250 Nakedness, Naked (*Nuditas, Nudus*)

Whoever falls naked into water escapes more easily than men who are clothed, so the poor man naked in the tribulation of the world escapes better than the rich man. Wherefore in the figure, 2 Macc. 11[:12], in that encounter which was between Lyseas and Machabeus, “many of them escaped naked.” Wherefore Seneca, *Epistula* 50, Ad Lucillum,[[1]](#endnote-1) if you are empty-handed, the highwayman passes you by; even along an infested road, the poor may travel in peace.

Again, according to the Master in the *Historiale*,[[2]](#endnote-2) the serpent attacks a clothed man, but flees the naked one. Therefore, the apostles chose this nakedness so that they may escape the devil, 1 Cor. 4[:11]: “We both hunger and thirst and are naked.”

Again, according to Augustine, *Super Psalmos*,[[3]](#endnote-3) if the chicks of the raven are naked and without feathers, they are abandoned by their parents but meanwhile are fed by the dew of heaven. So, while man is naked from the feathers of the world they are fed by God. Therefore, David made himself naked before the ark of God. Therefore, he merited grace and the fecundity of children, 2 Kings 6[:16-23].

Again, the Philosopher says in *Problematibus*,[[4]](#endnote-4) that bare feet are for the defeated. Therefore, David who sinned through adultery proceeded on bare feet to do penance, 2 Kings 15[:30]. And Tobias in the persecution of Senacherib “fleeing naked away, lay concealed.” And he escaped but it is another nudity in evil when man goes without the clothing of virtues, and however it is said [Apo. 16:15]: “Blessed is he that keeps his garments, lest he walk naked.” Others such as minstrels sell their precious clothing and go naked. So, sailors abandon the clothing of virtues. Solinus reports, *De mirabilius mundi*,[[5]](#endnote-5) that the horse of Alexander permitted each of the horsemen to mount him bareback but saddled only his lord the king. So, a man naked of virtues admits any devil and any temptation, but armed with virtues only Christ, Apo. 3[:17, 5]: “You say: I am rich, and have need of nothing, and know not that you are wretched and naked.” And it follows there, “He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.” A thief when he fears to kill, despoils men, so also the devil, Job 24[:7]: “They send men away naked, taking away their clothes.” Wherefore Anselm, *De conceptu virginali*, c. 27,[[6]](#endnote-6) disobedience makes in man a double nakedness, namely, of original justice and beatitude. But the apostles against every nudity placed over us “the garments” of Christ, that is, precepts of spiritual grace “and made him sit thereon,” [Matt. 21:7].

1. Seneca, *Epistle* 14.10 (LCL 75:88-89): Nudum latro transmittit;

etiam in obsessa via pauperi pax est.

If you are empty-handed, the highwayman passes you by; even along an infested road, the poor may travel in peace. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica* Genesis 23 (PL 198:1074): Et quia adhuc nudi erant, serpens modo hominem timet nudum, et fugit, et in vestitum insilit.

Cf. *The Medieval Bestiary*, “Snake” Snakes attack clothed men but flee from naked men. … The snake fleeing the naked man represents the way the devil will flee from a man who has thrown off his wicked ways, but will attack one still clothed in worldly affairs. The idea of the snake fleeing a naked man may also contain an allusion to the biblical creation story in Genesis. After Adam and Eve sinned, they realized they were naked and clothed themselves; the "naked man" could therefore represent the "pure" state of humanity, before sin, and the "clothed man" the corrupted state of humanity, subject to sin.

<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast264.htm>

Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.4.48 (PL 82:448): Fertur autem quod serpens hominem nudum non sit ausus contingere. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 146.18 (PL 37:1911-1912): et pullis corvorum qui invocant eum. Hoc forte putabimus, quia corvi Deum invocant, ut det illis escam? Ne hoc cogitetis, irrationalem animam invocare Deum; non novit anima invocare Deum, nisi sola rationalis. In figura accipite dictum, ne putetis, sicut impii quidam dicunt, revolvi animas humanas ad pecora, ad canes, ad porcos, ad corvos. Hoc a cordibus vestris excludite, et a fide vestra. Anima humana facta est ad imaginem Dei (Gen. I, 26); non dabit imaginem suam cani et porco. Quid est ergo, Et pullis corvorum qui invocant eum? Qui sunt pulli corvorum? Israelitae se solos justos esse dicebant, [Col.1912] quia Legem acceperant; caeteros omnes monium gentium homines peccatores dicebant. Et vere omnes gentes in peccato, in idololatria, in adoratione lapidum atque lignorum erant; sed numquid sic remanserunt? Etsi non ipsi corvi patres nostri, tamen pulli corvorum nos ipsi invocamus Deum. Dat pecoribus escam ipsorum, et pullis corvorum qui invocant eum. Ipsi sunt pulli corvorum, quibus dicit Petrus: Quia non corruptibili argento vel auro redempti estis de supervacua vestra consuetudine a parentibus vestris tradita (I Petr. I, 18). Proficientes enim pulli corvorum qui simulacra colere videbantur parentum suorum, conversi sunt ad Deum. Et audis modo pullum corvi invocantem unum Deum. Quid ergo? dimisisti patrem tuum, dicis pullo corvi? Dimisi plane: ille enim corvus non invocans Deum, ego pullus corvi invoco Deum. Et pullis corvorum qui invocant eum. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Aristotle, *Problems* 4.5 877a5 (Barnes 2:1352): Why is it that having the feet bare is prejudicial to sexual intercourse?

Cf. Διὰ τί ἡ ἀνυποδησία οὐ συμφέρει πρὸς ἀφροδισιασμούς; [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Solinus, *Collectanea Rerum Mirabilium* 45.8-9 (Mommsen, pp. 174-175): Alexandri Magni equus Bucephalus dictus siue de aspectus toruitate seu ab insigni, quod taurinum caput armo inustum habebat, seu quod de fronte eius quaedam corniculorum minae protuberabant, cum ab equario suo alias etiam molliter sederetur, accepto regio stratu neminem umquam alium praeter dominum uehere dignatus est. 9 Documenta eius in proeliis plura sunt, quibus Alexandrum e durissimis certaminibus sospitem ope sua extulit; quo merito effectum, ut defuncto in India exequias rex duceret et supremis sepulcrum daret, urbem etiam conderet, quam in nominis memoriam Bucephalam nominauit.

Cf. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 6 (LCL 99:238-239): And after he had calmed the horse a little in this way, and had stroked him with his hand, when he saw that he was full of spirit and courage, he quietly cast aside his mantle and with a light spring safely bestrode him. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Anselm, *De conceptu virginali et originali peccato* 27 (PL 158:461): Hoc peccatum, quod originale dico, aliud intelligere nequeo in eisdem infantibus, nisi ipsam quam supra posui, factam per inobedientiam Adae justitiae debitae nuditatem, per quam omnes filii sunt irae, [Col.0461B] quoniam et naturam accusat spontanea, quam fecit in Adam, justitiae desertio; nec personas excusat, ut dictum est (cap. 2), recuperandi impotentia, quam comitatur beatitudinis quoque nuditas, ut sicut sunt sine omni justitia, ita sint absque omni beatitudine: per quas duas nuditates in hujus vitae exsilio expositi sunt, et patentes peccatis et miseriis incessanter ubique occurrentibus, et undique irruentibus, nisi quantum divina defenduntur dispositione. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)