

Key Debates 7

Can non-human animal sacrifices serve as human substitutes to expiate human failings?



Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) by Francisco de Zurbarán (1635-40), in the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

<http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/agnus-dei-the-lamb-of-god/>



William Holman Hunt, *The Scapegoat*, 1854-55

33.7 x 45.9 cm

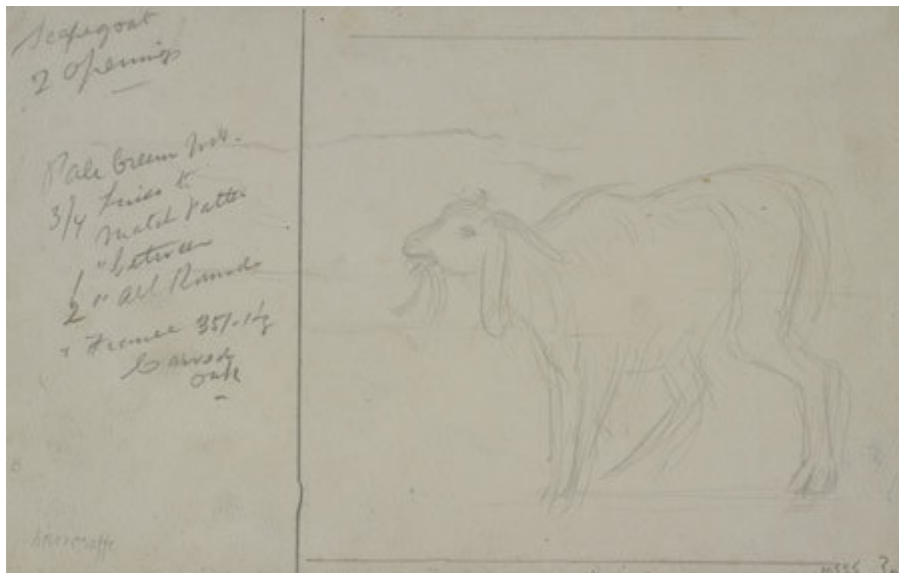
1906.2, Manchester Art Gallery

This painting is a preliminary study for *The Scapegoat*. Hunt did not include the rainbow, an image of hope and salvation in Christianity, in the final version.

Two of William Holman Hunt's preparatory sketches, drawn in about November 1854, for *The Scapegoat* are in the National Museums Liverpool. The drawings are of the white goat he took to the Dead Sea. It died, and he finished the painting using a brown goat as a model in Jerusalem.

<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever/exhibitions/drawings/studies/goat.asp>

WAG 10536 (top) and WAG 10535 (bottom)





William Holman Hunt, The Scapegoat, 1854-55.

87 cm x 139.8 cm

18 WHH 54, Port Sunlight, Lady Lever Art Gallery

<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/online/pre-raphaelites/scapegoat/>

Hunt went to the southern end of the Dead Sea in an area known in Arabic as Kharbet Usdum, which Hunt called 'Oosdoom', to paint the picture. The goat he took died and he went back to Jerusalem to paint another goat.

Hunt wrote to a fellow Pre-Raphaelite, Millais:

My notion is to represent this accursed animal with the mark of the priest's hands on his head, and a scarlet ribbon which was tied to him, escaped in horror and frightened to the plain of the Dead Sea, and in a death threat turning away from the bitterness of this sea of sin. If I can contend with the difficulties and finish the picture at Oosdoom it cannot fail to be interesting, if only as a representation of one of the most remarkable spots in the world – and I am sanguine that it may be further a means of lending any reflecting Jews to see a

reference to the Messiah, as he was, and not as they understand – a temporal King (cited in Boime 2002: 107).

The frame is inscribed:

‘Surely he hath borne our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows/Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of GOD, and afflicted’ (Isaiah LIII, 4)

‘And the Goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a Land not inhabited’ (Leviticus XVI, 22)