13 Lamb (*Agnus*)

There is the lamb[[1]](#endnote-1) of the flock, the lamb of the law, and the lamb of the king. The first Samuel wished for in Maspha desiring signs, [1 Kings 10:17]. The second the children of Israel sacrificed in Remasse anointing the posts and lintels, [Exod. 12:23]. The third they sacrifice who wash “their robes in the blood of the Lamb,” [Apoc. 7:14].

The lamb can be called the just man:[[2]](#endnote-2) mute through the humility of obedience, without the stain of pride, masculine through the virility of constancy, a year old through the purity of innocence. Again, the lamb is said to be Christ[[3]](#endnote-3) on account of some properties falling together from thence to this, Jer. 11[:19]: “And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim.” This lamb is the Paschal lamb and sacramental food.

Concerning the eating of one, four things are to be attended to: time, rite, culture, and fruit. The time was the first month, [Exod. 12:2]; the tenth day, [Exod. 12:3]; the fourteenth of the moon, the hour of evening, [Exod. 12:6].[[4]](#endnote-4) In all these things a mystery lies hidden. If you wish therefore to embody the lamb, go back to the first month through penitence, Eph. 4[:24]: “And put on the new man, who according to God is created.” On the tenth day observe the precepts of the law; on the fourteenth day of the moon exercise good works; when the hour is at evening persevere to the last, for only perseverance crowns among the other virtues. Beware therefore lest there be negligence in preparing, irreverence in approaching, or abuse in receiving.

¶ In the second place, the rite of eating was so that it would not be consumed raw nor boiled nor fried nor broken, but the whole entire and roasted by fire, [Exod. 12:9]. He who takes it raw does so irreverently, he who takes it boiled does so without devotion, he who takes it broken does so presumptuously.

¶ In the third place, the culture of eating had been so that with shoes on the feet, girded reins, with staffs in hands, with wild lettuce, [Exod. 12:11, 8]. The moral interpretation,[[5]](#endnote-5) with shoes on the feet is the crushing under of concupiscence. In the girding of the reins is that of uncleanness. In the holding of the staff is the quickening of patience. In the eating of wild lettuce is the performance of penitence.

If therefore with the blood of this lamb the posts and lintels are marked, [Exod. 12:7], a fourth thing follows, namely, a double fruit, namely the consternation of the enemy and the strengthening of the citizens.

1. Innocent III, *Sermones* 6 (PL 217:621-622): Non agni gregis, non agni legis, nec agni jugis, sed Agni regis, qui tollit peccata mundi. ... Agnum gregis immolavit Samuel in Masphat, petens dari de coelo fulgura, nubes et tonitrua, et liberavit Dominus Jerusalem in die illa manu Philisthiim (I Reg. VII). Agnum legis immolaverunt filii Israel in finibus Ramesse, linientes sanguine postes et superliminaria, [Col.0622A] et liberavit Dominus ab exterminatore primogenita eorum in nocte illa (Exod. XII). Agnus jugis immolabatur a sacerdotibus mane et vespere, «in odorem suavissimum Domino (Num. XXVIII).» Isti sunt qui venerunt de magna tribulatione, et laverunt stolas suas in sanguine Agni. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Pierre Bersuire, *Dictionarii seu repertorii moralis* Agnus (Venice: Gasparem Bindonum, 1589), (p. 121b): Et ideó vident de hoc potest exponi illud i Reg 7 Et obtulit ille holocaustum integrum domino expone, si uis quomodo vir iustus debet esse integer et nón diuisus, et Tulit itaque Samuel agnum lactentem tenerum. Et ideo quilibet talis potest dicere illud Hierema 11. Ego quasi agnus mansuetus.

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3. Pierre Bersuire, *Dictionarii seu repertorii moralis* Agnus (Venice: Gasparem Bindonum, 1589), (p. 121b): Sic vere Christus fuit dulcissimae benignitatis Agnus (ecce incarnatio) grauissimae societatis, In medio (ecce conuersatio) Firmissimae stabilitatis. Qui est (ecce mortis tribulatio). Fortissimae auctoritatis. Thronis (ecce iudicii dominatio). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Rupert Tuitiensis, *Super Mattheum* 10.13 (PL 168:1541): Sane primus mensis apud Hebraeos Nisan, apud nos dicitur Aprilis, quem ita secundum legem propter rationem Paschae observamus, ut lunatio, cujus quarta decima dies in ipso aequinoctio vel post aequinoctium evenerit, ipsa mensis primus habeatur. Ad vesperam illius diei, quando luna plenissima est, Agnus mystico ritu immolabatur, et comedebatur cum azymis panibus et lactucis agrestibus. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. *Glossa ordinaria* Exod. 12:8 (PL 113:218): Cum lactucis, etc. (GREG., ibid.) Lactucae agrestes valde amarae sunt, etc., usque ad ut dispensari omnia per Spiritus sancti potentiam sciat. ...

Cingulus vero modestia est et diligens vivendi ratio, quae nos monet ad necessitatem, non ad voluptatem, rebus uti. Baculus quo feras repellimus, et nonnunquam sustentamur, spes est. Ex igne autem solum cibus nobis propositus est, quoniam fides, quae per cibum illum significatur, ardentissima esse debet, nihil humidum aut labile possidens. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)