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TRANSFORMING THE LEGENDARY IMAGE OF THE LEGISLATOR AS PROMOTER OF NON-VIOLATION OF ANIMAL LIFE: A SHARED PREMISE IN PLUTARCH'S *MORALIA* AND PORPHYRY'S *DE ABSTINENTIA*¹

ABSTRACT: Gamlath Isha, *Transforming the Legendary Image of the Legislator as Promoter of Non-violation of Animal Life: a Shared Premise in Plutarch's Moralia and Porphyry's De Abstinencia*

Legislation was a component that characterized the link between civic and religious authority throughout the Archaic period to the early Roman Empire. Legislation is much celebrated in the respective philosophical cultures of Plutarch and Porphyry: in the former, the image of the ideal ruler reflects the notion of a philosopher-king, while in the latter, it was attached with significance to life lived under the divine law of the Intellect of Kronos. This article will demonstrate how Plutarch and Porphyry jointly acknowledge the legislator's legendary image as more than mediating between hostile factions of the citizen body and regulating divine worship and ritual praxis, often on the basis of his political expertise and divine ancestry by casting it in a fresh mold. In doing so, Plutarch and Porphyry together claim that the legislator's legendary image plays a decisively corrective role in ancient society by way of introducing the non-violation of animal life for food and sacrifice. This corrective role will be discussed as being pivotal for the intellectual pursuit of the priestly community and philosophers in selected dialogues in Plutarch's *Moralia* and Porphyry's *De Abstinencia*.

Keywords: Plutarch; Porphyry; legislator; non-violation of animal life; priests; philosophers

LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS IN MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATIONS

The first part of the article draws on the historical description of legislation in Mediterranean cultures and in Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. The second part will assess the manner in which the joint efforts of Plutarch and Porphyry transcend this description when they attribute non-violation of animal life to the image of the legendary legislator.

In most Mediterranean cultures in antiquity, legislation often revolved around the personality of a 'divine king,' if not 'divinized kingship,' the nature

¹I dedicate this article to my dearly beloved mother, Mrs. P. Gamlath, role model and sole inspiration in my life.

of which ensured continued fertility and prosperity for the community. The ideological and cultic perspective of the divine king has been the focus of many studies devoted to the ancient Near East (Holkeskamp 1992; Hagedorn 2017; Harris 2015; Szegedy-Maszak 1978). Most primitive communities in the ancient Mediterranean were ruled not by laws in the traditional sense of the word, but more emphatically by customs which were meant to be rules for specific groups like priestly communities and philosophers. Where rules were concerned, there were several levels of authority, each one with its own distinct legal basis and own distinctive methods of enforcement – on the *polis* level and otherwise (Harris 2015: 58). Such rules do qualify as laws provided that the priesthood has jurisdiction over a cult of the city (Harris 2015: 55). Laws marked the transition from a pre-political to a political way of life, and eventually, legislation (Koulakiotis 2008: 403–424). Laws may even signify enforcing a code of laws on the community to dismiss extravagance, political competition or even to restore ancient virtues (Koulakiotis 2008: 10–411). Codification of laws (*nomos*) consisted mainly of religious concerns such as purity of a sanctuary or a priesthood, which was well known as a *hieros nomos*, a ritual norm (Hagedorn 2017: 145). Such a code of laws was held to be unchanging and unchangeable (Hagedorn 2017: 125).

Legislation in the Archaic and Classical periods characterized the link between civic and religious authority and it was often aimed at specific social groups – such as priestly clans – while also the community at large.² The image of the ancient legislator surpasses or is on par with customary powers vested in ancient society on priesthoods and theologians.³

Many Greek states in the Archaic period were disposed to ascribe their legal code to a single ancient lawgiver. ‘Rules of behavior,’ which were attributed to the legislator, are suggestive of *nomos* (‘custom’) and *thesmia* (‘ancestral ordinances’). These included correct dealings with others, including the gods. By introducing written laws, primitive lawgivers attempted to resolve conflicts, while rules were designed to regulate ancient traditions (Gagarin 1986: 110).

The legislator was invariably described as being exceptionally virtuous (Szegedy-Maszak 1978: 202). Often regarded as truly wise and just, the legislator was often chosen to take care of political conflict and social strife so as to restore law and order and to establish *eunomia* in the *polis* community.

²This includes the *genes*, families that held religious privileges such as priesthoods of public cults or the *phratries*, which united several families around the worship of Zeus Phratrios and Athena Phratris as also those in charge of maintaining the ritual implications of the religious calendar.

³A line of thought related to legislation appears in the description of the Muses, who are in traditional Greek literature patrons of art and whose instructions are central for the cultivation of character (Plato, *Republic*, 2.376e; *Phaedrus*, 259b-d; *Cratylus*, 406a; *Laws*, 2,653d; 664–665b).

(Holkeskamp 1992: 87). However, the legislator is not always represented in a favorable light.⁴

THE LEGISLATOR'S RULES ON VIOLATION AND NON-VIOLATION OF LIFE

Laws ascribed to the legislators were consistent with the social and economic characteristics of their respective cities (Szegegy-Maszak 1978: 200). Around the 7th century BCE, rules on limiting violence to human beings, such as homicide rules on types of manslaughter, were attributed to such legislators as Draco (Thür 2014). Trials for bloodshed were held in a sanctuary, while the legislator, or even perhaps prominent priesthoods, were responsible for a wholesale ritual purification of the city, as in the civic festival of Thargelia (Bonnechere 2013: 367). Rules were imposed on worshippers of the Syrian goddess Atargatis as a ban on fish (Athenaeus, 346d-e). In the late Roman Republic, sumptuary laws were introduced for limiting extravagant food consumption. The *lex Licinia* were limited the acceptable weights of especially meat and fish, while *lex Aemilia sumptuaria* prohibited the consumption of stuffed dormice, mussels and wild birds (Gruen 1990: 171). Rules extended on the basis of some form of non-injury or limitation of non-injury to vegetation as well (Hyde 1917: Part 1, 152–175; 1917: Part 11, 285–303).

LEGISLATION IN MIDDLE PLATONISM AND NEOPLATONISM

The conception of legislation as ‘ideal ruler’ and as ‘philosopher-king’ was familiar in Middle Platonism and particularly in Plutarch (Dillon 1996: 198). Plutarch’s depiction of the role of ‘political animal’ and ‘teacher of philosophy and political duties’ transmits the image of the Platonic idea of a philosopher-king (Swain 1989: 272–302). The roles of the politician and philosopher, for Plutarch, are equally inspiring. Political legislation agrees with the arrangement of the Artisan or the Father (*De Fato*, 9.573 d-e), who induces citizens to seek for their own faults (9.573 e-f) and whose offspring or emanations of divine wisdom are allotted individual duties (9.574 b).

In Neoplatonism, the law of the legislator aims at the pursuit of specific virtues that lead to heaven (Digeser 2006: 80). As there is a strong interest in the nature of ideal rulers in Neoplatonism, most Neoplatonists more or less held the

⁴Plutarch writes that Alcibiades enjoys collecting money, committing excess of drunkenness and revelry with courtesans (*Life of Alcibiades*, 36.212a-b). Cimon is described as having committed incest with his sister (*Cimon*, 4.481c-d).

view that the ideal society would follow of necessity from the rule of an ideal ruler. This Neoplatonist vision of law has been noted chiefly as a divinizing agent for human communities and individual souls (Digeser 2006: 68–9). For Porphyry (as well as for Plotinus), legislation was a component for regulating divine worship, while it also seems to be characteristic of the best regime (Digeser 2006: 70).

PLUTARCH AND PORPHYRY ON NON-VIOLATION OF ANIMAL LIFE

Both Plutarch and Porphyry agree that the human community at present is bereft of the primal innocence which existed in the myth of the Golden Age and pre-historic Greece. They are aware that the ancients possessed an exceptional degree of virtue for they did not for whatever reason destroy animal life.

Porphyry draws from Dicaearchus the Peripatetic:

‘Expounding the ancient way of life of Greece, he says that the ancients were born close to the gods: they were best in nature and lived the best kind of life, so as to be reckoned a race of gold in comparison with those of the present day who are made from base and valueless matter; and they killed no animate being.’ (*De Abstinencia*, 4.2.1).

Plutarch writes in a similar manner:

‘What wonder if, contrary to nature, we made use of the flesh of beasts when even mud was eaten and the bark of trees devoured, and to light on sprouting grass or the root of a rush was a piece of luck? When we had tasted and eaten acorns we danced for joy around some oak, calling it “life-giving” and “mother” and “nurse.” This was the only festival that those times had discovered; all else was a medley of anguish and gloom.’ (*De Esu*. 2.993e-994f).

Plutarch laments the transformation from previously ‘lawful desires’ when men depended on vegetable produce to ‘unnatural and anti-social pleasures.’ (*De Esu Carnium*, 1.993d-e). Such ‘desires,’ says Plutarch, are not in tune with human nature (*De Esu Carnium*, 1.5.995 a-b; b-c; 1.6.995 d-e; e-f; 7.996a-b). Further, ‘he who tortures a living creature is no worse than he who slaughters it outright’ (1.7.996 b-c). Plutarch dismisses the mythical crimes of cannibalism (1.7.996 b-c; 2.2.997 e-f). But he accepts the program initiated by Pythagoras and the Pythagorean Empedocles, whose precepts were ‘law’ for the ancient Greeks (2.3.998f; 4.999a). Plutarch is more concerned with who exactly was responsible for this drastic social transition. It was the tyrants who began by killing the ‘worst of sycophants’ like Niceratus, Theramena, Polemarchus which gradually cleared ground to kill wild and harmful animals like bird and fish and expanded to the “laboring ox, well-behaved sheep and house-warding cock”, the reason for which was entertainment of guests, celebration of marriage, consorts with friends and war’ (2.4.998 b-c; c-d).

Both Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 1.2.993 d-e) and Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 3.26.12) agree that the ancient mode of living changes into one with exploitation of animal life, despite an abundance of vegetable production. Their reasons for this exploitation of animal life are similar. Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 2.10.1-2) and Plutarch (*Isis et Osiris*, 31.363 b) agree that the chief reason was sacrifice. Another reason for exploiting animal life was labor. This too is shared by Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 2.25.4) and Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 4.998 b-c). Yet another reason was entertainment, as affirmed by Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 2.25.5), and so too does Plutarch (*Bruta Animalia Ratione Uti*, 8.991d-9.991f, *De Esu Carnium*, 1.993 f-994b).⁵

Both philosophers share similar views regarding the need to exclude the common Greek practice of consuming animals. This is clarified in Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 2.5.1) and Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 1.2.984f; 1.1.3.993b-6.995f). Porphyry explains that it is wrong that men consume the flesh of tame animals (*De Abstinencia*, 3.12.5) and so does Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 2.3.994b-c). Porphyry is aware of the unsuitability of a meat diet for human health (*De Abstinencia*, 1.5.1), as is Plutarch (*De Tuenda Praecepta*, 4.123 e-f; 7.125 d-e; 7.126f; *De Esu Carnium*, 1.5.995b; 1.6.995e-f). Within their reference to the exploitation of animal life, when the occasion arose, both philosophers shared similar opinions among which are necessity, hunger, scarcity of food or vegetable production, as is noticeable in Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 1.5.3) and Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 1.4.994e-f; 2.1.9944-997a). The reasons, as described by Porphyry, may also be pestilence and war (*De Abstinencia*, 2.12.1; 2.57.1-3), with which Plutarch concurs (*De Esu Carnium*, 4.998b-c). The practice of destroying dangerous animals is not prohibited in Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 1.11.5) and Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 1.993f-994b), while killing animals in cases of necessity is not banned entirely in Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 2.12.1) and Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 2.997b-c). Plutarch, in particular, denies the exploitation of animal life on account of the human desire for luxury and variation of appetite (*De Esu Carnium*, 2.997b-c; c-d), cruelty (1.997e-f) and gluttony (1.997f).

THE LEGISLATOR'S CONCERN FOR HUMAN LIFE: REVIVAL OF THE ANCIENT MODE OF LIFE

They claim that just as much as the revival of such primal innocence, the legislator's image characterizes, more emphatically, the promotion of non-violation of life.

⁵The culmination of change is similar to the promotion of incest (*Vice and Virtue*, 2.101b; *De Esu Carnium*, 2.2.997b-c; *De Tuenda Praecepta*, 5.124f-125b; 6.126e; 7.125 c-d).

Early legislators are portrayed in Plutarch and Porphyry as specifically concerned with improving human life. Plutarch describes Solon as a ‘lover of wisdom’ (*Life of Solon*, 2.79b; 2.80b), who adopts the middle path and sound constitutional reforms (14.86; 15.87). Lycurgus creates favorable living conditions among humankind and in doing so, aims at establishing brotherhood between all Laconians (*Life of Lycurgus*, 1.8.44; 1.9.45; 1.8.44; 1.1.10). Lycurgus declared fish and flesh as relishes, endorsed black broth with no meat and demanded the sacrifice of first fruits (12.45). He also called for removing the sacrifice of ox at burials (21.90). He introduced Communal Meals (24.92) as well as an equal way of living (16.88; 17.88; 18.88; 19.89). Porphyry describes that Draco demanded the offering of first fruits and cakes (*De Abstinencia*, 4.22.7), while Triptolemos instructed people to abstain from animals and offer bloodless sacrifice (4.22.3).

Porphyry explores the subject of the legislator further. The legislator ‘excels in wisdom,’ (*De Abstinencia*, 1.8.2); the legislator ‘considered human life in community and people’s dealings with each other’ and ‘declared that the slaughter of a human being is sacrilege, and imposed exceptional penalties’ (1.7.1). The legislators:

‘Did not exclude even unintentional homicide from any punishment, so as not to concede any excuse to those who intentionally choose to imitate the deeds of those who act unintentionally, and also to prevent many genuinely unintended killings happening through negligence or inattention’ (1.9.1).

Most importantly, legislators promoted rules for specific groups in ancient society:

‘Even in civic life, lawgivers have established different requirements for laypeople and for priests; in some matters they have made concessions to ordinary people in relation to food and to lifestyle generally, but have forbidden priests to do the same, imposing death or other heavy penalties.’ (2.3.2.).

Among these rules of the legislator what stands out is the rule of non-violation of animal life:

‘So, wanting to make life civilized, he tried to preserve those animals which live with humans and those that are the most tame; unless, indeed, having ordained that the gods should be honored with fruits, he thought this kind of honor would last longer if there were no animal sacrifices to the gods.’ (4.22.4).

INTRODUCTION OF FRUGALITY

The legislator, explains Porphyry, encourages frugality as part of his non-luxury program (*De Abstinencia*, 4.3.3), as does Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*,

2.4.998b-c; 2.2.997d-e). The legislator's imposition of rules for the minimum use of meat was a form of widespread diffusion of frugality in Laconia (*De Abstinencia*, 4.3.1). Plutarch notes the same (*De Esu Carnium*, 2.997c-d). The welfare of mankind takes the upper hand in the legislator's program with the promotion of agriculture. This is praised by both Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 4.3.1) and Plutarch (*Septem Sapientia*, 15.138 e-f; 14.138 e-f). Lycurgus, for example, introduces communal meals (*De Abstinencia*, 4.3-4), as does Cimon (Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, 1.10.46). Lycurgus establishes the minimization of property, prompting a sort of brotherhood among the Spartans, which is also stated by Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 4.3) and Plutarch (*Life of Lycurgus*, 1.8.44; 1.1.10).

The legislator's non-luxury program exemplifies the manner in which frugality was imposed. This, explains Porphyry, includes the reduction of luxury (silver tables, purple rugs, gilded couches, precious stones (*De Abstinencia*, 4.3-5). Plutarch observes the same (*De Esu Carnium*, 2.997c-d). The idea that the program includes a widespread diffusion of peace is shared by Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 4.5-6) and Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 2.2.997c-d; d-e).

The notion that the legislator's non-luxury program extends to the elimination of cruelty from the human community is another shared premise in Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 1.7.1; 1.9.1) and Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 2.4.998 b-c; *De Tuenda Praecepta*, 7.125f-126b). The program encourages frugality, a point perceived by both Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 3.1) and Plutarch (*De Esu Carnium*, 2.2.997d-e). That the program aims at the promotion of agriculture is commented on by Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 3.2) and Plutarch (*Septem Sapientia*, 15.138 e-f; 14.138e-f). Porphyry is confident that the legislator is ultimately responsible for eliminating issues pertaining to human safety from both evil men and animals:

'In attempting to do this, they brought in the legislation which is still in force among cities and peoples, and the masses followed them voluntarily because they were already more aware of the advantage to be had in assembling together. Ruthless killing of all harmful creatures, and protection of everything which was useful for destroying them, worked together to provide absence of fear. So it was reasonable to forbid the killing of the latter but not prevent the killing of the former.' (*De Abstinencia*, 1.11. 1-2).

Here, Porphyry is exposed to Plutarch's representation of the legislator (4.3-5). This exposure reveals that the legislator's rule on consumption of meat for the general public is meant to be to the smallest possible degree (4.3.1). The legislator adopts a way of living labeled as the 'ancient mode' and draws from 'ancient teachings' (1.1.2; 2.5.1; 1.2. 2.1). He imposes these as rules for priestly clans (2.3.2; 4.16.2; 4.18.9-10). These priestly clans are Greek, such as prophets of Jupiter in Crete (4.19.1) and non-Greek, such as the Egyptian (4.6.1-7), Brahmins (4.17.4) and Sameaneans (4.17. 8), Essenes (4.13.5) and the Persian Magi (4.16.2).

However, the rule on non-violation of animal life, is specifically aimed at the philosopher (3.1; 4.18.7-8). As the ‘priest of the Father,’ the philosopher submits to a way of living promoted by the legislator. He worships with a ‘pure intellect’ and a ‘passive soul,’ all of which are allusions to the ‘best’ sacrifice (2.61.1).

RULE OF PURITY

In Plutarch’s estimation, the rule of purity imposed by the legislator on the priestly community is a pertinent medium for accomplishing divination, a ‘divine discipline’ (*De Defectu Oraculorum*, 413d). Divination is favorable for the philosopher’s acquisition of wisdom. Its proper accomplishment depends on the removal of wickedness, on which a taboo was imposed during the Pythian Games (438c8-d5). Daemons dispense divine wisdom, while their material disposition provides access to the acquisition of non-intellectual modes of knowledge (418d; 419b-e; 419e5-420a5; 421a5-e10). The most perfect inspiration is obtainable provided that all preparatory requirements are fulfilled (438a3-8).

Plutarch emphasizes the purity of the priestess, who consults the oracles:

‘It is for these reasons that they guard the chastity of the priestess and keep her life free from all association and contact with strangers and take the omens before the oracle, thinking that it is clear to the god when she has the temperament and disposition suitable to submit to the inspiration without harm to herself’ (438c2-8).

Those who wish to consult oracles and receive prophecy ought to maintain purity (438a3-8; 438a-c; 438c2-8). For those who maintain such purity, the ‘prophetic current and breath is most divine and holy’ (432d11-e3; 436e11-f3; 436f6-437a5). The body needs to be ‘cleansed of all impurities and attains a temperament adapted to this end, a temperament through which the reasoning and thinking faculty of the souls is relaxed and released from their present state as they range amid the irrational and imaginative realms of the future’ (432c4-9).

Porphyry comments on the conception of ritual purity, that is, abstinence from pollution of the consumption of meat and blood sacrifice. Such purity is practiced by sorcerers, as they do ‘abstain for a little from impure foods’ (*De Abstinencia*, 2.45.3). Such purity is, on some occasions, maintained by ‘some of those who study philosophy’ who are deceived by daemons (2.40.5).⁶ Such purity, however, is specifically allocated for ‘godly men’, since ‘holiness, both internal and external, belongs to a godly man’ (2.45.4). After all:

⁶Porphyry’s division of daemons as good and bad (*De Abstinencia*, 2.38-42) corresponds to Plutarch’s description of daemons: Daemons display degrees of excellence (*De Defectu*, 417 b6-417a; 1417d9-10) and as certain types of souls (*De Facie*, 944d-e).

‘Holiness is not for sorcerers, but for godly men who are wise about the gods, and it brings as a guard on all sides, for those who practice it, their appropriation to the divine’ (2.45.2).

Purity, for both Porphyry and Plutarch, is foundational for intellectual pursuits. The legislator’s division of rules for the priests and philosophers, in the form of a ban on violation of animal life, aims at cultivating the ideal of purity. Plutarch further reserves purity for Egyptian priests, whose endeavor is the acquisition of ‘truth’ and since they ‘speak the truth about the gods in longing for the divine’ (*Isis et Osiris*, 5.1.351 e-f; 1.1.351d-e; 1.2.351e-f). The holy living of Egyptian priests rests on a strict regime of abstinence with rules on diet (2.351f-352a). The regime extends further.⁷ Their love of frugality is far above the range of the average human being (5.4.354 b-c). Initiates of Isis practice frugality along with abstinence (*Isis et Osiris*, 2.2.352 f-353b). But the lifestyle of Egyptian priests extends further. Their way of life was literally a strict regime (4.79.383b-c), so the outcome is nothing but an unblemished carrier (4.79.383b-c). Their mode of life was appreciated when ‘kings were appointed from the priests or from the military class since the military class had eminence and honor because of valor and the priests because of wisdom’ (5.9.354 c-d). The wisest of the Greeks consort with them, as did Lyncurgus, Solon, Eudoxus and especially Pythagoras (1.10.354 e-f). Holy living restricts the use of wine, on which a ban was imposed when they are not studying, learning and teaching (5.6.353 b-c).⁸ Porphyry writes of the Egyptian priests, whose lifestyle was ‘frugal and simple’ (4.6.8) and who abstained from all fish and from quadrupeds that have solid hooves or hooves with fissures or have no horns, and from all birds that eat flesh’ (4.7.1).

Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 4.7.2-4) and Plutarch (*Isis et Osiris*, 5.4.352 d-e) refer to the rules of legislator for the priestly community. Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, 4.7.4) and Plutarch (*Isis et Osiris*, 5.7.353e-8.354b-c; 5.8.354f) agree that the legislator’s imposition of rules for the priestly community in respect of food consists of a taboo on fish, birds, female oxen, twin male oxen, turtle and eggs. Egyptian priests abstain from certain types of food. Plutarch specifies that Egyptian priests abstain from mutton and pork (1.5.353a-b; 5.4.352f-353e; 5.7.353e-8.354f) and from the use of sheep both meat and wool

⁷This includes: avoidance of lusts of flesh and love of pleasure (*Isis et Osiris*, 1.3.352 c-d), shaving heads, wearing linen garments, use of straw beds, frugal living and common food (1.8.354 b-c).

⁸Elsewhere, Plutarch’s argument of the use of wine is applicable for general use (‘the most beneficial of beverages, the pleasantest of medicines and the least cloying of appetizing things provided that there is a happy combination of it with the occasion as well as with water’ (*De Tuenda Sanitate*, 19.132b-c). Among Spartans, there is moderation in drinking wine (*Inst. Laco.* 237). In the past, breakfast was bread dipped in undiluted wine (*Quest. Conviv.* 8.6,726c), while teetotalism was considered suspicious (1.4.2). There should be control in the use of alcohol (1.4.620e-621b). Purity prohibits childbearing, laughter, wine and many other things worthy of zeal (*Quaest. Conviv.* 5.10.684-885).

(5.3.352 c-4.352d). Priests of Jupiter do not touch raw flesh (*Roman Questions*, 5.110.289f-290b). They avoid meat of dog and goat (5.111.290b) nor do they even touch ivy (5.112; 290f-291b). Priests of Poseidon abstain from seafood, of Hera in Argos from fish, of Aphrodite from slaughter of fish and initiates of Eleusis from sea mullet (*De Sollertia*, 35.983e-f). These priests avoid certain types of food on special occasions, such as abstention from sea fish (syene, oxyrhynchus (with the exception of the people of Cynopolis (4.72.380b-c). Those who practice holy living abstain even from legumes (5.95.286e).

The efforts of Plutarch, in selected dialogues in *Moralia*, and Porphyry in *De Abstinentia* in transforming the pre-existing image of the legendary legislator, are indeed, commendable. The legendary legislator's characterization of political expertise and divine ancestry is cast in an innovative mold as a promoter of non-violation of animal life and as a corrective incentive for fulfilling the intellectual goals of the priestly community and the ascetic philosopher.

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TRANSFORMING THE LEGENDARY IMAGE OF THE LEGISLATOR
AS PROMOTER OF NON-VIOLATION OF ANIMAL LIFE: A SHARE PREMISE
IN PLUTARCH'S *MORALIA* AND PORPHYRY'S *DE ABSTINENTIA*

Summary

Plutarch and Porphyry take into account the theme of legislation, which in most Mediterranean cultures in antiquity reflects authority and which in their respective philosophical cultures, Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism, embodies a strong outlook of an ideal ruler, whose role is devoted to the advancement of the intellectual community. Plutarch, in selected dialogues in *Moralia*, and Porphyry in *De Abstinencia* both cast the legislator's legendary role in a fresh mold – the former as one who introduces the non-violation of animal life specifically for the intellectual pursuit of the priestly community, and the latter in addition to this, the ascetic philosopher. In doing so, Plutarch and Porphyry seem to be claiming a specific identity for themselves.