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Goats, Marginality and the ‘Dangerous Other’

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ABSTRACT

Mediterranean vegetation is increasingly subject to high summer temperatures. Scrubland grazing by the omnivorous goat could reduce the risk of widespread fires. But goat populations have been controlled by bans and restrictions for many centuries. The political, economic and cultural reasons why the animal had such an unsavoury reputation are explored.

KEYWORDS

Mediterranean ecology, goats bans, cultural history

‘... the billy goats and their flocks are the most serious enemy of viticulture, woodland management, olive groves, and orchards and above all for all those who are not especially diligent, of the kitchen gardens. They are nasty, odious, bad tempered, noisy, beasts distinguished particularly by the stink of their bad breath. From the times of antiquity until our present era people have been of the same opinion ...’¹

Recent events both in Greece and in California present environmental historians with what is fast becoming a truism: that in the hottest and driest summers of this warming planet, huge tracts of the coastal regions of Mediterranean climate are at risk from fire. What were once localised outbreaks, now become rapidly expanding infernos, as summer land/sea breezes sweep the flames rapidly from one hillside to another consuming valuable properties and threatening life. While some of these fires are started by accident others are clearly the work of arsonists.² If global warming is a major factor in causing an increase in the number and severity of such catastrophes, there are ecologists who argue that the main

reason is the breakdown of the natural controlling mechanisms which were, at least in southern Europe and the Middle East, a by product of the traditional pastoral economies. Managed extensively under régimes of open evergreen woodland, these landscapes used to have a balanced biodiversity.³ Grazing by both sheep and goats was an essential part of this structure and there is evidence from at least medieval times that controlled firing was one of the mechanisms used by shepherds to improve pastures.⁴

As rural populations in the Mediterranean declined, so sheep and more particularly goat populations were also reduced. By the late nineteenth century, what was called the *garrigue* in the Alpes Maritimes, (the long-term product of controlled grazing), became the *maquis*: poor scrubland readily abandoned by farmers anxious to enrich themselves by lucrative land sales. This new wilderness of under-utilised land is on slopes increasingly valued by property developments for their sea views and their distance from the cluttered coastal zone. So land, which was economically marginal for any other use than rough grazing, escalated in development value. Thus fire- susceptible abandoned land abutted directly on new property.⁵

The answer sought by conservationists and developers alike turned them back to the most effective of all vegetation controls in this region, sheep and goats.⁶ Alongside recognition of the importance of the animal to subsistence societies and its recent adoption as an icon for charitable donations, for the goat this is a considerable change of opinion. In the official mind and in popular consciousness the goat has been the *bête noire* of dry farming areas. It has been damned as one cause of the encroachment of desert margins in Africa, the degradation of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern hillsides and the general decline of fertility. Nor is this aspect of their reputation newly acquired – indeed until very recently goats seem to have almost always had a bad press from the authorities.

My own acquaintance with this topic extended out of a search of parish documents in the mayoral archive of a perched village in the Alpes Maritimes.⁷ The commune of Cipières is situated above the Loup valley on a bench below the extensive plateau of Calern. It extends over forty square kilometres of slope, bench, terrace and limestone plateau. Here there is no doubting of the scale of woodland removal. Indeed many of the upper surfaces, now denuded of all but scrub vegetation, were almost certain to have been covered by deciduous woodland in the period when topographical features and fields were named, perhaps over a millennium ago. This grazing and foraging environment supported over 20,000 sheep and goats during much of the last thousand years.⁸ In the medieval period of rapid expansion in the market for wool, the region as a whole ‘groaned under the weight of sheep flocks’⁹ in particular and this expansion was managed with some difficulty. The pressure this placed on resources is evidenced by the number of times attempts were made to manage the animal population either by taxation, in the case of sheep, or by restrictions on herd size and eventually by total banning orders, in the case of goats.

There is clear evidence of restriction on goat numbers, even as early as the fourteenth century.¹⁰ Nor was this purely a local phenomenon. Indeed one finds injunctions to ban goats or to restrict the areas open to them for grazing in the official documents to survive from many areas in southern France.¹¹ Sometimes the problem was deemed to be so severe that only one goat per flock of sheep could be kept, as in Seyne in 1363¹² and references appear in the surviving village council deliberations in Cipières through succeeding centuries. In the seventeenth century, for example goat numbers were limited at first to five per family and gradually raised to nine by the end of the century as subsistence pressures increased through rising population.¹³ Most of the direct evidence of disapproval comes, however, from the total bans on goat keeping in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries both in Languedoc and Provence.¹⁴ The longest ban in Provence lasted for almost forty years, from the time of the court banning order on the 21 of January 1731.¹⁵ Evidence of such legislation can be found in the records of both state parliaments and village council minutes at intervals through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for both Mediterranean upland areas of France and further north in the pre-alps of Dauphine, Savoie and elsewhere.¹⁶

The question that one must ask is do these actions demonstrate a very early and persistent ecological awareness and sense of official environmental responsibility, or are there other forces at work? It is possible to relate these bans and restrictions on herd size to periods of population expansion both in the period before the Black Death in the fourteenth century and in the eighteenth century: precisely when one might expect the most serious ecological damage through population pressure. But were goats really so bad that they needed to be so comprehensively and universally banned when a tight restriction on numbers per family and on tethering, (tactics deployed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries),¹⁷ should surely have been sufficient? What at first appears as an entirely laudable, almost, response to environmental pressure becomes, on closer inspection an attitude with rather different over-tones. Indeed as Kolars¹⁸ and Forbes and Koster¹⁹ suggest the case against goats per se is nowhere as strong as it might appear.²⁰ In the first place, goats have been herded as an integrated part of the Mediterranean rural economy for over seven thousand years.²¹ Archaeological evidence yields no reliable indication that they were the cause of environmental deterioration. Kolars draws attention to the way in which, away from the coast, forest and goat management existed side by side in upland Turkey for at least 500 years without any appreciable degradation. Indeed Forbes²² has made a very good case for rejecting the goat as a major factor in removal of vegetation in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Both Kolars and Forbes point to the place of other demands made by populations on their vegetation resources. Timber and brushwood have been removed for centuries, first for building and then for heating. As the economy expanded, ship-building, charcoal-burning and lime production increased the range of these demands.²³ In fact the main agent of environmental destruction seems rather to have been the search for profit

rather than subsistence. It is here we come to a crux in the case that begins to develop in defence of the goat.

For the poorest in the rural populations of the Mediterranean region, the goat held the same position on the subsistence economy as the cow held in northern and Western Europe. It provided a measure of subsistence security. For the majority, who had no access to the forage or the shelter capacity necessary to maintain even a small flock of sheep, keeping a few goats, even when they were restricted to pastures on village wastelands at the margins or on otherwise unused roadside verges, was a considerable subsistence asset. Goats represented a source not only of meat, milk and high protein cheeses but also a wide range of other uses. These varied from the purely practical such as the safe transport of liquids (water, wine, oil) in their skins to the recreational and ceremonial uses of skins and horns for bagpipes and for drums and horns. For a subsistence pastoral economy in a dry upland environment, the food-tolerant goat may be seen as much more valuable than sheep and certainly than the demanding bovines. Indeed, as a recent NGO campaign testified, a goat represents the best possible investment for a poor family. For a very small outlay a goat could yield between fifteen and thirty per cent more value than a sheep. With no break in fertility after gestation, one pair can produce a hundred offspring in five years.²⁴ This is three times as many as for a pair of sheep and ten times more than cattle.²⁵ Moreover, goats are much better adapted to eating the woody forage of the margins of the used spaces of a community and need less to sustain life than either sheep or cattle. They are also able to eat almost anything and have the agility to cope with the most severe slopes. Here lay the root of the problem for the hapless animal. Goats were not only a cheap and valuable subsistence asset, they were also perfectly adjusted to ravage those parts of the environment most vulnerable to erosion.²⁶ This was perfectly well understood by a poor peasantry always trying to guarantee subsistence. When this perception was challenged by authorities seeking to improve woodland for maritime timber, or for hunting, bans and restrictions were introduced and peasants were more than willing to subvert laws which aimed to restrict numbers.²⁷

So just as the goat became crucial to the earliest subsistence economy of the Mediterranean, when the base of the mediaeval economy shifted towards the commercial production and trade in wool, the goat was increasingly marginalised. It remained above all an animal of the subsistence economy: popularly characterised 'the poor man's cow.'²⁸ On the other hand sheep became the creatures of emergent merchant capitalism. So the practice of grazing sheep and goats together was replaced by their separation into different flocks. As far as possible goats were restricted to those areas which could not sustain the best sheep pastures. But as both urban populations and commerce increased, the demands made upon the grazing environment also grew. The poor man's goat came increasingly in competition more directly with richer man's sheep. So the early restrictions on goat numbers were probably a manifestation of this

conflict rather than a deep concern for the environment. Throughout the long history of bans and relaxations of control, the clear line of conflict was between the goat-keeper, who persistently tried to avoid control and the increasingly differentiated flock masters and their sponsors, who competed with them for resources. Even if the restrictions were contravened the net effect was always to push the goat towards the more environmentally fragile land and in this way to make them even less popular with those in authority.

But having been restricted to the *maquis* and more marginal areas of woodland least suitable for sheep, the goat came into conflict with an even more formidable enemy. If the aristocracy shared in the profits of sheep farming, and supported the restrictions elicited by emergent commerce, their passion was for hunting. It was a focal part of a lifestyle of leisure. The habitats of game (deer, wild boar, stag, and partridge) were precisely those under threat from an increasing goat population. It is clearly possible to argue that the goat herder was caught in the pincers formed by emergent merchant capital on the one hand and feudal lifestyle and power on the other. Clearly as time went on commercial interests assumed increasing importance. Consequently, towards the end of the *ancien régime*, the restrictions of earlier periods were replaced by much more stringent banning orders. By this time of rising population and following centuries of environmental deterioration, the pleas for restoring the rights to pasture goats were much more specifically cast in terms of the relief of poverty.²⁹

We can now open the door on a more intriguing mystery: why did the virulent persecution of the goat provoke so very little in the way of peasant response, especially in the eighteenth century? The level of docility in the face of this supposedly severe threat to subsistence does not accord with experience of rural dissent in other areas of peasant Europe.³⁰ Perhaps it was because the very nature of goat keeping removed them from the eyes of the authorities? Goats were probably as invisible as smugglers to those who did not know the environments in which they lived. Where minor skirmishes between the forces of law and order and peasant goat-keepers have been reported the agile goats and their keepers seem to have found it fairly easy to avoid the penalties of confiscation and avoidances meant that enforcements took time and considerable effort if they were to be effective.³¹

Before the ban in 1730 in Cipières, the 3,500 goats were part of the subsistence economy in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. By the time of the troop occupations³² of the War of the Austrian Succession (1742–1747) they had disappeared. This was at a time of crisis that, together with a series of drought years (1739–1743), totally depleted the local rural economy and left the people to face three serious crises of subsistence, in 1747, 1750 and 1764.³³ As a product of this distress the goat ban was lifted in 1770, albeit after a careful survey and within strict limits of both numbers and in terms of designated grazing areas.³⁴ But it was not lifted as the result of violent protest, a confrontation with a desperate population following a post-war famine, which had removed

two whole generations of young children from the village population. It seems to have been the product of quiet diplomacy by literate council members (all goat owners) on behalf of poorer villagers. Fresh bans were introduced by local government in the 1820s, but raised again in 1838, after a similarly polite exchange in the village council.³⁵ The question we must ask is how did such draconian measures, which had such drastic effects on the life of the poorest, pass with so little response? This is remarkable enough in the uneasy last decades of the Ancien Régime, let alone after the Revolution.

In this paper I argue that an explanation for this phenomenon may best be sought by examining the attitudes that had developed in the previous four centuries or more. From this longer perspective what seems to be happening is an over-layering of deeply embedded attitudes and prejudices. Restrictions on goat numbers, it can be argued, were part of a well-established and perfectly well accepted rural frame of reference, aiming to preserve the crops and pastures. But those who would ban goats altogether in the eighteenth century and those who complied with such regulation, were responding to a new ethos. Do we see a clear manifestation of the Age of Reason and the command and control mechanisms of the emergent nation state? Although quite specific in his points of reference, my reading of Foucault suggests that the changes which took place in effectiveness of control through the institutions of an emergent bureaucracy depended on new attitudes towards reasonable behaviour.³⁶ He draws attention to the way that these new discourses were privileged through refinements of prohibition and the introduction of new virtues of orderliness and acceptability. Best known is his identification of the ways in which attitudes to curtailment and confinement changed as the mediaeval concepts of madness as 'non being' or 'bedazzlement' were replaced by the notion of 'unreasonable behaviour'. Within this new structure of meaning, the mad, the bad and the 'self inflicting' poor were all confined together in one institution. (The *Hôpital Général* founded in Paris in 1666). Foucault argues that it was through manipulation of such changes by the organs of the state that the exercise of power became much more effective in the eighteenth century.

What I am suggesting is that real insight into the behaviour of powerful interest groups, in the pre-industrial past as much as the modern period, can come from such an interpretation of the way in which first restriction and then prohibition could be accepted. I want to argue that such docility is made possible by the often-subliminal subversion of alternative views, the product not of a sudden change of emphasis but a much longer and persistent ideological subjection of the poorest elements of the rural population. But I also wish to extend this explanatory framework to serve a longer time period: to suggest that Foucault's epistemological cut-off point, dividing pre and post Enlightenment, is too harshly drawn. While admitting that extension of mechanisms of state power became much more pervasive in the Age of Reason, one might argue that compliance was an instrument of power relations well before the opening

of the *Hôpital Général*. The changing attitude to the goat may well have been in part a by-product of the raw psychological power of religious prejudice. In the periods before the Age of Reason the command and control mechanisms of cultural subversion were controlled by the Church.³⁷ In all its manifestations, the church drew on a subtle blend of fear and superstition to evolve powerful mechanisms of control over the majority. It consolidated its power through the violence of the prejudice it fuelled. First it was against Islam through the late mediaeval Crusades and then through the assault on protesting 'heresies' and 'blasphemies' of all kinds, from the Cathars and Waldensians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to the witch trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁸ The linking thread is the powerful manipulation of a sub-literate and ill-educated majority by a literate minority, which included a small religious elite. They used not so much the written word but a mix of iconography and rumour to engage compliance. If this argument is valid then nowhere is it better illustrated than in the case of the goat.

I would argue that an exploration of the subtle mix of myth, prejudice, fear and superstition which the more powerful had at their disposal in the case of the restrictions placed on goat keeping, takes one to some deep dark places of the collective cultural subconscious. Even from classical times the goat has occupied a curious place in our most basic perceptions. It is the way in which these perceptions were made manifest which allowed the goat and his keepers to be so easily marginalised. Endorsement of such policies came from a common acceptance of a set of mores that extended across all levels of society. The goat quickly came to represent beastliness in which the 'beast without' 'the dangerous other', quickly became 'the beast within'. From the earliest phase of our cultural heritage the goat, creature of mountain and forest, has been associated with fear of peripheries: woods and forests. For those who lived in the towns and villages of the lowlands, such areas were always dangerously 'other'.

In exploring the origins of what we might call the myth of 'goatism' it is possible to envisage two powerful re-enforcing cultural strands of polite disapproval: a Graeco-Roman cultist strand, and a Hebraic-Christian strand.³⁹ These strands fuse in the apostolic and patristic period because the gospel was born and developed within a world of Hellenistic thought and Roman power. This, I would suggest, fed through to the Renaissance and into modern times, both in polite and popular culture.

If the early pastoral nomads of the Greek peninsula saw the goat as a benign creature, for those who followed them, working in the cleared spaces to establish agricultural order, the world of woodlands and hills came to represent the terrifying alternative universe of the unpredictable. Poorer peasants, who inhabited such regions where goats were common, spoke strange languages, wore strange clothes, often made from goatskins, and had weird and eventually 'heretical' practices. Already marginalised in the mythology of a settled Greek agricultural population as a creature of the magical periphery, the goat became

a natural component of woodland Dionysian cults,⁴⁰ deified as the spirit of the mountains and woods. Even at this time it also came to be feared as a dangerous manifestation of male sexuality and unpredictability. For the lowland farmers and town dwellers the Beast and the Man were soon overlapping images, which were reflected in mythology and iconography. The wildest and most fearsome wood sprites in ancient Greece served the god Pan. It was the over-endowed Pan that represented the wildest and most sexually dangerous aspect of the dangers which lurked in the hills and forests spending much of his priapic time roaming the wildscape, consorting with satyrs (who were similarly inclined) seducing or raping nymphs and entertaining fauns. It is easy to see how even an innocent goat keeper in a skin jacket and carrying pan-pipes 'pan-icked' urban travelers already seeing mythological creatures behind every rock. Indeed, this basic separation between the earthy and sensual and the ethereal and intellectual is deeply embedded in Hellenistic thought particularly after Plato. The two overlapping images, once they had been reflected in the iconography of a culture, became very deeply rooted. There is wide ranging evidence that the Goat-Man-Beast-Devil was to persist, as a strand of associations to be taken through classical literature, repeated on endless pots, the subject of songs and charades in an image which survives to our own times. The place of the goat within the parallel Hebraic Christian cultural tradition of western civilisation complements the set of images referred to above. For the Jews and early Christians the goat was the repository of sin – the 'scapegoat' – a creature to be cast into outer darkness, a representative of evil to be divided from the lambs of God, and the Bible is rich in references to goats and their symbolic association with sinfulness

If the increasingly valuable wool economy could easily be linked with the rich Christian symbolism of the gentle shepherd and his safely grazing flock, it was different for the sinful goat. Given the many references to the dichotomy between the good sheep and the bad goat in both biblical testaments, the demonisation of the goat in western culture becomes less than surprising.⁴¹

Already identified with sin and the devil, fear and danger, in both cultural traditions, it was an easy incorporation. These powerful currents of ideology were reinforced by the natural suspicion which continued to develop between ways of life that increasingly divided, as settled agriculture marginalised the pastoral, turning it into a contrast between the 'good' open field and terraces near settlements with their 'fields full of folk' and the wild, forested and mountainous peripheries – places of danger anarchy, fear and evil.⁴² Put both of these strands of cultural awareness together and they were likely to fester in the dark corners of the collective soul. Even before the spin that was put on common prejudices by the Christian attitudes to sin, chastity and the development of heresies, the isolated grazing and foraging spaces of hills and woodlands could become the psychological black holes which represented the primitive, the lustful and the impure: a process by which two parallel literate discourses of the Hebraic

Christian and Graeco-Roman classical iconography were brought into service and aligned with a sub-literate culture of superstition and fear.

Within our own West European culture, the stories of evil and corruption attached to mountains and forests pass down to us as folklore and nursery stories. Many were written down quite early. Animals of the periphery became symbols of evil. The beast 'without' became the 'beast within'. The mixing of the two images became a powerful tool in the hands of those seeking out corruption and heresy. This was made easier because for the illiterate and superstitious rural populations, which were the subject of these restrictions on their subsistence, the tools of subjugation were iconographic and verbal rather than en-cripted. What emerges from the evidence is that the goat was a formidable iconographic weapon in the development of an ideology of command and control, which extended to the environments in which these animals grazed. The rest of this paper explores the justification for proposing an agenda, which identifies the goat as a powerful and persistent mechanism of subversion of the weak by the strong.

As public order increased in the nascent power structures of Western Europe, goats and their keepers were increasingly more likely to be seen as up to no good. Mountain areas, by their nature often close to borders, were nest-beds of contraband, anarchy and brigandage. So on their excursions to towns and into lowlands, mountain people were already identified as potential brigands, preying on lonely travellers and sexually assaulting urban women either in mind or in deed. Like their goats they were likely to be seen as smelly, bad-breathed, lying and cheating subversives. The specific associations remain buried. All that one can say is that for polite or even relatively polite elements in society, the Goat-Man-Beast-Satan could not have been in a position to develop a worse reputation. At the very lowest level of disapproval it is possible to produce a list of anthropomorphised unpleasantness which extends from lascivious (horny) sexual proclivities, unpleasant noise, halitosis, anarchic deviousness to serious charges of ecological degradation.

In such a discourse the goat becomes a powerful symbol. Such fears become explicit as the economy expands in the phase of population growth during the early feudal period. As population pressed closer to the margins of cultivation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, upland areas were further opened up for pastoralism and transhumance. The different behaviour of the anarchic pastoral groups which managed the increasingly large flocks and herds led to ever increasing apprehension among lowland or settled agricultural peoples.

The first recorded relationship between the devil and a man/goat dressed (or naturally covered) in animal hair dates from the period just before the Black Death. From this time the picture of Satan formed in the popular mind. Frequently, though admittedly not invariably the animal form he took was the goat. A population terrified by the traumas of the plagues and disasters of the fourteenth century and harassed by the Inquisition developed a paranoia, which

led eventually to the witchcraft purges of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here the goat became a crucial figure in manifestations. Like the cat, the goat is a creature of natural agility. It was easy to associate them with the behaviour of witches and their festivals, to which they flew through the air. So various forms of perversion associated with bestiality focused on this set of conjunctions between pastoralism, witchcraft and Satanism. It was an easy association in which the frequently anarchic lifestyles and heretical beliefs of shepherds were linked to the animals with whom strange people kept lonely company.

For a culturally powerful mediaeval priesthood, tortured by sexual repression, the whole context lay within the mind set in which maleness was all too easily seen as beastliness, the whole scene was too close to the dark world of the senses for comfort. It is not surprising that, fed by the prejudices and fears of both cultural streams, Satan was often perceived to take the shape of this the wildest of domestic animals in such a region. Attached to all the other roots of cultural disapproval the Judeo Christian iconography of the scapegoat represented similar murky and deep sexually dangerous relationships with the outer edge, the periphery, the unknown.

So by the mid fourteenth century when natural disasters of drought and flood culminating in the Black Death had a deep impact on powerful opinions, those in charge became all too willing to believe in the intervention of dark forces. When the great heresies of the Waldenesians and Cathar shepherds spread through the mountain peripheries of the Pyrenees and the Alps in the wake of the Black Death, they were signaled by the upsurge in witchcraft accusations which linked the fear of the unknown and the dangerous periphery with the whole psycho-sexual drama of fear and repression: of devil worship, the devil's kiss, of witches Sabbaths, of eating babies, of wild Dionysic orgies of dancing and depravity in secret woodland glades.

After the production of a kind of guidebook for the study of witchcraft for the literate minority *Malleus Malleficarum* in 1486 (running to fourteen reprints by 1520),⁴³ the great period of hysteria was unleashed. The witch hunting in Renaissance Europe extended over two centuries and resulted in the persecution and death of over perhaps 100,000 people many of them poor, old, or mentally ill widow women.⁴⁴ Indeed much of this fantasy was underpinned by the crude overtones of misogyny driven by fear of female sexuality and the cult of virginity.

The place of the goat in the symbolism of witchcraft was very well defined. If witches sometimes rode on rams they were much more often seen in the close company of the 'Bête Noire' and the association of goats with rampant sexuality and evil was a potent source of satanic imagery. It is here I make my major point. I would suggest that the continued presence of the goat in the developing iconography of evil created precisely the circumstances in which the medieval bans could be pursued. For most, the parade of bad qualities outlined above, re-enforced a deep seated if not overt association in the minds of poor goat

owners, with a rich tapestry of bad associations. The commercial implications of this prejudice were certainly convenient for those who would use the goat as a scapegoat for their own greedy appropriation of the product of the natural environment. At the very least, the comprehensive curtailments were validated by the whole portfolio of fears.

So in many respects it may be possible to position this animal as one of the clearest symbols of class division in preindustrial rural society. For the authorities and better off peasants the goat became a surrogate for the anarchic intemperance and strangeness of the upland poor, sharing their most dangerous or unpleasant attributes. In fact one might be hard put to distinguish some descriptions of the peasant poor from those of the goats they relied on. Both were renowned for their unpredictability and their deceitful deviousness. Both poor peasants and goats were dangerously numerous and therefore deemed to be sexually profligate and anarchic. At the margins of acceptable society, they were easily assumed to be in league with the devil. The opinion of goats in both popular as well as the official mind became, increasingly, directly related to one's position in the economic and social hierarchy. Even in the great age of classification in the nineteenth century goats remained difficult to place in emerging lexicons.⁴⁵

Cultural historians have been at pains to point out that there has often been a clear distinction to be made between the frames of reference of polite as opposed to popular culture. In the case of goats it would seem that there is an increasingly confused divide between polite, official views and popular opinion. If goats defined the divides, not only between lord and peasant but also between rich and poor in peasant society, the tensions the bans might have engendered were blurred by the subversive influence of cultural reputation, which reinforced the goatish, dark and threatening unpredictability of the periphery. These attitudes persist to this day and are still evident in cartoons, cinema and many cultural references.⁴⁶

So the goat has three separate images, the first as a provider of good things to poor people, the second as a ravager of land and crops, the third as a manifestation of unpleasant habits and behaviour both on their own account and as surrogates for those semi-savages who tended them. Out of the derogative aspects of the animal's place in mediaeval and Renaissance and early modern cosmology and mythology, it is primarily represented to all as the animal closest in nature to the Great Satan. How easy it became to ban the *bête noire*, framed for disapproval by a millennium of developing fear and distaste. Goat bans were, at the same time, a means of controlling the most anarchic elements of the population, a means to ease the path to commercial woollen enterprise and a means of improving timber supplies for the navy. Bans also better preserved the hunting grounds for hawk and hound. In such circumstances the poor man-beast, the Caliban of the periphery, stood no chance.

In more recent times the images have begun to shift. Goat numbers have increased around the world by sixty percent and even in high income countries by twenty percent.⁴⁷ Not only is the goat now seen as a provider for poor families in Africa but as a producer of specialist dairy products, part of the agro tourist industry in high-income countries.⁴⁸ An active International Goat Association, founded in 1982, promotes scholarship through the journal *Small Ruminant Research*.⁴⁹ Goat management is also beginning to be regarded as a part of a package of strategies for reducing fire risks in California.⁵⁰

Nonetheless, while this repositioning continues, recent calamities suggest that there is still a long way to go if the animal is to shed its deeply embedded images and goat farming is to become a fully integrated part of environmental management systems in all scrublands, and especially those close to areas of settlement.

NOTES

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¹ Segui 1946, 11.

² Estimates of this effect in the Bouche de Rhône in south-eastern France in 1972 indicated that thirty per cent of fires were deliberate. The rest are the product of negligence. See Houerou 1981, 487.

³ Pinto-Correia 1993.

⁴ Timbal 1969.

⁵ Naveh and Liebermann 1993; Rundel et al. 1997.

⁶ Lejaruen 1976, 44–55; Charlet and Lejaruen 1976; Naveh and Whittaker 1979; Naveh 1982, Etienne 1997; Di Castri et al. 1981, 327, 333.

⁷ Archives Communale de Cipières, hereinafter ACC.

⁸ Archives de Bouches de Rhone 1609 B1326, f225.

⁹ Duby 1968, 147; Sclafert 1959, 61.

¹⁰ Archives de Bouches de Rhône, Novembre 1334: 396 E17 and 18; Samaran 1957, 67.

¹¹ Sclafert 1934, 131 et seq.; Solakian 1988, 33–6.

¹² Archives Basses Alpes: E 64 bis

¹³ ACC: *Deliberations* 1657–1695 folio 37; ACC Del 1657 f.351; ACC Del 1671; ACC Del 1695.

¹⁴ Archives de Bouches de Rhône 1730 C287 *Inquete concernnant les chèvres*; Arret Prefectoriale de Provence 22.2. 1827; ACC: *Deliberations* 1827. The final ban was ‘absolu’! See ACC *Deliberations* 3.5. 1841 f.33.

¹⁵ Segui 1946. The state legislature of Languedoc banned goats in 1725.

¹⁶ Delano Smith 1979, 225–6; Bonnin 1984, 275.

- ¹⁷ Archives Basses Alpes E, 1484, Barcelonnette, 3 -5bis; Sclafert 1934, 132.
- ¹⁸ Kolars 1966.
- ¹⁹ Forbes and Koster 1976.
- ²⁰ A recent paper by Melinda Zeder of the American Museum of Natural History to the American Association for the Advancement of Science claimed that goats were domesticated well before sheep and confirmed the view that their bad reputation was not justified.
- ²¹ McNeill 1992; Boyazoglu et al. 2005.
- ²² Forbes 1982, 162–3, 165–6, 223–5, 298–302, 388–9.
- ²³ A similar point is made by Sclafert 1934, 134–5.
- ²⁴ One reason why goat populations expanded so rapidly after bans were lifted.
- ²⁵ Lejaruen 1976, 500–502.
- ²⁶ Barry 1960.
- ²⁷ Segui 1946.
- ²⁸ Delano Smith 1979, 225; Chevallier 1956, 309; Hatziminaoglou, and Boyazoglu 2004.
- ²⁹ Chevalier 1956, 305; ACC, Del. 1769; Sclafert 1934, 134–5.
- ³⁰ Hobsbawm 1959; 1969; King 1975.
- ³¹ Segui 1946, 31.
- ³² ACC Armée, 1742–1747. Cipières catered for a total of 22,000 troops from six different armies during this period.
- ³³ ACC Vital Event registers 1692–1772; Siddle 1996.
- ³⁴ ACC Del 1769.
- ³⁵ ACC Del 1838.
- ³⁶ Foucault 1965.
- ³⁷ Cragg 1961.
- ³⁸ Trevor-Roper 1969; Cohn 1972; Kors and Peters 1972.
- ³⁹ Kolars, 1966.
- ⁴⁰ Stanislawski 1975; Gerschen 2005.
- ⁴¹ Schwager 1987. There are 150 Old Testament references to goats: 13% are concerned with sinfulness, and the use of a sacrificial scapegoat for carrying human sin into the wilderness. See, for example Leviticus, Chapter 16, verse 9 ('and Aaron shall lay both hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and send him away into the wilderness'). The New Testament is equally clear on this point. Though it may not be easy to tell them apart from a distance, Jesus, the Lamb of God, leaves us in no doubt as to the symbolic difference between sheep and goats.
- ⁴² Fuller in Cosgrove and Daniels, 22–3; Cooper 1992; Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1982, 237–8.
- ⁴³ Sprenger and Kramer 1968 edn. This was the work of two Dominican inquisitors, Jacobus Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer. But there were other similar works by Lutheran divines.
- ⁴⁴ Trevor-Roper 1969, 88; Levack 1987; Russell 1972, 182, 185, 237, 243, 245, 247, 255; Russell 1977, 20, 72, 127, 215.

⁴⁵ Ritvo 1997, 58. She refers to the ‘barbarous assemblage of names, as if to describe all the mongrels in creation’, with which the Zoological Society of London labelled a single wild goat in 1830.

⁴⁶ In 1995 the *Oxford Book of Creatures* describes the animal like this: ‘the goat with amber devious eye, the blasé lecher, inquisitive as sin, the nothing-like-him goat ...’ Adcock and Simms 1995, 363.

⁴⁷ Morand Fehr et al. 2004.

⁴⁸ Dubeuf et al. 2004

⁴⁹ Sinapis et al. 2000; Boyazoglu and Morand Fehr 2001; Boyazoglu 2005.

⁵⁰ Woods 2006.

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