specific character, as it is rather possible for the funerary Christian Orpheus.

The Jennah mosaic, finally, is a representation of a shepherd in a realm of animal harmony and peace between animals and between animals and men. In this case the metaphor of peace, represented by the animal harmony, is appointed to a shepherd and not to the mythic Thracian musician.

As we shall see in the forthcoming pages, the characterization of different figures and personalities with shepherding elements reveals a tendency for bucolic metaphors, during the centuries 4th – 5th.

Saint Peter, for example, has been identified in some *kriophoroi*: some scholars, first of all Joseph Wilpert, based the interpretations of elder "good shepherd", come out in the

[19] M. J. Vermaseren, *The Legend of Attis in Greek and Roman Art* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 20 and plate IX, 1-2.20 and plate IX, 1-2

[20] Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality : Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978*, 520, n. 464.

[21] Weitzmann, 521, n.466.

Figure 56

4th century[22], with the Apostle on some scriptural references to shepherding metaphors referred to Peter: the apostle is appointed by Jesus Christ – named by Paul himself as the *arkipoimēn* (1Pet., 4) – to feed his sheep and lambs in the Gospel of John (21:15-ff)[23]. Wipert recognizes Peter in the elder *kriophoroi* and moreover he describes an image of saint Peter, that we only know from a drawing of Alfonso Ciacconio, of Peter enthroned and teaching to lambs, a mosaic that was in the left chapel of the basilica of S. Pudenziana (dated 423-432, Figure 56): the apostle was sitting on a chair, holding a *rotulus*, flanked by two sheep that seem to listen to his speech, represented by his *praelegere* gesture[24]. In this representation, Peter wears the usual *tunica* and *pallium*, not the shepherd apparel. Even if Peter is called *pastor* in some ancient sources[25], this representation only gives Peter the flock of the shepherd, with a weaker metaphor, avoiding the complete identification with it.

If this identification has some fundaments, for the identification of Peter is made possible by his clothing and his facial features, the same cannot be said for the image of Peter-good shepherd. First of all, it is necessary to specify that what the scholars call "good

[22]The shepherd can be represented as a youth (imberbe) or with beard, to indicate an aged man, the first being more common, from the end of the 1st century to the 4th ce, that is to say when the beard type comes out. Henri Leclercq, "Pasteur (Bon)," *Dictionnaire D'archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie (DACL)* (Paris, 1938), 2304.

[23] The same interpretation is given in Henri Leclercq, "Pierre," *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgi* (Paris: Librairie Leouzey et Ané, 1939).

[24] Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, vol. 1–Testo (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1929), 130.

[25] «Pietro era il pastor per eccellenza, giusto come i monumenti ce lo mostreranno pìscator. "Beate pastor Petre" è egli apostrofato in un *Hymnus in* honorem apostolorum Petri et Pauli ascritto a Elpis, moglie di Boezio; nella Revelatio Stephani papae è chiamato "bonus pastor", e da Gregorio Magno "pastor et nutritor noster"»(Wilpert, 1–Testo:130).

shepherd" has nothing to deal with the tenth chapter of the Gospel of John, but it is only an iconographic category to describe a shepehrd carrying an ovine on his shoulders; for this reason I shall use the word *kriophoros*. Therefore, the identification of Peter with the Christian *kriophoroi* appears to be weak.

André Grabar agreed with the interpretation of the good shepherd with Peter, and in this case the expression 'good shepherd' is coherent, since the representation of Peter *kriophoros* is, according to the scholar – an imitation of the representations of Jesus Christ as Good Shepherd. From the 4th century onwards Peter borrows some iconographies such as the enthronement, the philosopher apparel and the cross, from the analogous representation of Jesus, while – on the other hand – the representation of martyrdom is conversely borrowed by Jesus from the scenes of Apostles martyrdom and passion[26].

If the identification of the *kriophoros* with Peter is uncertain, the identification with Jesus Christ is even more unreliable, as I shall show in the next chapter: therefore, if Grabar's opinion about the relations of Peter and Jesus iconographies is agreeable, the same cannot be for his interpretations of the shepherds *kriophoroi*. The reasons that forbid the identification of Peter and Jesus with the *kriophoros* are based on the absence of features that make the characters recognizable. Before deepening the discourse about the representation of Jesus, I shall begin with the figure of Peter.

The apostle is already recognizable in the 3rd-4th century, as well as his companion Paul. In the mid-fourth century they begin to show particular, recognizable facial features, represented in some double portraits, as symbols of the Church of Gentiles (Paul)[27] and of the Jews (Peter).

[26] André Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of Its Origins* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1968).

[27] Paul's facial characteristic is a narrow face, a pointed beard and balding head. The traditional facial features of P&P become more consistent through the 5th century: Peter's face is broader, his hair thicker and curling over his brow. The sources describe the apostles differently, so the icongraphical features may come from oral traditions or brief references in apocryphal texts. See Robin Margaret Jensen, *Face to Face. Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 190.

Figure 57

Figure 58

On a medallion dated 4th-5th century (Figure 57) there is a *Chrismon* between the two faces of the apostles, while on the glass, dated about 400 C.E. (Figure 58), the two apostles, very alike with similar facial features, are recognizable thanks to the inscriptions of the names[28]. Similarly the apostles have their names on tree other glasses, dated about the 4th century, and now at Metropolitan Museum of New York[29]. As Grabar pointed out, in this type of representations of the couple of Apostles, there is always a sign among the two characters, as characterization of the persons portrayed, otherwise unrecognizable or hardly identifiable[30]. These identification devices were necessary except for Jesus Christ.

«An interesting iconographic transformation of the mid-fourth century is the assimilation of Peter and Moses into what were formerly representations of Moses' striking the rock to provide water to the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 17:1-6; Num. 20:2-12)», while in Peter's iconographies the Israelites turned into roman soldiers[31]. Moreover Peter and Paul appear both in the iconographies of the *Traditio legis et*

[28] Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of Its Origins*, figures 166-167.

[29] http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/465922 ; http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/463547 in these two glasses the Apostles are both portrayed without their characteristic facial features, they are both beardless and young. http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/463714.

[30] Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of Its Origins*, 68, ff.

[31] The transformation may be based on a play on Peter's name (*petros* = rock), or – more likely – a version of a later (6th ce?) insertion in the apocryphal acts of peter that describes his striking the walls of his prison in order to baptize the roman hailers. See Jensen, *Face to Face. Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity*, 186.

clavium[32]and, according to Reidar Hvalvik the two apostles are constitutive elements of this iconography[33].

A question is worth raising: why the apostle Peter, who – we said – showed some defined facial features already in the mid fourth century, should have been portrayed, in the very same century, with common and quite anonymous features as a *kriophoros*? It must be noticed that the facial features of the numerous old and bearded *kriophoroi* are not standard, the shape of the beard and the hair of the *kriophoros* are different from image to image, depending on the personal choice of artists, whereas Peter's beard is often square-shaped. Moreover, the bearded *kriophoros* appears only on reliefs and not in paintings nor mosaics and it is never accompanied with Jesus or Paul, from which Peter is never represented separated, neither from any Christ-like symbol, as the *Chrismon*.

This brief discussion on Peter as the 'good shepherd' shall be concluded with a reference to the brilliant work of Francois Tolmie on the "not so good shepherd", namely Saint Peter: Jesus appoints Peter with a pastoral task, nevertheless the apostle actually misses this occasion (John 13:36-38):

> «Peter is thus characterized as not being able to do what the sheep of the Good Shepherd do, to *follow* him […] how can Jesus say that he will not be able to follow him i.e. that he will not be able to do what is expected of the sheep of the good shepherd? No, he will do even better! He will lay down his life for Jesus; he will not only follow Jesus (as is expected of Jesus' sheep), but he himself will act like a good shepherd»[34].

The willingness of Peter to follow Jesus is expressed by the apostle with the same words spoken by Jesus when he describes himself as the Good Shepherd, as we shall see in detail in section 3.1.1. According to Tolmie, there is a deliberate intention to use pastoral imagery for both Peter and Jesus with obviously different senses, negative the former and positive the latter. Interestingly, the association of pastoral task and betrayal seems to have a visual counterpart on the Brescia casket (Figura 42): the right side of the front

[32] See Lee M. Jefferson, "Revisiting the Emperor Mystique: The Traditio Legis as an Anti-Imperial Image," in *The Art of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 49–86.

[33] Reidar Hvalvik, "Christ Proclaiming His Law to the Apostles: The Traditio Legis-Motif in Early Christian Art and Literature," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context* (Brill, 2006), 405–6.

[34] Francois D. Tolmie, "The (Not so) Good Shepherd: The Use of Shepherd Imagery in the Characterization of Peter in the Fourth Gospel," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John. Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 365.

displays a panel with the figure of Jesus, standing under the arch of a city wall door, with sheep inside; with his hand, Jesus seems to ward off a barking dog and a shepherd, who is running away towards the right. As we shall see (section 2.2.4), this scene is the representation of the Johannine pericope of the Good Shepherd, with the bad shepherd running away from the veritable one[35]. Beside this panel, there is a small vertical narrow panel representing a rooster perched on a pillar. Robert Milburn interpreted this image as a symbol of Peter's denial of Christ[36]: the juxtaposition of this symbol of Peter to the image of the Good Shepherd may mirror the juxtaposition highlighted by Tolmie of Jesus' pastoral task and the failure of Peter, conveyed by the use of the same expression "lay down the life for", used by the Good Shepherd and by Peter, who promises – in vain – to lay down his own life to follow Jesus[37].

The hybrid identity of Jesus as shepherd or the blend of his identity with bucolic

Figure 59

characteristics can be very multifaceted. As seen above, some scholars interpreted unconditionally every *kriophoros* in a Christian context as a representation of the so-called Good Shepherd: the existence and the definition of "good shepherd", that will be debated in the forthcoming pages (section 2.2.3), requires some preliminary consideration and the observation of the hybrid identities of Jesus can be illuminating for this purpose.

Since the early 4th century Jesus is recognizable as miracle worker and healer (resuscitating Lazarus, or healing the woman with the issue of blood, the man born blind, or the paralytic); he can also be represented giving the Law to his Apostles Peter and Paul. His recognisability, nevertheless, does not rely upon any physiognomic feature or characteristic, since during the 4th century the Christ could be still beardless and haired as

[35] See section 3.1.1. for the translation of *kalos*.

[36] Robert Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), 240; Catherine Brown Tkacz, *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and the Early Christian Imagination* (Paris: University of Notre Dame Press - Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 2002), 239 and note 19.

[37] The parallel of this expression will be further discussed in section 3.1.1.

a Roman citizen, or with long curly hair and a gentle young face, as in the scene of *Traditio Legis* on a columnar sarcophagus in the Museum Pio Cristiano (Vatican City – Rome)[38]; as we can see an univocal type of Christ is not established yet. Jesus is recognizable by contextual elements instead: a man dressed in a tunica and pallium touching he eyes of a man, or touched himself by a kneeled woman, or giving a scroll to two other men, is unequivocally recognized as the Christ. He is indeed recognizable for the presence of the Twelve apostles beside him, as in the sarcophagus from san Lorenzo fuori le Mura, dated 4th century (Figure 59).

On this sarcophagus Jesus is represented as a haloed shepherd amongst a flock of twelve sheep and surrounded by the apostles. If the halo and the apostles (and maybe the long hair) speak for an identification with Jesus, the characterization as a shepherd is unequivocal: Jesus wears the same garments of the other two characters on the sides undoubtedly shepherds. This image is a hybrid as much as it is the only representation of Jesus *as a* shepherd: all the other images can be representations of Jesus in a bucolic context or with some shepherd features, but this one is the only existing Christ-shepherd figure.

The mosaic in the lunette of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (450 C.E., Figure 60)is a representation of Jesus in a bucolic context: the young and long-haired Saviour is dressed in a golden tunic with blue *clavi* and purple *pallium*, his head is surrounded by a big golden halo; he's holding a high golden cross with the left hand and caressing a sheep with the right hand. The Christ is sitting on a rock, surrounded by six sheep. Sheep and landscape are the only pastoral features for Jesus who is not a veritable herdsman: Christ is «the regal Shepherd, victorious over death […] a new type of figure, that of an heroic model of a fictive person intended to resemble the idea that incarnates»[39].

[38] Jensen, *Face to Face. Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity*, 148, fig.67.

[39]Patrizia Angiolini Martinelli, "The Mosaics: The Image from Scenic Presence to Symbolic Suggestion," in *Il mausoleo di Galla Placidia a Ravenna* (Modena: Panini Editore, 1996), 159 and notes 83, 84, 85.

Figure 60

The shepherd of the sarcophagus from San Lorenzo fuori le Mura and the one in Galla Placidia are 'typological' portraits and do not rely upon any likeness, according to André Grabar[40]. The difference between the two shepherds is the *type*: the first is a portrait of Jesus as the Shepherd, the latter is a royal and triumphal portrait of Christ with bucolic setting and features.

The two shepherds have also different meanings: on the one hand, the mosaic displays a triumphant Christ, vanquisher of death, and – maybe for this reason – dwelling in a bucolic "heavenly" context. His clothes speak a triumphant language: blue, purple, and gold are the colours of kingdom and glory[41]. The other iconographies in the Mausoleum speak the same language: in the vault mosaic there is the golden cross in a blue sky full of stars; the four animals of the *Tetramorph*, placed in the corners of the dome, give the apocalyptic lecture key and the global sense of the whole decoration. The golden cross appears again in the lunette opposite to the entrance, in the hands of saint Lawrence, who is walking *to* the gridiron of his martyrdom: he is not perishing *because* of it, the golden

[40] Grabar André, *Les voies de la création en iconographie chrétienne: antiquité et moyen age* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979).

[41] Maria Cristina Carile, "Production, Promotion and Reception: The Visual Culture of Ravenna between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages," in *Ravenna Its Role in Earlier Medieval Change and Exchange* (London: University Of London School Of Advanced Study Institute Of Historical Research, 2016), 57 and note 11.

cross and halo are signs of Lawrence's triumph over death, in imitation of Christ. In this context the bucolic setting for the representation of the victorious Christ may be the representation of a heavenly and peaceful place, where sheep (lambs?) can dwell without any threaten or fear to be slaughtered. I should push this interpretations forwards, saying that here the Christ, rather than being overseer of the flock (shepherd), enjoys the peace of the blissful condition as well as the sheep; after all, this would not be the first example of the comparison of Jesus with ovine[42].

On the other hand the shepherd on the sarcophagus of san Lorenzo fuori le Mura is definitely a shepherd, while the Apostles are here compared with sheep: as these latter follow the shepherd, the former shall follow their shepherd-Jesus; this interpretation is suggested by the compositional pattern itself, that arranges the Apostles in rows on the two sides of Christ, each one corresponding to a sheep, themselves arranged in two rows.

Nikolaus Himmelmann[43] recognized Jesus Christ in two other characters, on two different sarcophagi, in addition to the one from San Lorenzo fuori le mura, placing these images in the group of images of Christ wearing the cloak of the shepherd: one is the Catervus sarcophagus in Tolentino (dated late 4th century, Figure 63), and the other is a strigilated sarcophagus in which the shepherd has long and curly hairs (Figure 61)[44]. Only the shepherd on the front of Catervus sarcophagus is a *kriophoros*, while the shepherds of the other sarcophagus is standing, holding a stick with one hand and reaching the other to touch the sheep. These last two shepherds are portrayed as actual herdsmen, wearing the tunic and the *fasciae crurales* (the latter wears also an *alicula*).

[42] See section 3.2.4. for the paradoxical identification of Jesus with both shepherd and sacrifical lamb.

[43] Nikolaus Himmelmann, "Sarcofagi romani a rilievo: problemi di cronologia e iconografia," in *Annali della scuola normale superiore di Pisa* (Pisa, 1974), 139–77.

[44] Deichmann, Bovini, and Brandeburg, *Repertorium Der Christlich-Antiken Sarkophage. Bd. 1. Rom Und Ostia Tafelbd Unbekannter Einband*, no. 829; Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, vol. II (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1929), fig. LXXXII, 1-3; Wilpert, *Sarcofagi Cristiani Antichi*, 1929, 1–Testo:99–100.

Figure 61

I partially agree with Himmelmann: on one hand, the shepherd from the strigilated sarcophagus is hardly recognizable as Jesus, since he doesn't display any Christologic feature (and the long curly hair is a weak clue); on the other hand, the Catervus shepherd is flanked by two figures clearly recognizable as the two Apostles, Peter on the left, and Paul on the right. In these two sarcophagi the shepherd is not undoubtedly recognizable as Jesus, as instead on the sarcophagus from San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, whose shepherd must have been recognized by contemporary viewers as Jesus Christ as the shepherd of his flock or, using the vivid name given by Wilpert, "Christ the Prince of the Shepherds"[45].

In conclusion, we can see that the representations of Christ as shepherds are not just few, but actually unique and limited to the example of San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura: it is therefore impossible to state all the *kriophoroi* as the representations of Christ-as-the-Good-Shepherd, for – as we have seen – they don't display Jesus' features; these features were existing already during the 4th century and if an artist had to represent Christ, he already was provided with a set of iconographic elements to represent the image of Jesus Christ. The *kriophoroi* in Christian contexts may not be "portraits" of Christ, nevertheless they bear a referral to the task of Christ or, at least, a Christian meaning. The meanings of such Christian shepherds *kriophoroi* or not, will be discussed in the next pages.

[45] Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, 1929, 1–Testo:95–96. Jesus is called "princeps pastorum" in Chromatius' Sermo XXXXII, 85 (cf. *CC* 9A, 146).

2.2.3 The Good Shepherd and its misinterpretation

The previous section focused on the images of Jesus portrayed as shepherd, as on the sarcophagus from San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura (Figure 59), and the representation of Jesus in a bucolic context, in the mosaic of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (Figure 60). This latter has been named by many scholars as "Good Shepherd", even if the Christ is not dressed like a shepherd[1].

The title "good shepherd" has been used, as seen, also for different characters, as Orpheus and saint Peter, basically because they were recognized in some representations of *kriophoroi.* For some scholars "*kriophoros*" and "good shepherd" seem to be synonyms, so that every ram bearer or shepherd with the sheep on the shoulders, even if not Christian, was labelled as good shepherd[2]. The *kriophoros*, when placed into a Christian context, is often interpreted as a symbolic representation of Christ[3]. In this section this misunderstanding will be solved: a distinction must be made between the *kriophoroi* shepherds, the "good shepherd" based on the Gospel of John and the interpretation of good shepherd *inspired* by the Fourth Gospel.

Josef Wilpert in his work on catacombs wall paintings divided the representation of the good shepherd in two distinct themes, namely the one from Matthew-Luke, and the other known as the pasturing shepherd from John 1 and Psalm 23; these two shepherds corresponded to two different types of representations, the first to the *kriophoros* and the second to other types. He wrote:

> «L'immagine del Buon Pastore ha per fondamento, oltre la parabola, anche il racconto della pecora smarrita, è già bella e disegnata nella Sacra Scrittura: un pastore che porta sulle spalle una pecora"[4]; and further: "Nel simbolo del Buon Pastore dobbiamo distinguere la similitudine della pecora smarrita e riportata all'ovile, da quella del pastore che pascola il suo gregge e lo difende dal nemico. Questa distinzione suggerita dagli Evangeli, la fecero anche gli antichi

[1] Robert Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), 177.

[2] Lucien De Bruyne, "Les 'lois' del l'art paléochretienne comme instrument hérmenetique," in *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1963).

[3] Catherine Brown Tkacz, *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and the Early Christian Imagination* (Paris: University of Notre Dame Press - Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 2002), 129.

[4] Joseph Wilpert, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane, illustrate Da Giuseppe Wilpert*, Desclée, Lefebvre, 1903, 45.

artisti, creando I due seguenti tipi di rappresentazione: 1. Il Buon Pastore che porta sulle spalle la pecora. 2. Il pastore col suo gregge»[5].

In Wilpert's opinion these images have different meanings[6], but they both refer to Jesus Christ: in the first case the flock is the group of believers and their guide is the shepherd while they are alive; in the second case, the sheep carried by the good shepherd is the soul of the dead carried in Christ's shoulders. Martine Dulaey considers early Christian *kriophoroi* as depictions of the Christ carrying home (God) the soul of saved men[7].

Other scholars rejected the *a priori* identification of every Christian *kriophoros* with Christ: the first was Theodor Klauser, who gave an interpretation of the so-called Good Shepherd as the personification of pagan *philantropia*. This interpretation was partially accepted by Jocelyn Toynbee, who argued that, in unequivocally Christian works, the *kriophoros* could stand for any "philanthropic" Christian[8]. Nikolaus Himmelmann disagreed with Klauser's interpretation, arguing that he considered only the *kriophoros* at the expense of the other kinds of shepherd, for which the interpretation as *philantropia* is invalid[9].

Lucien De Bruyne, as already mentioned, seems to use the label "Good Shepherd" for *kriophoros* only formally, describing it as *image isolée*, an impersonal and symbolic image, disconnected from the rest of the decoration[10]. For De Bruyne, the *kriophoros* does not always represent Jesus Christ, because the isolated figure, as seen, is impersonal.

The possibility to identify the *kriophoros* Good Shepherd with Jesus Christ has been debated by other scholars, such as Arnold Provoost and Giorgio Otranto. Although Christ is presented as the Good Shepherd by Hippolytus in his *Traditio Apostolica* (*Trad. Ap.* 41, SCh 11bis, 126) and Novatian, following the tradition of John 10, Giorgio Otranto points out that not every ancient viewer could interpret and understand the image of the

[5] Wilpert, 121.

[6] Wilpert, 213; 398.

[7] Martine Dulaey, "La parabole de la brebis perdue dans l'église ancienne: de l'exégèse à l'iconographie," in *Revue des études augustiniennes*, vol. 39, 1993, 3–22.

[8] Jocelyn Toynbee M. C., *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973), 297.

[9] Nikolaus Himmelmann, "Sarcofagi romani a rilievo: problemi di cronologia e iconografia," in *Annali della scuola normale superiore di Pisa* (Pisa, 1974), 165.

[10] De Bruyne, "Les 'lois' del l'art paléochretienne comme instrument hérmenetique."

shepherd as Christ, because not everyone was aware of the biblical and patristic tradition[11]; the viewer was not necessarily supposed to be a reader of Fathers texts.

While the definition of *kriophoros* is self-evident, since it concerns the formal aspect of the shepherd figure represented with an ovine on the shoulders, the definition of good shepherd requires some acknowledgments.

Since the expression "good shepherd" first appears in the Gospel of John, where Jesus Christ speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd who lays his life for the sheep[12], in my opinion this expression should be used only about shepherds that unequivocally represent Jesus, according to the Johannine Good Shepherd[13]. As we will see, paradoxically no representation of Jesus as a shepherd (or even in a bucolic context) is of the *kriophoros* kind, so it can be undoubtedly asserted that the good shepherd is never *kriophoros*.

Even more paradoxically, the only one sure illustration of the Gospel of John does not portray Jesus as a shepherd, he has no garments nor features that make him a shepherd: it is a scene on the front of the Brescia casket (end of 4th century, Figure 62)[14].

In this representation, Jesus stands under an arch, on a threshold of what seems to be a door of city walls that perhaps represent the sheepfold, because it has five sheep inside; he is dressed with a long *pallium*, his facial features correspond to the ones of the portrait in a tondo in the upper part of the casket and other episodes of the life of Christ. The right hand of Jesus is pointed towards a fierce barking dog, a shepherd dressed with the usual dress is running away on the right of the scene.

[11]Giorgio Otranto, "Tra letteratura e iconografia: note sul buon pastore e sull'orante nell'arte cristiana antica (2-3 secolo)," in *Vetera Christianorum*, 26, 1989, 80–86..

[12] For other uses of the title "shepherd" in the Bible, see section 3.2.3.

[13] For the christian representations of the shepherds see the section 2.2.4.

[14] For the bibliography on this scene: Tkacz, *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and the Early Christian Imagination*; Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture*, 239.

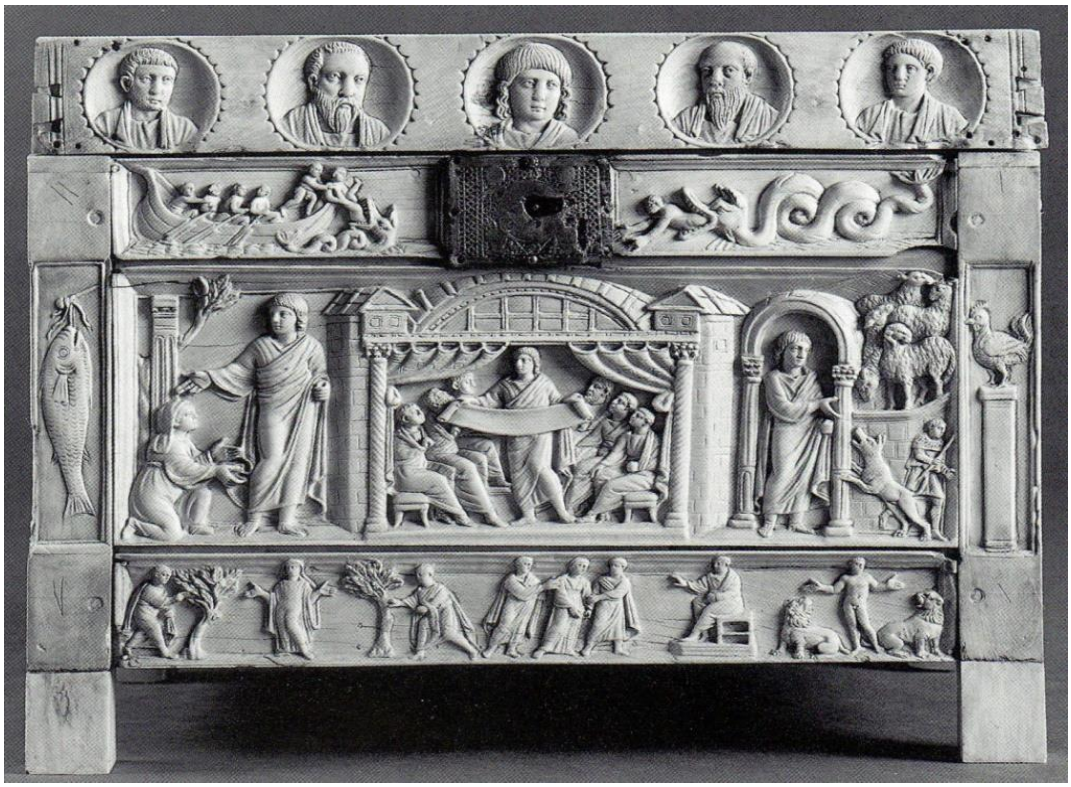

Figura 62

The Brescia casket has been studied by Catherine Brown Tkacz who gave a brilliant typological interpretation of the whole decoration, introducing Jacob as a shepherd type of Christ. She argues that «the Good Shepherd on the casket is not only simply different from other Early Christian depictions; it uniquely portrays John 10»[15]. Nevertheless the scholar admits that this is *one of* the representations of the «symbol of Christ as the Good Shepherd», that was represented as a *kriophoros*, or in the midst of the sheep as in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (Figure 60). In the unusual representation on the casket, the artist drew many details from the book of John:

> «Christ stands within the arch. This depicts his repeated statement that he is the door itself (vv. 1,7.9) as well as his assertion that he enters by the door, the action which identifies him as the true shepherd in charge of the sheep (v.2). he is shown warding off the wolf, from which the hireling is shown fleeing (vv. 12-13)» [16].

[15] Tkacz, *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and the Early Christian Imagination*; Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture*, 187.

[16] Tkacz, 32.

Figure 62a

In my opinion, the "uniqueness" of such image lies in the fact that this is the only *illustration* of the Gospel of John, the only image of Jesus as the God Shepherd; it is an image *based on* the text, that can, in this case, be considered as the source of the image. This Jesus-Good Shepherd is different from other images, such as the central image on the sarcophagus of San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura (Figure 62), since the former does not represent an actual shepherd, while the latter is a veritable shepherd; paradoxically the first is the only and real Johannine Good Shepherd, whereas the latter, who has garments and features of an actual herdsman[17], is not based on the Fourth Gospel and its image of the Good Shepherd.

The difference between the two images concerns the distinction between creation and interpretation of iconographies: the image on the Brescia casket was *created after* the Gospel of John as its illustration, while the shepherd from San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura, as well as the other Christian shepherds, can be *interpreted* in the light of the fourth Gospel, as well as of other texts in which Jesus is appointed as a shepehrd[18], without the exclusivity that characterizes the Brescia casket. This interpretation of images relies upon a tradition of texts, that is eventually a *cultural* tradition, that overcomes the idea of "source"[19].

Shepherding metaphors were used even in Ancient Near East, as well as in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament they were used for different "characters" besides Jesus: the Christologic metaphor of the Good Shepherd, with its specific meaning(s) and overtones was created by John, specifically for Jesus. The Johannine expression "good shepherd" is therefore incorrect for the representations of *kriophoroi*, since these latter don't bear any clear and unequivocal reference to Jesus Christ; moreover that expression is reductive for the pastoral representations of Jesus, as San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura, since their interpretation requires to the observer a knowledge that exceeds the boundaries of the Fourth Gospel, going back to other synoptic Gospels and even to Old Testament tradition. From an hermeneutical point of view, the *kriophoroi* represented in a Christian

[17] See section 2.1.3.

[18] S. Chae Young, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

[19] See the *Introduction*, section 1.1, pp. 1-10.

context, are not *representations* of the Johannine Good Shepherd, they have rather been influenced by John's Gospel, since it was part of the cultural background of the ancient Christian viewer.

In conclusion, the distinction can be this: the only representation of the Good Shepherd based on the Gospel of John is the one on the Brescia casket (Figure 62); the mosaic of Galla Placidia (Figure 60) represents Jesus as a king in a bucolic-idyllic context, and not an actual shepherd; last, the only sure representation of Jesus as a shepherd is on the San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura sarcophagus (Figure 59). All the other Christian *kriophoroi* and shepherds may evoke Jesus as well as other Christian characters, ideas or qualities that can be expressed by the shepherding metaphor.

The Early Christian *kriophoros* seems to have not any particular 'source', neither for its creation, nor for its interpretation, since this latter, as we shall see, does not rely upon single texts. The Early Christian *kriophoros* is not a narrative image, even if it can be part of a bucolic vignette; it is often isolated and framed, therefore it can be considered as an emblem: the ostensive character of this image, according to Carlo Ginzburg, is the visual counterpart of the noun phrases that characterize some chapters of the Bible[20]. This shows that there actually is a relation of images and texts, but this relation is structural rather than based upon contents. The *kriophoros*[21] is not an illustration of a given source, it's rather the visual product of a literary conceptualization and cultural tradition, that prefers 'visions' to accounts. It is therefore useful to gather the Christian *kriophoroi* in the forthcoming chapters, giving an account of the possible literary and non-literary elements that have influenced the interpretation of these images.

The isolated *kriophoroi* don't change their form in Christian or non-Christian contexts, therefore it's often impossible to determine the Christianity of an image without any contextual reference, since early Christians seem to have used the *kriophoros* as frequently as non-Christians.

The *kriophoroi* are different from the portraits of Christ seen in this section, since these latter are "recognizable images" of Christ and belong to the De Bruyne's category of "*images isolées*": they are not repeatable because they are not impersonal anymore. The shepherd of the sarcophagus from San Lorenzo fuori le mura, is a "typological" portrait,

[20] Carlo Ginzburg, "Ecce. Sulle radici dell'immagine di culto cristiana," in *Occhiacci di legno. Nove riflessioni sulla distanza* (Torino: Feltrinelli, 2011), 111.

[21] From now on, with '*kriophoros*' I'll mean 'the Christian representation of the *kriophoros*'.

while other *kriophoroi*, as we shall see in the next section, are repeatable for they are totally impersonal.

2.2.3 Christian representations of shepherds

Figure 63

The *kriophoros* in the central panel on the sarcophagus of Catervus in Tolentino's Basilica is hardly identifiable with Jesus, nevertheless it is surely Christian[1]: the epigraphy in the *tabula inscriptionis* tells us that the owner of the tomb was Flavius Julius Catervus, an ex-praetorian prefect dead at 56, buried there with his wife, Settimia Severina, whose marriage was blessed by the Lord. Moreover, the representation of the adoration of the three wise men on the short side confirms the Christian context of this sarcophagus. As already mentioned, the figures on the two sides of the central shepherd are Peter and Paul, dressed in *tunica* and *pallium*, standing before a *parapetasma*.

The scheme of this sarcophagus recalls the one of some sarcophagi with the central figure of Christ with a long cross, and two figures on the side panels: the sarcophagus of the Apt Cathedral (dated 4th century[2], Figure 64) the lateral figures are Systus and Hyppolitus (as we can read in the inscriptions), and the sarcophagus in the Avignon Museum (dated 4th century[3], Figure 65). In both sarcophagi the figure on the right (respectively Hyppolitus

[1] http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/37 .

[2] Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, vol. 1–Testo (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1929), 54 and plate XXXVII, 1.

[3] Wilpert, 1–Testo:46 and plate XXXVII, 5.

Figure 64

and Paul) raises his right hand as in a gesture of speech, his left hand holds a *rotulus*; on the other side, the character (Systus and Peter) raises the right arm through the center and holds the *tunica* with the other; both the figures have the basket with the *volumina* at their feet[4]. The close correspondence of Catervus sarcophagus to these two examples may speak for a correspondence Jesus–Good Shepherd, nevertheless, since the two sarcophagi of Apt and Avignon are contemporary of the Catervus sarcophagus, the artists of the two sarcophagi must have wanted to represent Jesus unequivocally, while the Catervus craftsman must have aimed at just evoking the *idea* of Jesus. In other words, in Catervus sarcophagus there is not a complete identification of Jesus with the shepherd, there is rather an allusion to the similar tasks and figures of Jesus and the shepherd, a based on the cultural tradition of shepherds widespread in early Christianity.

On Catervus sarcophagus the bucolic iconography of the shepherd mingles with the Christian subject-matter of the short sides iconographies and the philosophical theme: in the frontal antefixes the spouses are portrayed as *clarissimi* and at the feet of the apostles there are two boxes full of *volumina*. Christians took over this combination of philosophy and bucolic themes from earlier non-Christian sarcophagi, as Paul Zanker pointed out :

Figure 65

[4] Wilpert, 1–Testo:45–6; 54 and plate XXXVII.

«the emphasis in the later pastoral visions of happiness was philosophical and religious»[5]. As seen in sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, pastoral iconographies, pastoral scenes, vignettes, and isolated shepherds were popular themes in the decoration of tombs and sarcophagi, as they were for private spaces like the *domus*. The presence of bucolic images in both funerary and domestic pre-Christian contexts leads to avoid a strictly funerary interpretations of these iconographies; rather, it reveals a sort of privatization of the cult of dead, in opposition to republican monuments, and a desire for the tomb to be a *locus amoenus*. According to Verity Platt, «the tomb is a miniature satellite of the *domus*: for this, it is quite unsurprising that the tomb paintings echoed the wall decoration of private houses»[6].

On public monuments there was no room for a representations of animals, except for descriptive representations of cults[7], since imagery of official Roman religion had an imitative relationship with his subject-matter and religious practice[8]. In public art there was neither space for shepherds, that started being represented during the Augustan age, in the private sphere, as a part of idyllic representations of the Golden Age[9]. As we shall see, the idyllic sense of bucolic imagery was conveyed by Virgilian bucolic poetry[10], not without political purposes of propaganda and celebration of the Augustan *aurea aetas*.

The connection of shepherds and funerary context may be inspired by poetry and literary tradition: Paul Alpers pointed out that «Eclogue 5 suggests that a pastoral convention is a poetic practice that makes up for a loss, a separation or an absence»[11], and in general shepherds' songs were addressed to those who had lost someone. This interpretation may not give the rationale for the presence of shepherd imagery in tombs decoration, since these figures entered into funerary iconography for imitation of domestic decoration; rather, the convey of poetry can explain the growing fortune and emancipation of bucolic

[5] Paul Zanker and Bjorn C. Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2012), 168.

[6] Verity Platt, "Framing the Dead on Roman Sarcophagi," in *RES 61/62*, 2012, 216.

[7] Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006).

[8] Jas Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer. The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 190.

[9] Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, University of Michigan Press (Ann Arbor, 1988).

[10] All oriented, as we'll see, towards the celebration of Augustan Golden Age.

[11] Paul Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?*, University of Chicago Press (Chicago and London, 1996), 89.

imagery as subject matter, for its evocation of idyllic condition of blissfulness[12]. Nikolaus Himmelmann indeed underlined that Virgil must have influenced contemporary bucolic visual representations, as well as this 'artistic style' retroactively influenced his poetry[13].
As in houses decoration, the purpose of images was not the illusion but rather an allusion that evoked multiple meanings already set in viewer's mind and established by tradition and culture. The spectrum of meaning of bucolic images develops as it enters the private sphere, changing from domestic to funerary context, and from non-Christian to Christian; the general positive connotation of bucolic imagery does not change, it just conforms to changed circumstances.
For example, the representations of isolated *kriophoroi* in the centre of funerary roofs, such as the one in the Callistus Catacomb[14] dated 3rd century, or the *kriophoros* in the Priscilla catacomb[15] (Figures 66, 67), framed and depicted in a blank space, may evoke the idyllic condition that the deceased is about to 'experience', or the shepherd may have the function of a psychopomp figure.

Figure 66

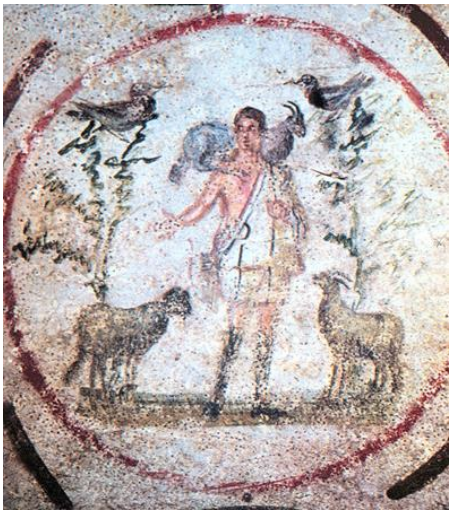

Figure 67

Semiotics and structural elements surely influence the perception and the interpretation of the image. The interpretation of shepherds in Christian funerary contexts might have been influence by the idea that Christians had of shepherds and afterlife, as it was in literature:

[12] Zanker and Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, 166. See also the previous section of this work on the Isolated Shepherd (pp. ???).

[13] Nikolaus Himmelmann, "Sarcofagi Romani a Rilievo: Problemi Di Cronologia E Iconografia," in *Annali Della Scuola Normale Superiore Di Pisa* (Pisa, 1974), 160.

[14] http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/58;Joseph Wilpert, *Le pitture delle catacombe romane, illustrate da Giuseppe Wilpert*, Desclée, Lefebvre, 1903, fig. 66,2..

[15] http://www.framelab.unibo.it/poimen/?q=node/71 ; Wilpert, fig. 66, 1.

the shepherd could have evoked the caring character of Psalm 23, Yahweh, the one present at life's passages and at the moment of trespass[16], or maybe it could recall the admonition for repentance of the *Shepherd* of Hermas, where an angel in a shepherd apparel instructs the protagonist, Hermas, in the importance of *metanoia* in an eschatological perspective[17].

In order to understand the sense, if not the meaning, of the shepherd image in a decoration, it is fundamental to consider contextual elements: it is necessary to relate the shepherd to other images of the decoration, to the function of the object that displays that decoration, the material elements, and so on.

If we consider for example the *kriophoros* figure, we can see that on *lènos* sarcophagi it is sometimes flanked by two lion heads: these protruding heads can be a memory of the spouts for new wine, since these sarcophagi were used to press the grapes and make the wine[18]. A *lènos* sarcophagus in Piazza Capo di Ferro in Rome[19] is nowadays used as a fountain, and the water that comes out of the lions mouths recalls the ancient use for wine; lions heads have been interpreted as the threaten against which the shepherd saves the sheep, but I disagree with this interpretation. Goodenough pointed out that lions are not exclusively positive or negative symbols[20], so it is hard to interpret the *kriophoros* as a soteriological figure. In my opinion, the function of the object is more telling than any other semantic presumption: as on the Endymion sarcophagus of the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 9a and b)[21], the shepherd in a *lènos* sarcophagus with lions is related to the hope for the renewal of life, evoked in a first instance by the grapes pressure echoed by the shape of the sarcophagus itself.

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[16] Abraham M. Antony, "God the Shepherd in the Book of Psalms, with Special Reference to Psalm 23," in *Shepherding: Essays in Honour of Pope John Paul II*, Vendrame Institute & DBCIC Publications (Shillong, 2005), 50–107.

[17] See section 3.2.4.

[18] Ibid., 39.

[19] Giulia Baratta, "La mandorla centrale dei sarcofagi strigilati. un campo iconografico ed i suoi simboli," in *Archäologie Und Geschichte, Römische Bilderwelten Von Der Wirklichkeit Zum Bild Und Zurück. Kolloquium Der Gerda Henkel Stiftung Am Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Rom (15. – 17. März 2004)* (Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 2007), 200, fig. 14. Stroszeck, Löwen-Sarkophage nr. 11

[20] Erwn R Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period - Pagan Symbols in Judaism*, vol. 7 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 58, ff.

[21] McCann, *Roman Sarcophagi in the Metropolitan Museium of Art*, 39.

Figure 68

The *kriophoros* can also be flanked by two *Erotes* leaning on their upside-down torches. These "pagan" figures echo the «son of Aphrodite [Eros, who] has been interpreted in this funerary context as a symbol of death or sleep»[22], for the presence of the torch. These figures give the idea of quietness in the death, paralleled to of sleep, rather than to a tormented or tumultuous condition.

On a sarcophagus in Palazzo Farnese (Rome, end 3rd century Figure 68)[23], under the central tondo with the unfinished portrait of the deceased there are a *kriophoros* and two sheep, framed by two trees. In my opinion, this shepherd gives an idyllic and bucolic overtone to the above-mentioned quietness evoked by the *Erotes* with their torches, that the couple of deceased spouses are now enjoying in the hereafter. The fact that the portraits are not carved yet demonstrates that this object was a "ready-made" and that this iconographic combination of shepherd and *Erotes* was a standard and reusable formula, a popular theme for sarcophagi and burial decoration. The shepherd *kriophoros* was a fortunate element for the sarcophagi decoration, both isolated or paired with other elements, even from the pagan realm. Making these iconographies Christian is often challenging, nevertheless this difficulty demonstrates that this kind of iconographies and iconographic combinations were suitable for both the customers. This difficulties shows that early Christian artists were influenced by Christian literature in the same way as they were influenced by previous and contemporary art.

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[22] Anna Marguerite McCann, *Roman Sarcophagi in the Metropolitan Museium of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978), 51.

[23] Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, 1929, 1–Testo:92; Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, 1929, vol. II, fig. LXXI, 4.. Similarly, but with a different arrangement of figure, the sarcophagus Corsini (second half of the 3rd ce.), where the portraits of the spouses are on the two sides of the sarcophagus, flanking the *mandorla* of the *kriophoros* among the strigils (Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, vol. II, 2 vols. (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1929); Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, 1929, 1–Testo:87).

We can conclude that the bucolic imagery in late antique funerary art was used as a positive figure of quietness, by both Christians and non-Christians. The meaning could change, depending on the combination with other images and other contextual elements, nevertheless it is clear that there was a common understanding of pastoral realm as positive. I agree with Aurélien Caillaud who defined the *kriophoros* figure as an emblem[24] of a golden age of peace and communion that could fit the funerary context in which it often appear[25]. This is the sense, in my opinion, of the shepherds represented on the two lateral panels of sarcophagi fronts, framing the centre, occupied by an *Orante*, a portrait, or a generic scene.

Sometimes the shepherd appears among other Christian episodes from the Bible within the decoration of a relief, without any separation or pause. On the famous sarcophagus of Santa Maria Antiqua there is a mishmash of iconographies: the *Orante* and the central male figure with *toga* and *pallium* – unfinished perhaps to be characterized with the deceased's portraits; the episodes of Jonas (the boat and the rest under the *cucurbita*); the *kriophoros* and the scene of baptism; each iconography, apparently unconnected to the other, aim at giving a positive image of the peaceful hereafter waiting for the baptised Christian. The specific meaning of each case should be analysed separately, taking into account the specific association that each image displays.

The *kriophoros* is juxtaposed with other Christian images also on gravestones (Figure 34). The *kriophoros* on the gravestone ICVR 31609[26] (Figure 69) is associated with Noah building the ark (maybe referring to salvation), Adam and Eve (emblem of sin), a man

Figure 69

tilling with a plough (neutral iconography) and Daniel among the lions (salvation again),

[24] Arnold Provoost argues that the first early christian representations must be considered as emblems, for the fact that these representations are supposed to be composed as parts of a whole, Arnold Provoost, "Il Significato Delle Scene Pastorali Del Terzo Secolo d.C.," in *Atti del IX congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana. Roma 21-27 Settembre 1975*, Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, vol. 1– Monumenti cristiani precostantiniani (Roma, 1978), 408.

[25] Aurélien Caillaud, "Criofori e pastore-filosofo nell'ipogeo degli Aureli," in *L'ipogeo degli Aureli in viale Manzoni. Restauri, tutela, valorizzazione e aggiornamenti interpretativi* (Città del Vaticano, 2011), 216.

[26] http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/31609

and its sense among these images, for hard to determine that it may be, is surely very rich and complex, and the meaning of the shepherd figure can be determined only in combination with the other[27].

On the gravestone of Gerontius (Figure 70)the shepherd, not *kriophoros*, is not paired with Christian images but with a Christian inscription: here the shepherd is sitting on a stone under a tree, facing his sheep, and holding a *pedum* and he brings the panpipe to his mouth (ICVR 20508)[28]; the inscription IN DEO and the provenance of the gravestone from the Domitilla catacomb[29] make the image surely Christian. The interpretation of such isolated images is necessarily generic, since there are no references that help in orientating the sense of the image, nevertheless the only presence of the shepherd makes of this figure a sufficient, independent and meaningful subject-matter for a decoration; these isolated shepherds can be read as evocations of a generic paradise condition, in a wide sense. The shepherd is neither a portrait of Gerontius, nor a representation of the Deus of the inscription; it is rather evocative and augural, as the inscription expresses a wish for the deceased (VIBAS).

As said above about sarcophagi and tomb paintings, it is hard to determine whether an image on a gravestone is Pagan, Jew or Christian: the juxtaposition with other images, it is worth repeating, is not a determining element to state the religious provenance of the image. For example the association of the shepherd with Jonas – a surely Christian iconography – does not make the whole representation undoubtedly Christian, given the non-exclusivity of Pagans decorative choices: a pagan customer could have purchased a

Figure 70

Christian iconography for any reason, not last his (or her) personal taste. Only the context

[27] I Di Stefano Manzella, *Le iscrizioni dei cristiani in Vaticano* (Città del Vaticano, 1997), 301-302, n. 3.8.1.

[28] http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/20508

[29] Henri Leclercq, "Pasteur (Bon)," *Dictionnaire D'archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie (DACL)* (Paris, 1938), coll. 2275-6.

or archaeological evidence can cast any doubt aside: a shepherd is Christian only when it belongs to a surely Christian support, a wall of a catacomb or a front of Christian sarcophagus, from which it's not separable; for the images whose original context is not decipherable, such as rings, gems, glasses, inscriptions, modern scholars must let the image speak for itself, analysing the structural and stylistic elements of the object.

In a moment in which it is hard to speak about iconographic programs even in tombs decorations[30], a methodological life jacket is offered by Richard Brilliant's study on *pendants*, that is to say, panels or images intentionally combined into meaningful associations without being part of a narrative course. He quotes Karl Schefold's work on Pompeii paintings:

> «By the term *cycle* we mean the interrelated motifs of decoration, arranged along the walls, while the term *pendant pictures* refers to the specific meaning that governs their association. Such pendants might even be taken from cycles, but they constitute more significant relationships than mere association in the course of the narrative»[31].

In my opinion this definition of pendant best describes the juxtaposition of Christian images as on the above mentioned sarcophagus of Santa Maria Antiqua and the gravestone ICVR 31609 (Figure 69). Every single figure is taken from a cycle, the episodes of the Jonah cycle for example, but when combined with other different images, the set of meanings changes and gets richer. In this perspective the viewer was forced to define relationships between images, that could not be interpreted as separate and not related episodes. For this reason some shepherds, when associated to Christian images, can be read in a Christian way or, rather, they may bear a Christian sense. The combination and juxtaposition of different images opens «to the possibility for the kind of typological comparison through images that is so characteristic of early Christian art»[32].

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[30] Paul Corby Finney, *Invisible God. The Earliest Christians on Art* (Oxfod: Oxforf University Press, 1994), 197.

[31] Richard Brilliant, *Visual Narratives. Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art*, Cornell University Press (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 65 and note 38.

[32] Jas Elsner, "Decorative Imperatives between Concealment and Display. The Form of Sarcophagi," in *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, vol. 61–2 (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 192.

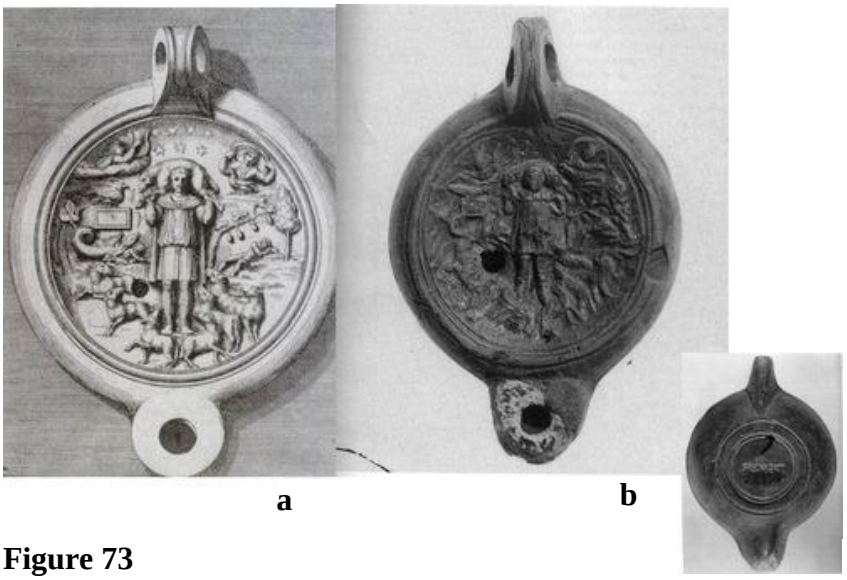
Figure 71

A good example of juxtaposition of images and iconographies is the reliquary from Novalja in the Archaeological museum of Zadar (Figure 71)[33] found on the island of Pag (Croatia) is decorated with 27 panels, arranged in three rows, with Old Testament and New testament scenes: Moses striking the rock (Es, 17), Moses taking off his sandals (Ex.3:1), Noah (Gen. 6), Daniel (Daniel 6), Isaac (Gen., 22), Jesus and the loafs (Mt. 14:13-21 ; Mt. 6:30-44 ; Mt. 15:32-39 ; Mk. 8:1-10 ; Lk. 9:10-17 ; Jn. 6:1-14), the resuscitation of Lazarus (John 11), healing of the man born blind (John 9), and two other images that are not drawn from the Bible, the shepherd *kriophoros* and the *Orante*. All the images bear an inscription, except for the scenes of Jesus, maybe because these were immediately recognizable, whereas the shepherd has the inscription PASTOR (Figure 72) and the Orante has the inscription MARIA. All the scenes are repeated, the shepherd is repeated three times.

Figure 72

This reliquary says a lot about the Christian interpretation of images: on one hand, the inscription MARIA could characterize the *Orante* as a typological portrait of the Virgin, an interpretation of the pre-existing figure of the woman with open hands as the mother of Christ. The inscription PASTOR, on the other hand, says

[33] Nenad Cambi, *Sarkofag Dobroga Pastira Iz Salone I Njegova Grupa (The Good Shepherd Sarcophagus and Its Group)* (Split: Arheoloski Muzej, 1994).



a **b** **c**

Figure 73

that the shepherd was not a specific character but a *typos*, since it's not a personal name as Maria.

The juxtaposition of Christian images and shepherd characterizes also a particular lamp, the famous lamp Wulff 1224 (Figure 73), the only surely Christian lamp according to Paul Corby Finney[34]. The *kriophoros* is in the centre of the decoration, in the foreground, surrounded by seven sheep; in the left of this image there is a cast up Jonah from the mouth of the fish, while the resting Jonah sleeping under the colocynth bush is on the right. On the left of shepherd's right shoulder, a bird is perched on a box that can be interpreted as the Noah's ark. Over the shepherd's head there are seven stars, flanked by the personifications of the Sun (left) and the Moon, Selene, on the right.

Corby Finney argues the lamp as a Christian, for only a Christian client could have been able to make sense of this complex iconography, but the scholar is doubtful whether to interpret or not the shepherd as Jesus. The sense of such a composition is hard to catch, nevertheless it is sure that the shepherd *kriophoros* is a protagonist of the decoration, for his dimension and position. The decoration should not be read as a whole, for it is a composition of pendants, according to Brilliant's definition, rather than an organic whole[35]. What could a 2nd – 3rd century Christian have seen in such a lamp?

[34] Corby Finney, *Invisible God. The Earliest Christians on Art*, 116–31.

[35] According to Grayndon Snyder there are not narrative scenes *ante pacem*, but rather emblems. Since the corpus of shepherd lamps, can be dated to a period within the years 175-225, this is perfectly coherent with the decoration of the lamp, a meaningful even if not organic arrangement of emblems (Graydon Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine* (Mercer University Press, 1985).

A first hint is the function of the object itself: the lamp is a lighting device whose function is to light the path in the dark and allow a safe walk; all the images of the disk can be interpreted in the same way, since the seven stars, perhaps the Pleiades, were a guide for sailors, the bird on Noah's ark guided to the mainland. Even Jonah, cast out of the *ketos*, found his way out of the giant fish. The shepherd in this context, with the sheep on the shoulders and his flock, is a guiding figure for the animals, as it is in Bible shepherding metaphors[36], that in this image are represented around (following?) him.

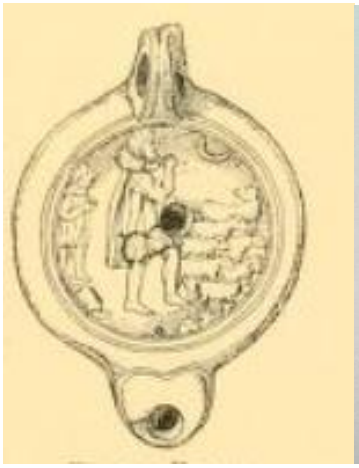


Figure 74 a

Figure 74 b

On a lamp made by Saeculus, now at London British Museum (Figure 74)[37] stars and sky elements are crucial elements in the decoration: a shepherd *kriophoros* is guiding his flock walking rightwards, looking at the moon and stars, as if these were guiding him; moreover a crowned personification is standing behind him. In this iconography the stars evoke the idea of guidance in a more explicit way than on the Wulff lamp.

This interpretation could be valuable for other lamps with a shepherd, as the numerous lamps produced by Annius' factory[38], nevertheless the absence of any other hint or image, except some vegetal decoration as a frame of vines running along the circle of the disk, makes this interpretation less specific.

The subject-matters of lamp decorations may be very different and various, from the erotic scenes of pre-Christian lamps, to the Christian decoration of the *chrismon*, so it's impossible to read all the disks decorations in the light of the "guide" lecture key. It is indeed out of doubt that the juxtaposition, rather, the composition of different

[36] See sections 3.2.1. and 3.2.3.

[37] British Museum. Dept. of Greek and Roman Antiquities, *Catalogue of the Greek and Roman Lamps in the British Museum* (London, 1914), 173, n. 1144.

[38] Corby Finney, *Invisible God. The Earliest Christians on Art*.

Figure 75

Figure 76

iconographies, in this specific case Christian, was arranged to be meaningful and communicative, if not allegoric.

Gems and rings were decorated with a juxtaposition of images or small inscriptions, with a stylistic arrangement similar to the above mentioned funerary gravestones (Figure 70).

A red gem at Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology (4th century, Figure 75)[39], represents the usual figure of the *kriophoros* with two sheep under a tree, with an anchor on the right; an obsidian gem of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (4th century, Figure 76), the *kriophoros* with the two sheep under a tree is flanked by a fish and there is the inscription IXYΘ-C C/Y[40]; on the other side of this gem there is Jonah, a sheep and a tree.

Since the same juxtaposition of the shepherd and the anchor characterizes some funerary reliefs[41], it is not possible to determine the sense of this juxtaposition by the context; what is meaningful in these decoration is, perhaps, the juxtaposition itself.

The anchor and the fish were diffusedly used by Christians and combined together maybe for their belonging to the maritime realm. Robin Jensen pointed out that the symbol of the fish has many possible meanings and «it's impossible as well as unwarranted to distinguish them […]. Multiple references are suggested by single images, both in literature and artistic compositions»[42]; the combinations with other representations, like scenes of baptism or episodes of Jonas, as seen on the Wulff 1224 lamp, convey

[39] Mariarosaria Barbera, *Costantino 313 D. C., (Catalogo della mostra tenuta a Roma Nel 2013)*, Electa (Milano: Electa, 2013), 229, nr. 111.

[40] Barbera, 229, nr. 113.

[41] http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/316.

[42] Robin Margaret Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, Routledge (London and New York, 2000), 51.

composite meaning. In these two gems these ambiguous symbols are combined with another polysemic icon, the shepherd[43]. The famous lines of Clement's *The Instructor* (III, 57,1-60,1) give some guidelines on the suitable iconographies for the good Christian's rings: on one hand dove, anchor, ship, fish, or a lyre, are all good iconographies, while on the other hand, idols, swords, or arrows should be avoided. Paul Corby Finney argued that the effectiveness of Clement's rules should be reconsidered, since they had little real effect on the jewellery market: the point is not what was allowed or forbidden, rather «the pupil should extract from the teacher's directives a principle of selection and make it his (or her) own»[44]. The moral choices of Christians could have been mirrored by the choice of rings iconographies, so if someone wanted to show off his moral virtues, jewellery was a good way to do it: in a way, rings and jewels iconographies could function as markers of Christian identity, whose function is to remind the observers (even the owner himself) that the person who wears that ring believes in and practices Christian values.

In these compositions the shepherd may be the spiritual guide, as it was for Abercius[45], or he could evoke different ideas, in a simultaneous understanding.

During the 4th century the *kriophoros* enters the monumental context, in the pavement mosaic of the Theodore Basilica of Aquileia (Figure 77), the oldest western Christian basilica. Given the surely Christian context, the image is equally surely Christian and, moreover, has undoubtedly a specific meaning within the decoration: the figure is isolated, framed, and appears to be in *pendant* with other figures.

The floor mosaic of the Basilica displays, besides the shepherd, the three episodes of Jonah, thrown in the sea, eaten by the *ketos*, and resting under the *cucurbita*: this mosaic occupies the biggest part of the surface, separated from the other decorations.

[43] The shepherd was already present on rings decorations in pre-christian ages. A very popular subject was the milking of the goat. See Gisela Richter, *Cataloue of Engraved Gems of the Classical Style* (New York, 1920), n. 396 and bibliography.

[44] Paul Corby Finney, "Images on Finger Rings and Early Christian Art," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers. Studies on Art and Archeology in Honor of Ernst Kitzinger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, Dumbarton Oaks, vol. 41, 1987, 186.

[45] Johannes Quasten, *Patrology. The Beginning of Patristic Literature*, vol. 1 (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1949), 172.

Both the shepherd and Jonas were popular themes in funerary decoration, and they both "exit" this context to enter the monumental decoration. These iconographies share their space with the portraits of the donors[46] and the famous inscription of Theodor, that reminds the cooperation of the community, the bishop, and God himself in the making of the basilica. I agree with the interpretation of Claire Sotinel who argues that «la signification des mosaïques est celui de la communauté chrétienne et de sa représentation, et non celui du dogme»[47]. In this perspective the scholar welcomes Françoise Thélamon's interpretation of the shepherd as an episcopal figure, rather than Christological.

Figure 77

It is a truth universally acknowledged that neither the shepherd nor the *kriophoros* were inventions of early Christian art, but images inherited from Greco-Roman culture,

[46] Luisa Bertacchi, "I ritratti nei mosaici di Aquileia," in *Il ritratto romano in Aquileia e nella Cisalpina. Atti della 27. settimana di studi aquileiesi, 27-30 Aprile 1996*, Antichità Altoadriatiche (Trieste: Editreg, 1999), 81–103; Marta Novello, "Autorappresentazione delle élites aquileiesi nelle domus tardoantiche," in *Architettura privata ad Aquileia in età romana. Atti del convegno di studio (Padova, 21-22 Febbraio 2011)* (Padova: Padova University Press, 2012), 222–42.

[47] Claire Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme: Aquilée du IIIe au VIesSiècle* (École Française de Rome, 2005), 81.

reinterpreted and reused by Christians[48]. The ways in which these images were reused, the processes and the social dynamics, are hard to trace: it is hard to determine whether Christian customers were purchasing ready-made and standard objects or if they had their own artists and craftsman. The oil lamps produced by the factory of Annius decorated with the shepherd could be bought by both Christian and non-Christian customers, since each one could "read", interpret the image as his personal cultural background suggested[49]. The *lénos* sarcophagus from Priscilla, surely Christian for its provenance, is decorated with shepherds caught in their shepherding activities, and represented according to the types already known in pre-Christian art. It is impossible to know if the customer was Christian or if Christian artists created sarcophagi purposely without any religious reference, in order to widen their market: it is nevertheless sure that the bucolic imagery had to be universally interpreted as a positive allegory to a happy condition for the deceased's afterlife[50].

What is it, then, the paradigm of adaptation of pagan iconographies to new Christian messages? Given the great adaptability of shepherd imagery, was it necessary to "inflect" these iconographies in a Christian sense? In my opinion, the "adaptation" made by Christians was double: on one hand the shepherd, especially the *kriophoros*, was juxtaposed to other images, representing – or generally inspired by – Christian texts. As seen above, the Wulff 1224 lamp (Figure 73), the gems, and the Novalija reliquary show this kind of process. On the other hand, early Christians used the shepherd as a metaphor to represent Jesus, as seen in section 2.2.2: the shepherd could metaphorically represent Jesus, or he could lend him some of his features (mosaic in Galla Placidia Mausoleum, Figure 60); "shepherd" could be just an epithet as on the Brescia casket (Figure 62), a visual representation of a metaphor based on the Scripture.

The shepherd may not be a Christian invention, nevertheless it's sure that Christians were the first, maybe the only, who represented the shepherd in monumental context, as in the

[48] Fabrizio Bisconti and Matteo Braconi, "Il riuso delle immagini in età tardoantica: l'esempio del buon pastore dall'abito singolare," in *Antichità Altoadriatiche*, vol. 74, 2012, 231; Corby Finney, *Invisible God. The Earliest Christians on Art*, 229.

[49] Corby Finney, *Invisible God. The Earliest Christians on Art*.

[50] «[…] l'esaltazione dell'*otium* e della *felicitas* agreste, evidente nei citati mosaici africani, assume, con la contesualizzazionenell'ambiente funerario, il significato pregnante di evocazione della quiete, della serenità dello spirito, diviene chiara allegoria dello *status* di beatitudine dopo la morte» (Lucrezia Spera, "Un sarcofago con temi agro-pastorali dallo scavo dell'arenario centrale della catacomba di Priscilla," in *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, vol. LXXVI, 1-2 (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2000), 243–84, 277).

Basilica of Aquileia (Figure 77) and in the baptistery of san Giovanni in Fonte (Naples). Moreover the shepherd was represented even on public structures and buildings (Eusebius, *Life of Cost.* III, 49).

Some pastoral features will appear also in the apse of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, where the figure of the bishop of Ravenna is surrounded by two lines of sheep, symmetrically arranged on his sides. We shall return on this image, and on the pattern of the figure surrounded by sheep, in the end of this work.

Jesus Christ and the debate about him were not the only "concepts" expressed by the pastoral metaphor of the shepherd.

The famous "new messages" expressed by Christian could be, besides the nature of Christ, the trinity, whose representation was a real distress for early Christian artists[51], and even the church itself, its spirit and its structure and hierarchy. What of these urgencies found its expression in the metaphor of the shepherd?

The next section will focus on pastoral vocabulary and literary pastoral metaphors: the ancient tradition of the shepherd-king, a tradition that goes up to the pre-biblical Ancient Near East, will evolve naturally in the Christian fathers and texts as the metaphorical representation of the episcopal characters and tasks.

The reasons for the use of visual pastoral metaphor are easily found: the shepherd imagery was already widespread and used, so it was easy to inflect it for new and particular purposes. Early Christianity did not "seize" the shepherd metaphor, since it already belonged to its literary tradition (Ancient Testament), but it was only with Christians that the shepherd metaphor evolved and became a *tòpos*.

[51] André Grabar, *Early Christian Art. From the Rise of Christianity to the Death of Theodosius* (New York: Odissey Press, 1968).

3. VERBAL

3.1 Pastoral Vocabulary and Language

This section analyses the literal uses of pastoral imagery from third to sixth century from a lexical and cultural point of view. On one hand, it takes into account the shepherd vocabulary in Greco-Roman culture, with an overview on Ancient Near East and Hebrew traditions. The survey of the words used to represent pastoral and bucolic world helps understanding the possible influences of different semantic fields, and the consequent determination of metaphorical uses of pastoral imagery.

As in the visual imagery section, verbal imagery is analysed first in its structure, and, second, in its metaphorical meanings.The first part of this section focuses on the literary meanings of words, their primal signifier, and their metaphorical use, where the metaphor lies in the combination of words. In the second part of this section, I will analyse the metaphorical uses of pastoral imagery in literature. In order to understand the choices of words by writers, it is necessary to understand the meaning and the sense of the single terms, their overtones and the meanings of syntagms and words combinations. The second part of this section focuses on the uses of the whole pastoral imagery in literature, in a wider perspective beyond the lexical level.

As the words of pastoral vocabulary got farther from their first signifier, early Christian authors could use them to build metaphors and shape their own interpretation of bucolic imagery: as we shall see, shepherd, the word “shepherd” and its derivatives are used to describe clergy and bishops.

3.1.1 Shepherd & Animals

The verb *rāʿâ*[1] means "graze" and, when used transitively (Mic. 7:14; Gen. 36:24), it refers to the work of shepherds, who tend and pasture the flock. The multiplicity of the Greek translations, in contrast to the simple Semitic usage, illustrates the variety of ideas associated with the life and work of shepherds: the LXX translates the verb 38 times with *poimaínein*, 22 times with *bóskein*, 14 times with *némein*.

In Greek a pastor is *νομεύς*, from the verb *νέμω*, whose first meaning is to deal out, distribute or dispense, and the second meaning, typical of herdsmen, means to pasture (Lat. *Pascere*, to feed). *Νομεύς*[2], besides its etymological meaning of "distributer" or "dealer", is the generic term for the special terms αἰπόλος (goatherd), βουκόλος (cowherd, herdsman), ποιμήν[3], συβώτης (swineherd). The Greek ποιμαίνω means herd, tend, but also metaphorically to tend, cherish, mind. Like the verb βουκολεῖν, to tend or "to serve" (metaphorical), ποιμαίνω means also to soothe, beguile, corresponding to the Latin *pasco*.

Rāʿâ (*rōʿeh*) has some royal overtones: it is not a proper title from the language of the court, it is rather a «metaphor, pondering the function of the king»[4].

The approbation in New Testament literature of the shepherd's title is surprising, given the scant evidence of the term as honorific title for a political or spiritual leader. It is important that early Jewish literature, possibly influenced by Zech. 11:4-17 and Eccl. 12:11, understood shepherds as leaders in the sense of teachers of the law of Israel (2Bar 77:13-1; 2 Esd. 5:18). Moses and David were counted among such leaders.

Of course, the Old Testament use of the image laid the groundwork for the development of this metaphor. «To equip his undershepherds for his mission God endows the staff in his hands with supernatural power. This maṭṭeh becomes an important instrument in the upcoming confrontations with Pharaoh and in the wilderness sojourn that follows (cf.

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[1] Wallis, "Rāʿâ; Rōʿeh," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge UK: G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, 1998).

[2] Νόμιος θεός is the pastoral god Pan, and Νόμιος is a title of Apollos as shepherd of the cattle of Admetus. It is a title aslso for Aristaeus (Pind. P. 9. 115), Hermes (Ar. Rhesm. 977), Dionysus (Anth. P. 9. 524, 14), Zeus (Archyt. ap. Stob. 270.3) and the Nymphs (Orph. H. 50.11).

[3] √πα

[4] Wallis, "Rāʿâ; Rōʿeh," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge UK: G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, 1998), 551-2.

Deut. 34:10-12)»[5]. The appropriate equipment for the protection of the flock includes the staff (*maqqēl*, *mišʿenet*) and a club (*šēbeṭ*, Ps. 23:4; Lev 27:32), a stick with a knob of hardened asphalt. Beth Tanner noted that the two words used for the rod and the staff in Psalm 23 have an ambiguous meaning: they are certainly not the staffs of simple shepherds but carry a meaning of power and judgment when used by the king. At the same time, these are implements of a just and righteous king, who rules with equity[6].

The Greek ποιμήν is attested to have also metaphorical meanings, besides the strict sense of "herdsman": the Greek parallels of the root *rʿh* , *bóskein*, *némein*, *poimaínein*, are applied to deities and philosophers, even if the meaning of the shepherd concept in the pre Hellenistic literature of Greece differs totally from its meaning in Egypt and Mesopotamia, where the solidarity binding shepherd and people together are emphasized. This difference is also illustrated by the existence of several different words in the Greek language available to represent the complex Egyptian and Semitic shepherd concept[7].

The expression "shepherd of people" is frequent in Homer[8]:«*poimèn laōn* is an expression that goes back to an age when the social structure was founded on animal husbandry. *Poiménn*, like other titles with a more political sense, *ǿrkhamos*, *koiranos*, *kosmétor*, is never constructed with *dêmos*, but exclusively with laòs»[9].

Metaphorical uses are attested for the verb ποιμαίνω, used in 1Peter 5:1-4 for the elders who are to *oversee* the flock. The verb for overseeing is *episkopein*: the task of watching

[5] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, Apollos (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 87–88.

[6] Beth Tanner, "King Yaweh As The Good Shepherd: Taking Another Look at the Image of God in Psalm 23," in *David and Zion. Biblical Studies in Honor of J.J.M. Roberts* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 279.

[7] Wallis, "Rāʿâ; Rōʿeh," 549.

[8] The expression poimèn laōn occurs forty-four times in the Iliad and (only) twelve in the Odissey. In the former, it is bestowed upon heroes of both Greek and Trojan sides: Agamemnon, Achilles, Machaon, Jason, Dryas and Nestor on one hand; Hector, Bienor, Hyperenor, Hyperion, Agenor. Cf. Emile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 372–73.

[9] Emile Benveniste, *Hittite et indo-européen* (Paris: librairire Adrien Maisonneuve, 1962), 100–101. The term *laòs* expresses a group of people tied by the communal relationship to a chief, while demos designates a group of men united only by a social status and not for the belonging to a political community or any bond of kinship. (Emile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 371,2). Iason is called shepherd of his people with the expression *poimèn laōn* in Theogony (1000) but it is never bestowed upon gods. The word is used also to describe a captain chief (ναῶν ποιμένες in Aechilus Supp. 767).

is a comprehensive summary of shepherding duties[10]. *Poimēn* is associated to *episkopos*, literally 'overseer', in Num, 27:17; Acts 20:28, and in 1 Pet. 2:25, underlining the loving care and concern of the shepherd. In 1 Pet. 2:25 the task of guard is bestowed upon Jesus that now assumed God's historic guardianship on his own people. Later on, oversight became the task of a special office: in Acts 20:28 *poimēn* and *ekklēsia* are juxtaposed. 'E*piskopos'* is first used as an explicit title in 1 Tim. 3.1 to designate a defined office[11]. It is clear how the pastoral care of bishop originates, at least as imagery, within pastoral vocabulary.

An echo of the Greek ποίμην is attested centuries later, the inscription of the floor mosaic of the Basilica of Aquileia: the dedication uses the word *poemnio,* a loan translation of the Greek ποίμην that designates as a 'flock' the community of Aquileian *euergetes* that sustained economically the decoration of the basilica, guided by the bishop Theodor.

The term flock also designates the community in Old Testament and pre-Christian Judaism, since in this association Israel followed the ancient near eastern cultural traditions: in early Sumerian texts the shepherd/monarch was also appointed with the power associated with the tree of life and the water of life. The application of shepherd imagery to deities and kings is apparent in the stylized representation of staff and club along with a horned headdress as insignia of gods and kings[12]. In court style, "shepherd" was a title for the king and in the context of Akkadian both purely literal and metaphorical meaning of shepherd and shepherding became associated very early with the monarchic role of the king, as well as the hierarchical position of the deity within both the pantheon and the world of the nations. A similar development of the concept and image of the shepherd is also found in ancient Egypt, especially at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, as we shall see in next section (3.2.1).

Old Testament use, according to which Israel is the flock of God, lives on in the Synoptic Gospels. For the most part, however, Jesus uses the image of God's flock for his disciples as the eschatological people of God[13].

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[10]Only here and in Acts 20:28 the imperative form of this verb used in this way (Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, Apollos (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 232).

[11] L. Coenen, "Bishop," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975), 191.

[12] Wallis, "Rāʿâ; Rōʿeh," 548.

[13] Joahim Jeremias, "Poimēn," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Gerhard Friedrich, 1968).

From a vocabulary study, it appears that pastoral and royal vocabulary are related; the reason is that the figure of the shepherd is deeply connected to the king or leader.

«'Royalty' introduces a conception of power which is different: the authority of the king is that of the guide, od the "shepherd" and we find it in Iranian, in Hittite, as well as in Homeric Greek»[14]. In his book Hittite et Indo-Européen, Émile Benveniste points out that the idea of shepherd, *vāstar*, protector of the ox and guide of the followers, was a title *and* a task (mission) bestowed upon the highest authority, human or divine, as the storm god invoked by king Muwatalli with the title "shepherd" (*weštaraš*)[15].

Even if scholars are not certain about the etymology of Nāgîd[16], the word expresses the idea of "something or someone standing before someone or something else". J. J. Gluck tried to connect the etymologies of the term shepherd (nōqēd), in order to make it synonym with nāgîd, but this theory has been shown as methodologically inaccurate[17]. «The meaning "shepherd" does not agree with the usage of the Nāgîd concept in the context of the Israelite monarchy in the Old Testament»[18]. For its appearance in 1Sam. 9:16 with reference to Saul, the traditional translation of Nāgîd is "prince", but this translation fits neither the context nor the philological evidence. "Highness" is a better translation.

The Nāgîd title is applied most frequently to David (1Sam. 13:14; 25:30; 2Sam. 5:2 par. 1 Ch. 11:2; 2 Sam. 6:21; 7:8 par. 1Ch. 17:7), who is exalted from tending sheep to be nāgîd over Yahweh's people Israel (2 S. 7:8, cf. 1 Ch. 17:7). Nāgîd does not seem to be synonym of king, but the two words are close in meaning. The authority and dignity of the nāgîd derived directly from God[19].

In chronicler's history, nāgîd appears frequently as a title of individuals who exercise primary authority over the "house of God" and in Prov. 28:16 the nāgîd is someone with an "exalted" role in society.

[14] Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, 376.

[15] Benveniste, *Hittite et indo-européen*, 100.

[16] Hasel, "Nāgîd," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge UK: G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, 1998, 187-202).

[17] W. Richter, *Die Nāgîd-Formel*, Biblische Zeitschrift, 9 (Paderborn, 1965), 72 and n.7.

[18] Hasel, "Nāgîd," 192.

[19] Hasel, 199.

Another overtone is given to the idea of shpepherd in New Testament: in the Gospel of John *poimēn* is associated with *kalòs*, in a syntagm that will shape pastoral imagery for a long time.

ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων

(John 10:11)

Kalòs here is used to bring into focus Jesus' office as shepherd in all its uniqueness, in contrast to contemporary false claims to the office of shepherd and to the shepherd-gods of antiquity[20]. In a first instance, it expresses the righteousness of Jesus' title[21]. In this context *kalòs* is used as synonym of *agathòs*[22]

As seen in section 2.2.2 there is a parallel between Jesus as the Good Shepherd and Peter, a parallel use of pastoral imagery realised, according to Francois Tolmie, on a verbal and lexical plan. In the dialogue between Jesus and Peter (John 13:36-38) Peter, to describe his willingness to die for Jesus, uses the same words that Jesus used to describe himself as the Good Shepherd, "to lay down his life for". Francois Tolmie suggests that the reason for this deliberate comparison is the will of the author to link Peter's promise to the Good Shepherd's pastoral task. Tolmie also stresses the importance of the use of the verb ἀκολουθέω, to follow, used by Peter in verse 37 and in the Good Shepherd passage, for the sheep that *follow* their shepherd: in his opinion, this use of vocabulary, even if not strictly pastoral, would serve a metaphorical purpose to build a pastoral parallel between the figures of Jesus and Peter. On one hand Peter wants to imitate Jesus' pastoral duties *towards* his sheep, by using the same expression "to lay down his life for" and, on the other hand, Peter wants to *follow* Jesus, just as the sheep *follow* their shepherd (John 10:4,5; 10:27). Eventually, Peter will fail not only the appointment as shepherd, but also his "sheep-like" task, in following his master to death[23].

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[20] E. Beyrehuter, "Shepherd," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975), 104.

[21] *Kalòs* is used to express righteousness also in John 10:31-33, to describe the good works of God that Jesus does. In these works there is an open claim to be the Messiah:« these works are καλά because they are true Messianic works» (Bertram, "Καλός," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1968), 556; see also Jeremias, "Poimēn.")

[22] «The difference between *agathòs* and *kalòs* in Jn. appears to be grammatical: *agathos* is used predicatively at 1:46 and 7:12, as a noun at 5:29, while *kalòs* is always attributive» Beyrehuter, "Shepherd," 101.

[23] Francois D. Tolmie, "The (Not so) Good Shepherd: The Use of Shepherd Imagery in the Characterization of Peter in the Fourth Gospel," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John. Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 363, ff.

In the figure of Peter, at least according to the interpretation of Tolmie, there is a blend of the figure of the shepherd and the ovine. The same paradoxical identity is bestowed upon Jesus himself that is both "good shepherd" and lamb. A brief survey on the lexical values of "lamb" is necessary to introduce this crucial topic.

There seems to be a distinction between "actual" and metaphorical animals, as it was in visual arts[24]. In Old Testament Kebeś[25] is associated with the shepherd motif and describes both the group of Israel and the individual (Ps. 119:176). It is also the lamb led unknowingly to the slaughter (Jer. 11:19) and the suffering servant of God (Isa 53:7).

Ἀμνός[26] occurs 4 times in the New Testament (Jn. 1:29, 36; Ac. 8:32; 1Pt, 1:19) and it is always applied to Jesus, who is compared with a lamb as the One who suffers and dies innocently and representatively. «The description of the Redeemer as a lamb is unknown to later Judaism; the only possible occurrence (Test. Jos. 19) falls under the suspicion of being a Christin interpolation»[27]. Isaiah 53:7 might well be the origin of the description of Jesus as *amnòs* and a second influence can be the sacrificial lamb of Passover, since the crucifixion of Jesus took place in that period. The first to compare Jesus to the Paschal lamb are Paul and then John (19:36), but maybe there is a wider background.

The words of salutation to Jesus, spoken by John the Baptist (John 1:29,36), *o amnòs toũ theoũ*, can be explained only in the light of Aramaic, where there is one and same term for "lamb", "servant" and "boy". Jesus is therefore the servant of God, being the sacrifice lamb.

In the book of *Revelation*, Christ is called "lamb" 28 times. It has been argued[28] that "ram" is the correct translation, since what is depicted is the wrath (6:16, ff) warfare and triumph (17:14) of the ἀρνίον: rams were often considered as ruling animals, a leadership expressed by their horns, and not only in Christian culture. In *Revelation* the slaughter

[24] See Jas Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer. The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006).

[25] Dohmen, "Kebeś," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge UK: G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, n.d.).

[26] Ἀρήν occurs only in Lk. 10:3, in the antithesis lambs/wolves, expressing the dangerous position of the defenceless disciples and the certainty of divine protection. Ἀρνίον is a diminutive of ἀρήν, but it has no longer this force in New Testament.

[27] Joahim Jeremias, "Ἀμνός, Ἀρήν, Ἀρνίον," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / London UK: Geoffrey W. Bromiley, D. Litt., D.D., 1964), 339.

[28] F Spitta, *Streitfragen Zur Geschichte Jesu* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), 172–224.

(5:9, 12; 13:8) and the triumph cannot be separated, and this connection is clear in the visual representations of the Lamb of God, where a lamb (often a ram) is portrayed with the triumphal flag, or high and victory cross (not the martyr sign), the blood exuding from its chest, remembering the sacrifice of Christ.

Words of the pastoral vocabulary appear also in epigraphy, in a sort of twofold role of images and texts. Arnold Provoost gives account of a certain amount of inscriptions of the words *pastor* or ποιμήν, pointing out that the expression *bonus pastor* is completely missing, so that it is almost impossible to read those inscriptions in an evangelic sense (moreover, the so-called good shepherd and pastoral paradise enter in the funerary inscriptions repertory very late)[29].

In some inscriptions, it only appears the monogram ΠΑ, sometimes with the representation of a *kriophoros*[30], and in a painting from the catacomb of Generosa in Rome (last quarter of the 4th century) a shepherd with his panpipe and sheep is featured with the inscription PASTOR[31]. Fabrizio Bisconti and Matteo Braconi, interpreted this image as a sort of portrait of the deceased, while the inscription would be a sort of visual rebus, as it was in the Pamphilus catacomb, where in the gravestone of Lucernius, it's represented a lamp enlightened, an echo of the deceased's name[32].

These words may be interpreted as captions for images but, as the image of the *kriophoros* in the Novalja reliquary (Figures 71 and 72) seems to suggest, the word inscribed has a further purpose than the pure denotation: as the word MARIA associated to the Orante figure on the reliquary, the word PASTOR may reveal something more on the identity of the *kriophoros*, beyond the purely iconographical identification (in the sense of Panofsky[33]). The previous lexical analysis shows that words, as well as images,

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[29] Arnold Provoost, "Il significato delle scene pastorali del terzo secolo d.C.," in *Atti del IX congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana. Roma 21-27 Settembre 1975*, Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, vol. 1–Monumenti Cristiani Precostantiniani (Roma, 1978), 424.

[30] Rosanna Friggeri, Maria Grazia Granino Cecere, and Gian Luca Gregori, *Terme di Diocleziano, La collezione epigrafica* (Milano: Electa, 2012), 582, IX.35a.

http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/39671; http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/37649.

[31] This use of the word shepherd as a tagline above the image recalls the example of the Novalja casket (see section 2.2.4).

[32] Fabrizio Bisconti and Matteo Braconi, "Il riuso delle immagini in età tardoantica: l'esempio del buon pastore dall'abito singolare," in *Antichità Altoadriatiche*, vol. 74, 2012, 231–40. ICUR X, 26397. http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/11251.

[33] Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History*, Doubleday (Garden City, N.Y, 1955).

have a tradition that influences their meanings and make them perceive and understand as meaningful. It is hard to determine the intention of the words associated to images, if they purposely conveyed the idea of guide, or carefulness or any other meaning the word had. Nevertheless it seems that these captions have a further purpose that exceeds the boundaries of a purely denotative level.

3.2 Pastoral imagery in literature

Michel Foucault delivered two lectures at Stanford University (October 10 and 16, 1979) about the technology of power: in the first of these lesson he introduced the idea of a "pastoral modality of power", a sort of individualizing power, of which he brilliantly traced the origins, going back to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. In this lecture he profusely spoke about the figure of the shepherd-king: «The idea of the deity, or the king, or the leader, as a shepherd followed by a flock of sheep wasn't familiar to the Greeks and Romans. […] this is not the case in ancient Oriental societies-Egypt, Assyria, Judaea»[34].

This sections gives an account of imagery of herdsman in ancient literary traditions, following Foucault's distinction: the first part analyses the shepherd kings and rulers in Oriental cultures, while the second part focuses on the idyllic and pastoral (in Arcadic sense) overtones of the Greco-Roman imagery of shepherds.

3.2.1 Oriental Shepherd-Kings: Ancient Near East and pre-Hellenic cultures

A distinction should be made between *actual* shepherd-kings and metaphors of kings or gods called shepherds, nevertheless it is not often possible to make such a clarification. Pastoralism, intended here as the activity of moving herds of animals in search of pasturelands, was a central feature of Near East economies for the second millennium B.C.. Hittite sources and texts from Ugarit reveal the significance and importance of livestock and cattle as economic resources. In Mesopotamia pastoral products represented a significant portion of economy, up to the Neo-Babylonian Empire (625-539B.C.). Shepherding was a pivotal activity also for ancient Israelites, who did not leave behind this practice, even after their period in the wilderness[35]. Surely the pastoral metaphors are shaped on real shepherding activities, and the attitude of good or bad rulers are modelled on the attitudes of good or wicked shepherds towards their flock. For this reason, the flock is an important element of the pastoral imagery, since the attitude of the herdsman towards it, as well as the behaviour of the sheep themselves, shape different kinds of

[34] Michel Foucault, "'Omnes et Singulatim': Toward a Critique of Political Reason," in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954 -1984: Power*, vol. 3 (New York: New Press, 2003), 300.

[35] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 46.

rulership: as we'll see, some cultures stress the importance of shepherd's knowledge of each sheep in the flock, and some other connect the city with the sheepfold, as the city of Uruk in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, emphasizing the territorial root of kingship.

These two branches will eventually convey in Early Christian tradition, shaping the idea of sovereignty and "pastorship" in surprising ways, since, as we shall see, the sovereignty of Christ will never be shaped on shepherd metaphors, as instead it was in Hebrews tradition.

The Greek *Poimēn Laōn* occurs for kings in Iliad and Odissey, and the shepherd metaphors appears in Pythagorean texts to describe the ruler, but it does not shape a wider imagery. By contrast, Plato often speaks of the shepherd-magistrate (*Critias*, *Republic*; *Laws*), and in the *Statesman* pastoral power is the central problem, treated at length. Can the city's decision-maker be defined as a sort of shepherd? In this case, as we shall see, there is a disambiguation of the metaphor, that is not a metaphor anymore but a paradigm, focusing on the shepherd tasks and duties, rather than on the nature of the flock. In Plato's *Republic*, (1.342-346) Socrates argued that the essence if a shepherd's art is selfless concern for his flock, otherwise there is no shepherd at all[36].

Besides these exceptions, Greeks limited the shepherd imagery to the field of poetry, endowing it with idyllic meanings. The only pastoral deity of Greek culture is Pan, whose divinity has nothing in common with ancient near eastern shepherd-deities such as Dumuzi or other Sumerian deities, identified as shepherds in epithets and titles. Actually, Pan, the inventor of the *syrinx*, is involved in music more than in shepherding.

The Hebrews tradition, in line with the Oriental one, conceives his god Yahweh as a shepherd, but it is necessary to make some clarifications: the use of the term for the deity is rare or late (Gen. 48:15; Ps. 23:1), probably because «at the time Israel adopted kingship the title "shepherd" was already fraught with certain other notions, so that simple adoption of this allegory was problematic. There is no evidence that the term "shepherd" ever served as a title for a reigning king of Israel»[37]. Nevertheless, even if the Old Testament connect hesitantly the shepherd concept with the leadership exercised by kings and by God, it must be noticed that the shepherd title is bestowed upon ruling and powerful figures, huan "heroes" if we want, appointed by God himself, like Moses and

[36] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*.Careless shepherds are like the wolves from which they are expected to protect their sheep (3.415-6; 4.440), thi is precisely the argument Ezekiel makes in his indictment n the false shepherd leaders of Israel (ch. 34) .

[37] Wallis, "Rāʿâ; Rōʿeh," 549–50.

David. The shepherd metaphor is bestowed upon Jesus Christ too: the New Testament shepherd metaphor fulfil Old Testament expectations and will be continued in Early Christian literature. Nevertheless, for what concerns visual metaphors, as we shall see, Greek influence seems to have been stronger rather than the Oriental-Hebrews one, since the representations of s ruling-shepherd are scarce and deceptive. As the conclusions of this work will show, the shepherding metaphor for power and ruling tasks shifted from the theological to the ecclesiastical plan: we will see how bishops literary and visual imagery relies deeply on the shepherd-king metaphor.

Shepherd language is used for a variety of gods and goddesses in diverse literary contexts throughout Mesopotamia: the ancient deity Dumuzi was associated with the fertility of the pasturelands and the flocks, and Enlil, another Mesopotamian god, was called the "august leader-goat"[38]. «Human rulers were represented in royal inscriptions as historical recipients of pastorship from the gods. They in turn ruled over human "flock"»[39].

The expression "Mesopotamian rulers" and "Mesopotamian kingship" are too broad to be analysed as a whole: there were different ideologies in different reigns and regions, and the ideology of power could change even within one and same reign. «Kingship in ancient Mesopotamia had many different facets and different aspects are reflected in the multifarious titles that the rulers took and in the statements included in their royal inscriptions (Seux, 1967)»[40]. Nevertheless the old-aged rulers such as Gilgamesh and Hammurabi were models for later rulers, and the term "shepherd of men was one of the Babylonian monarch's title[41].

«In Babylonian and Assyrian *rê'û* ('shepherd') is a common epithet for rulers and the verb *re' û* ('to pasture') is a common figure of speech for 'to rule'»[42].

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[38] The association of ram and goats to ruling roles is evident also in iconographies, on a sealing with a cylinder seal impression depicting a royal family, where a ram is represented under a three-line inscription panel, with the name of the royal family. Joan Aruz and Ronald Wallenfels, *Art of the First Cities. the Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus* (New York: Yale University Press, 2003), 226, no. 154.

[39] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 61.

[40] Michael Roaf, "Mesopotamian Kings and the Built Environment," in *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority. Cosmos, Politics, and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*, University of Pensylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Jane A. Hill Philip Jones, and Antonio J. Morales, 2007), 332.

[41] Sarah Stékoffer, *La crosse merovingienne de saint Germain, premier abbé de Moutier-Grandval* (Porrentruy: Office du patrimoine historique. Société jurassienne d'émulation, 1996), 16 and figure 3.

[42] Jeremias, "Poimēn," 486 and note 7.

Gilgamesh appears in the Sumerian king list as the 5th ruler in the first Uruk dynasty, which means he ruled about 2750 B.C. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* «he is the shepherd of Uruk-the-Sheepfold, Gilgamesh, [*the* ***guide*** *of the*]*teeming* [*people*]. Though he is their shepherd *and* their [***protector***] […]» (Tablet I, 187-189)[43].

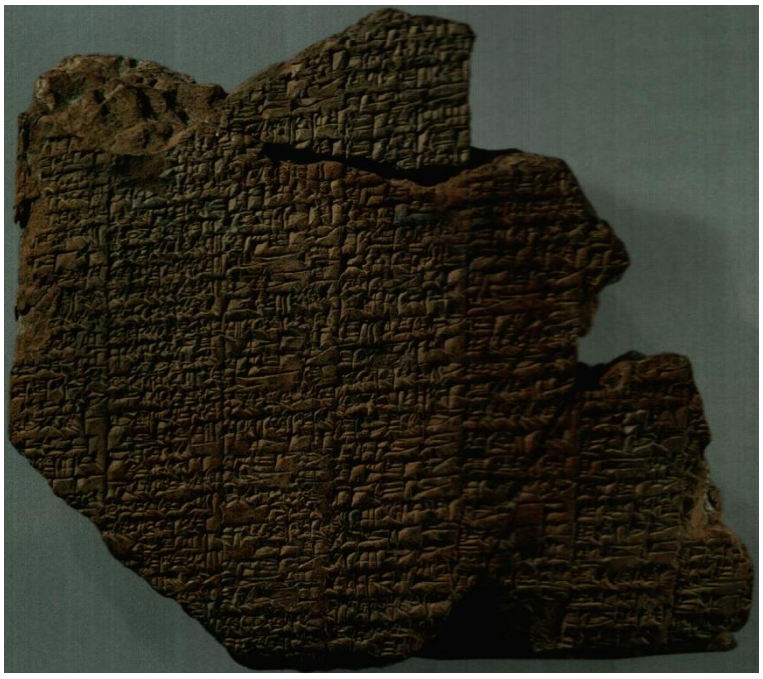

Figure 78

King Lipit-Eshtar of Isin (ca. 1919-1909 B.C. Figure 78) calls himself «pious shepherd od the city of Nippur» in a royal inscription with a collection of ideal legal decision that were intended to demonstrate the Crown's concern for, and control of, justice in the land[44].

The famous code of Hammurabi of Babylon would follow this rules model, even in the self-definition as a shepherd: in his elaborate code of laws the king says the gods established him «to make justice prevail in the land, to abolish the wicked and the evil, to prevent the weak from oppressing the strong, to rise like the sun god Šamaš over all humankind, to illuminate the land»[45].

[43] Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* (Allen Lane: Penguin Press, 1999), 4.

[44] Aruz and Wallenfels, *Art of the First Cities. the Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus*, 471, no. 334.

[45] Roth in John F. Robertson, "Social Tensions in the Ancient Near East," in *A Companion to the Ancient near East*, Daniel C. Snell (Blackwell, 2005), 76–77.

An Akkadian proverb succinctly asserted the centrality of kingship in Mesopotamian society: «People without a king are (like) sheep without a shepherd»[46]. Kingship everywhere and at all times has been in some degree a sacred office[47]: in many cylinder seals there is a figure of the so-called priest-king, represented dressed in a kind of net robe during cult rituals, it is often shown feeding the sacred herd of the goddess Inanna. Cattle appear to be associated particularly close with the priest-king, as they are on the seal where he is shown feeding a flock (Figureb 79 a,b)[48].

Figure 79 a **Figure 79 b**

Pharaoh was an Egyptian shepherd, he ritually received the herdsman's crook on his coronation day[49]. In Egyptian art, both Pharaoh and the Egyptian god Osiris are typically shown holding and flail and a crook, commonly identified as a shepherd's staff. In literature, One of Osiris' many names is *asar-sa,* meaning "Osiris the Shepherd"[50].

> «On pense que sa fonction débordait les limites du règne terrestre du pharaon, car les bâtons constituent une part non négligeable du mobilier funéraire. Parmi les huit principales espèces de bâtons connues, il en est trois, *l'aouit*,

[46] Foster 1996, 338 in Robertson, 205.

[47] (Evans-Pritchard 1962, 210) in Philip Jones, "Divine and Non-Divine Kingship," in *A Companion to the Ancient near East*, Snell (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 330–42.

[48] Beate Salje, "Uruk and the World of Gilgamesh," in *Art of the First Cities : The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus*, Joan Aruz with Ronald Wallenfels (New York: Yale University Press, 2003), 480; 482. Cat. No. 10b, pp. 39-40.

[49] Foucault, "'Omnes et Singulatim': Toward a Critique of Political Reason," 300.

[50] Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary : With an Index of English Words, King List, and Geographical List with Indexes, List of Hieroglyphic Characters, Coptic and Semitic Alphabets* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 87.

l'hekat et *ouas* (figures 3 et 4), dont les formes sont étonnamment proches des futures crosses abbatiales ou épiscopales»[51].

Texts from the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2055 BC – ca. 1650 B.C.) stress the king's role as good shepherd of his flock, Egypt, with the cares of the world on his shoulders; the king is a «herd for all the people» or the «herd who watches over his subjects»[52]. This accent is posed for political reasons, following a desire for a revival of "classic" arts of Dynasties fourth and fifth, a sort of attempt to restore the order and stability associated with that age[53].

The "Admonition of Ipuwer"[54], probably from early Middle Kingdom period, reveals the ideal shepherd-king by criticizing the Pharaoh, who leaves his people behind, letting his subjects like a herd that roams without a herdsman[55]. Herding imagery used to criticize the rulers in case of neglecting will be widespread in Old Testament.

The Second Intermediate Period was ruled by Hyksos rulers, "shepherd kings", a nomadic pastoral people of disputed origin who invaded Egypt from the north and composed Egypt's 15th Dynasty from 1650-1550 B.C[56]. During this period the paradigm of a shepherd-king acquired the overtone of the traditional ruler.

As mentioned above, the shepherding metaphor is "complete" when to the shepherd metaphor is paired the flock image: in some Egyptian texts the men are said to be the cattle of God and this is another aspect that will be inherited by Biblical tradition[57].

It is unclear if these kings were actually shepherds or if this was only a metaphoric title: according to the Bible, Gen. 46:34, all herdsmen and shepherds were detestable to the Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Greek idea of shepherding was not as deceptive as for Egyptians: as well as in the Bible, in Homer's Iliad some characters are actual shepherds.

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[51] Stékoffer, *La crosse merovingienne de saint Germain, premier abbé de Moutier-Grandval*, 16 and figure 3. Fig 3.

[52] Jeremias, "Poimēn," 486 and note 12.

[53] Rita Freed E., Yvonne J. Markowitx, and Sue H. D'Auria, *Pharaos of the Sun: Akhenateen, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen* (Boston, NewYork, London: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1999), p. 41.

[54] Papyrus Leiden 1.344, Anna-Latifa Mourad, *Rise of the Hyksos: Egypt and the Levant from the Middle Kingdom to the Early Second Intermediate Period* (Oxfod: Archaeopress Publishing Ltd., 2015).

[55] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 70.

[56] Janine Bourriau, "The Second Intermediate Period (Ca. 1650 - 1550 B.C.)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, Ian Shaw (Oxforf University Press, 2003), 193, .

[57] Jeremias, "Poimēn," 486-7 and notes 14-15.

Aeneas is born by Anchises, a cowherd, and Paris, the Trojan prince, was raised by the herdsman Agelaus.

The use of shepherd metaphors for kings and military leaders like Agamemnon, Hector and Achilles, expressed by the epithet "shepherd of the people", is an exception within the Greek culture, as Michel Foucault pointed out. He highlighted four points of difference between Greek political thought and the Hebrews conception of shepherd-kings or god: first, the Greek gods owned a land, while the power of shepherds is wield over a flock[58]; second, Greek leaders were meant to bring a stability supposed to last even after king's departure or passing away, while the flock of Hebrews was scattered when left without a shepherd. Third, there is a great difference for what concerns provision: while the Greek deity provides for the city once for all, the care of the shepherd is supposed to be daily and continuous. Last, the shepherd is supposed to know each sheep and maybe lay down his own life to save even one only lost sheep; on the other hand, Greek leaders are not supposed to sacrifice themselves but, if they do it for the sake of the *whole* community, they gain immortality: they always get a reward, while shepherds often do not[59].

The three major tragic poets, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, frequently picture commanders and rulers in pastoral terms (*Suppliants* 348, 642, 767; *Agamemnon* 657, 669, 795; *Eumenides* 78-79, 197, 249)[60], but in political literature the metaphor of the ruler as a shepherd does not occur (not in Isocrates, nor in Demosthenes, nor in Aristotle). In philosophical works, references to shepherd models are made in Pythagorean texts and in Plato's political writings (*Critias*[61], *Republic*[62], *Laws*[63]), where he speaks of the shepherd-magistrate. In the *Republic* he who is suitable to govern is identified with the philosopher, but in the *Statesman* the first definition of what the royal man should be is a shepherd (*Statesman* 258b-267), an idea later abandoned for other ruling paradigms: the Stranger argues that the statesman cannot be a pastor because the shepehrd attends to everything, while the statesman does not. Moreover the shepherd is of another species

[58] About to this topic, see section 3.1.1. about the expression *poimēn laōn*.

[59] Foucault, "'Omnes et Singulatim': Toward a Critique of Political Reason," 300–303.

[60] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 73.

[61] In this dialogue, the only mention of shepherds is about their task of pasture and nourishment of the sheep (*Critias*, 190b-c).

[62] In the first book it is underlined shepherds' devotedness and unselfish care for the sheep (*Rep*. I, 343b-e)

[63] In *Laws*, V, 735 there is a referral to the purgation of cattle. Sheep as well as other creatures cannot live unshepherded (Laws, VII, 808d). Shepherds are metaphors for guarding and overseeing (*Laws*, X, 906b-c).

from the one he tends he should be superior to the ones he tends; he should be a god, superior to the humans he guides. For these characteristics, the definition of shepherd is not analogical, it is rather genuine, «statesmanship is the science that *nemei*, that tends and pastures that nourishes, that attends to the life of human beings living in common; it's the science whose object is the raising of men in common»[64].

It is possible to draw some conclusions from this survey, although brief, on ancient shepherd metaphors. It seems that ancient cultures conceived the shepherd tasks and qualities in a similar way: the main appointment of shepherds was their guiding role for their flock (Hebrews; Mesopotamia; Egypt), that cannot not live un-shepherded (*Laws*, VII, 808d). Protection(Mesopotamia; Deut. 23:14; *Laws*, X, 906b-c) and provision of pasture and nourishment for the sheep (*Critias*, 190b-c; Ps. 78:19) appear to be the second-coming tasks of good shepherds. Another quality often underlined was the selfless concern for the sheep, an idea (surprisingly[65]) shared by Hebrews and Plato (*Rep*. I, 343b-e).

When shepherds come to be metaphors for rulers and kings, their characteristics are enriched: besides the over mentioned tasks and qualities, they were also required to be submitted to God, be they the Mesopotamian priest-king, or the Hebrews Moses, the under-shepherds of Yahweh.

> «Whereas the Near Eastern sources treat law codes as embodying the divine will, these Greek philosophers posit a view of leadership that is above law […] Greek literature has, thus, provided in its shepherd metaphors the most militant and the most tender images of leadership. As we draw closer to the period of the New Testament the latter was apparently he more dominant view at large»[66].

After these words Timothy Laniak accounts for the bucolic poetry of Vergil, as an idealization of the life and work of shepherds, to state the existence of a shepherd imagery univocally conceived as idyllic and positive. Surely the shepherd imagery refers to something positive, as I noted for the visual representations, and even when it is used to describe neglecting kings, it is clear that shepherds would be

[64] Cornelius Castoriadis, *On Plato's Statesman* (Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 33.

[65] The personal profit of Greek self-sacrifice of heroes, of which speaks Michel Foucault (cf. supra), is something different from the selfishness of rulers of Plato's political writings.

[66] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 74.

supposed to be caring and mindful, ethically “good”. Nevertheless, the idea of good shepherds that emerged in this section is different from the idyllic dimension and the bucolic qualities of shepherds that dwell in bucolic poetry. Before moving ahead towards the Early Christian development of shepherd imagery, it is necessary to focus on the shepherd imagery drawn from the works of Pastoral poets, beginning with Theocritus and Vergil.

3.2.2 Greek Shepherds: Homer and Pastoral genre

The very purpose of this chapter is to consider the contribution of bucolic literature to the creation and establishment of pastoral imagery. It is universally acknowledged that bucolic poetry influenced, rather determined, the idyllic interpretation of the shepherds world. Nevertheless this shouldn't be taken for granted as a matter of fact, because this would lead to ignore the ways in which a humble craft such as shepherding have become the longed-for condition of the cultured and educated roman.

It is exactly within the bucolic literary tradition that the shepherds world arises from an anthropological and social to a cultural ground: Greek and Latin bucolic poetry, that is to say, the tradition prompted by Theocritus and hold on by Virgil and his heirs, conveyed the shepherds world into common imagery and provided the interpretation keys.

The evolution of the bucolic poetry, from its very first definition as a genre to the deconstruction and fragmentation of its topics, reveals the ways in which the shepherding discourse of herds, countryside and pastoral activities changed from being accounted as a "realistic" occupation to being yearned as a condition of peasant life. The progressive stylization of Pastoral and "fragmentation" of bucolic genre will allow pastoralism to "survive" (borrowing a term from Jean Seznec[1]) as a mode, rather than a genre, and will be used in other contexts, making up a long lasting tradition.

Talking about "mode" rather than "genre" means to overcome the boundaries of literary genre to step into the wider field of cultural tradition: even when bucolic poetry was dismissed, pastoral mode endured, involving other literary genres, visual expressions and other forms of arts. Pastoral mode was defined by Paul Alpers in his work *What is Pastoral* as something that belongs to pastoral imagery not only in a literary sense: «'Mode' is thus the term that suggests the connection of "inner" and "outer" form; it conveys the familiar view that form and content entail each other and cannot, finally, be separated»[2]. Moreover, "pastoral" defines a wide cultural category of formal eclogues (pastoral elegies, love complaints, singing contests, and the like), pastoral romances, pastoral lyrics, pastoral comedies and pastoral novels; therefore Pastoral is not a literary genre, it is a mode indeed.

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[1] Jean Seznec, *La survivance des dieux antiques. Eessai sur le rôle de la tradition mythologique dans l'humanisme et dans l'art de la renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, 1940).

[2] Paul Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?*, University of Chicago Press (Chicago and London, 1996), 49.

Alpers' idea of Pastoral leads to the introduction of the idea of *Pastoralism*, a pivotal conceptualization for a study of pastoral imagery: with the word "Pastoralism" I intend the set of phenomena that imply the different aberrational uses of pastoral imagery, that is to say all that concerns pastoral, beyond any categorization of genre. This is possible only if pastoral is considered as a mode and not as a mere set of themes. This is the value of Paul Alpers work, thanks to which it is possible for this study to draw up a framework of purposes, ideals, forms and uses of pastoral imagery underlying pastoral allegories and metaphors.

In his chapter the literary concerns of poetry such as meter and mutual influences amongst authors will not be the subject matter; I will take them in account only as functional for drawing pastoral imagery.

Thomas K. Hubbard pointed out that bucolic poetry «by its very nature can exist only as part of an interconnected tradition of poets influencing other poets»[3]: from this standpoint, such a tradition is worth analysing, not to build up a literary historical discourse, rather to retrace how the hallmarks and topics of pastoral poetry have ben conveyed from author to author and how such themes established a tradition. This transmission turned bucolic topics into pastoral *tòpoi* thanks to a sort of stylization worked by Latin authors, Virgil and successor poets, as we will see.

The definitive establishment of *tòpoi* in pastoral tradition is mirrored in visual culture: in mythological sarcophagi the presence of shepherds evokes the idea of consolation and relief after a loss, just as the shepherds songs and funerary grief made by pastoral poetry, for example Theocritus's first Idyll, where herdsmen come together and sing each other for the pleasure of hearing a lament for Daphni's death. The characteristic of shepherds convening was pointed out by Alpers as a typical element of pastoral poetry that endured in Latin Pastoral, especially Virgil's 5th Eclogue, until becoming part of pastoral imagery.

My survey will take in account pastoral literary imagery, from the birth of bucolic poetry as a genre, to its deconstruction and the fixation of pastoral tradition.

Theocritus (305-250 B.C.) is generally considered to be the inventor of bucolic poetry, the poet who first promoted the rustic talk and the ordinariness of daily life to the elevated realm of art, by the use of the dactylic hexameters, the meter of epic poetry. It seems that

[3] Thomas Hubbard K., *The Pipes of Pan. Intertextuality and Literary Filiation in the Pastoral Tradition from Theocitus to Milton*, University of Michigan Press (Ann Arbor, 1998), 21.

Theocritus have been conscious of the originality of his poetics: his thematic choice to treat only human subject-matter, openly declared in *Idyll* 16, marks his distance from Hesiod, who in the introduction of *Theogony* follows Muses invitation to deny his herdsman occupation and status, to sing of Immortals and Gods[4]. Moreover the poet uses *boukolikòs* with reference to the words *Moisa* and *aoida* (sing), that is to say, for both music and poetic inspiration, marking even more his distance from Hesiodic Muses.

The use of words and bucolic vocabulary reveals Theocritus' consciousness of his poetical originality: for the first time the verb *boukoliasdomai*, literally "to be a shepherd, to shepherd" is used with reference to the sing, in the sense of "singing pastoral songs"; this use marks the strong coincidence that pastoral world and music had in Theocritean bucolic poetry. The verb *boukoliasdomai*, as Marco Fantuzzi pointed out, expresses the synthesis of daily rustic life and literary stylization, main characteristic of ancient pastoral[5].

Shepherds songs are a central issue of Theocritean poetry, the real poetic subject-matter is the vocal sing in hexameters (in Greek: *boukoliàzein*), while the sound of instruments is just a precondition and accompaniment; the mythic history and origins of instruments seems to affect Moschus and especially Bion: in Fragments 5 and 10 the poet shows a deep interest in the history of those elements that compose bucolic poetry[6].

Shepherds-musicians and their rustic songs prompts a discussion about the tradition in which the Sicilian poet was writing and, contemporaneously, about the *vexata quaestio* of the origins of pastoral poetry: some scholars hypothesized, from Renaissance onwards, that Theocritus' sources may have been located amongst the folk-practices of pastoral songs of shepherds. Richmond Hathorn[7] in 1961 reopenedthe case, to use his own words, of the origins of Pastoral, seeking a tradition precedent to Theocritus, arguing that the ancient explanations of the ritual origin of pastoral are substantially true, for there is little

[4] Marco Fantuzzi, "Teocrito e la poesia bucolica," in *Lo spazio letterario della grecia antica. La produzione e la circolazione del testo. L'ellenismo*, Salerno Editrice, vol. I, tomo II (Roma, 1992), 145–95, pp. 156-7.

[5] Fantuzzi, 145–95. See also Gregorio Serrao, "L'idillio V di Teocrito: realtà campestre e stilizzazione letteraria," in *Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica*, Fabrizio Serra Editore, vol. 19 (Pisa, 1975), 73–109.

[6] Marco Fantuzzi, "Imitazione teocritea e innovazioni nella poesia 'bucolica' post-Teocritea," in *teocrito nella storia della poesia bucolica. Atti del convegno nazionale. Milazzo 7-8 Novembre 1998*, Spes, vol. 1, 1999, 61–83.

[7] Richmond Y. Hathorn, "The Ritual Origin of Pastoral," in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 92 (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961).

in the subsequent development of the pastoral that such ritual origins do not account for, and indispensably valuable.

According to ancient scholiasts and grammarians, three localities were alleged to be the provenience of the genre (Laconia; Tyndaris; Syracuse): here bucolic rites must have taken place for different reasons (thanksgiving after a catastrophe with singing contests) during festivals that could easily have been seen or known by Theocritus and could easily have suggested to his mature creative mind the form and the content of its most distinctive products.

The rustic origins of Theocritus poetry and its strict connection to shepherding practices explain the appearance of features of shepherds everyday life in bucolic poetry, elements that will shape the visual expressions and representations of shepherds. These elements are the objects of herdsmen activities (the shepherd's crook, the *syrinx*, or panpipe), but also immaterial ones, such as the landscape, that plays a fundamental role in the definition of shepherd iconographies. Theocritus used shepherds tool and objects even for the purpose of declaring the rusticity of his bucolic poetry in *Idyll* VII, 128, where he mentions the gift from Muses, quoting the staff that Hesiod received from Muses (*Teogonia*, 30). Theocritus made a pastoral adaptation of his episode, changing the meaning of the staff itself: the shift from the Hesiodic laurel branch of actors to the herdsman stick, is a strong affirmation of poetics that Theocritus expressed and summarized in the single object of the *lagòbolon*, a real shepherds crook.

The main subject-matter of pastoral songs in Theocritean poetry, is love, often not reciprocated and unhappy. These unhappy loves are often framed by the haze of a premature death. «The "bitterness" of unfulfilled love brings a union of song and death»[8]. Charles Segal showed how «this contrast between the death of the embittered individual and the continuity and creative life of art may also be reflected in the juxtaposition of *Moiran* and *Moìsais* in identical metrical positions in the last two lines of Thyrsis' song»[9]. The antithesis between death and poetry seems too deeply related to the main themes of the Idyll to be accidental: in pastoral world even love sufferings and the fear of death lose their threatening qualities, being calmed by comforting songs. Love, death and songs are strictly connected, for the latter is an expression and consolation for the first.

[8] Charles Segal, *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral : Essays on Theocritus and Virgil*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, 1981), 42.

[9] Segal, 140–41.

While Theocritus has a sort of pessimistic idea of love, for in *Hylas* he pities the lovers for their sufferings and Daphnis death for love solicits a mourning song, Bion, on the other hand, has an optimistic vision of love, as he is a sort of *ante-litteram* elegy poet: this optimistic vision is expressed by «mythological paradigms» in which the deathly destiny of love is accepted and even welcomed[10]. The *Epitaph of Adonis* begins with a choral funerary lament of *Erotes* and continues with poet's direct appellation to Aphrodite for mourning action, in order to set a real *mise-en-scène* of Adonis death. This mimetic character of the Epitaph is mirrored in the representation of Adonis death and Aphrodite's desperation on late roman sarcophagi.

The framework for these songs and loves is, of course, the landscape, whose importance in visual arts has been highlighted in section 2.1.1. Pastoral landscape is made of countryside and grazing lands, represented by Theocritus as stylized panoramas, where the peaceful sunshine of the country is the realm of *asykìa* (serenity). For Theocritus landscape is a *locus amoenus* that simply frames shepherds activities, while for Moschus and Bion it turns from detail to "protagonist" of the narrative[11].

In Latin culture the *locus amoenus*, as well as whole Pastoral, assumed political and social overtones: country and gazing lands contrast with city life, political duties, violence and corruption. This tendency is evident even in the work of a non-pastoral poet such as Horace's *Epodes* (42-41 B.C.) where the countryside is a longing-for dimension:

> «Beatus ille qui procul negotiis, ut prisca gens mortalium, paterna rura bubus exercet suis solutus omni faenore»
>
> (Horace, *Epodes*, 2, 1-4).

It was Virgil (70-19 B.C.) he who introduced such elements in pastoral genre. Virgil shows to be aware both of his role as an author in Latin poetry, and of his poetical and stylistic choices: the use of lexicon in *Eclogues*, as well as poet's evocation of the "*Sicelides Musae*", show the author's choice of a humble tone, deliberately aiming at fitting the delicateness and pleasantness of the subject-matter of poetry itself. He wanted to stand in pastoral tradition, for he frequently recalls Theocritus and its poetry, presenting himself on one hand as an heir of the *archegetes*, following the habit of his

[10] Fantuzzi, "Imitazione teocritea e innovazioni nella poesia 'bucolica' post-teocritea," 69.

[11] Fantuzzi, 64.

contemporaries, and as Latin *euergetès* of Greek bucolic poetry[12]. Nevertheless Virgil adapted pastoral poetry to Roman environment, adding new elements to the ancient tradition and fixing permanently the hallmarks of the genre.

Virgil turned pastoral life into a yearning and longing for life, opposed to tumultuousness of the city life through the voices of Tityrus and Melyboeus[13], portrayed as protagonists of an idyllic condition[14]. According to Gianfranco Agosti, there is in Virgil's *Eclogues* a sort of political *Stimmung* in the use of bucolic imagery[15]. Virgil's bucolic idylls build the new myth of a Golden Age, made possible by virtue of the *Pax Augusta*: shepherds and their flocks are symbols of simplicity and piety[16]. This escapism was unknown to Theocritus, for whom poetry had the role of consolation for healing hearts and losses[17]. Nevertheless Virgil's 5th Eclogue recall Theocritus' practice of shepherds of making up for a loss, a separation or an absence, commemorating Daphni's death. As in its Theocritean model, the occasion of the funeral song is the ordinary meeting of two herdsmen at noontime and the proposal to sing for each other's pleasure[18], but Virgil's shepherds, by comparison with the rural characters in Theocritus, are more conventional: they can seem artificial and somewhat interchangeable, but the reduction of mimetic variety in favour of a stylization actually marks the beginning of bucolic tradition. It enables us to «grasp and make something of the likeness between motifs and practices that seem disparate or at best loosely connected in a more mimetic poet. In reducing Theocritus' bucolic representations, Virgil's pastoral conventions develop some of their

[12] Antonino Grillo, *Poetica e critica letteraria nelle Bucoliche di Virgilio* (Napoli: Libreria scientifica Editrice, 1971).

[13] Both these names are speaking-names: the first might mean "satyr", the second "cowherd" Francesco Della Corte, ed., *Virgilio, le Bucoliche* (Milano: Mondadori, 1939), 23.

[14] «Sembra quasi che la poesia scaturisca dall'ideale stesso di pace che è nelle aspirazioni di Titiro e di Melibeo, due pastori» Fabio Capaiuolo, *Trama poetica delle Bucoliche di Virgilio* (Napoli: Libreria scientifica Editrice, 1969), 105.

[15] Gianfranco Agosti, "Sulle immagini bucoliche nell'epigramma greco tardoantico," in *Le lierre et la statue. La nature et son espace littéraire dans l' épigramme gréco-latine tardive*, ed. Florence Garambois-Vasquez and Daniel Vallat, Publications dl' I'UnlVl'rsitl' dl' Saint-Étienne (Saint-Étienne, 2013), 240..

[16] Segal, *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral : Essays on Theocritus and Virgil*; Judith Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction : Theocritus to Marvell* (New York: Cambridge University Press, c1994).

[17] Fantuzzi, "Teocrito e la poesia bucolica", 191.

[18] Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?*, 157.

implications»[19]. Paradoxically it was Virgil he who gave idyllic connotation to pastoral world invented by Theocritus' idylls, where shepherds were still too "real".

Virgil remained for nearly a century the sole model for pastoral, for he fixed the hallmarks of the genre. All the following poets had to deal with the figure of the archprecursor:

> «nothing was more central to Virgil's later Latin successors than articulating their relationship to Virgil as a literary model and even cultural icon; for Calpurnius, Nemesianus, and the Einsiedeln poet, pastoral became the vehicle of choice for speculating how poetry was still possible in the face of predecessors (and literary past) of overwhelming greatness and visibility»[20].

On the one hand these poets were trying to find their place in the literary tradition and in history, carrying on a sort of meta-poetic discourse on their poetry. «Virgil became instead the avatar of classicism, a positive symbol of continuity with an idealized inheritance…what is thus constant in the pastoral genre, even in the Middle Ages, is its problematizing focus on the question of the poet's relation to literary tradition»[21]. On the other hand, they couldn't help but using the tropes fixed by Virgil, even with the purpose of diverting them. This is the case of Calpurnius Siculus, a poet whose period of life and activity is still debated[22]. He is well aware of his derivativeness from Virgil's poetry and «we cannot help but see his poem as also a metaphor for the relationships of poetic succession and inheritance that are so fundamental to his genre»[23]. Nevertheless, as Hubbard pointed out, Calpurnius seem to use Virgilian pastoral topics in an antithetical way: the *locus amoenus* is a topic of Calpurnius' Eclogues, but it does not seem so *amoenus*, for the streams irritate with their noise, rather than providing refreshment and the usual peace of countryside; the Calpurnius' character Corydon is shaped as a reverse shepherd, who longs for city rather than countryside, the Colosseum of Rome is figured as a mimetic version of the familiar pastoral landscape, with animals, artificial river and a tree-shaded fountain.

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[19] Segal, *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral : Essays on Theocritus and Virgil*.

[20] Hubbard, *The Pipes of Pan. Intertextuality and Literary Filiation in the Pastoral Tradition from Theocitus to Milton*, 6.

[21] Hubbard, 214.

[22] For a survey on Calpurniu's Biography, See Hubbard, 150 and note 15.

[23] Hubbard, 152..

> «Calp. 7 stands as an effective epilogue, not only deconstructing the positive pastoral program of Virgil 1, but also stepping out of the pastoral milieu long enough to re-contextualize it within the spectacular aesthetics of Calpurnius' contemporary urban and imperial audience: the successive mimes of singing and duelling rustics that Calpurnius has just given us are not unlike the matches of gladiatorial spectacle»[24].

If Calpurnius shows to be concerned with literary tradition, in the same way, his reversal of Virgil's topics, shows how these were already deeply rooted in the tradition. Calpurnius' Eclogues strengthened these topics, fixing the linchpin of bucolic imagery, in a wide sense that goes beyond the meta-poetic genre discourse.

Nemesianus, for his part, appeals to Virgil without any spirit of rivalry, as Calpurnius instead: the shepherds of Nemesianus' Eclogues dwell in a peaceful environment, in which they are happy to share their music and sing each other. Appealing to another familiar pastoral *tòpos,* shepherds are often presented as equally talented and skilled in music and verse. The songs of shepherds are a relief from love sufferings, their purpose is the recreation of the ideal state of pastoral repose and stillness. In this task shepherds are in a state of brotherly communion.

It is clear how the elements of bucolic poetry such as the convention of shepherds, the music of their pipes, their dwelling in a peaceful countryside far from the city's uproars, all these elements are the fundamental features of pastoral imagery. «The genre of pastoral by definition embodies the past, whether conceived as the primitive, prelapserian world of simple herdsmen or as the cumulative weight of literary tradition invested in this highly stylized genre». [25] Under the influence of Latin poets shepherds became stylized characters whose purpose was that to recall the idea of a peasant and peaceful life: these characters became soon an *antonomasia* for a yearned quiet life in a community of shared songs and blissfulness.

[24] Hubbard, 177.

[25] Hubbard, 223.

In late antiquity Pastoral poetry and genre appears to have waved, if not almost to have disappeared, by the late second century[26]: whereas in the Latin area the bucolic poetry is carried on by poets such as Nemesianus, Tiberianus and Christian poets, in Near East the bucolic *carme* is neglected[27].

Gianfranco Agosti spoke of *destrutturazione dei generi*, a late antique phenomenon of fragmentation of topics and characterizing elements of a given literary genre: instead of a bucolic literary genre, late antiquity knew a widespread use of elements of a Pastoral Imagery, a topic and idyllic (fictional) representation of bucolic elements[28].

> «L' assenza di una poesia bucolica *tout court* è in parte compensata dal fatto che elementi e tratti topici di essa sono assorbiti in altri generi, in primo luogo nella poesia epica […]e nel v secolo le Dionisiache di Nonno presentano molti tratti del genere bucolico. Altrove si tratta invece di valorizzare spunti pastorali già presenti nella tradizione, com'è il caso del Paride pastore del Ratto di Elena di Colluto; oppure di utilizzare una cornice bucolica all'interno di un poema didascalico, come nei Lithica orfici, il cui lungo proemio situa la rivelazione litologica in un ambiente agreste/pastorale. […] Più che di genere, dunque, si deve parlare di tratti bucolici e di un immaginario pastorale di cui la poesia tarda si riappropria secondo modalità e fini assai diversificati»[29].

As we shall see in the section 3.2.4, early Christian bucolic poetry of Endelechius loses the characteristics of the genre, saving some topics but dismissing the general idyllic and positive tone, its "mode".

Pastoral poetry's evocation of a positive dimension endures even in Carolingian age, with Modoin, a poet who was a churchman and became later bishop of Autun. In his *First Eclogue*, a dialog between an unnamed young shepherd and an elder, the author conflates the positivity of pastoral world and the evocation of ideal community and social harmony, recalling the imagery of a Golden Age and displaying the image of the defeated war goddess Bellona, in sign of peace and quiet[30]. Pastoral imagery and its positive

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[26] Michael Koortbojian, *Myth, Meaning and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi*, University of California Press (Berkeley - Los Angeles - London, 1995), 80–81 and note 76.

[27] «[…](excluding drama) pastoral is the one major Hellenistic genre that is conspicuous by its absence in early Byzantine times» (Averil Cameron, "The Empress and the Poet: Paganism and Politics a T the Court of Theodosius II," in *YCS*, vol. 27, 1982, 217–89, 231).

[28] Gianfranco Agosti, "Visioni bucoliche tardoantiche," in *Cento pagine*, II, 2008, 49.

[29] Agosti, "Sulle immagini bucoliche nell'epigramma greco tardoantico," 238.

[30] Agosti, 222.

characterization had been used for a positive construction of the past by later medieval poets as well[31].

What shall be underlined here is the phenomenon of de-structuration of Pastoral genre and the spread of its topics and subject-matters and the loss of the mode. Early Christian poet Endelechius reinterprets the idyllic mode of Pastoral poetry in a religious sense, bestowing upon the grace of God the prosperity of his livestock.

Before moving towards Early Christian pastoral poetry, a survey on the Bible shepherd character and pastoral imagery in Early Christian literature is necessary, in order to see how the Christian pastoral imagery was shaped. This tradition, as we shall see, is complex and multifaceted, and merges with other cultural instances.

[31] Hubbard, *The Pipes of Pan. INtertextuality and Literary Filiation in the Pastoral Tradition from Theocitus to Milton*, 223.

3.2.3 Shepherd characters in the Bible

In Old Testament and New Testament shepherds appear as actual characters: Abel was a herdsman and, as such, offered to God the first born of his flock (Gen. 4:1-4), David was tending his flock when Yahweh called him (1Sam 16:11; 17:15); shepherds appear even in the Gospel of Luke as witnesses of the birth of Jesus.

Perhaps it is not without significance that the first witnesses to the birth of the Messiah were members of the lowest rank of society. The 'despised' nature of shepherds may have put them on the same plan of other social categories like women, Samaritans, tax collectors, sinners and poor, that is to say, those people to whom Jesus is particularly interested, in the Gospel of Luke, for the fact itself that they are the 'last'. The discrimination against shepherds in everyday life is explained by J. Jeremias with an anthropologic argument: the independence of shepherds, who tended the sheep during summer months with no supervision, could tempt some of them to steal animals or something else. Jeremias notes also how paradoxical is that the shepherds are the first recipients of the Christmas message[1]. Since the shepherds could be good or bad, depending on their own inclination, in the Bible good shepherds, as well as the wicked ones, are often characterized and contextualized as such.

Timothy Laniak suggests that the visit of the herdsman was a way for Luke to «emphasize both the rustic and the royal of Jesus, both elements present in the Davidic/messianic tradition themselves»[2].

Besides this presence of 'actual' shepherds, pastoral imagery is used in the Bible as a metaphor, basically in two ways: in a general way as allegories on one hand, and as an epithet or title, on the other hand.

The first use of shepherd metaphors comprehends the representations of good or evil rulers and guides as shepherds, in an impersonal way, or the parable of the lost sheep (Lk, 15), where the sheep represents the redeemed sinner; moreover, in Acts 20:25-31 the flock is used as a metaphor for the human congregation, on which the elders are appointed to oversee *as bishops* by the Holy Spirit.

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[1] Joahim Jeremias, "Poimēn," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Gerhard Friedrich, 1968), 489; 491.

[2] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, Apollos (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 197.

The second use of shepherd imagery in the Bible consist in the appointment of given characters, such as Yahweh himself[3], Moses (Ex. 2:15-3:1), Joshua (Num. 27:17 RSV), king David, and Jesus as shepherds.

Generally speaking, in Old Testament the shepherd imagery is used with reference to royalty and power, as well as in the Oriental tradition[4]. In Micah the shepherds are named with "human leaders", and are supposed to be commander and to govern with the sword.

> And he will be "The One of Peace".
> Assyria – when he invades our land
> And when he tramples on our citadels;
> then we will raise up against him seven
> shepherds,
> even eight commanders of men.
> And they will shepherd the land of Assyria
> With the sword,
> And the land of Nimrod in her entrambces[5].
>
> (Mic 5:4-5)

The idiom «shepherd […] with the sword», compared with the verb "shepherd" of verse 3 («And he will stand and he will shepherd them in the strength of Yahweh», Mic 5:3) shows that this act of the seven shepherds is like that of the "ruler"

Michel Foucault argued that the Hebrews were those who «developed and intensified the pastoral theme, with nevertheless a highly peculiar characteristic. Only God's the people's shepherd», with the sole exception of King David, who is both shepherd and founder of the monarchy[6]. Timothy Laniak agrees, arguing that «when conventional Near Eastern shepherd language appears in the Bible, it is most often used with reference to Yahweh as the King of Israel. No human king of Israel was ever given the title

[3] «When conventional Near Eastern shepherd language appears in the Bible, it is most often used with reference to YHWH as the King of Israel. No human king of Israel was ever given the title "Shepherd"» Laniak, 249..

[4] See section on 3.2.1.

[5] Translation and comment drawn from Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Micah: A New Trnaslation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000c), 472–81; 480.

[6] Foucault p^^???

"Shepherd" […] pastoral imagery is part of a larger redemptive-historical *narrative* that depicts God's leadership in wilderness settings»[7].

Yahweh is called shepherd in Genesis 49:24 for the first time[8] and within the Old Testament the shepherd metaphor is used coherently to describe God: in Ezek. 34 God goes himself looking for the lost sheep (Ezek. 34:11) and Zechariah says that God whistles (*šrq*) to call the sheep (Zech. 10:8), as shepherds actually do. The shepherding metaphor is otherwise used to describe God as "true pasture", as in Jeremiah (31:23; 50:7). The same notion is restated in a less direct way elsewhere, where the people are spoken of as Yahweh's flock/sheep[9]; from this point of view Israel shared the common ancient oriental tendency, as seen above, to describe people as a flock[10].

In Psalm 23 God is explicitly called "shepherd" and, even if it has been pointed out that the explicit shepherd metaphor is restricted to verses 1-2, whereas in verses 3-4 God is a guide and in verses 5 to 6 is presented as a host, it must be noticed that all these designations are nothing but particular overtones of the single metaphor of the shepherd, the only used throughout the psalm[11]. According to Beth Tanner, the vocabulary of Psalm 23 provides a picture of Yahweh as the great Shepherd-King and the Psalmist as a vassal to that king. "Shepherd" of verse 1 is a title rather than a metaphor, and even other words show a global royal meaning: the rod and mace are used as royal regalia in antiquity and, according to Richard Corney[12], there is more evidence for this use than for their pastoral use. «The specific Hebrew words used for "rod" and "staff" also are more applicable to

[7] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 249.

[8] «The substantive rō'eh occurs 83 times in the Hebrew Bible. Curiously, however, we come across only four explicit OT uses of the noun rō'eh (a qal substantive participle, meaning 'shepherd') for God: twice in the Book of Genesis (48:15; 49:24), and twice in the Book of Psalms (23:1; 80:2)» Abraham M. Antony, "God the Shepherd in the Book of Psalms, with Special Reference to Psalm 23," in *Shepherding: Essays in Honour of Pope John Paul II*, Vendrame Institute & DBCIC Publications (Shillong, 2005), 51 and note 4. See also Jeremias, "Poimēn," 487 and note 18.

[9] Hos. 4:16; Jer 13:17; 23:1-4; 31:10; 50:19; Isa. 40:11; 63:11; Ezek 31:11ff; Zech 10:39:16; Pss 68:8; 74:1; 77:21; 78:52-53; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3; 1211:4.

[10] Jeremias, "Poimēn," 499–500.

[11] Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "Fact and Image in the Shepherd Psalm," in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, vol. XLII, 1971, 489. Beth Tanner, "King Yaweh As The Good Shepherd: Taking Another Look at the Image of God in Psalm 23," in *David and Zion. Biblical Studies in Honor of J.J.M. Roberts* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 270.

[12] Richard Corney, "Rod and Staff (Psalm 23:4): A Double Image?," in *On the Way to Nineveh: Studies in Honor of George M. Landes* (Atalanta: Scholar press, 1999).

the role of king than to the role of common shepherd»[13]. The word for "rod" is elsewhere used for "tribe", so when it is understood as a staff or rod, it is most often a rod of judgment or justice. Even the word "table" is used in Old Testament for Kings' table or Yahweh's, and the word "enemies" often describes enemies of a warring or national nature.

Abraham M. Antony's study on Psalm 23 highlights the undertones of the shepherd metaphor, such as guidance, closely related to protection, loving care and sovereignty. «In Israel the title evoked special memories of God's own leading and protecting role in the wilderness (Psalms 77:20; 78:52-53; 80:1) and in the return from the Exile (Isa 40:11; 49:9-10). With this background, the thought of God as shepherd would flood the informed and sensitive reader's mind with evocations too deep for words»[14]. Timothy Laniak insists on the importance of the wilderness imagery in shaping the figure of the Shepherd, especially the New Testament Shepherd-Messiah[15].

The shepherd tasks are basically: protection (Deut. 23:14), provision (Ps. 78:19), and guidance. The emphasis on this latter aspect is unique in Ancient Near East, since other shepherd-rulers stressed their role as guides in battle and related to their laws: «the image of God leading his "flock" purposefully in a historic journey across a desert towards a permanent pastureland is a novel use of the shepherd metaphor»[16].

God is not the only shepherd in Old Testament, even if – as noted – he is the only shepherd-king: Yahweh actually appoints human "undershepherds" who are in any case subordinated to him. Moses is appointed as an undershepherd, whose functions parallel on Earth those of Yahweh. Nevertheless Moses throughout the narrative identifies more and more with his flock, sharing even the misfortunes come from God's rage: this aspect of Moses' shepherding task foreshadows the figure of the suffering shepherd, who lays down his life for the flock, Jesus.

The wrath of God, addressed towards the bad shepherds who scattered His flock and sheep (Jer. 23:1-5), clearly displays that the flock does not belong to shepherds, whose only task is to feed and keep them safe: God is the only owner of the flock and He appoints his servants, Moses, Joshua and David, to be overseers of that flock. This

[13] Tanner, "King Yaweh As The Good Shepherd: Taking Another Look at the Image of God in Psalm 23", 278.

[14] Antony, "God the Shepherd in the Book of Psalms, with Special Reference to Psalm 23," 72.

[15] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 171.

[16] Laniak, 86–87.

characteristic actually disempowers the figure of the shepherd in Old Testament: he is fundamental for the development of the narrative, but he's subordinated to the accomplishment of God's mission. The shepherd is a fundamental actor of God's will, but he's never fully protagonist. It can be said that since the Flock belongs to God, this latter is the ultimate shepherd of his flock, while others, Moses and David, are some kind of deputy-shepherds[17].

David was actually a shepherd, since when Yahweh called him he was tending the sheep (1Sam 16:11; 17:15). He is appointed as shepherd in 2Sam. 5:2, when God says he shall shepherd [*r'h*] Israel and become their ruler [*nāgîd*]. In spite of the meaning of *nāgîd*[18], David's kingship is always subordinated to Yahweh: in Psalm 78:70-72 the figure of David is briefly described in his main characteristics: he was an actual shepherd, chosen to shepehrd the flock of God, nevertheless servant of god.

«In Ezekiel 34 David is mentioned together with the compassionate healing, but David is not the healer. Nevertheless the divine Shepherd expresses mercy through the flock of Israel and by the appointment of David as shepherd over the flock of Israel. David is an extension of God's responsive shepherding»[19]. David is not the healer, he is rather the action of God's healing. David is introduced as the appointed shepherd to fix the misbehaviour of the wicked shepherds (Ezek 37:24-38).

In Old Testament the shepherding metaphor is used, as mentioned above, to describe evil and selfish shepherds who destroyed God's pastureland: in Jeremiah 12:10 the shepherds are those who devastated the land, because there was no one to care for it. The devastation is the result of the absence of pastoral care (Jer. 23: 1-4). The Lord will punish evil shepherds (Jer. 25:34-38) and will gather the scattered sheep himself and will appoint a righteous shepherd (Jer. 23:3-4), as before he declare he would give shepherds after his own heart to guide the people (Jer. 3:15).

In Ezekiel (34:17) the shepherd metaphor describes the bad Israel's rulers who had become like the 'wild animals' for which the flock now became food, and for this now they deserve God's punishment[20]. Zechariah[21] extends his criticism below royalty to the

[17] Laniak, 248.

[18] See section 3.1.1.

[19] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 190.

[20] «Ezekiel is now comparing them the foreign kings under whose harsh rule the people were straining»(Laniak, 153.).

power brokers within the flock who shared responsibility for the demise of Israel[22]. Timothy Laniak pointed out as a characteristic of Zechariah that «the image of a struck shepherd and the scattered sheep is essential background for the Gospel writers as they explain the necessity of Christ's passion. It is arguable that this passage influenced Jesus' own thinking more than any other shepherd passage in the Old Testament (France 1971, 103,ff)». I think, following Joachim Jeremias, that «as the scattering is an image of disaster so the gathering is an image of the coming of the age of salvation»[23] realised by the come of Christ.

Joachim Jeremias points out that God is never called shepherd in the New Testament, maybe because of the great prominence given to the Christological application of the shepherd figure[24]. Nevertheless, the shepherd metaphor is used in New Testament to depict also other characters and ideas: besides the already mentioned Luke's parable of the lost sheep, in Acts the shepherding metaphor is employed for the pastoral mission of the Apostles, and then for clergy and bishops of the forthcoming Church. This aspect, as we shall see, is pivotal in Early Christian literature, whose effort will be for the description of the good shepherd of the community of Christian believers, the flock of God. The bishop-shepherds imagery will have also a great echo in visual representations, as the forthcoming sections will show.

Since the ministry of "overseeing" is entrusted to the Apostles by Jesus himself («feed my sheep», Jn. 21:16-17), before analysing the use of shepherd metaphor for ministries, it is necessary to understand the pastoral figure of Jesus.

Jeremias pointed out three different uses, in the Synoptic Gospels, of the figure of speech with which Jesus referred to himself as the Messianic Shepherd, promised in Old Testament. First, Jesus uses the ancient motif of the gathering of the scattered and dispersed flock, abandoned to destruction (Mt. 15:24; 10:6. The allusion to Ezek. 34 is particularly plain in Lk. 19:10, in Mark 14:27 (par Mt. 26:31). Second, Jesus uses the figure of speech to intimate to the disciples his death and return, and – third – in Mt 25:32 with the judge-shepherd who separates goats and sheep. After these cases, Jeremias speaks of Jesus as the Good Shepherd in the Christological statements of the Primitive

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[21] Zechariah 10:3 shepherds is in parallel with 'male goats', a term for second-tier leaders in the community. Previously we found the designation 'shepherd' used for prophets, kings and priests.

[22] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 165.

[23] Jeremias, "Poimēn," 492.

[24] Jeremias, 491.

Church; in John 10:1-30; the Post-Canonical Writings; last, Jeremias gives account of the use of the shepherd metaphor for Congregational Leaders (Eph. 4:11). Oddly enough, the scholar does not speak of the book of Revelation, and of the – surely paradoxical – figure of the Lamb-Shepherd[25].

In the Synoptic Gospels, the pastoral mission of Jesus starts when he sees the peoples lost like sheep without a shepherd and is moved to pastoral compassion (Matt. 9:36; Mk. 6:33-34). In Luke's Gospel Jesus presents himself as the seeking and saving Shepherd, in contrast to the religious leaders; in the parable Luke stresses the passionate commitment of the shepherds to the flock, since he goes himself in search of the lost one. Laniak links Luke's parable of the lost sheep and the pastors as the first visitors in the nativity account, arguing that the parable shows the kind of king the shepherd-visitors would find[26]. Moreover, representing Jesus as a descendant of David simultaneously associates him both with his ancestor's humble, pastoral origins and with his late status as conquering, ruling king.

Davidic shepherd role of guiding Yahweh's flock (Ezek. 34:23) is acquired by Jesus Christ. Jesus is the appointed eschatological Davidic shepherd who fulfils the Old Testament prophecies of salvation and restoration. Joel Willitts argued that Matthean Jesus Christ was expected to be a political leader[27], while Abraham Antony enlarges Matthew's Christology, underlining a wider spectrum of undertones: Jesus is not only the promised messianic shepherd-leader of Israel, but also the compassionate shepherd, the judge and the therapeutic son of David[28]. «Concentrating on just one designation or a single motif at the expense of others or in isolation from the narrative whole can distort Matthew's Christology»[29]. Timothy Laniak argues that Matthew does not limit himself to a singular Christological lens: «Jesus is the expected King and Isaianic Servant; new Moses and new David; Son of God and Son of Man; and the new Israel. More than other

[25] Jeremias, "Poimēn."

[26] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 195.

[27] Joel Willitts, *Matthew's Messianic Shepherd-King: In Search of the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel* (New York: De Gruyter, 2007).

[28] "Son of David" is a royal messianic title that in Matthew's Gospel is connected to healing activities and firmly anchored in the messianic tradition of the second Temple period (Lidija Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 7.

[29] Antony, "God the Shepherd in the Book of Psalms, with Special Reference to Psalm 23," 185.See also Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, *Come Nasce Una Religione: Antropologia Ed Esegesi Del Vangelo Di Giovanni* (Bari: Laterza, 2000), 3.

Synoptic writers, Matthew employs shepherd language to describe the ministry of Jesus, both in his ministry and in his death»[30]. In the account of Jesus' passion Matthews recalls the shepherd themes of the suffering servant of Zachariah 9-14.

In Matt. 2:6 Jesus is to recognize in the premonition of a shepherd that will come out of the land of Judah: in this passage Jesus is outlined as a shepherd, without having yet the "title" of shepherd, a title that will be explicit in the fourth Gospel.

The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John tells a parable of the shepherd. Parables are actually the most distinctive element of the other Gospels, but here Jesus' speech is explicitly called a parable, *paroimia*[31]. When John uses parables, they are brief and memorable descriptions of something already familiar to the hearer, so here the "parable" is a straightforward description of Palestinian shepherding, with the shepherd walking in the front of the flock, gazing the sheep in the courtyard. This image must have been familiar, even if the listeners didn't understand what Jesus meant by this speech (Jn. 10.:6): the reason of this misunderstanding can be that this discourse did not use the established parallel of good and bad shepherds, but it rather concentrated on some small details accurately observed from real life, such as shepherd's free access to the courtyard and his familiarity with the sheep. Such details are never mentioned in Old Testament's shepherding metaphors, and the hearer could not grasp immediately their positive referral to the carefulness of the shepherd[32].

In John's Gospel, Jesus's long speeches are revelations that establish a symbolic image for Jesus into reader's/listener's mind, at the expenses of the biography and the account of the miracles of Jesus. The need of vivid speech is, according to Gabriele Pelizzari, a pivotal common point of both Early Christian literature and iconography; these are producers of 'faith images', created within the *celebration* of Christ, and not within the account of his story […] these common points do not deal with the meaning of images, but rather they develop on a more structural plan[33].

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[30] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 182.

[31] This term occurs only here in John's Gospel (10:6; 16:25, 29) in the sense of dark saying, riddle. It is the equivalent of the hebrews term *māšāl*. C.H. Peisker, "Parable," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975), 757..

[32] E.A. Harvey, *The New English Bible Companion to the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxforf University Press, 1970), 348.

[33] Gabriele Pelizzari, *Vedere La Parola, Celebrare L'attesa: Scritture Iconografia E Culto Nel Cristianesimo Delle Origini* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2013), 120; 218. See also Carlo Ginzburg, "Ecce. Sulle Radici Dell'immagine Di Culto Cristiana," in *Occhiacci Di Legno. Nove Riflessioni Sulla Distanza* (Torino: Feltrinelli, 2011), 100–117.

The identification of Jesus as the Shepherd is explicit in the fourth Gospel where, according to John, Jesus says: "I am the Good Shepherd"[34]. In this pericope, Jesus gives a symbolic representation of himself using an allegory and not telling a story (parable). The use of first person and the present tense show the intention of the Evangelist to set the story of Jesus into the reader/listener's time[35].

In this Gospel the usual shepherding metaphor is reshaped: the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, in a voluntary act, that marks the difference from both the Old Testament shepherds and the despised hired shepherds: as mentioned above, hired shepherds could be deceptive and fall to the temptation of robbing some animals or products, so the carefulness of John's shepherd was a unprecedented quality.

Another unusual use of the shepherd figure is that of the book of *Revelation*, where the author introduces the paradoxical figure of the shepherd-Lamb: on one hand, the animal metaphor describes the suffering servant, the innocent slaughtered for the sake of humanity's salvation. On the other hand, the Lamb is triumphant, enthroned as a king, and in Rev. 7:15-17 it is uses shepherd language for it, repeating the task of guidance.

Following the lamb means to follow the Christ in his death, as it can be read in Rev. 7:15-17: the people with white robes and palm branches, come out of the great tribulation, who washed their robes and made them white with the blood of the lamb are the martyrs (Rev. 7:9-14). These people *recognized* and then followed the lamb to his final sacrifice, to become *martyrs*[36]. The *imitatio Christi* is a fundamental characteristic of sanctity, and is what the Apostles, especially Peter, are supposed to do.

As mentioned above, the shepherd metaphor is used in the Bible also to describe the tasks of spiritual guides and ministries, beginning with the Apostles, the first followers of Jesus during his life.

In this task, the ensemble of the twelve can be considered a single character, a choral character, who continues the pastoral tradition Yahweh– Moses – David – Jesus. In the end of the Gospel of John (21:15-17) Jesus commands Peter three times to shepherd and feed "his sheep". This investiture is the prompt for the pastoral ministry. Peter is specifically charged to shepherd the flock of the model Shepherd and called to follow that

[34] Laniak prefers to translate *kalos* as 'model', rather than a generical "good" (John could have used *agathos* or *dikaios*, which had royal-pastoral connotations). See section 3.1.1.

[35] See Bruno Maggioni, *La Brocca Dimenticata: I Dialoghi Di Gesù Nel Vangelo Di Giovanni* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1999)..

[36] "Martys" means literally "witness".

shepherd in death. Francois Tolmie in his already mentioned work on the (not so) Good Shepherd outlines the dynamic process whereby Peter is characterised in the fourth Gospel: after the terrible denial of Jesus, where he seems to be unworthy the ministry, in John 21 Peter demonstrates his willingness to follow Jesus and accomplish the task he was appointed to by Jesus himself. In this chapter Peter is appointed as shepherd and pastoral vocabulary is used to describe his duties[37]. «It is not surprising, therefore, that this apostle will encourage other leaders in the church to understand their suffering and service in terms of the self-sacrificing shepherd of John's Gospel (1Pet. 5:1-4)»[38].

John's epilogue makes the conceptualization of discipleship in terms of shepherd functions more explicit. As seen in the Gospels, 'following' Jesus ultimately entails "shepherding" his sheep and this metaphor is used even in 1Peter, where Peter calls his fellow elders to "shepherd the flock of God" (5:2)[39].

The shepherd metaphor was used for the followers and heirs of the Apostles, the clergy and bishops, especially in Early Christian literature.

Michel Foucault highlighted four ways in which the theoretical elaboration of the technology of power has been changed, from Hebrews themes by the Church fathers.

These themes will be analysed, as well as other characteristics of pastoral imagery, in the background of a study of the uses and meanings of shepherd and pastoral metaphors in Early Christian literature, from the non-canonical texts such as the *Shepherd* of Hermas, to the Church Fathers. The forthcoming sections will show how the shepherd characteristics will be used to describe metaphorically the clergy, priests and bishops, whose vocabulary is, still nowadays, drawn from the pastoral realm.

[37] Francois D. Tolmie, "The (Not so) Good Shepherd: The Use of Shepherd Imagery in the Characterization of Peter in the Fourth Gospel," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John. Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 362.

[38] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 222.

[39] Shepherds metaphors appear also in in 1Pet. 2:25; 5:1-4. See the section 3.1.1.

3.2.4 Early Christian Literature

Arnold Provoost[1] in his study on the meaning pastoral scenes of the 3rd century makes a sum of the literary interpretation of pastoral imagery. At first, poetry influenced the conception of pastoral world from Augustan age onwards: on one hand, Virgilian poetry conveyed the Theocritean memory of the bucolic world as an idyllic and generally positive realm, inasmuch that in the 4th century pastoral philantropia became a celebrated as a quality of kings and princes; Eusebius accounts that Constantin wanted to be a good shepherd for his flock[2].

On the other hand, the influence of poets like Nemesianus, who portrayed the shepherd Melyboeus with the traits of the mite and good philosopher, established the union of pastoral and philosophical themes, as the already mentioned sarcophagi with shepherds and muses in Pisa Camposanto (Figure 14), or the sarcophagus with a conversation of shepherds in Ostia (Figure 22).

Another interpretation of shepherds is provided by Early Christian texts, that influenced the identification of early Christian shepherds with Christ, in a soteriological sense. Provoost highlights the sacramental character of this interpretation, pointing out how the representations of water, meals, etc. may refer to liturgical practices. Last, the author reminds the evangelic interpretation of the shepherd images, in authors like Pomponius, Endelechius and Paulinus Nolanus, who created pastoral allegories for the sake of homilies and sermons.

This section analyses all the overtones of meanings of the shepherd and derivative metaphors, such as the Church as sheepfold or flock and the community of Christians as sheep, a variety that prompts from the «uncontrolled and uncontrollable allegorical interpretation of the early church» pointed out by Timothy Laniak[3].

Given the vastness of these hermeneutical possibilities, any attempt to be exhaustive would be ineffective; nevertheless, for the sake of this present work, it is worthwhile to

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[1] Arnold Provoost, "Il significato delle scene pastorali del terzo secolo d.C.," in *Atti del IX congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana. Roma 21-27 Settembre 1975*, Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, vol. 1–Monumenti Cristiani Precostantiniani (Roma, 1978), 427, ff.

[2] According to Provoost, during the 4th century it is possible to talk about an official pastoral art, even if he does not bring any example of this art.

[3] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, Apollos (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 203.

point out two main lines of use of pastoral metaphors and bucolic imagery: on one hand, Christ is designated as the Good Shepherd, according to the Gospel of John. As we shall see, this metaphor is not displayed without a set of overtones, different from author to author, and a consequent use of the animal metaphor of the sheep and flock, to describe the individual in his/her relation to the Shepherd-Christ. The identification of Christ as the Good Shepherd, an identification that overcomes the limits of a simple title, is employed by the most of early Christian authors and writings, not only in homilies and commentaries on the Fourth Gospel.

A second line of interpretation is connected to the former by the animal imagery: sheep and goats are used to represent not only individuals, but also the community of the Church. The image of the sheepfold or flock represents the community of the Christian church and therefore its leaders (members of the clergy and bishops) are portrayed as the shepherds of that flock. This second use of the shepherd imagery by Fathers and Early Christian authors reflects the urge of a community to establish itself as a political institution and its orthodoxy, against heresies, whose leaders are portrayed as false shepherds and sometimes as goats or wolves and robbers of the Fourth Gospel.

The first centuries of the Church have been characterized by the threaten of schisms and heresies, against which the Fathers addressed all their polemic writings; a pivotal point of their arguments was the transmission of the episcopal task from Peter to the bishops[4]. Pastoral imagery, especially the shepherd metaphors, seems to have been one of the most effective images to describe the wished condition of unity of the Church. Timothy Laniak pointed out the general Bible's predilection for ordinary metaphors and wrote that «the resilience of the pastoral image for a variety of leadership roles in different contexts (prophet, priest, king, church leader) – and at times when cultural associations were less favourable is evidence of its enduring usefulness»[5].

Nevertheless, council texts from 3rd to 6th century seem to discards the pastoral metaphor of bishop-shepherd, maybe because of the political and official, character of these texts, in which there was no space for rhetoric use of pastoral metaphors.

The association of clergy and pastoral imagery appears to be definitively established in 6th century in the writing of Gregory the Great, the *Liber Regulae Pastoralis,* a treatise on the responsibilities of the clergy, conceived then as the pastoral class.

[4]Joseph Wilpert, *Sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, vol. II (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1929), 130.

[5]Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart. Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, 250–51.

Most of the Church Fathers recognize Jesus in the metaphor of the Shepherd. Sometimes it is hard to separate the suggestions from the parable of the lost sheep of Matthew and Luke from the "Good Shepherd" of the Fourth Gospel: in Clement's *The Instructor* (1,9,83,2-84,3) Jesus is called the «all-holy Shepehrd and tutor, […] the omnipotent and paternal Word». Here the carefulness of the shepherd is juxtaposed to His power, since righteousness and love do not exclude each other in God[6].

Many Church Fathers and Early Christian Authors refer to the parable of the lost sheep reported in Matthew 18, 12-14 and in Luke 15, 4-6 as the "parable of the good shepherd", even if none of the two Evangelists actually speak of a shepherd, much less of "good shepherd"[7], they only speak of a generic person.

Early Christian fathers moved on to the blend of the distinctive elements deduced from three Gospels: the sheep on the shoulders from Luke, the descent from the mountain from Matthew, and the definition of the shepherd as the "good shepherd" from John. So the parable of the lost sheep, from paradigm of a good behaviour, became an allegory of Christ in the interpretations of early Church Fathers and Christian authors[8]. Tertullian interprets the shepherd looking for lost sheep of the parable as Jesus[9]; similarly, Jesus is the Shepherd in Clemens of Alexandria's *Hymn to Christ the Saviour* (*Paed.* 3.101.3, line 30) and in the famous Inscription of Abercius.

The inscription consists of 22 verses and 20 hexameters, composed at the end of the 2nd century; the author is Abercius, bishop of Hierapolis, who was 72 years-old when he composed the text. In the third line of the inscription, Abercius tells himself a disciple of the chaste shepehrd «who feedeth his flock of sheep on mountains and plains, who hath great eyes that look on all sides»[10].

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[6] Also in *Stromateis* 2.43 (5) and 2.55(3) the Shepherd is Jesus. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology: The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus.*, vol. 2 (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1950), 9–11.

[7] Origen, *Hom. Num.* 19, 4 (GCS, 184,16); *Hom. Gen.* 9,3 (SC *7b,* p. 250, 49-54); Tertullian, *Pud.*, 7, 1-4 (CCL 2, p. 1292, 1-18). Jerome, *In Is.*, 14 (53, 5-7), *CCL* 73, 590, 34-37.

[8] For a wide perspective of the interpretations of the parable in Early Christian authors See Martine Dulaey, "La parabole de la brebis perdue dans l'église ancienne: de l'exégèse à l'iconographie," in *Revue des études augustiniennes*, vol. 39, 1993, 3–22.

[9] «A parabolis licebit incipias, ubi est ovis perdita a Domino requisita et humeris sius revecta» (Tertullian, *Pud.*, 7, 1, in Paul Corby Finney, "Good Shepherd," *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York: Garland, 1990). See also A. Capone, ed., *Scrittori cristiani dell'Africa romana, Tertulliano, opere montaniste: Il velo delle vergini; Le uniche nozze; Il digiuno Contro gli psichici; La pudicizia; Il pallio* (Roma: Città Nuova, 2012), 278.

[10] Johannes Quasten, *Patrology. The Beginning of Patristic Literature*, vol. 1 (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1949), 172.

In the *Martyrdom* of Polycarp (19,7) Jesus is the shepherd-guide of the Church[11]. Gregory of Nazianzus in the *Oration on the Theophany* 38,14 (NPNF 2/VII, 349) united the images from the two Synoptic Gospels of Luke and Matthew with the image of the Johannine Good Shepherd, saying that God humbled himself in the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11) and goes in search of the lost one (Lk 15:4-ff)[12].

A particular standpoint in this context is that of Chromatius of Aquileia, who in *Sermo* XXIII quoted John 10:11 as many other authors, but in the context of the presentation of the figure of Abel:

> «In Abel imago <prae>cucurrit, ut in Christo veritas manifestaretur. Ille pastor de terra, iste pastor de caelo. Ille pastor pecudum, hic martyrum. Ille pastor ovium irrationabiliu, hic rationabilium»[13]

This reference to martyrs, instead of a more usual and general "community" of Christians, bears a clear reference to the sacrificial mission that Christ shared with Abel.

In the following lines Chromatius says that Jesus is called shepherd, as well as sheep and lamb, and in this there is the great mystery («advertamus magnum mysterium»): Abel offers to God his sheep with pure heart (his pureness is the reason of God's appreciation), the same innocence and purity of the patriarchs and prophets that are thus called sheep or rams. It seems that, according to Chromatius, Jesus, is both offering shepherd and offered lamb, just like Abel.

As mentioned above, the work of Rowan A. Greer analyses the four works on the Gospel of John, written by For Origen[14] Jesus Christ is the shepherd of the sheep[15]:

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[11]Paul Corby Finney, "Good Shepherd," *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York: Garland, 1990), 1055-56.

[12] Rowan A. Greer, "Good Shepherd: Canonical Interpretations in Early Church," in *Theological Exegesis : Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, c1999), 312. Moreover (p. 311) Lk. 15 and John 10 are the basis for the patristic identification of Good Shepherd and the incarnate Lord

[13] *CCSL* 9 A, 105.

[14] In Origen's mind the sheep are clean animals and represent the innocents and honourable, and the Saviour becomes a shepherd. For the use of the animal imagery in Origen (sheep as an honorary title for the Christian martyr, sheep as a mode of stupidity and goats compared to heretics) see F. Ledegang, *Mysterium Ecclesiae : Images of the Church and Its Members in Origen* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 588.

[15] Ledegang, 591.

«It is clear that he [Christ] is a "shepherd" for others, since he receives no profit for himself from being a shepherd, as those do who are shepherds among men, unless indeed one reckons that the benefit those receive who are shepherded in his benefit because of his love for men»[16].

(Origen, *Comm. John* 2, 125).

Here Origen underlines one of the main characteristics of Jesus as shepehrd of people, namely the selflessness care of his flock.

This passage is not drawn from the commentary of the tenth chapter of the Gospel, since Origen's Commentary on John is fragmented and does not include the treatment of the chapter of the Good Shepherd. The only extended discussions of the Fourth Gospel, and therefore of the Johannine definition of Jesus as the Good Shepehrd, are the commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Alexandria, the homilies of John Chrysostom and Augustine (all dated maybe some time in the half century preceding the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy in 438)[17].

Rowan A. Greer highlighted common points and differences in the works of these four authors, arguing that the Good Shepherd was a central image for early Christianity as a depiction Christ as the Saviour. Generally, the Johannine identification of Christ as the Good Shepherd was read against the background of the conflict against Pharisees and scribes in a different way: in Theodore's view the issue was Jesus' authority and his loyalty to the Law, while for John Chrysostom it was a way to affirm that Jesus is not a deceiver but the veritable shepherd; Cyril and Augustine, on the other hand, shifted the understanding on the controversy to the more general question of accepting or rejecting Christ.

Theodore is the most concerned about Christology: in the mutual knowledge of shepherd and sheep he sees the role of Jesus as a mediating figure between God and those who are redeemed, thanks to its being human (incarnation). Whereas Chrysostom tends to avoid theological controversy, Cyril's interpretation is more clear: for Cyril the Good Shepherd in the Word incarnates Christology in the context of the story of redemption.

Augustin, speaking of the Good Shepherd, does not seem concerned about the figure of Christ, he only argues the unity of Jesus with God, but in the context of his anti-Arians

[16] Ronald E. Heine, *Origen, Commentary on the Gospel according to John Books 1-10* (Washington D.C.: The catholic University of America Press, 1989), 127.

[17] Rowan A. Greer, "Good Shepherd: Canonical Interpretations in Early Church," in *Theological Exegesis : Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, c1999), 306–30.

orthodoxy. According to Augustine, the call of the sheep by shepherd's voice is a way to demonstrate that God calls those who he knows are his (*On John*, 45.6), as well as he knows those who are not belonging to him (pagans and heretics). Similarly Tertullian (*On the Flesh of Christ*, 8), Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 1.8.4; 1.16.1;1.23.2;2.5.2;2.24.6) and Hyppolitus, (*Refutation* 6.47) use the Good Shepherd image speaking of Gnostic and Marcionite.

Gregory of Nazianzus identifies a second plague and scourge from Egypt insinuates itself into the church in the person of the betrayer of the truth, the shepherd of wolves, the thief trampling through the fold, the second Arius (*Oration* 25).

It is in the interpretation of the positive details of the parable, namely the sheepfold and the door, that Greer points out the main differences in the four authors: Theodore keeps his exegesis bound to the narrative setting and Jesus' ministry, seeing in the sheepfold the boundaries of the teachings of the Law; Jesus is therefore the veritable teacher and the sheep are those dedicated to this teaching. Similarly, for Chrysostom the door is the Scripture that leads to God; without any hermeneutical problem for Chrysostom, Christ is both the door and the shepherd and, by extension, "shepherd" can also refer to those who preside over churches (*Hom on Jn*, 60.1 (NPNF 1/XIV, 216). The ecclesiastical theme predominates over the scriptural one in the interpretations of Cyril and Augustine. Cyril, talking about the door, says that through him there is a path to the leadership and governance of spiritual flocks.

With Augustine the ecclesiastical interpretation becomes dominant:

> «Hoc tenete, ovile Christi esse catholicam Ecclesiam. Quicumque vult intrare ad ovile, per ostium intret, Christum verum praedicet» (*On John* 45.5).

The pivotal points of the shepherd metaphor interpretations, not only in the works on the Gospel of John, are the discourse on Jesus himself, on one hand, and the description of the Church and their leaders, on the other hand: the fact that most of these authors had in mind the contemporary heresies is revealed by the urge to claim the unity of the Church, expressed in the sheepfold and flock metaphors. The figure of the shepherd is, consequently, a guarantee of the unity of the flock.

Returning to the first topic of Jesus as the shepherd, an early text of Christian literature(after 203 C.E.) conveys this image: the *Passio Perpetua* describes the vision of Saint Perpetua before her martyrdom:

> «Et vidi spatium immensum horti et in medio sedentem hominem canum, in habitu pastoris, grandem, oves mulgentem: et circumstantes candidati milia

multa. Et levavit caput et asperxit me et dixit mihi: "Bene venisti, tegnon". Et clamavit me et de caseo quod mulgebat dedit mihi quasi buccellam. Et ego accepi iunctis manibus et manducavi; et universi circumstantes dixerunt: "Amen". Et ad somnum vocis experrecta sum, commanucans adhuc dulce nescio quid»[18]

(*Passio Perpetuae*, IV, 8-10)[19]

The *Passio* tells the story of te martyrdom of Perpetua, a noble woman damned *ad bestias* for her faith in Christ. The text is spoken in first person, even if its authorship is still debated.

According to Saint Augustine the shepherd is Jesus, the Good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep («Pastorem bonum animam suam ponentem pro ovibus suis»[20]). In the passage of the *Passio* the shepherd is milking a sheep, but he does not get milk, but cheese instead: this may refer to the baptismal practice of partaking a mixture of milk and honey, attested by Tertullian (*Cor*. 3.3).

This is probably the only literary reference to a milking shepherd, an image that is very popular in visual arts (see section 2.1.2): in this text the milk appears not only in its derivative form, the above mentioned cheese, but also in the account of the nurseling son of Perpetua. At the beginning the baby is left in prison with his mother, while, after Perpetua's trial, the baby doesn't feel starvation anymore (as in the beginning) and Perpetua is not tormented by worry for her child, nor by the pain of her breasts.

Besides the interpretations of cheese in a baptismal context, some scholars see in this food a symbol of celestial rebirth[21], opposed to the physical death of martyrdom.

A shepherd is object of a revealing vision in another Early Christian text, the *Shepherd* of Hermas.

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[18] «And I saw an enormous garden and a white-haired man sitting in the middle of it dressed in shepherd's clothes, a big man, milking sheep. And standing around were many thousands dressed in white. And he raised his head, looked at me and said: "You are welcome here, child". And he called me, and from the cheese that he had milked he gave me as it were a mouthful. And I received it in my cupped hands and ate it. And all those standing around said: "Amen". And I woke up at the sound of their voice, still eating some unknown sweet». Thomas J Heffernan, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (New York: Oxforf University Press, 2012), 127.

[19] E Cantarella and Marco Formisano, *La passione di Perpetua e Felicita* (Milano: BUR, 2008), 88;90.

[20] Aug. *Sermo* 563

[21] Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua 203) to Marguerite Porete (1310)* (New York - Cambridge, 1984).

The *Shepherd* was written in Greek, in the first half of the 2nd century[22], almost certainly in Rome by Hermas, probably a freedman. The book is divided in three parts, *Visions, Mandates* and *Similitudes*. The *Shepherd* became soon very popular: from the second century onward it was quoted and appreciated by Early Church fathers, with the sole exception of Tertullian[23]; despite its popularity, the text was rejected by the Muratorian canon, probably because of its length.

The shepherd appears to Hermas in the fifth *Vision*: he is dressed like a shepherd, with a, white goat's skin, a wallet on his shoulders, and a rod in his hand; later, he changes his aspect in order to be recognized by Hermas, but the author doesn't give further details of this "new" apparel. The first information that the reader draws from the text about the shepherd is that he was sent by the most venerable angel to stay with Hermas, who had been entrusted to him.

Hermas uses the shepherd figure also for two other character, one vicious and the other virtuous, namely the angel of luxury and deceit, and the angel of punishment: in these shepherds we can see three different figures of guidance, both vicious and virtuous (*Similitudes* VII,2; VII,3). This double vision of god and wicked shepherds, that can guide their flock to virtue or vice is coherent with the other texts of the bible.

Nevertheless, the main shepherd is the companion of Hermas: his figure is described as a powerful one[24]:

> «I have handed over you and your household to this shepherd so you can be protected by him. "Yes, sir", I said. "So if you want to be protected from all annoyance and trouble, and to have success in all your good deeds and words and in every truthful virtue, proceed according to the commandments that I gave to you. […] To him alone throughout the whole wold conversion (metanoia) is entrusted. Do you not see how powerful he is? Yet you do not respect the fullness and forbearance he has toward you»[25]
>
> (*Sim.* X, 1.2-3)

[22] Dan Batovici dates the book 70 - 150 C.E. Dan Batovici, "Apocalyptic and Metanoia in the Shepherd of Hermas," in *Apocrypha - International Journal of Apocryphal Literatures*, vol. 26 (Brepols, 2015), 151–70.

[23] Tertullian (*De Pud.* 10;20), Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer*. 4.20.2), Clement, Origen. See Carolyn Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentar*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 4.

[24] In *Sim*. X Hermas insists on the exclusivity of the reliance on the shepherd and his authority.

[25] Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentar*, 258.

Metanoia[26] is the only and last chance of salvation, and it is entrusted only to the shepherd throughout the whole wold. The shepherd-angel, the angel of conversion (ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς μετανοίας, *Vis.* V,7) is the teacher who gives the dictates to Hermas, the guide and overseer in the process of *metanoia* and protector of Hermas and his household (*Sim.* X,1). To this shepherd is also entrusted the care of the construction of the tower: Hermas uses the metaphor of the tower to designate the Church and the stones represent its members. In *Sim.* IX, 7 the lord of the tower entrusts to the shepherd the rejected stones that are able to be returned to the building if they are cleaned by him (*Sim.* IX, 7.2); «by this process Hermas refers to repentance»[27].

> «Just as the tower came to be as if made of one stone after it was cleansed, so will the church of God be after its cleansing and purging of evildoers, hypocrites, blasphemers, doubleminded, ad doers of all kinds of evil»[28]
>
> (*Sim.* IX, 18.3).

In the *Shepherd* the call to conversion[29] leads to eternal life in the tower, metaphor for the Church[30]; by this standpoint *metanoia* has the additional purpose of cohesion and unity of the social group, because it guaranteed the condition of being member of the Church[31].
In the *Shepherd*, conversion has two effects: on one hand it leads to eternal life and avoids "deathly death"; on the other hand, *metanoia* is a means for social purification and cohesion of the community of the Church.Therefore the shepherd, as figure of *metanoia*,

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[26] While the New Testament concept of repentance does take on salvific overtones—the term's nuance seems to have shifted from merely a "change of mind" to an act that has eschatological implications—μετανοία should be thought of as repentance that leads to (and, for most writers, necessarily leads to) conversion, rather than as equivalent to it. Hermas seems to pick up on this idea; repentance leads to a change in status (conversion) which has eschatological significance. For this clarification of the best translation of the word *metanoia* in English, I thank Sam Grottenberg for his kind suggestion.

[27] Harry O. Maier, *The Social Setting of the Ministry as Reflected in the Writings of Hermas, Clement and Ignatius* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002).

[28] Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentar*, 239.

[29] *Sim.* VIII,3 (LXXIV); 9 (LXXV); 10.3 (LXXVI); *Sim*. IX ,19.2 (XCVI); 20.4 (XCVII);

[30] The Church is represented in the *Shepherd* also by an old woman (*Vis.* IV, 3.5).

[31] Effects of *metanoia* are eschatological, because conversion must happen before the Church is built (*Sim.* IX, 26.6; *Sim.* VIII, 8.2), but its realization belongs to the present time and has social effects. The connection between *metanoia* and eschatological death is strengthened by a comparison with Paul's Letter to Romans (5:1-2) where the apostle says that that those who are justified by Christ will become partakers in the coming kingdom of God; furthermore, *Didache* (esp. *Did*. 1:1–6:3) expresses the social consciousness of the "Two Ways" motif quite extensively, which aligns well with the sense, in Hermas, of right living leading towards participation in eschatological eternal life, versus ultimate destruction/death.

is a double-sense character in Hermas, being both guide through conversion to eternal life and guide through purification for the sake of community cohesion and social order.

Some scholars have brilliantly underlined the connection between the call to conversion of the *Shepherd* and Hermas contemporary social situation, pointing out that the book purpose was to respond to a social crisis[32].

The attention to contemporary social and political changes lays, in my opinion, in the background of the use of shepherd metaphor for Church ministries. These spiritual guides shall be like shepherds and guarantee the cohesion of their community against the threatens of crisis, division, political disorder. In a word, against heresy.

As mentioned before, the appointment of the "shepherds" of the church is rooted in the appointment of Peter as in John 21:17, «feed my sheep»[33].:

> «Tenet ab ipsa sede Petri apostoli, cui pascendas oves suas post resurrectionem Dominus commendavit, usque ad praesentem episcopatum successio sacerdotum»
>
> (Aug., *Against the Epistle of Manichaeus called Fundamental*, 4)

As early as the end of the 1st century, the writings of St. Clement of Rome already indicate that the church is conscious of herself and the apostolic succession of her bishop from the apostles[34].

One of the earliest Christian texts in which we can see the designation of bishops as shepherds is the *Epistle to the Philadelphians* of Ignatius of Antioch[35]. Aleksander Gomola affirms that the metaphor bishop-shepherd "became quickly a standard conceptualisation describing the division of roles in the Church and is used extensively by patristic writers.

Clement of Alexandria connects the pastoral metaphor of the Good Shepherd and the sheep to the role of clergy and church leaders in his *Christ the Educator*: In a passage the author comments 1Cor. 3:1-2, where Paul contrasts milk, the food of infants, and the

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[32] Carolyn Osiek argues that the *Shepherd* tried to face a crisis of community division and loss of good spirit: «Hermas' strategy is to reshape the church by bringing listeners to the point of openheartedness in which they can change» Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentar*, 29. According to Harry Maier, problems in Hermas community are due to inappropriate social attitudes and the call to "repentance" are «attempts to re-establish the purity of the group» Maier, *The Social Setting of the Ministry as Reflected in the Writings of Hermas, Clement and Ignatius*, 69.

[33] See also Augustine, *Treatise on the Gospel of John*, 123.5.

[34] John R Willis, *The Teaching of the Church Fathers* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 71-.

[35] Ignatius, *Phld.,* 2.

solid food of adults, as symbols of elementary teachings opposed to the spiritual knowledge. Clement says:

> «Is there any reason, then, that we should not understand the Apostle to be referring to this when he speaks of the "milk of little ones"? Whether we are the shepherds who rule the churches in imitation of the Good Shepherd, or the sheep, should not we understand that in speaking of the Lord as the milk of the flock , he is merely safeguarding the unity of his thought by a metaphor?»
>
> (*Christ the Educator* I, 6,37)[36]

Clement argues that that there is only one teaching, the metaphorical food is the same, be it milk or solid, and it can be digested by both church rulers, the shepherds, and the sheep, the simple people. In this passage, not only Clement speaks of Church leaders as shepherds, he also restates the necessary imitation of the Good Shepherd's pastoral task by these leaders.

The imitation of the Good Shepherd as a way to build a strong and unite Christian community, the Church, is present also in the writings of Origen as his commentary of the *Song of Songs*, whose author admonishes the bride to know herself lest she gets into the very back of the flock, far from the Good Shepherd. Origen says that there are other good shepherds besides the Good Shepherd, some fellow-workers of God and Christ and followers of the Good Shepherd: «indeed, if that Shepehrd had not come, the shepherds of the churches could not of their own accord guard the flock well»[37]. Among the shepherds of the church, some continue Christ's saving work, some others are bad shepherds; moreover, they can be called "shepherds" also the sages and the teachers of this present age, who teach "the wisdom of this world" (cf. 1Cor 3,19) and also announce themselves as shepherds[38].

Similarly Cyprian Letter 2.1:

> «priests and deacons, indeed, ought to have warned our people about this that they might protect the sheep entrusted to them and, with the divine teaching, instruct them in the wat of obtaining salvation»[39].

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[36]Simon P. Wood, trans., *Christ the Educator* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1954), 37–7.

[37] Ledegang, *Mysterium Ecclesiae : Images of the Church and Its Members in Origen*, 592 and note 573.

[38] Ledegang, 592.

[39] Sister Rose Bernard Fonna, C.S.J, trans., *Saint Cyprian. Letters (1-81)* (Washington D.C.: The catholic university of America Press, n.d.), 50.

Origen uses also another image to depict church's unity, namely the image of the one sheep's body, whose different parts of the body were connected by the shepherd: that unity springs from love, truth and good intention, through his own word (*logos*) He has united all[40]. In this image, seemingly inspired by the parable of the lost sheep, the issue is not unity, but individuality – of the one sheep against the ninety-nine others.

Origen uses also the image of the flock: the unity of the flock belongs also to an eschatological dimension: «it will become one flock of earthly and heavenly creatures and one shepherd (Jn 10:16) and "God will be all in all" (1Cor 15:28)»[41].

Tertullian in the 11th chapter of *De Fuga* says that bishop should avoid the getaway in order to be like the good shepherd[42] and in *De Corona* the author upbraids some leaders, called shepherds, for their cowardice in time of danger. In the first chapter, Tertullian tells the story of a Christian soldier that refused the laurel crown bestowed upon him by the Roman emperors, the traditional *donativum* offered to fighters on special occasions. The author's polemic is addressed towards those people that were grumbling because the brave soldier was endangering the "long and comfortable peace they were enjoying". The Montanist's anger is also directed towards the shepherds of these people, who are lions when things are quiet, and deer in time of danger. The brief aside on shepherds seems to be an explanation of these people's behaviour: how could they behave differently from their shepherds, the guides and models, if these latter are the first to act as cowards?

Tertullian seems to argue that the proactive profession of faith by church and community leaders, the shepherds, is necessary, a passive acceptance of faith is not sufficient.

A good illustration of how radical the elaboration of this blend might be is Augustine of Hippo's *Sermon on Pastors*, where he justifies bringing sinners back into the Church even against their will, employing imagery from the Hebrew Bible (Jeremiah 23: 1–4 and Ezekiel 34: 1–8)"[43].

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[40] Ledegang, *Mysterium Ecclesiae : Images of the Church and Its Members in Origen*.

[41] (*Rom.Comm*. VII,4 (*Lomm*. VII, 102) Ledegang, 596. The passage of John 10:16 is quoted also by Sister Rose Bernard Fonna, C.S.J, *Saint Cyprian. Letters (1-81)*, 247.

[42] Rudolph O.S.A. Arbesmann, Sister Rose Bernard Fonna, C.S.J, and Edwin A. S.J. Quain, trans., *Tertullian. Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1959), 296–97.

[43] Aleksander Gomola, "Conceptual Blends with Shepherd(s)/Sheep Imagery in Selected Patristic Writings," in *Studia Religiologica*, 47 (4), 2014, 275-84; 278-9.

Cyprian bishop of Carthage (248-9) outlined his conception of the episcopal office[44]: among all the images used by Cyprian in *The Unity of the Church* (*De Catholicae ecclesiae unitate*)[45] to describe the unity of the Church, the author uses the shepherd-flock image in chapter eight, referring to the Gospel of John 10:16:

> «He Himsef [Christ] warns us in His Gospel and teaches saying: "And there shall be one flock and one shepherd". And does anyone think that there can be either may shepherds or many flocks in one place?»[46]

In the same way, Saint Augustin, as mentioned above, uses the shepherd metaphor of John 10:16 to state the need for a united Church[47].

> Omnes enim Christum amamus, membra ipsius sumus; et cum ille commendat oves pastoribus, redigitur totus numerus pastorum ad corpus unius pastoris. Nam ut noveritis omnem numerum pastorum redigi ad unum corpus unius pastoris, certe pastor Petrus, plane pastor; pastor Paulus, ita sane pastor; Ioannes pastor, Iacobus pastor, Andreas pastor, et ceteri Apostoli pastores. Omnes sancti episcopi sunt certe pastores, ita plane. Et quomodo verum est: *Et erit unus grex et unus pastor* ? Porro si verum est: *Erit unus grex et unus pastor*, omnis innumerabilis pastorum numerus ad corpus unius pastoris redigitur.
>
> *Sermo* 229/N, 3

In the sermons of Chromatius of Aquileia "*pastor*" is an established epithet for bishops: the author reminds that the shepherd were the first ones to witness the Nativity of Jesus, the "*princeps*" of shepherds, and writes that «Pastores gregum spiritaliter episcopi

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[44] Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature. A Literary History*, vol. 1 (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 370.

[45] He probably wrote his work in occasion of the council held in Carthage immediately after 251 C.E.; according to some other scholars instead, the text was written after the problem of Novatian schism. Nevertheless, the work and episcopal task of Cyprian happened in a hard moment for Christianity, and perhaps this is the reason of the authoritatively formulated and defended statements of a catholic church.

[46] Roy J Deferrari, trans., *Saint Cyprian. Treatises* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1958), 102. Curiously, this is the only occurrence of pastoral imagery and vocabulary in all the treatise.

[47] In *Sermo* 4,18; *Sermo* 71,9; *Sermo* 88, 11.10; 138,5; 229/N; *De Consensu Evangelistarum* 3, 4, 14 (talking about the unity of the Church of Hebrews and Greeks); Greer, "Good Shepherd: Canonical Interpretations in Early Church.": The verse from John can also be used to refer to the unity of the church with and without reference to Jews and Gentiles.

ecclesiarum sunt qui commissos sibi greges a Christo custodiunt, ne luporum insidias patiantur» (*Sermo* XXXII, 86/87)[48].

In his Tractate on Matthew (XXXV) Chromatius uses the Gospel's image of wolves acting as sheep (Mt. 7:15-16) to describe the bishop Photinus who «apud Sirmium ovile Dei tamquam pastor ingressus est, sed tamquam lupus rapax gregem Christi, vastavit»[49]. In this context, "*Sirmium ovile*" is the episcopal community of Sirmium, so "*pastor*" describes the bishop-role, played, unfortunately in this case, by the despised Photinus. The use of the sheepfold-sheep-shepherd-flock metaphor seems already established within the 4th century: the incipit of the Tractate's paragraph on Photinus «Et quia hoc ita sit videamus» displays the intention to connect the hermeneutical discourse to contemporary clergy and political situation. Now more than ever in Chromatius' Tractate and Sermons, the theme of Church unity is pivotal, insomuch as the work seems to be addressed to readers involved in pastoral tasks themselves; Claire Sotinel hypothesizes that this Tractate and *Sermo* 41 may have been composed for the formation of clergy[50].

In Greek it is with Eusebius and his *History of the Church*[51] that the pastoral vocabulary for bishops and church rulers is established: Eusebius uses often used ποιμὴν as synonym of bishop, diffusedly as a synonym of bishop: Mark is appointed pastor of Alexandria (IV, 11.3), Cyprian is pastor of the see of Carthage (VII, 2.1) and Gregory and Antenodore are pastors of the Pontic communities (VII, 27.2)[52].

In Book VI, talking about Bishop Theophilus of Antioch, Eusebius points out one of the tasks of these pastors:

> «At that time heretics were as busy as ever spoiling like tares the pure seed of the apostolic teaching; so the pastors of the churches everywhere, as though driving away savage beasts from Christ's sheep, strove to keep thatm at bay […]»[53]

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[48] And later, in line 92: «Recte pastores ecclesiae nuncupamur». *CCSL* 9 A, *Chromati Aquileiensis Opera*, 146.

[49] *CCSL* 9 A, 369.

[50] Claire Sotinel, *Identité Civique et Christianisme : Aquilée Du IIIe Au VIe Siècle* (École Française de Rome, 2005), 222,ff.

[51] G.A. Williamson, trans., *History of the Church from Christ to Constantine NY University Press, 1966* (New York: NY University press, 1966).

[52] Moreover III,36.5; III, 37,1; VII, 32.9.

[53] ὧν γε μὴν αἱρετικῶν οὐ χεῖρον καὶ τότε ζιζανίων δίκην λυμαινομένων τὸν εἰλικρινῆ τῆς ἀποστολικῆς διδασκαλίας σπόρον, οἱ πανταχόσε τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ποιμένες, ὥσπερ τινὰς θῆρας ἀγρίους τῶν Χριστοῦ

(Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* IV, 24,1).

In the Epistles of saint Jerome the relation shepherd-sheep is frequent: this relation is based on shepherd's protection of sheep (15.2,1) and especially with reference to the lost sheep of Luke's Gospel[54] In letter 14, addressed to his friend Heliodorus the monk, Jerome uses the image of the sheep in another way: speaking of the contraposition of monk and clergy, he says: «The clergy feed the sheep. I am fed»[55] (14.8,2). In this passage the image of the needy sheep is repeated, but in this case it is depending from the clergy, instead of the shepherd.

Besides the interpretations of Church Fathers, pastoral imagery was conveyed, in a lesser scale, also by poetry: the only attempt to continue pastoral poetry in Late Antiquity is the short poem *De Mortibus Boum*, written in the fourth century probably by Endelechius, an author supposed to be Paulinus of Nola's friend. The 130 verses poem opens with the tears of Bucolus, the protagonist of this poem, who cries the death of his livestock, killed by a plague of mysterious origin. He is reticent to open his heart to the friend Aegon, since speaking aloud his disgrace would grow his pain. Encouraged to talk by the friend, eventually Bucolus tells him of the plague and in this long speech (vv. 29-52) he draws sad images of dying animals, falling one after the other, in a never ending sorrow. The image of the baby ox suckling from his mother's breast the plague and the mother's grief, consequent to the baby's death, is an image that has nothing of the bucolic idylls of Virgil.

Eventually, Bucolus will stop the plague thanks to the suggestion of another shepherd, Tityrus, whose flock seems to be immune to the plague: the shepherd tells Bucolus that his animals will be saved if he will draw a cross on their forehead, «the sign which is said to represent the cross of God who alone is worshipped in the big cities, Christ […]»[56]. After the long speech of Tityrus, that sounds like an hymn to the grace of God, the poem moves quickly to its conclusion, with the account of the three shepherds characters walking to the temple, without even putting the sign of the cross on animals' heads.

προβάτων ἀποσοβοῦντες, αὐτοὺς ἀνεῖργον τοτὲ μὲν ταῖς πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς νουθεσίαις καὶ παραινέσεσιν, (Williamson, *History of the Church from Christ to Constantine NY University Press, 1966*, 185.

[54] Lk. 11.3 (I have lost the flock);16.1,2 (Christ);21.2,7 (Christ); 21.38 (return to life).

[55] Charles Christopher Mierow, trans., *The Letters of St. Jerome - Letters 1-22*, vol. 1 (Westminster-London: Newman Press and Longmans Green and co., 1963), 65.

[56] Carolinne White, *Early Christian Latin Poets* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 74.

This poem is an *unicum* in latin poetry, since there is no evidence of the first three centuries, probably because it was all in GreeK.

The work of Endelechius has been read in many ways by historians: Alimonti[57] sees it as good example of pastoral genre, in spite of the vision of W. Schmid, who saw in *De Mortibus Buorum* a sign of the disappearance of pastoral literary genre: in his opinion pastoral themes and forms could have survived in early Christianity only with the creation of a new poetic form, whereas the introduction of theological messages in a bucolic context destroyed the traditional idyllic setting of bucolic poetry[58]. On the other hand, the Italian scholar recognizes in Endelechius' poem a coherent and homogeneous treatment of a tragic phenomenon as the death of Buculus' livestock. The heart-breaking descriptions of the dead animals and the desperation of the shepherd, are functional to the didactic purpose of the poem, which first aim is to show the powerful grace of the sign of the Cross and the true religion.

Despite the lately theological and biblical content of Christian Latin poetry, its form, style and aesthetics arguably owe far more to pagan latin poetry, particularly Virgil, but also Horace, Ovid, Statius and Lucan: «not only do early Christian latin poets use hexameters and other quantitative metres employed by the aforesaid poets but they pluck lines and phrases from these poets, through setting them in a new Christian context which alters and even negates the original meaning»[59].

For some Latin poets the poetical and aesthetically cured form of texts is a way to convey Christian messages of salvation in a more effective way, while some others tend to consider the form as secondary: on one hand for Prudentius poetry is a way to praise God with verses and Juvencus speaks of poetry as a way to make ideas live longer. On the other hand, Sedulius dismisses the lies of pagan poets in favour of truth and Paulinus of Nola, once committed to Christ, rejects the literary and aesthetic ideals of his mentor Ausonius[60].

Among the contents, besides the salvation of humanity in Christ, poetry is a mean to address an attack to heretics: in the beginning of 5th century Prudentius in his long poem

[57] Terenzio Alimonti, *Strutura, ideologia ed imitazione virgiliana nel "De Mortibus Buorum" di Endelechio* (Torino: Giappichelli, 1976), 11–15.

[58] Wolfgang Schmid, "Tityrus Christianus: Problem Religiöser Hirtendichtung an Der Wende Vom Vierten Zum Fünften Jahrhundert," in *Rheinisches Museum Für Philologie*, vol. 96.2 (J.D. Sauerländers Verlag, 1953), 101–65.

[59] White, *Early Christian Latin Poets, 6*.

[60] White.

Apotheosis (*The Divinity of Christ*) seems to be attacking Priscillianist doctrines, such as the belief that the soul is divine and that within the Trinity the Father and Son were not really distinct; some Hymns of Hilary of Poitiers and of Ambrose were composed in response to the success of Arianism in the west in the second half of the 4th century In 6th century Fulgentius of Ruspe composed a psalm explicitly directed against the Arians and modelled closely on Augustine's psalm against the Donatists. Sedulous in his *Carmen Paschale* seems to have been motivated by the desire to put forward an anti-Arian view of Christ[61]. It seems that early Christian literature, be it polemist, prose or poetry, cannot be indifferent to the contemporary "political" and theological situation, and it is significant to see that pastoral imagery was employed to express this urgencies and persuade the audience to keep the right side in these social "battles".

Differently, it seems that pastoral imagery is absent in the council texts of the examined period: in the Letter of pope Leo in Chalcedonian council (451 C.E.) there is a quote of John 10:11 («doinus noster verus et bonus pastor qui animam suam posuit pro ovibus suis […]», lines 199-200) and in the text of the Council *in Trullo* (692 C.E.) Christ is called shepherd («ποιμένος Χριστοῦ», line164)[62].

More interestingly Canon XII uses the flock metaphor to forbid bishops to live with wives, arguing that the formers shall be all committed to the care of their flocks (766-770)[63].

> Πολλῆς οὖν ἡμῖν σπουδῆς οὔσης τοῦ πάντα πρός ὠφέλειαν τῶν ὑπὸ χεῖρα ποιμνίων διαπράττεσθαι, ἔδοξεν ὥστε μεδαμῶς τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν γίνεσθαι[64].

It is hard to determine whether the use of soruch a metaphor aimed purposely at recalling the commitment and devotedness of shepherd to their flock, nevertheless, if read in the background of the literary tradition of patristic interpretation, this passage recalls one of the duties of the pastoral task, namely the selfless care of the sheep, a commitment that cannot be affected by personal desires, such as the care of the domestic and family

[61] White, 14–15.

[62] *Conciliorum Oecomenicorum Generaliumque Decreta. Editio Critica -The Oecumentical Councils from Nicea I to Nicea II (325-787)*, vol. 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 132;223, 132; 223.

[63] *Conciliorum Oecomenicorum Generaliumque Decreta. Editio Critica -The Oecumentical Councils from Nicea I to Nicea II (325-787)*, 1:238.

[64] «Cum itaque sollicitudo nostra eo magnopere tenderet, ut omnia ad gregis nostrae curae commissi utilitatem peragerentur, visum est nihil eiusmodi dehinc ullo modo fieri» See previous note.

"sheepfold". In a certain sense, the use of the word *poimnìon* recalls the idea of community, which the bishops are in chief of.

Interestingly enough, besides these above mentioned passages, in all the councils from Nicea I (325 C.E.) to the Quinisext (692 C.E.) any reference to pastoral task of bishops is completely absent. Compared to the use of pastoral metaphor in patristic literature, the reasons of this absence can be found in the contextual elements of these texts, their authorship, the designated recipients and the purpose: the ecumenical councils were gatherings of bishops aiming to draw the official guidelines of the catholic church, to make it united against contemporary crises. These crises were surely theological, some of them involving the figure of Christ, its divine nature etc, but – most of all – these critical moments had strong political overtones: the ecumenical council is the supreme teaching authority in the Catholic Church[65] and the bishops were summoned in virtue of their administrative and political power; this is proved by the presence of theologians, besides the bishops, who were in charge of giving technical opinions on theological questions. These texts can be considered as political statements, and for this reason the language is essential and free from flourished metaphors. Patristic literature instead seems to have profusely used vivid speech

From the comparison of council texts and patristic literature (homilies, treatises, commentaries etc.), it appears clear that "shepherd" was not yet a title for church rulers, it was rather a metaphor a figure of speech strategically used to convey a positive image of the church rulers, the good and careful shepherds of the Church, often in opposition to the wicked and selfish heretical shepherds.

If "shepherd" was not yet a title, it was at least an epithet. During the 6th-7th century pastoral language seems to be established in the work of saint Gregory the Great, in his *Pastoral Rule*.

In 4th century the pastoral treatise springs as a new literary genre. The works belonging to this genre are Ambrose's *De Officiis,* John Chrysostom's De Sacerdotio and Gregory the Great's Liber Regulae Pastoralis[66]. The inspiration for the two latter was the Gregory

[65]Joseph F. Kelly, *The Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church. A History* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 3.

[66] «Although he didn't author a pastoral treatise in the module of Nazianzen or Ambrose, John Cassian perhaps did as much as anyone to spread the pastoral strategies of eastern ascetic communities to the Latin west and his corpus testifies to the continued development of an ascetic pastoral tradition well into the 5th ce» (George Demacopulos, "Gregory's Model of Spiritual Direction in the Liber Regulae Pastoralis," in *A Companion to Gregory the Great*, Bronwen Neil and Matthew Dal Santo (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013), 208).

Nazianzen's apologetic writing on the priesthood, *De Fuga*, a discourse given at Nazianzus at Eastertide in. 362 C.E.

The book of Ambrose contains many moral principles which should guide the spiritual leader in the varied situations with which his duties will be faced; it is a book on basic Christian principles rather than a how-to handbook, as the work of Gregory instead. Ambrose doesn't seem to use pastoral imagery to build shepherd metaphors: he only quotes Eph. 4:11:

> «Dedit enim Deus quosdam quidem apostolos, quosdam autem prophetas, alios vero evangelistas, alios autem pastores et doctores»[67]
>
> (Ambrose, *De Officiis*, I, 15)

Ambrose defines the duties of all these spiritual leaders in terms of general moral principles, whereas Chrysostom's *Six Books on Priesthood* focuses on the moral qualities and the almost superhuman responsibility of the priestly office[68] The moral qualities that emerge from in Chrysostom's dialogue with Basil, are related to all the types of spiritual leaders, clerics, priests and bishops, not exclusively to the latter. Some of these moral qualities, as well as the role and responsibilities of these rulers, are expressed with shepehrd metaphors.

John Chrysostom's second book on priesthood, *The difficulty of pastoral care*[69], begins explaining that loving Jesus means to love his people, his flock, and Chrysostom quotes the dialogue of Jesus to Peter in the Fourth Gospel, and the pastoral appointment "feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:15). Those who are entrusted with the care of many souls, «the rational flock of Christ», have to resist against moral and spiritual threatens, such as darkness and wickedness. Chrysostom keeps the shepherd-flock metaphor, defining the actual metaphoric flock as "irrational", while the other, the human congregation, is the "rational" flock. Since the care of the human flock requires a particular care, the shepherd must have a thousand eyes, to keep inside the group the sheep that may get lost. The Lord said that concern for his sheep is a sign of love for himself. And the concern cannot be if the man practices asceticism, since in this case he would only help himself.

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[67] Mauritius Testard, ed., *Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis De Officiis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 1.

[68] J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom : Clerics between Desert and Empire* (Oxford: Oxforf University Press, 2011), 78.

[69] G Neville, trans., *Saint John Chrysostom, Six Books on Proesthood* (London: S.P.C.K., 1964), 54.

In the contraposition of ascetic life and pastoral commitment, the shepherd metaphor is here a figure of unselfishness and commitment to the good of the community. In conclusion of his apologia, Chrysostom says «I cannot myself believe it possible for anyone to be saved who never works for the salvation of his neighbour»[70].

Gregory's *Book of Pastoral Rule* stresses this aspect in the same way of Chrysostom: «the spiritual ruler should not relinquish all care for what is external in his solicitude for interior things»[71]. The pastor must be pure in thoughts and unselfishly committed to the care of those who have been entrusted to him (II, 7).

As Chrysostom, Gregory quotes John 21:15 in I,5 and refers more vaguely to John 10:12 in II, 4 – and Ezek. 13:5 – to state that a shepherd should speak aloud when he stands to defend his flock.

Gregory's terminology for the spiritual director is relevant: he employs a variety of terms to refer to the practitioner of spiritual leadership, such as *sacerdos* (19 times), *rector* (43 times), *predicator* (21 times), *pastor* (19 times). Intriguingly, *episcopus* is not one of them. This means that, as for Chrysostom, the admonishments, suggestions and rules outlined in the text are not addressed exclusively to bishops, but to the wider recipient of all the spiritual leaders[72].

This is an important aspect, if we read these texts in the background of the diatribe between ascetic life, isolated from the world of society, and the active life of priests within the community: on one hand Chrysostom and Gregory both admitted the importance of the ascetical experience, but on the other hand they are guidelines for leaders that actively exercise their authority within the community. These works are the earliest attempts to combine the pastoral strategies of the monastic and lay communities[73] and it is significant that these two works were written to defend themselves for his attempt to escape the office of bishops. In these texts the figure of the shepherd is crucial, because it shows that the good guide should be unselfish as a shepherd, out of metaphor, the spiritual leader should not be concerned exclusively of his own spiritual growth practicing ascesis; he rather should – as a careful shepherd – mingle with people in the community and have an active role in their education, in the guidance of the flock.

[70] Neville, 150.

[71] Henry Davis S.J., trans., *Saint Gregory the Great, Pastoral Care* (London: Newman Press and Longmans Green and co., 1951), 7.

[72] Demacopulos, "Gregory's Model of Spiritual Direction in the Liber Regulae Pastoralis," 211.

[73] Demacopulos, 207.

Chrysostom, for example, highlighted discernment as the key supernatural gift that enabled an elder to know good from evil, in order to offer effective guidance to those in his care[74], and Gregory, who also admits the importance of a spiritual experience, talks at length in *Pastoral Rule*'s third part of how to teach to the different kinds of people, showing how this interior practice should have a social outcome.

In conclusion, besides the Jesus as Good Shepherd, on which I will no longer talk, and some outstanding voices as Perpetua and Hermas, the strongest use of pastoral metaphors is the designation of church rulers: this appointment has its roots in the Bible, especially in John's appointment of the apostles by Jesus, to feed his sheep (Jn. 21:15).
The overtones of the interpretation of the shepherd metaphor are various, nevertheless it seems possible to stress the most significative and popular: a first aspect can be the general invitation to imitate the example of Jesus, the Good Shephers (*Imitatio Christi*), an exhortation that echoes in numerous texts.
Church leaders shall guide people as shepherds guide their flock, an image often used to describe the community of faithful (Origen; Cyprian). Therefore, as the shepherd is completely committed to the care of his sheep, Christian leaders should be all about the care of those who are entrusted to them and this means, in the context of monastic life, that a *vita activa* should be preferred to pure contemplation.
As seen, every author developed the pastoral metaphor, relying more or less on biblical quotations and *testimonia*. Nevertheless, there is also another way in which pastoral imagery was conveyed and applied to Church life: pastoral vocabulary became commonly used by some authors, as Gregory and Eusebius, as antonomasias, "shepherd" for "guide" or "leader" ad "flock" for community. As we shall see, in the floor mosaic of the Basilica of Aquileia the use of the word *poemnio* instead of "community" marks the establishment of the use of pastoral vocabulary in late antiquity.

[74] Demacopulos, "Gregory's Model of Spiritual Direction in the Liber Regulae Pastoralis."

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Metaphors and Pastoral Imagery

The study of imagery has to move on both visual and verbal plans, in order to give an exhaustive panorama of how pastoral world was conceived and communicated. So far, this essay has analysed the two aspects of pastoral imagery, now it is time to put the two parts together and drawn some conclusions about the relations image-text on one hand and, on the other hand, about the role of pastoral imagery in the development of Christianity from the 3rd century onwards.

Since imagery is a cultural phenomenon, it is necessary to understand that the relation between images and texts cannot be conceived as a derivative, in which images are mere "illustrations" of sources. It must be acknowledged that there is a double influence of texts on images and of images on texts.

> «[…] les textes sont trop souvent pris comme des documents archéologiques au premier degré, comme s'ils pouvaient livrer, sans égard aux divers genres auxquels ils appartiennent, des renseignements de première main sur les œuvres d'art qu'ils évoquent à l'occasion»[1].

These words of Jean-Claude Schmitt shall remind that the interpretation of an image, whatever it is, cannot rely upon a single text, even if it can be considered as it source: first, because the image never fits its source completely; for example, the mosaic representing the separation of the sheep from the goats in a panel of the nave of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo (Ravenna beginning of the 6th century, Figure 80) is undoubtedly shaped on the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 25:31-33), that can be considered as its source.

> «When the son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on the glorious throne. All the nations will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left».

Nevertheless, the Gospel does not describe the image in all its details: Jesus is not sitting on a throne and the six animals that synthetically represent the people are an interpretation of the artist: the number of the animals, the colours of the angels and the

[1]Jean Claude Schmitt, "Rituels de l'image et récits de vision," in *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo: settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, vol. 2 (Spoleto: CISALM, 1994), 419.

clothes of Jesus are not described in the text. There is not, and there cannot be, a close and exact correspondence of images and text also for the presence of the medium of the image itself, such as material components (glass tesserae, pigments, stone, *etc*); moreover, contextual and semiotics factors influence the interpretation of the image, pushing it beyond its literary source.

With this presumption, it is possible to understand the Christian representations of the so-called Good Shepherd, that is to say, the *kriophoroi* in Christian contexts: the relation that links these figures and the Gospel of John exists, but it develops on a structural plan, rather than on the plan of contents; as seen, the Fourth Gospel can be considered as "source" for the creation of the image on the Brescia Casket, while for any other image taken into account in this essay, the Gospel of John shall be considered as a literary influence, an inspiration for the interpretation, rather than for the creation. According to Donald Griggs[2], in the Gospel of John there are not parables, but metaphors: in this sense, the metaphorical images of the Good Shepherd correspond structurally to the metaphorical image of the fourth Gospel, evoking a certain set of ideas and meanings related to Christ, without necessarily representing Him.

Narrative representations of miracles have been crucial in the making of Christian iconography[3] but, as Carlo Ginzburg pointed out, in 5th and 6th centuries unpredictable visual possibilities spread out and led to the creation of a new kind of representation, such as symbols, emblems, cult images in a wider sense, that had no narrative subject-matter[4].

In the figure of the *kriophoros*, a Christian viewer might have "read" the carefulness of the Gospel of Luke (15) and of Psalm 23, but also the positive idea of shepherds conveyed by Late Roman sarcophagi, in a simultaneous understanding.

The relation image-text can be structural and it goes beyond the "likeness" of contents: for example, an image can be inspired by a given poetic text not because it displays the same subject-matter, but because the image mirrors the poetical structure, tone, style and purpose of the text. A portrait, for example, can share with an encomiastic poetry the

[2]Donald Griggs and P. Walaskay, *The Bible from Scratch: The New Testament for Beginners* (Louisville, 2003), 52.

[3] See Thomas Mathews, *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), chap. 3.

[4] Carlo Ginzburg, "Ecce. Sulle radici dell'immagine di culto cristiana," in *Occhiacci di legno. Nove riflessioni sulla distanza* (Torino: Feltrinelli, 2011), 109.

celebrative purpose and the absence of a timeline of narrative development, since neither the image nor the text are narratives.

Moreover, on the plan of contents, influences are always multiple, so this relation should not be considered as a one-to-one relation anymore, but as multi-valued "image*s*–text*s*" relation*s* (plural).

W.J.T. Mitchell argues that «the necessary subject matter is the whole ensemble of *relations* between media, and relations can be many other things besides similarity, resemblance and analogy»[5].

Images echo a tradition that is not exclusively literary, but cultural in a wider sense. Gabriele Pelizzari argues that images represent the *meaning* of a literary *tradition*, rather than illustrating the account or a story as reported in a particular text[6]. As Hays pointed out, the intertextual discourse that a viewer unconsciously engages when he sees images is a process that he calls "metalepsis": «the textual interaction lies neither (primarily) between the text and its contemporary historical settings, nor between the text and the meta-physical conceit, but rather between the text and the tradition»[7].

It is easy to read in these definitions of tradition the idea of pastoral imagery as cultural phenomenon, used by artists, through which ancient Christians used to convey their ideas, inside and outside Christianity itself. Images and texts must be therefore considered as products of cultural communication: for saint Augustine, as Michael Camille recalls, «both writing and picturing were seen as secondary, mediating and fallible means of human communication, constituting what Augustine called "signs". These signs, written, spoken, sung or thought all pointed to a third term that was far more fundamental to the human understanding of God – the Word»[8]. The purpose of Christian artistic expressions, whether apologetic, polemic, didactic etc., was to communicate not only their faith, but also themselves as a society. Harry O. Maier sees art as belonging «to a larger horizon of

[5]W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 89.

[6] Gabriele Pelizzari, *Vedere la parola, celebrare l'attesa: scritture iconografia e culto nel cristianesimo delle origini* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2013), 68.

[7] Y.S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 9.

[8] Michel Camille, "Word, Text, Image and the Early Church Fathers in the Egino Codex," in *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo: settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, vol. 41, 1 (Spoleto: CISALM, 1994), 70–71.

meaning in which art finds its social context»[9]; for this reason, images and texts should be both intended as cultural products, likewise.

The famous passage of Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* can be a good example of the equal cultural value of images and texts:

> «You would see at the fountains set in the middle of squares the emblems of the Good Shepherd, evident signs to those who start from the divine oracles, and Daniel with his lions shaped in bronze and glinting with gold leaf»[10].

The good shepherd was a well-known image amongst those who relied upon the *logíōn*, τών θέιων λογίων ορμωμένοις; this means that there was already an established tradition, a background for those images, a tradition of both images and texts (λογίων) that must have recalled in viewer's mind a multiple associations and an simultaneous understanding of meanings and ideas already established in viewer's mind. These viewers must have been provided with «different conceptual frameworks with which to interpret what is seen to make it meaningful»[11].

The relation image-text is overcome in favour of a ternary relation image-text-tradition: the Contextual Methodology of Graydon Snyder shows how both literature and art are cultural products and their relation is not of the kind one-to-one, but is multiple, and the influences go from image to text and from text to image backwards[12].

Such premises should be at the base of any discourse about the relation of the *kriophoros* figure and the image of the Good Shepherd as drawn in John 10.

As early as the 4th century, according to Freeman and other scholars «the representation of the Good Shepherd began to be dismissed during the fourth century, even if this "image" continued to be referenced in theological treatises and sermons»[13]. At this point a distinction shall be made: these authors refer to the *kriophoros* when they talk of the

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[9] Harry O. Maier, *Picturing Paul in Empire: Imperial Image, Text and Persuasion in Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 25.

[10] Eusebius. *Life of Constantine*, III, 49Averil Cameron, trans., *Eusebius. Life of Constantine*, vol. 49 (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1999).

[11] Jas Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer. The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3.

[12]Graydon Snyder, *Ante Pacem:Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine* (Mercer University Press, 1985).

[13]Jennifer Awes Freeman, "The Good Shepherd and the Enthroned Ruler: A Reconsideration of Imperial Iconography in the Early Church Chapter Author(s)," in *The Art of Empire Book: Christian Art in Its Imperial Context*, Augsburg Fortress Press (Lee M Jefferson, R. M. Jensen, 2015), 190 and note 80 (Jensen and Ramsey).

Good Shepherd, while I am not sure if they speak of the Fourth Gospel when they speak of the Good Shepherd in literature. On one hand this distinction is important, because if they intend the Gospel of John, we shall disagree, in the perspective of the breaking of the tie image-text; on the other hand, it is undeniable that the literary metaphor of the good shepherd survived for a long time, but not too longer than the visual one, since this latter just changed its apparel. From this observation we can draw two kinds of conclusions: one is that images and texts have independent "lives", even if not disjointed. The other is that the metaphor of the good shepherd, and the shepherd metaphor in general, was used for another sphere, to describe something else than Christ, namely the clergy, bishops and Church hierarchies.

We have seen (see section 3.2.3) that a great part of pastoral metaphors in early Christian literature was employed by Fathers to depict the members of Church: basically the main message conveyed by pastoral metaphors was the idea of church unity against the threaten of heresies. The church was depicted as a flock guided by the shepherd, whose characteristics were selflessness and devotion.

Figure 80

It is interesting to see that this imagery had a visual counterpart in a mosaic of sixth century in Ravenna, in the apse of the Basilica of Saint Apollinare in Classe: in this

representation the saint bishop of Ravenna, Apollinare, is portrayed in the middle of the lower part of the mosaic, in the praying position (*expansis manibus*), surrounded by twelve sheep in row[14] and three other sheep arranged in the upper part of the mosaic. Twelve sheep appear also in the upper part of the triumphal arch, arranged in two rows of six sheep each, going out of two buildings that represent, as in the scenes of *Traditio Legis*, the *ecclesiae* of Bethlem and Jerusalem[15]. Even if Apollinare is not portrayed in a shepherd apparel, it is quite clear that the sheep beside him are pointing their heads and walking towards him. The figure of the shepherd is absent in this image, nevertheless pastoral imagery is present in the sheep flock and displayed in the a prominent position: animals are here depicted to represent the Christian community gathered around the bishop, the moral, spiritual and "political" leader of the community.

Pastoral imagery survives also, in my opinion, in the sign of bishop's authority, the crosier. The appearance of this staff dates to a moment that exceeds the chronological limits of this work, nevertheless it is a question worth mentioning. In her study on the Merovingian crosier of saint Germain Sarah Stékoffer raises the question of the function of the crosier, as a sign of episcopal power or as a practical tool. Some scholars affirmed that the ancient *pedum* was the origin of the bishop's crozier, in the light of an exterior resemblance. In my opinion it is worth it to overtake the question of resemblance, to debate the question of the function. According to Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, the *pedum* might be the prototype of the bishop's crook, while Sarah Stékoffer is less assertive: «le Christ figure en berger muni du pedum. Ces peintures indiquent peut-être l'origine de la signification du bâton pastoral chez les représentants de l'Eglise, mais l'on ne peut certainement pas encore parler d'attribut de la charge ecclésiastique»[16].

In the section on shepherds features I argued the function of the *pedum* as a sign of shepherd's leadership on his flock: I think that the resemblance of the bishop's crozier to the *pedum* is therefore functional than esthetical, since both the crooks were used to lead, the flock of sheep on one hand, the flock of God on the other hand. Stékoffer argues that

[14] A similar composition characterizes a gravestone dated 4th century: http://www.edb.uniba.it/epigraph/10989 (ICVR IX, 23931; H. Solin, P. Tuomisto, *Le iscrizioni urbane di Anagni*, Roma 1996, 136-137 n. 24).

[15] Lucrezia Spera, "Traditio Legis et Clavium" (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2000), 289.

[16] Sarah Stékoffer, *La crosse merovingienne de saint Germain, premier abbé de Moutier-Grandval* (Porrentruy: Office du patrimoine historique. Société jurassienne d'émulation, 1996), 28.

the crosier «sanctionne très tôt le pouvoir hiérarchique de l'homme d'Eglise»[17] and that «la crosse à poignée recourbée est une probable adaptation chrétienne du *lituus* romain»[18]. I agree with the first statement, while I cannot agree with the idea of the derivation from the *lituus*, since both formal and functional analogies speak for the adaptation of the *pedum*, rather than the *lituus*. The former was, as seen, the authority tool of shepherds to call the flock, while the latter was an instrument of *augures* used to foresee the future events and its point was not curved as the *pedum* but curly. The crosier may inherit the leadership function of the *pedum* rather than the divination power of the *lituus*. The idea that the shepherd's crook could be conceived as an authority sign is suggested by its use in Psalm 23: Beth Tanner noted that the two words used for the rod and the staff have an ambiguous meaning: they are certainly not the staffs of simple shepherds but carry a meaning of power and judgment when used by the king; at the same time, these are implements of a just and righteous king, who rules with equity[19].

Pastoral imagery is employed to create visual metaphors that are, in my opinion, bestowed mainly upon episcopal hierarchies and clergy members rather than upon Jesus Christ.

After the first centuries of Christian visual representations, the figure of Jesus Christ, from 4th century onwards, changed its appearance: Thomas Mathews[20] points out that as soon as the figure of Christ gets out of catacombs to enter the public dimension of triumphal apses and monumental images, the language of his representation changes, turning into something more magniloquent. The representations of Christ raised the tones and in this context a representation of Christ as shepherd would not have been suitable for the purpose. Pastoral imagery was not employed to represent Christ's "kingship", nevertheless, it was not completely dismissed: as seen above, Jesus is portrayed as a king in a bucolic-idyllic context in the mosaic of Galla Placidia, and in many representations of the *Traditio Legis* Christ is surrounded by a bunch of sheep, symmetrically arranged as

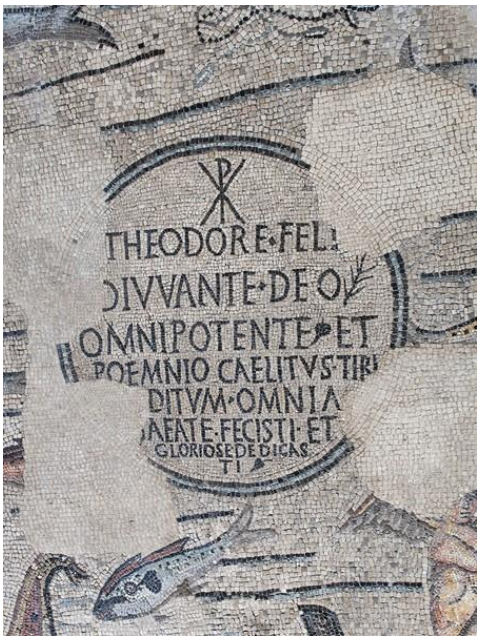
[17] Sarah Stékoffer, *La crosse merovingienne de saint Germain, premier abbé de Moutier-Grandval* (Porrentruy: Office du patrimoine historique. Société jurassienne d'émulation, 1996), 26.

[18] Stékoffer, 18.

[19] Beth Tanner, "King Yaweh As The Good Shepherd: Taking Another Look at the Image of God in Psalm 23," in *David and Zion. Biblical Studies in Honor of J.J.M. Roberts* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 279.

[20] Mathews, *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*.

the sheep of saint Apollinare[21]. These representations don't even dismiss a "pagan" reminiscence, since the figure of Christ is often represented on the personification of Coelus, a man with a cloth blown upon his head, representing the sky[22].



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In this perspective, from 4th-5th century onwards, pastoral imagery is employed in a more selective way: on one hand the few attempts to represent Christ in a pastoral mood, are dismissed, only a bucolic-idyllic tone survives; on the other hand, pastoral imagery shapes the imagery of Church leaders, that are called *pastores* from Middle Ages up to modern times.

Even if the visual figure of the shepherd is dismissed during the centuries, pastoral imagery and tradition shape a set of verbal and visual images that are adapted and employed to describe new concepts and ideas of a developing Christianity.

So in the Basilica of Aquileia, the bishop Theodore is remembered indirectly as a shepherd by the designation of his "flock" as a *poemnio*, a word, as seen in section 3.1, that designates a flock in relation to its shepherd.

In this sense, the study of imagery instead of images means to analyse the complexity of the communication through metaphors and allows to map and follow the development of messages and idea that have been expressed through those metaphors.

In conclusion, for what concerns the Early Christian pastoral imagery, this study wants to point out that the shepherding metaphor conveyed the idea that a careful guidance is always guarranteed for those who dwell in the flock of the Shepherd: therefore, whenever the contemporary viewer meets an image of a sheep, he must know that somewhere there is a shepherd appointed to look for and lead that animal, for there shall not be a scattered

[21] Ivan Foletti and Irene Quadri, "Roma, l'Oriente E Il Mito Della Traditio Legis," in *Byzantium, Russia and Europe Meeting and Construction of Worlds* (Ivan Foletti with the collaboration of Zuzana Frantová, 2013), 16–37; Reidar Hvalvik, "Christ Proclaiming His Law to the Apostles: The Traditio Legis-Motif in Early Christian Art and Literature," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context* (Brill, 2006), 405–37.

[22] Robert Couzin, *The Traditio Legis : Anatomy of an Image* (Oxfod: Archaeopress, 2015), 6. For other elements besides the sky see Hvalvik, "Christ Proclaiming His Law to the Apostles: The Traditio Legis-Motif in Early Christian Art and Literature."

sheep. The only exeption is a particular Lamb, he who is animal and shepherd at once; this is a different story, definitely worth telling in the future.

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Abbreviations

CCSL = Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, Turnholti: Brepols, 1954ss.

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