

BESTIARIA

LIBER MONSTRORUM DE DIVERSIS GENERIBUS

The *Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus* (henceforth *LM*) is an anonymous teratological anthology dealing with around 120 *monstra* and *mirabilia*, whether extant in nature or attested in myth and literature¹. Hardly to be pigeonholed within a definite genre², the *LM* has perhaps been best described as «the rather subtle and sophisticated work of a learned author who drew on and cunningly manipulated a number of disparate texts to offer a cogent (if uncomfortable) view of the monstrous»³.

The corrupt state of the manuscript tradition has not allowed to reconstruct the full extent of the original text with any precision⁴. In the most comprehensive witness (A)⁵, the *LM* consists of a general Prologue and three books: the first is devoted to anthropomorphic monstrosities (*De monstis [quae] leuiore discretu ab humano genere distant*); the second to zoomorphic ones, both terrestrial and marine (*De beluis*); finally, the third to serpentine ones (*De serpentibus*). Book I is the longest and, apparently, the most popular of the three, since it is preserved in all of the six surviving manuscript witnesses, whereas Books II and III are not only progressively shorter but also less frequently attested, with Book II being preserved in four manuscripts and Book III in just one; finally, the general Prologue is attested in only two manuscripts⁶. Thus, we may wonder with

1. [CPL 1124 and BCLL 1310]. For an introduction to the *LM*, cfr. M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, I, München 1911, pp. 114-8; J. B. Friedman, *Liber Monstrorum (Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus)*, in *Trade, Travel, and Exploration in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, curr. J. B. Friedman - K. Mossler, New York (NY) 2000 (Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 1899. Routledge Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages, 5), pp. 341-2; A. P. M. Orchard, *Liber Monstrorum*, in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, curr. M. Lapidge - J. Blair - S. Keynes - D. G. Scragg, 2nd ed., Oxford 2014 (henceforth *BEASE*), p. 290.

2. The *LM* «defies easy categorisation, being neither scientific survey nor well-ordered catalogue nor theological observation»: A. P. M. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript*, 2nd ed., Toronto 2003, p. 87. Porsia considers the *LM* «un'operetta che partecipa della natura del bestiaro, della silloge di mitografia, della raccolta di *mirabilia*»: *Liber monstrorum (secolo IX). Introduzione, edizione critica, traduzione, note e commento*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. into Italian F. Porsia, Napoli 2012 (Nuovo Medioevo, 88) (henceforth *Liber monstrorum*²), p. 33.

3. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 87. For a résumé of the contents of the *LM*, cfr. L. G. Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf*, «Mediaeval Studies», 36 (1974), pp. 434-71, at pp. 435-40.

4. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 55-7.

5. Cfr. below, p. 70.

6. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 52-5.

Andy Orchard whether the original core of the *LM* consisted of a catalogue of human-shaped monsters (corresponding to Book I), to which the material which now makes up Books II and III was eventually added, or, conversely, whether the text did originally consist of the general Prologue and the three books, which eventually underwent a series of omissions in the course of the manuscript tradition⁷.

Indeed, the extant witnesses bear evidence to both interpolations and omissions, which is not surprising given the compilatory character of a text such as the *LM*⁸. Furthermore, the *LM* relied on sources widely spread and readily available in early medieval libraries; thus, scribes could have had the chance to collate their antigraphs with the relevant source-texts⁹. However, if the exact scope of the original text remains somewhat elusive, there is general agreement as to the tripartite structure of the *LM*, which has been maintained by successive editors¹⁰. In turn, the three books arguably share a tripartite internal design. In fact, this is attested only in Book I, consisting of a prologue, fifty-six entries, and an epilogue, whereas Book II consists of a prologue and thirty-four entries with no epilogue attested, and, finally, Book III lacks a prologue and consists of twenty-four entries followed by an epilogue¹¹. However, it has been suggested that also Books II and III originally had a tripartite structure too, including an epilogue and a prologue, respectively, and that the general Prologue was possibly paired by a general Epilogue, as represented in the following diagram¹².

7. A. P. M. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning of the "Liber monstrorum"*, in *I monstra nell'inferno dantesco: tradizioni e simbologie*, Spoleto 1997 (Atti dei convegni del Centro Italiano di Studi sul Basso Medioevo. Accademia Tudertina e del Centro di Studi sulla Spiritualità, n. s., 10), pp. 73-105, esp. pp. 77-8.

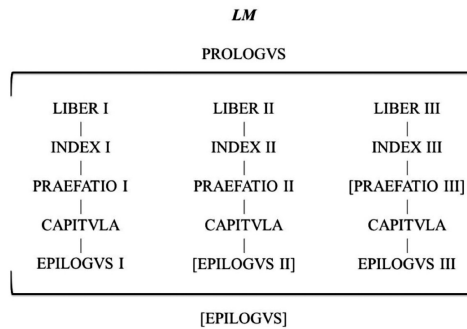
8. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 55-8 and Á. Ibáñez Chacón, *Interpolaciones de origen glosográfico en el Liber monstrorum*, «Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi», 75 (2017), pp. 89-106.

9. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 57; cfr. also Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., p. 76, and below, pp. 75-6.

10. Cfr. below, pp. 69-70.

11. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 34-5 and Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 77-8.

12. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 35 and Á. Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito del Liber monstrorum: Pal. Lat. 1741*, «Exemplaria classica», 24 (2020), pp. 151-75, esp. pp. 162-4 (diagram at p. 164).



While the above model is admittedly speculative, a basic tripartite pattern has been shown to «[operate] not only in Book I, but throughout the [LM] as a whole», that is the «pattern of the siren», according to Orchard's definition¹³. Such a key pattern is first laid out in the general Prologue, the authenticity of which was extensively demonstrated by Edmond Faral¹⁴, and which concludes with the earliest description of the siren as a hybrid creature with a scaly tail¹⁵. Having a human, reasoning head, but a bestial body and, finally, a scaly, serpentine tail, the siren works as a perfect metaphor of the *LM* itself¹⁶. The tripartite model embodied by the siren is detectable in both the overall structure of the *LM* and that of its individual books, as well as in the subtle use of the vast range of sources underlying the text¹⁷. However, the role of «the pattern of the siren» in the fabric of the *LM* was probably lost to successive readers and scribes, thereby contributing to the marred state of the manuscript tradition. As suggested by Orchard, «presumably it was [a lack] of understanding [of such a pattern] on the part of subsequent copyists which led to the truncation of the text by the omission of the [general Prologue] and one or more books»¹⁸. Omissions and alterations likely al-

13. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 99 and 104.

14. E. Faral, *La queue de poisson des sirènes*, «Romania», 74 (1953), pp. 433-506, esp. pp. 444-5.

15. Faral, *La queue* cit. On sirens and feminine monstrosity/-ties in the *LM* and *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus*, cfr. P. Lendinara, *Mostruosità femminili/-e nel Liber monstrorum e nelle Meraviglie dell'Oriente*, in *Mostri, animali, macchine. Figure e controfigure dell'umano / Monstruos, animales, máquinas. Figuras y controfiguras de lo humano*, curr. F. M. Dovetto - R. Frías Urrea, Roma 2019 (Linguistica delle differenze, 4), pp. 207-31.

16. Cfr. the relevant passage in *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 118-9, esp. n. 4. Cfr. also Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 81-2.

17. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 81-2 and 97-9. Cfr. also below, pp. 87-8.

18. *The Sources and Meaning* cit., p. 104.

so involved paratextual elements, such as the prologues and epilogues of the three books, as well as the indices and chapter-headings of each book¹⁹.

The manuscript tradition of the *LM* recorded in the two most recent editions²⁰ consists of five early medieval witnesses. Recently, a sixth copy of the *LM* has been discovered within the manuscript Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1741, a miscellaneous paper codex written in Heidelberg in 1465-7²¹.

The five earlier witnesses are all of Continental origin and dating from between the early ninth and the early tenth century²².

Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August Bibliothek, Gud. lat. 148 (4452): s. IX/X; or.: Eastern Francia; prov. Weissenburg (Porsia's A). It is a miscellaneous codex containing, *inter alia*, the *Prognosticon futuri saeculi* by Julian of Toledo, a collection of *Fabulae* by Phaedrus, and the *Physiologus*. The *LM* occurs as the last item (ff. 108v-123v). This is the longest surviving version of the work, consisting of the general Prologue and the three books, each with its own index and preface, on the one hand, and epilogue, on the other, except the epilogue to Book II and the preface to Book III, which are not attested in any of the surviving witnesses²³. The text has been corrected by a hand different from the scribe's but very similar and either contemporary or slightly later (Porsia's A¹); the corrections are not numerous and do not introduce any substantial alterations, that is they do not seem to stem from the consultation of a different exemplar.

New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 906: s. IX; or.: Rheims; also known as Codex Rosanboniensis, *olim* Pithoeanus (Porsia's B). The manuscript contains the five books of Phaedrus's *Fabulae* and an incomplete text of the *LM* (pp. 79-110). The latter consists of Book I and II, but the two relevant indices are missing and so is the epilogue to Book II; the first chapter of Book III features as last

19. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 34-5 and Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito* cit., pp. 162-9. Cfr. also above, p. 68 and below, pp. 74 and 80-1.

20. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 254-317 and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 115-375.

21. Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito* cit. Cfr. also below, p. 72.

22. In the following list, I generally provide the date and origin and/or provenance of the five manuscripts as from Porsia's edition of 2012 and quote other sources only when they disagree with the latter.

23. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 38-41, with relevant bibliography at p. 38, nn. 4 and 5. A. E. Knock dates the codex to s. IX²: *The Liber Monstrorum: An Unpublished Manuscript and Some Reconsiderations*, «Scriptorium», 32/1 (1978), pp. 19-28, at p. 21.

chapter of Book II²⁴. The text has been corrected by a contemporary hand (Porsia's B¹).

Leiden, Bibliotheek der Universiteit, Voss. lat., 8° 60: s. IX/X; or.: Fleury (Porsia's C). Besides the *LM*, the codex contains the Provençal *Chanson de S. Foy de Agen* and the *translatio* of Mary Magdalene's relics to the Vézelay Abbey ([BHL 5491]; notably, the lintel of the Vézelay portal famously portrays the heathen nations as *monstra*). The (incomplete) text of the *LM* is found at ff. 1v-12v and consists of Books I and II, preceded by their respective indices and prefaces and including the epilogue to Book I; the general Prologue and the whole of Book III are missing, and so are chapters 15, 36, and 47 of Book I²⁵. This codex has played a key role in the argument in favour of an Insular, especially English, origin of the *LM*, because of its distinctively Insular system of abbreviations and because it uniquely attests within the manuscript tradition of the *LM* to an English spelling for the personal name Hygelac, a character shared by the *LM* and the Old English poem *Beowulf*²⁶.

London, British Library, Royal 15.B.XIX, Part 3 (ff. 79-199): s. X; or.: Rheims; prov. England not before s. XII or XIII? (Porsia's D). This miscellaneous codex contains an extensive collection of Latin verse and short prose texts, including Bede's *Versus de die iudicii* and Symposius's *Aenigmata* (incomplete). The (fragmentary) text of the *LM* is found at ff. 103v-105v, written by a later hand of s. X² or XI *in.*, and consists of the general Prologue, an index listing 18 chapters, and 28 chapters of Book I, in often abridged or incomplete state²⁷. The text has been corrected by a contemporary hand (Porsia's D¹).

Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 237: s. IX¹; or.: Sankt Gallen (Porsia's E). The earliest witness of the *LM*, this codex contains a complete copy of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, preceded by a fragmentary text of the *LM* (pp. 2-6), consisting of only 49 chapters of Book I, five of which have been drastically abridged²⁸. The text has

24. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 41-2, with relevant bibliography at p. 41, nn. 6 and 7. C. Bologna dates the codex to s. X: *Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus. Libro delle mirabili diffomità*, ed. and trans. into Italian by C. Bologna, Milano 1977 (Nuova Corona, 5), pp. 168-9.

25. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 42-4, with relevant bibliography at p. 42, n. 8; cfr. also M. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex*, «Studi medievali», 23 (1982), pp. 151-92; rptd. in his *Anglo-Latin Literature: 600-899*, London-Rio Grande 1996, pp. 271-312 with additional notes at p. 508, esp. pp. 283-4, n. 52.

26. The first to draw attention to the Insular abbreviations in C was A. Thomas, *Un manuscrit inutilisé du Liber monstrorum*, «Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi», 1 (1924), pp. 232-45; cfr. also Bologna (ed.), pp. 169-70 and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 74. On Hygelac and the relationship between the *LM* and *Beowulf*, cfr. below, pp. 97-109.

27. H. Gneuss - M. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, Toronto 2014 (Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 15), no. 493; cfr. also *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 44-6 and the record and digitisation available on the British Library website.

28. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 46-8, with relevant bibliography at pp. 46-7, nn. 13-16. In particular, Knock has suggested a dating to ca. 830: cfr. her *An Unpublished Manuscript* cit., p. 21. Cfr. also the record and digitisation available on the *ecodices* website.

been corrected by one or more different hands, not much later than the scribe's (Porsia's E¹).

A sixth (incomplete) copy of the *LM* (F) has recently been identified by Álvaro Ibáñez Chacón within the Vatican manuscript Pal. lat. 1741, a late fifteenth-century German miscellany containing a wide range of texts, from Cicero to Martianus Capella²⁹. The *LM* occurs as the last item of the codex (ff. 286r-291v) under the rubric *De monstris*, and it consists of the chapters of Books I and II, without any prefaces or indices, but with chapter headings³⁰. F presents a few corrections mostly introduced by the scribe's hand during the copying process, and some more by a later hand (perhaps Angelo Mai?), but none of these interventions suggest the consultation of an alternative antigen³¹.

In addition to the six surviving codices, the catalogue of the Bobbio library first published by Ludovico Antonio Muratori and presumably dating to the second half of the ninth century, mentions two further manuscript witnesses of the *LM*³², of which no other record seems to have come down and which are now lost³³. (It may be noteworthy that in one of the two Bobbio codices the *LM* apparently occurred alongside texts on Alexander the Great and the *mirabilia Indiae*)³⁴. Finally, a copy of a *De monstruosis hominum generibus cum aliis contentis* is recorded in the monastery of Michelsberg, Bamberg, in 1483³⁵.

Because of the corrupted state of the manuscript tradition, in particular the high level of contamination and of idiosyncratic interventions by individual scribes on individual witnesses³⁶, the relationship between the five earlier manuscripts has proved quite intricate to untangle.

29. Cfr. above, p. 70 and n. 21.

30. On the chapter headings and their relationship with the indices of the books of the *LM*, cfr. Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito* cit., pp. 163-9 and below, pp. 80-1.

31. Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito* cit., pp. 160-1.

32. *Antiquitates Italicae Medii Aevi*. III, Milan 1740, cols. 817-24, at cols. 821 and 823, and G. H. Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum antiqui*, Bonn 1885, no. 32, pp. 64-73: the two copies of the *LM* are items no. 473 at p. 70 and no. 619 at p. 73. For a convenient résumé of the scholarly debate on the dating of the Bobbio catalogue, cfr. P. Collura, *Studi paleografici. La precarolina e la carolina a Bobbio*, Milan 1943, pp. 7-11.

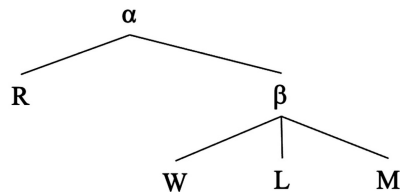
33. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 37. Cfr. also below, p. 82.

34. Muratori, *Antiquitates Italicae III* cit., col. 821.

35. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur* cit., I, p. 118; Faral, *La queue* cit., p. 442; and Bologna (ed.), p. 171.

36. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 56-7.

Of the editions of the *LM* only one features a *stemma codicum*, that is the unpublished edition by Douglas Rolla Butturff of 1968³⁷. That was to be soon superseded, however, by the discovery of **E**, first included in the manuscript tradition of the *LM* by Corrado Bologna in 1974³⁸ and first collated in his edition of 1977³⁹. Including only **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D**, Butturff's *stemma* outlined a bipartite tradition stemming from a common original, with **B** (Butturff's **R**) representing one branch and the other three manuscripts representing the other branch; while **B** (**R**) would have been derived directly from the archetype α , the other three codices would have been independently derived from the subarchetype β ⁴⁰.



Subsequent scholarship has highlighted the closeness of **A** and **E**, because, although **E** contains a text that is much shorter than **A** and is particularly prone to excision and synthesis, the two manuscripts share the interpolated chapter *De fabulani proserpine*, otherwise unattested in the other witnesses, as well as a number of common significant errors⁴¹. According to Bologna, **B** is also fundamentally close to **A**; in turn, **C** – apparently of “special interest” for the *restitutio textus* of the *LM* because of its closeness to the sources and for the frequency of good readings – may be derived from **B**, whereas **D** would stand somewhat apart from the other witnesses, though sometimes close to **B** and **C**⁴².

37. *The Monsters and the Scholar: An Edition and Critical Study of the Liber Monstrorum (Latin Text with English Translation)*, unpubl. PhD diss., University of Illinois 1968. Cfr. also below, pp. 77-8.

38. *La tradizione manoscritta del “Liber monstrorum de diuersis generibus”*. *Appunti per un’edizione critica*, «Cultura neolatina», 34/III-IV (1974), pp. 337-46, esp. pp. 345-6.

39. Cfr. below, pp. 78-9.

40. Butturff, *The Monsters and the Scholar* cit., pp. 1-5, with the stemma at p. 4.

41. Bologna, *La tradizione manoscritta* cit., pp. 341 and 345, and Bologna (ed.), p. 171. The interpolation is inserted between *LM* I. 36 and 37: cfr. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 53 and 56.

42. *La tradizione manoscritta* cit., p. 343, and Bologna (ed.), pp. 169-70, quotation at p. 170.

In fact, as Franco Porsia has shown in more detail, there is a special *consensus* between **B** and **D**, presumably as a result of their common origin in Rheims, and **D** – albeit in the very limited portion of text it preserves – attests to the most plausible reading against the other witnesses⁴³. In turn, **B** is closely related to **C**, although some errors common to **ABE** against **C** and to **AC** against **B** suggest that the two could have been contaminated by the **A**-text⁴⁴.

The discovery of **F** has triggered a reassessment of the mutual relationships within the manuscript tradition of the *LM*, although the definitive results of such a reassessment will be presented in full only in the new critical edition announced by Ibáñez Chacón⁴⁵. For now, it can be said that **F** is independent from all the other witnesses, as it does not share the interpolations of **AE**, **B** and **C**, but it shows at least two important analogies with **C**⁴⁶. Firstly, both feature chapter II.32 (**C** *De beluis Tyrreni maris*, **F** *De belluis Tirreni*) as the last item of Book II, whereas in Porsia's edition this chapter is the third last⁴⁷, and, secondly, the chapter headings of **F** show some notable correspondences with the indices of **C**⁴⁸. Hence, Ibáñez Chacón posits a common ancestor (γ) which consisted of two books and their respective indices (which were copied down at the beginning of the *LM* in **C**, whereas they were used for the chapter-headings in **F**); γ already had chapter 32 at the end of Book II and featured glosses; the latter were selectively interpolated in the antigraph of **C** (κ), whereas the antigraph of **F** (φ) left them out⁴⁹. In turn, γ derives from the same subarchetype α from which also the exemplar of **A** and **E**, ε , derives, whereas **B** and **D** descend from the other subarchetype β , as shown by the following provisional stemma⁵⁰:

43. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 56-7 and cfr. above, pp. 70-1.

44. *Ibidem*, p. 57.

45. Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito* cit., p. 159, n. 28.

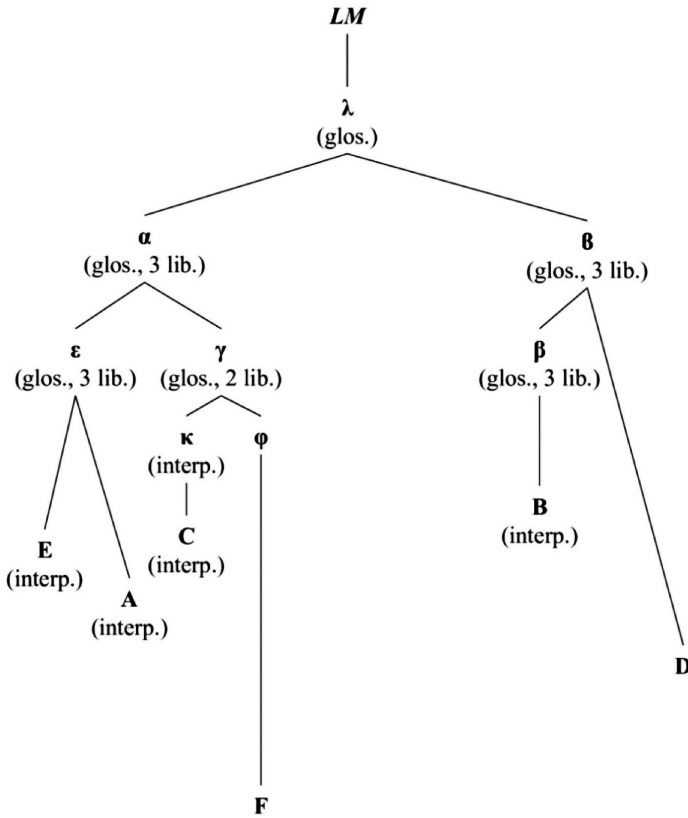
46. *Ibidem*, p. 161.

47. *Ibidem*, pp. 161-2. *LM* II.32 is a problematic chapter, which is in fact tripartite in **A** and edited as three distinct chapters by both Bologna and Orchard; these three chapters, however, are not the concluding ones of Book II, as they are followed by two more chapters in both editions: cfr. Bologna (ed.), §§ 33, 33bis and 33ter, pp. 120-2, and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., §§ 32, 33, and 34, p. 304.

48. Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito* cit., pp. 163-9.

49. *Ibidem*, pp. 171-3.

50. *Ibidem*, pp. 169-74, with the stemma at p. 174.



Pending the new edition by Ibáñez Chacón, it can be said for now that the conspicuous contaminations and interpolations that characterise the tradition of the *LM* inevitably make the *constitutio textus* a particularly challenging task. References works and catalogues such as the *LM* were naturally prone to alterations both *ex libro* and *ex ingenio*, but within the tradition of the *LM* contaminations have proved especially frequent because of the possible presence of more than one exemplar in the same scriptorium – as the discrepancies between **B** and **D** seem to attest –, and because of the widespread availability of the source-texts of the *LM*, which enabled scribes to collate their exemplar(s) with the sources⁵¹. Also,

51. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 56-7. Notably, **E** attests to just the titles of chapters I. 10 (onocentaurs), I. 16 (cynocephali), and I. 19 (hermaphrodites), but the actual content has been omitted and replaced by a reference to the copy of *Etymologiae* which follows the *LM* in the same

scribes proved particularly active when copying the *LM*, as all the extant witnesses attest to individual interventions⁵². **B** is a particularly interesting case study, as it is the only witness of a branch rich in glosses and interpolations, which are otherwise unattested in the extant tradition, as well as bearing evidence of an idiosyncratic scribal intervention at the end of Book II. This intervention consists of the inclusion of the first chapter of Book III (*De Lernaeo angue*) as the concluding chapter of Book II. With the exception of this first chapter, the whole of Book III is missing in **B**, but presumably the scribe felt compelled to include at least the chapter on the Lernaean serpent because in *LM* II.8 (*De belua Lernae*) the Hydra had been generically introduced as a monstrous beast, but with the anticipation that it would again be dealt with further on among the serpents (*de monstribus, quam etiam beluis et serpentibus de quibus partem replicaturi sumus*)⁵³. Notably, the scribe of **C** – which, like **B**, does not contain Book III – made an opposite choice on this regard, in that his version of *LM* II.8 omits the reading *et serpentibus*, thereby avoiding any anticipation and obliterating any reference to a following section on serpents⁵⁴.

The *editio princeps* of the *LM* was published in 1836 under the title *De monstribus et belluis* within the miscellaneous *Traditions tératologiques* by Jules Berger de Xivrey⁵⁵. This edition consists of an often incorrect transcription of the **B**-text, hence lacking the general Prologue and the whole of Book III, with the exception of the first chapter of the latter appended at the end of Book II⁵⁶. While the transcript is rife in mistaken readings and omissions, which were eventually highlighted and corrected by Ulysse Robert in his own diplomatic edition of **B** published nearly sixty years lat-

codex: *ibidem*, pp. 46-7, esp. n. 17. In fact, modern scholarship has ascertained that, while the source of *LM* I.10 is *Etymologiae* XI.iii.39, the source of *LM* I. 16 and I.19 is Augustine's *De ciuitate Dei* XVI.viii: cfr. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 318.

52. Cfr. above, pp. 70-2.

53. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 56. On *LM* II.8 and III.1, cfr. *ibidem*, pp. 270-1 and 326-7, quotation at p. 270.

54. *Ibidem*, p. 56. It should be reminded that **C** does not contain the general Prologue either, so it lacks any reference to the third book altogether: cfr. above, p. 71.

55. *Traditions tératologiques, ou Récits de l'antiquité et du moyen âge en Occident sur quelques points de la fable, du merveilleux et de l'histoire naturelle*, Paris 1836, pp. 1-330. The *LM* is followed by the letter of Alexander to his mother Olympias and his tutor Aristotle on the wonders of India (Greek text with facing-page French translation, pp. 331-76); the second part of the *Merveilles d'Inde* di Jehan Wauquelin (pp. 379-438); finally, the *Proprietez des bestes* (pp. 441-568).

56. Cfr. above, pp. 70-1.

er⁵⁷, the major merit of Berger's work consists of the copiousness and thoroughness of the explanatory notes to the text. Such notes make up an impressive compendium bringing together the earliest teratological sources with occult sciences and magic lore up to the then most recent discoveries of palaeontology, zoology, and medical biology, in the attempt to provide a rational and scientific justification of ancient myths, fables, beliefs, and superstitions in line with the *esprit scientifique* of nineteenth-century positivism⁵⁸.

A second edition of the *LM* was published by Moriz Haupt within the *lectiones aestivae* of 1863 at the University of Berlin⁵⁹. Though aware of the existence of **C**, Haupt just mentions it in the introduction⁶⁰ and chooses **A** as his base-text, collating it with **B** from Berger's transcript, hence reproducing the latter's mistakes, but also making some more of his own and overlooking some of the **B** variants⁶¹.

Attention to a third witness of the *LM*, manuscript **C**, was first drawn in 1902 by José Leite de Vasconcellos who claimed to have «discovered» the manuscript the previous year⁶². Whereas de Vasconcellos was interested in **C** primarily as witness to the Provençal text of the *Chanson de S. Foy de Agen*, about twenty years later Antoine Thomas focused on the (partial) copy of the *LM* therein contained and carried out a collation of the **A**, **B** (as consulted from Haupt and Robert's editions), and **C**-texts, publishing **C** variant readings, albeit often mistakenly and hurriedly⁶³.

The first attempt at a critical edition of the *LM* may be considered Butturff's unpublished PhD dissertation⁶⁴. This edition is based on the text of **B** (Butturff's **R**), which, however, Butturff knew from Berger's transcript and Robert's subsequent diplomatic edition, rather than from direct con-

57. *Les fables de Phèdre, édition paléographique d'après le manuscrit Rosanbo*, Paris 1893, pp. 149-81. Cfr. also Bologna, *La tradizione manoscritta* cit., pp. 341-2; Bologna (ed.), p. 168; and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 50-1.

58. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 49-50.

59. *Index lectionum quae auspiciis regis augustissimi Guilelmi in uniuersitate litteraria Friderica Guilelma per semestre aestiuum a.d. XIII m. Aprilis usque ad d. XV August a. MDCCCLXIII habebuntur*, Berlin 1863, pp. 1-28. A reprint with some minor alterations was eventually published within *Mauricii Haupti Opuscula. II*, Leipzig 1876, pp. 218-52, itself reprinted in Hildesheim 1967.

60. Haupt, *Opuscula. II* cit., p. 218.

61. Bologna (ed.), pp. 168-9, and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 50-1.

62. *Canção de sancta Fides de Agen, texto provençal*, «Romania», 31 (1902), pp. 177-202.

63. *Un manuscrit inutilisé* cit. Cfr. Bologna, *La tradizione manoscritta* cit., pp. 343-4; Bologna (ed.), pp. 169-70; and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 51.

64. Butturff, *The Monsters and the Scholar* cit.

sultation of the manuscript, and which he collated with **A** (**W**), **C** (**L**), and **D** (**M**)⁶⁵. The outcome of this collation is not presented in a traditional *apparatus criticus* at the bottom of the page, but variants are instead collected in one of the two final appendixes (Appendix A)⁶⁶. The discussion of the manuscript tradition and the choice of **B** as the base text is rather succinct⁶⁷. As mentioned above, the four manuscript witnesses are considered as independent copies from a common original, and of these four copies, **B** (**R**) is selected as the base text simply because it contains «a more complete version of [the *LM* and] fewer orthographic errors»⁶⁸. The edition proper is preceded by a few introductory paragraphs, including one on the dating and sources of the *LM*⁶⁹. Compared to current scholarship, Butturff post-dates the *LM* to «somewhere between the eighth and tenth centuries» and places it in England, although he overlooks any association with Aldhelm of Malmesbury († 709 or 710)⁷⁰. The survey of the sources is somewhat incomplete and does not seem to consider much relevant secondary literature, although a more analytical list of the sources of individual chapters is provided in the Appendix B⁷¹. Finally, the edition of the Latin text is followed by the English translation⁷².

Manuscript **E** was first included within the manuscript tradition of the *LM* and collated with the other four witnesses in the edition with facing-page Italian translation by Bologna, published in 1977⁷³. However, the collation of all the five witnesses does not result in a critical edition proper, as Bologna himself admits, but serves instead to introduce a limited

65. *Ibidem*, p. 5; for the resulting stemma, cfr. above, p. 73.

66. *Ibidem*, pp. 120-94.

67. *Ibidem*, pp. 1-5.

68. *Ibidem*, p. 5.

69. *Ibidem*, pp. 5-11.

70. *Ibidem*, p. 5. On Aldhelm, cfr. below, pp. 85-6.

71. Butturff, *The Monsters and the Scholar* cit., pp. 195-200.

72. *Ibidem*, pp. 91-117. Cfr. further Bologna (ed.), pp. 172-3.

73. Bologna (ed.), pp. 168 and 171. Cfr. also Bologna's introductory study of the manuscript tradition of the *LM*, *La tradizione manoscritta* cit., pp. 345-6. Unaware of Bologna's work, Knock published a dedicated study of **E** in 1978, where she claimed to have «discovered» this fifth witness of the *LM*, otherwise previously known to scholars just as a copy of Isidore's *Etymologiae: An Unpublished Manuscript* cit. Eventually, Knock failed to notice that **E** had indeed been discussed by Bologna in her own (censorious) review of his edition: *Review of Liber monstorum de diversis generibus: Libro delle mirabili diffomità by Corrado Bologna*, «Medium Aevum», 48/II (1979), pp. 259-62. Finally, in her unpublished PhD dissertation of 1982, Knock claims that her own (1978) study «coincided» (*sic*) with the 1974 one by Bologna (*La tradizione manoscritta* cit.): A. E. Knock, *Wonders of the East: A Synoptic Edition of the Letter of Pharasmanes and the Old English and Old Picard Translations*, unpubl. PhD diss., King's College London 1981, p. 15.

number of corrections and conjectural emendations to Haupt's text – itself based on A – which is basically reproduced, save for occasional variants from the other manuscripts recorded in end-notes⁷⁴. Indeed, there is no *apparatus criticus* as such, but a list of notes on the *constitutio textus* that follows the edition and facing-page Italian translation⁷⁵, whereas explanatory notes follow each book⁷⁶. Bologna's declared aim is to provide a serviceable text and translation for non-specialists, prefaced with a fairly slim introduction, focusing on the most sensational aspects of the subject matter⁷⁷, and appended with a survey of the manuscript tradition and previous editions, a discussion of the indirect tradition and of the origin and authorship (attributed to Aldhelm) of the *LM*, and, finally, a series of bibliographical notes on classical, late antique, and early medieval texts and authors which may have served as sources or analogues to the *LM*⁷⁸. The volume concludes with a list of abbreviations used in the bibliographical notes⁷⁹, but a full bibliography is regrettably not provided, and neither is any index⁸⁰. To be fair, Bologna seems aware that quite a few matters require further consideration, first of all a thorough collation of the five witnesses and detailed analysis of the variants, but he postpones it all to a later definitive edition⁸¹, which, however, has not yet seen the light of day.

Given the shortcomings of both Butturff and Bologna's texts, the only two editions which can be said to meet the philological standards of a modern critical edition are the more recent ones by Porsia and Orchard. The latter includes an edition of the *LM* with facing-page English translation within a wider study of the teratological texts of the *Beowulf*-manuscript⁸². The major accomplishment of Orchard's edition is the first proper collation of all the five manuscript witnesses, as well as of the four

74. Bologna (ed.), pp. 165, 167, and 179.

75. *Ibidem*, pp. 179-90; the notes to the translation are also listed as end-notes and follow the notes to the text (pp. 191-7).

76. *Ibidem*, pp. 74-98 (notes to Book I); pp. 124-37 (notes to Book II); and pp. 156-64 (notes to Book III).

77. *Ibidem*, pp. 165 and 167. Bologna's translation style also indulges into the spectacular and flamboyant: *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 51-2.

78. Bologna (ed.), pp. 167-79 and 198-219.

79. *Ibidem*, pp. 220-1.

80. Cfr. further Knock, *Review of Liber monstrorum* cit.

81. Bologna (ed.), pp. 165 and 167.

82. *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 254-317.

previous editions by Haupt, Butturff, Bologna, and Porsia, and the laying-out of the results of such a collation in a proper *apparatus criticus*⁸³.

Porsia published his first critical edition and Italian translation of the *LM* in 1976⁸⁴, unaware of Bologna's parallel project and, especially, of the latter's discovery of *E*. Hence, over thirty years later Porsia took up a revision of his work by collating *E* and including its variants in the *apparatus criticus*, updating the introduction and relevant bibliography, revising the translation as well as expanding the explanatory notes, and adding an Appendix with the translation of extracts from texts of similar content to the *LM*⁸⁵. As far as the *constitutio textus* is concerned in particular, the highly corrupted and contaminated state of the manuscript tradition led Porsia to opt for an eclectic reconstruction, that is for Books I and II he relied on the *consensus* of *BC(D)* against *A*, as well as on the criterion of the *lectio difficilior*, whereas for Book III – the most sparsely attested – editorial interventions were carried out on the basis of analogies with the previous two books and of the Insular Latin usage of the seventh and eighth centuries⁸⁶. Variants from the five manuscripts – excluding the merely orthographic ones but including the corrections in *A*, *B*, *D* and *E* –, as well as from Haupt's edition, are provided in the *apparatus criticus*, traditionally laid out at the bottom of the page, whereas the facing-page Italian translation is complemented with explanatory footnotes, which often work as an *apparatus fontium*. Finally, the volume includes a bibliography of both primary and secondary sources, but no indices, which is an omission particularly regrettable for such a text as the *LM*.

The new edition announced by Ibáñez Chacón promises some significant novelties, in that, unlike the reliance on a single witness adopted by the first editors or Porsia's eclectic reconstruction, he proposes a stemmatic reconstruction⁸⁷. Moreover, he intends to include in his analysis also paratextual elements, namely the indices and chapter-headings, as they could shed some light onto the relationship of the manuscripts⁸⁸. Only three wit-

83. *Ibidem*, p. 254.

84. F. Porsia (ed.), *Liber monstrorum*, Bari 1976 (Storia e Civiltà, 15).

85. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.).

86. *Ibidem*, pp. 57-8.

87. For Ibáñez Chacón's provisional stemma, cfr. above, p. 75.

88. Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito* cit., p. 165. On the importance of the paratextual elements in *A*, cfr. Á. Ibáñez Chacón, *La escritura publicitaria del Gud. Lat. 148: el texto del Liber monstrorum*, «Documenta & instrumenta», 15 (2017), pp. 57-67.

nesses feature indices, that is **A**, **C**, and **D**, and only three feature chapter-headings, that is **A**, **E**, and **F**, and of previous editors only Porsia had included both, whereas Berger, Butturff, and Bologna only included chapter-headings. Haupt and Orchard have neither. In particular, Orchard explains to have «consciously relegated to the critical apparatus» the chapter-headings, because they seem to be not so much an original feature of the text as the result of scribal interventions: «scribes simply excerpted parts of the text and prefaced their quotation with the word *de*, often forgetting to change the relevant word-ending»⁸⁹. Conversely, Ibáñez Chacón argues that, although there is no sufficient evidence to claim that the indices were an original feature of the *LM*, they must at least have been included in the archetype from which the surviving witnesses derive and to which both the existing indices and chapter-headings can ultimately be traced⁹⁰.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the context of composition and authorship of the *LM*, its dating can only hypothetically be set within a relatively broad chronological range. The ultimate *terminus* is obviously represented by the earliest manuscript witness, that is **E** of the first half of the ninth century. However, both Michael Lapidge and Orchard have suggested that the *terminus ante quem* for the *LM* should be moved back by around a century earlier than the date of **E**, that is *ca.* 750, because the considerable corruption of the manuscript tradition reveals «a fairly advanced state of transmission»⁹¹.

Eventually, a narrower *terminus* has been proposed on the basis of the date of the so-called *Cosmographia* by the elusive Aethicus Ister⁹², «the most problematic Latin text of the early Middle Ages»⁹³, a sort of travelogue reporting on the travels to the four corners of the world undertaken by the author. The most recent editor of the *Cosmographia* has shown that

89. *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 174.

90. Ibáñez Chacón, *Un nuevo manuscrito* cit., pp. 163-9.

91. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 284 and Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., p. 75.

92. [CPL 2348 and BCLL 647]; M. W. Herren (ed.), *The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Turnhout 2011 (Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin, 8).

93. M. Lapidge, *Review of The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister: Edition, Translation and Commentary. Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin 8 by Michael W. Herren*, «The Journal of Medieval Latin», 22 (2012), pp. 306-311, at p. 306. On the many complexities and uncertainties of this text, cfr. also G. Orlandi, *Cosmographia*, in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo: Te.Tra III*, curr. P. Chiesa - L. Castaldi, Firenze 2008 (Millennio medievale, 75. Strumenti e studi, 18), pp. 4-13.

the *LM* is among the (numerous) sources drawn on by Aethicus, and since the *Cosmographia* «could not have been composed much before ca. 730»⁹⁴, this date could also be taken as the *terminus ante quem* for the compilation of the *LM*. Also, both texts seem to have originated in an Insular milieu⁹⁵. Although Michael Herren's hypothesis of a peripatetic author, moving between Ireland, England, and the Continent from the end of the seventh century to the beginning of the eighth, is ultimately unverifiable⁹⁶, at least the association of the *Cosmographia* with the Insular foundation of Bobbio rests on more solid ground, in that nearly all the works quoted in the *Cosmographia* are recorded in the Bobbio catalogue which also features two copies of the *LM* now lost⁹⁷.

As to the *terminus post quem*, Porsia suggested, though rather tentatively, that the chapter on the Antipodes (*LM* I.53) may draw on a relevant treatise putatively authored by Vergil, the Irish bishop of Salzburg († ca. 784)⁹⁸. Although it is doubtful that Vergil actually wrote such a treatise, his soft stance as to the possibility of the existence of the Antipodes, against the more sceptic attitude of patristic authorities such as Augustine and Isidore, is attested in a letter of pope Zacharias to the English missionary Boniface probably datable to 748⁹⁹. Lapidge dismissed Porsia's arguments, claiming that the *LM* likely echoes instead either Augustine or Isidore, who, incidentally, are the two sources most frequently drawn on in Book I of the *LM*¹⁰⁰. (Indeed, both Augustine, *De ciuitate Dei*, XVI.ix,

94. Lapidge, *Review of The Cosmography* cit., p. 307. Cfr. also R. M. Pollard, "Denuo" on Lucan, the "Orpheus" and "Aethicus Ister": "Nihil Sub Sole Novum", «The Journal of Medieval Latin», 20 (2010), pp. 58-69.

95. But cfr. M. Winterbottom, *Review of Otto Prinz, Die Kosmographie des Aethicus, MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* 14. München 1993, «Peritia», 9 (1995), pp. 430-2; rptd. in Id., *Style and Scholarship: Latin Prose from Gildas to Raffaele Regio: Selected Papers*, cur. R. Gamberini with a Foreword by M. Lapidge, Firenze 2020 (mediEVI, 26), pp. 378-80, where the original locale of composition of the *Cosmographia* is traced to Merovingian Gaul.

96. Lapidge, *Review of The Cosmography* cit., p. 307.

97. Herren (ed.), pp. LXII-VIII. Pollard has argued that the author of the *Cosmographia* must have been in England at least once, because only in England, in particular from the *LM*, he could have learned of Lucan's *Orpheus*: cfr. his "Denuo" on Lucan, esp. p. 59, and below, nn. 124 and 274-5. On the Bobbio catalogue, cfr. above, n. 32.

98. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 92-3.

99. E. Dümmler, *S. Bonifatii et Lulli epistolae*, Berlin 1957 (MGH Epp. III.vi), pp. 356-61.

100. Beowulf, *Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 285, n. 57; cfr. also Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 449-50, and below, pp. 86-91. Puzzlingly, Porsia also posits as *terminus post quem* the use of the sixth-century *Chronicon* by Marcellinus Comes, although he also considers certain that the author of the *LM* drew on the *Etymologiae*, which are demonstrably later: *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 82-3 and 85; it is also bewildering that Porsia presents the

and Isidore, *Etymologiae*, IX.ii.133, as well as Servius's commentary *In Georgica*, I. 235 are provided as sources of the Antipodes chapter in Orchard's list of sources and analogues of the *LM*¹⁰¹).

On firmer ground rests the *terminus post quem* proposed by Orchard, that is ca. 650, on the basis of the latest datable source-text drawn on in the *LM*, the *Etymologiae* by Isidore of Seville, which were published posthumously soon after 636¹⁰². In sum, the timespan ca. 650 × ca. 730 seems the most likely one for the dating of the *LM*¹⁰³, because it relies on the unquestionable use of the *Etymologiae* on the part of the author of the *LM*, on the one hand, and on the recent acquisitions of the *Quellenforschung* on the *Cosmographia*, on the other; it also accounts for the marred state of the manuscript tradition; and, finally, it is in keeping with the context of composition of the *LM* which seems to be prevalent in the scholarly debate.

Although all the six surviving witnesses of the *LM* are Continental manuscripts, very few scholars have argued in favour of a Continental origin of the *LM* itself¹⁰⁴, and its composition has generally been traced instead to an Insular milieu. In particular, palaeographic, linguistic, and stylistic evidence, as well as source-study, concurrently point to late seventh- or early eighth-century England as the most likely place of origin of the *LM*¹⁰⁵.

A number of orthographical features and, especially, abbreviations in the earlier five surviving witnesses suggest their ultimate derivation from an

LM as a ninth-century text on the very cover of his edition, but concludes his discussion of the date, origin, and authorship of the *LM* by stating that it is to be attributed to an eighth-century English ambience: cfr. *ibidem*, p. 97.

101. *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 319.

102. *Ibidem*, p. 86; Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., p. 75; and Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 284-5.

103. Cfr. below, p. 113.

104. Manitius and Haupt both suggested a Frankish origin: cfr. Manitius, *Geschichte* cit., I, pp. 114-8, and Haupt, *Opuscula II* cit., p. 220. Eventually, Knock argued for an origin either in eastern Francia or Switzerland/South-West Germany: cfr. her *An Unpublished Manuscript* cit., p. 28.

105. The English origin of the *LM* has been consistently advocated since Thomas, *Un manuscrit inutilisé* cit. Cfr. further S. Backx, *Sur la date et origine du «De monstris, belluis et serpentibus»*, «Latomus», 3 (1939), p. 61; D. Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf*, Oxford 1951, pp. 46-55; Faral, *La queue* cit., pp. 441-70; Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 451-61; Bologna (ed.), pp. 178-9; G. Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare. Presenze del «Liber monstrorum» e della «Cosmografia» dello Pseudo-Etico nel «Beowulf» e nel cod. Nowell*, «Studi medievali», 3rd ser., 25 (1984), pp. 681-720, at pp. 684-5; Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 285-9; Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 75-6; Id., *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 86-7; Id., *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 133-4; and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 85-90.

Insular exemplar or exemplars¹⁰⁶. In particular, C – the witness with most Insular “symptoms”, including the distinctive abbreviation *b'* for *autem* – uniquely attests to the faithful Latin transliteration (*Hyglac[us]/Higlac[us]*) of the Old English anthroponym, *Hygelāc/Higelāc*, itself perhaps the most relevant clue about the English affiliations of the *LM*, as the *Hyglac[us]/Higlac[us]* of *LM* I.2 has been taken to correspond with the Hygelac of the renown Old English epic *Beowulf*¹⁰⁷.

The Latinity of the *LM* has long been recognised as idiosyncratic and “post-classic”¹⁰⁸. In particular, the prose of the *LM* has been consistently described as over-ornate and flamboyant, rife in alliteration and wordplay, laden with arcane and poetic vocabulary, and arranged in a turgid and complex syntax with frequent hyperbata and hexametrical clauses¹⁰⁹. These characteristics also point to an Insular origin of the *LM*, as they clearly parallel some of the most distinctive expressions of Insular Latinity, such as the Hiberno-Latin *Hisperica famina*¹¹⁰ and Aldhelm of Malmesbury, «the first Englishman of letters» and the «finest of the Anglo-Latin poets»¹¹¹.

106. Cfr. the detailed description of the five manuscripts in *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 38-48. Cfr. also the convenient résumé of the relevant evidence by Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex*, pp. 285-7. An orthographical trait shared by at least four of the five earlier witnesses (i.e. A, C, D, and E) that seems to hint at a specifically English context of origin, rather than a generically Insular one, is the free alternation between *i* and *y*, which may be explained as an interference of Old English spelling usage, albeit admittedly one which established itself from the late tenth century onwards: cfr. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 39, 43, 45, and 48. «The interchangeability of <i> and <y> [in Old English spelling] is partly the product of Latin influence, for the two were variants in medieval Latin, and partly is caused by phonemic change, for by the end of the tenth century there are signs that the phonemes represented by the two symbols, earlier separate, had fallen together in most dialects, and it is from that period that many scribes used <i> and <y> indiscriminately»: D. G. Scragg, *A History of English Spelling*, Manchester 1974, pp. 10-1, quotation at p. 10; Id., *Spelling and Pronunciation, OE*, in *BEASE*, p. 441; A. Campbell, *Old English Grammar*, Oxford 1959, §§ 315-18; and K. Brunner, *Die Englische Sprache: Ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung*, 1, 2nd ed., Tübingen 1960 (Sammlung kurzer Grammatiken germanischer Dialekte), p. 250.

107. Cfr. below, pp. 99-100.

108. Manitius, *Geschichte* cit., I, p. 115.

109. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 68-9; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 89; Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 291-4.

110. The *Hisperica famina* is attested in a number of recensions: cfr. [BCLL 325-30] and the following editions: F. J. H. Jenkinson (ed.), *The Hisperica Famina*, Cambridge 1908; M. W. Herren (ed.), *The “Hisperica famina”*. I: *The A-Text*, Toronto 1974 (Studies and Texts, 31); Id. (ed.), *The “Hisperica famina”*. II: *Related Poems*, Toronto 1987 (Studies and Texts, 85). On the Hisperic Latin, cfr. at least A. P. M. Orchard, *Some Aspects of Seventh-Century Hiberno-Latin Syntax: A Statistical Approach*, «Peritia», 6-7 (1987-8), pp. 158-201 and Id., *The Hisperica famina as Literature*, «The Journal of Medieval Latin», 10 (2000), pp. 1-45.

111. M. Lapidge - M. W. Herren (edd.), *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, Cambridge 1979, p. 1, and A. P. M. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, Cambridge 1994 (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon

Aldhelm has often been considered as the most likely candidate for the authorship of the *LM*, on the basis of both stylistic and thematic overlaps, as well as of the dependence on a similar library as the author of the *LM*¹¹². As far as the style is concerned, however, among many similarities, a few crucial differences between Aldhelm and the *LM* have been pointed out, especially in diction and syntax. Whereas both authors have a penchant for unusual vocabulary, the lexical choices of the *LM* are often unparalleled in Aldhelm's *corpus*, in particular the use of adjectives ending in *-osus*¹¹³. Such adjectives have been considered as a Hisperic feature, and indeed Lapidge has pointed out that at least two adjectives, *rumorosus* and *carboneus*, are uniquely shared by the *Hisperica Famina* and the *LM*¹¹⁴. Aldhelm himself received his early education at the Irish foundation of Iona and seems to have been familiar with Irish culture and scholarship in general¹¹⁵, although eventually becoming rather critical of English students going to Ireland to pursue their studies¹¹⁶. He may also have known and drawn on the *Hisperica Famina*¹¹⁷, and if so this text could be yet another source shared by Aldhelm and the *LM*. However, given the key role of Isidore's *Etymologiae* as a source for Aldhelm, the famimators, and the author of the

England, 8), p. 2. On Aldhelm's style, cfr. *ibidem*, pp. 8-18 and A. P. M. Orchard, *Artful Alliteration in Anglo-Saxon Song and Story*, «Anglia», 113 (1995), pp. 429-63. For a different assessment of Aldhelm's style, which posits it «firmly with the continentals against the Irish», cfr. M. Winterbottom, *Aldhelm's Prose Style and Its Origins*, «Anglo-Saxon England», 6 (1977), pp. 39-76; rptd. in *Id.*, *Style and Scholarship* cit., pp. 101-38, quotation at p. 73 [135].

112. Cfr. below, pp. 91-7.

113. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 292-3.

114. *Idem*. The adjective *rumorosus* occurs three times in *LM* (Prol., I.8, and III.13; *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia [ed.], p. 118, l. 3; p. 144, l. 4; p. 350, l. 1) and in the B-text of the *Hisperica Famina* (Jenkinson [ed.], B46, p. 24). The adjective *carboneus* occurs in *LM*, I. 30 and in both the A-text and B-text of the *Hisperica Famina* (*Liber monstrorum*², Porsia [ed.], p. 192, l. 3; Herren [ed.], A348 and 434, pp. 90 and 98; Jenkinson [ed.], B63, p. 25).

115. M. Lapidge, *The Career of Aldhelm*, «Anglo-Saxon England», 36 (2007), pp. 15-69, esp. pp. 22-30 and Orchard, *The Poetic Art* cit., pp. 3-5; cfr. also D. Ó Cróinín, *The Irish Provenance of Bede's Computus*, «Peritia», 2 (1983), pp. 229-47, esp. p. 244, and M. W. Herren, *Scholarly Contacts between the Irish and the Southern English in the Seventh Century*, «Peritia», 12 (1998), pp. 24-53, esp. pp. 29-44. Aldhelm's Irish tuition is, however, not universally agreed upon: cfr. Winterbottom, *Aldhelm's Prose Style* cit., pp. 46-62 [108-24].

116. Cfr. Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Wibfridum*, addressed to a disciple about to leave England to pursue his studies in Ireland, whom Aldhelm tries to discourage from devoting himself to the study of pagan literature there; and the *Epistola ad Ehfriðum*, addressed to a disciple who had returned from six years of study in Ireland, a journey which Aldhelm deems unnecessary now that Archbishop Theodore and Abbot Hadrian have established their prestigious school at Canterbury: R. Ehwald (ed.), *Aldhelmi Opera*, Berlin 1919 (MGH AA 15), rptd. 1961, nos. 3 and 6, pp. 479-80 and 486-94; translated in Lapidge-Herren (edd.), pp. 154-5 and 160-4. Cfr. also Herren, *Scholarly Contacts* cit., pp. 30-2.

117. *The "Hisperica Famina" I*, Herren (ed.), p. 36.

LM, the overlaps and parallels between the three could ultimately be traced to a similar use made of the Isidorean encyclopaedia¹¹⁸.

As to the syntax, both Aldhelm and the author of the *LM* are fond of amplification, verbosity, and lengthy sentences. However, Aldhelm arranges his periods, lengthy though they may be, according to a plain, intelligible structure, whereas the author of the *LM* constructs complex, tortuous sentences, chiefly thanks to the frequent use of hyperbaton – a rhetorical device which is rarely found in Aldhelm¹¹⁹. Finally, while both authors write a markedly rhythmical prose, in what has been described as a distinctive «house-style» quite unlike that of other contemporary Insular Latin authors, they show individual preferences in terms of *cursus*, which ultimately set them apart¹²⁰.

In sum, the stylistic evidence does not ultimately support a straightforward attribution of the *LM* to Aldhelm, but, together with the results of *Quellenforschung*, points to an author contemporary and familiar with Aldhelm, sharing his stylistic predilections, as well as his wide-ranging reading and use of sources.

Although the author of the *LM* is characteristically reticent to name his¹²¹ sources¹²² and refers to previous accounts in a generic and often disparaging way¹²³, the extensive scope of the sources underlying the *LM*, as well as the subtle use consciously made of them by an obviously erudite writer, is one of the most striking aspects of the *LM* and perhaps the one

118. For a recent study of Aldhelm and the *Etymologiae*, cfr. C. Di Sciacca, “I” is for Isidore: *Isidore of Seville and Early English Poetry*, in *The Anglo-Latin Poetic Tradition: Sources, Transmission and Reception*, ed. C. Curran, York forthcoming in 2023 [1-40]. For the debt of the *Hisperica Famina* to the *Etymologiae*, see *The “Hisperica famina” I*, Herren (ed.), pp. 17 and 19-22; cfr. also Id., *On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance with Isidore of Seville*, in *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, cur. E. James, Oxford 1980, pp. 243-50; rptd. with the same pagination in M. W. Herren, *Latin Letters in Early Christian Ireland*, Aldershot 1996 (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 527), at p. 246, and M. Winterbottom, *Review of The Hisperica famina: I. The A-Text edited by Michael W. Herren. Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1974*, «Medium Aevum», 45 (1976), pp. 105-9; rptd. in Id., *Style and Scholarship*, pp. 357-61, at pp. 106 [358] and 109 [361]. The *Hisperica famina* has been considered the product of «an apparently widespread seventh-century Hiberno-Latin wisdom tradition (derived in part from Isidore)»: Orchard, *The Hisperica Famina* cit., pp. 31-41, quotation at p. 41.

119. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 293-4.

120. *Ibidem*, pp. 294-5.

121. In the course of this essay I will refer to anonymous authors with a masculine pronoun as shorthand for these unidentified individuals.

122. Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 440-1.

123. Cfr. below, pp. 89-91.

that has been most meticulously investigated. The library available to the author of the *LM* must have included texts ranging from pagan poets, such as Vergil and Lucan¹²⁴, and prose sources, such as the vast body of material pertaining to Alexander the Great and his exploits in the East¹²⁵, to Fathers of the Church, such as Augustine and Jerome, and late antique Christian authors, such as Paul Orosius and Isidore of Seville¹²⁶.

Sources, whether ultimate or intermediate, as well as analogues have been identified for almost every entry of the *LM* and charted in ever more detailed lists¹²⁷. If such lists are significant insofar as they reveal the extent of the library underlying the *LM*, their distribution is perhaps even more relevant in that it affords insights into the author's actual predilections and working method¹²⁸, as well as into the ultimate meaning of the *LM*¹²⁹.

The sources of the *LM* have been divided into three groups of increasing distribution and frequency of use¹³⁰. The first group consists of Christian sources, first of all Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, XVI.viii, debating the ante- or post-diluvian origin of humanoid monsters, and Isidore's *Etymologiae*, XI.viii (*De portentis*) and XII (*De animalibus*), which are drawn on almost exclusively in Book I of the *LM*¹³¹. The second group consists of late antique texts of odeporic and teratological content associated with the figure of Alexander the Great, in particular the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, that is a pseudepigraphic letter where Alexander putatively reports to his former teacher Aristotle about his campaigns in the East and the fabulous creatures he encounters¹³²; and some version of the so-called *De rebus in Oriente*

124. On Vergil as a key source of the *LM*, cfr. below, pp. 88-9. The *LM* shows knowledge of the now-lost poem by Lucan, *Orpheus*: cfr. Lapidge, Beowulf, *Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 289; Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., p. 440; *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 60, and chapters I.5 and II.7, pp. 136-7, esp. n. 14, and 268-9. But cfr. Knock, *Wonders of the East* cit., pp. 340-2. Cfr. also below, nn. 274-5.

125. Cfr. below, pp. 87-8.

126. Lapidge, Beowulf, *Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 287-9; Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 440-8; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 92-4; Id., *The Sources and Meaning*, pp. 84-105; Butturff, *The Monsters and the Scholar* cit., pp. 5-11; *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 59-68; and Knock, *Wonders of the East* cit., pp. 314-16.

127. Butturff, *The Monsters and the Scholar* cit., pp. 5-11; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 318-20; and Id., *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 85-6.

128. While relying on a vast array of sources, the author of the *LM* could also use a given passage from a source more than once: Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 88-91.

129. *Ibidem*, pp. 76-7 and 104-5.

130. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 92-4 and Id., *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 84-105.

131. *Ibidem*, p. 88.

132. W. W. Boer (ed.), *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, Meisenheim am Glan, 1973 (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, 50). The popularity of the *Epistola Alexandri* in early medieval England

mirabilibus, a compilation about the marvels of the East which originally was also arranged as an epistle written by a character variously named and addressed to either the emperor Hadrian (117-38) or to Hadrian's predecessor, Trajan (98-117)¹³³. (The epistolary framework of these Alexander-related sources likely had an impact on the "broadly epistolary form" of the general Prologue of the *LM*)¹³⁴. Though borrowings from these sources concern all three books of the *LM*, they are chiefly concentrated in Book II¹³⁵. Finally, the third and most important group of sources consists of Vergil's poems *Georgics* and, especially, *Aeneid*, as well as of Servius's relevant commentaries, which were drawn on throughout the *LM*, with nearly one in three of the entries indebted to Vergilian material and with Vergilian phraseology pervading the work¹³⁶.

Vergil is one of the very few sources to be explicitly and admirably named in the *LM* as the *precipuus poeta* (III.10)¹³⁷, and indeed the author of the *LM* shows a deep and detailed knowledge of his verse¹³⁸. Hence some apparent misunderstandings or misrepresentations of the Vergilian source-texts in the *LM* have been explained as a learned and mischievous *divertissement* the author of the *LM* deliberately entertained with his

is attested by its circulation both in Latin and Old English; notably, the vernacular translation is contained in the *Beowulf*-manuscript. On the Alexander legend in early medieval England, see Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 116-39, with an edition of the Latin text of the *Epistola Alexandri* attested in a manuscript witness circulating in early medieval England (London, British Library, Royal 13.A.I, s. XI ex.), collated with Boer's text (pp. 204-23), and an edition and facing-page translation of the Old English version of the *Beowulf*-manuscript (pp. 224-53).

133. This text too was vastly popular in early medieval England, circulating both in Latin and in Old English: cfr. Knock, *Wonders of the East*, pp. 147-298. An edition of the Latin text attested in manuscripts circulating in early medieval England is provided in Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 175-81; the Old English text with facing-page translation is at pp. 183-203. One of the two Old English versions of this text is attested within the *Beowulf*-manuscript: cfr. A. S. Mittman - S. M. Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts: The Wonders of the East in the Beowulf Manuscript*, Tempe (AZ) 2013 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 433).

134. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 22-4 and Id., *The Sources and Meaning* cit., p. 87. In the opening of the general Prologue, the author addresses an unnamed correspondent, whose behest seems to have triggered the compilation of the *LM*: *Liber monstorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 116, ll. 1-8.

135. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 87-9. Nearly 60% of the entries of Book II are indebted to the *Epistola Alexandri* and *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus*, whereas only a quarter of the entries of Book I and a third of Book III depend on them.

136. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., p. 89; Id., *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 93; and Whitbread, *The Liber monstorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 441-3.

137. *Liber monstorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 344, ll. 4-5.

138. «[T]he author of the [LM] is a keen Latinist, steeped in Vergil»: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 102; cfr. further Whitbread, *The Liber monstorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 440-3.

source, as well as with his most immediate audience, with whom he presumably shared the same penchant for and familiarity with Vergil¹³⁹.

The in-depth and «encyclopaedic knowledge» of Vergil on the part of the author of the *LM* also shows in his «quite astonishing ability [to] bring together Vergilian material from very different contexts»¹⁴⁰. This is the case with at least five different entries of the *LM*, dealing with mythological *monstra*, namely Proteus (*LM*, I.35), the gorgons (*LM*, I.38), the Eumenides (*LM*, I.45), the Lernaean Hydra (*LM*, II.8), and the chimaera (*LM*, II.11), respectively¹⁴¹, where details drawn from disparate passages of Vergil's *Aeneid* and *Georgics*, as well as of Servius' commentaries, are ingeniously combined¹⁴².

Such a «concern to mix like with like» and the awareness of the compatibility of sources within individual entries is evident throughout the *LM*, but it coexists with an equally deliberate strategy to alternate clusters of entries relying on different sources¹⁴³. A perfect case in point is the interchanging distribution of the entries relying on Christian, Alexander-related, and Vergilian sources in Book I, which incidentally exemplifies the tripartite siren-pattern underlying the whole of the *LM*¹⁴⁴.

Somehow paradoxically for this well-read author, reliant on such a vast library, he flaunts a demeaning attitude towards his own sources and their trustworthiness¹⁴⁵. Often he is «careful to distance himself from the material he is reporting, largely by the use of a huge variety of phrases such as “they say”, “we read”, “it is said”, which can be found in every section of the work»¹⁴⁶. Indeed, the whole work is encased between two statements about the difficulty of distinguishing between truth and lies in the accounts provided¹⁴⁷. The antithesis between fact and fiction is part of a

139. Cfr. *Ibidem*, pp. 459-60; Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 288; and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 102.

140. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 89-95, and quotations at pp. 94 and 93, respectively.

141. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 202, 210, 224, 270, and 276.

142. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 89-95 and Id., *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 319.

143. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 95-6.

144. *Ibidem*. Cfr. above, p. 69.

145. Butturff, *The Monsters and the Scholar* cit., pp. 38-57; Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 438-9; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 90-2; and Id., *The Sources and Meaning* cit., pp. 96-9.

146. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 92; for a convenient list of the phrases casting doubts on the sources, cfr. *ibidem*, p. 97.

147. Cfr. the general Prologue and the Epilogue of Book III in *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 116, ll. 1-2, 11, and 15; p. 118, l. 1-5; and p. 374, ll. 1-2.

wider net of oppositions and contrasts which runs through the *LM*, namely the antagonism between monsters and men; the distinction between a remote past, rife in monstrous fabrications, and a more enlightened present; but, most of all, the tension between the pagan lore attested in most of the sources used and the Christian learning which obviously makes up the primary frame of reference for a Christian author and his audience, inevitably vilifying the deceitful yet captivating narratives and characters from pagan times¹⁴⁸. Indeed, the terms and phrases of disbelief recurring in the *LM* are more insistent in those entries drawn from pagan sources, that is towards the end of Book I – which otherwise chiefly relies on Augustine and Isidore –, and throughout Books II and III, which depend almost exclusively on Alexander-related sources and Vergilian material¹⁴⁹.

Rather than in a mere catalogue of *monstra* and *mirabilia*, the meaning of the *LM* can then be said to lie in the tension between the two components of late antique and early medieval education and literary culture, the antique and the Christian, inextricably linked and mutually dependent, yet inevitably antagonistic. The contrasting feeling of the Christian erudite towards the dangerous seductiveness of the pagan heritage is best typified by the reverence in which medieval *literati* held Vergil, while being painfully aware of his ultimate inadequacy as a pagan author. *Mutatis mutandis*, in his pervasive and sophisticated, yet sceptical and suspicious use of Vergil, the author of the *LM* shares in this ambiguity, which will eventually culminate in Dante's portrait of the poet¹⁵⁰.

Vergil was one of the few classical poets that can be said to have been intensively studied in pre-Conquest England¹⁵¹, though with the same ambivalence towards his pagan inspiration and poetic distinction¹⁵². Aldhelm perfectly embodies this contradiction: though steeped in Vergil and familiar with other pagan authors¹⁵³, he rebukes one of his students, Wihtfrith, eager to travel to Ireland to study classical literature there¹⁵⁴. Ald-

148. Butturff, *The Monsters and the Scholar* cit., pp. 38-57.

149. Orchard, *The Sources and Meaning* cit., p. 99.

150. *Ibidem*, pp. 99-105.

151. A. P. M. Orchard, *Classical Learning* and M. Lapidge, *Schools*, both in *BEASE*, pp. 108-9 and 421-3, esp. p. 422. At least six manuscripts containing Vergil's works were written or circulating in England *ante* 1100: cfr. Gneuss-Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* cit., nos. 12e (*Aeneid*), 258e (*Georgica*), 477 (*Aeneid*), 503 (*Aeneid*), 648 (*Aeneid* and *Georgica*), and 919 (*Aeneid* and *Georgica*).

152. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* cit., pp. 130-5 and N. Wright, *Bede and Vergil*, «*Romanobarbarica*», 6 (1981-2), pp. 361-79.

153. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* cit., pp. 127-61.

154. *Ibidem*, p. 102. On the *Epistola ad Wihtfridum*, cfr. above, n. 116.

helm's censorious comments closely echo those of the author of the *LM* about his pagan sources, and both can be said to share an «educationally ambivalent background» where appreciation of pagan literature coexists with Christian suspicion¹⁵⁵.

The silhouette emerging from the backdrop of the style and sources of the anonymous author of the *LM* is that of a distinguished Latinist and «a man of impressive learning who was able to draw on the resources of a very considerable library»¹⁵⁶.

This silhouette has often been matched with Aldhelm, whose proficiency in Latin, stylistic peculiarities, and command of a vast array of sources, including Vergil, have indeed much in common with the author of the *LM*. Moreover, Aldhelm also shared an interest in *monstra*, which are the subject of at least eight of his *Enigmata*, namely *Enigma XV (Salamandra)*, *Enigma XXVIII (Minotaurus)*, *Enigma XXXIX (Leo)*, *Enigma LX (Monoceros)*, *Enigma LXXII (Colosus)*, *Enigma LXXXVIII (Basiliscus)*, *Enigma XCV (Scylla)*, and *Enigma XCVI (Elefants)*¹⁵⁷. Notably, six of these eight *monstra*, namely the salamander, the Minotaur, the lion, the Colossus, Scylla, and the elephant, are also dealt with in the *LM*¹⁵⁸. (It has also been suggested that the *LM* was drawn on in another collection of Anglo-Latin *enigmata* with a conspicuous teratological element, that of Eusebius, probably to be identified with Hwætberht, who succeeded Ceolfrith as abbot of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow in 716, but whose date of death is unknown¹⁵⁹.)

Furthermore, Aldhelm's *Enigma XCVII (Nox)*¹⁶⁰, which immediately follows those on Scylla and the elephant, shows a significant overlap with

155. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* cit., p. 102.

156. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 288.

157. For a new edition and facing-page translation of Aldhelm's 100 *Enigmata*, cfr. A. P. M. Orchard (ed.), *The Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, Cambridge (MA)-London 2021 (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 69) (henceforth *OEALRT*), pp. 2-93, with notes to the text at pp. 619-20 and to the translation at pp. 639-73; relevant commentary in A. P. M. Orchard, *A Commentary on the Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, Washington D.C. 2021 (Supplements to the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library) (henceforth *COEALRT*), pp. 1-112.

158. Cfr. *LM*, III.14, I.50, II.1, I.3, I.14, II.20, II.32, and II.2: *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 352, 234, 256, 130, 160, 294, 318, and 258.

159. P. Lendinara, *The Liber monstrorum and Anglo-Saxon Glossaries*, in *Anglo-Saxon Glosses and Glossaries*, cur. Ead., Aldershot 1999 (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 622), pp. 113-38, at pp. 122-3 and 137. On Eusebius's *enigmata*, cfr. *OEALRT*, pp. 140-81 (text and translation), 621 (notes to the text), and 695-715 (notes to the translation), and relevant commentary in *COEALRT*, pp. 172-229.

160. *OEALRT*, pp. 82-5.

LM, I.42 (*De monstro nocturno*), in that both texts draw on Vergil's description of Fame (*Aeneid* IV.173-95), as a huge, winged monster, with as many eyes, ears, and mouths as it has feathers, which flies in the shadows of the night¹⁶¹. The trait of the Vergilian Fame that made it monstrous in the eyes of both Aldhelm and the author of the *LM* was her being generated by Earth, exactly like the giants and the titans¹⁶², earth-born monsters, both of whom, though under different circumstances, fought against the Olympian gods¹⁶³. Indeed, the Fame-inspired, nocturnal monster of *LM*, I.42 occurs at a short distance from entries devoted to giants, such as Tityos (*LM*, I.47; cfr. *Aeneid*, VI.595-7), Aegeon (*LM*, I.48; cfr. *Aeneid*, X.565-8), and the Aloidae (*LM*, I.55; cfr. *Aeneid*, VI.582-4)¹⁶⁴. Also, the titans Coeus and Iapetus, as well as the giant Typhoeus, are mentioned in the very epilogue of Book I of the *LM* (cfr. *Georgics*, I.278-80) as examples of men of the infernal regions (*inferi homines*) described in disgraceful fables (*turpissimae fabulae*)¹⁶⁵. Because of their war against the gods, titans and giants came to represent paradigms of overweening pride and, as such, could be read as pagan antecedents of the fallen angels rebelling against the Judaeo-Christian God¹⁶⁶. Lucifer's rebellion epitomises the sin of pride in Aldhelm's prose *De uirginitate*¹⁶⁷, another text by Aldhelm with which the author of the *LM* must have been familiar, as verbal echoes and parallel phrasing show¹⁶⁸, thereby adding to the analogies linking the two authors in terms of style, sources, themes, and imagery.

The Aldhelmian associations of the *LM* have also been furthered by the (oblique) attribution of a compilation on *monstra* to Aldhelm in the *Liber de natura rerum* (henceforth *LDNR*) by Thomas of Cantimpré (ca. 1201 - ca. 1270)¹⁶⁹. This encyclopaedia, consisting of as many as twenty books in

161. Interestingly, a key source of both Aldhelm and the *LM*, i.e. Isidore, explicitly quotes four lines from Books I and II of Vergil's *Aeneid* in his entry on night in the *Etymologiae* (V.xxxi.1-14): cfr. *COEALRT*, p. 102.

162. Cfr. O. Seyffert, *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities, Mythology, Religion, Literature and Art*, curr. H. Nettleship - J. E. Sandys, Cambridge 2011, ss. vv. *Gigantes* and *Titans*, pp. 253 and 639.

163. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 99-101.

164. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 218, 228, and 230.

165. *Ibidem*, p. 248.

166. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 99-101.

167. Ehwald (ed.), p. 239, ll. 7-12.

168. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 296 and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 95-8 and 100-1.

169. For a recent résumé of Thomas of Cantimpré's life and literary activity, cfr. R. J. D. Smith, *Excessive Saints: Gender, Narrative, and Theological Invention in Thomas of Cantimpré's Mystical Hagi-*

its final redaction¹⁷⁰, relies on a variety of classical, late antique, and medieval sources presented in the Prologue¹⁷¹, among which Thomas also mentions a certain *philosophus Adelinus*¹⁷². Besides the Prologue, Adelinus is explicitly referred to another twenty-five times. Once, he is named as a putative source on the onocentaurs in the introduction to Book III of the *LDNR* for which no precise antecedent has in fact been identified¹⁷³. In the other twenty-four occurrences of the name, instead, Adelinus is quoted in passages that borrow from either Aldhelm's *Enigmata* or the *LM* or both¹⁷⁴. Indeed, the entry on Molossus/Colossus (*LDNR*, III.v.39)¹⁷⁵ has also been traced to Aldhelm's prose *De uirginitate*, XXI, besides Aldhelm's *Enigma* LXXII and *LM* I.3¹⁷⁶, and the entry on the night-raven (*LDNR*, V.92) echoes Aldhelm's *Enigma* XXXV as well as a line of his treatise *De metris* (CXXIII, l. 8)¹⁷⁷.

ographies, New York (NY) 2018 (Gender, Theory and Religion), pp. 23-47. For the *LDNR*, cfr. H. Boese (ed.), *Liber de natura rerum*, Berlin-New York, (NY) 1973.

170. Boese (ed.), pp. VII-IX.

171. *Ibidem*, pp. 3-5.

172. *Ibidem*, p. 4, l. 44. Boese's reading is *Adelinus*, but, as noted by Lapidge, in Boese's base manuscript, London, British Library, Harley 3717, it is difficult to distinguish *Adelinus* from *Adelmus*, because of the easy confusion of the three minims (*in/m*): cfr. the full digitisation of the Harley manuscript available on the British Library website. In turn the spelling *Adelmus* for *Aldhelmus* is not unusual in Aldhelmian manuscripts: cfr. Lapidge, Beowulf, *Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 290, n. 80; cfr. also *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 79, n. 30.

173. Boese (ed.), p. 97, ll. 3-5. Adelinus is credited as the source for the onocentaurs' origin through the adulterous union of man and beast (i.e. ass). In fact, Aldhelm does not deal with onocentaurs in his *Enigmata*, but alludes to the double nature of man and beast of the Minotaur in the dedicated *Enigma* XXVIII: *OEALRT*, pp. 22-3. Otherwise, the hybrid origin of such monsters as centaurs, onocentaurs, hippocentaurs, and the Minotaur, can be considered as commonplace: see, e.g., the relevant entries in Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XI.iii. 37 (centaurs), 38 (Minotaur), and 39 (onocentaurs and hippocentaurs), in F. Gasti (ed.), *Etimologie. Libro XI, de homine et portentis*, Paris 2010 (Auteurs latins du Moyen Âge), pp. 156-9. The onocentaurs are dealt with in detail in Book IV.82 of *LDNR*, the probable antecedents of which are *LM* I.7 (*De hyppocentauris*) and 10 (*De onocentauris*), as well as Aldhelm's *Enigma* XXVIII on the Minotaur: cfr. Knock, *The Wonders of the East* cit., p. 973.

174. Cfr. the list of "Adelinus References" in Knock, *The Wonders of the East* cit., pp. 957-95.

175. In this entry Thomas of Cantimpré distinguishes between the monstrous man *Molosus* and the statue made after him, *colosus*; another entry (*LDNR*, IV.70) deals specifically with *Molosus* the monstrous hound, the source for which is Aldhelm's *Enigma* X: cfr. Boese (ed.), pp. 100 and 149; cfr. also Knock, *The Wonders of the East* cit., pp. 966-7 and 970-1.

176. The Colossus of *LM* I.3 seems to refer to the colossal statue erected by Nero and measuring 120 feet according to Suetonius, whereas both Aldhelm's *Enigma* LXXII and prose *De uirginitate* deal with the Colossus of Rhodes. Notably, however, both *LM* I.3 and the relevant passage from the prose *De uirginitate* attribute to the Colossus a height of 107 feet, a detail which may ultimately derive from Jerome's translation of Eusebius's *Chronici Canones*, thereby adding to the evidence of a shared library between the author of the *LM* and Aldhelm: cfr. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 130-1; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 95 n. 50; and Lapidge, Beowulf, *Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 289, n. 75. Cfr. also Bologna (ed.), pp. 175-6.

177. Boese (ed.), pp. 217-8 and Knock, *The Wonders of the East* cit., p. 979.

Also, eight entries from Book III of the *LDNR*, dedicated to the monstrous men of the East (*De monstruosis hominibus Orientis*)¹⁷⁸, depend on just as many chapters from Book I of the *LM*, itself devoted to men-shaped monsters¹⁷⁹. Whereas the first of these eight entries from the *LDNR* (III.v.19) occurs at some distance from the rest and probably results from the conflation of *LM*, I.22 with at least another source, the *Historia Orientalis* by Jacques de Vitry¹⁸⁰, the seven entries that follow make up an unbroken set (III.v.32-38) dependent on the *LM*, even though the chapters of the *LM* in question are not contiguous¹⁸¹. Finally, this sequence of chapters of the *LDNR* dependent on the *LM* closes with the above-mentioned entry on Molossus/Colossus (III.v.39), which borrows from both Aldhelm and the *LM*, and, what is more, explicitly mentions Adelinus as its source¹⁸². Although he is not named in the preceding set of entries, the explicit reference to Adelinus in the chapter on Molossus/Colossus immediately following them, as well as the association that can be established between Adelinus, Aldhelm, and the *LM* in the twenty-four entries where Adelinus is explicitly named, suggests that the set of eight entries from Book III of the *LDNR* relying on the *LM* were likely attributed to Adelinus, even though he is not explicitly named, and that Adelinus was, in turn, identified with the putative author of the *LM*¹⁸³.

In particular, Ann Knock envisaged that Thomas of Cantimpré drew on a hybrid compilation consisting of a prosified (and epitomised?) version of Aldhelm's *Enigmata* combined with some or all of the *LM*; this hybrid text would have travelled under the name of Adelinus, and as a result the author-

178. The third book of the *LDNR* apparently enjoyed more popularity than the rest of the work, often circulating independently; it has also been printed on its own by A. Hilka, *Liber de monstruosis hominibus Orientis aus Thomas von Cantimpré, De natura rerum*, in *Festschrift zur Jahrhundertfeier der Universität Breslau*, Breslau 1911, pp. 153-65, and together with the Prologue and Book XIX by J. B. Friedman, *La science de la nature: théories and pratiques*, Montreal 1974, pp. 107-54.

179. The eight entries from *LDNR* are III.v.19 and v.32-38: cfr. *De natura rerum*, ed. Boese cit., pp. 99-100. They rely on *LM* I.22, 11, 13, 12, 36, 26, 24, and 20: cfr. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 176, 150, 158, 154, 204, 184, 180, and 172. Cfr. also Knock, *The Wonders of the East* cit., pp. 959-63.

180. *Ibidem*, p. 959, n. 1.

181. Cfr. above, n. 179.

182. Cfr. above, n. 176.

183. For a résumé of the scholarly debate about the identification of Adelinus with Aldhelm alias the author of the *LM*, cfr. Faral, *La queue* cit., pp. 457-70; Bologna (ed.), pp. 173-5, 209 and 217-8; Knock, *The Wonders of the East* cit., pp. 337-50; Ead., *Review of Liber Monstrorum* cit., p. 261; Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 289-91; and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 90-7.

ship of the *LM* material would also have been attributed to him¹⁸⁴. This putative hybrid compilation was put forward by Knock because at least one of Aldhelm's *Enigmata*, that is *Enigma* XV (*Salamandra*), is quoted directly and verbatim in the chapter of the *LDNR* (VIII.30) dedicated to the same reptile¹⁸⁵. Since here the source is specified to be Adelinus's book of *verse* riddles (*De salamandra Adelinus in libro epigrammatum versificans dixit*)¹⁸⁶, Knock deduced that other borrowings from Aldhelm's *Enigmata* cannot have been from the original verse riddles but from a prose version (epitome?) of them, combined with at least part of the *LM*¹⁸⁷.

I would rather agree with Lapidge, though, that it is unnecessary to posit such a composite compilation conflating Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and the *LM*¹⁸⁸, in view of the fact that Thomas of Cantimpré seems to draw on the *Enigmata* and the *LM* discretely. Indeed, the entries of the *LDNR* which may have resulted from a conflation of both source-texts are just three, namely the one on the Colossus (III.v.39)¹⁸⁹, the one on the onocentaurs (IV.82) – the origin of which was apparently a crux for both Aldhelm and Thomas¹⁹⁰ –, and the one on the salamander (VIII.30)¹⁹¹. «The most reasonable explanation», then, is that Thomas of Cantimpré drew on a manuscript which contained at least Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and the *LM* and that the latter too was attributed to Aldhelm¹⁹². Similarly, Porsia has suggested that Thomas of Cantimpré had before him a miscellaneous codex, containing Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and extracts of scientific content from his other works, as well as other texts on natural history, including the *LM*, and that this whole anthology travelled under the name of Adelinus¹⁹³. Be as it may, Thomas of Cantimpré's *LDNR* shows that Aldhelm's *Enigmata* (and perhaps other works by him, such as the prose *De uirginitate*) were associated with the *LM* in at least part of the manuscript

184. *The Wonders of the East* cit., pp. 346–50 and Ead., *Review of Liber Monstrorum* cit., p. 261.

185. Boese (ed.), p. 286 and Knock, *The Wonders of the East* cit., pp. 339 and 989.

186. Boese (ed.), p. 286, l. 62; my emphasis. Cfr. ms. Harley 3717, f. 104v.

187. Cfr. above, n. 184. In support of this putative hybrid compilation, Knock mentions a certain *Liber de proprietatibus rerum* which is quoted by Raoul de Presles in his extended French translation of Augustine's *De ciuitate Dei* (1371 × 1375) as a source of information on giants and attributed by Raoul to an *Adelin*: *The Wonders of the East* cit., p. 347.

188. Beowulf, Aldhelm, *the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 291, n. 84.

189. Cfr. above, pp. 93–4.

190. Cfr. above, p. 93 and Knock, *The Wonders of the East* cit., p. 348.

191. Cfr. above, n. 185.

192. Lapidge, Beowulf, Aldhelm, *the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 291.

193. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 78–9 and 90–1.

tradition and, as a result of this association, Aldhelm's authorship was extended to the *LM*.

This element of the manuscript tradition has added to the similarities in style, theme, and sources between Aldhelm's *corpus* and the *LM*, as well as to the link between the latter and the Old English poem *Beowulf*, itself not without Aldhelmian associations¹⁹⁴, thereby ultimately favouring the attribution of the *LM* to Aldhelm on the part of a few earlier scholars¹⁹⁵. More recent scholarship, however, has specified the relationship between Aldhelm and the *LM* by highlighting also some tell-tale discrepancies between the two, which on the whole discourage a definitive identification of the author of the *LM* with Aldhelm¹⁹⁶. Rather than to Aldhelm himself, the *LM* should be attributed to someone cultivating the same «house style»¹⁹⁷ – whether one of his colleagues or disciples or epigones¹⁹⁸. Porsia has attempted to identify and name some individuals of Aldhelm's entourage, such as Wihtfrith and Ehfrith, both disciples and correspondents of Aldhelm's¹⁹⁹, or Æthilwald, also a disciple and correspondent of Aldhelm's and, what is more, author of four Latin poems in rhythmical octosyllables²⁰⁰.

However, none of these attributions has gathered general consensus or has been supported by substantial evidence, and the closest we can get to the still anonymous author of the *LM* is his most likely scholarly context as defined by a certain linguistic and stylistic taste, thematic predilections, and bibliographical resources. In particular, the contour of a distinctive Southumbrian school of Latin poets has recently been highlighted by Orchard, as the earliest school of Anglo-Latin verse, operating *ca.* 690 × *ca.* 740 and having Aldhelm, Tatwine, and Boniface as its major representatives²⁰¹. Although the *LM* is a prose text, the Aldhelmian brand of its La-

194. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit.

195. Faral, *La quene* cit., pp. 458-61; Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 455-61; and Bologna (ed.), p. 174.

196. Cfr. above, pp. 84-6.

197. Cfr. above, p. 86 and n. 120.

198. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 289-96; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 94-5; *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 93-7; and Bologna (ed.), pp. 178-9 and 208-11.

199. Cfr. above, n. 116.

200. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 93-7. Cfr. also A. P. M. Orchard, *Æthilwald*, in *BEASE*, p. 22.

201. A. P. M. Orchard, *Alcuin and Cynewulf: The Art and Craft of Anglo-Saxon Verse*, «Journal of the British Academy», 8 (2020), pp. 295-399, esp. pp. 314-6.

tinity, the range of its virtual library and, especially, its penchant for a verse source such as Vergil, would point to that «Southumbrian school», spear-headed by Aldhelm, as the most fitting milieu to which the anonymous author of the *LM* could be assigned at the current state of knowledge.

Much of the scholarly attention devoted to the *LM* owes to its association with the renown Old English poem *Beowulf*, as well as with the *Beowulf*-manuscript as a whole²⁰². Besides the epic of the monster-slayer Beowulf, the codex features a poem on the Jewish heroine Judith and her defeat of the proud pagan prince Holofernes, a passion of St. Christopher, belonging to the monstrous race of the cynocephali, a version of *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus*²⁰³ and of the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*²⁰⁴, the latter two long-established sources of the *LM* themselves²⁰⁵. In sum the *Beowulf*-manuscript could be described as a *liber monstrorum* in its own right²⁰⁶.

Among the numerous parallels which have been highlighted between *Beowulf* and the *LM*²⁰⁷, the most obvious and most significant concerns Hygelac, a character of the poem as well as the protagonist of *LM* I.2, but also a historical figure²⁰⁸. In the poem Hygelac, king of the Geats and maternal uncle of Beowulf, is ultimately killed during an ill-fated expedition in Frankish-controlled Frisia, references to which are repeatedly made in

202. For a convenient overview of the scholarly debate on this point, cfr. *Liber monstrorum*², Por-sia (ed.), 71-80; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 110; and T. J. Burbery, *Fossil Folklore in the "Liber Monstrorum", "Beowulf", and Medieval Scholarship*, «Folklore», 126/III (2015), pp. 317-35, esp. pp. 325-9. For further bibliography, cfr. also below, n. 285.

203. Cfr. above, n. 133.

204. Cfr. above, n. 132.

205. For an edition with facing-page translation of all the texts of the *Beowulf*-manuscript, cfr. R. D. Fulk (ed.), *The Beowulf Manuscript*, Cambridge (MA) 2010 (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 3).

206. The scholar who first proposed the definition of the *Beowulf*-manuscript as a *liber de diversis monstribus* was K. Sisam, *The Compilation of the Beowulf Manuscript*, in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature*, cur. Id. Oxford 1953, pp. 65-96, esp. p. 96. Sisam's intuition has been subsequently fully explored by Orchard in his monograph *Pride and Prodigies* cit.

207. Cfr. at least Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 296-9; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 86-115; Id., *A Critical Companion* cit., pp. 133-6; Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., pp. 461-71; and Princi Braccini, *Tra folklore germanico e latinità insulare* cit.

208. For an introduction to the fictional and historical character and relevant sources, cfr. K. Malone, *Hygelac*, «English Studies», 21 (1939), pp. 108-19 and C. Susaneck, *Hygelac*, in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde begründet von J. Hoops und herausgegeben von H. Beck et al.*, 2nd ed., 36 vols., Berlin-New York (NY) 1973-2008 (henceforth *RLGA*), XV, pp. 298-300. On Hygelac's key role in the poem, cfr. A. G. Brodeur, *The Art of Beowulf*, Berkeley (CA) 1971, pp. 79-86.

the poem²⁰⁹. In the *LM* Hygelac is the king of the *Getae* who is killed by the Franks and whose most striking feature is the gigantic size, still attested by his abnormal bones; these are preserved on an island in the delta of the river Rhine and are shown as a wonder to travellers²¹⁰.

No exact source has been identified for the *LM* chapter, but Hygelac and his violent death at the hands of ruthless enemies must have been a familiar tale, of which variant versions, both written and oral, circulated on both sides of the Channel and in Scandinavia²¹¹. Two Frankish historical sources, the *Historia Francorum* by Gregory of Tours († 593 or 594) and the derivative *Liber historiae Francorum* of the early eighth century, mention a *Ch(d)ochilaicus*, king of the Danes, who attacked the Gaulish coast *ca.* 525²¹². Interestingly, the *Liber historiae Francorum* specifies that the target of the Danish attack was a region controlled by the *Attoarii*, a Frankish tribe of the Lower Rhine corresponding to the *Hētware* of the poem²¹³, who soon took a crushing revenge on *Chochilaicus* as he stayed behind while most of his fleet set sails with their cargo of captives and treasure. At the command of their prince Theudebert, a great army of *Attoarii* slaughtered the Danes, killing *Chochilaicus* and seizing their booty. The detail of the role of the *Attoarii*, unparalleled in Gregory, and the fact that in one manuscript witness of the *Liber historiae Francorum*, *Chochilaicus* is qualified as *re[x] Gotorum* in a superscript emendation²¹⁴, has suggested

209. R. D. Fulk - J. D. Niles - R. E. Bjork (edd.), *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, Toronto 2008 (henceforth *Klaeber IV*), ll. 1202-14a, 2201b, 2354b-66, 2493b-508, and 2910b-21. Cfr. M. Lapidge, "Beowulf" and Perception, «Proceedings of the British Academy», 111 (2001), pp. 61-97, at pp. 70-2, and R. North, *The Origins of Beowulf: From Vergil to Wiglaf*, Oxford 2007, pp. 39-42.

210. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 128-9.

211. For a convenient resumé of the different accounts on Hygelac and relevant bibliography, cfr. L. Neidorf, *King Hygelac of the Geats: History, Legend, and Beowulf*, «Neophilologus», 106 (2022), pp. 461-77, esp. p. 463, n. 4 and p. 465, n. 11, and A. Thompson, *Rethinking Hygelac's Raid*, «English Languages Notes», 38/IV (2001), pp. 9-16.

212. B. Krusch - W. Levison (edd.), *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Libri historiarum X*, Hannover 1965 (MGH SRM 1), III.3, p. 99, and B. Krusch (ed.), *Liber historiae Francorum*, Hannover 1988 (MGH SRM 2), § 19, pp. 274-5.

213. Cfr. *Klaeber IV*, ll. 2363 and 2916, and *Liber historiae Francorum*, Krusch (ed.), p. 274, l. 22. On the *Attoarii*, cfr. G. Neumann - H. v. Petrikovits, *Chattuarier*, in *RGLA IV*, pp. 391-3.

214. In the Migration Age the ethnonym *Dani*, attested both in Gregory's *Historia* and in the *Liber historiae Francorum*, had a wider denotation than its modern counterpart, meaning all Scandinavians, and it may be that, like the reading *Getae* of the *LM*, the emendation *Gothorum* in the *Liber historiae Francorum* could be taken to refer to the Geats: cfr. E. Wessén, *Dänen*, in *RGLA V*, 174-6, esp. p. 176, and below, n. 232. On the etymological relationship between the ethnonyms Goths and Geats, possibly conveying also a shared ethnogenesis, cfr. T. Anderson, *Gøtar*, in *RGLA XII*, pp. 278-83, and B. Gräslund, *The Nordic Beowulf*, trans. by M. Naylor, York 2022 (Medieval Media Culture), pp. 39-62.

that the anonymous historiographer must have relied on an additional source besides Gregory²¹⁵. Such a source, whether oral or written, aligns the *Liber historiae Francorum* to the Beowulfian version of Hygelac's story, where he is a king of the Geats who falls to an overwhelming and composite Frankish army including the *Attoarii*²¹⁶. Finally, both Frankish sources echo the Old English poem in that in all three accounts Hygelac's expedition seems to have been driven by looting, with the transfer of treasure – alternately won by Hygelac's raiding army and then restored to its Frankish owners – conveying the key *Beowulfian* theme of *edwenden*, that is the capricious changes in fortune, and anticipating the similar transfer of the magnificent necklace earned by Beowulf himself after his exploits against Grendel, the first of his three major monstrous antagonists²¹⁷.

The *LM* does not provide any information about the raid, but confirms two important details of both *Beowulf* and the Frankish historical source-texts, that is the agents of Hygelac's death, the Franks, and its location, the Rhine delta. More relevantly for the purpose of this essay, the *LM* uniquely shares with *Beowulf* Hygelac's Geatish nationality²¹⁸ and very name. As to the former, the *LM* reading *Getae* may be considered a variant form for *Gautae* or *Gauti*, the Latin equivalent of the Germanic ethnonyms *Geatas* (Old English) and *Gautar*/*Gōtar*/*Gautir* (Old Norse)²¹⁹. As to Hygelac's name, while the two Frankish spellings, *Chlochilaicus* and *Chochilaicus*, are clearly (corrupt) Latin transliterations of a Continental Germanic form²²⁰, the spelling of Hygelac's name accepted by the two

215. Thompson, *Rethinking Hygelac's Raid* cit., p. 12; F. M. Biggs, *History and Fiction in the Frisian Raid*, in *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment*, cur. L. Neidorf, Cambridge 2014 (Anglo-Saxon Studies, 24), pp. 138-56, esp. p. 142; and Neidorf, *King Hygelac of the Geats* cit., pp. 463-4.

216. According to Richard North, there is «near certainty» that the *Beowulf*-poet drew on the *Liber historiae Francorum* for Hygelac's story: cfr. his *The Origins of Beowulf* cit., p. 43.

217. E. Currie, *Hygelac's Raid in Historiography and Poetry: The King's Necklace and Beowulf as Epic*, «Neophilologus», 104 (2020), pp. 391-400, esp. pp. 392-4, and J. D. Niles, *The Myth of the Feud in Anglo-Saxon England*, «Journal of English and Germanic Philology», 114/II (2015), pp. 163-200, esp. p. 187.

218. But cfr. above the emendation attested in one manuscript of the *Liber historiae Francorum*: p. 98 and n. 214.

219. Cfr. above, n. 214.

220. All the variant forms of the anthroponym attested in the two Frankish sources (*Chlochilaicus*, *Chrochilaicus*, *Chlodilaichus*, and *Hrodolaicus* of Gregory's *Historia Francorum*, and *Chochilaicus*, *Chronchilaicus*, and *Chobilaicus* of the *Liber historiae Francorum*) retain the Common Germanic diphthong *-ai-* (from an original **Hugilaikaz*), while the diphthong has instead typically developed into the monophthong *-ā-* in Old English (cfr. *Hygelāc*/*Higelāc*): cfr. Lapidge, *Beowulf*, *Aldhelm*, the *Liber monstrorum* and *Wessex* cit., p. 286, and Klaeber IV, p. 310. Also the evolution of the original Germanic *-g-* and *-k-* > *-ch-* in at least some of the Frankish forms can be traced to the High German consonant shift.

most recent editors of the *LM*, and indeed attested in at least one witness, that is C, is *Hyglac[us]/Higlac[us]*²²¹, a transparent transliteration of the Old English *Hyg(e)lāc/Hig(e)lāc*²²². More specifically, the spelling *Hygelāc/Higelāc*, by far the most common in *Beowulf*, is late West Saxon, that is the dialect in which the poem is predominantly transmitted in its unique witness, although it also shows a characteristic admixture of dialects, which has been variously interpreted in the (highly controversial and prolonged) debate on *Beowulf*'s genesis and transmission²²³. Indeed, at least once, Hygelac's name is attested in the variant *Hylāc* (l. 1530b), philologically and metrically equivalent to *Hyglāc*, a form which shows the syncope of the (characteristically late West Saxon) middle vowel and has been identified as distinctively Anglian²²⁴.

Whether or not *Beowulf* was Anglian in origin²²⁵, the form *Hylāc* and/or the philologically equivalent *Hyglāc* could be argued to have been the original form of Hygelac's name in *Beowulf* also on metrical grounds²²⁶. Should this be the case, then the link between the poem and the *LM* would be further corroborated, in that the possible original *Beowulf* reading *Hylāc/Hyglāc* would correspond exactly to the C reading *Hyglac[us]/Higlac[us]*, accepted as the original reading of the *LM* by Orchard and Porsia²²⁷.

Admittedly, the descriptive elements of Hygelac's portrait in the *LM* are unparalleled in *Beowulf*, that is his gigantic size, already evident in his childhood, as no horse could carry him since the age of twelve, and the detail of his huge bones preserved on an island in low Rhineland and serving as a kind of tourist attraction. Whether this *LM* sketch attests to the circulation by the early eighth-century, in both England and low Rhineland, of a Hygelac's biography in three parts, that is childhood, reign in Geat-

221. *Higlacus* is Orchard's accepted reading, whereas *Hyglacus* is Porsia's: cfr. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 258, and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 128, with the variants in apparatus. C spells the name *Hyglac[us]* in the chapter heading and *Higlac[us]* in the text: on C as the manuscript witness of the *LM* of most obvious Insular derivation, cfr. above, p. 71 and pp. 83-4. On the *ily* alternation in Old English orthography, cfr. above, n. 106.

222. Notably, the same Old English name, though denoting other people, is also rendered as *Hyglacus/Higlacus* in Anglo-Latin texts: Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., pp. 286-7.

223. For a convenient résumé, cfr. *Klaeber IV*, pp. CXXIX-CLIX.

224. C. L. Wrenn (ed.), *Beowulf with the Finnesburg Fragment*, rev. by W. F. Bolton, London 1973, pp. 31 and 38; Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex*, pp. 297-8; and *Klaeber IV*, § 19.10, pp. CXLI-CXLII.

225. *Klaeber IV*, pp. CLIV-CLVIII.

226. Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 298.

227. Cfr. above, n. 221.

land, and death in Frisia, as Richard North has argued²²⁸, is in fact unprovable. At best, it could reasonably be expected that some elements of the *LM* narrative may have been shared by the *Beowulf* poet and his audience, though left implicit.

While no physical description of Hygelac as such is provided in the poem²²⁹, the extraordinary height could have been considered a given for a Germanic warrior king²³⁰, as attested in a number of sagas²³¹, and especially for a Geatish king, as several medieval traditions attributed the Geats a tall and strongly-built figure²³². Also, Hygelac's gigantism has been explained as a reflex of the king's association with his most renown retainer, Beowulf, the strongest man in the world (ll. 789-90), with whom Hygelac entertains an enduringly close and affectionate relationship²³³.

If high stature can be considered as a commonplace of the physiognomics of valiant Germanic heroes or the very pre-condition of their strength and prowess, on the other hand, abnormal proportions are also one of the most characteristic and obvious symptoms of monstrosity, both

228. *The Origins of Beowulf* cit., p. 43.

229. A descriptive detail referring to Hygelac's height could perhaps be read in l. 1926a, where the very adjective *beah* («high») occurs, but it most likely refers to Hygelac's hall rather than Hygelac himself: cfr. Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., p. 462, n. 65, and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 113, n. 118. Indeed, the high and vast proportions of building is a recurrent motif in both the poem and the *LM*: cfr. Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare* cit., pp. 703-5.

230. A strongly-built and tall physique is a veritable topos of the description of Germanic peoples in antique and late antique ethnography: e.g., in *De bello Gallico* (i.39), Caesar describes Germanic men as *ingenti magnitudine corporum*; in the *Germania* (iv.2), Tacitus attributes to them *magna corpora*; and in the *Etymologiae* (IX.ii.97), Isidore even associates the very toponym *Germania* with the adjective *immanis*, in one of his characteristic folk etymologies: *Germaniae gentes dicta quod sint immania corpora*: M. Reydellet (ed.), *Étymologies: Livre IX: Les langues et les groupes sociaux*, Paris 1984 (Auteurs latins du Moyen Âge), p. 97. Indeed, the gigantic stature did not concern only Germanic tribes, but was generally attributed to men of bygone days in classical tradition: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 105.

231. Orchard, *A Critical Companion* cit., p. 134; Orchard mentions in particular Gøngu-Hrólfr or "Walker-Rolf", a saga-hero who, like Hygelac, was so tall that no horse could carry him; *ibidem*, n. 25.

232. Cfr. J. A. Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf: A Study in the Geographical Mythology of the Middle Ages*, Madison, WI 1967, pp. 12-42. In the *Etymologiae* (IX.ii.89), Isidore describes the Goths as tall and massive: Reydellet (ed.), p. 91. Interestingly, he points out that the Goths were preferably called *Getae* by the ancients, i.e. he uses the same spelling attested in the *LM* for the Geats; however, *Getae* originally was an alternative name of the Dacians, which eventually came to identify the Goths, because some Gothic tribes temporarily settled on Dacian territory: cfr. *ibidem*, p. 91, n. 121. Cfr. also the title of Jordanes's *De historia actibusque Getarum* or *Getica* and the superscript emendation [rex] *Gotthorum* in a manuscript of the *Liber historiae Francorum* to denote Hygelac, otherwise considered Danish in the Frankish sources: cfr. above, p. 98 and n. 214.

233. Neidorf, *King Hygelac of the Geats* cit., pp. 471-4.

physical and moral²³⁴. Heroes of old and giants are associated in both pagan sources, such as Vergil, and Judaeo-Christian ones, from the Old Testament (Gen 4, 1-4) to Augustine²³⁵. Thus, the gigantic size is a trait often shared by the hero and his antagonist, according to that osmotic or mimetic relationship between man and monster which is one of the most perceptive, if disturbing, facet of the representation of the two by both the *Beowulf* poet and the author of the *LM*²³⁶. If the latter text clearly includes Hygelac among human-shaped monsters, the former depicts a subtly ambivalent character, in that, although a worthy king and a brave warrior, Hygelac seems to have been driven to his fateful expedition to Frisia by *wlenco* (l. 1206a), a term which has traditionally been translated as «pride» or «arrogance», leading to a pejorative interpretation of Hygelac's character in the poem²³⁷. Indeed, Hygelac's very name has been taken to reflect the character's unbalanced disposition and it has been suggested that it might mean «frivolity, perturbation, instability of mind»²³⁸. More recent scholarship has challenged the implications of personal names on character representation in *Beowulf*²³⁹, and alerted to the wider range of connota-

234. Giants were assigned a malignant genealogy by both classical mythology and Judeo-Christian tradition: for a synthesis, cfr. *Etymologiae*, XI.iii.13-14: Gasti (ed.), pp. 140-3. Cfr. also C. Leconteux, *Demons and Spirits of the Land: Ancestral Lore and Practices*, trans. J. E. Graham, Rochester (VT) - Toronto 2015, pp. 14-22.

235. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 105-6, and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 125, n. 7, and 243, n. 67.

236. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 28-57 and 113-5. On the porous boundaries between giants and heroes in twelfth- and thirteenth-century courtly poetry, cfr. T. M. Boyer, *The Giant Hero in Medieval Literature*, Leiden-Boston, (MA) 2016.

237. Cfr. for example R. E. Kaske, *Sapientia et fortitudo as the Controlling Theme of Beowulf*, «Studies in Philology», 55 (1958), pp. 423-56, esp. p. 440; Id., *The Sigemund-Heremod and Hama-Hygelac Passages in Beowulf*, «PMLA», 94 (1959), pp. 489-94, esp. p. 490; S. C. Bandy, *Cain, Grendel, and the Giants of Beowulf*, «Papers on Language and Literature», 9 (1973), pp. 235-49, esp. pp. 244-5; E. B. Irving Jr, *Heroic Role-Models: Beowulf and Others*, in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honor of Jess B. Bessinger, Jr*, curr. H. Damico - J. Leyerle, Kalamazoo, (MI) 1993 (Studies in Medieval Culture, 32), pp. 347-72, esp. p. 361; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 113-4; Id., *A Critical Companion* cit., p. 210; Klaeber IV, p. 194; and A. Hall, *Hygelac's Only Daughter: A Present, a Potentate, and a Peaceweaver in Beowulf*, «Studia neophilologica», 78 (2006), pp. 81-7; for counterarguments to Hall, cfr. L. Neidorf, *Hygelac and His Daughter: Rereading Beowulf lines 2985-98*, «Medium Aevum», 89/II (2020), pp. 350-5.

238. F. C. Robinson, *The Significance of Names in Old English Literature*, «Anglia», 86 (1968), pp. 14-58, rptd. in Id., *The Tomb of Beowulf and Other Essays on Old English*, Oxford-Cambridge, MA 1993, pp. 185-218, esp. pp. 213-7, and Susaneck, *Hygelac* cit., p. 300.

239. R. D. Fulk, *Unferth and His Name*, «Modern Philology», 85 (1987), pp. 113-27; Id., *The Etymology and Significance of Beowulf's Name*, «Anglo-Saxon», 1 (2007), pp. 109-36; S. Jurasinski, *The Feminine Name Wealhtheow and the Problem of Beowulfian Anthroponymy*, «Neophilologus», 91 (2007), pp. 701-15; and L. Neidorf, *Wealhtheow and Her Name: Etymology, Characterization, and Textual Criticism*, «Neophilologus», 102 (2018), pp. 75-89.

tions of OE *wlenco*, including the more positive ones of «ambition» or «bold indifference to prospective misfortune» or *edwenden*²⁴⁰, which is one of the most distinctive, as well as inherently tragic, traits of Germanic heroes²⁴¹. As the *Beowulf* poet and the author of the *LM* have shown, the heroic condition is a complex, multi-faceted one and rather than monolithic embodiments of the highest virtues and ideals²⁴², heroes can also harbour in themselves much less flattering elements of mankind up to its potentially monstrous degeneration²⁴³. Thus, while Hygelac's merits as king of the Geats and indeed as uncle and lord of the protagonist of the poem are undeniable, the obvious interest that the poet shows towards his character and the reason why he so often mentions Hygelac's endeavours should perhaps be sought in the moral dilemmas they present²⁴⁴.

The surviving testimony to Hygelac's gigantic proportions – his bones preserved on an island in the Rhine delta and shown to travellers for their extraordinary size – is also an element of the *LM* description unparalleled as such in the poem, yet echoing the *Beowulf* references to the biblical Flood as God's means of vengeance on the giants²⁴⁵. Indeed, the putative location of Hygelac's bones close to the seashore suggests that they could have been washed up there when the Flood waters finally retreated, a concept which emerges three times more in the *LM*, namely at the end of the prologue of Book I and in chapters 13 and 54 of the same book²⁴⁶. Both the prologue and chapter 54 of Book I deal with the giants, although in the prologue they are referred to obliquely as those creatures generated by the earth²⁴⁷, and while the prologue refers to their death by drowning, chapter 54 states that their bones can be found on seashores or in the recesses of the earth. No antecedent has been identified for the latter detail, but quite a few analogues can be found in the exegetic tradition on the Flood²⁴⁸. As to chapter

240. Cfr. above, p. 99.

241. Neidorf, *King Hygelac of the Geats* cit., pp. 467-71.

242. According to Neidorf, Hygelac is a «valorous and magnanimous benefactor», «a concerned, pious, and grateful lord», «the ideal lord»: *King Hygelac of the Geats* cit., pp. 462, 472, and 474.

243. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 169-71.

244. North, *The Origins of Beowulf* cit., pp. 39-40.

245. Cfr. Klaeber IV, ll. 1258b-67a and 1688b-93. On the theme of the Flood in the poem, cfr. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 78-84 and Id., *A Critical Companion* cit., pp. 134 and 138-40.

246. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), pp. 124, 158, and 242.

247. «quae terra foveat [aut] quondam fovisse fertur»: *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 124, ll. 2-3.

248. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 319, and *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 125, n. 7 and p. 243, n. 67. A similar image is also found in Vergil's description of Priam's corpse, itself too of gigantic proportions, lying headless on the seashore (*Aeneid*, II. 557-8): cfr. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 107-8.

I.13 concerning the remains of a gigantic girl washed up on the shores of western Europe with her head injured, no specific source has been identified either²⁴⁹. As noted by Porsia and Bologna, the author seems to point to an oral tradition and world-wide folkloric lore about sacrificial rituals of young women to sea monsters or deities²⁵⁰, but Orchard has demonstrated that the most pertinent analogues can in fact be found in medieval Irish vernacular texts (though admittedly much later than the *LM*), where sea-bourne giantesses seem to be ubiquitous²⁵¹.

It has also been argued that Hygelac's gigantic bones alluded to in *LM* I.2 may refer to the actual remains of prehistoric fauna, in particular mammoths, which have profusely been found in the Rhine delta and probably came to be identified with Hygelac's rests in folk legend since they were discovered on his traditional death-site²⁵². According to Claude Lecouteux, prehistoric remains indeed served as one of the major sources of evidence for the existence of monsters in the Middle Ages, and as such they were even displayed in churches²⁵³.

It may be speculated that this remarkable find may have had an impact, however oblique, on the *Beowulf* poet too, in that bone-related lexicon and imagery, otherwise quite sparse in the poem²⁵⁴, peppers the lines concerning the feud with the Frisians²⁵⁵. Also, it may be worth noting that the

249. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 158, and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 318.

250. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 159, n. 25, and Bologna (ed.), p. 80. Oral tradition (*ferunt*) also seems to underlie *LM* I.32, which deals with a (gigantic?) monster, who is again located near the Ocean, although here he is alive and snatches a ship and its crew from the waves, placing them on dry land: cfr. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 196; Whitbread suggested a possible, but rather weak, analogue with *Beowulf*'s Grendel: *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., p. 466; cfr. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 319 and Bologna (ed.), pp. 87-8.

251. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 107-9. Cfr. also below, p. 112.

252. Burbery, *Fossil Folklore* cit.

253. *Les monstres dans la pensée médiévale européenne*, 3rd ed., Paris 2000 (Traditions et croyances), p. 16. On the monstrous in churches, cfr. A. Kirk, *The Marvellous and the Monstrous in the Sculpture of Twelfth-Century Europe*, Woodbridge 2013 (Boydell Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture); on dragons in English and Scandinavian medieval churches in particular, cfr. M. E. Ruggerini, *L'eroe germanico contro avversari mostruosi: tra testo e iconografia*, in *La funzione dell'eroe germanico: storicità, metafora, paradigma*, cur. T. Pàroli, Roma 1995, pp. 201-57, esp. pp. 231-2.

254. The «bone-words» in *Beowulf* amount to just a total of eight, i.e. *bān*, *bān-cofa*, *bān-fæt*, *bān-fāb*, *bān-gār*, *bān-bring*, *bān-hūs*, and *bān-loc*: cfr. A. P. M. Orchard, *Word-Hord: A Lexicon of Old English Verse*, Oxford 2023 (CLASP Ancillary Publications 1), ss.iii.

255. Cfr., e.g., *bān-fæt*, «bone-vessel, body» (l. 1116a), denoting the corpse of the son of the Frisian king Finn and his Danish spouse Hildeburh, who gets killed during the feud and is cremated next to his maternal uncle Hnæf; *bān-hūs*, «bone-house, body» (l. 2508a), denoting the corpse of Dæghrefn, Hygelac's Frankish killer, who is in turn slain by Beowulf in revenge; finally, *bān-*

Danish hall, Heorot, is once said to be *bān-fāh*, «bone-adorned» (l. 780a), itself probably an allusion to the antlers or horns apparently decorating the hall gables (or possibly to hunt trophies adorning its interior)²⁵⁶.

A Hygelac-figure is also attested in Scandinavian sources. The *Gesta Danorum* by Saxo Grammaticus († after 1217) feature two characters named Huglecus. The former is a Danish king who defeats two Swedish kings in a naval battle, a possible analogue of Hygelac's invasion of Sweden and defeat of the Swedish king Ongentheow in *Beowulf* (ll. 2941-98)²⁵⁷. More significant is the second Huglecus (or Hugletus), an indolent and decadent king of Ireland, who lavishes his immense wealth on mimes and jugglers, while disregarding the art of war²⁵⁸. When threatened by a Danish invasion, he resorts to two mercenaries, Gegatus and Suipdagerus, but is ultimately defeated and slain, while his treasure is scattered by the Danes all over Dublin, in what can probably be read as an echo of the Franks' pillage of Hygelac's army mentioned in both *Beowulf* and the Frankish historical sources²⁵⁹.

A similar figure of a helpless, hedonistic king, named Hugleikr²⁶⁰, occurs in the *Ynglinga saga*, a saga on the Swedish royal dynasty authored by Snorri Sturluson in the 1220s²⁶¹. A Swedish king, Hugleikr rules his lands in peace and hosts a large company of musicians and magicians; when threatened by pirates, his defences are boosted by two valiant brothers, Geigaðr and Svipdagr – named exactly like the two mercenaries employed by the Irish king Huglecus in the *Gesta Danorum* –, but Hugleikr is also ultimately defeated and killed²⁶².

helm, «bone-helmet, skull», occurring in the *Finnsburh Fragment* (l. 30a), a fragmentary heroic poem on the Frisian expedition: cfr. Orchard, *Word-Hord* cit., ss.iii.

256. On the association of Heorot with the stag as a symbol of royal power, cfr. at least F. Leneghan, *Beowulf and the Hunt*, «Humanities», 11/II (2022), available online. It might be speculated that the antlers and horns decorating Heorot may have triggered associations with the prehistoric fossils decorating medieval churches: cfr. above, n. 253.

257. *Gesta Danorum*, IV.vii: *Gesta Danorum. The history of the Danes*, K. Friis-Jensen (ed.), trans. by P. Fisher, 2 vols., Oxford 2015 (Oxford Medieval Texts), I, pp. 244-5.

258. *Gesta Danorum*, VI.v.11-13: Friis-Jensen (ed.), I, pp. 384-7.

259. North, *The Origins of Beowulf* cit., p. 44 and Susaneck, *Hygelac* cit., p. 299.

260. The Old Norse name *Hugleikr* correspond to the Old English *Hygelāc*, and like the latter has been interpreted to denote intellectual instability or unreliability: cfr. Robinson, *The Significance of Names* cit., pp. 215-16, esp. p. 216, n. 109.

261. *Ynglinga saga*, 22: B. Aðalbarnarson (ed.), Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla. I*, 4th ed., Reykjavík 2002 (Íslensk Fornrit, 26), pp. 42-3.

262. North, *The Origins of Beowulf* cit., pp. 43-4.

In sum, the Huglecus/Hugleikr of the Scandinavian sources is alternately Irish, Danish or Swedish; he is attacked by Scandinavian invaders that he is ultimately unable to confront, because of his insignificant martial talent and frivolous disposition. Thus, the Scandinavian character is quite different from the valiant warrior king of *Beowulf* or the impressive giant of the *LM*, both belonging to the Geats and defeated by the Franks. However, both the *Beowulfian* Hygelac and the Scandinavian Huglecus/Hugleikr fight their ultimate fight in a marine environment and die trying to defend their treasure²⁶³.

All of the above shows that Hygelac was the subject of quite a few narratives, both legendary and historical, both written and oral, circulating on the Continent, in the Insular world and in Scandinavia, from late antiquity to at least the thirteenth century. Within this rather vast and varied *corpus*, it is significant that *Beowulf* and the *LM* uniquely share the same form of the name as well as the ethnicity of the character. Admittedly, only the *LM* makes explicit reference to Hygelac's gigantic size, but this element seems to be echoed – albeit obliquely – also in the poem. Both *Beowulf* and the *LM* seem to draw on a vast and composite repertoire of gigantic monsters, both heathen and Judaeo-Christian²⁶⁴, and share what may be called a penchant for them, as shown by the sheer number of human-shaped gigantic monsters in the *LM* or by the recurrent associations of Grendel and his mother with the giants in *Beowulf*²⁶⁵. Indeed, such a penchant could be extended to include the Nowell anthology as a whole, where the cynocephali, the dog-headed giants subject of *LM* I.16²⁶⁶, feature in no less than three items of the codex, namely the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* and *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus*, two key texts of pagan paradoxography which also count among the sources of the *LM*²⁶⁷, as well

263. *Ibidem*, pp. 44-5.

264. Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare* cit., pp. 700-2 and 710-5, and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 58-139.

265. Cfr. at least Bandy, *Cain, Grendel, and the Giants of Beowulf* cit., pp. 235-49 and Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare* cit., pp. 700-2.

266. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 164 and p. 165, n. 28. Cfr. also Bologna (ed.), pp. 81-2.

267. It has been argued that the images of the two Latin copies of *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus* attested in two early English manuscripts (London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. V, part 1, s. XI^{2/4}, and the derivative Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. 614 [S.C. 2144], s. XII *med.*) seem to reflect the «attitudes of extreme hostility towards [monsters] present in the [LM;] alternatively [there] were extant in England manuscripts of the [LM] with accompanying illustrations [and these] served as the source» for the Tiberius and Bodley witnesses of the *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus*: cfr. J. B. Friedman, *The Marvels-of-the-East Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Art*, in *Sources of An-*

as the *Life of St. Christopher*, where the monster of heathen antiquity is refashioned into the Christ-bearing saint²⁶⁸.

Another of the very few unsourced chapters of the *LM* shows a striking echo of *Beowulf*, namely chapter II.23 (*De bestia venenosa*), where an unspecified beast is said to be so venomous that, although of small size, even lions fear it, as its poison has the power to melt even an iron blade²⁶⁹. Now, Grendel seems to share exactly the same characteristic, in that his blood manages to melt the blade of an exceptionally mighty sword, ancient and made by giants with which Beowulf beheads him (ll. 1558a, 1562b, and 1663a).

Porsia identifies the ultimate antecedent of the *LM* venomous beast with the *leontophonos*, described in the *Etymologiae* as a small animal, the flesh of which is so toxic that even a small amount of it can kill lions if they feed on it²⁷⁰. However, a closer analogue of the *bestia venenosa* of the *LM* is probably represented by the *bestiolae venenatae* described twice in the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister²⁷¹. These *bestiolae* are so venomous that contact with their teeth or breath can kill bigger animals or men, and their blood can melt the iron of the traps prepared to catch them, although the beasts themselves die after the effort of secreting their venom²⁷². Previous scholarship has considered the *Cosmographia* as a possible source of *LM* II.23²⁷³, whereas the most recent editor of the *Cosmographia* has suggested that in all probability it was the latter to draw on the *LM*²⁷⁴. Thus the re-

glo-Saxon Culture, cur. P. E. Szarmach, Kalamazoo (MI) 1986, pp. 319-41, quotation at p. 336. For a detailed study of the early English manuscript tradition of *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus*, cfr. A. J. Ford, *Marvel and Artefact: The "Wonders of the East" in Its Manuscript Context*, Leiden 2015 (Library of the Written Word. The Manuscript World, 45). Cfr. also above, nn. 132-3.

268. Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare* cit., pp. 710-15, and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., 12-8. On the key role of cynocephali in late antique and medieval teratology and their problematic classification, cfr. K. Steel, *Centaurs, Satyrs, and Cynocephali: Medieval Scholarly Teratology and the Question of the Human*, in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, cur. A. Simon Mittman - P. Dendle, London-New York, (NY) 2013, pp. 257-74, esp. pp. 269-74.

269. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 300.

270. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 301, n. 25. Cfr. also Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XII.ii. 34: J. André (ed.), *Étymologies. Livre XII: Des animaux*, Paris 1986 (Auteurs latins du Moyen Âge), pp. 116-17; Isidore, in turns, relies on Solinus: cfr. *ibidem*, n. 180.

271. Cfr. above, pp. 81-2.

272. *The Cosmography*, Herren (ed.), § 20, p. 20, ll. 13-8, and § 37c, p. 44, with translation at pp. 21 and 45.

273. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 301, n. 25 and Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare* cit., pp. 695-9.

274. In *Cosmographia* § 20, l. 14, the source explicitly mentioned is Lucan, but Herren has argued that the author of the *Cosmographia* in fact meant the *LM*, which he may have attributed to Lucan: *The Cosmography*, Herren (ed.), p. 74, n. 181, and p. 97, n. 402.

lationship between the two texts should rather be reversed or else the iron-melting venomous creatures should more likely be put down to the independent use of common source material on the part of their respective authors²⁷⁵.

Further, the detail of the ultimate death of the *bestiolae* of the *Cosmographia* after secreting their venom might echo another episode of *Beowulf* besides the beheading of Grendel, that is the killing of the dragon by the Volsung hero Sigmund (ll. 874a-902a). Here the dragon's body is pierced through by Siegmund's sword, which gets stuck in the wall of the monster's lair while the dragon melts away in its agony, consumed by its own flames (ll. 890-2 and 897b)²⁷⁶. The motif of the "self-combustion" of the dragon seems to be unparalleled in the Germanic tradition of dragon fights, hence it can be considered an ingenious and idiosyncratic elaboration on the part of the *Beowulf* poet²⁷⁷.

As to the melting of the sword blade, several Celtic parallels have long been pointed out²⁷⁸, but dismissed as «rather fanciful» by more recent scholarship²⁷⁹. In particular, Orchard has argued that the blade melted by the hot and toxic blood of Grendel, Cain's kin, may have had an intra-textual origin, in that it may have been inspired by the theme of the Flood aimed to destroy Cain's descendants – a theme recurrent in both the poem and the *LM*²⁸⁰, and indeed engraved upon the very hilt of the same sword (ll. 1687-93)²⁸¹. On the other hand, the image of the melting iron in both *LM* and *Beowulf* may ultimately be traced to the scene in *Aeneid* XII.740-1, where Turnus's word, striking Aeneas's divine armour, shatters like brittle ice (*glacies ceu futilis ictu | dissiluit*)²⁸². Although the shattering of ice is admittedly quite different from the melting of iron, Orchard has ingenious-

275. Pollard has suggested that the ultimate source of both chapters of the *Cosmographia* and *LM* II.23 may have been Lucan's *Orpheus* or an epitome of it; however, according to Pollard the most likely scenario is that this ultimate source was mediated to the author of the *Cosmographia* by the *LM*: cfr. his "Denuo" on *Lucan*, pp. 64-9. Cfr. also above, n. 97.

276. Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare* cit., pp. 697-9; at the end of the poem, the corpse of the dragon defeated by Beowulf is also scorched by its own flames (ll. 3040b-1b), though not thoroughly melted as the dragon of the Sigmund's episode; *ibidem*, p. 698, n. 35.

277. *Ibidem*, p. 699, esp. n. 37.

278. M. Puhvel, *The Melting of the Giant-Wrought Sword in Beowulf*, «English Languages Notes», 7 (1969), pp. 81-4, and Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare* cit., p. 691.

279. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 112.

280. Cfr. above, p. 103.

281. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 112-3.

282. Orchard, *A Critical Companion* cit., pp. 135-6.

ly suggested that a variant text of the *Aeneid* featuring the *lectio facilior dissoluit* might have provided a much better match²⁸³. Apparently, such a variant has not been recorded²⁸⁴, but given the great familiarity with Vergil shown by both *Beowulf* and the *LM*, as well as the subtle and creative use made of Vergil by both of them, it remains a tantalising possibility.

Be as it may, the shared elaboration of the iron melted by the hot and venomous blood of a monster re-poses the dilemma whether *Beowulf* and the *LM* were independently indebted to the same putative antecedent(s) or to one other. This is obviously *the* key question of the relationship between the two texts and one which would have implications on other dilemmas concerning the origin of both. Unfortunately, it is also a question which, although profusely debated with alternative positions²⁸⁵, is ultimately insoluble at the current state of knowledge. Despite the numerous parallels and the even more numerous studies investigating them, the relationship between the *LM* and *Beowulf* cannot be precisely determined; yet the two undoubtedly «share a number of mutually illuminating attitudes and themes»²⁸⁶.

Tracing the indirect tradition of an anonymous catalogue such as the *LM*, itself dependent on highly popular source-texts and reference works, is not only a difficult task, involving a virtually boundless *corpus*, but also one which risks being thwarted by the intensely intertextual nature, problematic filiations, and pseudepigraphic attributions of the texts involved²⁸⁷. Aspects of the indirect tradition of the *LM* have already been addressed above, in particular when discussing the relationship between the *LM* and the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister, the *Enigmata* of Eusebius, and the *LDNR* of Thomas of Cantimpré. Now, I will focus on the use, however problematic, that the *LM* seems to have found in two distinct

283. *Ibidem*, p. 136.

284. *Ibidem*, p. 136, n. 33.

285. Cfr. at least Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf* cit., pp. 46-53; K. Sisam, *The Structure of "Beowulf"*, Oxford 1965, p. 6; Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf* cit., p. 124; M. E. Goldsmith, *The Mode and Meaning of Beowulf*, London 1970, pp. 98-9; Whitbread, *The Liber monstrorum and Beowulf* cit., p. 465; Knock, *Review of Liber Monstrorum* cit., p. 259; Princi Braccini, *Tra folclore germanico e latinità insulare* cit., pp. 685-90; Lapidge, *Beowulf, Aldhelm, the Liber monstrorum and Wessex* cit., p. 297, n. 107; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., pp. 110-1; North, *The Origins of Beowulf* cit., p. 45; and Burbery, *Fossil Folklore* cit., p. 333.

286. Cfr. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 110.

287. *Libro delle mirabili difformità*, ed. Bologna cit., pp. 173 and 175-6.

textual traditions of the early medieval Insular world, namely the *Navigatio S. Brendani* and pre-Conquest English glossaries.

The *Navigatio S. Brendani* is the anonymous Latin account of the seven-year sea pilgrimage of St. Brendan († ca. 570), abbot of Clonfert, and a group of monks in search of the *Terra repromissionis Sanctorum*, which can be said to have originated in late eighth-century Ireland²⁸⁸. Although the protagonist is a saint, the *Navigatio* is fundamentally a travelogue with a distinctive teratological element, as the encounters with exotic and monstrous creatures make up most of the narrative. Thereby, the *Navigatio* intertwines the native Irish tradition of the *echtraí* and *immrama*, that is narratives of ocean voyages of marked eschatological and visionary character, with hagiography, pilgrimage literature, and otherworldly visions, as well as with the classical and late antique teratological and paradoxographical tradition²⁸⁹.

At least two passages of the *Navigatio* seem to echo the *LM*. In chapter XXI.2, Brendan and his companions come to cross a stretch of sea where the water is so clear that they can see all sorts of animals lying on the seabed («Cum autem aspexissent intus in profundum, viderunt diversa genera bestiarum, iacentes super arenam») ²⁹⁰. These lines may recall the description of a certain Greek painting («per quamdam picturam Graeci operis») in *LM* II.32 (*De beluis Tyrrheni maris*) – a chapter still unsourced –, which apparently depicted all sorts of creatures living in the Tyrrhenian Sea («bestias omnes et terrena animalia cum variis monstrorum et beluarum generibus») ²⁹¹. Also, in the *incipit* of chapter XXV.2, recounting the meeting between Bren-

288. On St. Brendan and the controversial dating of the *Navigatio*, cfr. G. Orlandi - R. E. Guglielmetti (edd.), *Navigatio sancti Brendani. Alla scoperta dei segreti meravigliosi del mondo*, Firenze 2014 (Per verba, 30), pp. CII-CXIX.

289. Orlandi-Guglielmetti (edd.), pp. XXXIII-LXXVIII; P. Bouet, *Le fantastique dans la littérature latine du Moyen Âge. La Navigation de saint Brendan (oeuvre anonyme du IX^e siècle). Recherche pédagogique*, Caen 1986; M. Cavagna, *La Navigatio sancti Brendani et ses liens avec la tradition visionnaire*, «Medioevo romanzo», 26 (2002), pp. 30-48; F. M. Cicone, *Cenni sull'incontro della tradizione celtica irlandese con la cultura latina nella Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, «Quaderni del Dipartimento di filologia, linguistica e tradizione classica», 4 (2005), pp. 261-82; D. Faraci, *Navigatio sancti Brendani and Its Relationship with Physiologus*, «Romanobarbarica», 11 (1991), pp. 149-73; and M. L. Rotsaert, *Teratologia brendaniana*, in *Metamorfosi, mostri, labirinti. Atti del Seminario di Cagliari 22-24 gennaio 1990*, curr. G. Cerina - M. Domenichelli - P. Tucci - M. Virdis, Roma 1991, pp. 37-50.

290. *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, Orlandi-Guglielmetti (edd.), pp. 78 and 173.

291. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 318 and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* cit., p. 320. According to Porsia, rather than a painting, the *pictura* refers to a large mosaic, perhaps one adorning a spa: cfr. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 319, n. 34, and de Xivrey, *Traditions tératologiques* cit., pp. 178-82; cfr. also Bologna (ed.), pp. 135-6. On this chapter and its different length and structure in the manuscript tradition and editions, cfr. above, n. 47.

dan and Judas while he is sitting on a surf-swept rock during the periods of respite from the infernal punishments, Judas's silhouette appearing to Brendan in the distance is defined as *quaedam formula*²⁹², echoing the description of the siren (*quandam formulam sirenae*) in the *explicit* of the general Prologue of the *LM*²⁹³.

More relevant to this discussion, however, is the group of the German-Dutch vernacularisations of the *Navigatio*, which consists of two German versions – of which one in verse and the other in prose – and one in Dutch verse and which ultimately stems from a now lost mid-twelfth-century Frankish version, probably from the Trier or Rhineland area, the so-called *De reis van sint Brandaan*²⁹⁴. The German-Dutch versions share a more pronounced teratological element and a unique narrative framework within the Brendan tradition, in that the saint's voyage is triggered by his burning of a book containing stories about the wonders of God's creation out of disbelief; therefore, he has to set sails so that he can witness with his own eyes the wonders he has refused to credit, ultimately salvaging the burnt-out book by reporting the marvellous experiences of his own voyage. In particular, one of the two witnesses of the Middle Dutch version features an otherwise unparalleled episode, that is Brendan's encounter with the speaking head of a dead heathen giant by the seashore (ll. 137-260)²⁹⁵. As the giant's head reveals, he used to ambush ships and steal their cargoes until he drowned in a flood²⁹⁶. Brendan offers to resuscitate and baptize him, so that his sins could be remitted and he could go to paradise, but the giant refuses, because he is afraid to sin again and then the infernal torments would be even worse for him as a Christian rather than a heathen; besides, he is afraid of experiencing death once more, so he takes his leave and goes back to hell. In all probability a unique interpolation

292. Orlandi-Guglielmetti (edd.), p. 90.

293. *Liber monstrorum*², Porsia (ed.), p. 118, l. 8. Cfr. also above, p. 69.

294. Cfr. C. Strijbosch, *The Seafaring Saint: Sources and Analogues of the Twelfth-Century Voyage of Saint Brendan*, Dublin 2000, pp. 27-60 and 217-24. For an English translation of the Middle Dutch version and the Middle High German prose version, cfr. W. P. Gerritsen - P. K. King, *The Dutch Version*, and W. P. Gerritsen - C. Strijbosch, *The German Version*, in *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation*, curr. W. R. J. Barron - G. S. Burgess, Exeter 2002, pp. 103-30 and 131-53.

295. L. Jongen - J. Szirmai - J. H. Winkelman (edd.), *De reis van Sint Brandaan: kritische editie van de Middelnederlandse tekst naar het Comburgse handschrift, met vertalingen van de Middelnederlandse en Middelboogduitse Reis-versie en van de Oudfranse en Middelnederlandse Navigatio-versie*, Hilversum 2013 (Middelnederlandse tekstedities, 13).

296. Cfr. *LM* I.32 and above, n. 250.

into the thirteenth-century Middle Dutch version²⁹⁷, the episode of the giant's head clearly elaborates on a variety of source materials, ranging from the popular *exemplum* of Gregory and Trajan²⁹⁸, to a number of hagiographic traditions (such as that of St. Machutus or Maclovius and St. Macarius, but most of all, of Irish saints' lives, including St. Patrick, St. Cainnech, St. Cronan, and St. Columba)²⁹⁹, to, finally, folkloric legends concerning gigantic rests washed up on the shore³⁰⁰.

Most notably, one of the Latin *vitae* of St. Brendan, the *Vita Insulensis* or *Oxoniensis*³⁰¹, and both recensions of the Irish Life of the saint, which also feature a few voyage elements of the *Navigatio*³⁰², contain a similar episode, in that the saint comes across the corpse of a giant girl lying on the seashore with a spear stuck between her shoulders and coming out between her breasts³⁰³. Brendan revives the blonde and fair giantess and baptizes her. Afterwards, the two have a brief exchange, where the giantess reveals that she belongs to the dwellers of the sea, but when Brendan asks whether she would rather go back to her people or to heaven, the giantess promptly opts for heaven; so after receiving the viaticum she dies and is honourably buried by Brendan³⁰⁴.

In sum, early Irish hagiographic traditions variously attest to the exchange between a given saint and a (gigantic) skull, with the resuscitation

297. C. Strijbosch, *The Heathen Giant in the Voyage of St Brendan*, «Celtica», 23 (1999), pp. 369-89, esp. pp. 369-74.

298. G. Paris, *La légende de Trajan*, «Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études. Section des sciences historiques et philologiques», 35 (1878), pp. 261-98, and A. Graf, *Roma nella memoria e nelle immaginazioni del medio evo*, 2 vols., Torino 1882-3; rptd. as one volume 1923, pp. 374-406.

299. Strijbosch, *The Heathen Giant* cit., pp. 374-6 and 378-82.

300. Cfr. above, pp. 103-4.

301. [BHL 1439]; Orlandi-Guglielmetti (edd.), pp. LXXXII-v; edited as *Vita prima sancti Brendani abbatis de Cluain Ferta in Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, ed. C. Plummer, Oxford 1910, rptd. 1968, I, pp. 98-151, esp. § LXVIII, p. 135.

302. For a discussion of the relationship between the Irish Life, the Latin *Vita*, the *Navigatio S. Brendani* and other voyage texts, cfr. S. Mac Mathúna, *The Irish Life of Saint Brendan: Textual History, Structure and Date*, in *The Brendan Legend: Texts and Versions*, curr. C. Strijbosch - G. S. Burgess, 24, Leiden-Boston (MA) 2006 (The Northern World, 24), pp. 117-58, with relevant bibliography at nn. 5-7, and Orlandi-Guglielmetti (edd.), pp. LXXVIII-CI; on the two recensions of the Irish Life, cfr. *ibidem*, pp. XC-XCIII.

303. Cfr. LM I.13 and above, pp. 103-4.

304. For the relevant passage in the First Irish Life (ll. 3678-90), cfr. W. Stokes (ed.), *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore, Edited with a Translation, Notes, and Indices*, Oxford 1890 (Anecdota Oxoniensia. Mediaeval and Modern Series, 5), pp. 99-116 (Irish text) and 247-61 (English translation), esp. pp. 109-10 and 255. For the relevant passage in the Second Irish Life (chpt. XXVIII § 87), cfr. C. Plummer (ed.), *Bethada naem nÉrenn: Lives of Irish Saints*, 2 vols, Oxford 1922, I (*Introduction, Texts, Glossary*), pp. 44-95, esp. pp. 62-3, and II (*Translations, Notes, Indexes*), pp. 44-92, esp. p. 61. Cfr. also Strijbosch, *The Heathen Giant* cit., pp. 376-8.

of the dead giant who tells the story of his/her life and the torments (s)he suffers in hell, is baptised and then dies again. This veritable motif of Irish early hagiographic literature was probably conflated with similar stories of giantesses lying dead on the seashore, themselves also quite frequent in Celtic sources³⁰⁵, and it is in the interweave of these Celtic source material, both pagan and Christian, with the varied complex of teratological and paradoxographical sources underlying the Brendan legend, that the origin of the unique interpolation of the Middle Dutch version of the *Navigatio* is likely to be sought. This interpolation is, in turn, even more intriguing in that it seems to attest the persistence in the lower Rhine area of a tradition – whether oral or written or, more likely, both – concerning the remains of some gigantic creature washed up on the shore, from which the description of Hygelac in *LM* I.2 also likely stemmed.

Some of the earliest witnesses to English literary culture, that is the oldest English glossaries, were likely indebted to the *LM*. The glossaries in question are the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary and the Second Corpus Glossary, all ultimately traceable to an original compilation which has been dated to the last quarter of the seventh century and associated with Aldhelm's school at Malmesbury³⁰⁶. In particular, the *interpretamenta* of some glosses, such as those for *Scylla* or *Sirenae*, closely resemble the wording of the relevant entries of the *LM*, as well as showing an attitude to the *monstra* very similar to that of the author of the *LM*³⁰⁷. Because of the derivative nature of glossaries, their parallels with the *LM* can best be explained by positing a debt of the glossaries to the *LM*, which in turn has significant implications as to the dating and origin of the latter³⁰⁸. In other words, if the *LM* was really one of the sources drawn on in the *Cosmographia* and in the Épinal-Erfurt and the Second Corpus glossaries, the *terminus ante quem* of ca. 750 or the eighth century in general proposed by the two most recent editors could be moved up to ca. 730 or even earlier than that³⁰⁹.

305. *Ibidem*, pp. 382-4 and Stokes (ed.), pp. XLII-III. Cfr. also above, pp. 103-4.

306. Lendinara, *The Liber monstrorum* cit. On the earliest English glossaries, cfr. at least Ead., *Anglo-Saxon Glosses and Glossaries: An Introduction*, in her *Anglo-Saxon Glosses* cit., pp. 1-26, esp. 15-7; J. D. Pheifer, *Old English Glosses in the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary*, Oxford 1974; and Id., *Early Anglo-Saxon Glossaries and the School of Canterbury*, «Anglo-Saxon England», 16 (1987), pp. 17-44.

307. Lendinara, *The Liber monstrorum* cit., pp. 124-37.

308. *Ibidem*, p. 137.

309. Cfr. above, pp. 81-3.

Finally, it may be appropriate to conclude this brief survey of the indirect tradition of the *LM* by returning to Thomas of Cantimpré's *LDNR*, the extensive debt of which to the *LM* has already been discussed³¹⁰. Now, I would like to consider an entry of the *LDNR* which has not been associated with the *LM* but which may retrospectively shed further light on the antecedents of the controversial description of the washed-up remains of the giant Hygelac in *LM* I.2.

The entry in question is the last one of Book III of the *LDNR* (III.v.40)³¹¹ and immediately follows the sequence of eight entries dependent on the *LM* (III.v.19 and 32-8) and the entry on Molossus/Colossus (III.v.39) which explicitly mentions Adelinus as its source³¹². The entry III.v.40 concerns the giants that allegedly once populated Germany (*Theutonia*) in great numbers³¹³. Indeed, Germany itself is so called from a huge giant called *Theutanus*, whose grave is located in a village called St. Stephen, by the river Danube and two miles away from Vienna, where his huge bones and teeth still elicit incomparable wonder. The source of this entry is apparently Lucan, who is indeed mentioned twice, besides unspecified *multi alii*. In fact, the lines of the *Pharsalia* alluded to concern the Gaulish war-god Teutates (I.444-5), considered the counterpart of the Latin gods Mars or Mercury. However, in glosses and scholia of the medieval tradition of the poem, the Gaulish deity came to be identified with Theuton, the eponymous god of the Germanic tribe of the Teutons, presumably as a result of folk etymology, and attributed gigantic proportions³¹⁴. With the finding of prehistoric bones in the Vienna region after the mid-thirteenth century, the alleged grave of the giant Theuton was located by the local stretch of the Danube³¹⁵. Indeed, it has been suggested that the St. Stephen village mentioned in the *LDNR* may refer to the very Viennese cathedral, *Stefandom*, which, at the time of its construction, lay outside the city walls and by the north tower of

310. Cfr. above, pp. 92-6.

311. *De natura rerum*, Boese (ed.), p. 100.

312. Cfr. above, pp. 94-5.

313. The concept of outsized archaic supermen as the earliest forebears of the German nation is key to the construction of German identity; in particular, the earliest Germans would have sprung from the union of Trojans and giant Teutons: L. Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity: Authority and Crisis 1245-1414*, Cambridge 2012, pp. 295-6 and 303-24. Cfr. also above, n. 230.

314. H. Kästner, "Der großmächtige Riese und Recke Theuton": *Etymologische Spurensuche nach dem Urvater der Deutschen am Ende des Mittelalters*, «Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie», 110 (1991), pp. 68-97, esp. pp. 81-5.

315. *Ibidem*, pp. 81-2.

which some mammoth bones were discovered and subsequently hung in the west wing of the same tower, while the west wing door became known as *Riesentor*, «(lit.) door of the giant»³¹⁶.

Now, in spite of the obvious echoes between Hygelac of the *LM* and Theuton of the *LDNR* and although the former text can demonstrably be counted among the sources of the latter, the equally obvious differences between the two characters and their respective stories discourage from positing any direct relationship between the two entries. Yet the more extensive entry on Theuton and the more detailed background information available about Theuton and his “genesis” as a giant may provide some retrospective clues to retrace the possible process of how the more laconic story of Hygelac as the washed-up giant of *LM* I.2 came to be fashioned. That is, it may have resulted from the creative conflation of some literary, epic source concerning a hero or god of the pagan past bestowed with a gigantic figure because of his heroic or divine status, with a folkloric tradition originated by the findings of prehistoric fossils, as well as with the Biblical narrative of the Flood. *Mutatis mutandis*, all these three basic elements seem to be present in both the Hygelac entry of the *LM* and the Theuton entry of the *LDNR*: both share a fluvial setting and rely on the proven presence of prehistoric fossils in the respective locations, as well as on an epic background for both characters. Hygelac is a renown Germanic warrior king, whose endeavours are attested in both historical and epic sources, and Theuton is a Celtic-turned-Germanic god, who is dealt with – although under the name of his Gaulish *alter* ego – in Lucan’s *Pharsalia*. (It may be worth noting in passing that the author of the *LM* was familiar with Lucan too)³¹⁷. Whether and how the *Beowulf* poet, in turn, may also have been acquainted with such a syncretic legend concerning Hygelac is a matter of speculation. However, as the above discussion has shown, similar narratives about the washed-up remains of gigantic creatures were widespread, if not commonplace, in the Insular world of the early Middle Ages, so it would be unlikely that the *Beowulf* poet and his audience had not been familiar with any of them.

Whether the *LDNR* might contribute to clarify the still unsettled relationship between the *LM* and *Beowulf* or not, the extensive debt of Thomas of Cantimpré’s encyclopaedia to the *LM* certainly offers precious, if retro-

316. *Ibidem*, p. 81, n. 58.

317. Cfr. above, p. 87.

spective, evidence as to the intensely and subtly intertextual nature of the *LM*, as well as to its position within the encyclopaedic and teratological lore of the Western Middle Ages, from the late antique Isidorian *Etymologiae* with its synthesis of the antique and Judaeo-Christian *mirabilia*, to the scientific compendia of Scholasticism to which the *LDNR* largely paved the way³¹⁸.

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318. M. Cipriani, *La place de Thomas de Cantimpré dans l'encyclopédisme médiéval: les sources du Liber de natura rerum*, unpubl. PhD diss., Paris, EPHE - Scuola normale superiore, Florence - École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences historiques et philologiques 2014. In conclusion, I wish to thank Federica Di Giuseppe for her bibliographical help.