

PANTHER – THE FATHER OF JESUS AND THE PANTHER FROM THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Texts from antiquity and later historical sources feature a certain¹ Pantheras, also Panther, Panthera, and Pandera/Pantera (Pantiri).² The enemies of the Christians consider him Mary's seducer and the actual, biological father of Jesus.³ Christians, however, hold that the man is merely a member of Jesus' family, that is, the father of Joseph (Epiphanius *Pan.* 78.7.5⁴) or, possibly, in the opinion of other authors, the grandfather (*Doctrina Jacobi* I 42⁵; Andronikos, *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* 38⁶) or great-grandfather of Mary (Andrew of Crete, *oratio* VI = PG 97, col. 916⁷;

¹ I deal more extensively with Panther in my book published solely in Polish: P. Janiszewski, *Panthera – ojciec Jezusa. Geneza idei, antyczne przekazy, późniejsze polemiki* [Panther – the Father of Jesus. The Origins of the Idea, Accounts from the Antiquity, and Later Polemics], Warszawa 2013.

² In this article we will use the form 'Panther' since this is the spelling used by Eusebius of Caesarea, who is important for our reasoning.

³ See Origen, *The True Word* (CC I 28, 32–33, 69), editions: Origenes, *Die Schrift vom Martyrium, Buch I–IV Gegen Celsus*, Origenes Werke B. I, ed. P. Koetschau, Leipzig 1899; Origenes, *Buch V–VIII Gegen Celsus. Die Schrift vom Gebet*, Origenes Werke B. II, ed. P. Koetschau, Leipzig 1899; for Babylonian Talmud (*Shab* 104 b; *Sanh* 67a) see P. Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, Princeton–Oxford 2007, 15–24; in the later centuries we find this spelling also in the so-called *Toledot Yeshu*.

⁴ Epiphanius, *Ancoratus und Panarion*, ed. K. Holl, vol. I–III, GCS, Leipzig 1915–1933, vol. III, p. 458 (Joseph is featured here as Kleopas's brother and the son of Jacob nicknamed Panther – Οὗτος μὲν γὰρ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀδελφὸς γίνεται τοῦ Κλωπᾶ, ἦν δὲ υἱὸς τοῦ Ἰακώβ, ἐπὶ κλην δὲ Πάνθηρ καλούμενου. Ἀμφότεροι οὗτοι ἀπὸ τοῦ Πάνθηρος ἐπὶ κλην γεννῶνται).

⁵ *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*, éd. et tr. par V. Déroche, in *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 47–229; reprinted later in G. Dagron, V. Déroche, *Juifs et chrétiens en Orient Byzantine*, Paris 2010, 47–229 (Joachim, the father of Mary, was to be Panther's son – Ἰωακείμ δὲ υἱὸς ἐστὶ τοῦ Πάνθηρος).

⁶ PG 133, coll. 791–922 (col. 860: Joachim was Panther's son – *qui Pantheri fuit filius*).

⁷ PG 97, coll. 913–932 (Panther had a son named Karpanther/Barpanther [Καρπανθήρ/Βαρπανθήρ], he was the father of Joachim the father of Mary).

John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* IV 14⁸; Epiphanius Monachus, *De vita B. Virginis* 2⁹ = PG 120, col. 189). Contemporary research mentioning Panther, on the other hand, proceeds in two opposite directions. One leads to the conclusion that Jesus was in fact an illegitimate child whose real father may have been this Panther. One must note that this current of study includes two approaches: the scientific approach and the popular or ‘scandalizing’ one, which, unfortunately, is often of a very low, even embarrassing, quality. The second direction in research leads to the conclusion that Panther is a completely fictional character, either purposely created by the enemies of the Christians or brought into existence as a result of a misunderstanding. The genesis of the idea or the cause of this confusion has been variously explained. The classic explanation is that the character was brought to life as a result of a distortion the term ‘the son of a virgin’ (τοῦ παρθένου) used in reference to Jesus in the phrase ‘the son of Panther / the son of Pantheras’ (τοῦ Πάνθηρος / τοῦ Πανθήρα).¹⁰ There exist other, similar language associations¹¹ that could have resulted in the invention of this person. Analysing all these ideas is the subject for a separate article, and I will not take them up now. In this paper I propose instead another explanation of the circumstances of the appearance among the ancient polemics of the character of Panthera. I will do so by delving into two texts: *Eclogae propheticae* by Eusebius of Caesarea as well as *Physiologos*.

Eclogae propheticae by Eusebius of Caesarea

One of the most important and oldest arguments that Christians considered as proof that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of God, the Logos, the Wisdom of God, etc., that is a – variously called and variously defined – supernatural / divine being, was the so-called prefiguration, that is the presence of allegorical

⁸ *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, ed. B. Kotter, vol. III: *Expositio fidei*, Berlin 1973 (Pantheras was the father of Barpantheras, the father of Joachim the father of Mary – ὁ Πάνθηρας γέννησε αὐτόν πού ὀνομάσθηκε Βαρπάνθηρας. Αὐτός ὁ Βαρπάνθηρας γέννησε τόν Ἰωακείμ); in 12th century Burgundio of Pisa translated into Latin *De fide orthodoxa* by John of Damascus. The translation was later used in the 13th century by Jacobus de Voragine, in whose *Golden Legend* (ch. CCXXV [195]) Mary is featured as Joachim’s daughter, Barpanther’s granddaughter and Panther’s great-granddaughter.

⁹ PG 120, coll. 185–216 (Panther was Barpanther’s father, who in turn was the father of Joachim – Mary’s father – Ὁ Πανθῆρ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Βαρπανθῆρ. Ὁ Βαρπανθῆρ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωακείμ τὸν πατέρα τῆς Θεοτόκου).

¹⁰ See P. Cassel, s.v. ‘Caricaturnamen’, in *Aus Literatur und Geschichte*, Berlin-Leipzig 1885, 323–347.

¹¹ See e.g. E. Lipiński, ‘Pandra & Stada and Jehoshua bar Perahya’, *Estetyka i Krytyka* 27 (2012), 51–66, where the term Ben Pandera is derived from the adjective *paṭṭirā*, ‘sent away’; to enemies of Christianity, Jesus would therefore be the son of a woman sent away by her husband.

references to him in the Hebrew Old Testament. We find traces of this kind of argument in the synoptic Gospels already, to mention only the most famous and most frequently cited passus from Matthew (1:23) which contains the quotation from the *Book of Isaiah* (7:14) announcing the birth of Emmanuel. Christian writers competed in the task of locating and interpreting the largest possible number of similar passages in the Hebrew Bible. At this point, we are interested in one only of these prefigurations: the image of Christ as the ‘panther’ in Hosea (5:14 and 13:7). Although in the canonical Gospels themselves there is no reference to this particular prefiguration, it is worth stating by way of introduction that this is the book of the Old Testament from which there comes another passus (Hos 11:1: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son’) cited by Matthew (2:15). The Evangelist refers to it in connection with his description of the escape of Joseph and Mary with the newborn Jesus from Bethlehem to Egypt and their later return and settlement in Nazareth (Matt 2:13–23). In other words, we can see that the Hosea was a source of prefigurative ideas dating back to the earliest years of Christian literature.

Two interesting passuses from the prophet (Hos 5:14 and 13:7) caught the attention of Eusebius of Caesarea, who took advantage of them in the text quoted today as *Eclogae propheticae*. So far this modest book, consisting of four slim volumes, has not aroused much scholarly interest.¹²

The Latin title *Eclogae propheticae* or, more broadly, *Libri quatuor Eclogarum Propheticarum de Christo*¹³ is commonly used to refer to the Greek text, which was probably called: Περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προφητικαὶ ἐκλογαί, that is, *Prophetic Excerpts about the Christ*. This is at least the conclusion suggested by the headings of the second (ed. Gaisford, p.64: τάδε ἔνεστιν κεφάλαια ἐν τῷ β' τῶν περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προφητικῶν ἐκλογῶν) and the third book of these excerpts (ed. Gaisford, p. 93: τάδε ἔνεστιν ἐν τῷ 'τόμῳ τῶν περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προφητικῶν ἐκλογῶν). The beginning of the first book was lost; therefore, we do not know its title. As for the fourth book, the heading states only its number and the information that it contains extracts from Isaiah (ed. Gaisford, p. 166: Λόγος δ' Ψ. Ἡσαΐου). At its very end the fourth book contains also the most valuable information, namely, that it is an extract from the ninth book of *General Elementary Introduction* (ed. Gaisford, p.236: ἐν τέτταρσι καὶ τὴν τῶν Ἐκλογῶν ὑπόθεσιν ἐν τῷ τῆς Καθόλου Στοιχειώδους

¹² The more important studies of this text are: H. Nolte, ‘Zu den *Eclogis Propheticae* des Eusebii von Cäsarea’, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 43 (1861), 95–109; W. Selwyn, ‘Emendations of certain passages of Eusebii *Eclogae Propheticae*’, *Journal of Philology* 4 (1872), 275–280; G. Mercati, ‘La grande lacuna delle *Ecloghe Profetiche* di Eusebio di Cesarea’, in *Mémorial Louis Petit*, Bucarest 1948, 1–3; T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge Mass.–London 1981, 167–174; E. Cavalcanti, ‘Dai «testimonia» all’«armonia delle Scritture»: la raccolta dei profeti nel libro XVIII del «De civitate Dei»’, *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 11 (1994), 491–510; see n. 14 and 15.

¹³ The text was basically only published once: Eusebii Pamphili episcopi Caesariensis *Eclogae propheticae*, ed. Th. Gaisford, Oxonii 1842; in 1857 it was reprinted in PG 22, coll. 1021–1262.

Εἰσαγωγῆς ἐνάτω). All we have are, therefore, later, very modest (and partially damaged) extracts from the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth books of the large work by Eusebius of Caesarea, which he conceived as a universal-catholic (καθόλου) and primary – elementary (στοιχειώδης) introduction to the Christian religion.

According to the D.S. Wallace-Hadrill's hypothesis,¹⁴ we have also at our disposal some fragments of the text of the tenth book of Eusebius's *General Elementary Introduction*. In the second half of the eleventh century, Bishop Niketas of Heraclea left us the so-called *catena*. It is within these extracts, taken from the works of Christian authors writing about the Gospel of Luke, that fragments of the tenth book of *General Elementary Introduction* were supposedly transmitted (PG 24, coll. 529–605). Aaron P. Johnson,¹⁵ however, rejected this hypothesis, showing that the material known to us from Niketas's account probably came from a now lost *Commentary on Luke* by Eusebius. The issue does not bear on this discussion because the material does not touch on our interests.

Prior to embarking on the analysis of the key issues, it is worth noting that the mention in *Eclogae propheticae* (I 8) of the problems concerning staffing bishoprics that resulted from persecution allows us to place Eusebius's work as hailing from before the collapse of Maximinus Daia. According to Wallace-Hadrill, *General Elementary Introduction* was therefore written in 309–310;¹⁶ Johnson¹⁷ writes more generally about the era of persecution, that is, the period before 313.

As concerns the content of *Eclogae propheticae*, Eusebius chose and discussed the fragments of the Old Testament that he considers to prefigure Christ and to indicate that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. In the first book of *Eclogae propheticae* (formerly the sixth book of the original work), the author employs this perspective to analyze the first part of the Bible, from Genesis to Ezra. In the second book he deals with the Psalms, in the third the books of the prophets excluding Isaiah, to whom he dedicates the whole of the fourth book of *Eclogae propheticae*. The material is not particularly visionary. Eusebius follows the well-trodden path laid out by many predecessors. At one point, however, his work is quite novel. This concerns his use of Hosea. In *Eclogae propheticae* the author refers to it several times, in the following fragments of the text preserved until today: 1. *Ec. proph.* I 13 and III 11 (= Hos 11:1); 2. *Ec. proph.* III 10 (= Hos 5:14); 3. *Ec. proph.* III 10 (= Hos 13:7); 4. *Ec. proph.* III 11 (= Hos 10:14); 5. *Ec. proph.* III 12 (= Hos 11:9).

¹⁴ D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Eusebius of Caesarea's *Commentary on Luke*: its origin and early history', *HThR* 67 (1974), 55–63.

¹⁵ A. P. Johnson, 'The tenth book of Eusebius' *General Elementary Introduction*: a critique of the Wallace-Hadrill thesis', *JThS* 62 (2011), 144–160 (the footnotes contain the literature relevant for *Eclogae propheticae* by Eusebius).

¹⁶ D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, London 1960, 51.

¹⁷ Johnson, 'The tenth book of Eusebius', 158–159.

In the first case (*Ec. proph.* I 13 and III 11), in accordance with the idea of prefiguration, we have a *passus* from Hosea (11:1) that Eusebius connects with the above-mentioned account of the Holy Family's escape to and return from Egypt in Matthew. The last two fragments of the text (*Ec. proph.* III 11 and *Ec. proph.* III 12) deal with more general prefigurative references and I do not need to dwell on them because they do not bear on this discussion. Eusebius's second (*Ec. proph.* III 10 [= Hos 5:14]) and third (*Ec. proph.* III 10 [= Hos 13:7]) reference to Hosea, however, are extremely important. Significantly, Eusebius discusses them together in the same part of his text (*Ec. proph.* III 10) because they contain the same prefigurative theme of the Christ as the 'Panther'.

Eusebius's account – preserved today in the form of *Eclogae propheticae* – consists of three parts. First we have an indication of the author's interest in two places in Hosea (5:14 and 13:7) where, in the Bible translation used by the writer, i.e. the Septuagint, there appears a panther (gr. *πάνθηρ*). Then follows an anecdote about this animal taken from the first book of *Physica* by Didymus of Alexandria. Finally, Eusebius includes a Christological interpretation of the character of the panther. I will quote, translate, and analyse in sequence these three parts of his text.

In the first part we read as follows (*Ec. proph.* III 10, ed. Gaisford, p. 111, l. 4–8)¹⁸:

Διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὡς πάνθηρ τῷ Ἐφραΐμ, καὶ ὡς λέων τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰουδα. Ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ τόπῳ τοῦ αὐτοῦ προφήτου ὁ Κύριος περὶ ἑαυτοῦ φησιν τὸ, καὶ ἔσομαι ὡς πάνθηρ,¹⁹ ἀναγκαῖον ἰδεῖν τὰ ἱστορούμενα [ἅ] περὶ τοῦ ζῴου.

For I am like a panther to Ephraim and like a lion to the house of Ioudas [= Hos 5,14]. Since in another place [of the book] by the same prophet the Lord says about himself [these words]: *And I will become [...] like a panther* [= Hos 13:7], it seems necessary we learn what is known about this animal.

Jesus is therefore for Eusebius the 'panther' from Hosea. The bishop of Caesarea, however, by 'trimming' biblical quotations and by his reliance on the Septuagint only, somewhat simplified for himself the task of creating a convincing argument in support of this prefiguration concept²⁰. In fact, both fragments of the Septuagint have the following form:²¹

¹⁸ Italics are used to highlight quotations from Hosea.

¹⁹ Eusebius (or an author who abbreviated his text?) omitted the preposition *αὐτοῖς*, present in the Septuagint (καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς ὡς πάνθηρ).

²⁰ It is possible to wonder whether this does not result from the efforts by a now unknown author of the excerpt from the work by Eusebius. It seems, however, rather unlikely for a man making such an excerpt from the original text by Eusebius to shorten or change the biblical quotation used.

²¹ *Septuaginta: id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, ed. A. Rahlfs, vol. I – II, Stuttgart 1935 (repr. 1971); English translation: *A New English Translation of the Septuagint. A New Translation of The Greek into Contemporary English – An Essential Resource for Biblical Studies*, ed. A. Pietersma, B.G. Wright, Oxford-New York 2009 (Hosea was translated by George E. Howard).

– Hos 5:14 – διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὡς πανθήρ τῷ Ἐφραΐμ καὶ ὡς λέων τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰούδα· καὶ ἐγὼ ἀρπάζω καὶ πορεύομαι καὶ λήψομαι, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ὁ ἐξαιρούμενος.

For I am like a panther to Ephraim and like a lion to the house of Ioudas. And I will plunder and go and take, and no one will rescue;

– Hos 13:7 – καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς ὡς πανθήρ καὶ ὡς πάρδαλις κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν Ἀσσυρίων.

And I will become like a panther to them and like a leopard according to the way of the Assyrians.

In the first paragraph we therefore have a panther (πάνθηρ) and a lion (λέων), and in the second again the panther (πανθήρ) followed by the term *pardalis*, that is a 'leopard'.²² As we will see below in the texts of classical authors, including Aristotle, the term *pardalis* is used as synonymous for the word *panther*. Eusebius, however, quotes the whole of the first passus of Hosea, that is, the one quoting a 'panther' and a 'lion', but from the second one he quotes only the half that contains the 'panther' and omits the continuation with the word *pardalis*. He was therefore only interested in the term panther. The problem is that in the Hebrew text of Hosea in the first paragraph (Hos 5:14) there is the word 'lion' and 'young lion',²³ while in the second case (Hos 13:7) we have in the Hebrew Bible a 'lion' and a 'leopard'. In *Eclogae propheticae* – following the Septuagint – there is the word 'leopard' where the Hebrew text in both places reads 'lion'.²⁴

Thanks to the preserved part of Origen's *Hexapla* (ed. Field, p. 949)²⁵ we can see how other interpreters of the Old Testament translated into Greek the first passus from Hosea (5:14). Where the Septuagint uses the phrase 'like a panther' (ὡς πανθήρ) in Aquila we read 'like a lioness' (ὡς λέαινα), in Symmachus it is 'like a lioness's attack' (ὡς ἐπιβολὴ λεαίνης), while in Theodotion there appears the term 'like a lion' (ὡς λῆς), but the translator uses a different, poetic, Homeric (*Il.* XV 275) word (λῆς) to identify the animal. As for the second part of the same sentence from Hosea (5:14), in Aquila we see a 'young lion', and the whole phrase in his translation reads as follows: 'like a lioness to Ephraim, and like a young lion' (ὡς λέαινα τῷ Ἐφραΐμ, καὶ ὡς σκύμνος). Not a trace of the panther. We can only find it in the Septuagint and in the works by Eusebius.²⁶

²² *LSJ*, s.v. *πάρδαλις*.

²³ I used here the *Hebrew Interlinear Bible (OT)*, available at: http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Hebrew_Index.htm

²⁴ Both passuses from *Hosea* (5:14 and 13:7) where the Septuagint uses the word *πάνθηρ* the Hebrew text reads *shahal* (the term appears also in: Job 4,10; Ps 91,13; Prov 26,13) – the word which means 'an adult lion'.

²⁵ *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, ed. F. Field, vol. I – II, Oxonii 1875 (repr. Hildesheim 1964).

²⁶ *Nota bene*, in the Latin Vulgate we have, respectively: Hos 5:14 – *Quoniam ego quasi leaena Ephraim, et quasi catulus leonis domui Iuda*; Hos 13:7 – *Et ego ero eis quasi leaena, sicut pardus in via Assyriorum*.

Not only does Eusebius see a panther instead of a lion, but an anecdote he goes on to quote refers not to the second but, obviously, the first of these animals. In the next part of the text of *Eclogae prophetae* we read (III 10, ed. Gaisford, p. 111, l. 8–18):

καὶ δὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου τῶν Διδύμου Φισικῶν ταῦτα παραθετέον. Πάνθηρ τὸ ζῷον οὐ μόνον ἐστὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα εὖμορφον, καθάπερ ἀστερωπός, ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ πέφυκεν εὖπνους ὑπερβάλλει καὶ τῶν παρ' Ἰνδοῖς ἀρωμάτων ἐν εὐωδία. οὗτος ἕως οὗ οὐ πεπεινηκεν ἐν τῇ καταδύσει μένει, θέλων οἰκουρός τις εἶναι. ἐπ' ἂν δὲ τροφῆς ἐπιθυμήσῃ μεταλαβεῖν, προελθὼν βαδίζει μόνον. τὰ δ' ἄλλα θηρία ἀλισκόμενα ὑπὸ τῆς εὐωδίας αὐτοῦ τῆς περὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀκολουθεῖ κηλούμενα. ὁ δὲ πλάγιος τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς τὸ ἐπιτήδειον αὐτῷ θηρίον αἰρεθῆναι περιβλέπει καὶ ἐπιτηδήσας ἔχει.

Thus one must infer from the first [book of] Didymus's *Physica*. The panther is beautiful not only in terms of the body, as if 'starry',²⁷ but when this animal exudes a smell its aroma exceeds even the aromas of the Indies. Also, until she is hungry, she remains in hiding, trying to be like someone guarding their home. Leaving [her shelter] she walks, if she wants to get food. Other animals, captivated by the aroma of her body, follow her in enchantment. Standing sideways, the panther glances around to capture an animal that is best for her and catches it by leaping upon it.

Cited by Eusebius in his anecdote about the panther is the famous grammarian and philologist Arius Didymus of Alexandria, who lived in the first century BCE. He wrote, among others, a work entitled *Physica*, which we know only from excerpts²⁸ cited by Stobaeus and Eusebius of Caesarea. The latter, apart from the mention in *Eclogae prophetae*, quotes a passus from Didyma's text in his *Praeparatio evangelica* (XV 15.1–9, 18.1–3, 19.1–3, 20.1–7) explaining the Stoic concept of God.

As for the content of the anecdote cited by Eusebius, it contains a well-known story of the panther, which gives off a wonderful scent attracting other animals. Didymus did not invent it. Below we indicate a number of sources that contain different versions of the tradition, by authors such as Aristotle, Theophrastus, Pliny the Elder, Plutarch and Claudius Aelianus. All this material is closely related to the passus that *Physiologos* dedicates to the panther, which I will shortly deal with. I do not want here to scrutinize the origins of the story of the panther since it is of key importance here that I note something else: Eusebius quotes this anecdote solely to use it to clarify the Christological prefiguration in Hosea.

Thus, in the third part of the text from *Eclogae prophetae* we read (III 10, ed. Gaisford, p. 111, l. 19–29):

Τὰ μὲν δὴ περὶ τῆς φύσεως τοῦ ζώου τοιαῦτα. ὅπως δ' ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀποπνεύουσαν εὐωδίαν ταῦτα μεταφέροιο, μακρὸν ἂν εἴη νῦν

²⁷ The Greek word ἀστερωπός suggests a reference to the spotted panther rather than a uniformly colored animal, for example black.

²⁸ See *Doxographi Graeci*, ed. H. Diels, Berlin 1879, 447–472.

διηγείσθαι. Παραθετέον τὸ ῥητὸν πρὸς τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς κατὰ τινα δὴ διαβολὴν καὶ λοιδορίαν φάσκοντας ἐκ πάνθηρος γεγενῆσθαι τὸν Σωτῆρα καὶ Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. ὃ καὶ τάχα κατὰ τινα παράδοσιν μυστικώτερόν τι δηλοῦσαν παρεληφότες οὐκ ἐπιβάλλουσι τῇ διανοίᾳ, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐφιστάναι τῇ προκειμένῃ τῆς προφητείας λέξει, ἐν ᾗ αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος πάνθηρα ἑαυτὸν ὀνομάζει.

So much on the nature of this animal. As this is for the sake of the power of God's Word and the aroma it secretes should be understood figuratively, more will presently be told. This needs to be explained to those circumcised, spreading slander and insult that our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ was born of Panther. This, in turn, submitted to the people who think according to a more mystical tradition and not comprehend through the senses will not allow a denial of the prophecy of the text where the Lord himself called himself a panther.

The wonderful scent secreted by the panther and attracting to it all other animals was juxtaposed by Eusebius with the action of the Word of God – of Christ, who, likewise draws people to himself. Clearly, the text of *Eclogae prophetae*, which – as one should always remember – is only a later summary of the original work by Eusebius, announces a comprehensive explanation of the issue (μακρὸν ἂν εἴη νῦν διηγείσθαι) without actually providing it. The person who abbreviated the original text did not quote the full discussion of the panther's prefiguration in the version given by Eusebius. He limited himself to citing the words of Eusebius, saying that, contrary to 'those of the circumcision' (πρὸς τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς) who say slanderously that Jesus was born of Panther (ἐκ Πάνθηρος γεγενῆσθαι), Christ is 'the panther' from Hosea, since this is what he calls himself (ἐν ᾗ αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος πάνθηρα ἑαυτὸν ὀνομάζει).

Eusebius mentions the objections formulated by the Jews. In his *Church History* (VI 36,2) he mentions Origen's book *The True Word*, in which a pagan (CC I 28, 32–33, 69) quotes the Jewish charge that Jesus was conceived in an adulterous relationship that Mary had with the soldier Pantheras. Celsus does not appear in the text of *Eclogae prophetae*. We read here about the Jewish accusations. It is difficult to determine conclusively whether this means that Eusebius generalized and simplified the image he knew from Origen's work, or whether he had in mind not Celsus's *The True Word* but a conviction widely circulated among the Jews. However, Tertullian in *De spectaculis* (30.6)²⁹ wrote in general about the Jewish accusations that Jesus' mother was a prostitute (*quaestuarium*). Perhaps then such an anti-Christian story was quite well known. Celsus's account does not necessarily have to be its source.

The *Eclogae prophetae* certify that Eusebius of Caesarea, at the turn of the third and fourth centuries, referred to Hosea so as to achieve a dual effect. First, he

²⁹ Tertullien, *Les spectacles*, ed. M. Turcan, SC 332, Paris 1986 (*hic est ille, dicam, fabri aut quaestuariae filius*).

wanted to point out the prefigurative image of Christ the ‘panther’ who uses the power of the Word to attract people to himself and, secondly, he desired to repel the Jewish charge that it was Panther who was the true father of Jesus. Eusebius is therefore of the opinion that the Jews did not understand the meaning of both (Hos 5:14 and 13:7) passages from Hosea discussed here. It is, however, especially significant that, in his polemic against Celsus, Origen does not employ a similar argument, and does not refer to Hosea at all. It may be that, since he knew Hebrew as well as other Greek translations of the Bible besides the Septuagint, Origen had a greater awareness of the weakness of such argumentation, all the more addressed to the Jews who could always say: but there is no panther whatsoever in Hosea.

At this point we are faced with two major questions. First, what content, images and associations were brought by the reference to the panther in Hosea cited by Eusebius? After all, the author of the excerpt from *Eclogae propheticae* omitted the entire extensive discourse present in the original work by Eusebius. Second, was it only at the turn of the third and fourth century that Eusebius found the prefiguration of the ‘panther’ from Hosea to be a way to crack down on the allegations concerning the conception of Jesus, or is he using texts by his predecessors? It is hard to believe that such an attractive – and rather obvious – argument waited so long to emerge in the sphere of ancient polemics.

Hosea

Let us start with the first issue. The Book of Hosea begins with the prophet’s account of his marital trials and tribulations of when, at Divine command, he marries a prostitute (Hos 1:2): ‘Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom’ (βάδιζε λαβὲ σεαυτῷ γυναῖκα πορνείας καὶ τέκνα πορνείας). Thus he is married to Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim (Hos 1:3). She bears him three children (Hos 1:3–9). Eventually, however, he sends her away because of her depravity. Further down the text there appear threats against the woman and her offspring, for example (Hosea 2:4): ‘And upon her children also I will have no pity, because they are children of whoredom (τέκνα πορνείας). For their mother played the whore, she who bore them acted shamefully’. However, since the woman could not survive because she did not find new lovers, she decided to return to her husband (Hos 2:9). He, at God’s command, took her back to his house again (Hos 3:1), but ordered: ‘You will not play the whore, nor will you be with a man (οὐ μὴ πορνεύσῃς οὐδὲ μὴ γένη ἄνδρι ἐτέρω)’ (Hos 3:3).

In the telling of this moral story, already there appear in the text suggestions for its metaphorical treatment: the ‘fornication’ would be a ‘betrayal’ of Yahweh³⁰ by worshipping gods made by human hands. Therefore, further on God says:

They would consult counselors, and with his rods they would report to him. They were led astray by a spirit of whoredom (πνεύματι πορνείας), and they played the whore (ἐξεπόρνευσαν) from their God. They were offering sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and were sacrificing upon the hills, under an oak and a white poplar and a thickly shading tree, because shelter is a good thing. Therefore your daughters will play the whore (ἐκπορνεύσουσιν), and your daughters-in-law will commit adultery (μοιχεύσουσιν) (Hos 4:12–13).

These accusations focus, eventually, on the tribe of Ephraim (e.g. Hos 5:3, 6:9, 7:1), where the fall and destruction of Samaria (Hos 10:7, 14:1) are revealed to be the punishment for the tribe’s ‘immorality’.³¹

Throughout the story various threats are uttered against the apostates whom God wants to destroy. Hence, among others, the two excerpts of interest to us (Hos 5:14 and 13:7) in which the Lord shows Himself in the form of bloodthirsty animals (including the panther in the Septuagint) aiming to tear the ‘adulterers’ apart. The latter, in turn, return to God and then again betray him with other deities. All the time, however, they count on his mercy, saying, among other things:

Let us go and return to the Lord our God, because it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he will strike down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will make us healthy; on the third day we will rise up (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ ἀναστήσόμεθα) and live before him and have knowledge (Hos 6:1–2).

Because the excerpt relates a rising up after three days, it was one of the favorite prefigurations of the resurrection of Jesus among Christian writers (e.g. Origen, *In Exod. Hom.* V 2; Gregory of Naz., *or.* 8,16; Cyril of Jerus., *cat.* 14,14).

Christological interpretations of the various passuses from Hosea are present in the most ancient Christian texts, to name for example the Gospel of Matthew, which quotes (Matt 2:15) the words ‘out of Egypt I called my son’ (Hos 11:1). From our point of view, however, it is more important that we find in Hosea the idea of ‘fornication’ (πορνεία) as a turning away from the true religion of Yahweh. In the Gospel of John (8:41) the Jews accuse Jesus that his teaching comes ‘from fornication’ (ἐκ πορνείας). This is only a step away from the idea that he

³⁰ The issue enjoys an enormous body of literature; in this article I have used: B. E. Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, Atlanta 2005; J.A. Dearman, *The Book of Hosea (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament)*, Michigan–Cambridge 2010.

³¹ The subject is therefore the fall of the Kingdom of Israel (= Ephraim) and the conquest of Samaria by the Assyrians in the year 721 BCE. Consequently, Hosea’s activity is dated to circa 760–720.

himself is a bastard child. Perhaps, then, interpretations of Hosea were an area of Jewish-Christian disputes. In these we have a ready-made arsenal of arguments against the person and teachings of Jesus, strangely coinciding with the allegations of his bastard conception from the relationship with Panther and the story of Mary's sending away by her rightful husband Joseph. On the other hand, Christians found in the same book the theme of punishment for corruption, of the escape to and return from Egypt, the prefiguration of the resurrection after three days and, finally, also, the 'panther' as the Christ. At the same time one must ask whether it was the first Christians who created the parallel between Jesus and the panther from Hosea, to which the Jews said, not a panther, but the son of Panther, his mother's lover? Or was it, conversely, defending themselves against the charge of Jesus' conception by Panther that the Christians argued, not Panther's son, but Christ, the 'panther'? To answer this question it is necessary somehow to date the beginnings of the discussion on Hosea.

It may of course be disturbing that the picture of the prefigurative Christ as the 'panther' does not appear sooner than in Eusebius of Caesarea, at the turn of the third and fourth centuries. Thus we return to the genesis of the idea known from *Eclogae prophetice*. It is striking indeed that among the large numbers of texts and Christian authors searching for further prefigurations of Christ in the Old Testament the two paragraphs from Hosea, which are of interest to us, did not enjoy much success with early Christian writers.

In the case of the first passus (Hos 5:14), it was Origen who, before Eusebius, employed it in his commentary (XVII 19) on the Gospel of Matthew, which we will discuss in a moment. After Eusebius, it appears in a fourth-century work by a now anonymous author of the *Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus*. In this dialogue, a Jewish polemicist asks a Christian³² whether it is true that Christ is compared to a stone (ch. 115). The answer is that invisible things (τὰ ἀφανῆ καὶ ἀόρατα) are represented by parables (διὰ παραβολῶν), which is why God himself says, inter alia, through the prophet: καὶ ἔσομαι ὡσεὶ πάνθηρ τῷ Ἐφραὶμ καὶ ὡσεὶ πάρδαλις τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰούδα.³³ Although in the text we have a reference to Hosea (5:14), it is not so in the version from the Septuagint, where, as we remember, this fragment reads a 'panther' and a 'lion' (Hos 5:14: διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὡς πανθὴρ τῷ Ἐφραὶμ καὶ ὡς λέων τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰούδα). *Pardalis* appears, however, in the second paragraph of the Prophet in the Septuagint (Hos 13:7: καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς ὡς

³² *The Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus*, in *Ancient Jewish-Christian dialogues: Athanasius and Zacchaeus, Simon and Theophilus, Timothy and Aquila*, introductions, texts, and translations by W. Varner, New York 2004, 76–77.

³³ In Varner's translation, p. 77: 'I will be as a panther to Ephraim and as a leopard to the house of Judah'.

πανθήρ καὶ ὡς πάρδαλις κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν Ἀσσυρίων). In the *Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus* the names of the animals from the two fragments are combined; therefore, we have here the panther and *pardalis*. The author of the dialogue does not delve more deeply into these prefigurations; he testifies, however, that in the fourth century the panther motif was known as derived from the Hosea. Moreover, the first of the two passuses from Hosea that interest us will later be referred to by Procopius of Gaza in his commentary on Genesis (PG 87, coll. 509–510, l. 49).

As for the second fragment from Hosea (Hos 13:7), it did not invoke an interest before the time of Eusebius, but was later referred to by Gregory of Nazianzus (*Carmina theologica*. XXV. *Adversus iram*, verse 372 = PG 37, col. 839; or. XVI 7 = PG 35, col. 944), Gregory of Nyssa (*Contra Eunomium* II 300 = ed. Jaeger, p. 314, I 24; *In Canticum canticorum homiliae* 9 = ed. Langerbeck, p. 265, I 3) as well as Procopius of Gaza;³⁴ there is also a reference to this passus in the Latin *Apologia David altera* (5.30) attributed to Ambrose.

The authors later than Eusebius notwithstanding, all we have is Origen and his aforementioned *Commentary on Matthew*. Considering the relationship between Eusebius and the school of this Great Alexandrian, what appeared to be an attractive path of transmission for the prefiguration idea turns out, surprisingly, to be a dead end. This is because Origen used Hosea (5:14)³⁵ in a completely different sense. The words: ‘For I am like a panther to Ephraim and like a lion to the house of Ioudas’, which he cites in their Septuagint translation, have no Christological dimension. According to Origen, God in the Old Testament is shown as a panther and a lion (Hos 5:14), a she-bear (Hos 13:8), a ‘consuming fire’ (Deut 4:24) – that is, the Lord punishing his worshippers for their sins. Once they repent, however, he will be for them a ‘light’ (1 John 5) and ‘love’ (1 John 4:8 and 4:16). Origen is therefore considering the issue of God’s responsibility for His severe punishments rather than referring to the parallel of Christ as the ‘panther’. It is therefore not from Origen’s commentary on the Gospel of Matthew that Eusebius derives his idea.

Of course one can always suspect that the texts containing the idea of the panther’s prefiguration have not survived to our times. In one of his letters (*Ep.* 33) Jerome mentions two commentaries on Hosea (*In Osee de Effraim librum I, In Osee commentarium*)³⁶ among the works by Origen that are lost. One of these works

³⁴ In the case of Procopius of Gaza there are references in his catena to the *Book of Proverbs* (*Catena in Proverbia*): *Nova Patrum bibliotheca*, ed. A. Mai, vol. IV/3, Romae 1847, p. 190, I 9; *ibidem*, vol. VII/2, Romae 1854, p. 27, I 41; PG 87/2, col. 1784.

³⁵ Origenes, *Matthäusevangelium*, hrsg. E. Benz, E. Klostermann, Origenes Werke, B. X, Leipzig 1935, XVII 19, p. 639.

³⁶ Sant Jérôme, *Lettres*, texte établi et traduit par J. Labourt, t. I – VIII, BL, Paris 1949–1963.

concerns Ephraim in the Book of Hosea, and it is for him that God was to be ‘like a panther’ (Hos 5:14: ὡς πανθῆρ τῷ Εφραΐμ). We also know that Pierius of Alexandria,³⁷ the teacher of Eusebius’ master Pamphlus³⁸ wrote a – nowadays also missing – commentary or maybe homilies on Hosea. He is mentioned also by Jerome (*De vir.* 76).³⁹ Maybe, then, in one of these texts, which are now lost, originated the idea for the prefiguration of the panther. However, even if in one of them the prefigurational Christ was Hosea’s ‘panther’, the tradition would not take us further back than the times of Origen, that is, to the first half of the third century.

But there is one text, dating back probably to Eusebius’s times, that appears to contain a much older tradition. In it we find the image of Christ – the ‘panther’ parallel to the account we know from *Eclogae propheticae* by Eusebius. It is the so-called *Physiologos*.

Physiologos

This rather unique work boasts a symbolic and allegorical interpretation of – especially, although not exclusively – various animals. Relatively loose in structure, on the one hand it allowed the material from a much earlier period a relatively free entry; on the other hand, we must also take into account the continuous replenishment of this work with new content. As a matter of fact it is hard to date both the whole of it and its individual paragraphs to a precisely specified time. However, the principal, central part of this work was probably written in the second half of the third – and certainly no later than the mid-fourth – century.⁴⁰ *Physiologos* is therefore contemporary to Eusebius.

What is very important to us is that already Jean Daniélou⁴¹ (following earlier studies),⁴² pointed out the strong rooting of *Physiologos* in the Judeo-Christian and early Christian literature. The paragraph devoted to the lion, for example, contains a fairly archaic theology of a hidden descent of the Heavenly Christ.

³⁷ See the excellent study: J. Naumowicz, *Wczesnochrześcijańscy pisarze aleksandryjscy w Bibliotece Focjusza*, [*The Early-Christian Alexandrian writers in the Bibliotheca of Photius*], Wrocław 1995, 108–135.

³⁸ Mentioned by Photius (cod. 119).

³⁹ Naumowicz, *Wczesnochrześcijańscy pisarze*, 112.

⁴⁰ See U. Treu, ‘Zur Datierung des *Physiologos*’, *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 57 (1966), 101–104; A. Scott, ‘The date of the *Physiologos*’, *VC* 52 (1998), 430–441.

⁴¹ In this article I am using the Polish translation of this book: J. Daniélou, *Teologia judeochrześcijańska. Historia doktryn chrześcijańskich przed soborem nicejskim*, tr. S. Basista, Kraków 2002, 233–237.

⁴² For example, E. Peterson, ‘Die Spiritualität des griechischen *Physiologos*’, *BZ* 47 (1954), 60–72.

Not only that, at this point, the text seems to be very similar to the so-called *Ascension of Isaiah*, which dates back to the end of the first or early second century. *Physiologos*, however, displays an even older tradition than that present in today's version of the *Ascension of Isaiah*. I do not wish to enter further into these complex issues, it is however important at this point to note that *Physiologos* clearly contains material that is very archaic, and partly Judeo-Christian in provenance, and so, reading it, we find ourselves far earlier than Eusebius's *Eclogae propheticae* or any of the now-missing comments by Origen or Pierius on Hosea or ideas on how to prefigure Christ as the 'panther', which may be located in the material. With the text of *Physiologos* in hand, we can therefore look back and show the roots of the concept known, albeit in fragments, from Eusebius's *Eclogae propheticae*.

In *Physiologos* we read about 'the panther':

The Prophet says, 'I become like a lion to the house of Judah, and like a panther to the house of Ephraim'⁴³ (Hos 5:14). The panther has this nature: he is a friend of all animals but is an enemy of the dragon. He is entirely variegated and is beautiful like Joseph's cloak (cf. Gen 37:3).⁴⁴ And David said in Psalm 44, 'At your right hand stands the queen in a golden dress decked in various hues' (Ps 45:13–14). The panther is a quiet and most exceedingly mild animal. If, however, he has eaten and is satisfied, he falls asleep immediately in his lair and arises from his sleep on the third day (like our Savior). If the panther awakens from his sleep on the third day, he roars out in a loud voice and many a pleasant fragrance issues from his voice. Those who are far away and those who are near, hearing his voice, follow its pleasant fragrance (ch. 30; tr. M.J. Curley).⁴⁵

Included in the quoted text is the Christological interpretation of the panther⁴⁶ – which is the figure of Christ – already known to us from the text called *Eclogae propheticae* by Eusebius of Caesarea (III 10) discussed above; this time, however, we have a much richer and more complete picture. The basis of this prefiguration are, therefore, similarly, two passages from Hosea (Hos 5:14 and 13:7). *Physiologos* refers directly to the first of the biblical passages quoted, but

⁴³ In *Physiologos* the quotation from Hosea (5:14) follows the Greek version known from the Septuagint, which uses the word panther (ἐγὼ εἰμι ὡς πανθὴρ τῷ Ἐφραϊμ).

⁴⁴ This is a reference to Gen 37:3 (ἐποίησεν δὲ αὐτῷ χιτῶνα ποικίλον), where the key role is played by the word used in the Septuagint: ποικίλος – inter alia, 'multicoloured', 'variegated' – which is an allusion to the spotted panther.

⁴⁵ English translation: *Physiologos: A Medieval Book of Nature Lore*, tr. by M.J. Curley, Chicago–London 2009 (the translation is based on the two editions of Latin *Physiologos* prepared by F. Carmody); Greek text: *Physiologi Graeci*, ed. F. Sbordon, Mediolani 1936 (repr. Hildesheim 1991).

⁴⁶ There exists an analysis devoted to the figure of the panther in *Physiologos*, but it deals with Henry Suso (Heinrich Seuse), a 13th-century Dominican mystic, who employed the motif of the beautiful aroma exuded by that animal, drawing for his ideas among others, from Aristotle and *Physiologos*, see A.J. Festugière, 'Le Bienheureux Suso et la panthère', *RHR* 191 (1977), 81–84.

it goes far beyond Hosea in its emphasis on the panther's gentleness, where the animal shows hostility only to the dragon (= Satan). The three-day dream, of course, is an allusion to the death and resurrection of Jesus. This may be linked to another, aforementioned passus from Hosea (6:1–2). The picture of the panther it draws, however, is surprising and distressingly falsified: for example, we do not find out what for it attracts other animals with its nice aroma. As we remember, Eusebius, citing Didymus of Alexandria, clearly wrote that the panther comes out of its hiding place to hunt and devour animals attracted to the pleasant scent secreted by its body. The text of *Physiologos*, older at its core, does not contain such information, as if defying the tradition in which the animal is typically described.

We do know what was thought and written about the panther (interchangeably referred to in written texts as *pardalis* or *panther*). And it is from this perspective exactly that the *Physiologos*' account seems to be quite significant, since the author of the paragraph cited above is very selective in his use of the tradition⁴⁷ that goes back at least to Aristotle who – in *Problemata* (907b) – writes that none of the creatures has a pleasant smell except the panther. Similarly, Aristotle's student Theophrastus⁴⁸ says that it is the only animal that has a pleasant smell (*De causis plantarum* VI 17.9). Theophrastus also clarifies that the smell of the panther is not pleasant for humans but for other animals, because we have a weaker sense of smell (*De causis plantarum* VI 5.2). From Aristotle's *Historia animalium* (612a) we learn the purpose of this seductive scent. The panther, aware that wild animals like its smell, hides in order to catch them when, attracted by its scent, they approach it too closely. The panther is therefore not a cuddly pet – it uses its scent to attract other animals and devour them. This train of thought is followed by other ancient authors (Theophrastus, *De causis plantarum*, VI 5.2; Pliny, *Historia naturalis* VIII 17.41, VIII 23.62–63; XXI 18.39;⁴⁹ Plutarch, *De sollertia animalium* 976d;⁵⁰ Claudius Aelianus, *De natura animalium* V 40 and VIII 6).⁵¹

⁴⁷ I have managed to find only the Russian translation of the book by Annick Le Guérer on the subject of aromas, whose author briefly presents antique accounts regarding the panther's scent (Анник Ле Герер, *Ароматы и запахи в культуре*, Перевод М. Микаэлян, Вайнштейн. М.: НЛЮ, 2003, 272–276). Another work, however, seems more important: M. Detienne, *Dionysos mis à mort*, Paris 1977, especially chapter 3: 'La panthère parfumée', 49–131.

⁴⁸ Theophrastus, *De Causis Plantarum*, vol. III, Books 5–6, ed. B. Einarson, G.K. Link, Loeb, London 1990.

⁴⁹ Pliny, *Natural History*, with an English translation by H. Rackham, vol. III (libri VIII–XI), Loeb, London 1967; Pliny, *Natural History*, with an English translation by W.H.S. Jones, vol. VI (libri XX–XXIII), Loeb, London 1961.

⁵⁰ Plutarch's *Moralia*, ed. H. Cherniss, W.C. Helmbold, vol. XII (*The Cleverness of Animals*), London 1957, 420–421.

⁵¹ Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals*, ed. A.F. Scholfield, vol. I – III, Loeb, London 1971–1972.

Aristotle differs also in his description of the panther's features, where the animal is by no means as it is in *Physiologos*: 'a quiet and most exceedingly mild animal' (ch. 30; tr. M.J. Curley). According to Aristotle, the animal is wild and cannot be in any way tamed (*Historia animalium* 488b); females are even bolder than the males (*Historia animalium* 608a). The key characteristic, however, is the one that comes from *Physiognomica* by Aristotle:

Among the animals reputed to be brave the panther is more female in appearance except in the legs; with these he achieves and accomplishes mighty deeds. For he has a small face, a large mouth, small eyes rather pale, hollow and somewhat flat; the forehead is rather long, rather rounded than flat about the ears; the neck is over long and light, the chest is narrow, the back long, the haunches and thighs are fleshy, while the parts about the flanks and belly are flatter; the skin is mottled and the body as a whole is badly jointed and imperfectly proportioned. This is the shape of the body, and its character is petty, thieving and, generally speaking, deceitful (809b-810a, tr. W.S. Hett).⁵²

The conclusion one can draw from the ancient tradition regarding the panther is therefore obvious. First of all, although the above-mentioned authors more often use the term *pardalis*, they are clearly writing about the same animal that is mentioned as panther in *Physiologos* and in Hosea. Eusebius's *Eclogae propheticae* (III 10), with reference to the now missing Didymus' *Physica*, also contains a similar story about this animal. Most importantly, however, *Physiologos* significantly changed the image of the panther to fit it into its Christological interpretation: we do not read here about the hunting panther's cruelty. Eusebius, on the other hand, like Aristotle and other classical authors, wrote explicitly that the panther uses its smell to hunt other animals, but he endowed this with an interpretation metaphorical enough to make it appear as the enticing scent of the Word of God – the Christ.

Eusebius writes in his *Eclogae propheticae* that, while according to the Jews Jesus was born of Panther, to the author he is in fact the 'panther' from Hosea. *Physiologos* attests to a very old (as old as first century) discussion of the interpretation of the Hosea referred to as early as in the Gospel of Matthew (2:15). These may be echoes of an early Jewish-Christian dispute about whether Jesus is the son of Panther or the 'panther' from Hosea. However, in the writing of this particular prophet we find the motif that treats the turning away from the worship of Yahweh as harlotry which, in turn, could have resulted in the charge known already in the Gospel of John (8:41), namely, that not only the teachings of the apostate Jesus but he himself come ἐκ πορνείας. The Book of Hosea was therefore an ideal

⁵² Aristotle, *Physiognomics*, in Aristotle, *Minor Works*, with an English translation by W.S. Hett, Loeb, Cambridge, Mass. – London 1955, 81–137.

ground on which, in the course of the discussion around it, to bring into existence Panther, the seducer of Mary and father of Jesus. The phantom may have therefore been created in the Jewish community (as confirmed by Celsus) in response to an earlier Christian idea that Jesus is the ‘panther’ from Hosea.

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