Re-Mapping the Space of the Sacred in the Nowell Codex

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DEDICATION

To my husband,

My family,

And those who know what it means to live “WAY out West.”

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This dissertation would never have come to fruition without the efforts of a small army of friends and mentors to help me through the hard spots. Among those include Dr. Trish Ward, who first introduced me to Anglo-Saxon studies (and to Christopher), Dr. Maura Lafferty and Dr. Roy M. Liuzza for their professional mentorship, and also Julian and Melanie Reese, whose tireless care for graduate students at the University of Tennessee has kept all of us fed, hopeful, and most importantly, progressing towards our degrees. There are so many others at the University of Tennessee and the Marco Institute who have contributed, and to all of them I give my undying thanks.

Deus est spaera intelligibilis, cujus centrum ubique, circumferentia nusquam.
God is a perceptible sphere whose center is everywhere, its circumference, nowhere.

Alan of Lille[1]

[1] Alan of Lille, *De arte seu articulis de Catholicae fidei*, 4.7. J. P. Migne, "Patrologia Latina," (Ann Arbor: Chadwyck Healey, 1996), vol. 210: col. 0627A.

ABSTRACT

The most recent codicological studies of London, British Library Cotton MS Vitellius A.xv, part 2, also known as the Nowell Codex or *Beowulf*-Manuscript, have looked to its many depictions of monsters as an explanation for why it was compiled. Nicholas Howe, however, proposed that the Nowell Codex functioned as a "book of elsewhere," treating the five texts as a "gathering" particularly invested in a reappraisal of the cultural implications of geography. This dissertation describes the three prose texts of the Nowell Codex as one such "gathering" which explores alternative ideas of spiritual geography, specifically in regards to the religious implications of geographic space and its intersection with earthly power. In the *Passion of Saint Christopher,* Christopher operates as a subversive figure whose marginality makes him both a potent missionary and social revolutionary; in particular, a historical association between the Cynocephali and the Scandinavian North would have given Christopher a cultural association with the Germanic missionary frontier. The second chapter analyzes the complicated transmission history of the *Wonders of the East* to demonstrate how the text fails to provide any coherent way of controlling the marginal figures in the text. The final chapter explores how Alexander in the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* moves through India completely unaware of his own marginality to the vast spiritual power of India and the resulting conflict with the land. The study concludes with a short analysis of *Beowulf* and *Judith* to demonstrate how these texts are also a part of this "gathering" of texts exploring marginality and the spiritual implications of geography.

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Introduction: Re-Mapping the Sacred in the Nowell Codex

> Location, in both a literal and figural sense, is key to the medieval articulation of bodily diversity and religious difference.
>
> Suzanne Conklin Akbari[1]

The Nowell Codex (London, British Library Cotton Vitellius A. xv, part 2),[2] so named after the *ex libris* written on the first folio, is a manuscript of Anglo-Saxon prose and poetry conventionally dated to about 1000 AD or within a decade or so on either side.[3] The manuscript itself is in poor condition, having been partially burned in the 1731 Cotton library fire, and the fire damage has caused some loss of text around the edges. It is best known for the two poems *Beowulf* and *Judith,* but these are preceded by three English

[1] Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 100-1450* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 12.

[2] Listed as Item 399 in Gneuss, 216 in Ker. The first part of Vitellius A.xv, fols. 4-93, is a later twelfth-century manuscript of Augustine's *Soliloquies* and other materials called the Southwick Codex; it will not be discussed here. The manuscript was first described by Max Förster and then by Kemp Malone and Kevin Kiernan. Leonard Boyle and Johan Gerritsen have also given useful supplemental analyses. See: Max Förster, *Die Beowulf-Handschrift* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1919); Kemp Malone, ed. *The Nowell Codex: British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. xv, Second MS*, EEMF 12 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1963); Kevin S. Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1981; repr., 1996); Leonard Boyle, "The Nowell Codex and the Poem of *Beowulf*," in *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. Colin Chase (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997): 23-32; Johan Gerritsen, "British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv: A Supplementary Description," *English Studies* 69, no. 4 (1988): 293-302. There are also two facsimiles of the complete MS, by Malone and Kiernan respectively. The earliest autotype by Zupitza, however, covers only the folios containing *Beowulf*. See: Julius Zupitza, *Beowulf*, EETS Original Series 77 (London: EETS, 1882); Kevin S. Kiernan and Andrew Prescott, *The Electronic Beowulf*, (London: British Library, 1999). All five texts have never been edited together, but Stanley Rypins produced an edition of the three prose works for the EETS. See: Stanley Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts in Ms. Cotton Vitellius A. xv*, EETS Original Series 161 (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1924). Editions, facsimiles, and descriptions of individual texts will be discussed separately in the following chapters.

[3] Dated x/xi by Ker and Gneuss, ca. 1000 by Malone. Kiernan's date to the reign of Cnut, sometime between 1016-1032, is likely too recent. David Dumville is probably the best contemporary scholar in matters of Anglo-Saxon square minuscule, and he gives extremely compelling evidence to prefer an earlier date. See: David N. Dumville, "*Beowulf* Come Lately: Notes on the Palaeography of the Nowell Codex," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 225, no. 1 (1988): 49-63; "The *Beowulf*-Manuscript and How Not to Date It," *Medieval English Studies Newsletter* 39 (1998): 21-27.

translations of Latin prose texts which all contain some element of the marvelous. The full contents are as follows:

1. **94r-98r:** *The Passion of Saint Christopher*. Kemp Malone and Neil Ker identify as the closest analogues BHL 1768–69, which are "Dangus" versions of the story. The beginning quire(s) are missing and less than forty percent now remains. London, BL Cotton Otho B. x once contained a second copy of the OE translation in a homiliary mostly by Ælfric, but the same fire which damaged the Nowell Codex destroyed most of this manuscript as well.[4]
2. **98v-106v:** *The Wonders of the East*, an illustrated text translated from a unique Anglo-Latin exemplar, although there are several distant analogues from the Continent. A second, longer version of the text survives in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fols. 78v-87v, paired with the corresponding Latin text.[5]
3. **107r-131v:** *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, an apocryphal letter detailing Alexander the Great's India campaign. This is the only surviving copy of the English version, which is demonstrably shorter than the Latin analogues. A Latin source-text for the translation has not been identified.[6]
4. **132r-201v:** *Beowulf*. The Nowell Codex contains the only surviving copy.

[4] Item 355 in Gneuss, 177 in Ker, dated xi[1]. Only part of the first folio of the *Passion of Saint Christopher* survives. For a description of the remaining fragment, see: John Drayton Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript" (Diss., University of Cambridge, 1971), 22-24.
[5] Item 373 in Gneuss, 193 in Ker, dated xi[1] - xi[2/4].
[6] The Latin version show considerable variation, and so far none of them are a clear fit for the OE version, which has its own vagaries in the text. For an edition of the Latin text, see W. Walther Boer, ed. *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem: ad codicum fidem edidit et commentario critico instruxit*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie (Meisemhein am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1973).

5. **202r-209v:** *Judith,* a poetic epic loosely based on the Latin Vulgate story of Judith and Holofernes. Like *Beowulf*, this is the only surviving copy. The poem is missing material at the beginning and a single leaf at the end, but there is no scholarly consensus about what proportion of the original the surviving material represents.

The manuscript contains two different scribal hands, the first of which wrote all of the first three items and up to the top of fol. 175v of *Beowulf*; the second copied the remainder of *Beowulf* and all surviving pages of *Judith*. Scribe Two's hand is of a heavy Anglo-Saxon square minuscule of the last decades of the tenth century; in comparison, Scribe One's hand is a more fluent post-square minuscule more at home in the early eleventh century, which complicates the dating slightly.[7] The overall impression is of two scribes from different stages of their scribal careers working in tandem.[8]

The three prose texts in this manuscript—*Christopher*, *Wonders*, and the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*—share several common features. All are translations or adaptations of a Latin original. All are incomplete in comparison to the Latin, either through damage or revision, and two of these texts, like *Beowulf*, are unique to this manuscript. This idiosyncratic collection has left scholars of the previous century and beyond to wonder: is the Nowell Codex simply a coincidental miscellany and unrelated to *Beowulf*, as Kevin Kiernan suggests,[9] or does this manuscript's texts and organization present a discernible

[7] One should note Scribe Two's formation of the flat-topped **a**, as well as **e**, and **o**, of which exhibit the characteristic straight or "broken" back seen in AS square but disappear by the eleventh century. Scribe One's vowels, in comparison, are completely round. In addition, Scribe Two occasionally uses an Insular **s**, especially in terminal positions, whereas Scribe One prefers a more Caroline type and has long descenders on **s**-longa, **r**, and **f**.
[8] For a more detailed description, see: Malone, *The Nowell Codex*, 17-20.
[9] Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 132-33.

interpretive argument? If so, what might these texts, presented in tandem, mean to an English reader who encountered them together?

This dissertation proposes that a focused reading across the texts of the Nowell Codex first shows a sustained preoccupation with the interplay between geography and spiritual power, and second, that each of these texts show different ways of reconfiguring that relationship. In the Nowell Codex, the centers and peripheries which normally define human relationships switch places, muddle together, and even disappear. These texts also reveal a preoccupation with categorization, hierarchy, and cultural power, especially in situations which give border-dwellers subversive power over figures of authority. Moreover, four of the narratives originate in the context of the four great biblical empires; three of them explicitly address conflict between that imperial power and a higher religious authority, and it is implicit in the fourth. Most importantly, all of them explore who gets to claim authority, and *where*. The monsters who appear in these texts are not so much the focal issue as they are manifestations of that marginality; the many interactions between humans and monsters are crucial moments for these characters to discover the spiritual power which lives in the margins. These ideas all have direct relevance to *Beowulf*, a text about a land considered by the rest of Europe to hang on the edge the known world, about a pagan past of a recently-converted Christian region, and likely written by a Christian living in a cultural age still sorting out a satisfactory perspective on their Germanic past without lessening their dedication to the Church at Rome.

For the sake of narrowing the scope of this project, however, I will focus upon the three prose texts and expand the argument to *Judith* and *Beowulf* in the Conclusion.

Although this dissertation will largely use the tools of classical philological, codicological, and contextual studies, it follows the spirit of cultural geography as described by Derek Gregory but as adapted for the pre-Modern world by Nicolas Howe, Sylvia Tomasch, and Seally Gilles.[10] Through this lens, the Nowell Codex raises the possibility that some Anglo-Saxons explored alternative possibilities to the Rome-centered view once highly influential in Bede's time but perhaps scrutinized in an England increasingly interested in Germanic kingship and looking for a more nuanced approach to understanding their history on the pre-Christian margin of the world.

1. Codicological Speculations on the Nowell Codex: A Short History

It is not an exaggeration to say that studies of the Nowell Codex have sprung almost entirely out of an interest in *Beowulf.* In fact, three major and controversial studies of the manuscript in the last forty years owe their genesis to critical debates about the poem: Kevin Kiernan's *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, Colin Chase's collection *The Dating of Beowulf,* and Andy Orchard's *Pride and Prodigies*.[11] The same has been true of most of the studies seeking a link between all five texts. Speculations about a theory of compilation for this manuscript began, in fact, in 1916 when Kenneth Sisam demonstrated that the same

[10] Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994); Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles, eds., *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1998); Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven: Yale University Pres, 2001); Catherine Karkov and Nicholas Howe, eds., *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England* (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2006); Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
[11] Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*; Colin Chase, ed. *The Dating of Beowulf* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981; reprint, 1997); Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

scribe who wrote the first part of *Beowulf* also copied the prose texts.[12] Stanley Rypins then took this argument to its logical conclusion, suggesting that the three prose texts might give important context to *Beowulf.*[13] Kenneth Sisam returned to the manuscript some years later and made the first actual foray into a codicological reading, suggesting that the entire codex might be classed as "a book of various monsters, in English."[14]

Sisam's work led to a handful of codicological speculations, mostly of doubtful quality, over the next three decades. The year after Sisam's study, Max Brunner suggested that the manuscript owed its survival to its largely Christian content and because it features both Christian and historical heroes.[15] He barely glances at the two main monster-texts, *Wonders* and *Alexander*, and his larger argument falters on these grounds. While Alexander might fit in as a historical hero under his paradigm, he cannot work *Wonders of the East* into the same structure. Two other articles appeared in the following decade: a comparison of translation styles by Robert Reynolds and a study on religious themes by Paul Taylor and Peter Salus in 1968. Both articles used intertextual readings to make a larger point about the manuscript, but neither is of any real contemporary use. Reynolds, for one, basically claims that the creatures called *hostes* from *Wonders of the East* and Grendel are the same monster, something which no modern scholar accepts; Taylor and Salus' argument uses cross-readings in the Southwick Codex, the manuscript bound with

[12] The essay is reprinted in: Kenneth Sisam, "The *Beowulf* Manuscript," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 61-62.
[13] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, i-ii and xi-xii.
[14] Kenneth Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 96.
[15] Max Brunner, "Why Was *Beowulf* Preserved?," *Études anglaises* 7 (1954): 3.

the Nowell Codex. While his may shed some light on the Cottonian bookbinder who put them together, it does not help us to underestand the Anglo-Saxon compiler.[16]

Paul Allen Gibb made a minor but significant contribution in the 1980's with his edition of *The Wonders of the East,* which slightly anticipated Andy Orchard's work. Noting some general correlation of theme among adjoining texts but not necessarily across the entire manuscript, he called this loose association "concatenation" and concluded that "there is nothing arbitrary or unplanned about the codex";[17] he also sided with Sisam on the overall theme, claiming that "monsters and the overcoming of evil are the two primary concerns."[18] Although this was largely an aside in his work on *Wonders,* Gibb's assertion opened the door for other unity arguments, as it suggested that the manuscript could be both carefully planned but only loosely thematically tied. [19]

Each of these previous contributions were either article-length hypotheses or asides in larger studies, and so Andy Orchard's ground-breaking work *Pride and Prodigies* was the first time that Sisam's postulation was explored in any significant depth. Noting the profusion of monsters and arrogant figures across the manuscript and its analogues, Orchard concludes that the manuscript is preoccupied with the association of monsters with pre-Christian hubris; behind the manuscript's interest with monsters, he claimed, is a fascination "with the relationship between pagan past and Christian present, and with the

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[16] R. L. Reynolds, "Note on 'Beowulf's' Date and Economic-Social History," in *Studi in onore di Armando Sapori* (Milan: Instituto editoriale Cisalpino, 1957), 175-178; Paul Taylor and Peter Salus, "The Compilation of Cotton Vitellius A. xv," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 49 (1968): 199-204. For a more detailed summary of both arguments and their major flaws, see: Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 132-37.
[17] Paul Allen Gibb, "Wonders of the East: A Critical Edition and Commentary" (Diss., Duke University, 1989), 3; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies,* 27.
[18] Ibid., 2.
[19] Nicholas Howe's own explanation of the manuscript's thematic unity, which is discussed below, echoes Pickles somewhat, but he comes to a different conclusion about the nature of that loose organization.

tension between an age which extolled human glory and an age in which vainglory was condemned."[20] Perhaps his best contribution to the argument has been putting the texts of the Nowell Codex in conversation with other monster-related texts, including the enigmatic *Liber monstrorum* and Celtic and Norse legend. Although Orchard's work is easily the most important codicological study of the manuscript thus far, one could say that it has created a bottleneck in contemporary interpretation. *Pride and Prodigies* coincided with a new wave of teratological criticism in medieval studies, and scholarship on the texts of the manuscript seems disproportionately focused on its monsters.

Kathryn Powell's research is perhaps the best example of post-Orchard criticism. Calling her argument a "refinement" of Sisam's work,[21] Powell starts with a close critique of Orchard and offers an alternative reading, suggesting that *Christopher* and *Judith* were added to a previous collection, and under a different organizing principle, than its original interest in monsters.[22] The core of the MS, containing *Wonders*, the *Letter* and *Beowulf*, made up a previous, separate manuscript interested in monsters and the exotic; *Christopher* and *Judith* were added as this core was copied into a common manuscript sometime during the reign of Æðelred with "an interest in rulers and rulership, particularly in the ethical conflicts that arise in their interactions with foreign peoples as those rulers defend and expand their kingdoms."[23]

The most recent codicological argument comes from Nicholas Howe's body of work, starting with his 1999 Toller Memorial Lecture "An Angle on this Earth" and expanded in

[20] Ibid., 169.
[21] Kathryn Powell, "Meditating on Men and Monsters: a Reconsideration of the Thematic Unity of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," *Review of English Studies* 57, no. 228 (2006): 1.
[22] Ibid., 10.
[23] Ibid.

his book *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*.[24] Howe called the Vitellius and Tiberius[25] manuscripts of *Wonders*, along with the Junius manuscript, "books of elsewhere" [26]; the term designates "a place of similarity and difference, though the ratio between these two must be recalculated depending on where one locates that place elsewhere."[27] Howe likewise claimed that these texts "reveal a sustained engagement with the larger cultural implications of geography."[28] In terms of overall structure or theme, Howe suggests that "neither manuscript establishes a definitive or authoritative genre for representing places; instead, each contains an array of genres for doing different kinds of cultural work with place."[29]

It is upon these "kinds of cultural work with place" in the Vitellius manuscript that this dissertation finds its grounding. Howe suggested that the Vitellius texts contain "moments in each text when return to a place becomes foregrounded so markedly that it deepens or enlarges the meaning of the text."[30] In the Vitellius *Christopher,* Howe points to the saint's power of geographic conversion, as the story sets up "missionary martyrdom as a paradigm for conversion as it is practiced across the dimensions of space; for what is converted is a region and its people rather than individual souls that have come separately to God."[31] Howe reads *Wonders of the East* in the context of the much more geographically precise *Letter of Alexander*, claiming that this context makes it "more complexly historical

[24] Nicholas Howe, "An Angle on this Earth: Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82, no. 1 (2000): 1-25; *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 178-94.
[25] London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B.v, dated xi[1]. For description and contents, see: Patrick McGurk, *An Eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany,* 25-39.
[26] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11. Item 640 in Gneuss, 334 in Ker, dated x[2] to xi[1].
[27] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 167.
[28] Ibid., 154.
[29] Ibid., 156.
[30] Ibid., 178.
[31] Ibid., 179.

in Vitellius than in Tiberius, more about human beings and the use of places to demarcate a life than about the exotic elsewhere."[32] In *Alexander*, he believes that the epistolary frame of the story, written from India to Aristotle in Greece, "inscribes in its very structure the negotiation of here and elsewhere" and that Alexander's struggles in the narrative are indicative of his main struggle with conquering place rather than monstrosity.[33] *Beowulf* and *Judith*, in contrast, both focus on the return to *eþel* or homeland.[34] His interpretations of both *Alexander* and *Judith* are sparse, and he leaves much room open for further interpretation.[35]

This is, from Rypins to Howe, a largely complete history of the major attempts to provide a unified reading across the texts of the Nowell Codex. Since, however, most of these studies have focused on an interpretive context for *Beowulf,* they have largely attempted to address two key debates within *Beowulf* scholarship: the problem of monsters and the presence of Christian influence. At times, these two areas of inquiry can problematize readings which take the entire manuscript into account.

To start with the monster criticism, even though serious scholarly interest dates back at least to J.R.R. Tolkien's 1936 lecture,[36] it has taken a few decades into the linguistic turn for monster-centered criticism to come into its own. Four major studies have developed a place for monsters in medieval cultural critique: John Block Friedman in *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought,* Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's works *Monster Theory*

[32] Ibid., 187.
[33] Ibid., 185.
[34] Ibid., 188-93.
[35] For this reason, it is tempting to speculate that Howe's analysis of Vitellius was somewhat incomplete when *Writing the Map* was published posthumously in 2008, although the acknowledgements suggest that the manuscript is complete as written. See: ibid., xiii.
[36] J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays* (London: HarperCollins, 1983), 1-48.

and *Of Giants*,[37] and, of course, Orchard's work *Pride and Prodigies*, which provided a wealth of cultural and historical context missing in *Beowulf* scholarship. The first three books helped create a theoretical and historical basis for discussing monstrosity: that monsters operate as a cultural, religious, and/or geographic Other to the self, a free signifier used to plumb problems of identity and difference, or justify imperial/cultural hegemony. Orchard's work applied these ideas to the Nowell Codex to explain how monsters did the cultural work of exploring Anglo-Saxon identity.

When imposing a teratological framework across the entire Nowell Codex, however, one finds some striking limitations. As practically everyone has already noted, *Judith* does not contain any element of the monstrous or marvelous. Sisam, in fact, declared that "Holofernes is no monster" and largely excluded this text from his analysis on linguistic grounds;[38] Orchard and Powell both concede to Sisam's claim somewhat, although this also leads them to more interesting and nuanced readings. Orchard, for instance, suggests that Holofernes typifies "the fatal humiliation of overweening pagan pride" which monsters often embody, even if Holofernes isn't monstrous himself; Kathryn Powell points to a thematic interest in kingship in *Christopher* and *Judith* that was laid, almost like a palimpsest, over an older collection of three monster texts.[39]

Secondly, the best thematic readings of monstrosity also have a difficult time explaining what to do with *The Passion of Saint Christopher* because the saint's monstrosity

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[37] John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*.
[38] Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 65-67.
[39] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 5; Powell, "Meditating on Men and Monsters," 6-7.

problematizes any argument which relies on the monster as Other. Orchard covers a lot of ground in his work drawing historical parallels between monstrosity and biblical ideas of pride, but the protagonist is the monster in his story rather than the prideful king Dagnus. Although it doesn't greatly trouble her main argument in "Meditating on Men and Monsters," Powell's larger body of work on the Nowell Codex forces us to read sharply against the genre of *Christopher* in order to make it fit her psychoanalytic and post-colonial reading of monstrosity.[40] Obviously, understanding the role of monsters in this manuscript has value, but the traditional role ascribed to them in a more typical self/Other binary is not well adapted to what these medieval writers were apparently doing.

In contrast to these monster-centric theses, Nicholas Howe's reading of the manuscript addresses many of these limitations, but he may have pushed a little too far in downplaying some of the manuscript's monsters. Since he does not rely on the presence of monstrosity to make his argument, he has a much easier time incorporating *Judith* under a paradigm which draws most of its parallels to *Beowulf.* Howe radically de-emphasizes Christopher's monstrosity, especially in comparison to Powell's reading,[41] and while the text is very much a conventional martyrdom story, it seems strange to take the only two surviving references to Christopher's monstrosity in this passion-tale as a figurative insult. The English and Irish Christopher-cults present some of the most vivid examples of him as a cynocephalus in the West, and Howe takes every other mention of monstrosity in the

[40] This is best demonstrated in her analysis of *Christopher* in her dissertation. See: "The Anglo-Saxon Imaginary of the East: A Psychoanalytic Exploration of the Image of the East in Old English Literature," (Diss., University of Notre Dame, 2001), 35.

[41] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 178. It is possible that Howe had backed off a little on his emphasis of the monstrous, which had played a more prominent role in "An Angle on this Earth" but less so when he revisited *Wonders* in *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*.

manuscript literally.[42] In addition, the only other copy of the English translation had explicitly stated that Christopher was a *cynocephalus* [*healf hundisces mancynnes*] in the opening passage.[43] Howe therefore downplays the most significant thematic connection between *Christopher* and the next two texts.[44] This is the same mistake that Karl Brunner makes, and with similar complications to his overall argument. [45]

Next, *Beowulf*'s relationship to contemporary Christian thought is one of the longest-standing critical arguments about the poem; in the last century and a quarter, scholarly consensus has shifted from calling the work pagan to Christian and everything in between.[46] The earliest studies, for a variety of critical and political reasons, cast *Beowulf* in the role of a pagan poem awkwardly forced into a Christian context. The late nineteenth-century critic F. E. Blackburn, for instance, concluded that all the Christian elements were the product of later interpolation.[47] Although several decades of criticism have tempered

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[42] For Anglo-Saxon context in martyrologies, see: Theodore H. Leinbaugh, "St. Christopher and the Old English Martyrology: Latin Sources, and the Phrase *hwæs gneaþes*," *Notes & Queries* 32, no. 4 (1985): 434-37. In addition, one should note references to a dog-headed Christopher in the letters of Ratramnus of Corbie and a reworking of the legend by Walter of Speyer (*BHL* 1776-77).

[43] London, British Library, Cotton Otho B. x. This English homiletic collection was largely destroyed in the Cotton fire of 1731, but Wanley's catalog records an incipit and explicit. Ker compares the explicits of the Vitellius and Otho versions and concludes that they are very similar. N. F. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 224-29.

[44] "It cannot be an accident that the three Anglo-Saxon pieces which certainly mention the *Healfundingas* are all together in one manuscript; and once it is established that the codex has been planed with some regard to subject-matter, *Beowulf*… may be reasonably associated with the same design." Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 66-67.

[45] See also: Brunner, "Why Was *Beowulf* Preserved?," 3.

[46] The footprint of the religious criticism on *Beowulf* is vast. The following important studies, however, represent the scope of the material well: Marie Padgett Hamilton, "The Religious Principle in *Beowulf*," *PMLA* 61, no. 2 (1946): 309-30; Margaret E. Goldsmith, "The Christian Perspective in *Beowulf*," *Comparative Literature* 14, no. 1 (1962): 71-90; Marijane Osborn, "The Great Feud: Scriptural History and Strife in Beowulf," *PMLA* 93, no. 5 (1978): 973-81; C. Tidmarsh Major, "A Christian Wyrd: Syncretism in *Beowulf*," *English Language Notes* 32, no. 3 (1995): 1-10; F. Klaeber, *The Christian Elements in Beowulf*, Old English Newsletter Subsidia 24 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Western Michigan University Press, 1996); Paul Cavill, "Christianity and Theology in *Beowulf*," in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. Paul Cavill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 15-39.

[47] F. A. Blackburn, "The Christian Coloring in the *Beowulf*," *PMLA* 12, no. 2 (1897): 225.

that conviction, Robert Stevick still pled Blackburn's cause some sixty years later, and William Whallon claimed that "[the poet] may have been acquainted with stories from the opening chapters of Genesis but ignorant of the opening chapters of Luke."[48] At the same time, a growing trend of scholars read the poem from the other side of the page, arguing for a more complex understanding of Christian thought in light of the characters' pagan past. Examples range from Bernard Huppé's full allegorical reading to the essential works of Larry Benson and Fred Robinson, both of whom explore how an Anglo-Saxon audience would have interpreted the poem's characters and their knowledge of God.[49] Although academics of the last fifty years have generally tended to favor Benson and Robinson's interpretations, many details of the argument, such as how Hrothgar and Beowulf's piety would have been interpreted, are still very much an open question.

Many of the previously mentioned thematic studies of the Nowell Codex have, with varying degrees of success, taken a stake in the manuscript's engagement with Christian thought. Max Brunner is the most heavily invested in a Christian reading, but his analysis gives very little insight for understanding *Beowulf* except that the audience would have thought of it as a Christian poem.[50] Sisam and Powell's arguments focus mostly on secular

[48] Robert D. Stevick, "Christian Elements and the Genesis of 'Beowulf'," *Modern Philology* 61, no. 2 (1963), 79-89; William Whallon, "The Christianity of 'Beowulf'," *Modern Philology* 60, no. 2 (1962): 82.
[49] Bernard Felix Huppé, *The Hero in the Earthly City: A Reading of Beowulf*, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies 33 (Binghamton: Center for Medieval And Renaissance Studies, State University of New York, 1984); Larry D. Benson, "The Pagan Coloring of *Beowulf*," in *Old English Poetry: Fifteen Essays*, ed. Robert P. Creed (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1967), 193-213; Fred C. Robinson, *Beowulf and the Appositive Style*, The Hodges Lectures (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985).
[50] Brunner, "Why Was *Beowulf* Preserved?," 3-4. At the time that Brunner's article was published, even suggesting this would have been a contentious issue.

concerns and therefore have little to offer for this corner of the critical arena,[51] but Orchard and Howe's readings both make important contributions. Although he called it a secular collection, Orchard believes that Christian readers were struggling with how to interpret the *leofgeornost* characters of *Beowulf* in a Christian era that condemned pride, heroic or otherwise, as a sin. He therefore sets up the manuscript as an example of the tensions that existed between the Anglo-Saxons' Germanic past and their post-conversion identity.

I find Howe's interpretation of Vitellius as one of the three "books of elsewhere" the most interesting because it offers a completely different way of thinking about the texture of Christian thought in the manuscript. Previously, Howe had mostly described his work as an interest in place and its implications in history and cultural memory, but his ideas take on a decidedly theological bent in his analysis of the Junius manuscript. In his interpretation on MS Junius 11, the awareness of place is tied to knowledge of the Fall and God's promise of a homeland for the faithful.[52] Although Howe did not extend his interpretation of Junius to Vitellius, his reading of *St. Christopher* shows that he was nevertheless interested in the Christian implications of place in the Nowell Codex. In addition, Howe's larger body of work is also heavily invested in understanding the interplay of centers and peripheries, particularly in regards to Anglo-Saxon Christianity's devotion to Rome.[53] His research on the Anglo-Saxon "books of elsewhere" therefore suggests that Anglo-Saxons were keenly interested in the geographic implications of their

[51] Take, for instance, Sisam's summation of the Christianity/paganism divide: "in this work the poet was not much concerned with Christianity and paganism. Beowulf was a hero mainly because of his deeds." Kenneth Sisam, *The Structure of Beowulf* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 78.
[52] One can do no better than to see Howe's interpretation of the OE *Exodus* as an example. See: *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England*, 72-107.
[53] See: Howe, "Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34, no. 1 (2004): 147-72.

religious thought, both upon the places they called "home" and the places their ancestors left behind.

This dissertation aims to pick up this thread of Howe's thought and push it in a slightly different direction. Nicholas Howe once explained that Anglo-Saxon England had adopted Rome as their "cultural capital" during the Age of Bede, and that their extreme distance from their cultural center might be a source of anxiety.[54] Nevertheless, Howe also suggested that there were different kinds of overlapping "geographic imaginations" in Anglo-Saxon England, to borrow Derek Gregory's term, [55] and the Nowell Codex never once mentions Rome as a cultural center. I would therefore argue that the Nowell Codex offers a persepective outside of the Roman framework and makes the margin more spiritually independent. Even though early medieval Christianity absorbed many of the cultural attitudes of the Roman Empire in the Latin West, this is not always a comfortable relationship; Christian theology, especially in its views on missiology and apocalyptic thought, often subverts that old Roman perspective on space and power. The power that Christopher wields over Dagnus, that the grove of the Sun and Moon has over Alexander's fate, and that Judith holds over the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, is the power of that divinely charged margin over an earthly center of power, be it Greek, Macedonian, or Assyrian. Some of the texts also push against the desire to find clean, easy divisions between these two categories; others focus the struggle between the pre-Christian center of the world and the true faith lying on this imperial center's margins, and they all address what the proper response to the marvelous ought to be.

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[54] Ibid., 151; "At an Angle on This Earth," 7.
[55] *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 2.

If we follow this interpretation, however, where does that leave our monsters? I would argue that these creatures 1) function as markers of geographic marginality, 2) draw out the limits of humanity and therefore their spiritual agency in a Christian cosmos, and 3) demonstrate the power of the periphery to subvert the center through their interaction with people. Furthermore, monsters are not universal across the Nowell Codex because they are not the only embodiment of marginality and subversion. In the Conclusion to this dissertation, I shall explain how the same kinds of power struggles between faith on the periphery and imperialistic power at the center take place in *Judith*, but this fact has passed unnoticed because that struggle largely plays out over Judith's body rather than on the ground in Judea. These same themes are also present in *Beowulf*, as the Geats and Danes live in a pre-Christian cultural center on the margins of the "known world" and encounter the monstrous edges of a divine history.

2. The Nowell Codex: Reconstructing the Quires

Now that we know where this dissertation intends to travel, we must first justify the basis of the argument. All of the previously discussed arguments, including mine, can *only* work if the physical evidence supports it—and, as we have already seen, some arguments like Sisam and Powell's have required some speculation on the manuscript's genesis to make a clean fit. In fact, at least two scholars, John Drayton Pickles and Kevin Kiernan, have specifically argued against the feasibility of codicologically-based, thematic analyses at all. In his 1971 study of the three prose texts, for instance, John Pickles decided that codicological analysis on the manuscript had very limited value, partly because all but Sisam's work on the subject was badly argued, but also because his own reconstruction of

the manuscript indicated that the manuscript was missing entire texts. Faced with the likelihood that this manuscript was only partially complete, Pickles concluded that any codicologically-based unity arguments could only have limited value.[56]

Kevin Kiernan's meticulous study of the manuscript, however, is considerably more damning: he claims that the Nowell Codex actually consists of three originally separate booklets written at different times and only coincidentally bound together at some point later in their existence. Kiernan works his argument from conclusion to evidence, starting with two critical objections against the current scholarship on *Beowulf*: first, that a poem praising Danish history could exist at any time before the reign of Cnut, and that *Beowulf's* seemingly inferior position in the manuscript (fourth out of five) is an aesthetic snub. As he explains,

> The real objection to the thesis that *Beowulf* was the fourth item in a decidedly eccentric *Liber Monstrorum* is the implication that eleventh-century Anglo-Saxons had no sophisticated appreciation for an original epic written in their own tongue… even the dullest anthologist would realize that Grendel outmonstered anything that *The Wonders of the East* had to offer, much less *Alexander's Letter* or St. Christopher's curious pedigree.[57]

For this reason, he proposed that *Beowulf* was originally written later in the eleventh century during the reign of Cnut, that the extant copy must be the author's autotype, and that what scholars have been calling "the Nowell Codex" is in fact three separate codices

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[56] Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 137. I address Pickles' concerns in "C. Answering the Completeness Question," below.

[57] Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 140.

containing the prose texts, *Beowulf*, and *Judith*, respectively.[58] He then works through the physical evidence to show how it fits these assumptions.

Kiernan concludes that scholars should no longer compare *Beowulf* to the rest of the manuscript at all: "Suddenly the poem is no longer the fourth item in an otherwise undistinguished Anglo-Saxon anthology… It becomes instead a poem that eleventh-century Anglo-Saxons appreciated enough to copy as an individual book."[59] The arc of his thesis is admittedly tendentious, as it starts with his conclusions and then interprets the evidence, and even Kiernan concedes that his thesis "is not totally objective, for it is founded on the premise of a contemporary MS."[60] Kiernan's work has undergone considerable scrutiny by critics, but it is nevertheless the most thorough and meticulous examination of the manuscript since Kemp Malone's, and the sheer amount of new evidence he brings to the table is essential for understanding the manuscript.

Regardless of whether or not these arguments are widely accepted, they bring up an important point: there is little value to discussing the Nowell Codex as a thematic whole if it was never a single manuscript before Nowell's time or if it is only a part of a larger whole. If Pickles is correct that the Nowell Codex originally had more than the five texts which have survived, then there is no way to know if a sustained reading among the remaining texts would be even remotely accurate. If Kiernan is correct, then it makes no logical sense to propose a reading of five texts which were never bound together during the Anglo-Saxon period. Before we can proceed with this reading, we must therefore address these

[58] Ibid. One should also see his summary of this argument in: "The Eleventh-Century Origin of *Beowulf* and the *Beowulf* Manuscript," in *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. Colin Chase (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 1997), 9-22.
[59] *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 132.
[60] Ibid., 270.

objections: first, are we in fact dealing with a physically indivisible group of texts, or a miscellany of unrelated materials assembled at a later date? Second, is the manuscript largely complete as it stands, or did it once contain more texts? These questions can only be answered by tackling a thornier critical issue: we have no evidence of the binding or the original gatherings of this manuscript. When we talk about the Nowell Codex as being "incomplete" or containing "multiple booklets," how do we even know what the manuscript originally looked like?

A. The Quiring Debate

The Nowell Codex as it now stands consists of 116 loose folios hung in individual paper frames and secured in a nineteenth-century binding. Prior to that binding and restoration, the manuscript had been apparently been rebound several times, and multiple foliations litter the edges.[61] Following the 1731 fire at Ashburnam house, manuscript Cotton Vitellius A. xv was left with charred, brittle edges and some buckling/shrinkage on all of the folios. As every editor of the manuscript has noted, the British Museum conserved the crumbling folios of the manuscript by cutting them out of their previous binding and suspending each folio in its own paper frame.[62] While this conservation prevented any further loss to the text frame, it also destroyed the the physical gatherings which one normally uses to prove the boundaries of a quire. it is now unclear whether the Nowell Codex once consisted of one, two, or even three separable booklets, as Kiernan has argued.

[61] The various misbindings and refoliation have left behind some valuable information about quire boundaries. There are at least four foliations, which have been collated by Malone, but Kiernan counts up to six. See: ibid., 14; Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 86.
[62] For two very thorough descriptions of the rebinding process, see: *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 65-71; Malone, *The Nowell Codex*, 11.

Considering how much this study hinges on these texts being placed physically together into a single book, we must pause to sort through the evidence and remove any doubt about what this manuscript actually did or did not contain. This section will therefore reassess the evidence of the manuscript's original gatherings and the hypothetical reconstructions proposed by other scholars in order to ascertain what the most likely configuration of the Nowell Codex looked like before its rebinding. From there we may clarify whether or not a thematic reading of all five texts is feasible.

Since they lack the original stitching in the binding, modern scholars have therefore tried to reconstruct the original quires through more circumstantial evidence, such as previous misbindings, wrong foliations, rulings, frame size, and hair and flesh arrangements. Surprisingly, these various studies agree on quite a bit and disagree on surprisingly little. Table 1 contains a side-by-side list of the seven previous studies of the manuscript's gatherings and arrangement; since Boyle confirmed Ker's reading, and Gerritsen confirmed Malone's, they each appear in the same column.[63]

On the one hand, the chart shows that the codicologists who have studied the Nowell Codex agree on many things. All, for instance, concur that the text consisted of fourteen quires, that there are gaps before Quire 1 and both sides of Quire 14, and that the misbinding of Quires 3-4 mark them out as two quires of eight folios each. On the other

[63] Table adapted from: Förster, *Die Beowulf-Handschrift*, 22-23; Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, *Beowulf and Judith*, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), xv; Ker, *Catalogue*, 282; Malone, *The Nowell Codex*, 14-16; Gerritsen, "British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv: A Supplementary Description," 299; Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 126; Boyle, "The Nowell Codex and the Poem of *Beowulf*," 24. Note that Kiernan's manuscript foliation has been silently adapted to the BL foliation to make direct comparison between the different columns easier.

Table 1. The five major reconstructions of the gatherings in the Nowell Codex

Quire	Förster, 1919		Dobbie, 1953		Ker, 1957 Boyle, 1997		Malone, 1963 Gerritsen, 1988		Kiernan, 1994	
	# folios	MS range	# folios	MS range	# folios	MS range	# folios	MS range	# folios	MS range
[gap]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	8	94-101	10	94-103	8	94-101	10	94-103	10	94-103
2	8	102-109	6	104-109	8	102-109	6	104-109	6	104-109
4	8	110-117	8	110-117	8	110-117	8	110-117	6 + 2	110-117
3	8	118-125	8	118-125	8	118-125	8	118-125	6 + 2	118-125
5	8	126-133	8	126-133	8	126-133	8	126-133	6	126-131
6	8	134-141	8	134-141	8	134-141	8	134-141	8 + 2	132-141
7	8 + 1	142-150	8 + 1	142-150	8	142-149	8	142-149	8	142-149
8	10	151-160	10	151-160	8	150-157	8	150-157	8	150-157
9	8	161-168	8	161-168	8	158-165	8	158-165	8	158-165
10	8	169-176	8	169-176	8	166-173	8	166-173	8	166-173
11	8	177-184	8	177-184	8	174-181	8	174-181	8	174-181
12	8 + 1	185-193	8 + 1	185-193	10	182-191	10	182-191	10	182-191
13	8	194-201	8	194-201	10	192-201	10	192-201	10	192-201
[gap]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	8	201-209	8	201-209	8	201-209	8	201-209	8	201-209
[gap]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

hand, there are three major areas of dispute among these scholars, and these are marked in Table 1 in green, purple, and blue.

First of all, the green block on the left-hand side of the table represents the first major discrepancy between scholarly reconstructions, which spans most of the *Beowulf* folios. Max Förster was the first to attempt a complete description of the manuscript in 1919, and although previous misbindings and foliation helped him to identify several quire boundaries, he misread those the same clues in the later folios, leading him to argue for two highly unusual quires of nine folios in Quires 7 and 12, thus misaligning all of the quires in between.[64] Later, Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie adopted Förster's arrangement except for a small adjustment in the first two quires.[65] As Kevin Kiernan's excellent analysis of the hair and flesh sides of the pages makes clear, however, their reconstruction of Quires 7-13 is not possible, and so the differences highlighted in green be safely discarded in favor of the other reconstructions.[66]

The scholarship of the last sixty years provides a much better picture of the overall manuscript; nearly all of these studies agree with Neal Ker that "art[icle]s 1-4 are inseparable" and thus consisted of a single, continuous block of text.[67] Nevertheless, these

[64] Förster, *Die Beowulf-Handschrift*, 21. One should note, however, that even with the errors in the last half of the manuscript, both Förster and Dobbie made first four texts of the manuscript an indivisible unit of continuous quires, just as every other codicologist except Kiernan has done. See: ibid., 82.
[65] Dobbie, *Beowulf and Judith*, xv.
[66] Kiernan's hair/flesh analysis has been accepted even by his most severe critics. Richard Clement never once questions Kiernan's hair/flesh reconstruction, and Johan Gerritsen has also confirmed it in an independent examination. Cf. Kiernan and Prescott, *The Electronic Beowulf*; Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 123-26; Gerritsen, "British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv: A Supplementary Description," 298; Richard W. Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 1 (1984): 14.
[67] Ker, *Catalogue*, 282. He also notes that, "[s]ince Judith was not always in its present position… it must have come originally before art. 1 or have been shifted from the end to some other position before the worm got to

modern reconstructions differ on two different cruxes: the division between Quires 1-2, marked in purple, and 5-6, marked in blue. Both Leonard Boyle and Neil Ker, for instance, believe that Quires 1-2 are "palpably quires of eight folios each" as opposed to quires of ten and six, and Leonard Boyle points to a catchword on the bottom of 101v as proof.[68] Kiernan's hair/flesh side analysis again clarifies the situation: since fols. 94-98 all place hair to the outside, the arrangement only makes sense if Quire 1 contains ten folios. Moreover, as Peter Lucas reminds us, "[C]atchwords were not in general use before the twelfth century," and he suggests that it is much more likely that a later binder wrote the catchword, as well as one on fol. 96, when trying to put the jumbled sheets back in their original order.[69] Quires 1 and 2 are therefore gatherings of ten and six folios respectively, thus solving the crux marked in purple on the table.

The final controversy involving Quires 5-6, marked in blue on the table, is much more important to our understanding of the manuscript, for on this point the physical unity of *Beowulf* with the three prose texts depends. Although every other codicologist places the beginning of Quire 6 on fol. 134, two folios into the beginning of *Beowulf,* Kevin Kiernan places the boundary two leaves earlier to make *Beowulf* a stand-alone booklet from the prose texts. He then concludes that all five texts were "combined early in their history, most likely in the scriptorium in which they were copied, but perhaps by Laurence Nowell or a previous owner in the late 16th century."[70] If Kiernan is correct about this, then *Beowulf*

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work on ff. 192-201." He therefore implies that *Judith* is an original part of the same MS, as he does not suggest that it was added later.

[68] Boyle, "The Nowell Codex and the Poem of *Beowulf*," 23.

[69] Peter J. Lucas, "The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript," *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language* n.s.41, no. 164 (1990): 467.

[70] Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 127.

was not originally read in the context of *Christopher*, *Wonders, Alexander,* or *Judith*, which would then limit the usefulness of this dissertation.

Even though Kiernan's description of the hair/flesh arrangement of the pages is probably very accurate, his conclusion is nevertheless incorrect.[71] As Richard Clement has shown, Kiernan's hair/flesh analysis of these two quires leaves three possible arrangements for Quires 5 and 6: 1) a quire of eight and a composite quire of eight, 2) one quire of six followed by a composite quire of ten, or 3) a quire of six and a quire of eight, separated by a single bifolium inserted between them (see Figure 1).[72] Kiernan originally preferred the second arrangement, in the chart, but this makes Quire 6, a gathering of six folios expanded with two singletons, completely unlike any other quire in the manuscript.[73] Meanwhile, the first arrangement, a quire of three bifolia expanded with two singletons, is a perfectly normal arrangement, and exactly like the ones which Kiernan posits for Quires 3 and 4.[74] Even Kiernan himself seems to have backed away from this possible arrangement: at some time before Clement wrote his rebuttal, Kiernan proposed the third arrangement in the chart, making Quire 5 six folios, Quire 6 eight folios, and a single bifolium separating

[71] Kiernan gives several other pieces of circumstantial evidence including the aspect, dirt, and a seeming binder's instruction on 132r, to prove the first page; Clement answers all of these arguments convincingly. See: ibid., 133-34; Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 19-20.
[72] Table adapted from: *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 139; "A Long Footnote for J. Gerritsen's 'Supplementary' Description of BL Cotton MS Vitellius A. xv," 494-95; Johan Gerritsen, "British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv," 298-99; Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 18-20.
[73] "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 18.
[74] Ibid.; Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 33-34, 126. Cf. Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 18-20.

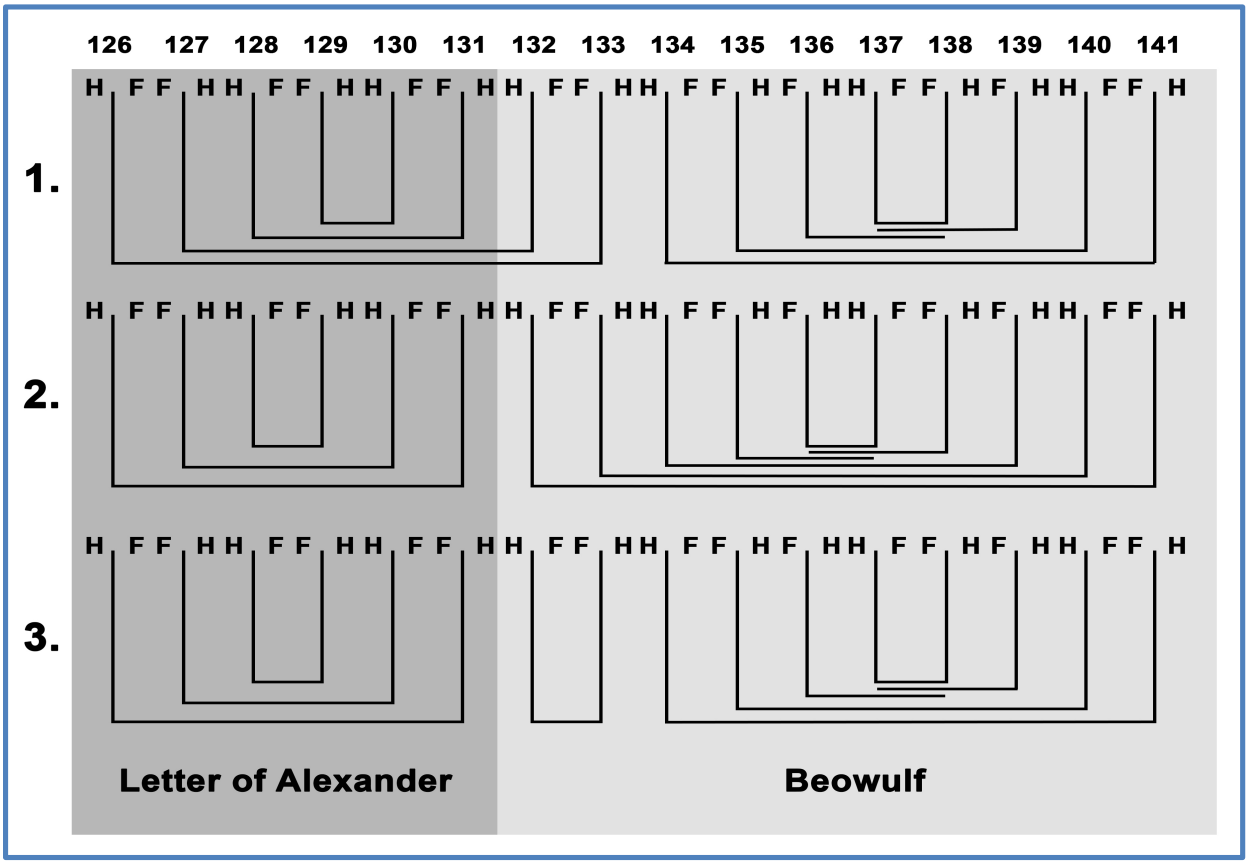


Figure 1. The three possible folio arrangements for Quires 5 and 6

them. Kiernan called this arrangement a "more strongly supported" formulation "than any other sheet arrangement" for the beginning of *Beowulf*.[75]

Despite Kiernan's revised arrangement, a ruling error across Quire 5 reinforces the first arrangement for Quire 6. As Leonard Boyle notes, the text frame in ths codex is usually pricked and ruled across an entire stack of sheets; in Quire 6, the bottom ruling is demonstrably too low across fols. 126-133, making the boundaries of this particular quire

[75] Kiernan, "A Long Footnote for J. Gerritsen's 'Supplementary' Description of BL Cotton MS Vitellius A. xv," 494-95.

easier to spot.[76] Gerritsen nicely summarizes the problem: "The fact itself that 131v and 132v have identical secondary rulings seems sufficient proof that they belong to a single codex. Quite apart from this, the ruling grid on 132 does not match 141 (which does match 134) but 127, also proving the quire."[77] Figure 2, below, is a short visual representation of the folios in question. In the left-hand image, folios 131r and 131v are aligned to demonstrate the ruling line next to fol. 132r. As once can see from the emphasized lines, these rulings all correspond, and the botched ruling at the foot of the page aligns across both folios. In contrast, the two following folios represented on the right, fols. 133 and 134, do not have identical ruling. Since folios 133 and 134 could not have been ruled at the same time, Quire 5 thus ends with fol. 133.

Despite Kiernan's otherwise excellent analysis, his explanation for this ruling error is both unsatisfying and unnecessarily complicated. For one, it requires that an orphan bifolium pulled from Quire 5 and destined for *The Letter of Alexander* was stitched onto the the first full quire of *Beowulf*; then this orphan folio had to be coincidentally reunited with the rest of its original gathering, in the correct order, when the two texts were bound together at some later time.[78] Furthermore, this violates common-sense book construction. The only reason to start a new book with a bifolium is when stitching in separately produced material like a frontspiece, computus, or canon tables. Otherwise, that loose bifolium, which Kiernan imagines would have been individually stitched to the adjoining

[76] Boyle, "The Nowell Codex and the Poem of *Beowulf*," 23.
[77] Gerritsen, "British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv," 298 fn. 10.
[78] Kiernan, "A Long Footnote for J. Gerritsen's 'Supplementary' Description of BL Cotton MS Vitellius A. xv," 494-95; Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 18-19.

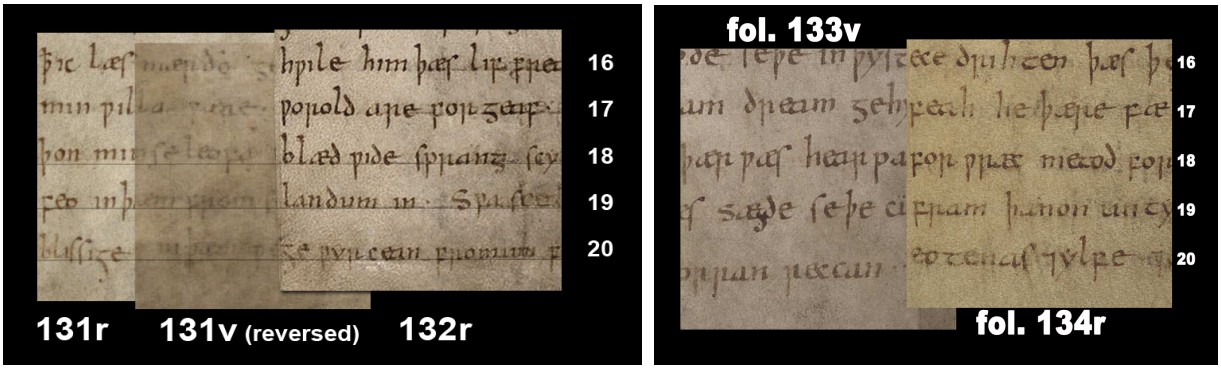


Figure 2. Comparison of text frames within Quire 5 (ruling emphasized on the left.) [79]

quire, creates a weak spot in the gatherings.[80] We know from their handling of Quire 3 and Quire 10 that this scribe was capable of planning ahead; he or she could just as easily have wrapped that bifolium around that quire of eight to make a stronger quire of ten. We have, therefore, very little evidence that Quire 6 begins on fol. 132 while we have very good evidence that it begins on fol. 134. We should therefore assume that these quires contain eight folios each, that *Beowulf* begins on the penultimate folio of Quire 5, and that the first four texts of the manuscript therefore make an indivisible unit across Quires 1-13. The most correct foliation is therefore Kemp Malone's, with allowances for the singletons in Quires 3, 4, and 6 as Kiernan has proved (Figure 4, below).[81]

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[79] Image source: Kiernan and Prescott, *The Electronic Beowulf*. Display of these images constitutes scholarly fair use for academic research. The images are also available from The British Library at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_vitellius_a_xv. I have included the verso of fol. 131v, reversed, so that the images can be more perfectly aligned using the shine-through on the verso side. This also allows one to compare the rulings across the two facing pages 131v and 132r.

[80] One should also note that Kiernan's re-creation of this scenario, which tries to account for the common ruling across fols. 126-133, requires the scribe to have been copying the prose texts *at the same time and in the same sequence* as the current manuscript. This is a complete reversal from his previous claim that "*Beowulf* was copied at a different time, and with a far different attitude." See: *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 140; Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 18.

[81] Malone, *The Nowell Codex*, 14-16; Gerritsen, "British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv," 299; Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 14-16.

B. Placing *Judith* in the Nowell Codex

Now that we have reconstructed the most probable divisions of Quires 1-13, we may conclude that we have a single, indivisible manuscript spanning at least from *Christopher* to *Beowulf*. Even so, this still leaves us with one unresolved question: how does *Judith* fit into this picture? Since we are missing an unknown number of folios at the beginning of *Judith* and at least one at the end, placing this quire within the rest of the manuscript has historically been more difficult. Generally speaking, scholars have focused on the same key features of the manuscript to answer this question: incompleteness of the poem, the common scribe across Quires 10-14, and the excessive wear and presence of a wormhole at the end of Quire 13, which all suggest that fol. 201 was once the final page of the manuscript.

Although the first earliest codicologist of the Nowell Codex, Max Förster, had assumed that *Judith* was indivisible from the rest of the manuscript, other scholars speculated that Quire 14 was a separate booklet from a fairly early date.[82] R. W. Chambers claimed in 1921 that "the two poems have probably not always formed one book. For the last page of *Beowulf* was apparently once the last page of the volume, to judge from its battered condition, whilst *Judith* is imperfect at the beginning."[83] Kemp Malone proposed the same scenario in his facsimile edition, but with a little more elaboration:

> It would seem to follow that fols. 202-209 were added later, perhaps hundreds of years later. One may reasonably conjecture that the scriptorium in which fols. 94-

[82] Förster, *Die Beowulf-Handschrift*, 82. Förster based his assumption on the belief that *Beowulf* was incomplete as it stands, and that it must have continued into another quire that also contained the start of *Judith*. Nearly all modern scholars believe that *Beowulf* is complete, making the argument irrelevant.
[83] Walter Loeschcke, "Sanctus Christophorus canineus," in *Edwin Redslob zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Edwin Redslob et al. (Berlin: E. Blaschker, 1955), 555.

> 201 were written also produced a manuscript containing a poem about Judith, and that fols. 202-209 (i.e., the surviving part of the MS) were combined, by Nowell or by some earlier owner, with fols. 94-201 because the Judith fragment was obviously written by the scribe who wrote *Beowulf* 1940-3182.[84]

The critics on this end of the debate therefore believe that the damage at the end of Quire 14 is more compelling evidence for separation of the codices than their joining based on the presence of a common scribe across Quires 11-14. By the time Kevin Kiernan writes his analysis of the codex, he declares that "[a]lmost certainly *Judith* was once part of another codex entirely," and Mitchell and Robinson's most recent edition of *Beowulf* tacitly follows suit.[85]

The apparent certainty with which Kiernan proclaims *Judith*'s independence from the Nowell Codex belies the actual state of the evidence. In fact, the circumstantial evidence supports its inclusion and we have very little evidence to the contrary. Peter Lucas best explains the situation:

> While this sequence of events [late binding of *Judith* to the MS] is theoretically possible, it is, as Boyle observed, a 'chance and a singular one at that'—extremely improbable. It is much simpler, and more plausible, to assume that *Judith* always belonged to the *Beowulf*-manuscript, unless there is no way *Judith* can be accommodated in the manuscript as an integral part of it, in which case some such hypothesis as that suggested by Chambers and taken up by Malone would have to be resorted to *faute de mieux.* The burden of proof lies with those who claim, in the

[84] Malone, *The Nowell Codex*, 17.
[85] Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 150; Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, eds., *Beowulf: An Edition* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 3.

> recent words of Kiernan [p. 151], that 'the *Beowulf* and *Judith* MSS were [...] in fact[...] once separate.'"[86]

Lex parsimoniae, in other words, compels us to find the simplest answer, the solution which introduces the fewest complications or assumptions in order to be true. As Lucas explains above, the fact that the same scribe's hand can be found through Quires 11-14, and that these quires represent the only surviving example of his work, strongly suggests that these pages all belong together. Furthermore, the fact that these texts were bound together at least as early as the seventeenth century, with no other indication of separate origin or proof that they were brought together in the Renaissance, strongly suggests they were always together; we should therefore start from that assumption until a *better* explanation presents itself.

On the balance of the evidence, we have no compelling paleographical grounds to challenge this assumption. Although Kiernan makes much of *Judith*'s difference of aspect, even Chambers, who largely agrees with Kiernan on this matter, conceded that the differences between the scribal performances in *Judith* and the second portion *Beowulf* are insignificant—"trifling," to use his word.[87] He likewise discounts any difference in aspect as proof of a separate origin: "this is hardly compelling evidence. The differing styles of capitals may just as well reflect differences in the exemplar(s)."[88] And, though Kiernan emphasizes the difference in text frames between *Beowulf* and *Judith*, which he claims differ by almost a centimeter, Clement averages the difference between them at two

[86] Lucas, "The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript," 468. Ellisions in the quote are Lucas'.
[87] R. W. Chambers, *Beowulf: An Introduction to the Study of the Poem*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 555.
[88] Ibid.

millimeters—hardly enough to argue that *Judith* was ruled later and with a different frame size.[89] As for the arrangement of the hair and flesh sides, we should rightly note that the bifolia in *Judith* are arranged with the hair facing to the outside of the quire, unlike the majority of the other quires, which often put hair sides and flesh sides facing each other.[90] However, Quires 1, 12, and 13, which all contain ten folios, have the same arrangement. Since two of those three quires also contain Scribe Two's work, would appear to be a peculiarity of this scribe rather than proof of a separate origin.[91]

This leaves us with one last piece of evidence: the wear and tear on folio 201 as compared to folio 209. The state of the evidence has left almost every scholar to agree that *"Judith* was not always in its present position," but we need not take this as proof that *Judith* was once a separate codex. [92] A much more reasonable location for *Judith* has already been proposed, and that is at the front.

Neil Ker first suggested that *Judith* made up a portion of the Nowell Codex's acephalous first part, and both John Drayton Pickles and Peter Lucas pursued that lead

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[89] I have serious reservations about attempting this kind of analysis on a burned manuscript, as the pages tend to buckle and shrink asymmetrically; and, seeing as *Judith* is completely contained in the final quire, it likely bore a disproportional amount of the heat damage. Even though the binding strings can limit horizontal shrinkage somewhat, the facsimile editions clearly show shrinkage along the inner edges of Quire 14. Nevertheless, Richard Clement notes, "the written space in the *Judith* fragment (measured between the first and last rulings) is between 16.6 and 17.1 cm; the average is 16.9 cm. Kiernan claims that the average for this same measurement in the quires of *Beowulf* is 17.5 cm. The actual size, however, is 17.1 cm, which is only 2 mm difference from the measured average in the *Judith* fragment." Kiernan's error might have come from adopting Neil Ker's figures, as he also estimates the average frame length to 175 mm. See: Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf-Manuscript*, 151; Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 22; Ker, *Catalogue*, 282.

[90] Every major scholar has noted this fact, but the hair/flesh arrangement is easiest to see in Gerritsen's chart: "British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv: A Supplementary Description," 299.

[91] Clement, "Codicological Consideration in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 22. One should note also that Clement's preferred account of the missing leaf at the end of *Judith* is to make Quire 14 an original quire of five with the hair side out, just like Quires 1, 11 and 12. This is sorely tempting, but it does introduce a slight wrinkle in Lucas' argument that would need addressed. See section 3, below.

[92] Ker, *Catalogue*, 282.

independently in their own analyses. Pickles, who believed that the current Nowell Codex was incomplete, suggested that *Judith* was a fragment of a much larger array of missing material before the *Passion of St. Christopher*.[93] Twenty years later, Peter Lucas investigated the same question. As he points out, we know we are missing a final leaf of *Judith* which contained the last six lines because a late hand has written them in the margin on the final leaf; if that leaf were joined to a quire containing the missing portion of *Christopher*, then we can account for two troubling gaps in the surviving manuscript.[94] Once we move the surviving quire of *Judith* to the front, then the final page of *Beowulf* becomes the end of the codex and has the outward exposure needed for the bookworm to chew through much of Quire 13. This takes care of our last sticky issue.

As Lucas has said, the burden of proof is on those who wish to sunder *Judith* from the rest of the Nowell Codex. Now that the evidence is laid out, I think it is clear that the burden of proof for that hypothesis cannot even remotely be met. On the contrary, every justification for removing *Judith* is easily accommodated for in a unified codex, and if we move *Judith* ahead of Quire 1, then a unified codex actually makes more sense of what remains. This new location for *Judith*, however, leads us to our final codicological problem: is the manuscript largely complete? Pickles and Lucas have both explored that question, and the answer is very encouraging.

[93] Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 8-9.
[94] Lucas, "The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript," 470-71. This is of course a grossly inadequate summary of his larger argument, which I will discuss in more detail below.

C. Answering the Completeness Question

John Pickles explained his resistance to codicologically-based thematic readings of the Nowell Codex based on the following logic:

> [T]here remains the possibility that the Vitellius manuscript once contained writings now lost. Such writings, if they existed, and if they had survived, might have revealed more to us about the transmission of the five works remaining, and about the character of the whole volume. Certainly any theory about a single principle of compilation if rather forced, even if that possibility is discounted, while, if it be accepted, it must greatly weaken all such theories.[95]

This warning has gained little traction among modern scholars of the manuscript; nevertheless, Pickles had good justification for his pessimism, as there are three known gaps in the manuscript. Any one of these could have theoretically contained multiple texts across an unknown number of quires, and so any good theory of compilation must take these into account. His own reconstruction of the manuscript removed one of these theoretical gaps as follows:

> (*n* quires)+ Judith + (*n* quires) + Christopher + Alexander + Beowulf [96]

Even by this model, Pickles had reason to be less than optimistic: if *Judith* is largely complete as it stands, as some critics have argued,[97] then some other text had to fill up the remaining space in the previous quire(s). And, if *Christopher* is missing about 350 lines, as Max Förster had estimated, then another text is needed to fill up the missing quire(s)

[95] Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 139.
[96] Ibid., 9.
[97] Rosemary E. Woolf, "The Lost Opening to the 'Judith'," *The Modern Language Review* 50, no. 2 (1955):168-72; Martina Häcker, "The Original Length of the Old English *Judith*: More Doubt(s) on the 'Missing Text'," *Leeds Studies in English* n.s. 27 (1996):1-18.

between it and *Judith*.[98] The best we can hope for is that the manuscript started with *Judith* and is missing only one more text in the middle, where *Christopher* probably began close to the beginning of a quire and requiring at least one more text.

More accurate measurements of the missing texts, however, fix most of these doubts for us. Again, Peter Lucas provides the necessary information. The remaining text of the OE *Christopher* is fairly faithful to its Latin exemplar, and one can reasonably use the Latin to estimate what is missing in the English original. Using this technique, Lucas estimates that the extant portion makes up 36.7 percent of the original length.[99] He therefore concludes that, instead of 350 lines, "[b]efore the 174 manuscript lines that still survive there would have been exactly 300 manuscript lines, i.e. 15 pages at 20 lines per page, a remarkable finding."[100] What this means is that, if the final, missing page of *Judith* ended on the first leaf of a hypothetical quire containing eight folios, then the missing portion of *Christopher* would have begun on the verso side of the same folio and exactly filled up the missing quire with no gaps (see Figure 3.)[101]

We have now moved from three problematic gaps in the Nowell Codex to just one at the very front, immediately preceding *Judith*. Unlike like Pickles' reconstruction of the MS, which assumed missing texts at both breaks in the remaining pages, this remaining gap at the front of the codex does not force the same assumption: we must simply be willing to

[98] At twenty lines to a page, which is the norm through most of the Nowell Codex, 350 long lines will only fill 17.5 pages, or about nine leaves—too much for a single quire of eight and not enough for a quire of ten even if we factor in the missing leaf at the end of *Judith*. See: Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 24-25; Max Förster, *Beowulf-materialien zum Gebrauch bei Vorlesungen*, 5th ed. (Heidelberg,: C. Winter, 1928), 76-77.
[99] Lucas, "The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript," 471-72.
[100] Ibid., 472.
[101] Ibid.

accept that *Judith* began at the top of the previous quire. On the other hand, that means accepting that we are missing least 50% of *Judith*, and this a conclusion which some scholars would prefer to avoid. Albert Cook had suggested in 1907 that *Judith* was 'virtually

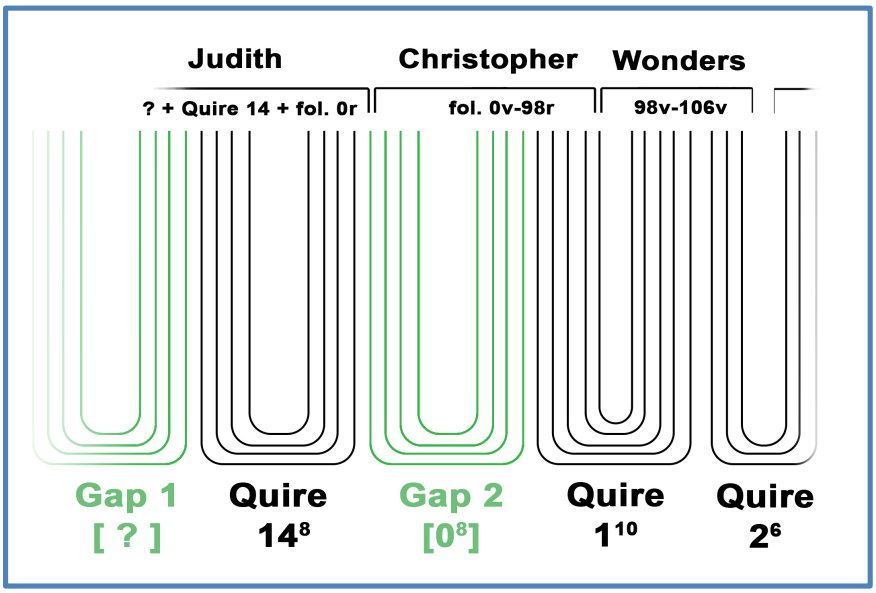


Figure 3. Lucas' suggested reconstruction of the front of the manuscript

complete';[102] Rosemary Woolf then argued that, contrary to Max Förster's assumption that *Judith* is missing three quires, the poem is structurally largely complete and theoretically needs very little additional information to make a coherent work.[103] Other scholars, including Martina Häcker, have supported her thesis on thematic grounds; both Pickles and Lucas, for example, used Woolf's article to help reconstruct the missing material in the MS,

[102] Albert S. Cook, *Judith, an Old English Epic Fragment* (New York: AMS Press, 1972), 21 fn. 1.
[103] Woolf, "The Lost Opening to the 'Judith'," 168-72.

and they both concluded that the Nowell Codex contained more than just the five texts now extant.[104]

This is not the only scenario we must consider, nor is it the most likely. When Max Förster estimated the missing portion of *Judith*, he used both the original Latin source and the estimated number of missing section numbers as a guide. The extant poem contains 349 verse lines marked out with three divisions, "fitts" marked as sections X, XI, and XII; moreover, the remaining story picks up at about 8:1 in the Vulgate account. Using these numbers, he calculated that *Judith* was only about 25% complete, or missing three more quires of four bifolia from the manuscript.[105] Förster's estimation, however, fails to take several things into account. For one, *Judith* is a very loose adaptation of the Vulgate, and there is no reason to assume that the translator would follow their source as closely as the *Christopher* redactor followed theirs. Next, the length of fitt divisions in *Beowulf* can vary by more than a hundred lines, and as such they make for a poor unit of calculation. Moreover, they do not necessarily mark out divisions in a single poem. Rosemary Woolf points out that the fitt numbers in the Junius manuscript stretch across multiple poems, so we cannot assume that the original *Judith* had twelve marked fitts. These numbers could have simply been copied out of the exemplar.[106]

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[104] Häcker, "The Original Length of the Old English *Judith*: More Doubt(s) on the 'Missing Text'," 1-18; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 9; Lucas, "The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript," 477. Häcker argued that *Judith* could be up to 98 percent complete, although the construction of the codex would require at least twice that; Lucas thought the poem was missing just under 100 lines, making the poem about 78 percent complete.

[105] "Danach ware also etwas weniger als drei Viertel, d. h. ca. 950 bis 1000 verse, fortgefallen, so daß das ganze Gedicht ungefähr den gleichen Umfang wie Cynewulfs Elene (1320 Verse) gehabt hätte. Da die erhaltenen 350 Verse genau 16 Manuskript-seiten, also eine achtblättrige Lage füllen, würden mithin 3 x 16 = 48 Seiten, d. h. drei ebensolche Bogenlagen ausgefallen sein." Förster, *Die Beowulf-Handschrift*, 88-89.

[106] Woolf, "The Lost Opening to the 'Judith'," 170.

These two possibilities represent two codicological extremes: are we missing up to three quires, or just a single folio? Although Woolf's later advocates treat her theory as the correct answer, especially given the problems with Förster's numbers, she merely concluded that Förster's "prima facie" argument "does not rest on secure foundation and that the opposite view is, at least, equally tenable."[107] Nor does she ever give a definitive number for the missing folios preceding *Judith.* But one *can* take a middle road between these two extremes. The heroine Judith does not enter the Vulgate version of the story until Chapter 8, about halfway through the text; furthermore, the remainder of the English poem does not pick up until about 12:8. This leaves us with approximately four chapters for the missing portion and four for the remaining poem. If we assume that the complete *Judith* focused entirely on the heroine, as Rosemary Woolf suggested, then it would not be unreasonable to argue that the missing portion would have covered material from the Vulgate, chapters 8-12, with a brief introduction to the larger context. If the author followed a similar rate of paraphrase as through chapters 13-16, then the missing portion would take up only one more quire of eight or ten bifolia. This would put the original length of *Judith* somewhere between 670 and 770 lines— still a little too short to accommodate all of the missing fitt numbers as Förster had wished, but nevertheless a reasonable suggestion under Woolf's paradigm.

In conclusion, we cannot argue for the completeness of the Nowell Codex as forcefully as we can its unity, but I do feel that the assumption is more than reasonable. We have just as much good reason to think that *Judith* began on the first page of the manuscript

[107] Ibid., 172.

as anything else, but more importantly, the available evidence does not *exclude* this possibility whatsoever. In the following chapters, I will therefore assume that *Judith* was originally the first text in a unified Nowell Codex, without any unknown, missing texts before it; and since there is no evidence that casts any reasonable doubt upon it, this assumption should not weaken the overall analysis. An updated reconstruction of the entire manuscript is therefore as follows (see Figure 4.)

We have therefore answered back to Kiernan's and Pickles' codicological questions. There is, nevertheless, one more issue we should address before I close, and that is the problem of scribal intentionality. Many scholars since Sisam and Orchard tend to agree that the Nowell Codex is a carefully planned work; Sisam and Powell specifically have offered their theses as answers to why the text was compiled. Nevertheless, this manuscript shows no useful evidence of its use and without any extra-textual clues or a clear genre among the texts, "proving" that the Nowell Codex is anything more than an incidental collection becomes difficult if not unwise. For that reason, I wish to limit this analysis to a reading of the texts of the manuscript as they stand, lest I tread into some very sticky methodological territory by pushing the evidence further than it may reasonably take us. Even though I will not claim that the following analysis will give us a conclusive answer about why this work was commissioned or what purpose it served, I am *very* interested in what ideas or cultural beliefs would have brought these texts together in the minds of the two scribes who copied them out, regardless of their main intent, or what kind of argument they would have posed to the English reader who browsed its pages.

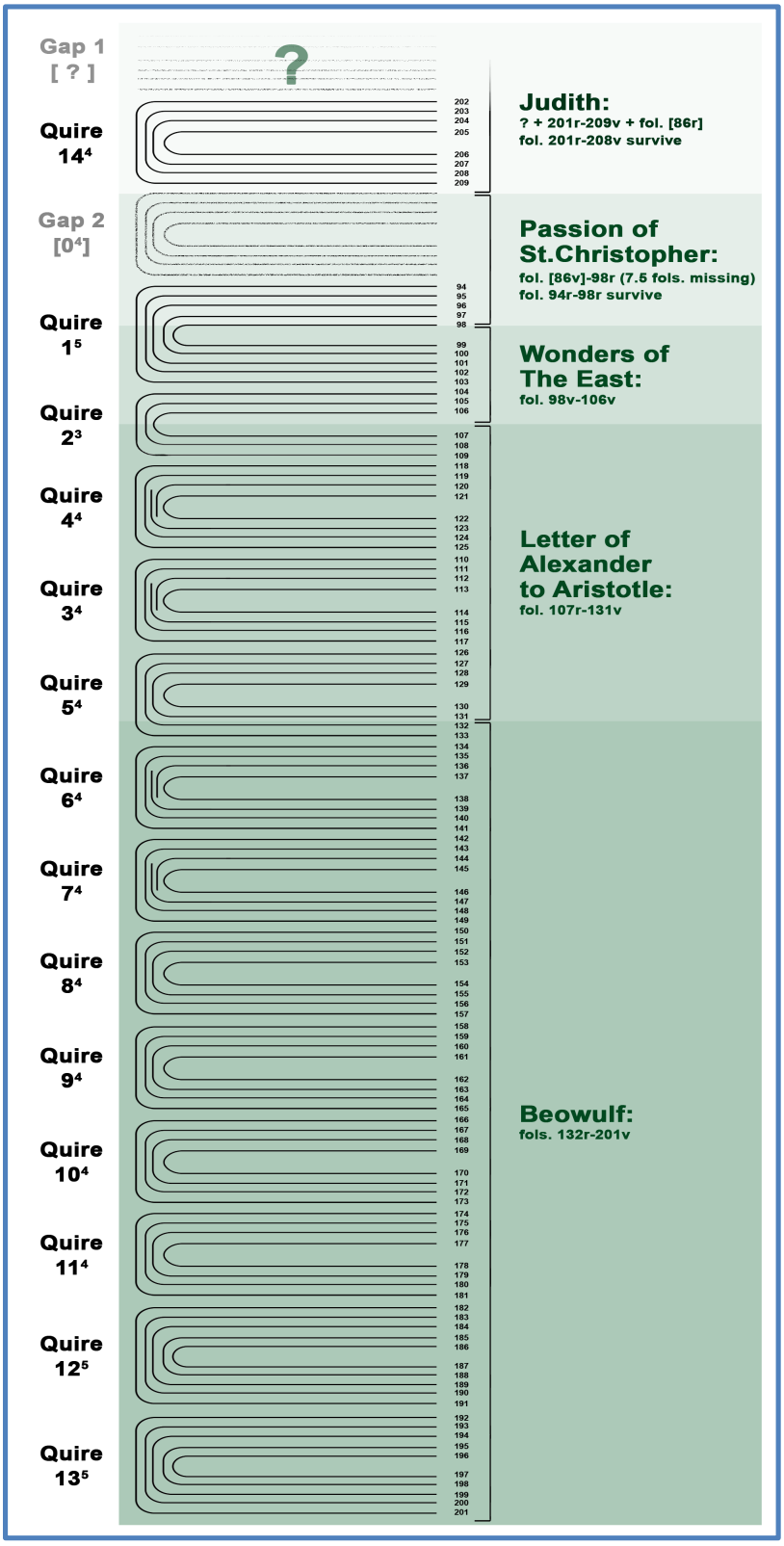


Figure 4. The most likely configuration for the gatherings of the Nowell Codex

There is, nevertheless, a small body of evidence to suggest that the Nowell Codex is a planned piece of scribal work following some kind of theory of compilation. If we use the physical context of the textual analogues to give us a clue to their genre, it is very unlikely that any of thee texts would normally appear together in the same compilation. The English analogue for the *Passion of Saint Christopher*, for instance, was in a collection of saint's lives and homilies, and the existing Latin versions rarely (if ever) stray out of the hagiographic/homiletic tradition.[108] The *Wonders of the East* analogues clearly belong in the genre of natural history, as they are found mostly in encyclopedic collections of cosmography, geography, and computus.[109] In contrast, *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* is a history text, and it only ever appears with a *Wonders* analogue in one other manuscript.[110] The text instead dwells almost exclusively with other history texts and especially alongside the Julius Valerius *Epitome*.[111] Only *Beowulf* and *Judith* share a strong generic relationship, but that assumption is largely based on their joint survival in the

[108] London, British Library Cotton Otho B.x, item 355 in Gneuss, 177 in Ker, dated xi^{1}. See also Paris, BN Lat. 5774, item 885.5 in Gneuss, dated ix/x to x$^{1/4}$ and from Mercia. Like these two MSS, all other major analogues of *Christopher* which I have seen so far are appended to homiliary collections or martyrologies.

[109] London, British Library Cotton Tiberius B. v, item 373 in Gneuss, 193 in Ker. This is a composite manuscript of cosmology, computus, and calendars dated xi$^{2/4}$ by Ker. See also: Paris, Bibliothéque Nationale, nouv, acq. lat. 1065, provenance Beauvais, dated ix-x; and Montecassino, Codex Casinensis 391, dated xi. For a description, see: Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 201-03; Ann Knock, "Wonders of the East: A Synoptic Edition of the *Letter of Pharasmanes* and the Old English and Old Picard Translations" (Ph. D. Diss., University of London, 1981), 221-34.

[110] The single exception Brussels, Bibliothéque Royale Albert Ier, MS 14562, a Picardic manuscript of the thirteenth century CE. This manuscript contains Old French translations of both *WOE* and the *Letter* among some vernacular French histories. Ann Knock provides evidence that these two come from loosely related but clearly divergent Latin exemplars in comparison to the English. See: "Wonders of the East," 173-85.

[111] The vast majority of manuscripts containing the Latin *Letter* also contain the *Epitome*. Out of Boer's four major manuscript families, Groups I and III pair it with the *Epitome* almost exclusively while the other two still have a very high correlation. In fact, the only manuscript in Groups I and III without the *Epitome* is also the only text without any historical context whatsoever: Oxford, Lincoln College 96, an unusual theological and natural history miscellany dated ca. xii (Boer's manuscript "Ol"). See: Boer, *Epistola Alexandri*, vi-xxi, xxvi-xxxii; D. J. A. Ross, "A Check-List of MSS of Three Alexander Texts: the Julius Valerius *Epitome,* the *Epistola ad Aristotelem* and the *Collatio cum Dindimo*," *Scriptorium* 10 (1956): 127-32.

Nowell Codex. If we were to compare *Judith* to the rest of the poetic canon, it would seem the most at home in a manuscript of Biblical poetry like the Junius Manuscript.[112] The fact that these four texts, each coming from a range of genres, dialectical backgrounds, and translators ended up together alongside *Beowulf* certainly argues that they would have to be sought from several different manuscripts before they were anthologized—and that, in turn, implies at least some planning of the contents even if it is not obvious to us as modern readers.

With all of this evidence in mind we can conclude that Nowell Codex is undeniably a unified manuscript of at least four texts, and *Judith* more than likely makes it five. We can reasonably assume that we have most if not all the texts accounted for without stretching the evidence. The manuscript as a whole might have had a purpose which it cannot show us in isolation from similar manuscripts. Based on the available physical evidence, therefore, we have no major obstructions to an analysis of the second half of London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xv as a single, unified manuscript, and we can safely move forward into a textual and historical analysis of its contents.

[112] This is a common observation. Peter Lucas believed that *Judith* must have been copied into the manuscript from exactly this kind of collection, along with the existing fitt numbers written in the margins. See: Lucas, "The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript," 477.

Chapter One: The Virtues of Alterity: Challenging the Center in the *Passion of St. Christopher*

> Plane, tertium genus dicimur. Cynopennae aliqui vel Sciapodes uel aliqui de subteraneo Antipodes? Si qua istic apud uos saltem ratio est, edatis uelim primum et secundum genus, ut ita de tertio constet.
>
> Certainly, we [Christians] are called a "third race" [of humanity]. Are we some of the Dog-men, or Sciapodes, or the sub-equatorial Antipodes? If you have any reason at all for that claim, I want you to explain what the "first" and "second" races are that we may, in this way, establish the nature of the "third."
>
> Tertullian, *Ad nationes*[1]

1. An Apostle Writes a Monk

Sometime before he became Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen in 865, Rimbert had been promoted by his mentor, the missionary Ansgar, to the head of the Scandinavian mission field; this meant overseeing conversion efforts in Germany and Sweden from his home base in the diocese of Hamburg-Bremen.[2] During his tenure with Ansgar, Rimbert had encountered a variety of Germanic-speaking peoples, including the Friese, Danes, and Swedes, and his mentor had preached salvation among them all—not always with success, as Rimbert reports, but at least with great faithfulness. Now that Rimbert was taking over the Archbishop's old role as the "Second Apostle to the North," he had a difficult decision to

[1] Tertullian, *Ad nationes libri duo*, ed. E. Dekker, in CC Ser. Lat. 1 (Tunhout: Brepols, 1954), 1.7.1.

[2] What we know of Rimbert comes largely from three Continental sources, all of which are fairly tendentious: Adam of Bremen's *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, the *Vita Rimberti,* written by a monk of Corvey, and the *Vita Anskari*, written by Rimbert himself, though he doesn't mention himself by name. See: Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, ed. Francis J. Tschan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), I.xx-lxiv; *Vita Anskarii auctore Rimberto: accedit Vita Rimberti*, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS. rerum Germanicarum (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1884); Adam of Bremen, *Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Bernhard Schmeidler, 3rd ed., MGH, SS. rerum Germanicarum (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1917). Modern discussions of Rimbert include: Eric Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert, and the Forged Foundations of Hamburg-Bremen* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), Ch. 6; Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050* (Harlow, Eng.: Longman, 2001), 123-41; Wood, "Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia," in *The Christianization of Scandinavia*, ed. Birgit Sawyer, Peter Sawyer, and Ian Wood (Alingsås, Sweden: Viktoria Bokförlag, 1987), 36-67.

make: should he expand his mission to the Cynocephali?[3] Granted, the Swedes and the Danes were also once thought savages, but they were at least demonstrably *human*. Were creatures with dog's heads also capable of receiving baptism? For Rimbert, this was more than an idle question: his mission stretched to the edges of the known world, in places where the old Roman missionaries had never dreamed of going, and this was an important matter of pastoral care. As Ian Wood explains, "What is at stake in this discussion is the definition of a frontier… allowing for the fact that evangelization should be pursued to the ends of the earth, Rimbert wanted to know what in creation belonged in his missionary brief."[4]

Rimbert reached out to Ratramnus of Corbie for an answer, a well-respected theological scholar from Ansgar's former monastery not far from Amiens. Although Rimbert's letter no longer survives, Ratramnus' response is preserved in a single manuscript from Pegau.[5] That correspondence evaluates the essence of humanity and what is too far away—and too different from ourselves—to be redeemed. Like the scholar he

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[3] Most critics assume that this is, in fact, the reason that Rimbert initiated this conversation. E. Ann Matter, however, suggests that "it could be that the legend of the dog-headed saint, newly circulating in German lands, actually inspired Rimbert's question." Although it is an imaginative suggestion, it reduces Ratramnus' entire argument to tautology: one cannot prove Christopher's humanity by appealing to Christopher's humanity. See: Scott G. Bruce, "Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography: a Note on Ratramnus of Corbie's Letter Concerning the conversion of the Cynocephali," in *Insignis sophiae arcator: Essays in Honour of Michael W. Herren on his 65th Birthday*, ed. R. Wieland Gernot, Ruff Carin, and G. Arthur Ross (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 46; E. Ann Matter, "The Soul of the Dog-Man: Ratramnus of Corbie between Theology and Philosophy," *Rivista di storia della filosophia* 1 (2006): 45.

[4] Ian Wood, "Missionaries and the Christian Frontier," in *The Transformation of Frontiers: From Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*, ed. Walter Pohl, Ian Wood, and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 215.

[5] The manuscript is Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig MS 190, fol. 83r-85v, dated xi, from Pegau. The letter is appended to a copy of Rufinus' translation of Clement of Rome; it may have survived only because Ratramnus also addresses the orthodoxy of Clement's work in the letter. One scholar, however, claims that the letter itself is written in a Corbie hand, which I cannot currently verify for myself. The letter is edited in: Ernst Dümmler, ed. *Epistoli Karoli Aevi*, vol. 4, MGH, Epistolae (Berlin: Weidmann, 1899). For a discussion of the manuscript, see: Jean-Paul Bouhout, *Ratramne de Corbie: Histoire littéraire et controverses doctrinales* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1976), 20, 29.

was, Ratramnus starts with a review of the ecclesiastical doctors, using a thoroughly Augustinian framework for his investigation: he defines a "human" as having both descent from Adam and possession of a rational soul.[6] His secondary concern is human form and function; under the old Roman laws, a "human" had to possess human likeness for legal recognition,[7] and Isidore likewise defined a beast as "any animal that lacks human language and form."[8] Based upon these standards, the case at first looks fairly bleak for the dog-men: the Cynocephali have elongated, animalistic faces, and they cannot speak.[9]

Rather than let the matter rest, however, Ratramnus also looked to sources outside the usual religious and scientific canon for an answer.[10] Starting with the anecdotal evidence about the Cynocephali which Rimbert provided, he notes that these creatures have laws and a sense of shame as well as agriculture and animal husbandry, all of which denote a rational soul; and so, "since reason seems to be present in the Cynocephali," he

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[6] Ian Wood explains, "Ratramnus' response to Rimbert operates at a variety of levels. First the whole assessment is subject to an appeal to authority, basically Biblical, albeit partly filtered through Isidore. Second, the information provided is assessed against the Aristotelian, or better Augustinian, criterion for rationality. Third, the main body of the assessment is conducted in a manner which in certain respects might be read as an anthropological analysis of Rimbert's information. And fourth, St. Christopher is cited as a test case." Ian Wood, "Categorizing the *Cynocephali*," in *Ego Trouble: Authors and Their Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Corradini et al. (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 131-32. See also Matter, "The Soul of the Dog-Man," 46.

[7] John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 179.

[8] *omne quod humana lingua et effigie caret. Isidori Hispalensis etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), XII.i.5 (henceforth *Etymologies*). All translations are from: *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[9] *Inter haec sciendum quod si contenti fuerimus opinione nostrorum, videlicet ecclesiasticorum doctorum, inter bestias potius hominibus, sed bestiis similes ostendunt... et homines loquuntur, canes vero latrant.* Friedman traces this line of argument as far back as St. Basil in the Patristic period. Letter to Rimbert (#12), in *Ratramni Corbiensis Epistolae*, ed. Ernst Dümmmler, MGH Epp. 6 (Berlin: Weidmann's, 1925), 155.22-27; Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 188.

[10] For a much more detailed explanation of Ratramnus' reasoning than what I present here, see: Bruce, "Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography," 52-53.

concludes, "they ought to be deemed humans rather than animals."[11] Ratramnus' second proof-text, however, is of centeral concern here: he consults a copy of the *Passion of Saint Christopher*, which Robert Bruce calls an "unprecedented" move among medieval thinkers.[12] While all of his other authorities deal with either outward behavior or appearance of the Cynocephali, the hagiography provides a different kind of evidence: Christian conversion. As he explains to Rimbert,

> [A]s it is found in that book, it is clear that he was from the race of humans. His life and martyrdom are surely supported by his outstanding virtues. For it is believed that the sacrament of baptism came to him from heaven when the mystery poured over him from a cloud. That story spread and many things were reported which seem to suggest that the race of humans of this sort are in possession of reason.[13]

Christopher's baptism came about without any form of human mediation and directly from Heaven; it could not therefore have been an error. And so, using the acceptance of the sacrament as his base point, Ratramnus now works Augustine's theological argument backwards: if God can convert Cynocephali like Christopher to Christianity, then they have

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[11] *Qua de re cum talia dicitis apud Cenocephalos videri… Homo vero a bestiis ratione tantummodo discernitur*. Ratramnus of Corbie, Letter to Rimbert (#12), 156.11-13. All translations of the Ratramnus letter are from Paul Edward Dutton, ed. *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2004), 452-55.
[12] Robert Bruce claims that Ratramnus must have been familiar with a version of BHL 1764, the 'Dagnus' version, because it is the earlier of the two versions available at the time. This is demonstrably not the case. In his letter, Ratramnus claims that Christopher was converted and baptized by mist (see fn. 13, below.) This detail does not appear in the "Decius" version. Ratramnus could only have gleaned this detail from the later version—BHL 1766-68, the "Dagnus" version. Bruce, "Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography," 53-55.
[13] *Quemadmodum enim in eo legitur, hoc de genere hominum fuisse cognoscitur*, *cuius vita atque martyrium claris admodum virtutibus commendtur. Nam et baptismi sacramentum divinitus illum consecutum fuisse, nubis [in] mysterio eum perfundente, sicut libellus ipse testator, creditor. Fama quoque vulgante plura feruntur, quae huiusmodi hominum genus rationis compos insinuare videntur.* Ratramnus of Corbie, Letter to Rimbert (#12), 156.16-20.

rational souls—and that makes them descendants of Adam.[14] From there, he points to other evidence pulled from Isidore of Seville about the Cyclopes and the biblical giants to reinforce this conclusion.

Despite his conviction that his answer is correct, Ratramnus nevertheless battles some cognitive dissonance arising from his conclusion. He sifts through a litany of counter-arguments regarding monstrous births from Isidore and the Alexander tradition before he eventually confesses,

> I would not believe that these Cynocephali, whom we are studying, consistently possess rational minds, even if they have their beginnings from humans, were I not persuaded by what you wrote and by those things which we read or are reported concerning them… it would seem to be stubbornness rather than prudence to deny them.[15]

Even though Ratramnus concludes that the Cynocephali are human and have human souls, he declares it only with reticence, and when faced with the prospect of extending his argument to the other monstrous races, he demurs.

What Rimbert eventually did with Ratramnus' recommendation we can only guess, but for us his letter reveals a very important point about the *Passion of Saint Christopher*: this is a *deeply* subversive text. A well-respected theologian "departed… markedly from

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[14] This is where Bruce's argument and mine diverge. He claims that God's gift of speech to Christopher demonstrates that they have rational souls after all, and thus filling Augustine's requirement that rational souls have the power of speech. That is not what Ratramnus tells Rimbert, however: he specifically mentions Christopher's baptism, not his ability to speak. Salvation, and not speech, confirms what Rimbert's letter makes him suspect is true. See: Bruce, "Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography," 54-55.

[15] *Qua de re nec hos, de quibus res agitur, propterea quia duxerunt originem ex hominibus, eos continuo rationali pollere mente crediderim, si non vel ea quae scripsistis vel quae leguntur et feruntur de eis, talia quo sentirem, moverer... ut his vel fidem non adhibere vel contradicere velle pervicatia potius videtur esse quam prudentia.* Ratramnus of Corbie, Letter to Rimbert (#12), 157.5-10.

received traditions concerning the Cynocephali" because of it, and against his own better instincts, to find the possibility for salvation in the strangest of monsters.[16]

Secondly, Ratramnus' subversive proof-text was a close Latin analogue to the Old English *Christopher*,[17] and his struggle with its implications can teach modern scholars much about how we should also engage with this text. Ratramnus' story tells us that we should place this text in the larger context of Continental missiology and barbarian conversion. For him, Christopher was the final answer to whether or not an entire culture at odds with his own was redeemable; this question has important connotations to the English as well. Secondly, we must also realize that this saint of *healf hundisces* extraction, as the Otho *Christopher* calls him,[18] had already figured in the conversation surrounding the so-called Germanic "barbarians" in the North and their assimilation into the Christian fold. Perhaps most importantly, however, Ratramnus reminds us that we need to be aware that our own deeply held scholarly convictions about monstrosity could hamper an accurate reading of the text. Ratramnus had to put the opinions of his own *doctores ecclesiastici* on hold long enough to let Rimbert and Christopher speak to their own experience. If we also think about *Christopher* in terms of the historical context first and

[16] It would seem that, in doing so, Ratramnus anticipated the Scholastic movement's opinion on the same matter. See: Bruce, "Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography," 47; Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 181.

[17] Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale MS D.V.3, s. viii^{ex}. This manuscript contains a copy of BHL 1768, the Latin version perhaps most commonly associated to the *Vitellius* Christopher, and the one detail which Ratramnus specifically cites (baptism by mist) only appears in texts of this recension. The text is in a Corbie "AB" minuscule, hinting at a connection to Corbie, but the most recent study attributes it to Soissons, perhaps at Saint-Menard. See: Monique Goullet and Sandra Isetta, eds, *Le légendier de Turin: Ms. D.V.3 de la Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire* (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzo, 2014), 91. For this manuscript's relationship to the OE version, see: John Drayton Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript" (Diss., University of Cambridge, 1971), 18-20.

[18] As taken from the incipit recorded in Wanley's catalog before the Cotton fire: *Þæt sum man com on þa ceastre se wæs healf hundisces manncynnes*. Quoted in N. F. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 226.

then in terms of modern criticism, we will discover that this legend has a lot to say to the English about what it meant to be a legacy convert living on the extreme edges of the old Roman Empire.

This chapter will explore how the Old English version of *The Passion of Saint Christopher* preserved in the Nowell Codex existed in a context where Christopher's dog-headedness carried specific Northern connotations, formed the basis of Christopher's subversive power, and challenged the power structure of Romanocentric and ethnocentric conversion narratives from the Continent. *Christopher* therefore stands as a powerful reminder to Anglo-Saxons living on the farthest edge of Europe that their own conversion in the seventh century affords them a powerful sense of agency, and that their heritage of evangelizing pagan kings, as the Franks and Irish did was a powerful proof of that.

This chapter will also also highlight several important themes about space and power which will occur in the other texts of the Nowell Codex. For one, border-dwellers are often capable of subversive power over centers of authority. We have already seen Ratramnus grapple with the margins under these terms, and almost every other text in the manuscript has this same subversive power. Secondly, those on the margins have potential for contact with the holy, something which will be important in *Alexander, Judith,* and *Beowulf*. And, perhaps most importantly, this text demonstrates how these other four texts interrogate and subvert their own encounters between a central, secular figure of authority and those on the very edges of their domain.

2. The Critical Background of the OE *Christopher*

Before we begin, a short summary of Christopher's cult and the differernt versions of his vita will help us proceed. In early medieval Europe, Christopher's feast was traditionally celebrated on three different dates: May 8, celebrated in the Eastern Church and in Greek versions of his passion; April 28th, used mostly in Insular sources such as the Irish *Martyrology of Oengus* and the *Old English Martyrology*; and July 25th, which was eventually adopted in the Roman martyrology.

The Latin Christopher legend at this time came in two different versions named after their respective antagonists, but these have their own variations. The different recensions as identified by their BHL numbers are:[19]

1. **BHL 1764-65,** called the "Decius" version after the Roman emperor who martyrs Christopher, corresponds with most martyrologies commemorating him on April 28th. This Latin version is a translation of an older Greek legend (BHG 310) found mainly in the southern Mediterranean, where Christopher's cult first takes hold. In this version, Christopher is a soldier *in numero armarianorum*, from northern Africa, and the story follows the plot of a conventional military martyrdom.[20]
2. **BHL 1766-69,** the so-called "Dagnus" versions, are a completely new retelling of Christopher's life which eventually made its way into the martyrologies of Ado,

[19] Simply put, using the BHL to make fine distinctions within recensions is problematic because the divisions are made based almost entirely on the incipit/explicit. In the case of the earliest Christopher legend, however, most of the important changes—Decius vs. Dagnus, Christopher as a "Canineus" as opposed to a "Chananeus"— are cued in the first sentence. Even so, we must be aware of some classification problems: the lost Fulda manuscript from the *AA-SS* is classified as BHL 1766 even though it is obviously a close cousin to the Turin manuscript (BHL 1768). Moreover, the distinction between versions starts falls apart around BHL 1770; the vast majority of these texts are much later than the OE *Christopher*, and so they will not be addressed here.

[20] Edited editions of these texts can be found in: Ángel Fábrega-Grau, *Passionario Hispánico (siglos VII-XI)* (Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1955), 299-309.

Raban Maur, Usuard, and the *Martyrologium Romanum*.[21] These versions feature a mythical king of Samos who, unlike Decius, converts to Christianity at the end of the story. Although it is possible that these, too are based on Byzantine models, none can be immediately found.[22]

The Dagnus version itself, however, has two variations of its own. One recension is clearly a stylistic update of the other, even if the order is unclear, and their only major difference regards Christopher's nationality and/or monstrosity:

1. **BHL 1766-67**, the "Canineus" recension, explicitly mentions his monstrosity on several occasions, and his nationality, *canineus*, declares him to be a "dog-man" from a far-away island.
2. **BHL 1768-69**, the "Chananeus" recension: in this version, most references to Christopher's dog-headedness are suppressed (though he remains gigantic), and his nationality, *Chananeus*, is often read as "Canaanite" in accordance with the better-known versions of his *vita* in the later Middle Ages.

The main thrust of the "Dagnus" versions is as follows: Christopher, a "dog-man" [Lt. *Canineus*/*Chananeus*] is chosen by God to receive baptism. He prays to God, whereupon a shining cloud appears, announces his baptism, and grants him the ability to speak. After he enters Samos, he performs his first miracle, the flowering of his staff, to a crowd who gathered to stare at his strange appearance. King Dagnus of Samos hears of his deeds and

[21] Rosenfeld, *Der hl. Christophorus*, 520-29; Goullet and Isetta, *Le Légendier de Turin*, 229-43.
[22] I have no information available to me in order to adequately answer this question. Walter Loeschcke mentions details that imply that, at the very least, these Latin versions are based on a Byzantine model. However, neither Loeschcke's more detailed article nor any other sources detailing these texts are available to me at this time. See: Walter Loeschcke, "Sankt Christophorus, der Heilige mid dem Tierkopf," *Eikon* 2 (1958): 3; Venetia Newall, "The Dog-Headed St. Christopher," in *Folklore on Two Continents: Essays in Honor of Linda Dégh*, ed. Nikolai Burlakoff and Carl Lindahl (Bloomington, IN: Trickster Press, 1980), 245.

he sends soldiers to apprehend him. Dagnus is so shocked at Christopher's appearance that he falls out of his seat, but he then orders Christopher to sacrifice to his idols or be punished. An ever-widening circle of Dagnus' inner circle convert and are martyred, starting with Dagnus' soldiers, then two prostitutes named Niceaea and Aquilina who are brought in to seduce Christopher. These plucky women dupe Dagnus into staging an elaborate sacrifice and then destroy the idols in his temple. Dagnus orders them executed, and thousands of Samians, including Dagnus' closest advisors, convert in response to their miracles.

The English fragment in the Nowell Codex picks up at this point. After Dagnus kills his closest advisors for rebuking him, Christopher declares his tortures "more sweet than the bee-bread of honey;"[23] Dagnus complies with more elaborate torments, each of which miraculously fails. His last torment, death by firing squad, also fails after the arrows hang miraculously in the air near the saint. Dagnus cannot see the miracle, and when he approaches the saint to gloat, an arrow (two in the English version) blinds him. Christopher tells him that if he believes in God and rubs mud from the bloody ground of his martyrdom on his eyes, he will be healed; then he prays to God that his body may become a blessing wherever it lay. Christopher dies, and Dagnus converts after his miraculous healing. He declares Christianity the law of the land, and the English text ends with a prayer that "God

[23] *þine tintrego me synt swettran þonne huniges beobread.* Stanley Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS Cotton Vitellius A. xv* (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1924), fol. 94.15-16.

send a good reward to whoever writes my passion and an eternal reward to whoever reads it with tears."[24]

Our knowledge of the Old English version of this story is limited by the incompleteness of the text, the loss of the only other English copy, and the difficulty of sustaining continued scholarly interest. George Herzfeld and Eugen Einenkel each edited the text in the 1890s, but it was later re-edited by Stanley Rypins as a part of his edition for the *EETS* in 1924.[25] Kemp Malone, John Drayton Pickles, and Joseph McGowan have published corrections and alternate readings, making the earlier editions much more useful.[26] These editions were the basis for linguistic analysis in the succeeding decades.

That early work on the English *Christopher* was responsible for locating the closest analogues, assigning it a dialect, and providing a date of translation. Which Latin recension formed the base text for the OE translation is unfortunately an open question.[27] The best-fitting analogue seems to be BHL 1768, but this is still a contentious issue. John Pickles compared the OE *Christopher* to manuscripts from Corbie area, Fulda, St. Emmeram, and

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[24] *god syle gode mede þam þe mine þrowunga awrite 7 þa ecean edlean þam þe hie mid tearum ræde.* Ibid., fol. 98.14-17. All manuscript readings from the Rypins edition have been checked against the digital facsimile and Malone and McGowan's readings, and their corrections silently accepted. In basically all instances, this has merely resulted in confirming Rypins' tentative readings, so there is very little change to the actual text. For full cit., see fn. 26, below.

[25] George Herzfeld, "Bruchstück einer ae. Legende," *Englische Studien* 13, no. 1889 (1889): 142-45; Eugen Einenkel, "Das altenglische Cristoforus-Fragment," *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 17 (1895): 110-22.

[26] Kemp Malone, ed. *The Nowell Codex: British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. xv, Second MS*, EEMF 12 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1963), 114; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 142-44; Joseph McGowan, "Notes on the OE Version of the *Vita sancti Christophori*," *Neophilologus* 75, no. 3 (1991): 451-55; "Readings from the *Beowulf* Manuscript, ff. 94r-98r: The *St. Christopher* Folios," *Manuscripta* 39 (1995): 26-29.

[27] Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 17-21. Rypins also includes the Latin text from a third manuscript in his edition of the *OE* Christopher taken from the *Acta Sanctorum* (Rosenfeld's manuscript "F"). The source for this edition was a twelfth century manuscript from Fulda which is now lost. See also Footnote 28, below, and *AA-SS,* Julii vol. 6:146-149.

southern Germany to the remaining text,[28] and he concluded that the source text for the OE *Christopher* was a hybridization of the BHL 1766-69 versions; nevertheless, he conceded, all of the texts in his sample were remarkably close to it regardless.[29] Both Neil Ker and Kemp Malone, however, believed that "the English seems to be closer to 1768 or 1769 than to 1766" and felt no need to qualify their answers.[30] In addition, Rypins had called the language of *Christopher* "a plain West-Saxon of the post-Alfredian period;" Pickles largely agrees, although Sisam suggested Mercian, to which Orchard agrees.[31] These same scholars also date the translation to about the mid-tenth century, meaning that the OE *Christopher* in the Nowell Codex cannot be too many generations removed from the original.[32]

Pickles and Orchard have also tackled the relationship of the Vitellius Christopher to London, BL Cotton Otho B.x, a homiletic collection of saint's lives largely attributed to Ælfric and roughly contemporary to the Nowell Codex.[33] This manuscript was almost entirely consumed in the Ashburnham House fire, and out of the fifteen or so folios which once comprised the Christopher homily, only a scrap of the first page now remains. The

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[28] Pickles used four different manuscripts for his analysis: Turin, BN D. V. 5, the aforementioned Soissons manuscript in AB minuscule; Würzburg, UB Mp. Th. F. 28, commonly known as "St. Burghard's Homiliary" and dated to ix$^{3/4}$, Southern Germany; London, BL Additional 11880, a collection of saint's lives from St. Emmeram dated s. ix^{1}; and a now-lost twelfth century Fulda manuscript collected in *Acta Sanctorum* (see fn. 27, above). Paris, BN 5574, an English copy of the legend, was apparently unknown to him and was not a part of his analysis. Although Pickles does not favor any one manuscript, Turin manuscript (BHL 1768) has the most common readings. Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 18.

[29] Ibid., 20-21.

[30] Malone, *The Nowell Codex*, 114; Ker, *Catalogue*, 226.

[31] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, xlviii; Kenneth Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 68; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 24; Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 3.

[32] Sisam and Pickles disagree on the manuscript's distance from the archetype. Sisam believed that the amount of corruption indicated several generations of copying between the archetype and Vitellius, but Pickles believes that the kinds of mistakes involved are fairly simple and there less indicative of that. Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 70, 72; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 30.

[33] Item 355 in Gneuss, 177 in Ker, dated xi^{1}.

only surviving evidence for this version is the incipit/explicit recorded by the cataloguer Humphrey Wanley and about a dozen words transcribed by Pickles.[34] Neil Ker believed that the two were probably copies of the same text,[35] but Kemp Malone claimed that the Otho version was only about 300 lines long and therefore an abridgement.[36] Pickles re-assessed the evidence and decided that the length difference was only about ninety lines.[37] If we use Peter Lucas' more accurate estimates against a 29-line text frame in Otho, however, the difference shrinks down to about forty lines, or an eight percent difference;[38] if we also consider the text frame size differences and textual compression, however, then the difference between the two is almost negligible.[39]

The first articles to venture out of manuscript study and into literary work focused heavily on the hagiographic themes of the story. Jill Frederick's 1987 article "His ansyne wæs swylcan rosan blostma," for instance, sought to prove that the story has literary merit, and she draws out thematic parallels of interior vs. exterior truth and vision vs. blindness.

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[34] No one as of yet has tried to place the script hand or manuscript provenance, but based on Ker and Pickles' description of the remaining fragment, that may be a fruitless task. See: Ker, *Catalogue*, 226; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 22-23.

[35] Ker, *Catalogue*, 226. Cf. Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 24.

[36] This is based on the number of folios which Wanley's catalog said the original text occupied, measured against Max Förster's estimation of Vitellius' original length. Malone's error was assuming that the Otho text, like Vitellius, was measured for 20 long lines per page; Ker, however, tells us that Otho B.x was ruled for 29. Malone, *The Nowell Codex*, 114; Ker, *Catalogue* 226.

[37] Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript,"70; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 25

[38] Peter J. Lucas, "The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript," *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language* n.s.41, no. 164 (1990): 472.

[39] No one has, to my knowledge, looked at the differences in frame size as well. To use Ker's numbers, the Nowell Codex averages a text frame of 175 mm x 105 mm; Otho measures in at 175 mm x 115 mm, or the gain of 1.65 lines per page (10 mm x 29 lines). Over the length of the entire text, that results in a gain of almost exactly 24 lines. The other sixteen can be made up either by vagaries of estimated length, since we don't know where on the page the Otho version ended, or by text compression. The Otho version squeezes 29 long lines into approximately the same vertical space that Vitellius fits twenty, and generally, the smaller the hand, the more text can fit on each line. There is therefore no solid evidence that these two texts were substantially different based on estimated text length, and rather, they were possibly very close. Cf. Ker, *Catalogue*, 226, 82; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 24-25.

Andy Orchard's brief discussion of the OE *Christopher* makes a another important claim: that *Christopher* introduces to the manuscript a distinction "between the basically antagonistic worlds of monsters and men," and he claims that the three texts are "centrally concerned" with that dichotomy.[40] In contrast, Nicholas Howe leaves the monstrous completely behind, instead focusing on the saint's complicated interaction with place. For him, the text reveals "a familiar narrative of top-down conversion as dictated by a ruler, such as appears frequently in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*."[41] Geographic space, he asserts, must be brought into the map of Christian belief just as much as Dagnus the king or the people who obey him.[42]

Other critics address the context of Orchard's "antagonistic worlds of monsters and men" by investigating issues of cultural identity, ethnocentricity, and concepts of the Other. Joyce Tally Lionarons, for instance, explores the "category crisis" which a monstrous Christian saint potentially creates for the reader and how the gift of speech helps both confirm Christopher's humanity and solve the crisis.[43] Susan Kim, however, suggests that Christopher sacrifices his body to torture and fragmentation in order to resolve the contradiction between "the self represented in language and the self understood as language";[44] in short, he places his identity as a martyr outside of his body. The more that the martyr denies that identity lies outside the body, however, the more that this assertion puts the torturer's own identity in doubt—and this is what leads to the cycle of violence in

[40] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 18.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 179.
[43] Joyce Tally Lionarons, "From Monster to Martyr: The Old English Legend of St. Christopher," in *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2002), 171,77.
[44] Ibid., 123.

the martyrdom tale.[45] In contrast, Kathryn Powell's dissertation looks at Christopher as part of a larger conversation on the East as a site for Lacanian desire. The fact of Christopher's monstrosity dictates that the reader cannot identify with him, at least not initially, and the text creates a sense of guilt in the reader for identifying with the wrong side of the self/Other binary.[46]

When taken together, these critical studies of the Christopher legend illustrate that, like Ratramnus, modern scholars also run into interpretive tension and cognitive dissonance when they read this text. These studies rightly agree that monsters in hagiography make a statement about the nature of identity, and that this statement comes with an ideological edge cutting deeply into issues of space and otherness, or spirituality and power. And yet, these interpretations also hold an uneasy relationship with their source material. For the poststructuralists, Christopher's monstrosity is a cultural symptom that threatens to pull either the text or Christopher's body apart at the seams. Frederick, Lionarons, and Kim all conclude that this crisis of identity has to be resolved, usually by suppression and violent overthrow of the physical body, or by making Dagnus appear more monstrous in comparison. They likewise all find fault with the text. Lionarons claims that the author was incapable "of realizing its literary potential as a narrative of category crisis" while Powell claims that "the work's moral is not communicated in any overt or straightforward way," providing an interpretation that goes sharply against the grain of the

[45] Ibid., 125.
[46] Cf. Lionarons: "Even more anxiety-producing for a reader would be the consciousness of how easy it could be, in a world in which miracles are rare or seem to belong to the distant past, to reject out of hand that which seems monstrous and Other but which actually shows forth, *demonstr*ates the divine." Lionarons, "From Monster to Martyr," 181.

hagiographic genre.[47] Susan Kim's reading concludes that God does *not* grant Christopher's wish at the end of the story.[48] Each interpretation brings an expectation to the OE *Christopher* that the text fails to meet.

The other reaction, eschewing the saint's monstrosity in favor of exploring his sanctity is surely an over-correction to these problems. Both Howe and Frederick produce useful theories regarding the nature of hagiography in the Old English *Christopher*, particularly Howe's desire to link conversion and place. Frederick is right to point out that Christopher's monstrosity is thematically at odds with his inner sanctity, Nevertheless, Lionarons, Powell and Kim are absolutely correct that Christopher's monstrosity is doing *important cultural and theoretical work*. Ignoring Christopher's monstrosity, as Nicholas Howe was wont to do, or allegorizing it as in Frederick's interpretation does not further our understanding of *Christopher* quite as much as if we take his monstrosity both literally and seriously.[49]

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[47] Powell sets up the problem as follows: "[The reader] is presented with a choice of making a symbolic identification with a Christian saint who nonetheless presents an imaginary threat to the reader, or making an imaginary identification with a powerful ruler who threatens the reader's symbolic identity. I would maintain that this 'choice' is in fact a forced choice." She also maintains an odd reading of Dagnus' blinding for his sins: "When the king is blinded by arrows intended for Christopher, his mutilation defies readerly expectations in a number of ways. Not only would readers familiar with hagiographic literature expect Christopher, not his torturer, to be subject to mutilation, but a medieval audience would expect blinding to be a punishment inflicted by, not upon, a king." In fact, this kind of bodily punishment against persecutors is fairly common in Biblical literature, from Nebuchadnezzar to Herod to the Apostle Paul, and it *would* be expected by a biblically literate reader. Powell, "The Anglo-Saxon Imaginary of the East," 288, 90.

[48] "God's answer to Christopher's prayer, however, denies the plea for the power of his relics… Christopher's body drops out of the equation." Kim, "Monstrous and Bloody Signs: The Beowulf Manuscript," 137.

[49] Howe suggests that "[i]n its fragmentary state, the version in Vitellius A xv, however, makes no explicit reference to forms of the monstrous, and more specifically, to Christopher's membership in the race of the dog-headed people. From passing references in the extant text, a very alert reader might deduce that Christopher deviates from human norms." He then explains that the references to Christopher's bestiality could merely be "a metaphoric rather than a liter insult, one especially revealing when uttered by a pagan ruler as he persecutes a Christian saint." Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 178.

Where, then, lies the interpretive gap? Frederick and Howe have no problems explicating the text, provided that Christopher's monstrosity is either downplayed or allegorized. Post-structuralist readings such as Lionarons and Powell's, in contrast, seek to explore the cultural power of monstrosity and identity, but run into snags. The problem is one of identification: Howe and Lionarons argue that the reader would identify or sympathize with Christopher while Lionarons and Powell argue that such identification is difficult, if not impossible. Monstrosity and self-identification are the twin axes on which this entire scholarly conversation revolves.

I would propose this alternative out of this critical stalemate: if assuming that medieval readers must reject identifying with a monster fails to explicate a text, then perhaps we need to explore the possibility that medieval readers were capable of just that. To do so opens us up to the intellectual path that Ratramnus was reluctant to follow: that this text has powerful, subversive potential to re-classify who has spiritual agency and *why*. In fact, there were a large group of medieval European Christians capable of exactly that kind of identification: those who originally dwelled beyond the borders of the old Roman frontier, those whose own historical roots began outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire and whose ancestors were dubbed "barbarians." Therein lies the crucial distinction: those who originally wrote the text probably saw Christopher as a creature far unlike themselves and from far away, but to those who lived or worked in the mission fields, these lands were close at hand. Although the Franks and Germans may not have brough the Christopher legend into Latin Europe, they were certainly the majority of those reading it. If their reaction to his monstrosity truly differed from modern expectations, we

must place the Cynocephali in the neighborhood of these medieval readers and explain why those readers might have seen in Christopher's doggish face a bit of their own.

3. Cynocephali and the Development of the Christopher Legend

The interpretive work of the previous section hangs upon a single historical question: could people living and working in Northern Europe possibly identify with a cynocephalic saint? The answer, strangely enough, is yes. When both medieval and modern scholars discuss the cynocephali, however, their first recourse is usually to an encyclopedic tradition which placed the Cynocephali in the South. Ratramnus' *doctores ecclesiasti* and Isidore in particular worked from this tradition, and he too placed the Cynocephali in the South. At first glance, the Anglo-Saxon record supports the usual perspective: two of the other texts in the Nowell Codex place the Cynocephali in Africa and India, there are dozens of old Imperial texts placing them in in the same regions,[50] the *Liber monstrorum* puts them in Egypt,[51] and the only surviving detailed *mappamundi* from Anglo-Saxon England places the *Cinocephales* on the southern rim of the habitable world.[52] If we turn our gaze here as well, it is hard to see why anyone on the old Roman frontier would identify Christopher as a regional native.

And yet, Rimbert obviously made the connection between the Cynocephali and his mission district, and Ratramnus never once questions the connection, either. Their

[50] For instance, see: Solinus' *Collectanea rerum memoriabilem*, which survives in two manuscripts and was cited by both Aldhelm and Bede; and Isidore of Seville, represented in nineteen manuscripts and a host of citations. Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 311, 33.
[51] Cf. *Liber Monstrorum* I.16, II.13. The full text is found in Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 254-317.
[52] London, BL Cotton Tiberius B.v, fol. 56v. Item 373 in Gneuss, 193 in Ker, dated xi[1]. See: Patrick McGurk, *An Eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B.v, Part I*, EEMF 21 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1983), 87.

conversation points us towards what was probably a vibrant northern cynocephalic tradition tied up with the old barbarian nations that Ian Wood claims "provide[s] subject matter for a debate on the [Roman/Germanic] frontier."[53] What that evidence is, and how it might have filtered into the hagiographic tradition, will be the next area of investigation.

A. The Development of the Northern Cynocephalic Tradition

Monsters have long dwelled in the northern marches of Classical thought. In the imperialist geographies of Solinus and Pomponius Mela, for instance, the Essedones, Hippopodes, and Panotii all populate islands located somewhere in the North and Baltic Seas, but the Cynocephali are usually not among them.[54] By the time that Late Antique geographers authors put the Dog-man in the north, however, they usually have one of two Classically-determined habitations: on the outer islands with the other Plinian races, or as one of the unclean races whom Alexander the Great miraculously closed away between the "Breasts of the North." They cannot dwell in a place more marginal and still be counted as inhabitants of the *orbis terrarum*.[55]

Alongside this Classical context appears the traces of an indigenous cultural tradition only obliquely reported by early Latin authors. David Gordon White, for one,

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[53] Wood, "Categorizing the *Cynocephali*," 33.

[54] Pomponius puts his Plinian creatures somewhere in the North Sea region while Solinus claims they live on an island called "Baltia," which naturally suggests somewhere farther east towards Prussia. The details, including the Hippopodes, Panotii, and the island of birds' eggs, however, are identical. *Pomponii Melae de chorographia libri tres*, III.6; Solinus, *Collectanea*, 39.

[55] Examples of this Alexandrine cynocephalic tradition include the Greek *Βίος Ἀλεξάνδρου*, dated 500-700 CE by Anderson, and the pseudo-Methodius *Revelationes*, from the seventh century. Two later manuscripts of the Latin *Revelationes* survive: London, BL Royal 5. F. xviii (Item 463.5 in Gneuss), dated xi^{ex}; and Salisbury, Cathedral Library 165 (Item 749 in Gneuss), dated xi^{ex}. See: Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1932), 38-41, 44-48; Michael Twomey, "The *Revelationes* of Pseudo-Methodius and Scritpural Study at Salisbury in the Eleventh Century," in *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill*, edited by Charles D. Wright, Frederick M. Biggs and Thomas N. Hall (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007): 370-86.

catalogs a vast network of cynanthropic folklore across Eastern Europe and the Baltic.[56] Ian Wood also notes that Paul the Deacon relates myths of the Cynocephali among the early Lombards, and Charlemagne himself was said to call the Vikings by that name.[57] He likewise suggests that some Vendel-era cultures employed the *cynocephalus* as a cultural symbol. Wood points to the better-known Torslunda bronze plaques for an example, as one depicts a dog-headed figure. He notes,

> Nor are the Torslunda placques the only objects which appear to have representations of dog-headed warriors: migration-period examples from the Alamannic region are to be found on the Gutenstein scabbard… and on a fragment of foil from Obreigheim… That northern warriors continued to wear dog-masks on occasion, might be suggested by Notker's reference to the Vikings as *cynocephali.*[58]

Dog-men were therefore already a part of cultures beyond old Roman frontier, and the Late Antique and early Medieval texts which contain reports about them could be reporting indigenous customs.

One of these texts is the eighth-century *Cosmographia* by Aethicus Ister, which provides the most detailed account of the northern Dog-men, a connection to Saint Christopher, and a tantalizing possible reference to an Insular context. The *Cosmographia* is itself a strange, hybrid creature: the Latin is unorthodox to the extreme, supposedly narrated by St. Jerome, epitomized froma pagan philosopher named "Aethicus." Despite its

[56] See: White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 47-70.
[57] Wood, "Categorizing the *Cynocephali*," 134-35. The Charlemagne quote comes from Notker the Stammerer's life of Charlemagne, II.13.
[58] Ibid. See also: Wood, "Missionaries and the Christian Frontier," 214-15.

obscurity, the text was surprisingly influential: it hides in the background of most later *mappaemundi* and Adam of Bremen's late eleventh-century history of Hamburg-Bremen.[59]

According to this account, the *Cenocefali* live on the outer islands of the North, in the same general area where Solinus and Pomponius once put other Plinian races. The passage is worth quoting in detail:

> [T]heir heads resemble canine heads, but the rest of their members—hands, feet—were of human species [and] like other race[s] of men. They are tall in stature, savage in appearance, and [one finds] also unheard-of monstrosities among those whom the neighbouring people call *Cainanei*, for their women do not bear a very great resemblance to the men… And the peoples of Germany, especially their tribute collectors and merchants, affirm that they often come to this island for sea commerce, and they call that people *Chananei*. These same heathens go about bare-legged, and they treat their hair by smearing it in oil or fat, which gives off a filthy stench; they lead a most filthy life… The land produces neither corn nor vegetables; there is an abundance of milk, but very little honey.[60]

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[59] A strange, interpolated account of the Cynocephali appear in Adam of Bremen's *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, written in the last quarter of the eleventh century. Adam claims they live in the Baltic, are the husbands of the Amazons, and have features consistent with the Blemmye. See: Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, IV.xxix. The Cynocephali also appear in Scandinavia on the Hereford, Henry of Mainz, Koblenz, and Walsperger *mappaemundi.* The ultimate source in most cases on these maps is either Aethicus or Adam of Bremen. Leonid Chekin goes so far to call these northern cynocephali a feature of Anglo-Norman *mappaemundi*. Leonid Chekin, *Northern Eurasia in Medieval Cartography* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 221.

[60] *capite canino habere similitudinem, reliqua membra humana specie, manus et pedes sicut reliqui hominem genus. Procere statura, truculenta specie, monstra quoque inaudita inter eos quos uicinae gentes cira eos 'Cainaneos' appellant, nam feminae eorum non praeferunt tantum horum similitudinem… Et gentes Germaniae, maxime qui uectigalia exercent et negotiores eorum, hoc adfirmant quod in ea insola crebrius nauale commercio prouehunt et gentem illam 'C<h>ananneos' uocitant. Idem gentiles nudatis cruribus incedunt, crines nutrient oleo inlitas aut adipe fetore nimium reddentes, spurcissimam uitam ducentes…Fruges non gignit nec holera; lactis copia, mel paruum.* Michael Herren, *The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister: Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. Michael Herren (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 28.1-12.

We should also note that, when Aethicus describes the Cynocephali, as he does with nearly every ethnic group in the north, he uses stereotypes nearly identical to those used against Germanic barbarians with a disgust so extreme that Ian Wood actually calls him "the Mary Douglas of the eighth century" against Ratramnus' Claude Lévi-Strauss.[61] His comments about Cynocephali's rancid-smelling hair, for instance, is nearly identical to Sidonius Apollinaris' (d. 489) distaste for the Burgundians, who used rancid butter [Lt. *butyro*] for hair pomade in one of his *Carmina*.[62] His other complaints, ranging from their appearance to their eating habits, follow suit.

Aethicus calls their home *Munitia insola septentrionalis*, which he mentions as a part of his tour of Thule, Britain, Ireland, the Orkneys, and the Hebrides. It also lies adjacent to so-called "German" territory. The Dog-heads are clearly characterized as northern peoples, but which ones? Ian Wood believes that "probably the author had in mind the island of Monabia, which occurs in an equivalent place in Orosius' account of the world, and which should be identified as the Isle of Man."[63] There is a raft of archeological and geographic information to support Wood's claim. As every major scholar on Christopher has noted, Conchan Parish on the Isle of Man sports at least two pre-Viking era crosses adorned with cynocephali, one of which may have once been incorporated into the lintel of the previous

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[61] Wood, "Categorizing the *Cynocephali*," 133.
[62] The reference appears in his short epistolary *Carmina* 12, 3-7: *inter crinigeras situm caterva/et Germanica verba sustinentem,/ audantem tetrico subinde vultu/ quod Burgundio cantat esculentus/infundens acido comam butyro?* "…sitting among a horde of hairy ones and withstanding Germanic words, just after praising with a sour face whatever an overstuffed Burgundian sings, greasing his hair with rancid butter?" *Apollinaris Sidonii Epistulae et Carminae*, ed. Christian Luetjohann, MGH auct. ant. 8. (Berlin: Weidmanns, 1887), 230-31.
[63] Michael Herren prefers to associate "Munitia" with the Norse toponym *Muness*, which is on Unst in the Shetland Islands. Aethicus silently cites Orosius in a number of places, however, and he also has a tendency to mutate proper names. It seems unlikely that he would have picked up an authentic Norse place-name when we clearly know he had the other source in front of him. Wood, "Categorizing the *Cynocephali*," 128; Herren, *Cosmography*, 81n.

church.[64] Since two manuscripts of the Irish *Martyrology of Oengus* glosses the entry for Christopher with *Cristoforus .i. conchend* [Christopher, that is, dog-headed], it's difficult not to make an association between this particular island, the Conchan Parish, the "conchend" Cynocephali, and Saint Christopher.[65]

Secondly, Aethicus brings up an interesting point about nomenclature: the nations around them call the Cynocephali both "Cainaneos" and "Chananneos"; the resemblance of these terms to the word "Canaanite"[Lt. *Chananeus*] is obvious.[66] As Wood explains,

> Doubtless Christopher's dog-headedness led, from the Greek word κυών (κυν-), and more immediately for the western hagiographies via Latin, *canes*, to an association with Canaan, which could be misread as the Land of the Dogs… We have already seen that *cynocephali* were associated with Canaan by Aethicus Ister, and that the passage in Exodus flowing with milk and honey, which also mentions the Canaanites, may be subverted in the Cosmographer's description from the area from which the dog-headed beings came.[67]

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[64] Crosses Conchan 62 and 63 from P. M. C. Kermode's *Manx Crosses*, Plate 23. Both contain zoomorphic decoration with cynocephali at the base, possibly by the same sculptor, and both date to pre-Scandinavian habitation. Two others from elsewhere on Man, however, are Viking-era crosses that contain cynocephalic figures interwoven with bits of Norse legend. P. M. C Kermode, *Manx Crosses* (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1907), 134-36, 87-88. See also: Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 27-28; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 15-16; Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 73-74.

[65] Since this is a metric calendar, it is nearly impossible to add names, and so the entries are more or less fossilized in their original form. The original text mentions Christopher by name on April 28th and dates to sometime between the late ninth and early tenth century, close to the same date as Paris, BN 5574. An interlinear gloss in two manuscripts clarify that Christopher is a *conchend*: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B. 505, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud 610, two of the best witnesses of the *Martyrology*. Since these are thoroughly incorporated into the interlinear text, they probably at a minimum predate their manuscripts. Stokes, *Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, 109, 18; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 27-28; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 15-16.

[66] Herren, *Cosmography*, 28.5, 10.

[67] Wood, "Categorizing the *Cynocephali*." 132-33.

The larger Christopher tradition may prove Wood's point, as it shows us that development from cynanthropy to Canaanite in process.[68] In the "Decius" tradition, the text never describes Christopher as "Cynocephalus"; rather, he is from a foreign land in Africa where cannibals live, and he has the head of a dog [*quasi canino capite*].[69] When directly asked about his place of origin, he declares, "my face indicates my nationality." Emperor Decius curses him for being "misshapen" [*deformis*].[70] In the "Dagnus" versions, Christopher's description and nationality now begin to merge: now he is a "Dog-man" [*genus Canineorum*], and Christopher never claims any other nationality beyond that; and when Dagnus curses him for his piety, he uses the same insult.[71] In the BHL 1768 manuscripts, Christopher becomes a "Canaanite" [*genere Chananeus*] and Dagnus, enraged at his obstinacy, calls him by the same term.[72] By the time that Walter of Speyer and Jacob de Voraigne dip their hands into the legend, Christopher loses his dog-head and gains a new nationality as a fully-fledged Canaanite from the near East. To be from "Canaan" is to be a "Caninite"— and Aethicus believes that "Caninites" are Cynocephali who live in an uncomfortable proximity to the British coast.

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[68] Putting these changes into a clear chronology of revision is difficult. The "Decius" legend clearly comes first, but picking out which of the "Dagnus" versions came next gets one into problems of a chicken-versus-egg variety. One version is almost certainly a stylistic revision of the other, but without a complete survey of manuscripts I would rather not hazard a guess.

[69] *Quidam autem vir, cum esset alienigena regionis eorum, qui homines manducabant, qui habebat terribilem visionem, et quasi canino capite.* The text then describes him as a soldier in the *numera armarianorum* which is usually taken to mean the *Marmitanii,* a military unit from Libya who served in Syria. Woods speculates that Christopher's cynocephaly could stem with this association with a region of Libya known for its monstrosities. Fábrega-Grau, *Passionario Hispánico*, 299.3; Woods, "The Origin of the Cult of Saint Christopher,"*The Military Martyrs,* accessed 15 September 2013, http://www.ucc.ie/milmart/Christopher.html.

[70] *Genus autem meum meus vultus indicat.* Fábrega-Grau, *Passionario Hispánico*, 302.11.

[71] *Canina, et fax mala… quam diu te possum sustinere.* Rosenfeld, *Der hl. Christophorus*, 522.3.

[72] *caneneae. et facies turpis… quam diu te possum sustinere.* Goullet et Isetta, *Le Légendier de Turin*, fol. 13v.1-2.

Finally, the "Canineus" version of the tale adds one more tantalizing clue to Christopher's geographic home: he comes from an island [*homo venit de insula genere Canineorum*.][73] I am not aware of a single southern monstrous tradition that places Cynocephali on an island before the late Middle Ages.[74] Plinian monsters of the South usually dwell upon a seemingly featureless landscape of Africa or India; the monsters, and not the geography, divides this world into distinct regions. Perhaps more importantly, I cannot find a northern Dog-head tradition before the thirteenth-century Sawley *mappamundi* that does *not* place the Cynocephali on an island.[75] Barrier islands along the edge of the ocean are a defining characteristic of the northern landscape in Classical geography, one that carries into almost every geographic text of the medieval period. To place the Cynocephali on an island, just as Aethicus did when he placed them on *Munitia insola septentrionalis*, is essentially to give them a northern context, and their bodies are a reflection of their northern marginality and a Late Antique stereotype of Germanic barbarism.

B. Cynocephali and the Missionary Conversion fantasy

From what we have seen so far, there is ample reason to believe that early medieval readers might have associated Cynocephali like Christopher with the remote areas of northern Europe; in fact, they could have been as close as the Isle of Man or the Norse to

[73] Following the Würzburg manuscript reading. Rosenfeld, *Der hl. Christophorus*, 522.1.
[74] That text is Mandeville's *Travels*, where the Cynocephali live on "Natumeran." Many of the details from this section could have come from Benedict Polonius, who also places the Cynocephali in the land of the Tatars in the north. See: *The Book of John Mandeville*, ed. Tamarah Kohanski and C. David Benson (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), lines 1854-59.
[75] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 66, p. 2, dated xii-xiii, from Sawley in Yorkshire. Interestingly enough, on the Henry of Mainz map, the Cynocephali are placed on a peninsula. This could be analogous to the transformation of Scandinavia from an island in Late Antique thought to a recognized peninsula, as "Noreia" is also drawn as a peninsula. See: Chekin, *Northern Eurasia in Medieval Cartography*, 137-9, 454.

the northeast. But why put them in in a hagiography? As David Gordon White and Ian Wood explain, the Christian cynocephalic tradition was originally born in a Parthian/Scythian context, connecting them to some of the earliest Christian saints and their conversion efforts.[76] The Cynocephali became a shorthand for unconverted or heterodox peoples along this frontier. David Woodward, John Block Friedman, and Ian Wood, for instance, have all performed detailed analyses of how the cynocephalus specifically came to represent the possibility of converting foreign Others into the religious and cultural fold—barbarians, Jews, Turks, and, eventually, Muslims.[77] As Friedman explains, "The Cynocephali were attractive to the missionary spirit because of their established reputation… they were not only more grotesque and unreasonable than certain other Plinian races, but also more familiar. Their conversion would be a special and dramatic triumph for Christian propagandists."[78]

The Eastern gnostic and Greek traditions are perhaps the earliest traditions tying the Cynocephali to a desire for conversion. Dating back perhaps as early as the fourth and fifth century, these Coptic and Greek dog-headed tales were highly missionistic, played on Greek attitudes towards the exotic, and emphasized ethnocentric ideas of barbarism and cultural conversion. In the Ethiopic "Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew," for instance, these apostles go north to "Parthia," somewhere vaguely around Macedonia, and they come across a man-eating Cynocephalus named "Abominable"; he converts at the exhortation of

[76] White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 33.
[77] J. B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, The History of Cartography 1 (1987), 332; Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 67-69; White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 61.
[78] Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 61.

an angel, loses his savage nature, and becomes their servant.[79] The early legend of Saint Mercurius follows a similar design. Although it was never very popular in the Latin West,[80] Friedman claims that he was a prominent Coptic saint and also appears frequently in Greek kalendars.[81] In all the versions of the tale, Mercurius is an accomplished barbarian-killer with Scythian and Armenian heritage serving in the Gothic wars, but in the Coptic versions of the legend, he is accompanied by two cynocephalic soldier-servants who, like Abominable, are tamed by the power of God.[82]

The early Christopher legend also took shape out of these cynocephalic conversion fantasies, and it spread across both sides of the old Roman empire by the late sixth century.[83] Rimbert anticipated meeting them in his own mission-field among the Swedes, Danes, and Friese, and the Saxon bishop Bruno of Querfort (d. 1009) imagined his mentor Adalbert verbally sparring with sneering Dog-heads while on mission in Prussia.[84] Bruno lived very close to the northern frontier in which he worked, and he emphatically asserts they are real. Contrary to Friedman's assertion that monsters appear at great geographic

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[79] The manuscripts of these tales are late, but other research suggests the original transmission of the Ethiopic "Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew" came from fourth-to fifth-century texts translated from Greek into Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic. E. A. Wallis Budge, ed. *Gadla Hawâryât: The Contendings of the Apostles*, vol. 2 (London: Henry Frowde, 1901). For an examination of the legend see: White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 22-26; Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 70-71.

[80] The Latin version is an expansion of the Greek version BHG 1274, apparently set during Decius' renovation of the state religion and the Gothic incursions. Neither versions are cynocephalic. See: Victorio Giovardi, ed., *Acta passionis et translationis sanctorum martyrum Mercurius ac XII fratri* (Rome: Johannes Baptista à Caporalibus, 1730).

[81] Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 71-72.

[82] White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 37-38.

[83] The Greek version of the tale is usually dated from the fifth century. The earliest references in the Latin west are a Mozarabic liturgy of the sixth century, a list of relics from the mid-seventh century in Spain, as well as foundations in the Frankish kingdoms by the end of the sixth. See: Fábrega-Grau, *Passionario Hispánico*, 212; Loeschcke, "Sanctus Christophorus canineus," 33; Newall, "The Dog-Headed St. Christopher," 244-45; Rosenfeld, *Der hl. Christophorus*, 246-47.

[84] BHL 0038-39, written ca. 1000 AD. See: Bruno of Querfort, *Vita secunda auctore Brunonis Archepresbyteris*, in *MGH, SS* 4, ed. George Pertz (Hannover: Bibliopoli Aulici Hahniani, 1856), 596-612.

distances from the self, Ian Wood insists that "[Bruno] does not distance himself from them… Indeed, he must have expected to meet them soon."[85] These Cynocephali represent the possibility for barbarian conversion, and they slide northward over time along the growing missionary frontier, from Parthia, to Scythia, to the Germanic/Scandinavian north, and eventually eastward into Prussia.

At the heart of all of these other missionary tales, from Abominable to Bruno, lies the larger fantasy of barbarian conversion. As White explains, "In these legends, the cynocephalic hero Abominable constitutes an allegorical representation of the triumph of Christian ecumenisms over the benighted barbarism or paganism of foreign populations."[86] Conversion in these tales leads to a docile, subservient barbarian characterized by his new ideals of "obedience and service" as he diligently provides service, missionary zeal, and, if needed, military muscle for his new master.[87] Friedman likewise suggests these stories "showed the surpassing power of the Word in a propagandistic context."[88] I would argue that the "Dagnus" version of the Christopher legend mirrored this same desire to convert the continental Saxons and Scandinavians, and to that end, the shape of the legend mirrors that of the Continental missions efforts.

What makes the "Dagnus" versions so unusual is the lack of a civilized control over the cynocephalus. Whereas Abominable and Mercurius serve alongside their master like tributary soldiers, Christopher is a free operator, and he is the one who recruits and and converts; his human converts become his proxy soldiers who serve his aims by destroying

[85] Wood, "Categorizing the *Cynocephali*," 130; Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 37, 58.
[86] White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 31.
[87] Ibid.; Newall, "The Dog-Headed St. Christopher," 244.
[88] Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 69.

Dagnus' idols. If Christopher is capable of standing in as a Germanic or Scandinavian mascot, then his textual tradition offers these people much more agency than previous and future missionary monster tales ever would. That difference, as we shall see, may have been the impetus which lead to the rapid spread of the "Dagnus" legend in the regions of the Continental missions movement and among the missionizers themselves.

C. The Spread of the Latin Christopher Legend in the West

Despite Christopher's popularity in the later Middle Ages, there is a surprising lack of scholarship on the earliest versions of the legend. The vast majority of the work on the early Latin Christopher legend was done over fifty years ago, and nearly all of it comes out of the German academic school. Walter Loeschke fleshed out the Greek Cynocephalic tradition from icons and manuscripts, and Venetia Newall later summarized many of his findings in English, from a folkloric perspective.[89] Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld and Konrad Richter studied the traditions of the Latin West, with Richter focusing especially on the German Christopher legends by Walter of Speyer.[90]

From this material we can draw a rough sketch of the two major Latin versions. Even though the existing "Decius" manuscripts are slightly later than the "Dagnus" manuscripts, the "Decius" version is generally recognized as the earliest Latin version because it is a translation of the oldest Greek version (BHG 310) and because the earliest traces of

[89]Walter Loeschcke, "Sanctus Christophorus canineus," in *Edwin Redslob zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Edwin Redslob et al. (Berlin: E. Blaschker, 1955), 33-82; "Darstellung des Kynokephalen hl. Christophorus," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte* 5 (1957), 37-59; Newall, "The Dog-Headed St. Christopher," 242-49.

[90] These are BHL 1776-77, the metrical and prose *Lives of Christopher* written by Walter of Speyer.

Christopher in Europe place him in a Decian context.[91] This version seems to have spread originally through the Mediterranean and did not see much spread through the eleventh century. A look at the map below (Figure 5)[92] shows the limited spread of the text before

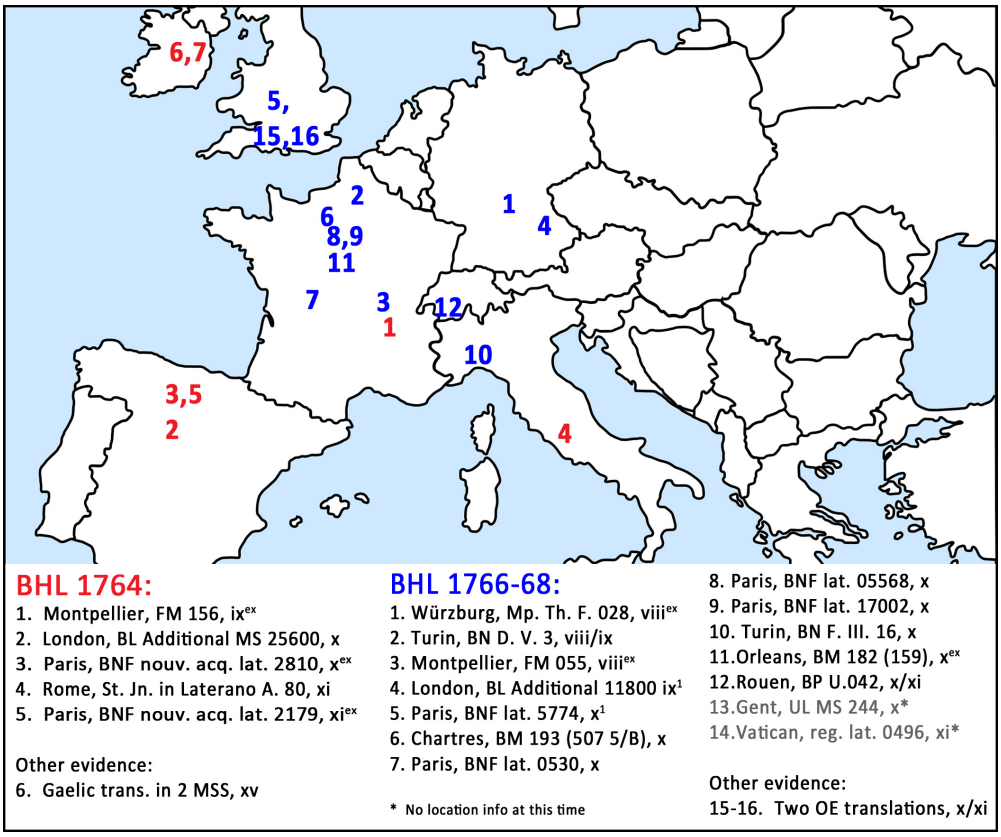


Figure 5. Distribution of the "Decius" and "Dagnus" versions before 1066

[91] David Woods, "The Origin of the Cult of Saint Christopher."

[92] The manuscript list is compiled from the BHL, but information on individual manuscripts has been cross-referenced from all available manuscript catalogs. The regional designation for BHL 1764, #4 (in red), and BHL 1766, #1 (in blue) is approximate. Image source: Wikimedia Commons.

1100: we see some presence of Latin texts in Spain and Italy, with one text in central-eastern France mirroring the early establishment of his cult.[93]

Although it is hard to prove that this version has a "southern" affinity, some details could have made it more popular in the Mediterranean: Christopher is a military conscript in the "Marmitani," both a Lybian unit of the Roman army and a region thought to contain Plinian races.[94] It is theoretically possible that this connection gave Christopher some connection to the south, especially in Spain where African cultural ties were more immediate and North African incursions were a problem in the late Roman period. Moreover, his ties to a specific historical period within the bounds of the old Roman Empire might have made him a more popular saint in regions with historical ties in the empire from that period.

Even though copies of the Latin "Decius" text is itself limited to the Mediterranean, it left traces in Gaelic literature which in turn influenced its reception in England. For instance, we have two late Irish manuscripts with a middle Irish translation of the "Decius" version which, like much of the surviving Irish corpus, is older than the manuscript in which it survives.[95] Secondly, the ninth-century Irish metric calendar by Oengus mentions Christopher on April 28th, attesting to knowledge of the "Decius" text in Ireland.[96] This Irish

[93] It makes sense that there was at least some limited presence of BHL 1764 in central France and the diocese of Paris due to the number of very early church foundations there, but the only actual texts I am currently aware of is Montpellier, FM 156, dated s. ix with a provenance of Lyon. BHL 1765 contains six later manuscripts, all of which at first glance appear to be from all around France after 1100, but this appears to be a much later recension, and it is very difficult to say whether their presence indicates anything about the availability of this text in France before 1066.
[94] Woods, "The Origin of the Cult of Saint Christopher"; Hippolyte Delahaye, *Les légendes Grecques des saintes militaires* (Reprint: New York: Arno Press; repr., 1975), 21n.
[95] The manuscripts are from the fifteenth century, but the language limits its age to 900-1100.
[96] Whitley Stokes, *Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1905), 109, 118n; J. Fraser, "The Passion of St. Christopher," *Revue Celtique* 34 (1913): 307-25.

presence of the legend is a possible source for the *Old English Martyrology* version, which more or less is a summary of the "Decius" text; the *OEM* likewise places his commemoration on April 28th. It would not be surprising to trace this Irish influence back to northern Spain, based on the well-known intellectual ties between Ireland and Spain, the long-time presence of his cult there, and the higher concentration of copies of the "Decius" legend surviving from Castile.

Unlike the "Decius" version's mostly southern connections, the "Dagnus" version, (BHL 1766-69) probably arrived in Europe later and survives in large numbers. The two earliest manuscripts, originally copied in northern France and southern Germany, show up at roughly the same time and then spread widely: the BHL, which is hardly a complete list, shows over forty copies of just BHL 1766 before the close of the Middle Ages. In these versions, Christopher is no longer a military martyr serving a Roman emperor in Syria and loses all of his African heritage, becoming a "Dog-man" or *Caninus/Chananeus*.

Why did this version spread more than the "Decius" version? The simplest answer might be its historical placement during the Continental missionary movement. Frankish, Irish, and English missionaries were branching out into Danish, Frisian, Saxon, and Swedish territory in the eighth and ninth centuries, and the Anglo-Saxon mission in particular reached its peak in the decades immediately before the earliest manuscript evidence. The earliest dateable manuscript, known as "St. Burghard's Homiliary," comes from an Anglo-Saxon missionary center in southern Germany, and two others come from or were from

near Insular foundations on the Continent.[97] In addition, the "Dagnus" versions of the text have two key differences which make the text fit into the genre of missionary hagiography: Samos has never been evangelized, and the king at the end of the story converts to the faith.

The "Decius" version reflected a time when the main threat was the Great Persecution against Christians, and so this version surrounds Christopher with fellow persecuted Christians. Christopher stops at a church, and a priest named Peter baptizes both him and his companions. Three more priests conveniently appear to baptize the growing crowd of converts who witness the series of miracles after his arrest, and crowds of Christians vie with the authorities for relics from their bodies. After Decius orders his execution, a priest named Athanasius appears to collect his relics and found a church. In contrast, the only Christian in Samos at the start of the "Dagnus" recension is Christopher, and the only evidence of Christianity is the single word *ecclesiam,* attached to a building near where Christopher stops to pray. There is no priest at this church, only a woman who has also come to pray—but to pagan idols.[98]

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[97] Würzburg, Mp. Th. F. 028, dated viii$^{3/4}$, Turin, BN D. V. 3, dated viii/ix, and London, BL Additional 11880, dated ix^{1}. The Würzburg manuscript probably is from an Anglo-Saxon foundation near Würzburg, which, at the time this manuscript was copied, was an Anglo-Saxon mission linked to Saint Burchard; a binding strip written in an Insular minuscule reinforces its connection to this region. The number of Anglo-Saxon foundations in the area (including at least one very productive convent) problematizes narrowing down its origin any further. London, BL Additional 11880 comes from Willibrord's foundation at Echternach and is associated with a known scribe named Engyldos, while Turin, BN D. V. 5 is written in a Corbie minuscule, limiting its production to the houses near Corbie or Corbie itself. Goullet suggests Saint-Médard at Soissons, which was founded much earlier in honor of a missionary to the Flemings. Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 18; Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin,* 91.

[98] *Et orante eo. ecce exiit mulier de ciuitate ut adoraret "idolis". et uidens ipsum sanctum contremuit: et facies eius mutata est et currens ad civitatem. clamabat et dicebat Veni*[. .] *et uidite mirabilia quod adhuc nullus uidere potuit. et exierunt turbae et uiderunt ipsum sanctum stantem iuxta ecclesia.* "And while praying these things, behold, a woman exited from the city in order to adore idols, and seeing the saint himself she trembled: and his face was different/changed. And, running to the city, she cried out and said: 'Come and see this wonder, which up to this point no one has been able to see.' And the crowd came out and saw the saint standing next to the *ecclesia*." Although the word *ecclesia* usually means a "church," the context here seems a

Christopher therefore goes from being a simple convert, prophet, and martyr in the "Decius" version to a para-missionary engaged in important acts of spiritual care. His miracles are no longer private affairs to intended to strengthen his own faith; in the "Dagnus" versions, a multitude witnesses his staff blooming miraculously, and they convert. Without priests ordained to do the task, Christopher baptizes all the new converts "with his own hand."[99] Two of his converts, Nicaea and Aquilina, defile a temple and destroy its idols. And, in a scene clearly evocative of the Eucharist and the miraculous healings of the Gospels, Christopher offers up his own body and blood, mixed with the earth, for Dagnus' salvation.[100] The "Decius" versions have no parallel for this moment.[101]

Perhaps more importantly, Christopher uses his influence to convert a king and his entire people to the faith, even suffering martyrdom for doing so. Since the "Decius" version features a persecutory emperor with a widely known history, Christopher's martyrdom has a much more limited effect over the power structure. Switching the antagonist to an

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little more ambiguous. Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin*, fol. 9r.19-9v.5. All quotations from the Latin "Dagnus" legend will come from this edition.

[99] *et tenens uirgam in manum suam. fixit eam in terram et dixit Domine deus fac uirgam meam florere et ramos bonus habere et folia formunsa. quomodo mutasti in channa galilaeae aqua in vino. et statim floruit uirga illa. multi autem uidentes quia uirga illa floruit et crediderunt cum illo deo suo... et baptaziati sunt de manu ipsius sancti.* "And, holding the staff in his hand, he planted it into the ground and said, 'Lord God, make my rod flourish and have good branches and comely leaves, as you changed water into wine in Chana Galilee!' And immediately that rod sprouted. Moreover, many people, seeing that the rod sprouted, believed with him in that god of his... and they were baptized by the hand of the saint himself." Ibid., fol. 9v.7-14.

[100] *Þ[onne] þa geseah se halga cristoforus he him to cwæð þu wælgrimma ⁊ þu dysega... Cum þonne to minum lichaman ⁊ nym þære eorðan lâm þe ic on gemartyrod wæs ⁊ meng wið min blod ⁊ sete on þine eagan þonne gif þu gelyfst on god of ealre heortan þære sylfan tide þu bist gehæled fram þinra blindnesse·* "When Saint Christopher saw that he said to him, 'You slaughter-greedy and foolish man... come then to my body and take the soil of the earth on which I was martyred, and mix it with my blood and set it on your eyes; then, if you believe in God with your whole heart, in that very hour you will be healed of your blindness.'" Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 97v.11- 98. 2.

[101] In fact, in the "Decius" version, a bishop named Athanasius arrives after Christopher's death to barter for his relics. These ecclesiastical overseers carefully govern the distribution of this body, just as they do all other sacramental functions. Cf. Fábrega-Grau, *Passionario Hispánico*, 308.34-09.39.

ahistorical "king of Samos" in the "Dagnus" version allows Christopher's martyrdom to act as both a resistance to and a victory over earthly authority. As Nicholas Howe has noted, the narrative frame of the "Dagnus" recension mirrors what actual missionaries had been doing in the Germanic north by targeting rulers for conversion.[102] Howe is right to connect these plot elements to Bedan conversion tales; at the same time, they could just as easily come from *vitas* of Boniface, Killian, or Willibrord, all of which were composed in the same few decades and in the same geographic areas that the earliest manuscripts of the "Dagnus" version. When we take all of this material into account, the "Dagnus" version of the Christopher legend was ideally suited for its geographic location: the legend spread into areas already associated with cynocephaly, areas which were already heavily involved in missionization by the Franks and the English, and it mirrored the conversion practices used in those very areas. Even so, this story comes with an important difference: the marginal figure in this story is the missionizer, and he is commissioned from his island home to convert pagans much closer to the Greco-Roman center. All that remains now is to explore how this material was employed in Anglo-Saxon England, and how the readers of the Nowell Codex might have responded to it.

D. "Christopher's Canineus" in Anglo-Saxon England

As we have seen above, the geographic and missionary traditions each developed a context for the Cynocephali where anxieties about cultural and ethnic outsiders, often barbarians, could be transferred to the North. The larger historical context of the Latin

[102] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 178. See also the discussion of Howe's argument in Section 2. The Critical Background of the *OE Christopher*, above.

Legend of Saint Christopher participated in a culture where missionistic ideals, barbarians, conversion, and margin vs. mainland were already in play. Would these same cultural ideas have been present in the mind of the readers of the Nowell Codex, however? Usually, talking about a dog-headed Christopher in England ends in a stalemate, with the critics divided over whether the Vitellius version was truly cynocephalic and whether he was well enough known for people to even make the connection. Kenneth Sisam suggested that the Christopher cult was relatively unknown before a sudden increase in the second quarter of the tenth century, coinciding with the introduction of his relics from the Continent by Æthelstan (d. 939).[103] On a reappraisal of the evidence, John Pickles mostly agreed with Sisam's characterization even though he quibbled over whether or not Christopher ever became truly "popular" in Anglo-Saxon England.[104] Knowledge of a saint and development of a cult are two very different things, however, and just because we lack evidence that Christopher was actively venerated before the middle of the tenth century does not necessarily mean that the saint—or his dog's head—were unknown to the English.[105]

Much of our evidence comes from Wessex, no doubt from the influence of Æthelstan's gift of relics there, but these are not the only reasons he might have had a presence in that region. Wessex, and particularly its nuns, maintained a lively involvement

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[103] Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 71-72. He takes care to point out the presence of Christopher in manuscripts from Nunnaminster in Winchester and Shaftesbury, both prominent women's monastic foundations in Wessex.

[104] Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 29-30.

[105] Some of the evidence from later in the period is harder to interpret. There are enough kalendars from Anglo-Saxon England mentioning Christopher to be notable, but the surviving copies mostly come from the later eleventh and twelfth centuries, which makes the information difficult to interpret. By my count there are a dozen manuscripts, including the Bosworth Psalter, containing a memorial for Christopher in Anglo-Saxon England. For more information on these kalendars, see: Francis Wormald, ed., *English Kalendars before AD 1100*, Henry Bradshaw Society vol. 72 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1934).

with the missions on the Continent in the eighth century,[106] and the saint was already well-established in Frankish territory at this period. There were Frankish texts and influence flowing back and forth across the Channel in the years after that, especially in the time of Alcuin, and Christopher's cult was already well-established in the diocese of Tours when Alcuin lived the last years of his life there.[107] It is not that difficult to imagine that stories of the dog-headed saint made their way to England through one of these cultural channels long before his cult actually took root.

For evidence, we should first look to our only English copy of the Latin passion: Paris, BN 5574, a book of hagiographical material most likely from Mercia. The accepted date for this manuscript is the early 900s, which predates the establishment of his cult in Wessex.[108] The decoration in this manuscript combines northern French floral motifs and English zoomorphic elements, but it is copied in a late pointed minuscule;[109] this opens up the possibility that the manuscript was copied from a French exemplar which migrated from the region of Tours or Metz, the closest regional match for the unique design of the

[106] Cf. Barbara Yorke, "The Bonifacian Mission and Female Religious in Wessex," *Early Medieval Europe* 7, no. 2 (1998): 145-72.
[107] There is a surprising amount of Christopher-related materials from Tours from this early period, including a church dedicated to Saints Christopher, Martin, and Brictius from about 800 AD, for which Alcuin had even written a short poetic inscription; a sacramentary of about 900; and a missal/litany of the tenth century. Rosenfeld, *Der hl. Christophorus*, 236-37.
[108] Item 885.5 in Gneuss, from Mercia, provenance France by xii. The text contains annotations in a French hand from no earlier than the twelfth century. François Avril and Patricia Danz Stirnemann, *Manuscrits enluminés d'origine Insulaire VIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1987), 10-11.
[109] "Le filigranes festonnés rapellent les manuscrits de Tour et Metz au IXe s., mais les collerettes, têtes d'animaux et oiseaux, et les ailes, ainsi que les filigranes étalés sur les mots initaux se rapprochent d'un manuscript datant du début du Xe siècle à Londres contenant le *De virginitate* d'Aldhelm, attribué à le Mercie en raison de son écriture." ibid., 11.

artwork.[110] The manuscript is a "Chananeus" version of the Dagnus legend (BHL 1768), and the text shows some kind of relationship to the Turin manuscript.

But is this version of the tale *cynocephalic*? As we have mentioned before, the "Dagnus" version of the Christopher story comes in two variants: BHL 1766, the "Canineus" recension, which draws attention to the saint's dog-head, places his homeland on an island, and repeatedly calls him a "dog-man" [*Canineus*]. BHL 1768, the "Cananeus" recension, lacks the reference to the dog's head and island home, and Dagnus instead calls him a "Canaanite" [*Chananeus*]. A review of the text shows that the Paris manuscript is a "Chananeus" text, but I would argue that the distinction between the two versions is purely academic. Ian Wood has already shown how the early Christopher legend existed alongside a body of material that conflated "Cananites" with dog-headed "Caninites" in the Germanic north.[111] I see no reason why any audience who was familiar with the legend outside of this manuscript would have been aware of the distinction.

The fragment of the Otho Christopher translation reinforces this point. Both Malone and Ker identified the closest analogue to the OE *Christopher* as a version of BHL 1768, which is a "Chananeus" text.[112] When Pickles studied the MS, he was less sure, but he did note that the Turin manuscript was a close match. In fact, of the four versions studied by Pickles, only the Turin manuscript is a near-perfect match for both the incipit and explicit

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[110] While there are no other actual manuscripts of the Christopher legend from Tours or Metz, evidence of his cult from Tours is roughly contemporary to the age of this manuscript, including a short inscription written by Aldhelm himself. Evidence from Metz is also plentiful, as far as this early period goes, but at least a hundred years later than the Paris MS. See also footnote 107, above.

[111] See footnote 67, above.

[112] I place more emphasis on this fact than Pickles does, who was uncomfortable saying that the text followed any specific exemplar more than others because the source text "was of mixed descent" compared to his sample manuscripts. For my reasoning, see footnote. 121, below. Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 19-20.

of the Otho version.[113] If we therefore use the Turin text as a hypothetical base text for the Otho Christopher, then its translator took the phrase *In tempore illo quu Dagnus rex regnabat in ciuitate Saman. uenit homo genere chananeus. hic Dei non nouerat,* and he/she translated it: *on þære tid wæs geworden þe Dagnus cync rixode on Samon þære ceastre þæt sum man com on þe ceastre se wæs healf hundisces manncynnes. ac he ne cuðe nan þinge to þam lifiendan gode*.[114] And so, when faced with the word "Cananite" in the exemplar, our English translator translated it as "dog-head"; in the translator's mind, at least, the terms are one and the same.

The Paris manuscript places Christopher in England by 900, but The *Old English Martyrology* may push back knowledge of the Christopher legend even farther. In his entry on April 28th, condensed from a "Decius" version of the text, Christopher's monstrosity gets central billing: he was *of þære þeode þær men habbað hunda heafod, ond of þære eorðan on ðære æton men hi selfe. He hæfde hundas heafod, ond his loccas wæron ofer gemet side, ond his eagan scinon swa leohte swa morgensteorra, ond his teþ wæron swa scearpe swa eofores tuxas.*[115] His commemoration is one of the longest entries in the entire martyrology, but it is only extant in two of the five manuscript fragments, and both date from the early to

[113] As per Pickles' own analysis. If we limit ourselves to just variant readings in the incipit and the explicit of Otho, then all three of the manuscript variants which he catalogues match uniquely with Turin. Based on this evidence, we should probably use the Turin manuscript as the closest available textual analogue to Otho until a better manuscript presents itself. See: Ibid.

[114] "In those days when Dagnus ruled in the kingdom of Samos, it happened that a man came to the city who was of the cynocephalic tribe. And he knew nothing about the living God." Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin,* fol. 9r.1-3; Ker, *Catalogue*, 226.

[115] "from the country where men have dog's heads, and from the region where people eat each other. He had the head of a dog, and his hair was long beyond measure, and his eyes shone brightly as the morning star, and his teeth were as sharp as the tusks of a wild boar." Christine Rauer, ed. and trans., *The Old English Martyrology: Edition, Translation and Commentary* (D. S. Brewer, 2013), 90-91.

mid eleventh century.[116] All the surviving copies are either fragments or, in one instance, a single excerpt, and the earliest fragment is coterminous with the reign of King Alfred.[117] Knowledge of Christopher and his cynocephaly could therefore go at least that far back—several decades *before* Æthelstan's gift of relics fostered an active cult in Wessex.

That date, however, could be pushed back as far as the Anglo-Saxon Continental mission. Michael Lapidge has proposed that the *Old English Martyrology* was not an original composition; rather, it was translated from a now-lost Latin martyrology, which was itself written no later than the middle of the eighth century. His evidence consists of datable entries; noting that, despite the fact that most martyrologies are constantly expanded over time, Lapidge demonstrates that the latest dateable event happened in 721 AD. Moreover, the most famous early English saints, such as Boniface and Willibrord, are not in any of the remaining manuscripts, which gives us a *terminus ante quem* of about 740.[118] This demonstrates that the Old English *Martyrology* was likely a translation of a Latin exemplar,

[116] London, BL Cotton Julius A.x, dated x/xi, origin unknown, item 338 in Gneuss, 161 in Ker; and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 196, dated xi^2, Exeter. Listed as item 62 in Gneuss, 47 in Ker. These are Rauer's MSS B and C respectively. See: Rauer, *The Old English Maryrology,* 19-20.

[117] This is Rauer's manuscript "A": London, BL Additional 23211, dated 871-899, Wessex. Item 282 in Gneuss, 127 in Ker. This fragment is a pastedown, containing entries for April 14th-23rd only; the Christopher entry would have appeared on the following leaf had it survived. Of the five manuscripts, four are fragmentary and the fifth is an excerpt. That Christopher was contained in the other two MSS cannot be excluded, but it cannot be proven, either. See also: ibid., 18-25.

[118] 740 being the earliest date that news of Willibrord's death could have made it back to England. This gives Christopher legend a nominal presence in England close to two hundred years before the development of his cult. It is always technically possible that the Christopher entry in the *OEM* was added later at some point after the creation of Lapidge's proposed *Vorlage*, but this seems extremely unlikely: there are much more popular (and more English) saints dating after 721, and none of them were added. To say that a generic saint like Christopher without a strong local commemoration would be added to the *OEM* while Willibrord and Boniface were not would be unusual in the extreme. If we accept Lapidge's theory of an original Latin copy-text, then the only reasonable conclusion would be that Christopher was included from the start. Michael Lapidge, "Acca of Hexham and the Origin of the *Old English Martyrology*," *Analecta Bollandiana* 123 (2005): 40-41.

and that exemplar probably had been written sometime during the Anglo-Saxon continental mission.

We have plenty of reasons to believe, therefore, that Christopher's legend was circulating before the mid-ninth century and appeared in martyrologies as far back as the early eighth century. That eighth- and ninth- century evidence also has ties to the Anglo-Saxon mission to the Continent, often in places where copies of the Christopher legend are found. And, when they pictured this saint, he would have been exactly as pictured him as *OE Martyrology* and the Otho manuscript make him: a person of *healfhundisces mancynnes,* a reformed cannibal with a dog's head.

4. Rewriting the Conversion Script in the English Christopher Legend

With this discussion, we can now take this broader context of the Cynocephali and frontier mission into the surviving Old English text. For one, we can now see how this text placed a different emphasis on Christopher's monstrosity, a different perspective that could read his monstrosity as a kind of shorthand for Europeans beyond the old Romano-Germanic frontier. Equating cynocephaly to the exoticism of the North opens the possibility that Christians of a Northern extraction might identify with his monstrosity as a cultural marker for the cultural differences of their region. Secondly, as White and Friedman have shown, the Cynocephali had long served as a mainstay of missionary tales; the "Dagnus" version of the Christopher legend would have fit very well in the eighth-century missionary context in which it first appeared, for Christopher is an extreme example of God's divine grace offered to the most culturally and geographically marginalized people in Rimbert's mission-field.

We can now approach the OE *Christopher* with a better idea of how his sanctity interplays with his monstrosity. First, we must follow where the genre leads us, which is towards identification with a saint whose extreme geographic and cultural isolation makes an ideal figure to those who are also on the edges of the world. As Nicholas Howe reminds us, the OE *Christopher* and its Latin counterparts are a near-perfect story of missionary martyrdom: Christopher receives a divine call to convert unbelievers, goes to a foreign place, and sets up ministry among the common people; then, in a plot twist unique to the "Dagnus" version, Samos goes through a top-down conversion through Christopher's miraculous martyrdom.[119] Except for Christopher's monstrosity, no other part of this story steps out of the narrative bounds of similar hagiographies which were written at this time.

Secondly, we must remember that a dog-headed saint is a semantic wild card. As we have seen in the earliest analogues of the Christopher story, a Cynocephalus is a powerful tool in the hands of the apostle or saint who wields him, but he must remain always under the governance of others. In return, these Cynocephali become tools of coercion and conversion on behalf of their Christian handlers. In contrast, *OE Christopher* gives no hint that such an authority exists, and none appear in the closest analogues. We have no sign of any other Christian in the land of Samos before Christopher arrives; he baptizes others, with his own hand, with no other human being to authorize his actions in advance.[120] He brings the Samians to conversion completely on his own, ministers to them, and dies for their souls. If there is potential for a category crisis in the Christopher legend, it should be

[119] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 180-81.
[120] In the "Dagnus" versions this happens after the crowds witness the miracle of his flowering staff. Note that the Latin emphasizes that Christopher does this "with his own hand": *baptaziati sunt de manu ipsius sancti.* Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin*, fol. 9v.13-14.

here—not just where monstrosity and sanctity collide, but where monsters wield spiritual authority over others and display sacramental authority without any institutional control. Compared to "Abominable" from the *Contendings of the Apostles*, the OE *Christopher* converts the Cynocephalus but lets him off the leash.

Before we proceed to an analysis of the OE *Christopher*, however, we must add in one more critical piece of context: the other sixty-two percent of the story. The fragment begins only twenty-four hours before Christopher's martyrdom. Some of the most important thematic elements extant in the remaining OE *Christopher* can only be understood if we can also see how they were developed in context to the rest of the story. I will therefore refer to broad, general readings contained in the Turin manuscript to fill in plot points from the Christopher legend where necessary, as this is the one edited manuscript currently available which most closely follows the remaining OE text.[121] Wherever the OE text survives, however, I will use readings from the Nowell Codex instead.[122]

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[121] Of the twenty-four textual variations which Pickles tracks between the OE version and its potential exemplars, the Turin manuscript agrees with the OE on seventeen, and two others are ambiguous and might go back to readings in Turin. I have found two other textual correlations, bringing the total up to nineteen. In addition, ten of those readings (nine identified by Pickles) are unique to Turin and the OE *Christopher,* and only the Turin manuscript is a near-perfect match for the incipit/explicit recorded from the Otho version. The Paris MS, in comparison, has peculiarities which immediately rule it out as a possible source-text. Out of the available texts, then, the Turin manuscript remains our best fit for filling in the details of the story, provided that we keep in mind that the Turin manuscript is not the same as the source-text for the OE *Christopher* and tread cautiously with word study.

[122] This kind of analysis has not been attempted before on the OE *Christopher*, and I think the reason why is obvious: it requires speculation. I would argue that the interpretive rewards, however, outweigh the potential risks, and that all the current evidence points to a complete, close translation of the Latin version in the Nowell Codex. We know that the Otho version started at the beginning of the tale, tracked closely with the plot of the Latin legend probably as far as the first two folios, and that the endings of the Otho and Vitellius were more or less identical. We also know that the remaining fragment of the Vitellius copy is a very close translation of the Latin version, and that, when we back-calculate its original length from what remains in comparison to the Latin, the result is essentially the same length as the Otho version. All of this suggests that the Vitellius *Christopher* was originally a complete and close translation of its Latin original. Since Pickles has

A. The Virtues of Alterity: Monsters and Martyrs as Signs

It would be helpful at this point to remember that Isidore of Seville defines monstrosity by their ability to carry meaning. He defines a *prodigia* and *monstrum* as follows:

> Portenta esse Varro ait quae contra naturam nata videntur: sed non sunt contra naturam, quia divina voluntate sunt, cum voluntas Creatoris cuiusque conditae rei natura sit... Portentum ergo fit non contra contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura. Portenta autem est ostenta, monstra atque prodigia ideo nuncupantur, quod portendere atque ostendere, monstrare ac praedicare aliqua futura videntur... monstra vero a monitu dicta, quod aliquid significando demonstrent, sive quod statim monstrent quid appareat.[123]

This passage, from the beginning of Isidore's discussion of the monstrous races, reminds us that the chief problem with monsters is not so much which category they should reside in as what manner they ought to be interpreted. Many scholars focus on the symbolic boundary between human and beast and how the monster worries at that distinction. While maintaining this distinction is critical in works of natural history like *The Wonders of the East*, it does not form the central interpretive issue in the OE *Christopher*. Following Isidore, we should instead discuss the tension between what is thought to exist contrary to

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demonstrated that "the differences between the Latin texts are… not vitally important, for they indicate no essential changes in the story itself," using the closest version of these for only the most basic plot details is hardly a rash maneuver. Ibid., 21.

[123] "Varro defines portents as beings that seem to have been born contrary to nature—but they are not contrary to nature, because they are created by divine will, since the nature of everything is the will of God the Creator... A portent is therefore not created contrary to nature, but contrary to what is known nature. Portents are also signs, omens, and prodigies, because they are seen to portend and display, indicate and predict future events... But omens derive their name from admonition, because in giving a sign they indicate something, or else because they instantly show what may appear." Isidore, *Etymologies* XI.III.3.

nature [*contra natura*] as opposed to created within nature [*creatura*], as this goes to the heart of Christopher's martyrdom and his conflict with Dagnus.

As a monster, Chrisopher's body is beyond what humans understand about how nature (and the God of nature) is supposed to behave; his body therefore makes the gap in their understanding manifest, and it points [*monstrat*] the viewer towards the higher and inscrutable power who created it. Those who look upon Christopher are supposed to see their own lack of knowledge of nature in his body and then look beyond his body for the answer. The text, in fact, repeatedly models this process for the reader. In all of the Latin "Dagnus" versions, this process begins when a devout female pagan encounters Christopher on the edge of Samos as he prays. She looks specifically upon his face, flees back to the city, and declares, "Come and see wonders [*mirabilia*] which till now no one has been able to see."[124] Then Dagnus sends soldiers, some of whom refuse to approach him while others look upon his face, pray with him, and convert. The two prostitutes who look upon his face cower in fear because it is "like a fiery flame" when he prays.[125] In the OE *Christopher*, the soldiers who flog him with iron rods call him "God's soldier" [*godes*

[124] *ecce exiit mulier de ciuitate illa ut adoraret "idolis*". *et uidens ipsum sanctum contremuit. et facies eius mutata est et currens ad ciuitatem. clamabat et dicebat Veni*[. .] *et uidite mirabilia quod adhuc nullus uidere potuit.* "Behold, a woman exited from the city to adore her idols, and seeing the saint himself she trembled: and his face was different/changed. And, rushing to the city, she cried out and said: 'Come and see this wonder, which up to this point no one has been able to see.'" In the "Canineus" recension, she specifically sees that he has the head of a dog [*mutata est, videns autem corpus humani, capud istius cani*], but that detail is suppressed in the "Chananeus." Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin,* fol. 8v.19-9v.1-4; Rosenfeld, *Der hl. Christophorus*, 521.2.

[125] *uiderunt eum faciem ejus tamquam flamma ignis.* While Christopher's flaming face as he prays obviously has mystical implications, there may be a more practical reason: Cynocephali can breathe fire. Cf. *Wonders of the East* § 7: *Hi habbað horses manan and eoferes tucxas and hunda heafa, and heora oruð byð swylce fyres lig.* "They have horse's manes and boar's tusks, and the heads of dogs, and their breath is like the flame of a fire." Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin,* fol. 11r.2-3; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 189.

cempan] in the same terms that they are the soldiers of Dagnus.[126] The reader is likewise encouraged to look upon Christopher's body, monstrous and yet also broken in martyrdom, and re-align themselves accordingly; for their efforts, the final prayer in the text asks for eternal reward "for those who read it with tears."[127]

Christopher points others to their lack of knowledge of the Creator beyond, but being a prodigy is not enough to lead others to *right* worship of the true God. A monster can "portend and display, indicate and predict future events," to use Isidore's words, but if Christopher is to give witness [μαρτυρέιν] to the power of God, he needs linguistic power in order to do so; that is, the monster must likewise become a martyr. As Susan Kim points out, "The most important truth spoken by the martyrs, for Augustine, is the truth of the resurrection, which they speak *through their bodies* in imitation of Christ. In order for the martyr to speak this truth, he *has to be able to speak*, to transfer meaning, and simultaneously to lodge meaning in his body, to be in his body."[128] This is where monstrosity and martyrdom elide: while one indicates a *lack* of knowledge on the part of the beholder through the monster's body, the other *completes* that knowledge through both the martyr's body, both of which speak to God's nature through miracles and preaching respectively. Kim is therefore right to see martyrdom and monstrosity as covering portions of the same semantic space: whereas the saint sometimes creeps into images of the

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[126] *þa cempan þa ðe hyne swungan gecwædon to ðam cyninge eadig wær ðu dagnus, gif þu næfre geboren nære þu ðe þus wælgrimlice hetst tintegian þillicne godes cempan.* "The soldiers who had beaten him said to the king, 'you would be blessed, Dagnus, if you were never born, who thus cruelly orders torture to one such as this soldier of God.'" Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 94.7-10.

[127] *þam þe hie mid tearum ræde.* This final phrase may be less of an addition as it is a loose translation of the original manuscript, as the Turin manuscript has a vaguely similar blessing attached: *Dominus Deus uirtutum scribentibus presta vita. legentibus da intellectem. amen. Explicit.* Ibid., fol. 98.16-17; Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin,* fol. 16r.10-11.

[128] Kim, "Monstrous and Bloody Signs," 142. Emphasis mine.

monster, there is something deeply and semantically prodigious about the saint.[129] This is also why Christopher's first recorded prayer is, "Glory to you, God, who convert the ignorant, and lead them in the way of Truth, you transform the tongues of beasts and give them human speech."[130] In Christopher's mind, stepping along the "way of truth" and speaking human language go hand in hand.

The critical gap that arises between monstrosity and martyrdom is now one of ambiguity. As signs, monsters can be disturbing because they point to some signified meaning, but not clearly, and this leaves room for a linguistic wandering off the path of Christopher's "way of truth." Dagnus has the option of interpreting Christopher as either as proof that he does not understand creation (because Christopher a *creatura* and Dagnus does not recognize his *creator*) or as a thing born *contra naturam*, a violation of the order of nature.[131] Given his initial reaction in the Latin versions, Dagnus leans toward the latter interpretation over the former. Giving Christopher speech makes his message unambiguous, however, because he both points to the Creator with his body and explains who Creator is with his speech. This combination of pointing *and* speaking—the traits of both monster and martyr— makes Christopher a far more powerful figure than any one of these traits alone, for knowledge of walking in the "way of the truth" comes specifically through the tongue. Christopher's gift of a "human tongue" operates more like the Pentecost gift of tongues than the healing of some defect in his humanity.

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[129] Ibid., 122.
[130] *Gloria tibi deus qui conuertis ignorantis et adducis ad uiam ueritatis et mutas linguas ferarum. et das eis linguam humanam.* Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin,* fol. 9r.13-14.
[131] John Block Friedman discusses this difference between the Classical model and Medieval theory of monstrosity at some length. See: Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 108-09.

The textual archive, in fact, demonstrates that Christopher's ability to point to truth, rather than his humanity, is what is really at stake. In the Turin MS, for instance, Christopher specifically prays for *eloquence*, not just speech, so he might teach the Samians orthodoxy: "Lord, [you] who made Adam and gave him eloquence [*eloquentiam*] that he might know the way of truth, also grant it to me, your servant, that I might teach those people who are in error [*erravit*]."[132] In Christopher's verbal battles at the end of the OE version, Christopher prays that he has kept his faith *unwemmed*, that is, by staying fast in his confession.[133] He credits God for saving him in the days before he could speak out of *gedwolan* (for which the most proper definition is *heresy*) and giving him wisdom,[134] and at the end of the story, Christopher's good deeds are recounted in thousands turning to God, not through his miracles or his martyrdom, but through the "good doctrine" [*gode astrynde*] he reveals through both.[135] We cannot know if the concept of *eloquentiam* appeared in the OE *Christopher,* but we see those ideas still very much at play in the remaining fragment.

If we take both Christopher's monstrosity and his speech as semantic gifts which bestow spiritual power, what then shall we do with critical interpretations which desire

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[132] *Domine, qui fecisti adam et dedisti eloquentiam ut agnuscerit uiam ueritatis; da et mihi seruo tuo ut doceam populum istum qui erravit.* This phrase would have likely appeared on the very bottom of the first folio of the Otho version. This leaf has survived, but this text has not. Goullet and Isetta, *Le Légendier de Turin,* fol. 9r.16-19.

[133] *þine goda ic laðette ⁊ him teonan dô for þon þe minne geleafan ic unwemne geheold þone ic on fulwihte onfeng.* "I utterly reject your gods and I take up punishment for it, because I keep my belief, which I received upon baptism, unspotted." The word *unwemmed* has no Latin equivalent in any of the Latin versions to which I have compared it. Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 95b.4-6.

[134] *ælmihtig þu ðe me of gedwolan gehwyrfdest ⁊ godne wisdom gelærdest þ[æt] ic þin þeow nu on þysse tide þe bidde gearwa hit.* "Almighty, you who converted me out of heresy and taught me good wisdom, in order that I, your servant, may now in this hour pray it clearly." Ibid., fol. 96b.8-10.

[135] *⁊ þ[æt] wæs wundor þæs folces þe se halga cristoforus þurh his lare gode astrynde· Þæt wæs eaht ⁊ feower þusenda manna ⁊ hundteonig· ⁊ fiftyne.* "And that was the glory of the people which Saint Cristopher taught through his good doctrine, which was eight and four (forty) thousand, one hundred and fifteen people." Ibid., fol. 97.10-13.

physical change in his body to make him less monstrous? Friedman, White and Lionarons, for instance, make much of physical changes that appear in other versions of the legend but not in the OE Christopher. White points out how, in the Ethiopic *Contendings of the Apostles*, baptism brings Christopher human speech and behavior; Lionarons turns to the Walter of Speyer legend (BHL 1770), where Christopher's face turns a milky white.[136] Christopher does not have a miraculous change of face after his baptism in the "Dagnus" versions, bringing him only his new name as "the bearer of Christ"; the water changes only what his body signifies.

There is one important moment in the OE *Christopher* that echoes this facial change later in the text, however, and it occurs during his immolation. As Dagnus tries to roast Christopher alive on an iron bench, the saint calls out in defiance of Dagnus and his gods and, "while the saint said this in the middle of the multitude of the fire, the bench became like melted wax. Then Dagnus the king saw Saint Christopher standing in the middle of the fire and he saw that his face was like the blossom of a rose."[137] Jill Frederick says of this passage that "[Christopher's] external appearance has come to mirror his interior nature in a wonderful, if temporary, transfiguration." Frederick is right to note that this is a spiritual transformation intended to show his perfection in martyrdom, but we should not go so far as to argue that Christopher physically loses his monstrosity. For one, a change in his physical appearance at this point would be tantamount to losing the thing that makes him

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[136] White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 22-25; Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 72; Lionarons, "From Monster to Martyr," 176.

[137] *⁊mit ty þe he þis cwæð se halga Cristoforus þa on middum þæs fyres mænigo se scamull him wæs geworden eall swa geþywed weax þa geseah dagnus se cyningc þone halgan cristoforus on middum þam fyre standende ⁊ he geseah þ[æt] his ansyn wæs swylcan rosan bloma.* Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 94b.12-17.

an effective martyr.[138] For another, Christopher is not the only one in his *Passio* to see roses appear at their martyrdom: almost the exact same thing happens to Niceaea, one of the two prostitutes who is martyred immediately before this scene.

Nicaea's martyrdom anticipates Christopher's on several accounts. Forced into service, Dagnus orders Nicaea and her sister Aquilina to seduce him into idolatry. Instead, they dupe Dagnus into staging a huge public sacrifice where they pull down all of the statues with their garters. As Nicaea is also tried in the fires of martyrdom, all four of the manuscripts described here relate the following scene:

> The woman herself stood in the middle of those flames and cried out, saying: "Lord, you who sent your angel in the furnace of the three boys and freed them from the flame of the fire, I pray and ask that you send your angel and liberate me, that this tyrant may be humiliated with his rage!" And then her hands and feet were freed, and she stood in the middle of the fire: and those flames became like a rose which descends from heaven.[139]

Based on the Latin analogues, this passage would have appeared on the recto side of the leaf preceding the first folio of the Nowell Codex (fol. 94). Practically all of the details of this story have their parallels to Christopher's immolation: the binding and burning, calling out from the flames, their bonds being loosened, standing in the flames and the rose imagery all appear. We are apparently dealing with a trope, one that uses the image of the rose of

[138] I would argue that it is tantamount to a change in his ethnicity. For my reasoning, see section B. Challenging the Center in the OE *Christopher*, below.

[139] *Ipsa autem in medio flamma stabat et clamabat dicens. Domine. qui misisti angelum tuum in camino trium puerorum. et liberasti eos de flamma ignis. et mihi mittas angelum tuum et liberet me de igne isto ut erubiscat tyrannus cum ira sua. et tunc solute sunt manus et pedes eius stabat in media igni et facta est flamma ipsa tamquam ros qui de celo* [. . .]*cendit.* Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin,* fol. 13r.2-9.

martyrdom to foreshadow each saint's death and victory over Dagnus.[140] To borrow Kim's words, this is the moment where the martyr through suffering has "to transfer meaning, and simultaneously to lodge meaning in his body, to be in his body";[141] the two momentarily merge and become visible in Christopher's face, the part of his body which produces semantic meaning. Since this symbolism appears in more than one place, and since Dagnus calls him *wyrrest wilddeora* immediately after this transformation, it seems more likely that this transfiguration is one more miracle of martyrdom which Dagnus can't see rather than a change literally and physically inscribed upon Christopher's flesh.

This brings us to the nature of Dagnus' relationship to the saint. When the king looks upon Christopher, he refuses to address his ignorance of God's true nature; rather, he sees something *contra naturam,* something which violates the laws of the gods. This is where Powell's interpretation is useful: since a poststructuralist view of monstrosity fits in extremely well with Varro's definition of a prodigy, it gives us a way to understand why Dagnus reacts to Christopher so violently. Like Varro, Dagnus also believes that omens like Christopher are *contra naturam*, and so Christopher presages disaster for his people; and, since Dagnus inscribes his own identity and agency through right worship of the gods, Christopher is likewise a threat to his own identity.[142] Christopher's "fragmented and hybrid image" does not point to the pagan gods and, for Dagnus, "strike[s] at this first

[140] On the symbolism of the rose in medieval art, see: Leslie Ross, *Medieval Art: A Topical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), s.v. "rose."
[141] Kim, "Monstrous and Bloody Signs," 142.
[142] We should also note Lionarons' description: "Thus the pagan emperor fails to resolve the twin category crises which the Christian readers of the *Life* have already negotiated: he categorizes neither the human nor the divine correctly, mistaking Christopher for a monster and pagan idols for gods." Lionarons, "From Monster to Martyr," 179.

identification that forms the foundation of all subsequent identifications."[143] Christopher chides Dagnus for being *dysig 7 unsnotor* because he refuses acknowledge that his understanding of nature, and nature's Creator, as reflected in Christopher's body, is incomplete.[144] Christopher therefore tells him that "*þu... ne ondrædst dryhten se ys alra þinga scyppend*"—that is, he does not fear the God who also created Christopher.[145]

Unlike those who look upon Christopher and align themselves with the God who gives him power, Dagnus can hardly look upon Christopher at all, for to view his body places his own identity as a pagan in danger. As Jill Frederick has pointed out, Dagnus' understanding of the world, and most of his interactions to it, is driven almost entirely by sight—and since the sight of Christopher brings him no understanding, it signals danger.[146] In the Latin version, when Dagnus sends for him after hearing of his miracles, the very sight of him knocks him off his throne.[147] Later, when Christopher survives the "burning bench" torture and stands before him in the flames, "[Dagnus] was in amazement in his great heart, and because of terror from that awe, he was so terrified that he fell upon the earth and lay there from the first hour of the day until the ninth hour."[148] In each case, actually *seeing* Christopher as he really is makes Dagnus lose control of himself.

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[143] Powell, "The Anglo-Saxon Imaginary of the East," 281.
[144] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 94.1.
[145] "you... do not fear the Lord who is the creator of all things." Jill Frederick notes of this phrase, "both terms [*dysig* and *unsnotor*] suggest that no intellectual defect separates Dagnus from the truth, but rather his own willfulness." Ibid., fol. 94.1-2; Frederick, "His ansyn wæs swylce rosan blostma," 140.
[146] "Paradoxically, [Dagnus], like the Jews, refuses to see what lies, in truth before him... Seeing events and entities as they really are, that is their spiritual natures and directions, shapes Christopher's responses as it does not influence Dagnus.'" Frederick, "His ansyn wæs swylce rosan blostma," 140.
[147] *ingresses sanctus christoferus ante conspectu dagni. uidens rex quia magnus erat, statim curruit ad consesturio ubi sediat.* Goullet and Isetta, *Le Légendier de Turin*, fol. 10r.3-6.
[148] *Mit ty þe þ[æt] geseah he was on miceles modes wafunga 7 for þæs eges fyrhto he wæs swa abreged þ[æt] he gefeol on eorþan 7 þær læg fram þære ærestan tide þæs gæges oð ða nigoþan tide*. Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 94b.18-95.3.

Dagnus' solution to this category crisis is to render Christopher understandable, either by making his body and words reflect his gods or by destroying the body which challenges his own identity.[149] Both of these goals can be accomplished, or so he thinks, through torture. Following Peter Brown, Susan Kim notes that the goal of torture is not just pain, but to gain truth: "Acknowledgement of his body's pain is also intended to coerce the criminal into alignment, in true speech of his word and deed, or his narrative and the event in the world."[150] By torturing his body, Dagnus hopes to re-fashion Christopher's monstrosity in a way to make it point to his gods rather than Christopher's; through his voice, he desires to make Christopher a witness, a *martyr* to his truth instead of God's. If both fail, Dagnus swears to "wipe [Christopher] from memory and from life."[151] In short: whereas one woman calls Christopher's body *mirabile*, Dagnus twishes to turn it into a *bysen*, "an example to all of those who believe through you in your god."[152] Frederick highlights the irony hidden in Dagnus' words, as "Christopher will of course become an example [i.e., OE *bysen*, Lt. *exemplum*] for all Christians, but not in the way that Dagnus

[149] Kim's analysis and mine agree on this point, although her reasoning focuses on a different source for Dagnus' identity crisis. Since Kim argues that Christopher seeks martyrdom as a way both to deny that his identity lies inside the body and to turn it into meaningful fragments, Dagnus must convince Christopher otherwise by making him acknowledge pain inside the body. My own analysis, however, puts heavy focus on the symbolic power of Christopher's still-living body as monster as opposed to his fragmented body as martyr— and that difference of emphasis leads us to quite different conclusions about where the power of Christopher's body lies. While I would say the body as monster is powerful, she argues that denying identity's location in the body is the source of that power. See: Kim, "Monstrous and Bloody Signs," 124-5.

[150] Ibid., 126.

[151] *wite þu þ[æt]... ic gedo þ[æt] ðu byst forloren ⁊ þin nama of þys gemynde ⁊ þyssum life adilgod.* "Know that... I will see to it that you will be destroyed and your name abolished out of this memory and this life." Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 95.13-17.

[152] *þu scealt wesan ealra bysen þara þe ðurh þe on ðinne god gelyfað·* "you will be a warning to all those who believe in your god through you." Ibid., fol. 95.15-18.

intends."[153] Although a monster's body might be interpreted in several ways, the martyr's body cannot be re-written.

B. Challenging the Center in the OE *Christopher*

We have already discussed how this strong reaction to Christopher's monstrosity holds spiritual import, but how should we attribute his monstrosity as a part of his geographic and cultural identity? The details in the English are oblique but clearly prodigious: Dagnus calls him "the worst of wild-beasts" [*wyrrest wilddeora*], and the iron bench prepared for his martyrdom is twelve feet long.[154] This is hardly unique to the English version, as none of the "Dagnus" versions dwell too deeply upon Christopher's monstrosity: he is only introduced as a Cynocephalus in the first few lines, the phrase "head of a dog" only appears once in the BHL 1766 versions, and all of the other allusions come by way of insults.[155] Moreover, the Turin version suppresses these few details even more: Christopher's heritage in the *genus Canineorum* no longer directly reflects his dog-headedness, as he becomes an Aethican "Cananite," and the only other reference to his cynocephaly in the other manuscripts simply disappears. If the source text for the OE Christopher was based on a hybrid version of the "Chananeus" recension, as Pickles has largely demonstrated, then even the original, complete version of the story would have given precious few hints to the extent of Christopher's monstrosity. Even so, the "Dagnus"

[153] Frederick, "His ansyn wæs swylce rosan blostma," 143.
[154] *Se cyninc þa het bringan isenne scamol se wæs emneah þæs mannes upwæstme þ[æt] wæs twelf fæðma lang.* "The king then ordered them to bring an iron bench which was equally high as that man's height, which was twelve feet long." Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 94.17-19.
[155] This is also probably why there is so little mention of his monstrosity in the English version except where the detail is necessary for furthering the plot: since the text establishes this fact early, there is no need to reinforce the idea at the end.

version still shows its dramatic effects. His appearance is striking enough to terrify hardened soldiers and his face qualifies as a wonder; Dagnus falls off his seat, twice, at the sight of him. This is not a matter of whether or not Christopher is a monster; the question is why we do not *dwell* on it.

The only surviving direct reference to his monstrosity is in the incipit in Otho, which calls him a person of *healfhundisces mancynnes*. If we take Turin as a very general indication of its original contents, this phrase mentioned here and repeated maybe twice more in later chapters are the only explicit references. This is hardly the garish picture we find in the *Old English Martyrology,* with his wild-man's hair and boar's tusks.[156] What would this text gain by making Christopher's monstrosity so subdued in comparison to the only other English version of the story? Again, this comes down to what his monstrosity is supposed to signify to the reader. As we already have seen in Aethicus, the phrase *Canineus/Chananeus* has a double valence: it can refer to monstrosity as a "doggish" man, or it can refer to the "Cananites," the name given to them in Aethicus Ister's *Cosmographia*. This is essentially asking whether we should emphasize the *healfhund* or the *mancynn*.

We can see that most versions of the *Christopher* legend, whether they dwell on his monstrosity or not, treat it as a tribal identification. In the Latin "Decius" versions, for instance, Christopher answers Decius' question "What is your religion, or from what nation [*genere*] are you?" by proclaiming, "I am a Christian, but my face reveals my *genus*."[157] The OE *Martyrology* reinforces that this is both a tribal and geographic identity: he is "of the

[156] See footnote 125.
[157] *Decius rex dixit: Cuius religionis, vel ex quo genere es, aut quis vocaris? Beatissimus dixit: Si velis scire cuius religionis sim, christianus sum. Genus autem meum meus vultus indicat.* Fábrega-Grau, *Passionario Hispánico*, 302.11.

þeode where men have heads of dogs, and of the *eorðan* in which men eat each other."[158] In all of these versions, monstrosity is not the essence of his identity, but a by-product of his ethnic identity—and that is how we should understand it in the OE *Christopher* as well. Lacking any dramatic detail about his seeming deformities, the audience can shift its attention to his status as a geographic and ethnic outsider, a "barbarian" from a prodigious *mancynn* unknown to those who live in the city of Samos. He is a *vir Chananeus*, a man from the land (and sometimes island) of Chananea, and both his power as a convert and his agency within the city of Samos arise from his placement on the margins. This barbarian moves from the very edges of the Greek world into the heart of Samos, which Isidore called the birthplace of Juno, Pythagoras, and the Sybil, and he is on a mission to convert an area of Asia where the Apostle Paul once briefly stood.[159] In terms of geographic motion, Christopher perfectly reverses the trajectory of "The Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew": the outer reaches of the world come back to the Greco-Roman cradle to free them of idol worship.

What the Christopher legend does with this marginal agent of the barbarian world is staggering: not only does he become baptized into the ideological center of Christianity through his salvation and sainthood with his monstrosity intact, but his monstrosity moves him into the birthplace of philosophy. Before Christopher's appearance, Samos is a cultured, ordered society with Dagnus at the center and worship of Dagnus' gods as the activity which keeps them oriented to him. On the flip side of things, this powerful, earthly center does not recognize the existence of the Christian center of power, and so from a spiritual

[158] *of þære þeode þær men habbað hunda heofod, ond of þære eorðan on ðære æton men hi selfe.* Rauer, *The Old English Martyrology,* 90-91.
[159] Isidore, *Etymologies* XIV.vi.31. See also Acts 20:15.

perspective exists at the margins of a holy geography, which puts right worship at its center. Christopher will tread this "path of Truth" from the edges of Samos into the center of the nation, but in doing so he moves from the place of his baptism to the spiritual wasteland of Samos. Walking the "path of Truth" from the wilderness to the city takes him both to the center of one ideological power and into the margins of another at the same time, and his power increases with every step.

From a secular perspective, Christopher enters Samos as a barbaric, marginalized savage into the civilized center of Samos, and it his newfound faith in Christ that empowers him to do so. Christopher's conversion closes the distance between himself and the secular power of Dagnus, and this is all the more interesting monsters almost never *move* in medieval monstrous discourse. Since monsters are creatures of their place, their limits are inscribed within the places which their authors give them, for geography and identity are linked. There are only two texts in the Anglo-Saxon corpus which shows humanoid monsters changing geographic location: Saint Christopher is naturally the first, and the others are the Grendelkin. Both kinds of monsters have Christian roots to their origin stories, and both completely upset the normal functioning order of a pre-Christian society. Not coincidentally, both are in the Nowell Codex.

The incipit of the Otho Christopher records the very start of this process: Christopher *com on þe ceastre* of Samos at first as complete foreigner, both to Syria and to God, as he *ne cuðe nan þinge to þam lifiendan gode* [He knew nothing of the living God.][160] After his destiny as a martyr is revealed, in the Latin versions he is baptized by cloud

[160] Ker, *Catalogue*, 226.

somewhere beyond the province of Syria, and this begins a process of steady movement alternating with prayer:

> And that saint, having entered into Syria, prayed, saying, "Glory to You who convert the ignorant, and lead them in the way of truth and transform the tongues of beasts and give to them human language." And having entered into the city itself, he again prayed saying, "Lord, you who made Adam, and gave to him communication that hey may know the path of Truth; give it to me, your servant, that I might teach those people who are in error."[161]

We should note that each prayer takes him closer to the heart of Samos, and each one contains a request for increasing levels of semantic power: human language first, to eloquence, to miracles of transformation. In the Latin version, Dagnus falls out of his seat when he sees Christopher's face.[162] Although the Turin manuscript represents only one possibile reading among many, it is difficult to ignore how the executive overtones in this passage (*consistorio* and *tribunail*) gives this scene the air of an inquisition. The implication is that Christopher's body is enough to discredit Dagnus' authority to judge between truth and falsehood. Christopher penetrates from the outer reaches into the heart of Samos in

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[161] *et ingressus intra Syriam, orabat dicens Gloria tibi Deus qui conuertis ignorantes. et adducis ad viam veritatis et mutas linguas ferarum. et das eis linguam humanam. et ingressus infra ciuitatem orabat dicens, Domine, qui fecisti adam et dedisti eloquentiam ut agnusceret uiam veritatis da et mihi seruo tuo ut doceam populum istum qui errauit.* Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin*, fol. 9r.12-19.

[162] Et *ingressus sanctus christoferus ante conspectu dagni. uidens rex quia magnus erat statim corruit ad consesturio ubi sediat, et postmodum surrexit sedens pro tribunali interrogabat eum.* "And Saint Christopher entered before Dagnus' presence. The king, seeing that he was great, immediately tumbled to the place of assembly where he was sitting, and after a time he rose up. Sitting upon the judgment seat, he interrogated him." The word *consistorio* is unique to the Turin MS, so there is no way of knowing if it was in the Nowell translation; the other two manuscripts only say that the fell from his seat [*corruit... qui sedebat*] The word *tribunali* occurs in all available MSS, however, keeping the sense that Christopher is being put on trial. Ibid., 522.3-23.3.

just two days, and he displaces Dagnus' authority as he reorganizes the city around worship of Christ instead.

If we allow ourselves the room to imagine that some form of these events occurred in the OE *Christopher*, we can see this progression continue through the surviving English text. Dagnus' complaint at the center of the Nowell version, *hu lange dyrstlæcest þu þ[æ]t þu þis folc fram me tyhtest* [How long will you dare to take these people from me?] shows that this war of attrition has claimed more than just the soldiers executed shortly before this moment. From this point forward, Dagnus attempts to perform similar feats of disempowerment as Christopher has wreaked upon him. He first orders the saint beaten with iron rods and given a burning iron helmet (unfortunately corrupted in the English) in retribution for usurping Dagnus' authority.[163] Since Christopher knocked Dagnus off of his seat of authority, the king orders him tied to an iron bench and roasted alive.[164] Ironically, by giving Christopher these items in torture, he is symbolically turning over his own throne and crown to the intruder through the process of martyrdom.

Each of these attempts to "wipe Christopher from memory" simply increases Dagnus' marginalization within his own city. He likely beats Christopher with iron rods in the middle of his council chambers, if we use the Latin corresponding with this portion of the English as a guide.[165] He first takes Christopher to the center of the city for a very public

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[163] *he hyne het swingan mid isernum gyrdum ⁊ he het settan on his heafde þry weras·* "He ordered him beat with iron rods and he ordered set on his head... (?) three men." Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 94.6-7. Obviously, the passage is corrupted and the *casside ignea* has dropped out of the English. For a better reading, see: McGowan, "Notes on the OE Version of the *Vita sancti Christophori*," 451-52.

[164] Compare with Orchard, who says that the doubling of throne and crown is intended to contrast against Dagnus' kingship. These readings are not necessarily incompatible. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 17.

[165] The Turin manuscript states that Dagnus ordered Christopher *ante conspectum suum venire,* which is the same language used when Christopher makes his first appearance before Dagnus in the *consistorium*. It

immolation.[166] Seeing Christopher rise unharmed from the pyre, he falls again to the ground in a swoon, losing all control of himself. He then orders a post erected right in front of the hall, the very seat of Dagnus' authority, and sentences him to execution by firing squad.[167]

To borrow Kathryn Powell's terminology, Dagnus' estrangement culminates with physical dismemberment and losing his kingly *conspectus*.[168] Unable to see the truth of Christopher's martyrdom, Dagnus approaches Christopher to gloat over his demise but cannot see that his body is still unpierced, the arrows hovering in midair in front of the saint. Dagnus boasts, "Where is your god? Why does he not come and save you out of my hands and from these horrible arrows?" The king's own power to grant life and death turns against him, and the arrows and strike him in the eyes.[169] Jill Frederick and Joyce Tally Lionarons both point out that, in this paradigm, to be pagan is to be on God's periphery, and by extension, monstrous; by forcing Dagnus out of his center of power in Samos, Christopher simply makes his previously existing condition manifest.[170] I am unsatisfied with this reading for two reasons. First, Dagnus' loss of power in Samos is undeniably real; just because he is marginal to God's presence does *not* mean he never exercised legitimate authority as the ruler of his people. I believe that, like all the texts in this manuscript,

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seems that Christopher is back to face Dagnus' judgment as he passes his sentence where the text begins on fol. 94. Goullet and Isetta, *Le Légendier de Turin,* fol. 13v.1.

[166] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 94.19-20.

[167] *he hit asettan beforan þære healle 7 he hyne het þær on gefæstnian*. "He ordered the [beam] set in front of the hall and he ordered him bound to it." This is the same word used (uncompounded) of Heorot and other mead-halls ten different times in *Beowulf*, and Porus' palace in *Alexander*, so the cultural importance of Dagnus' *heall* would likely have similar resonances. Ibid., fol. 95b.9-10.

[168] For Powell's discussion of blinding and kingship, see: Powell, "The Anglo-Saxon Imaginary of the East," 290.

[169] *hwær is þin god for whon he ne com he 7 þe freosolde of minum handum 7 of þissum egeslican strælum.* Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 94.19-20.

[170] Lionarons, "From Monster to Martyr," 171, 77; Frederick, "His ansyn wæs swylce rosan blostma," 139.

Christopher allows for a secular exercise of authority over cultural centers, and this will be important to my reading of *Alexander*, and, ultimately, *Beowulf*. Secondly, if we follow Isidore's definition of a prodigy, Dagnus is clearly not a "monster" in the Isidorean sense yet. Dagnus may want to point his people through his kingly body to right worship of his gods, but the *only* nature his body can point towards is to Christopher's God, and that does not happen until this moment when he is blinded. Only at this point, and no other, can Dagnus truly be considered a *monster* in the same sense as Christopher—and *his* body must also be fragmented in order to do so.

Christopher's body not only thrusts Dagnus to the periphery of Samos, but after Christopher is killed, that same body becomes the gateway by which Dagnus passes back into the center of Samos. Susan Kim notes that, when Dagnus approaches the ground of Christopher's body and addresses it, he is essentially re-enacting the Latin *quaestio* he attempted with Christopher while he was alive; this is a complete reversal of the moment where Dagnus falls off his seat in the council chambers.[171] They are no longer in the *consistorio*, but outside of it in the dirt, and the ground of Christopher's martyrdom symbolically acts as the platform upon which he is spiritually elevated. As Christopher had foretold, Dagnus takes a dab of Christopher's blood, makes a mud out of it from the ground of his martyrdom, and places the mixture on his eyes; when he is miraculously healed, he

[171] "Dagnus challenges Christopher to show him the 'truthfulness' (*soðfastnesse*) of his God, how well God's words can be aligned with events in the world. Dagnus is, in effect, replaying the sort of *quaestio* he staged in the martyrdom, attempting to enforce an alignment of word and event. The fact that this *quaestio* is gruesomely after the fact doesn't seem to make a difference to Dagnus; he addresses 'that place where the holy body was' directly, as 'Christopher.' Kim, "Monstrous and Bloody Signs," 139.

proclaims that "Wondrous and mighty is the god of the Christian men, whose glorious works no *human craft can overcome*."[172]

Jill Frederick, Nicholas Howe, and Susan Kim have commented upon this moment in detail; Frederick calls this moment "almost an objective correlative of the spiritual process; the blood of faith mingled with the earth of worldly vision opens eyes to heavenly truths."[173] Howe, however, points out that this moment holds significant import for the conversion of an entire people, first because it shows "the healing of an individual's blindness as a means to enable the spiritual illumination of the larger group to which he or she belongs."[174] He specifically points to similar miracles in in Bede's account of St. Germanus as an example of how these miraculous healings act "as a measure for the conversion of place."[175] Though this may seem obvious, Howe reiterates that we must also recognize that a martyr or saint's presence can quite literally convert "specific and local" space into something spiritually powerful.[176] Christopher does not just displace Dagnus from his position of authority in Samos: through the martyrdom of his followers, the soldiers and the two women, he converts the ground beneath his feet and makes it holy territory. The land itself comes into alignment with Christopher's spiritual center, and when he subjects himself to the martyr's blood and the soil, Dagnus also becomes heavenly territory.

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[172] *wuldorfæst ys ⁊ micel cristena manna god þæs wuldorgeworces nane mennisce searwa ofercuman ne magon.* In the context here, *searu* seems to convey the idea of agency. Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 97b.7-10.

[173] Frederick, "His ansyn wæs swylce rosan blostma," 145.

[174] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 179.

[175] Ibid., 180.

[176] Howe also compares the Christopher story directly to the miraculous healing power of the soil which had been anointed with water used to bathe Cuthbert's body. The point is that the healing power of place "is specific and local." Ibid., 181.

Susan Kim wisely points out that Dagnus now stands in Christopher's stead as the converter of his people. *How* that happens, though, is interesting: Dagnus has taken upon himself both a piece of the monster's body and the ground of his martyrdom.[177] If we expand on her argument in a different direction, however, Dagnus incorporates both of the qualities of Christopher that he had once tried to destroy into his own body. Now pointing others to God and giving testimony himself, Dagnus himself becomes just a little prodigious himself, giving witness to something beyond what his secular view of nature could explain.

This leaves us with just one final mystery: God's answer to Christopher's final prayer. Just after Dagnus is maimed and shortly before Christopher dies, the saint asks God to make the land powerful through his body and his name:

> I, your servant eagerly now pray to you in this hour for myself, that there will be in each place where any part of my body is neither poverty nor fear of fire; and if there are ill people there and they come near to your holy temple and they pray to you there with all their hearts and they call my name on behalf of your name, that you, Lord, heal each and every infirmity which they had before."[178]

Strangely, God's response to Christopher's plea seems to contradict a very key part of his request, that the parts of his body might become relics. God declares that men will be healed of their sins everywhere they pray, *þeah þin lichama ne sy*.[179] Susan Kim claims that

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[177] Kim, "Monstrous and Bloody Signs," 140.

[178] [*I*]*c þîn þeow nu on þysse tide þe bidde gearwa hit me þ[æt]te on swa hwylcre stowe swa mines lichaman ænig dæl sy ne sy þær ne wædl ne fyres broga · 7 gif þær neah syn untrumne men 7 higcumon to þinum þam halgan temple 7 hig þær gebiddon to þe of ealre heortan 7 for þinum naman hi ciggen minne naman gehæl þu þone drihten fran swa hwylcere untrumnesse swâ hie forhæfde·* Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 96b.8-18.

[179] *þeah þin lichama ne sy on þære stowe swa hwyllce geleaffulle men swa þines naman on heora gebedum beoð gehælede fram hyra synnum.* "Although/even if your body is not in that place, as many faithful men... with

this means that God has other plans, for his answer "denies the plea for the power of his relics... In God's response Christopher's *name* is endowed with divine power; devout men are healed because they call his name in prayer. Christopher's body drops out of the equation. Christopher's body—even his dead body—'is not in that place.'"[180] It would be strange indeed if the plot of an otherwise formulaic hagiography denied the power of a saint's body as a conduit for holy power. And yet, exactly the opposite seems to be the case. Christopher's blood heals Dagnus' eyes, and when he "call[s] [Christopher's] name on behalf of [God's] name," the Lord "heals each and every infirmity" which he once had. Christopher prays for this kind of intervention through his body, and God answers.[181] *Dagnus* is the literal answer to his prayer.

I think this issue can be clarified through two different observations. First, the conditional adverb *þeah* can mean "even if" in conditions where the outcome is known;[182] in this case, since we know that Christopher's body has already been prophesized as a remedy to Dagnus' blindness, we can take the condition as a known fact. *Even in* situations where Christopher's body is not present, God says that the faithful will be healed and their sins forgiven. This makes God's answer an expansion upon, rather than a denial of, the power of Christopher's body. Nicholas Howe solves the second half of the problem: when he compares Dagnus' healing through blood and earth to similar miracles in Bede, he demonstrates that even the localized, immediate ground of Christopher's martyrdom has

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prayers in your name will be healed from their sins." The text is corrupt here. McGowan suggests supplying *gebiddon*. Ibid., 97r.1-3; McGowan, "Notes on the OE Version of the *Vita sancti Christophori*," 453-54.

[180] Kim, "Monstrous and Bloody Signs," 137.

[181] God's voice tells Chistopher that *þin gebed is gehyred*. Since *gehyran* mean both "to hear" and "to obey," this gives the sense that Christopher's prayer is actually fulfilled. Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 95b.20-96b.1.

[182] Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.v. "*þeah*."

been redeemed for God through his body. Dagnus' miraculous healing, in Howe's explanation, shows that "the healing power of place is specific and local"; and yet, the power of place has a universal focus:

> That a holy place acquires an aura of reverence because of its history and its attendant healing powers is not exclusive to any one site on the map of Christendom... When these sites become enfolded into narrative, as occurs in these various works of hagiography, they become the objects of pilgrimages, either literal or imaginative. Even mental pilgrimages, such as an Anglo-Saxon might take after hearing *the Passion of Saint Christopher*, would entail a journey or return to a literal place and its soil, the same soil that can be mixed with the martyred blood of a Christopher to cure blindness, or with the bath water of a Cuthbert to cure possession.[183]

Christopher's body need not lie in any one place, Howe argues, because every reader who encounters Christopher's story "with tears" travels back to the very ground on which Dagnus stands. The specificity of the place, the moment, and Christopher's blood gives his work universal power. *Even if* his body is not there, Howe suggests that the faithful can still access the place of his martyrdom spiritually by reading and responding to his story.

Interestingly enough, Howe's interpretation of the OE *Christopher* makes Christopher's final act of salvation in Samos a common, an almost unremarkable martyrdom story. Since this story could have taken place in Lindisfarne among Cuthbert's relics just as easily as it could in Samos, the story of Christopher's sanctification could just

[183] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 182.

as easily be an English one—and this is what makes this story remarkable. In short, if we want to understand why the OE *Christopher* made his way into the same manuscript as *Beowulf*, both its Continental heritage and the details of its plot gives us a possible answer: an outlandish barbarian from an island nation in the far North receives divine grace, loses his barbaric, barking tongue, gains heavenly eloquence, and becomes a missionary to the cradle of Greco-Roman culture. Once there, he and his followers destroy the pagan idols whose worship has enslaved others, and he converts the king, whereupon the entire nation becomes Christian territory. His seeming disadvantage, his marginal origin and extreme cultural difference, becomes his greatest asset in bringing others into right worship of the Lord, and in doing so, he gains a glorious martyrdom and sainthood which is recognized by all nations. If we do not hear echoes of Boniface and Willibrord, and even Rimbert's eventual converts in the Frankish borderlands who ventured east to convert the Prussians, then we may have missed this story's most subversive message: that those from the edges of the earth, when touched by God, can turn earthly authorities on their head.

The illustrator of the Vitellius *Wonders of the East*, perhaps, made a vaguely similar connection when working on the Nowell Codex, for the dog-headed *Conopenas* on folio 100r, was not drawn naked, eating human flesh, or grazing on wild fruit as in the Tiberius manuscript.[184] Ratherin addition to its dog's head, boar's tusks and horse's mane, this Cynocephalus has stately robes in blue and red and holds not severed limbs or forage but what looks like a rod and scepter—less a monster than a powerful creature, suggesting a level of personal agency and cultural development normally missing from all other

[184] London, BL Cotton Tiberius B.v, fol. 80r. For a facsimile image, see: McGurk, *An Eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany,* fol. 80r.

representations of *cynocephali* in Anglo-Saxon England.[185] Like Christopher, this monster suggests that great power dwells in the margins.

[185] Cf. Asa Simon and Susan Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts: The Wonders of the East in the Beowulf Manuscript* (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2013), 17-18.

Chapter Two: Of Cannibals and Kings: Rewriting Geographical Desire in the *Wonders of the East*

> Ubi tunc totius orbis homines, ab India usque ad Britanniam, a rigida Septentrionis plaga, usque ad fervores Atlantici Oceani, tam innumerabiles populi, et tantarum gentium multitudines...? Piscium ritu ac locustarum, et velut muscae et culices conterebantur: absque notitia etenim Creatoris sui, omnis homo pecus est.
>
> Where, then, were the people of all the continents, from India to Britain, from the harsh regions of the North to the raging heat of the Atlantic Ocean, such innumerable people and such great throngs of tribes...? They were culled like fish and locusts, and flies and gnats— indeed, but for knowledge of his Creator, every person is a beast.
>
> Saint Jerome, Epistle to Heliodorus (no. LX)[1]

1. Fear and Loathing in the *Liber monstrorum*[2]

At some point in the hundred years spanning the lives of Adamnán, Aldhelm, Boniface, and Bede, an anonymous patron gave an English cleric (called here "Adelinus"[3] for convenience) an unusual task: to bring monstrosity under the lens of academic scrutiny.[4] His creation is a strange, sprawling compilation known to modern scholars as the

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[1] Ambrose of Milan, *Epistolae Hieronymi,* in *PL* vol. 22, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1845), col. 591.

[2] This chapter will use the working edition and translation of the text provided in: Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 254-317. Other editions are as follows: Corrado Bologna, ed. *Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus: Libro delle mirabili difformità* (Milan: Bompiani, 1977); Franco Porsia, ed. *Liber monstrorum: Introduzione, edizione, versione e commento* (Bari: Dedalo Libri, 1976); Moriz Haupt, ed. *Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus* (Berlin: Formis Academicis, 1863). See also: Ann Knock, "The *Liber monstrorum*: An Unpublished Manuscript and Some Reconsiderations," *Scriptorium* 32 (1978): 19-28.

[3] The name comes from Thomas of Cantimpré, who attributed the *Liber monstrorum* to an "Adelinus." Many critics believe that this refers to Aldhelm of Malmesbury, but the evidence is inconclusive. For one good discussion of this association, see: Michael Lapidge, "*Beowulf,* Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex," *Studi Medievali* 32, no. 1 (1982): 169-72.

[4] Most scholars, following Lapidge, put the date of compositionbetween 650 x 750; with the exception of Gibb and Knock, consensus looks to an Insular provenance with preference for England over Ireland. For more recent texts exploring the date, see: ibid., 164-65; Porsia, *Liber monstrorum*, 87-106; L. G. Whitbread, "The *Liber monstrorum* and *Beowulf*," *Mediaeval Studies* 36 (1974): 452-3. For speculations on provenance, see: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 86-87; Lapidge, "*Beowulf,* Aldhelm, the *Liber monstrorum* and Wessex," 166-68; Paul Allen Gibb, "Wonders of the East: A Critical Edition and Commentary" (Diss., Duke University, 1989), 27; Knock, "The *Liber monstrorum*," 28; Porsia, *Liber monstrorum*, 49-57.

Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus, the more literal and Latinate manifestation of Kenneth Sisam's "book of various monsters." Adelinus describes his commission as follows:

> You have asked about the secret arrangement… of the lands of the earth, and if as many kinds of monsters are to be credited as are demonstrated in the hidden parts [or 'births'] of the world, raised throughout the deserts and the islands of the Ocean and in the recesses of the farthest mountains, and you were particularly asking me to answer about these three kinds of the world's area which strike the greatest terror or fear in humankind, so that I should record the monstrous parts [or 'births'] of men, and the horrible and innumerable kinds of wild beasts, and the most dreadful kinds of dragons, serpents, and vipers.[5]

The *Liber monstrorum* is, at its core, an encyclopedic survey, but Adelinus frames his investigation in geographic terms. Monsters are creatures of place, he tells us, and to catalogue the world's monsters also means the kinds of places where they live. He must therefore trek into the intellectual and geographical periphery to engage with his material.

His phrase *de occultu orbis terrarum situ* indicates a scholarly engagement organized by spatial principles.[6] *Situs* is Boethius' term for "being-in-place" in his translation of Aristotle's *Categories*, and he uses *de situ* to classify an object by its position.[7]

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[5] *Liber monstrorum,* Prologus: *De occultu orbis terrarum situ interrogasti et si tanta monstrorum essent genera credenda quanta in abditis mundi partibus per deserta et Oceani insulas et in ultimorum montium latebris nutrita monstrantur, et praecipue de his tribus orbis terrae generibus respondere petebas quae maximum formidinis terrorem humano incutiunt, ut de monstruosis hominum partibus describerem et de ferarum horribilibus innumerosisque bestiarum formis et draconum dirissimis serpentiumque ac uiperarum generibus.* The edition of the *Liber monstrorum* used here is found in: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 254-317. Translations are also Orchard's unless specified.

[6] Andy Orchard translates *occultu...situ* as a "secret arrangement" with a possible pun on "filthiness," but this reading of *situ* is unlikely, considering that definition is usually limited to the body or mind. Cf. ibid., 89.

[7] *Eorum quae secundum nullam complexionem dicuntur singulum aut substantiam significat aut quantitatem aut qualitatem aut ad aliquid aut ubi aut quando aut situm aut habitum aut facere aut pati.* Boethius,

Pliny and Pomponius Mela use *situs* to describe a geographic map woven from language. [8] With this phrase, Adelinus intends more than an exploration of the "hidden regions of the world": he seeks a "hidden situation or design" of the world which monsters paradoxically obscure and reveal. For all this geographic posturing, however, Adelinus is nevertheless uncomfortable conceding even the mountains and deserts to these creatures. As he tells his patron,

> [W]e read that in most of the corners of the world [monsters] have been utterly eradicated and overthrown by [humans], and now, cast out from the shores, they are thrown to the waves, and that by the churning from the steep summit of the pole they turn from the edge of the entire circle and from every place on earth towards this vast abyss of the flood.[9]

In his view, monsters no longer have a *situs* on the earth, for humans have removed them from any relationship to the fixed earth. Tellingly, Adelinus feels the pinch of the same exile, for "the gust of [his patron's] request" pitches him into the brine and "quivering among the monsters of the deep," which leaves him swimming in strange waters indeed.[10]

In his own "arrangement" of the world, Adelinus then quarantines his monsters within three broad categories: human-like monsters, beasts, and serpents. Then, he orders them on a sliding scale by the likelihood of their existence. His sources largely come from

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"Categoria vel praedicamenta translatio Boethii," in *Aristoteles latinus* Vol. I.1-5, ed. Laurentius Minio-Paluello (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961), 6.

[8] Pliny: *Hactenus de situ et miraculis terrae aquarumque et siderum ac ratione universitatis atque mensura*. *Pliny: Natural History* vol. 2, ed. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), III.i.1-3. Pomponius Mela: *Orbis situm dicere aggredior.* Pomponius Mela, *Cosmographia Siue De Situ Orbis*, ed. Hermolaus Barbarus (Northridge: California State University, 1973), I.1.

[9] *Liber monstrorum,* Prologus: *quae ab ipsis per plurimos terrae angulos eradicata funditus et subuersa legimus et nunc reuulsa litoribus prona torquentur ad undas, quaeque turbine poli uertice sub arduo a totius gyri ambitu et omni loco terrarum ad hanc uastam gurgitis se uoraginem uergunt.* Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 256-7.

[10] *nisi me uentus tuae postulationis puppi praecelsa pauidum inter marina praecipitasset monstra*. Ibid., 254-55.

Christian scholars and a smattering of pagan poets, but he includes three pieces of monster-lore related to the Nowell Codex: the story of the "giant" King Hygelac, the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle,* and, most relevant to this discussion, a very close analogue to the *Wonders of the East.*[11] Adelinus chops up his original sources and scatters this material over his three books, and in consequence, both the *Wonders* analogue and the *Letter of Alexander* lose their geographic specificity. Only fifty-five percent of the first book of the *Liber monstorum* mentions geographic location, and Adelinus places the majority of the creatures from the *Wonders* tradition at the nether end of his reliability scale.[12] He strips these creatures of their native *situs* and tips them into the deep, all for the sake of constraining their threat within a proper scholarly discourse.

What makes Adelinus so ambivalent about monsters and space? On the one hand, Andy Orchard and Brian McFadden have noted a tension between Christian and pagan learning in the *Liber monstrorum,* so perhaps it stems from a need to make them conform to a more orthodox religious cosmology.[13] Leslie Whitbread notes that the Antipodes in I.53 were theologically controversial at this time, and Adelinus stashes them away at the end of the first book, right next to the more outlandish figures of the Greek pantheon.[14] On the other hand, perhaps banishing monsters in the margins brings them a little too close to

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[11] To be more specific, his source was some version of *The Letter of Premonis to Trajan* (called "Pit"), a close ancestor of *The Wonders of the East*. It would have been vaguely similar to the lost manuscript that J. B. Pitra transcribed in 1884, as it appears to lack the Alexandrine material and the crocodile accretion. Knock leans towards the manuscript transcribed by Eberhard Graff (called "EP") as the closest surviving analogue, though neither are a perfect match. See: Ann Elizabeth Knock, "Wonders of the East: A Synoptic Edition of the *Letter of Pharasmanes* and the Old English and Old Picard Translations" (Diss., University of London, 1981), 326-32.
[12] Out of the fifty-six entries in Book I, only thirty-one mention a location, and many of these are extremely vague. In addition, Brian McFadden notes that the author only treats fifteen factually and denies thirty-one of them outright. Brian McFadden, "Authority and Discourse in the *Liber monstrorum*," *Neophilologus* 89 (2005): 481-82.
[13] Ibid., 476-77; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 90-91.
[14] Whitbread, "The *Liber monstrorum* and *Beowulf*," 449-50.

home. If the creatures of the *Wonders of the East* exist "in the islands of the Ocean" as he says in his Prologue, that includes both Britain and Ireland.[15] Perhaps the only safe place for an Englishman to keep a monster is no place at all.

Adelinus' angst demonstrates a deep, urgent need for geographical mastery over his material, an impulse which Sylvia Tomasch calls "geographical desire." As she explains, "[Geographical] knowledge always enjoys an element of control, of conquest, even of ravishment... not only to partake of the joys of abstraction and to smooth surface irregularities, but to penetrate interior enigmas, to master and possess."[16] To that end, both text and land must be *situated*-- that is, given a *situs,* a relational space within a body of discourse.[17] This is exactly how Adelinus tackles his sources: these monster-filled regions are "re-presented as a territory" under the dominion of mankind, and his literary sources "are surveyed, explored, located, and bounded" in ways to force monsters to the margins of serious intellectual inquiry—and the farthest, watery edge of the planet.[18] When he denies monsters their own space on the intellectual map of the world, he is committing an act of geographic and intellectual hegemony.

Ironically enough, Adelinus cannot satisfy his geographical desire because that desire itself is at odds with the means of fulfillment. His overarching taxonomic scheme organizes his marvelous beasts and men by the likelihood that they exist: the most likely to

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[15] On the concept of Britain's extreme remoteness and appropriateness for monsters, see: Nicholas Howe, "An Angle on This Earth: Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82, no. 1 (2000): 1-25; Asa Simon Mittman, *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 16-20.
[16] Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles, eds., *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1998), 2.
[17] Ibid., 5.
[18] Ibid.

be real come first in each category, followed by those more fiction than fact. But if we look at those on the near end of his reliability scale, we find *place*. His first prodigies in Book I are a hermaphrodite from his own hometown; King Hygelac, buried on an island of the Rhine; Colossus, who was wounded at the river Tiber and turned its waters red with blood; and the fauns of Lucan, who also appear in the Church Fathers.[19] We start at home and move in ever-widening circles away from that point: to the Continent, to Rome, and then outward to Greco-Roman mythology, and eventually, to Asia and India. If the marvels closest to home are the most reliable, then the only true monsters are the ones closest to home, not the periphery. His monsters have, more or less, escaped over the frontier.

Adelinus was hardly alone in repurposing a *Wonders of the East* text, nor the only English one; he stands first in a tradition of author-scribes stretching from his eighth-century "book of monsters" all the way to Gervase of Tilbury in the thirteenth.[20] The Vitellius version of the *Wonders of the East* sits at the middle of this literary tradition, and, like the *Liber monstrorum* and the other texts of the genre, its authors have rewritten the text countless times to meet their own cultural needs. With this in mind, this chapter will demonstrate how the Vitellius copy of *The Wonders of the East* subverts any attempt to create a space of "situated difference" by means of its accreted and corrupted layers of intellectual control. This work carries the vestiges of taxonomic, geographic, and imperialistic systems of containment encoded in its textual DNA, but the same scribes who intervened in the text to meet those needs unwittingly dismantled them without erasing

[19] *Liber monstrorum,* I.1-1.3.; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies,* 258-59.
[20] On Gervase of Tilbury and the text of the *Otia imperalia*, see: Knock, "Wonders of the East," 261-83; Edmond Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre: le lettre sur les merveilles de l'Inde," *Romania* 43 (1914): 353-70.

their traces. As later English scribes grappled with this unruly text, they made specific interpretive choices which, intentionally or not, left the text filled with textual cues which "might well have led an Anglo-Saxon reader or viewer to ponder the ways in which the distant regions of this text are populated by beings at once *like and unlike* those to be found on the island."[21] Finally, when we put *Wonders of the East* back in its manuscript context with *The Passion of Saint Christopher* and *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle,* we will see that the Nowell Codex demonstrates two different modes of encountering the monstrous: one can either read it or resist it, and, as we have already seen in *The Passion of Saint Christopher*, these choices have vital spiritual implications.

2. Textual and Critical Concerns

At its heart, *The Wonders of the East*[22] is an English-made catalogue of Indian and African marvels derived from a much older Continental tradition.[23] The text as we think of it contains thirty-seven discrete sections, each of which describe some marvelous creature, person, or object with unusual attributes and then positions it on a sprawling and inconsistent textual map. Many of the living creatures, such as the *cynocephali* (§9), *blemmye/epifagi* (§15), and *panotii* (§21) are the standard fare of the so-called Plinian tradition stretching back to Megasthenes and Skylax.[24] Others include the split-faced creatures (§11), the lion-headed man (§12), and the donestre (§20), which evolved from

[21] Howe, "An Angle on This Earth," 12. Emphasis is mine.
[22] For the purposes of this chapter, I have opted to use Rypins' edition because Orchard's base text is London, BL Cotton Tiberius B.v. Section numbers will follow Orchard, however, as this numbering system is the same for nearly all editors and used in most criticism.
[23] For a brief and useful summary, see: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 18-20.
[24] Both John Block Friedman and Joseph Wittkower have studied the origin and development of the so-called "Plinian races" in detail. See: John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Rudolf Wittkower, "Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters," in *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 159-97.

more recognizable creatures after scribes rewrote the contents. Copious illustrations are a defining characteristic of these English-produced texts, and this feature sets them apart from their Continental analogues.

Besides the Vitellius version, which spans fols. 98v-106v in the Nowell Codex, *Wonders* survives in two other English manuscripts. London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B.v, is a bilingual version regarded as the "standard" *Wonders* text; it is preserved in a lavish miscellany dated to the second quarter of the eleventh century.[25] In addition to *computus* charts, an illustrated calendar, an itinerary, regnal lists, and geographic and cosmological material, it contains a Macrobial zone map and the only surviving *mappamundi* from Anglo-Saxon England. The third is a Latin-only version in Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 614, a meticulous, pocket-sized volume from the late twelfth century.[26] Bodley contains the same calendars and cosmological tracts as Tiberius, and a comparison of the text and illustrations readily demonstrates that the Bodley manuscript descended from Tiberius at some point along its transmission.[27]

In comparison to these two manuscripts, the Vitellius version is both older and resists easy generalizations. Knock and others believe that the Old English translation was

[25] Item 373 in Gneuss, 193 in Ker, dated xi[1]- xi[2/4]. Origin is not certain, but Friedman suggests Canterbury, and its provenance is Battle Abbey by saec. xii. John Block Friedman, "The Marvels-of-the-East Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Art," in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), 320. The entire manuscript has also been reproduced in facsimile: Patrick McGurk, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B.V, Part I*, ed. Geoffrey Harlow, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile 21 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1983). Editions of the Latin and/or OE text can be found in: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 175-203; Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 353-70; Thomas Oswald Cockayne, ed., "De rebus in oriente mirabilibus," in *Narrativncvlæ Anglice conscriptæ* (London: Iohannes R. Smith, 1861), 33-39.

[26] Usually dated to xii[ex], of English origin but with no identifiable location. For descriptions, see Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 8-9; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 63-64; F. Madan and H. H. E. Craster, *A Summary Catalog of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* vol. 2, pt. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 229.

[27] Cf. Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 9; McGurk, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany*, 88-103; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 45.

intended for a bilingual edition like Tiberius', but Vitellius contains the Anglo-Saxon only. Furthermore, it is missing the last five marvels of the text, ending with the black-skinned Ethiopians rather than the story of the Egyptian brothers Jamnes and Mambres. In addition to the five marvels, it lacks two to three lines' worth of text from §5, and §23 seems to be completely rewritten. Turning to the illustrations, scholars have noted that the images in Vitellius follow a different physical layout and artistic plan than the other two manuscripts. Instead of the de luxe illustrations in Tiberius, the Vitellius illustrations are tinted only with a watercolor wash, have an irregular and inconsistent layout, and appear to be freehanded.

When taken together, these three manuscripts represent three discrete points in a much larger and rapidly evolving textual tradition. Paul Allen Gibb and Ann Knock, for instance, each catalog readings in the Latin text not found in either of the English translations, which demonstrates that the English and Latin versions were drifting apart even as they were being copied side-by-side.[28] Bodley 614 contains twelve more marvels largely culled from Isidore, which, as Ann Knock has argued, "demonstrate that the collection became regarded as a *Florilegium* and continued to grow" between the mid eleventh and the late twelfth centuries.[29]

Our English texts descend from a wildly diverse collection of variants "in various highly-altered forms, the products of constantly smoothed-over corruption and editorial change."[30] This larger tradition, which spans six different versions and an unknown number of manuscripts, was circulating on the Continent at least as early as the sixth

[28] Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 12; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 78.
[29] Ibid., 90.
[30] Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 30.

century and in England no later than the eighth.[31] Based on their manuscript context, the individual texts of this Continental tradition were usually regarded as natural history.[32] Direct quotations are found in Gervase of Tilbury, Thomas of Cantimpre, and, as discussed before, the anonymous *Liber monstrorum*, which further highlights their status as natural history texts.[33]

Scholars typically divide the Continental tradition into two families based on the stated author and addressee of the incipit: the *Letter of Fermes/Feramen to Hadrian* (called the F-Group by Knock) and *The Letter of Premo/Pharasmenes to Trajan* (called the P-Group).[34] Within the F-group, the *Letter of Fermes to the Emperor Hadrian* (Knock's analogue "FL") is an imperial travelogue considerably longer than its P-group counterparts; it has an elaborate preamble and conclusion to Trajan, and it focuses heavily upon the

[31] Gibb believes that the original source for the tradition has to be dated no later than the sixth century. Knock dates to the late seventh. The date of English arrival comes from quotations from some Continental version in the anonymous *Liber monstrorum*, which is loosely associated with Aldhelm's intellectual circle. See: ibid., 18; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 326-31; Lapidge, "*Beowulf,* Aldhelm, the *Liber monstrorum* and Wessex," 164-69; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 86.

[32] "Versions of the Letter frequently appear in manuscript compilations of a scientific charater, suggesting that this text was also seen as 'scientific,' that is as a contribution to the sum of knowledge about the created world." Ann Knock, "Analysis of a Translator: The Old English Wonders of the East," in *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately on the Occasion of Her Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, Ed. Jane Roberts, Janet L. Nelson and Malcolm Godden (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 121. Three of the continental manuscripts are bound with copies of Bede's *De temporibus anni*, as is London, BL Cotton Tiberius B.v, and five of them contain Isidore, Aethicus, and/or Solinus. The one exception is Brussels, Bibliotheque Royale Albert Ier 14562, on old French translation of the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* and other purely historical works. See: A. Hilka, "Ein neuer (altfransösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens," *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 46 (1923): 173-74.

[33] For text details, see fn. 2.

[34] The terminology for the two families and their textual abbreviations come from: Anne Knock, "Wonders of the East," 11-17. The F-group and P-group texts have also been edited individually. See: Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 353-70; Eberhard Graff, *Diutiska: denkmäler deutscher Sprache und Literatur, aus alten Handschriften*, vol. 2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970), 648-49; Hilka, "Ein neuer (altfransösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens."92-103; Friedrich Pfister, *Kleine Texte zum Alexanderroman* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1910); J. B Pitra, "Epistola Parmoenis," in *Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi* (Paris: 1884; Farnborough, 1966), 648-49.

geography of the East.[35] The other F-Group analogue, *The Letter of Feramen Rex to Hadrian* (Knock's analogue "FR"), is a drastic condensation of the *Fermes* letter which Knock believes was made to focus on its marvels; it survives in four manuscripts, all from Spain or Italy, and dated from xi-xiv.[36]

The P-group includes the *Wonders of the East* and three other analogues: EP, a transcription by Graff of a destroyed Strasbourg manuscript; Pit, which was transcribed by J. B. Pitra as a footnote to another text, but his source manuscript has been lost; and OFr, an Old French translation from a thirteenth-century Picardic manuscript.[37] The source text used in the *Liber Monstrorum* has features consistent with this group. The P-group letters shed most of the F-Group's epistolary trappings: the elaborate preamble in the *Fermes* letter is missing, the use of first person is significantly reduced, and in the case of the Old French version, only the incipit states that the text is a letter at all. The *Wonders of the East* is the only version with no epistolary framing whatsoever.[38] Most P-group works contain unique interpolations or additions not found in the other versions, and, as Ann Knock has attempted to show, these successive layers of change eventually gave rise to the text we now call *Wonders of the East*.[39]

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[35] The text called *The Letter of Fermes to Hadrian* (Knock's FL) survives in Paris, BN. nouv. acq. lat. 1065 (saec. IX, prov. Beauvais). Knock calls this manuscript the best example of what the original tradition may have looked like. The other four MSS are closely related copies of *The Letter of Feramen to Hadrian* (Knock's FR), a much shorter work from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries CE. Based on their similarities and similar provenance, Knock posits that they share a common Beneventan exemplar. Knock, "Wonders of the East," 205-7, 21-35.

[36] Ibid., 247-50.

[37] Brussels, Bibliotheque Royale Albert Ier, MS 14562, ff. 5v-6v, dated to the thirteenth century CE. See: Hilka, "Ein neuer (altfransösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens," 92-103; John Drayton Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript" (Diss., University of Cambridge, 1971), 57-87; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 173-174.

[38] For a concise summary of the two traditions, see Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 22-25.

[39] Knock, "Wonders of the East," 57, 147.

A. The "Joyful Excess" of the Hippopotamus[40]

We have just discussed how the texts that make up the *Wonders* tradition vary wildly from one text to another—but what does that mean for its creatures? To give a quick example, the Vitellius version describes of the land of Archoboleta and its many camels; the accompanying illustration on fol. 101v depicts two camels standing together, one with a single hump, and the other with two. In the Tiberius and Bodley versions, however, both the text and illustrations clearly depict an elephant. A single syllable shift, from *elefendra* (OE "elephant") in Tiberius to *ylpendra* ("camel") in Vitellius gives rise to an entirely new species.[41] The plasticity of this tradition means that the vast majority of these creatures, along with their descriptions and locations, have evolved so rapidly that the various iterations look nothing like each other. The hippopotamus found in the *Letter of Premo to Hadrian* provides a convenient example: this beast transmogrifies into a horse-colored/shaped, lion-footed beast in the F-group and a giant, lion-headed *human* in *Wonders* §12.

When we look at these three versions, the basic outline of the wide-mouthed, blood-sweating hippopotamus of Pliny's account is still vaguely apparent, but the details drift away from that common point: a lion's head versus lion's feet, a wide mouth versus a wide stature, the animal sweating versus the hunter lapping up blood, man or beast.[42] As is to be

[40] "This appropriation [of written vernacular language] found expression in an essential variance, which philology, modern thinking about the text, took to be merely a childhood disease, a guilty offhandedness or an early deficiency of scribal culture, whereas the variance was, quite simply, joyful excess." Bernard Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critique of the History of Philology*, trans. Betsy Wing (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 21.
[41] Knock, "Wonders of the East," 115.
[42] Cf. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* VIII.39-40, in: *Pliny: Natural History*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 68-71.

Table 2. Variant readings in three analogues: FL, EP, and Wonders (T)

F-Group, *Letter of Ferman to Hadrian*(FL)[43]	P-Group, *Letter of Premo to Hadrian* (EP)[44]	*Wonders of the East*, Latin version (MS T), §12[45]
Item queque nascuntur bestiae colore similes equorum, pedes habentes leonum et ipsi longitudinem pedum duodena ędificio amplo. Hanc bestiam si quispiam persequi voluerit, sanguinem suum a quolibet se sequi adimens sugit et omino ab is feris non nocetur, nam yppofogi appellantur.	Nascuntur etiam ibi animalia triplici coloris, quorum capita sunt leonum, longa pedum decem et octo, ore amplissimo: homines cum viderint, si eos aliquis insequatur, longe fugiunt, ita ut sanguine sudent: hyppopotami appellantur.	Item liconia in Gallia nascuntur homines tripertito colore, quorum capita capita leonum, pedibus .XX., ore amplissimo sicut uannum; hominem cum cognouerunt, aut si quis persequatur, longe fugiunt et sanguine sudent: hi putantur homines fuisse.

expected, much of this drift comes from copy errors. The phrase *liconia in Gallia* in the Latin *Wonders*, for instance, originally belonged to the previous entry about storks [Med. Lt. *ciconia*], and *sugit* for *sudet* might have come from a writing mistake. Other changes, such as the Latin *Wonders'* assertion that "these are thought to be humans" more likely came about from scribal emendations to make sense out of a mangled source text.[46]

The "hippo" of the *Letter of Premo to Hadrian,* in fact, continues to evolve in the Vitellius version:

> Ciconia in gallia hatte þæt land þær beoð men acende on drys heowes þara heafdu beoð gemonu swa leona heafdu· 7 hi beoð .xx. fota lange 7 hy habbað micelne muð swæfon· gyf hi hwylcne monnan on þæm landum ongitað oððe geseoþ oððe him

[43] Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 208. I have opted for the original manuscript readings over Faral's suggested corrections.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 192.
[46] For two examples, see: Knock, "Wonders of the East," 687-90; Gibb, "*Wonders of the East*," 152-53.

hwilc man folgiende bið· þonne feor þæt hi fleoð 7 blode hy swætað· þas beoð men gewende[47]

At this point in the text's transformation, the creatures now live in an unidentifiable "Ciconia." A missing crossbar on the eth of *ðrys* transforms the three colors to “the form of a sorcerer,"[48] and the mouth has been corrupted from its fan shape to something both ungrammatical and unclear (perhaps full of flames?).[49] Only the manes of lions survive. The accompanying illustration in Vitellius (fol. 102r) shows a very tall man in outline, uncolored, with a normal mouth, a thick head of hair, and a piece of vegetation in one hand.

What just happened to our hippopotamus? Gibb called this "metamorphosis" across the analogues "an extreme example of how very little the accuracy of medieval textual transmission can be taken for granted," and Pickles likened that change to being "confronted by a mirage."[50] For this reason, editors from various critical schools have tried to slam the philological brakes on this textual drift, but their approaches have hidden the

[47] "That land is called Ciconia in Gallia, where men are born in the form of sorcerers(?), on their heads are manes like a lion's head, and they are twenty feet tall and they have great mouths [they burn/of brimstone?]. If they notice or see any man or if a man follows him, then they flee far away, and they sweat blood. They are thought to be humans." Stanley Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS. Cotton Vitellius A. xv* (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1924), 101b.13-102a.2. The reading *swæfon for swæ fon* in line 19 reflects the actual manuscript reading and follows most editors after Rypins. For more information, see fn. 49 (below).
[48] This section appears on fol. 101v of the Vitellius MS, and the word on line 14 is undamaged and clearly reads *drys.* The possibility remains that the scribe forgot to cross the ascender on an eth, which are more or less identical to his d's. *Drys,* however, is a perfectly acceptable reading of a rather common word. The word *dry* (cf. Gaelic *draoi*) is usually used as an equivalent for Lt. *magus*. Bosworth and Toller note its use in the Jamnes and Mambres episode in the Tiberius *Wonders, Ælfric’s homilies, in Moses’ confrontation of the* magicians in the OE *Exodus,* and in the OE *Orosius* for Alexander's father Nectanebus, a necromancer. See: Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary,* s.v. “drys,” and also the same entry in the *Supplementum*.
[49] The Vitellius reading is clearly corrupt, but that does not mean that it would have lacked meaning to the reader. Gibb preferred to read *swæfon* as the past tense form of *swefan*, "to sleep," which also makes no sense. The verb *swæfan,* however, does exist; it has never been given a clear definition in Bosworth-Toller, but functions in other contexts as a variant of *swellan*, "to burn." There is also some association with the English words for sulfur and brimstone [*swefel, sweflan*]. See: Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 152-53; Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.v. “swæfan”; see also the same entry in the *Supplementum*.
[50] Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 22; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 51.

evolution across the texts— and, more importantly, the Vitellius version— behind an illusion of order. As editors of the genetic school, Orchard and Gibb's editions of the *Wonders of the East* use the more complete Tiberius version as their base; Gibb calls the loss of the hippopotamus from the analogues an "absurd corruption" and spills quite a bit of ink explaining away the alternate readings.[51] Even though Orchard's monograph is about the Vitellius manuscript, he chose the less problematic Tiberius version for his base text.

In contrast to the genetic school, Edmond Faral, a Bédiériste by trade, simultaneously edited four different analogues with two (The *Fermes* and the *Premo* letter) in parallel. Here, the hippo in the *Premo* letter sits uneasily alongside the *yppofogi* of *Fermes*, but his Latin-only edition of *Wonders* is relegated to a separate text at the back of the journal. [52] Montague Rhodes James opted for an outright facsimile of all three manuscripts, but his provided text is the Latin from the Tiberius manuscript.[53] And, Ann Knock, perhaps the most adventurous of the earlier editors, produced a thousand-page, color-coded "synoptic edition" which should be regarded as an early precursor to hypertext editing.[54]

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[51] Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 153-54. To his credit, Gibb also provides a diplomatic parallel text of both Tiberius and Vitellius in his back matter to highlight their variations. Cf. Appendix 1, 185-199.
[52] Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 353-70.
[53] James also confesses, "I do not see how it comes, as it repeatedly does, to misread and grossly misunderstand its original [the *Fermes* letter]: not only in the topographical part (in which the author is plainly not at home), but in the descriptions of the marvels, which are the very gist of the tract." M. R. James, *Marvels of the East: A Full Reproduction of the Three Known Copies* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, Oxford University Press, 1929), 25.
[54] For an example of her methodology, see Knock, "Wonders of the East," 363. As a print work, Knock's edition is so large as to be nearly unusable, but we must remember that she produced it some nineteen years before the development of XML. Had the right tools been available, her work would almost certainly have been compiled as a hypertext edition and answered Cerquiglini's call for computer editions capable representing medieval *variance*. See: Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 79-80.

Here, the hippopotamus is just one limb of a kaleidoscopic, rainbow-hued prodigy spreading out from its analogues (see Figure 1, below).[55]

The different colors in the image represent readings over different analogues, with the Old English and Old French versions printed separately at the bottom; one follows the colored lines from left to right to find the reading unique to a specific Latin version. Knock collapses similar manuscripts into a single archetype whenever possible, however, and so the Tiberius version gets pride of place. The lion-maned man with a wizard's shape disappears, leaving behind the tri-colored, fan-mouthed figure in Tiberius.

Some critics however, focused entirely on the Vitellius version, sometimes to the point of excluding everything else. Stanley Rypins opted for a rigidly diplomatic edition of Vitellius, but others sharply criticized his book for abdicating the editor's duty to construct meaning from corrupted readings.[56] Asa Mittmman and Susan Kim also remain strictly devoted to the physical manuscript, creating a word-by-word transcription of the text, a

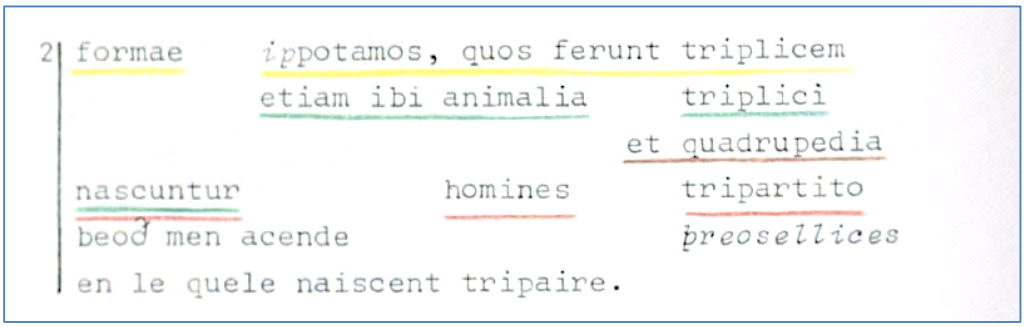


Figure 6. P-group variants on the hippopotamus, from Knock's synoptic edition.

[55] Image source: Knock, "Wonders of the East," 442.
[56] Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 22. One reviewer was so perturbed at the lack of intervention that he offered several of his own emendations to *Wonders of the East,* and in particular, the hippopotamus episode. See: E. V. Gordon, "Old English Studies," *The Year's Work in English Studies* 5 (1924): 66-72.

full-color reproduction of the manuscript pages, and even a translation with same-page translations.[57] In their introduction, Mittman and Kim discuss their discomfort with altering the text, and so they chose to provide "less an edition than a transcription" so that the text may speak for itself.[58] Their text provides no app. crit. in the traditional sense, and they make the unusual choice of refoliating the text as if it were its own, self-contained manuscript. Even so, they have silently, perhaps even unconsciously, reproduced some readings of Tiberius in their translation. Their same-page text translates the lion-maned man's *drys heowes* as "three colors,"[59] even though there seems to be not a single example in the Anglo-Saxon corpus of *dry*, *drys*, or its alternatives used to mean *þri*.[60] Even diplomatic editions post-Rypins, it seems, have difficulty shaking free of Tiberius' readings.

B. The "Joyful Excess" of the Critical Theorist

Just as the plasticity of the *Wonders* tradition has made a kaleidoscope out of its different creatures, it also leads to an overabundance of critical possibilities. As Dana Oswald notes, "It is difficult to resist the urge to totalize the experience of the texts, and so

[57] Asa Simon Mittman and Susan Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts: The Wonders of the East in the Beowulf Manuscript* (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2013), 40-72.
[58] Ibid., 36.
[59] Ibid., 46.
[60] Though the interpretive leap looks simple enough, there are no instances of *dry* meaning "three" in the searchable Anglo-Saxon corpus out of well over seventy examples. As far as analogues, one has to look as far back as OHG to find a matching analogue for *drys* meaning *þreos*, but all the closest linguistic relatives use ð\þ. With the common, repeated use of *dry* to mean "sorcerer" in biblical literature and in the Jamnes/Mambres episode in Tiberius (§37), repeated references to sorcery in the Vitellius *Wonders,* and without any parallel Latin text or illustration to provide the context, I am hard-pressed to think that an English reader would naturally and automatically assume that the correct reading of *drys* in this context is *þri.* Cf. *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, accessed June 12, 2014 (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2009) http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/; Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 1:1068. See also fn. 51, above.

constitute it in some unifying structure, but the text itself resists this impulse."[61] Susan Kim and Asa Simon Mittman likewise note that "these images, and the texts with which they are partnered, not only encourage contemplation but also insistently evade and deny resolution."[62] This resistance to interpretation makes it a theoretical sandbox of sorts, as its meaning is highly malleable to whatever critical eyes gaze upon it. The resulting body of work on *Wonders* is thus diverse, contentious, and of variable quality-- and at some level, the *Wonders of the East* defies nearly all of it.

Roughly speaking, *Wonders'* critical history falls into two thematic arcs. One critical area considers the matter of India, starting with Rudolf Wittkower's seminal work on the transmission of the Plinian tradition.[63] Andrea Rossi-Reder and Heidi Estes' postcolonial analyses identify the early stages of Orientalist and colonizing discourse in *Wonders*,[64] and Kathryn Powell explores how the East in *Wonders* functions as a locus of Lacanian desire.[65] In contrast, Nicholas Howe and Mark Busbee complicate these readings, looking instead at how the Anglo-Saxons contemplated the East as both a real place and an exercise in imaginative self-reflection.[66] The other major branch follows John Block Friedman's lead and look at monsters to explore issues of ethnicity, gender, and cultural difference from a

[61] Dana Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010), 30.
[62] Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 135.
[63] Wittkower, *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols*, 159-97.
[64] Andrea Rossi-Reder, "Wonders of the Beast: India in Classical and Medieval Literature," in *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), 53-66; Heide Estes, "Wonders and Wisdom: Anglo-Saxons and the East," *English Studies* 91, no. 4 (2010): 360-73.
[65] Kathryn Powell, "The Anglo-Saxon Imaginary of the East: A Psychoanalytic Exploration of the Image of the East in Old English Literature" (Diss., University of Notre Dame, 2001), 102-75.
[66] Howe, "At an Angle on This Earth: Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82, no. 1 (2000): 1-25; Mark Bradshaw Busbee, "The Idea of India in Early Medieval England," in *India in the World*, ed. Cristina M. Gámez-Fernández and Antonia Navarro-Tejero (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011): 3-16; "A Paradise Full of Monsters: India in the Old English Imagination," *LATCH* 1 (2008): 51-72.

critical-historical perspective.[67] These include Greta Austin and Lisa Verner, who each offer Christian hermeneutical readings of monstrosity,[68] and Christopher Monk, who traces Biblical discussions of monsters and sexuality through Anglo-Saxon and Hiberno-Latin literature.[69] Other scholars have fruitfully paired postmodern theory with the matter of monstrosity, and their work is perhaps best represented by Kim and Asa Simon Mittman's collaborations on the Vitellius *Wonders of the East*.[70] Other teratological works range from Courtney Barajas' critique of postcolonial readings to theoretical readings of monstrosity, sexuality, and gender by Eileen Joy, Dana Oswald and Rosalyn Saunders.[71]

Despite this relatively large body of criticism, these scholars have reached a consensus on almost nothing. To give two brief examples, Dana Oswald criticizes

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[67] Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 144-54; "The Marvels-of-the-East Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Art," 319-41.

[68] Greta Austin, "Marvelous Peoples or Marvelous Races? Race and the Anglo-Saxon *Wonders of the East*," in *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2002), 25-51; Lisa Verner, *The Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 45-90.

[69] Christopher Monk, "A Context for the Sexualization of Monsters in the Wonders of the East," *Anglo-Saxon England* 41 (2013): 79-99.

[70] Their most recent collaboration is *Inconceivable Beasts*. Chapter 5 was previously published as: "The Exposed Body and the Gendered Blemmye: Reading the *Wonders of the East*," in *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. Albrect Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). Their other work includes: Mittman, *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England*; Susan Kim, "The Donestre and the Person of Both Sexes," in *Naked before God: Uncovering the Body in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. B. C Withers and J. Wilcox (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2003), 162-80; "Man-Eating Monsters and Ants as Big as Dogs: The Alienated Language of the Cotton Vitellius A.xv 'Wonders of the East'," in *Animals and the Symbolic in Mediaeval Art and Literature*, ed. L. A. J. R. Houwen (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997), 39-51.

[71] Eileen Joy, "The Signs and Location of a Flight (or Return?) of Time: The Old English *Wonders of the East* and the Gujarat Massacre," in *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 209-29; Courtney Catherine Barajas, "Reframing the Monstrous: Visions of Desire and a Unified Christendom in the Anglo-Saxon Wonders of the East," in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin:de Gruyter, 2013), 243-61; Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature,* 27-65; Rosalyn Saunders, "Monstrosity, *Leaslicum Wordum*, and the Strange Case of the Donestre," *Different Visions* 1, no. 2 (2010): 1-36.

arguments that use a Christian framework in favor of a feminist reading.[72] Likewise, Courtney Barajas and Mark Busbee each propose alternatives to the essentialist tendencies they find in postcolonial readings.[73] Conversely, Barajas argues that the readership of *Wonders* did not believe in Eastern marvels whereas most other critics, including Asa Mittman, assume the opposite. Even the most basic of questions, such as what the illustrations represent, are hotly contested.

This tradition has become so many different things at different times that the *Wonders of the East* seems capable of being everything and yet never quite *anything* at the same time. On the one hand, the lack of similarity of the three versions complicates any unified reading, and as Mittman and Kim point out, Vitellius' uniqueness often disappears beneath the other two manuscripts.[74] Dana Oswald's argument regarding sexual erasure, for instance, works remarkably well with the Bodley and Tiberius manuscripts but falters with Vitellius; both Lisa Verner and Heidi Estes run into similar problems in their own work. Unifying arguments across all three manuscripts are tricky, and the utility of focusing on just one manuscript, as Austin, Kim, and Mittman have done, is often overlooked.

A further complication comes from the nearly endless number of revisions, as scholars pick up and follow one thread of discourse in *Wonders of the East* only to find that it does not extend through the entire text. Both Kathryn Powell and Lisa Verner, for

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[72] Oswald specifically points to Greta Austin's article for an example. See: Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature*, 35.

[73] Barajas specifically argues that "[c]ritical work which has been done in recent years, moreover, tends to lean toward a strangely anachronistic essentialism, assuming a universally intrinsic fear or pity of the Eastern wonders described"; Busbee calls this "anachronistic," and it "oversimplifies what Anglo-Saxons thought and believed about an unknown, almost mythical place." Barajas, "Reframing the Monstrous," 244; Busbee, "A Paradise Full of Monsters," 53-54.

[74] Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 5.

instance, are forced to argue that the vestiges of the F/P-Group epistolary format is more present in the *Wonders* than perhaps it really is, but that leads Powell to argue that a transcendent "gaze of history" watches over the text while Verner explicitly denies that any transcendent view exists at all.[75] Greta Austin calls this implied viewer a generalized, anonymous "visitor" who represents the reader, but Heidi Estes assumes that figure is Alexander the Great.[76] Each finds a thread of discourse and follows it, but they each go different directions and, ultimately, end up on opposite sides of the textual labyrinth.

C. Superabundance: Medieval, Modern, Divine

If we are to understand how and why the *Wonders of the East* stymies modern scholarly interactions with the text, we must return to our hippopotamus. The swift textual change across the *Wonders* tradition typifies what Bernard Cerquiglini calls *variance*, the inevitable drift of meaning between copies of manuscripts leading to rapid textual evolution.[77] *Wonders* is an unbounded text free from any sort of overarching authority; its creatures are a result of the "joyful excess" of the medieval scriptorium, attributable to "a

[75] Powell argues, "the figure of the ruler takes up a similar position in the *Wonders* occupied by God in many Anglo-Saxon works." Verner claims, "Instead of depicting a God's eye view of the physical world, these worlds describe an entirely earth-bound, horizontal perspective that never becomes omniscient... The worldly limitations of these works... derive from the definitely pagan point of view they represent." Powell, "The Anglo-Saxon Imaginary of the East," 104; Verner, *The Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages*, 66.
[76] Austin extends her argument to include the figure in the Tiberius illustrations while Estes does not. See: Austin, "Marvelous Peoples or Marvelous Races?," 33-41; Estes, "Wonders and Wisdom," 363.
[77] "Variance is the main characteristic of a work in the medieval vernacular; a concrete difference at the very basis of this object, it is something that publication should, as a matter of urgency, make visible. This variance is so widespread and constitutive that, mixing together all the texts among which philology so painstakingly distinguishes, one could say that every manuscript is a revision, a version." Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 37-38. Bernard Cerquiglini's concept is a reworking of Paul Zumthor's concept of *mouvance* in his *Essai de poétique médiévale*, Collection Poetique (Paris: Seuil, 1972). Zumthor talked about rapid change as primarily an oral rather than a textual phenomenon, however, so Cerquiglini's structure makes for a better overall fit with what we see in a textual tradition which spans both Latin and vernacular traditions.

writer's workshop" of author-scribes rather than to a single authorial source.[78] The medieval scribes who copied a *Wonders* text asked the same questions of their text as modern editors: how does one construct something stable and meaningful out of its shifting body? How might they recast the material in order to make it useable for their own purposes? What changes in text? What new frames of understanding? When modern editors intervene in this text, they join that "writer's workshop," and each new intervention drives that engine of transformation a little further down the evolutionary path.

Instead of embracing this, however, modern editorial maneuvers participate in what Cerquiglini calls "the mourning for a text," an attempt to re-create something no longer extant, never existed, or, in the case of the facsimiles, privileging the physical object over everything else.[79] When editors treat *Wonders of the East* as an isolated text, it presents itself as a "collection of absurdities," a boggy, occluded textual backwater worthy of "a perhaps merited oblivion."[80] Likewise, the lion-maned wizard of Vitellius is a prodigy born from "gross perversions of sense," leaving the real creature buried under so many generations of scribal detritus.[81] Cerquiglini, however, would argue that the lion-maned man is "a living creature, not flotsam, not jetsam, and not a fossil, but one realization among others in the midst of an evolving process."[82] And just like its lion-maned wizard, the *Wonders of the East* is itself a prodigy, a creature "in the midst of an evolving process"; and

[78] Since Cerquiglini builds his concept of *variance* off of textual rather than the oral models of Zumthor, one can easily expand his critique of French vernacular texts to the *Mirabilia* tradition, which in addition to Latin includes texts in French and Anglo-Saxon. He asserts, for instance, that "in the Middle Ages the literary work was a variable," that the only true medieval "text" in the modern sense is the Bible, and that medieval writing was more like "a writing workshop." All of these statements expand his ideas beyond the vernacular and into any medieval literary text. See: *In Praise of the Variant*, 33-35.
[79] Ibid., 34.
[80] James, *Marvels of the East*, 9.
[81] Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 42.
[82] Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 68.

all of its author-scribes, from its late Classical origins to Mittman and Kim, partake of the joyous excess which drives its evolutionary process.

To put this in medieval terms, our protean "hippopotamus" demonstrates both God's superabundance through its monstrous body; it likewise participates in the scribes' superabundance, their "joyful excess," through its evolving body of words.[83] If we are to understand the *Wonders of the East* on its own terms, we must let this superabundance, the scribe's "joyful excess," inform how we approach its shifting textual bodies. Furthermore, we must understand that the modern need to stabilize and comprehend participates in that superabundance: our scholarly interventions are a part of, not separate from, the "writer's workshop" which created the text in the first place. Modern scholars do not rewrite the text so much as they do the interpretive frame around it, but the results are much the same: for, whether the *Conopenas* described and illustrated on fol. 100r are cannibals or kings depends on how one situates their humanity.[84] As we shall see, these modern frames echo the concerns of the medieval scribes: they imposed intellectual frames over the text to lend it a recognizable shape and, also like our modern scholars, those frames were sometimes mutually exclusive and at odds with their source material. Much like "Adelinus" and his *Liber monstrorum*, the intellectual frames function like a boundary marker, the *limes* staked out between the known and unknown. And yet, the problem of an elastic, evolving text is that it cannot hold such unruly knowledge within its bounds.

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[83] The idea of monsters demonstrating God's superabundance goes back to Augustine, but the formulation here is Lisa Verner's. See: *The Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages*, 36.

[84] Kim and Mittman believe that the Vitellius figure of the *conopenas* is holding the instruments of kingship, which is an outlier in most other scholarly readings who try to read the objects in parallel with the foliage in Tiberius B.v. In contrast, Heidi Estes calls the *conopenas* in *Wonders* "dogs" and later draws a parallel to Saint Christopher, who is described as a cannibal in the *Old English Martyrology*. Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 17-18; Estes, "Wonders and Wisdom," 363, 368.

3. Re-Mapping the *Wonders of the East*

As we have previously seen with Adelinus and his *Liber monstrorum*, intellectual frames are meant to corral alterity and neutralize its danger. But what kinds of frames are we looking for? A different text about the marvels of the North can provide us with some analogies. The *Cosmographia* is a strange, Carolingian-era travelogue and scientific compendium whose literary sphere overlapped somewhat with the Continental *Wonders* analogues.[85] This text masquerades as an obscure Greek treatise written by an "Aethicus Ister" and translated and epitomized by Saint Jerome, but in reality it is neither. Michael Herren demonstrates that both of these personas are satirized, fictional constructs with competing intellectual obsessions.[86] As the so-called cosmographer, "Aethicus" sails around the world and mapping it, casting aspersions upon the far north as he does so. In contrast, his pious epitomizer "Jerome" rails against heresy, idolatry and pagan learning even while he supposedly gleans edifying knowledge from his pagan science text. Both of these characters long for someone to constrain the spread of northern monstrosity, and so they turn to a third personna, Alexander the Great, as "[he] found such useful stratagems for checking the rage of these wild peoples."[87] Both "Jerome" and "Aethicus" praise Alexander's imperial conquest of the barbarian wilds, but "Aethicus" laments that Alexander failed to

[85] For two quality editions of the text, see: Michael Herren, ed., *The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister: Edition, Translation, and Commentary* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Otto Prinz, *Die Kosmographie des Aethicus* (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae historica, 1993). The text was read in Anglo-Saxon England and survives in three manuscripts: London, BL Cotton Vespasian B. x, dated x/xi, likely from Worchester (Gneuss #386), London, BL Harley 3859, dated xi/xii or xi^{ex} (Gneuss #439), and Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Scaliger 69, dated x^2, from Canterbury (Gneuss #839). Both the *Wonders* analogues and the *Cosmographia* are known to circulate in manuscripts with portions of Solinus and Isidore as well as geographic and historical works, although they never seem to appear together in the same manuscript.

[86] Michael Herren, "Wozu diente die Fälschung der Kosmographie des Aethicus?," in *Lateinische Kultur im VIII. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albert Lehner and Walter Berschin (St. Ottilein: EOS Verlag, 1989), 145-59.

[87] *Et non inmerito magnus dici potest qui tam utilia argumenta agrestium hominum uesaniam retrudenam adinuenit*. *Cosmography*, §41.14-18.

contain the Turks and the Jephthathites behind stony walls as he had done at Gog and Magog.[88]

These three figures each desire to know more about these places so that they might subject them to an external authority, be it scientific, geographic, or, in Alexander's case, himself. These three figures therefore give us three vividly-drawn personas to think about intellectual desire and containment of the prodigious: the naturalist, the geographer, and the imperialist. As the scribes who shaped these texts strove to make meaning of their texts, some took on the intellectual tools of an Aethicus or an Alexander to govern the limits of the knowable while others, like Adelinus in the *Liber monstrorum*, looked to the scholarly and encyclopedic tools of a Jerome. Even so, the same scribal interventions which gave birth to the monsters of *Wonders* interfere with one another, muddy the waters. The vestiges of these framing narratives are more obvious in all of the Continental *Wonders* analogues, but the *Wonders of the East* holds a special ambivalence for these frames. The readers of the Vitellius version would find themselves hard-pressed to intellectually contain the East into any discourse while discovering a surprising degree of accommodation for some of the wonders dwelling at the frontiers of humanity.

A. Taxonomic Containment: Talking of Cannibals and Kings

The previous chapter detailed how Ratramnus of Corbie puzzled through the mystery of the *cynocephali*: what marks the boundaries of the human, and how do those

[88] This story appears early in the Alexander legend and endures through most of the Middle Ages. That Alexander fails to repeat the miracle against the tribes of Biza and the Turks, however, seems to be the invention of this author. See: ibid., §39-41b. For a complete account of the development of this legend, see: Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1932).

boundaries determine the spiritual value of others? His own criteria came from older authorities, Isidore of Seville and Augustine of Hippo, who were asking similar questions of these and the other Plinian races. In his survey of natural history, however, "Adelinus" settled upon other criteria: three major body types, ranked according to their likelihood of fictionality. Although the categories may change, each one draws borders to help place monsters within their understanding of the world. Their preoccupations, and ours, can tell us something important about the nature of these categories: while modern teratology investigates how the abnormal arises, Isidore and Augustine's teratology focuses on what it means. Likewise, whereas the modern scholar's anthropology may focus on cultural or social concerns, Ratramnus' anthropology is theological: he tries to delimit the human, its boundaries, and its relationship to the Creator. And Adelinus, forever the sceptic, hopes that they mean very little at all.

As each of these authors put the unknown into an understandable context, that context becomes the container to regulate their challenge to known nature. As Susan Kim explains via the work of Bruno Roy,

> [M]onster catalogues can reassure their readers... as they provide a normalising context for aberrant human births, monsters demonstrate what can happen to the human body - what can come off, what can be unnaturally added on. But with the same gesture the catalogue reassures… because as the monstrosities define the norm, they confirm it, and thus quiet the fear of its dissolution.[89]

[89] Kim, "Man-Eating Monsters and Ants as Big as Dogs," 40.

Instead of challenging the norm, these catelogues make it comprehensible, quantifiable, and understood.[90] If we compare Kim and Bruno Roy's discussion of the monster catalog to Tomasch's concept of geographical desire, both their desires and its fulfillment are identical: as places "are re-presented as territory" in geographical desire, bodies are re-presented as species, forms, or antitypes to the self. Bodies of land and people are therefore controlled in much the same way.

In short, this taxonomic desire and control is still a spatial, geographic interaction, and it should be treated as such. As Ernst Cassirer said of a pre-Modern microcosm, "all our affimations about 'what' are always accompanied by affirmations concerning 'where'… The body is by no means indifferent to the place in which it is located and by which it is enclosed; rather it stands in real and causal relation to it."[91] His discussion of the elemental "bodies" of the four elements applies to the "bodies" of the macrocosm as well. In a pre-Cartesian world, space is a fundamental characteristic of any object or creature, and where a creature dwells, its weather, nearness to the poles, its location in the Macrobian zones, all play a profound impact on its nature.[92] Extremity, intellectually understood, is both physical *and* geographic; discussing place is thus a way of interpreting the creatures who live there, but those creatures can also speak volumes about the places where they dwell.

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[90] Cf. Mittman, *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England*, 53.

[91] The passage, in its larger context, is discussing the Aristotelian cosmology in the pre-Renaissance world; it seeks to understand the nature of bodies and movement, and the bodies referred to are the four elements. In terms of our discussion, however, the context—movement and distance in the cosmos—makes good sense for larger discussions of place, and the humoral theory based on those four elements means that the "bodies" in this case are more literal (and fleshly) than those Cassierer had imagined. Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1964), 135.

[92] To quote John Block Friedman, "Moral disposition and physical appearance were firmly rooted in the medieval concept of place, and this in turn was a natural outgrowth of Macrobian zone thinking." Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 50. Also cf. Knock, "Wonders of the East," 569; Matthew Boyd Goldie, *The Idea of the Antipodes* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 24-46.

Starting with the analogues, the most hierarchically organized is *The Letter of Parmoenis to Trajan* (Pit). Based on what we can tell from Pitra's transcription, this lost P-group text is the shortest of all the surviving analogues and shares some important readings with the Latin *Wonders* text.[93] The narrator, Parmoenis, promises the reader a survey catalogue about *ubi quales homines nascuntur, vel qualia monstre vel montium figuras et hominum vel bestiarum*, and the following text is an orderly scale from beast to human, with some concessions made for changes in geographic area.[94] It thus begins with venomous chickens near the Red Sea and concludes with the unambiguously human ox-tailed women, who, in this iteration, are beautiful (*speciosa*), with skin like marble.[95] Parmoenis puts each creature into a discrete, Isidoran taxonomic category, such as *serpentes, quadrupedes, bestiae, homines,* or *mulieres*; he does, however, fail to classify the *cynocephali*, and he remains coy about its status as man or beast. All creatures with at least some humanoid features are "human," and most of those harder to classify, such as the onocentaur or *blemmye,* conveniently make no appearance. The entire purpose of the journey, it seems, is scientific knowledge created through observation of body types and behaviors.

Pitra's analogue therefore has a clear taxonomic purpose, and both its content and structure of indicate what that purpose is. But what about the *Wonders of the East*? Some critics, such as Austin and Howe, believe that the reader is meant to contemplate the

[93] If we compare Pit to the Tiberius wonders, it only contains §1-14, 16, 25-27 out of a possible thirty-seven. This conveniently leaves out some of the species harder to categorize, such as the onocentaur, the blemmye, and the Donestre. Pitra, "Epistola Parmoenis," 648; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 24-25; McGurk, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany*, 89-90.
[94] Pitra, "Epistola Parmoenis," 648.
[95] *Altae sunt, speciosae corpore, quasi marmore candido*. Ibid., 649.

creatures' humanity, while others, like Andrea Rossi-Reder and Eileen Joy, argue for the opposite. What is at stake in their readings is how one constructs their view of the self: does our engagement with these marvels bring them closer, or does it push them farther away? Likewise, both medieval and modern audiences are forced into King Dagnus' dilemma from the *Passion of St. Christopher*: does the marvelous violate the rule of nature? Is the "correct" scholarly response identification or abjection? *Wonders of the East* gives us many possibilities, but no easy answer. Even so, when compared to other texts of the tradition, *Wonders of the East* is the most accommodating of all the *Wonders* analogues in regards to the humanity of its creatures, and its readers walk through a landscape where, as Nicholas Howe asserted, they are forced to contemplate both their similarities and differences to the Other.

We must first address the issue of a taxonomic structure. Paul Allen Gibb first suggested an overarching structure for the *Wonders* existed, and he concluded that it was exegetical: "The text can thus be said to move from the temporal to the eternal, from the moral to the eschatological, from man to God. This movement would seem to be a structural principle… that becomes apparent only when the text is read on the symbolic level."[96] Greta Austin theorized that the Tiberius version follows a loose spectrum from least to most human "in order to understand their positions in the natural world" as opposed to simple, binary categories of human and inhuman.[97] As she explains, "[T]he *Wonders'* interest in these peoples is soteriological: the individual marvels are arranged to

[96] Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 73.
[97] Austin, "Marvelous Peoples or Marvelous Races?" 28.

show the hierarchical spectrum of those people to whom God offers grace."[98] That spectrum, she argues, shows interest in the idea of "race" where infinite gradations take the place of firm categories.

Gibb and Austin's arguments are specifically crafted with the Tiberius version in mind, and their arguments are well-crafted for that text. The truncated version in Vitellius, unfortunately, is much more resistant to their arguments. Gibb, for instance, places heavy emphasis on §23, 34, and 35 in his exegetical structure; as he points out, these sections "are so laden with details pointing towards a Christological interpretation that a connection is difficult to deny."[99] This is especially true for the griffon and the phoenix, two creatures which are the common fare of bestiaries and exegetical treatments. Neither of these creatures, however, are present in Vitellius, and the third, the priest at Heliopolis, has been heavily edited.[100] Furthermore, if the Vitellius text likewise moves "from temporal to the eternal, from the moral to the eschatological, from man to God," it ends with at a strange point: the *sigelwara*, the sun-people with black skin. Vitellius never transcends the temporal and moral long enough to contemplate those eternal truths.

Turning to Austin, we run into a similar problem. One of her most convincing pieces of evidence is the Jamnes and Mambres episode, which appears at the end of the Tiberius and Bodley versions; she believes that the text, with a few others from Bodley, give "a

[98] Ibid.
[99] Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 71.
[100] In the Tiberius version, the temple is wrought iron and brass, and the second temple, dedicated to the Sun, has a gentle priest. In the Vitellius version, the temple is iron and glass; the second place is called Quietus, which has no specific dedication to the Sun, and the bishop only eats oysters. Knock, Gibb, and McGurk have all tried to explain the discrepancy. See: Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 165-167; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 822-24; McGurk, *An Eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany*, 94.

Christianizing gloss to a text to a text that was originally pagan."[101] Since the Jamnes-Mambres episode is also missing from the Vitellius version, the text no longer contains that clear indication to read the text from a Christian standpoint.[102] Moreover, some of the individual marvels garble the spectrum. The fish-eating *homodubii* of §8, for instance, appear early in the spectrum, but nothing seems amiss other than their choice of diet. The *donestre* of §20, however, are cannibals, leaving the reader to ponder why eating raw fish is a bestial trait when eating people is not. In short, Austin and Gibb's interpretations are still valid possibilities, but Vitellius lacks the structural cues which make it clear that the text is *supposed* to be read that way.

To conclude: it is hard to find any clear, overarching logic for the order of marvels in Vitellius, but there are definitely partially-executed possibilities which *could* be loosely applied. But what sense of categorization exists on a case-by-case basis? The Vitellius text is full of small steps toward confirming the humanity (or lack thereof) of some of the monsters. For instance, the text has a tendency towards the magical: the OE translator adds the phrase *þæt syndon ungefrælicu liblac*, "unheard of sorcery," to the incendiary chickens of §3;[103] a missing crossbar on an eth makes the lion-faced men of §12 become *drys heowes,* "in the form of a sorcerer," and the *Donestre* have the heads of *frifteras*, presumably *frihteras,* "soothsayers."[104] And, in an odd textual addition in §26, the bearded ladies hunt on the mountain *mid heora scine [. . .]e*, which Mittman and Kim decline to translate; one of

[101] Austin, "Marvelous Peoples or Marvelous Races?," 45.
[102] Oswald makes exactly the same point, but she uses it as a reason to downplay Christian readings of the text. She correctly argues that this episode is lacking in Vitellius, but she mistakenly assumes that it is also missing in the Bodley version. Cf. Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature*, 35.
[103] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts,* 99a.14.
[104] Ibid., 101b.14, 103b.4-15.

the most likely possibilities, however, is that *scine* is a prefix, meaning that they hunt "with their magical [ ]."[105] These readings, many of them unique to Vitellius, suggests a need to understand where these creatures get their strangeness from, and the scribe/editor defaults to magic.

In addition, that struggle to identify often leads the reader to a closer identification with the monsters. Ann Knock identifies an overarching "anthropomorphisation" whereby "successive corrections move these creatures further from their animal roots and closer to the state of humanoid monsters."[106] As she points out, this process happens most often in the P-Group branch of the tradition, and it is especially visible in the *Wonders of the East.* Our "hippopotamus" is her key example, as this P-Group creature's transformation from beast to person happened as late as the Latin *Wonders*. In addition to the hippopotamus, however, we must also consider the split-faced men, the *Conopenas*, and the *Donestre*.

To start, the split-faced people were humans with two separate phases of existence. In the *Fermes* letter, these creatures are perfectly normal, if not oddly proportioned people: long legged with red, white, and black markings. Eventually, however, "these people are transformed into birds of heaven after a space of time," and the text explicitly identifies them as "storks" [*Ciconas*].[107] Pit retains a similar reading. Gibb and Knock found no specific Latin analogue, but there could be some precedent in the Greek tradition. In the Greek origin story of the war between the Pygmies and the storks, the Pygmy queen Oenoe

[105] Ibid., 105b.6-7. Both Rypins and Mittman and Kim transcribe the text missing in the margin the same, and Orchard does not indicate the missing text in his *ap. crit.*
[106] Knock, "Wonders of the East," 569.
[107] Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 207.

was transformed into a stork, and her death lead to war.[108] In Aelian, storks turn into humans as a reward for filial piety.[109]

Although these specific stories of transmutation were not well-known in the Latin tradition, metamorphosis in general was a sticky theological issue. Tertullian's pneumatology, for instance, meant that a human soul was incompatible with the body of an animal.[110] Augustine suggested that neither the body nor soul could be transformed, and all appearances of such were trickery or deception by demons.[111] Isidore of Seville, however, called it "historical fact" and used instances of spontaneous generation among the lower animals as proof.[112] Not surprisingly, the one sentence describing the men's transformation into birds is the most plastic one across all the analogues. Nearly all scholars have noted that the phrase *in avibus* in FL and Pit turns into *navibus* in EP and the OE *Wonders*, and *manibus* in the Latin *Wonders*.[113] The sentence drops out entirely from FR. In these transformations, their behavior moves from completely extraordinary to fairly mundane

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[108] Cf. *Antoninus Liberalis: Les Métamorphoses*, ed. Manoles Papathomopoulos (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002), 16.1. Neither Knock nor Gibb look to the crane and pygmy stories as an analogue. Knock looks to the folktale canon, where stories of men who turn to storks also exist. Cf. Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 150; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 679.

[109] *Claudius Aelianus: De Natura Animalium*, ed. Manuela García Valdés, Luis Alfonso Llera Fueyo, and Lucía Rodríguez-Noriega Guillenn (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), III.24.

[110] *Et ideo adjicio, si nulla ratione capax est hujusmodi translationis in animalia, nec modulis corporum, nec caeteris naturae suae legibus adaequantia, numquid ergo demutabitur secundum quatitales generum, et vitam eorum contrariam humanae vitae, facta et ipsa contraria humanae per demutationem? Enimvero si demutationem capit amittens quod fuit, non erit quae fuit; et si quae fuit, non erit, soluta est metensomatosis, non adscribenda scilicet ei animae, quae si demutabitur, non erit.* Tertullian, *De anima*, in *PL* 2, col. 704B.

[111] Augustine, *De civitate dei* XVIII.18.23-24. In addition, both Carol Walker Bynum and Joyce Salisbury have both discussed these early authors' ideas on metamorphosis. See: Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 82-84; Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994), 141.

[112] *Nam et Diomedis socios in volucres fuisse conversos non fabuloso mendacio, sed historica adfirmatione confirmant.* Isidore, *Isidori Hispalensis etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, edited by W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), XI.iv.2.

[113] For some examples, see: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 25-26; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 682-3; Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 151-52.

(and orthodox), but their appearance becomes even more strange even as their behavior normalizes. In Pit, the red faces of the split-faced men are called *Parthicus* (Parthian), both an ethnic term and a specific shade of scarlet.[114] By the time of the copying of the Latin *Wonders*, however, the phrase becomes *duas in uno habentes capite facies,* and Vitellius translates that phrase more or less literally, with a Janus-faced man illustrating the text.[115] What we have, then, is a creature whose behavior normalizes while its body becomes more prodigious—and the *Wonders of the East* still calls them *men*.

Next, the *Cynocephalus* of §7 is the first non-beast to appear in *Wonders,* and the text gives them a fearsome description: *hy habbað horses mana 7 eoferas tuxas 7 hunda heafdu 7 heora oroð bið swylce fyres leg*.[116] Far from being merely a hybrid, these creatures are an amalgamation of multiple creatures: bits of lion, dog and boar mixed into a single creature. Instead of identifying them by the more common term *Cynocephalus*, the *Wonders* texts call these creatures *Conopenas*. Though it is an unusual term in Latin, it is an identifiable one: a transliteration of the Greek word *cynophanes*, the term even shows up sporadically in some of the Latin Fathers.[117] No part of the text so far suggests that this creature resembles a human being.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Cynocephali*, by most accounts, are not usually considered human—or, at least, not fully so. Augustine thought that their animalian

[114] Pitra, "Epistola Parmoenis," 648.
[115] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 177. One possibility is that the *Parthicus* of Pit turned into *partitus*, which then led to the word *bipartite* in the *Liber Monstrorum,* and eventually, the idiomatic rendering in *Wonders*.
[116] "They have the mane of a horse, and boar's tusks, and the heads of dogs, and their breath is like the flame of a fire." Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 100b.13-15.
[117] See: Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary,* rpt. ed., s.v. "Cynophanes." Nicholaus du Mortier, *Etymologiae sacrae Graeco-Latinae* (Rome: Jacobus Kumarek Boheme, 1703), s.v. "cynophanes." Both Lewis and Short and Du Mortier cite Tertullian as a source, and the epigraph to this chapter was likely one of their main examples.

heads and lack of language proved them inhuman;[118] Isidore treated them at one point as a kind of ape, situated among other beasts.[119] On the opposite side is Aethicus, who treated them as a horrible barbarian *gens*;[120] Ratramnus, who queasily affirmed their humanity; and the author of the *Passion of Saint Christopher*, whose dog-headed hero saves souls and dies a martyr. "Adelinus" unwittingly splits the difference: he puts his *Conopenas* among the beasts, and he never makes the connection that these are the same creatures as the *Cynocephali* he put among the humanoids in Book I.[121]

The *Wonders* tradition, as a whole, stands on the side of the *Cynocephali*'s de-humanization. No *Wonders* analogue uses the word *gens* or *homines* to describe them except EP, and here the term is a strange equivocation: *homines vel bestiae quaedam vel verius homines mixti cum capitibus canum habentes*.[122] Pit identifies them as *cynocephali* but never calls them human; EP calls them *cenonulli* but at least entertains their humanity as a vague possibility. Turning to *Wonders itself, t*he text of §6 also gives the reader no indication that the *Conopenas* are human. The words *men or moncynn* never appear. We learn nothing of their behavior, and we do not know whether or not they can speak. In addition, they appear in closest proximity to other other beasts like the *Lertices* and *Corsiae*. Without any other contextual cues, the reader of Vitellius, like "Adelinus," has no intuitive reason to connect this creature to anything human.

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[118] *Quid dicam de Cynocephalus, quorum canina capita atque ipse latratus magis bestias quam homines confitetur?* Augustine, *City of God* XVI.vii.19-20.
[119] *Cynocephali et ipsi similes simiis, sed facie ad modum canis; unde et nuncupati*. Isidore, *Etymologies* XII.ii.32.
[120] Cf. Herren, *Cosmography*, I.28.
[121] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, II.13.
[122] Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 205.

Even so, the illustrations in every version of the *Wonders of the East* depict creatures with hominid-like bodies and long, canine snouts.[123] The Bodley and Tiberius illustrations in particular emphasize their wildness through pose and detail. The *Conopenas* are naked and have highly elongated, squared snouts, and both feed themselves from a tree—focusing their attention, as Isidore would say, on bellies rather than their souls.[124] These visual cues push the anthropomorphization as far as recognizing their human-like bodies, but they do not give any other indications of humanity (see Figure 7, below).[125]



Figure 7. The Cynocephalus, from Vitellius (left) and Tiberius (right).

[123] See London, BL Cotton Tiberius B.v., fol. 80r; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 614, fol. 38v.
[124] Cf. Isidore, *Etymologies* XI.i.5.
[125] Image source: James, *Wonders of the East*. Plates arranged by MS folio number.

In comparison to the Tiberius and Bodley versions, the Vitellius illustration marks out these creatures as not just human-like, but truly *human*: fully clothed, socially aware, looking upwards to the sky rather than down to the belly. Mittman and Kim offer this compelling description of the cynocephalus on fol. 100r:

> Rather than depicting him as a naked beast, the illuminator presents the fire-breathing, boar-tusked, dog-headed monster as regally attired in flowing robes. He even provides what may be intended to represent a golden shoulder-clasp, similar to the one familiar to us from the royal burial at Sutton Hoo… He carries the traditional emblems of royalty as well. In his right hand, he bears a scepter. In his left hand, swathed in the folds of his red cloak—a color still redolent of imperial connections—he bears the ultimate symbol of dominion over the world: an orb.[126]

Kim and Mittman have perfectly described what makes the Vitellius *Conopenas* different from every other monster: authority. Most of the illustrations in Vitellius manuscript are outline drawn, with occasional highlights of color or a shaded background. The *Conopenas* has fully colored clothes and a shoulder brooch, which is rare even for the humans in the manuscript, and only he wears royal robes of *red*. Though his snout is still animalian, he has a much shorter and rounded profile than in Tiberius and Bodley, which somewhat minimizes his bestiality. It is one thing to recognize that a sense of shame and the capacity to live under the rule of law makes someone human, as Ratramnus once did;[127] it is something else altogether to reflect the differences of social class through dress and display the implements of imperial rule. For this reason, Mittman and Kim conclude that "the

[126] Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 17-18.
[127] See: Ratramnus of Corbie, letter to Rimbert, in *MGH Epistolae 6, Epistolae Karoli aevi*, ed. Ernst Dümmler and Ernst Perels (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1995), 155.28-35,56.6-9.

attention to the clothing and ornamentation suggests the image is not one of pure Alterity. In fact, it reminds us that pure alterity is never possible."[128]

For all of the fine detail put into the humanity of the *Conopenas,* we see a completely different attitude to the *Donestre* of §20. In Vitellius, these are an island people who speak the languages of all nations and use that knowledge to prey upon unsuspecting travelers; once beguiled into approaching, those victims are devoured, and the *Donestre* weep over the unconsumed head. The F-group has nothing like the *donestre;* its parallel text describes no "people" at all, but rather godlike oracles called *soraci* who have the power to answer all questions.[129] In EP they first become a *genus hominum* with most of the features of the Donestre, but they are human to the navel, inhuman below, and they do not weep for their victim's heads.[130] In the Latin version in Tiberius, a mistake in the last half of the clause makes both the upper and lower parts human.[131] In the OE translation, the terms are reversed, for their lower half is human while the heads and chests are not: *Þa syndon geweaxene swa frifteras fram þam heafde oð ðonne nafolan 7 se oðer dæl bið mennisc onlic.*[132]

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[128] Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 18.
[129] Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 211. The term *tritognides* means "of Triton," and it may refer to the Tritonides, who were nymphs and his daughters. Cf. Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 159.
[130] Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 211.
[131] *hominum genus est quod apud nos appellatur Donestre, quasi diuini a capite usque ad umbilicum, quasi homines reliquo corpore similitudine humana*. Orchard has chosen to punctuate in a way that stresses the Old English reading, but the grammar makes much more sense as *apud nos appellatur Donestre, quasi diuini; a capite usque*[…] Orchard's reading emphasizes how an early translator of the Latin likely got around the problem—by moving *quasi diuini* from the end of the previous clause to the beginning of the next. Here I follow Knock and Gibb against Sisam, who said that the two halves of the creature's body were still reversed. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 171; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 798; Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 161; Kenneth Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 78.
[132] "They are grown like *frifteras* [*frihteras*, diviners?] from the head down to the navel, and the other part is like men." I have preserved the actual MS reading of *frifteras*. Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts* 103b.13-17.

Somewhere in the river of *variance* between the oracles of FL and the monster-headed soothsayers of *Wonders*, the P-Group texts turned the *soracii* into a peculiar animal. Ann Knock first noted the similarity between the *Donestre* and the *corocotta*, a hyena-lioness hybrid described in Pliny, Solinus and Dicuil.[133] The weeping detail, which is only extant in *Wonders* and the Old French version, she argues, accreted later, and comes from folk tales about the crocodile.[134] Like its father the hyena, the corocotta can imitate human speech, and Knock hypothesizes that the connection to this animal might explain why illustrations of the Donestre have the heads of lions. [135]

Just as we have discussed with the *Conopenas*, the *Donestre's* face is an important indicator of its humanity.[136] The Tiberius version clearly humanizes the *Donestre* with more human features beneath a shaggy mane and a leonine split lip (see Figure 8, below, right).[137] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen describes the Tibreius *Donestre* as "a fleshy, naked man with a lion's head" with an exaggerated "sad frown and huge, watery eyes," with gestures and facial fatures that suggest both language and empathy.[138] Cohen concludes, "At first more virile than bestial, the monster's animal head is fully anthropomorphized to give an

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[133] Knock, 'Wonders of the East,' 899-901. Knock used Thomas of Catimpré as her source, but these three authors represent the most likely source for the *Wonders* tradition. That the hyena-stone, when placed on the tongue, allows a person to divine the future may have something to do with the connection between this animal and the *soracii*. Cf. *Pliny: Natural History*, VII.44-45; Solinus, *C. Iulii Solini collectanea rerum memorabilium*, ed. Theodor Mommsen (Berlin: Wiedmann's, 1958), 27.23-24; *Dicuili liber de mensura orbis terrae*, ed. J. J. Tierney (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967), VI.33-34.
[134] Knock, 'Wonders of the East,' 900-901.
[135] "The picture cycle, which was not an early addition since it portrays readings unique to Mir, diverges from its text here in order to portray a corocotta, as the illustrator understood it. There can be no other explanation for the leonine heads." Knock, 'Wonders of the East,' 802.
[136] Cf. Isidore, *Etymologies*: *Qui ideo erectus caelum aspicit, ut Deum quaerat, non ut terram intendat veluti pecora, quae natura prona et ventri oboedientia finxit* (XI.i.5); *pecus dicimus omne quod humana lingua et effigie caret* (XII.i.5).
[137] Image source: James, *The Wonders of the East*. Plates arranged by manuscript folio.
[138] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 2.

empathetic look."[139] If we compare Cohen's description to the Vitellius, however, we see an illustration which clearly privileges the bestial. A long snout (considerably bigger than even the *cynocephalus*) dominates the face, indicating a savage nature, and though his right hand is clearly gesticulating, indicating his capacity for language, he clutches a human foot in his left, seemingly in mid-meal. Furthermore, the *Donestre*'s nakedness and prominent male genitalia, contrasts drastically to his fully clothed—and female—victim just to his right (See Figure 8).[140] When compared to the *cynocephalus* on fol. 100r, this creature is far more savage and dangerous.[141]

Nevertheless, the Vitellius text identifies the *donestre* as *mancyn*. In fact, no surviving analogue gives any indication of the creature's former life as a *corocotta* or crocodile.[142] Even so, every P-group text with a *donestre* analogue calls them not just human, but a *gens* or *genus* of people; [143] their difference is not just physical or behavioral, but now cultural/social as well.[144] The *Wonders of the East* also explains that these people are called *donestre* "among us," treating them as if they are a known, familiar kind of

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[139] Ibid.

[140] Image source: James, *Wonders of the East*. Most criticism addresses the nakedness, especially with the *blemmye* and the *Donestre*, and it indicates many more cultural assumptions than I address here. See: Friedman, "The Marvels-of-the-East Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Art," 327-28; Kim, "The Donestre and the Person of Both Sexes," 162-80; Saunders, "Monstrosity, *leaslicum wordum*, and the Strange Case of the Donestre," 12-14; Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 106-09.

[141] Mittman and Kim discuss the threatening elements of the *donestre*'s illustration at more length. See: *Inconceivable Beasts*, 20.

[142] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 103b.11.

[143] Cf. Latin *Wonders: homina genus est quod apud nos Donestre*. EP: *in qua est genus hominum*. OFr: *en le quele sont gens qui aprolent de tous langages*. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 179; Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 211; Hilka, "Ein neuer (altfransösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens," 122.

[144] Mittman and Kim connect the word *moncyn* with the term "race," which I am choosing to avoid at present. The term has a long and complicated critical history, and Mittman has intentionally engaged with the idea to provoke a deeper discussion of the term. Cf. Asa Simon Mittman, "Are the 'Monstrous Races' Races?," *Postmedieval* 6 (2015): 36-51; Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 18.

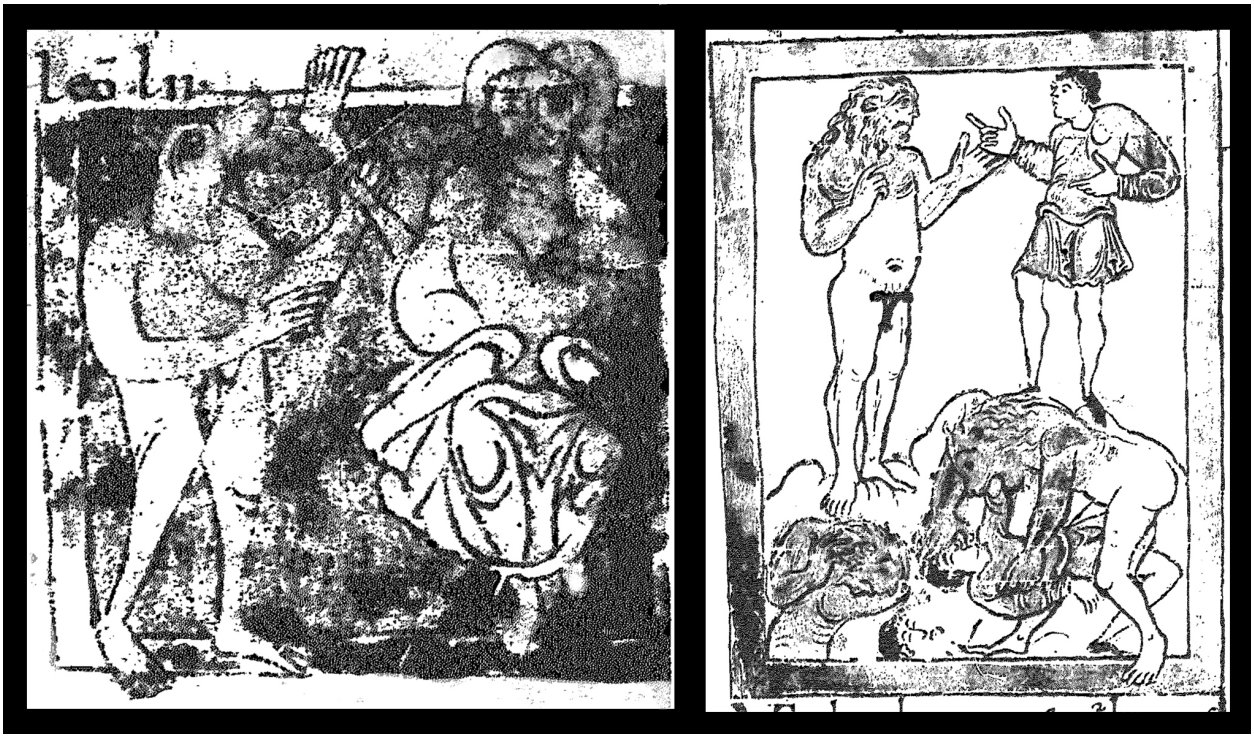


Figure 8. The Donstre, from Vitellius, fol. 103v (left) and Tiberius, fol. 83v (right).

humanity. Even in the bloody-hued illustration on fol. 103v are indications of humanity: the *donestre* holds his right hand up in a speech gesture even while he brandishes the human foot in his left. In the case of the *Donestre,* human speech trumps an animalian form, and these beast-headed, beastial-minded, man-eating creatures are unambiguously human.

As we compare the *Conopenas* with the *Donestre*, it is clear that the illustrations play a key role in marking humanity, and that clothing is an unambiguous, if inconsistent indication of it. In John Block Friedman's analysis of the illustrated *Marvels* tradition, he concludes that the illustrations as a whole show an attitude "of ethnocentric and rhetorical fear and distaste" full of ethnocentric judgment.[145] Even so, he concedes that "Certainly

[145] Friedman, "The Marvels-of-the-East Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Art," 321.

they [the Vitellius illustrations] are the most emotionally neutral of the *Mirabilia* group," and that its illustrator "seems to have viewed his figures passively."[146] Friedman claims that the Tiberius illustrations have prominent landscape details and thick, clear-cut borders to both increase their savageness and isolate them from the reader, but he especially notes that the classicizing garb in Vitellius has the opposite effect.[147]

We have already discussed the clothing on the *Conopenas*, but there are two other examples in Vitellius: the *homodubii* of §17, commonly identified as an *onocentaur* or ass-centaur, and the *blemmye*. The Vitellius text translates the word *homodubii* as *twimen*, "doubled" or "ambiguous" men in §8, but the translation does not appear in this passage.[148] Generally speaking, the humanity of the *onocentaur* is just as ambiguous as *twimen* would make it sound. Isidore lists the *onocentaur* last in his catalog of prodigies, and he says it "*seems* to look half like a human, but half like an ass."[149] "Adelinus" puts them in his category of human-like monsters, but he adds that their relatives, the hippocentaurs, cannot speak, and *onocentaurs* have lower halves with "shaggy foulness."[150] Although the *homodubii* in the other manuscripts is entirely naked, the one in Vitellius on fol. 102v sports a pair of red cuffs on his outstretched, gesticulating hands. Though decoration does not rise to the level of clothing, Ratramnus would call this proof of technical arts, which is a

[146] Ibid., 322, 24.
[147] Ibid., 327.
[148] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 103a.3. The missing *twimen* in this passage makes the preceding clause incomplete and ungrammatical, signaling a clear loss of *something* to the reader.
[149] *Onocentaurum autem vocari eo quod media hominis specie, media asini esse dicatur; sicut et Hippocentauri, quod equorum hominumque in eis natura coniuncta fuisse putatur*. Isidore, *Etymologies* XI.iii.39. Emphasis mine.
[150] *Liber monstrorum*, I.10*: Onocentauri corpora hominum rationabilia habere videntur usque ad umbilicum, et inferior pars corporis in onagrorum stetosa turpitudine describitur.* Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 264-5.

human pursuit.[151] The *blemmye* of §15 is likewise depicted naked in the Tiberius and Bodley versions, but in Vitellius he sports what appears to be shoes, striped hose, and a kilt. A line down the left wrist gives the impression of a sleeve or cuff.[152]

To my knowledge, no one has suggested a reason why these three monsters were dignified with clothing or jewelry, but there may be an obvious motivation: they all have some association with the North. The *Cynocephali*, as the previous chapter explored, has a fairly long-standing tradition of appearing in Scandinavia, but the *Blemmye* and *Onocentaur* do as well. In Aethicus Ister, the *Onocentaur*s are called *Onagrias*, and they represent one of the "vile and deceitful peoples of the North" which Alexander the Great condemns along with Gog and Magog.[153] The *blemmye* have a long pedigree in the North as well. In Adam of Bremen, his *cynocephali* in the far north are actually *blemmye*, men without heads.[154] Adam's source material for this passage shows a debt to Aethicus, and so it's unclear how his *cynocephali* turned into *blemmye*; nevertheless, this northern blemmye tradition continues through the entire Middle Ages, into the Islamic record, and down to Juan de

[151] *Inter honestum turpeque discernere, artisque scientia pollere, iura pacis concordiaeque condere, nec sine iudicio rationis nec praeter acumen ingenii fieri possunt.* Ratramnus of Corbie, letter to Rimbert, 156.9-11.
[152] Cotton Vitellius A.xv, fol. 102v. How much clothing the *blemmye* actually wears is a matter of fierce debate, divided between those who put him in a kilt and those who think it stops with the stockings at the knees. The horizontal line across the knees, which extends beyond the right leg, leaves me with little doubt that the *blemmye* wears a kilt and striped hose at the very least and a full tunic (with no obvious neckline for a neckless creature) at the most.
[153] *tam prauas gentes et perfidas, ut supra diximus, ad aquilonem, cum conperisset Gogetas et Magogets et onagrias forma et omnia lineamenta transformata et truculentissima tam in vitam et in membris omnibus*. Herren, *Cosmography*, I.41a.205.
[154] Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. Francis J. Tschan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 248-49.

Cosa's 1500 CE mappamudi.[155] We cannot discount that the possibility that these creatures are clothed simply because their cultural placement is closer to "home."

In short, the Vitellius *Wonders of the East* certainly implies that the categories of "human," "monster," and "beast" exist; it even suggests that fitting these creatures into such categories, as it does with the lion-maned man, is a good idea. But what we lack is confirmation that any particular definition or set of norms is *right*, or whether the categories used to define them as monsters are even useful. As Nicholas Howe has explained, "The category of the monstrous in *Wonders* does not yield beings utterly different or unimaginable for an English reader or viewer. If these beings sometimes seem freakish, they are not freaks that can be mentally quarantined in a distant elsewhere."[156] He likewise concludes that "*Wonders* becomes more completely historical and less sensationalistic in Vitellius than in Tiberius, more about human beings and the use of places to demarcate a life than about the exotic elsewhere."[157] Without any kind of systematic categorization to help assimilate this knowledge, the reader must either accept the nearness of these creatures or to abjectify them, reject the challenge they bring to the familiar. The *donestre* episode suggests to the reader that this desire for familiarity, to seek out the familiar in these texts is a trap; and yet, to reject the call of one's own language is to deny something of the self. Likewise, the *Conopenas* with his boar's tusks and splendid robes hints that something of Christoper dwells within.

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[155] Cf. Tony Campbell, *Early Maps* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1981), 14-15, pl. 3. Some of this is summarized in Alauddin Samarri, "Beyond Belief and Reverence: Medieval Mythical Ethnography in the near East and Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23, no. 1 (1993): 40.
[156] Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 175.
[157] Ibid., 186.

B. Geographic Desire vs. Geographic Containment

As we have just seen, taxonomic containment is a spatial exercise whch places the unknown into an intellectual architecture, putting the unknown "closer" or "farther" from the standards of the norm. Geographic containment is the literal manifestation of that spatial scale mapped out on the physical earth; it puts the reader both inside of the space and intellectually in control of it, reconstructing it mentally from a safe distance from the realities of the actual location. It also allows the reader, in Tomasch's words, " to penetrate interior enigmas, to master and possess."[158] Many Classical and Medieval geographies, in fact, used an elaborate formula of progressive rotation and spatial orientation to situate that reader within the space without the aid of illustrations. As F. E. Romer points out, Greek geographies generally rotated around the *orbis terrarum* clockwise while Latin authors often moved counter-clockwise, each turning once around the main landmass and then once more around the islands of Ocean.[159] These texts often orient the reader bodily within the textual map, turning them *sinistra, dextra,* and *terga* within the mental space in addition to the cardinal points of the compass rose.[160]

Out of the surviving analogues, the *Fermes* Letter (FL) most clearly represents this geographic impulse. The salutation identifies the work as an imperial travelogue, and

[158] Tomasch and Gilles, *Text and Territory*, 2.
[159] F. E. Romer, *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 9.
[160] This is the common method for Antique cartographers to help their readers spatially reconstruct written maps. To give a more easily demonstrable example, the *Fermes* letter locates the land of the "quinocoephali" as follows: *Seleucia autem a parte dextra euntibus ad Mare ruburm sunt vicinales divisione*s. The readers mentally orient themselves as if on a road (here, to the East), putting North to the left and South to the right. Here, Seleucia is to the North, and the readers mentally turns to his or her right to find the Red Sea. The text then instructs them to continue South (*a dextra parte ducent*) and they will end up in Egypt. While these directions may sound absurd to modern cartographers, it perfectly fits the configuration of landmasses as they are drawn in the Cotton Mappamundi. Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 206. Cf. McGurk, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany*, fol. 56v.

though Fermes proposes to describe "the nations of men and sorts of places" in his introduction, he does not specifically mentions marvels and monsters.[161] In fact, FL's first marvels, the combustible chickens and eight-legged beasts, only appear after painting this elaborate backdrop:

> For those going towards the south from this place [Egmonas] there is a wealthy city by the name of Archymedia; it is 300 stadia from Babylon. There are rich estates in this same Archymedia, and exceedingly fruitful. From here to Anteletens is 300 stadia. A massive river [is there]. It is forty stadia from Babylon to Mesopotamia. This is a worthy and dutiful region more than wealthy. It is 185 stadia from there to the *damnas castrorum* [Damascus?].[162] Going to the left-hand side [East] there are twelve nations: Valatho, Melenimo, Cleopatra, Termasia, Marmino, Maragdon, Fluvius, Casia, Possidonia, India, Anda, and Eluchana. From there to the fort of Philonia, which the place is called, is 300 stadia. This region is in the vicinity Mount Hor.[163]

While this is easily the most elaborate example from the *Wonders* tradition, it provides an excellent illustration of these geographic conventions. Following Greek tradition, the *Fermes* letter progresses more or less in a clockwise direction, starting in Antioch, moving

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[161] *Interea cognovi ut nationes hominum et qualitates locorum que in terris nostris sunt exquisivi meisque litteris conexa transmittam*. Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 202.

[162] Both Gibb and Knock suggest that the original reading was *damascus*, following Gervase of Tilbury's emendation. This also makes good sense geographically, as it is in the same region as Mount Hor. Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 133; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 276.

[163] *Hinc euntibus ad meridie versus civitas est opulenta nomine archymedia; distat a babilonia stadia CCC; haec eadem archymeda sunt predia opulenta et fructuosa nimis. Hinc usque ad anteletens stadia CCC. Fluvius immensus. A babilonia usque mesopotamia stadia sunt lx; locus honestus et plus quam locupletes hinc usque damnas castrorum stadia sunt clxxxv. A sinistra vero euntibus civitates sunt xii: valatho, melenimo, cleopatra, termasia, marmino, maragdon, fluvius, casia possidonia, india, anda, eluchana. Hic ad castellum philoniae, qui locus dictus est stadia .ccc. hac regio mons horis vicinatur*. Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 203-4.

into Mesopotamia and India, south past the Red Sea into Egypt, and ending somewhere in western Africa. FL presents us with the ethos, if not quite the reality, of geographic accuracy:[164] first few sections meticulously explain the names of rivers, colonies, and territories, giving their location in relationship to others and measuring their distance in Greek stadia. Its spatial cues point the readers south and then looking leftward (that is, to the east) to properly locate the surrounding lands in the vicinity. The monsters of the East become part of that landscape, no different than mountains of gold and fire or the glittering black gems of Persia.

In contrast, the P-Group analogues are much less invested in this geographic discourse, and the subsequent revisions in the manuscript scrambled the geographic framework. As Faral, Knock and Orchard have all described in detail, the texts of the P-Group excised much of the FL's topographical content and inserted new marvels into the last third of the text. The lack of situating toponyms for these new marvels, and the lack of toponyms in other places, makes their location harder to pin down; places once explained with some precision become merely "an island in Ocean" or "near the Red Sea."[165] Other locations migrate to entirely different continents. For example, many analogues including *Wonders of the East* include a mountain of adamant, the griffon, and the phoenix near Heliopolis in Egypt. EP, however, identifies this mountain (perhaps more appropriately) as Riphaeus, the boundary marker between Europe and Asia where the griffons traditionally dwell. This shifts the geography from southern Egypt to the northernmost point of the

[164] If one compares this passage with the later chapters of the Ravenna *Cosmography*, the tropes are nearly identical: locations come first, and then long lists of *civitates* contained in the vicinity. See: "Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia," in *Itineraria Romana*, ed. Joseph Schnetz (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1990), III.2.
[165] Cf. Hilka, "Ein neuer (altfransösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens," 95-96.

world, disturbing the linear motion of the text and dragging the phoenix out of context along with it.[166] In FR, "Mesopotamia" finds itself lodged between the Nile and Briso rivers instead of the Tigris and Euphrates.[167]

These texts therefore show varying levels of dedication to, or deviation from, the conventions of geographical discourse, and the scribes who wrote them each made meaning from those deviations in different ways. But how does this matter to the creatures of the East? As we have previously seen with Adelinus and his *Liber monstrorum,* geographically marginalizing the Other creates a barrier of distance between them and the self, provided one can find a place on the map remote enough to banish them. Adelinus, for instance, thought that monsters naturally occur in places opposed to human cultivation: islands, deserts, and mountains. Not satisfied with leaving them in the margins, however, Adelinus then literally chases the monsters into the sea like a latter-day Saint Patrick. As John Block Friedman, Susan Kim, and Asa Simon Mittman all have demonstrated, this tactic is at least as old as the Greeks, who commonly pushed their fantasies of monsters in the margins of the world while such creatures rarely existed at home.[168]

These Continental analogues all show varying levels of commitment to this form of geographic containment. The *Epistola Premonis* (EP) seeks to describe places "where diverse kinds of men and monsters are born," and it likewise places many of them on

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[166] FL: *Circa ea vero mons est adamans inaccessibilis. In quo monte est avis habens caput aquilinum, penas maximas similes luppe. In eodem monte est alia avis, nomine phenix.* EP: *Et montes riphei ibi, ubi sunt gripes, qui habent equinum capud. In eodem monte quoque est avis fenix.* Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 213. Traditionally, the griffon lives in the far Eurasian north, and the Riphaean Mountains are usually associated with adamant through the legend of Alexander's entrapment of Gog and Magog. See: Herren, *Cosmography*, 41a-b, 67a-b.

[167] *Est inter brysonem fluvium et nilum quo egiptus irrigatur regio que dicitur Mesopotamia.* Knock, "Wonders of the East," 936.

[168] Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 37-38; Kim, "Man-Eating Monsters and Ants as Big as Dogs," 40; Mittman, *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England*, 46.

islands, deserts, and mountains.[169] The Old French version (OFr) is perhaps the most extreme: many landlocked areas become islands, and those islands, along with mountains and rivers, are home to a host of marvels from the second half of the text.[170] Although the technique may differ slightly, both of these analgoues situate their marvels into an intricately drawn and inflexible map which renders monsters firmly "over there."

This brings us to the question of how these geographical conventions play out in the *Wonders of the East*. What we find is that the Viltellius *Wonders* is shot through with all the cues of geographic desire but without fulfillment, hinting at the possibility of containment but failing to realize its potential. On the one hand, the Vitellius text pays homage to many of the conventions of the geographic tradition. Despite the chaos on the surface, one can still pick out a counter-clockwise rotation across the *orbis terrarum:* it starts in Babylon and Medea, turns south to Egypt, east to the Red Sea, and finally north towards the "beginning of the East."[171] Furthermore, many of its more unidentifiable locations can be *situated* against one another even though most of them cannot be *placed* on a generic map. If one puts Archemedon to the Red Sea on one axis and Babylon on the other with Antimolima as its axis, one can outline the locations in §§1-7 with some certainty: Lentibelsinea and its incendiary chickens live somewhere to the right in a line between

[169] *loca vel insulas in oriente, ubi diversa hominum monstrorumve qualitas nascatur, vel montium figuras et hominum vel bestiarum describi jussimus*. Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 202.
[170] Hilka, "Ein neuer (altfransösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens," 100-02.
[171] See: Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, pl. 9. Kim and Mittman have attempted to plot this journey, as much as it can be, onto the Cotton Mappamundi, mostly as an intellectual exercise to visualize the difficulty of the task. The importance of this exercise, to my mind at least, is that it demonstrates how differently the Anglo-Saxons situated the lands of the earth in comparison to our post-Cartesian world. One most clearly sees that diffference in both the eastern direction of the Nile and extreme eastern position of the Red Sea, even beyond Babylon. Through this exercise, we can see that the reader travels the length of the Nile and Brixontes not to the *south*, but to the *east*. Knock assumed a largely post-Cartesian outlook when interpreting the directional cues, and so she believed that the text moved south and then to the west to Egypt in §9. Knock, "Wonders of the East," 624-5.

Antimolima and the the Red Sea. The horned asses and serpents make their appearance in southern Babylon, not far from the land of pepper.[172]

As for orientation, the Tiberius/Bodley versions turn the reader *sinister* and *dexter* while facing a specific direction, and Vitellius translation renders these directions correctly. In §6, the the Latin *a dextera parte in Babilonia* is translated into *þæt is on þa suð healfe from Babiloniam*, the correct direction when facing East, heading from Babylon to the Red Sea;[173] in §17, the same direction is again translated as *on þa suð healfe garsecges*, since the reader is facing east as they move away from the Brixontes.[174] In §29, the reader is directed first *on þæm wynstran dæl* (that is, north) towards the land of the land of the Catini, turned back towards Ocean, and then directed *þanon fræm þæm wynstran dæle*, to the south, towards the land of the generous men.[175] Vitellius' final marvels are mostly on the edge of Ocean or its islands, working around the edges of the landmass after describing its center. All of these features suggest that the person who translated *Wonders* into English both understood the text's geograpic underpinnings and used these tropes in the translation.

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[172] This interpretation is based on a few assumptions which depart from the norm. First, the phrase *sum stow* (fol. 99r, ln. 6) and *<o>n sumon lande* (fol. 99v, ln. 7) should be rendered "a part of that place" and "in a part of that land," based on the most common definition of *sum*, which is a part of a whole (Bosworth-Toller 933). This reading also accords with the corresponding Latin *ibi* in the Tiberius MS. The text therefore names larger landmasses and then breaks them down into smaller parts in the same manner as the Ravenna *Cosmography* does. Secondly, references to Archemedon, Babylon, and the Red Sea are meant to serve as fixed axes of a mental map. Mittman and Kim, in comparison translated *sum* as indefinite and concluded that there was no coherent map. See: Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 184; cf. "Ravennatis anonymi cosmographia," III.ii.
[173] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts,* 99b.9-10.
[174] Ibid., 102b.17-18.
[175] Ibid., 106a.10, 19-20. My interpretation here differs from Knock's, who felt that the orientation was absolute and based on the eastern orientation of most maps. If we use the Old English *Orosius* as a second data point, however, we see a more situational orientation. At one point, the translator defines North as *on þa swiþran* healfe, which means that the reader is facing West (8.16-19). The Latin author's position *sinistra* to Armenia becomes *westryhte,* meaning that the reader faces North (11.28). Likewise, Ohthere's travelogue orients the reader first north and then east, directing the reader to the left and right of his ship (*bæcbord* and *steorbord*) as needed. See: Knock, "Wonders of the East," 625; Janet Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1.1.

Moreover, some of the changes in the Vitellius version actually improve its geographic veneer. The Vitellius version lacks five marvels included in the Tiberius version: the griffon on its adamant mountain, the phoenix, a flaming mountain, and a story about Iamnes and Mambres, the two Egyptian magicians who sparred with Moses in the Exodus account.[176] These different marvels have wildly divergent locations in the textual canon: the griffon and Adamans in the far north among the Scythians, the phoenix in either Heliopolis, Syria, or Arabia, the flaming mountain in the far south-east, and Iamnes and Mambres in Hell.[177] Without these more obviously catalog-oriented marvels at the end, the Vitellius text ends with the Ethiopians (called *sigelwara*) among its other Indian marvels, keeping the situational map more or less in focus.[178]

Even so, describing a landmass by the relative position of its parts requires a systematic consistency, which is something that *Wonders* fails to provide. One must first start from a "well-defined and isolatable site," not unlike a datum stake in a surveyor's grid.[179] Central points such as this are crucial for textual mapping, for if one gets lost in the sequence, they must start again from their anchor-point. FL starts with Antioch, an

[176] §§ 34, 35, 36, and 37 respectively.
[177] While there are numerous traditions placing the griffon and the adamant mountain in the far north, including Aethicus, the Latin *Epistola Alexandri*, and Solinus, the most convenient example comes from the mappamundi in London, BL Cotton Tiberius B.v, fol. 56v. Here, the "griphorum gens" sits directly north of the Sea of Azov, on the border of the Ocean. Both pseudo-Lactantius and its Old English adaptation place the phoenix in Syria, and Isidore in Arabia (*Etymologies* XII.vii.22). The Cotton Mappamundi places a burning mountain (*hic dicitur esse mons super ardens*) in the farthest southeastern corner of the *orbis terrarum*. McGurk, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany*, fol. 57r.
[178] While the Ethiopians may seem out of place at first glance, it depends on *which* Ethiopians are under discussion. Both Pliny and Isidore of Seville divide them into regional groups, and each place one of those in the Far East. Isidore identifies three groups: the western Hesperians, the Garamantes of Libya, and the Indians in the Asiatic east (IX.ii.127-129). Following the Isidoran tradition, the Cotton Map calls three different regions of the far south "Ethiopia," and the farthest East lies very near to the eastern Ocean.
[179] "These writers locate places… by writing them in an ordered sequence that typically begins with a well-defined and isolatable site and then moves outward to other such regions as Britain." Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 5-6.

important commercial and political center in the Greek East, for exactly this reason. The Vitellius version, however, starts with an unnamed colony placed near *Antimolima*, which is described as both an island and a city, but we have no mention of where it is or in which body of water it lies.[180] Only when Archemedon and Babylon appear does the location of *Lentibelsinea* (§3) draw vaguely into focus. The Vitellius *Wonders* has no "well-defined and isolatable site" to start, and the closest site we have is Babylon, mentioned well into the second section. We start *in medias res*, searching for definable points buried by corruption or lost to time.

Furthermore, a textual map functions purely on sequence; as Nicholas Howe explains, "To locate where a place is in this form or cartography, one must relate the sequence of places that lead to it… you cannot get there from here unless you go through all of the places in between."[181] That "sequence of places" in FL, for instance, is fairly uncomplicated and tied up within the sequence of the narrative, but the Vitellius *Wonders* breaks up the sequence of locations entirely. §9 implies that the dog-headed *conopenas* live in the general area of Persia but then places them in southern Egypt.[182] Next, the lion-maned men (§12) live in *Ciconia in gallia*. This toponym originally refered not to a place but to birds (Lt. *ciconas*, *gallis*) and arose from a conflation between §11 and §12.[183] Since Gallia is a recognizeable place-name in the European west, it breaks the situational

[180] *Seo landbuend on fruman from antimolime þæm lande*. Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 98b.1-3.
[181] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 6.
[182] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 100a.18-19.
[183] Ibid., 101b.12. The confusion is an issue of page layout. Knock correctly notes that the sentence about Egypt should probably have been treated as the first part of §10 rather than the conclusion to §9, as it is in some of the other analogues. Gibb offers Solinus' land of "Cercina as a possibility" for the intended locality, but he places no faith in the suggestion. Knock, "Wonders of the East," 624-5; Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 151-52.

progress from Egypt to the Red Sea by seemingly veering off to France and dropping the lion-maned men somewhere just over the Channel. The text has just violated Friedman's proclamation that "the monstrous races were always far away"[184] and, ironically, contradicts Jerome's infamous proclamation that "Gallia alone has no monsters."[185]

As the text progresses, those data points become more and more scarce, and by the the time we reach the last several marvels, only the *sigelwara* (Ethiopians) in §33 provide any familiar context. Though Ethiopians are geographically known, they are not isolatable; Isidore divides them into three geographically bounded groups, and the word *Ethiopes* likewise appears in five times in three diferent locations on the Cotton Map.[186] Their widespread existence in different areas makes it impossible to use them to stabilize an already uncertain geography.[187]

Finally, even though the measured distances we have seen in FL are not a part of all textual maps, they sometimes make a special appearance in imperial works of geography—and they also appear in *Wonders*. Agrippa's work contained such distances, as Pliny cites them throughout his geography in Book III.[188] The Antonine Itinerary measures the distance in miles of nearly every major road in the British Empire, and it also records both

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[184] Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 1.
[185] *Sola Gallia monstra non habuit*. Jerome, *Contra Vigilantum,* in *PL* vol. 23, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1845), col. 341.
[186] The map includes the legends *libia ethiopicum* in two different locations, *gangines ethiopes* and *hic ethiopes* in the same location, and *ethiopica deserta* in the far southeast. McGurk, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany*, fol. 56v. See also fn. 178, above.
[187] Suzanne Conklin Akbari has also noted this multiplicity of "Ethiopia" on world maps, though her example is from Lambert of St.-Omer's *Liber floridus*. She concludes that Ethiopia is "a location of multiplicity and uncertainty, where borders are extremely variable." *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the East, 1100-1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 69.
[188] Most of the distances in Pliny's survey of Europe appear to come from Agrippa, whom he explicitly cites on at least two occasions. *Pliny: Natural History*, III.xvii.

its islands and their distances in Greek stadia.[189] The fourth-century cosmography of Julius Honorius meticulously measures rivers, and the ninth-century Irish cosmographer Dicuil compiled many of these sources in his *De mensura orbis*.[190] When such measurements appear, the reader can visualize not only relative position but also vastness, allowing for a spatial form of comprehension much more familiar to modern obsessions with space and scale. To reduce the vastness of the world into discrete and measurable figures is, in some ways, the highest achievement of geographical desire. Tomasch's analogy to Martianus Capella is especially apt: Philology's handmaid is not Geography, but *Geometry*, and she features such distances in the lecture which arouses Zeus's lustful gaze.[191]

The earliest versions of the *Wonders* tradition almost certainly had distances in Greek stadia; they play an important part in the construction of FL's travelogue setting, and despite the extreme plasticity of the larger tradition, only one analogue lacks them entirely.[192] The Old French version contains distances measured only in leagues and thus hints at an older, Continental ancestor somewhere between them.[193] Regardless of their accuracy, one must infer that these measurements were treated like an important element of the text. Like these Continental analogues, the Vitellius *Wonders* contains some references to distance, but neither their consistency nor purpose line up with reader's

[189] "Itineraria Antonini Augusti," in *Itineraria Romana*, ed. Otto Cuntz (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1990), 508.1-529.6.
[190] One of Dicuil's sources, in fact, is a composite of Julius Honoroius and Orosius, but he attributes it to Aethicus Ister. Cf. A. Riese, ed. *Geographi latini minores* (Heilbronn: Verlag von Gebr. Henninger, 1878), 24-55; Tierney, *Dicuili liber de mensura orbis terrae*, 27-30.
[191] Cf. fn. 16, above.
[192] As explained in the previous section, EP focuses the most heavily on marvels, making the reason for the lack of geographic detail more obvious. FR, which also focuses on marvels, only retains one of the original measurements.
[193] Knock, "Wonders of the East," 175.

expectations. The opening sections of Vitellius, for example provide the following description:

> On þæm ealande bið micel mænegeo sceapa 7 þanon is to babilonian þæs læssen milgetæles stadio hundteonig · 7 eahta 7 .lx. 7 þæs miclan milgetæles þe leones hatte fiftyne 7 hundteonig[194]

To a modern eye at least, the textual problems here are legion. Since the Gallic league is a rather obscure measurement in Anglo-Saxon England, most critics of *Wonders* are mystified as to why the text contains them at all. Pickles notes that the Vitellius version renames the leagues with the nonsensical "lions" (*leones*), which puts the Vitellius copyist's familiarity with them somewhat in doubt.[195] We can make the same assumption for their knowledge Greek stadia. The most common unit of conversion between stadia and leagues (1.5:1) across the manuscript is incorrect, as there are around twelve stadia in a league.[196] In fact, no commonly known definition of a *stadium*—Greek, Roman, Egyptian—fits the conversion size. The error likely originated in a Continental version only to be passed on, unnoticed, by English scribes. To put it in perspective, it would be like expecting a modern reader to recognize a conversion error in kilometers to furlongs; both units might be

[194] "On that island there is a great multitude of sheep, and from there to Babylon it is 168 of the lesser measurement called *stadia,* and 115 in the greater measurement called *leuuae*." Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts,* 98b.7-9.
[195] Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 54.
[196] The margin of error depends on which definition of stadia one uses, although none of them produce the correct result. Here I have used the Greek. Also, since the size of both the league and mile can vary in the Middle Ages, one should not put too fine a point on this.

familiar by name, but the reader may have only a vague sense of how long one of them really is.[197]

Ann Knock thus hypothesizes that the original translator, unfamiliar with the *stadion*, assumed that it was the same length as the long mile, which is in fact measures 1.5 per league.[198] In the example given above, the overall ratio of stadia to leagues is 1.46, which is fairly close, but the ratios vary from there. The length of the island with the ancient temple in §23, for instance, is 150 leagues too short for the number of stadia given.[199] On the whole, Kim and Mittman and Kim feel that the calculations are too corrupted to carry any sense, while Knock asserts that the original calculations were probably as accurate one could get with an abacus.[200]

What this means for the Vitellius *Wonders* text is unclear. Mittman and Kim stress that the repetition and level of unnecessary detail creates something like Baudelaire's "reality effect" while Paul Allen Gibb declares geographical authenticity "thin" and assumes that the text's purpose lies elsewhere.[201] Both of these assumptions assume that these included measurements no longer serve any recognizeable geographic purpose, but is that

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[197] These distances would not have made much sense to an astute reader anyhow, for at face value they are far too short to represent real distances between Babylon and the Holy Land. If, however, one replaces the Greek *stadia* for Roman leagues (at 1.5 Roman miles), it is 300-375 leagues from ancient Babylon to Archemedon (modern-day Fars), bringing the distances much closer to reality. This could mean that the problem of unit conversion seen in the *Wonders of the East* may have been a feature of these texts from its inception.

[198] Knock, "Wonders of the East," 69. Knock, as well as others, take the inclusion of leagues as an indication that these conversions were originally done on the Continent. Supporting her hypothesis is the version OFr, which is written in Picardic and also contains the league conversions. See: ibid., 67.

[199] The area is said to be 360 stadia, or 110 leagues. If the same ratio were followed, it should be 240 leagues. Cf. Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 104b.3-8.

[200] I tend to side with Knock on this issue. If one looks at the Appendix to Kim and Mittman's book, all but two of the ratios are within two or three percent of exact accuracy. Knowing the limitations to computing fractions with an abacus, these ratios are, in fact, impressively close. The other two are so far off as to clearly be copy errors, and it is reasonable to think that a keen-eyed reader of medieval texts would be aware of such mistakes. Knock, "Wonders of the East," 69; Mittman and Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts*, 240.

[201] *Inconceivable Beasts*, 187; Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 56.

necessarily the case? On the one hand, an initial survey would say "yes." The first three measurements all place the unnamed colony of §1 in relation to larger cities: five hundred stadia to Antimolima, a hundred and sixty-eight to Babylon, and three hundred to Archemedon, the city of the Medes.[202] Though we seem to have located the colony with an almost Cartesian accuracy, two of those data points, Antimolima and Archemedon, have no isolatable, determined location. The most geographically detailed section of Vitellius thus fails to pinpoint anything at all. Furthermore, the distances recorded after this passage do not follow in direct sequence. Only two of the remaining measure distances between two points: from Babylon to the land in Persia where pepper grows in §6 (800 stadia), and from the vaguely defined islands of the Briso to an unnamed kingdom in §17 (233 stadia).[203] Since there are nine chapters of intervening places between them, they cannot map out a clear sequential map of locations.

On the other hand, perhaps focusing on distances between points is misleading us from their true purpose. The four remaining measurements define not distance, but *dimension*: the length and width of the island where the unnamed colony lies (§1), the size of the lakes of the Sun and Moon (§18), the land surrounding the lakes (§19), and the island where the ancient temples and the noble priest are found (§23).[204] All of these measurements are somehow related to the size of either islands or bodies of water, and of those discussed before, all but one of them measure distances to islands as well. These measurements, regardless of whether they involve distance or dimension, are

[202] Cf. §§1-2, fol. 98v-99r.
[203] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts,* 100a. 3-8; 102b.19-103a.2.
[204] I have excluded one additional measurement, the land of Hascllentia (§5), because it is omitted from the Vitellius version. It is possible that the lines were omitted to make room for an extra drawing, as the two-headed serpent on fol. 99v stretches across the page and blocks out two entire lines' worth of text space.

overwhelmingly focused on sites not directly attached to the landmass of the world. We are not meant to use these measurements to find our way around the earth, but rather what lies apart from it.

Many of the ancient geographers record dimensions or distances for islands, mountain ranges, or other land-forms, but in the geographies available to to the Anglo-Saxons they tend to be used most often with islands. In a textual, sequential geography, islands are harder to situate because they share no terrestrial borders. Some geographers situate them against the coastline in a fixed order, and others give their dimensions and relative distance to each other. The Antonine Itinerary, for instance, measures the islands together in a single section, and, just like the *Wonders* tradition, it measures them in stadia.[205] Isidore of Seville begins his catalog of islands with Britannia and Taprobane, the two largest, and then lists both dimensions and immediate distances for the islands of the Mediterranean.[206] The geographic chapters of Orosius' *Historia* mention almost no dimensions other than those for those islands of the Mediterranean, and the Old English version follows suit.[207] This same list of islands likewise appears in an anonymous eighth-century cosmography represented in a Cambridge manuscript from the late eleventh century.[208]

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[205] See: Otto Cuntz, ed., *Itineraria Antonini*, in *Itineraria Romana* vol. 1 (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1990), 1-85.
[206] Cf. Isidore, *Etymologies* XIV.ii.2,17-42. One should note that the Barney et. al. translation of Britain's circumference in XIV.ii.2, which reads 24,000 Roman miles, is clearly a mistranslation of the Latin. Isidore's figures should be rendered as 48 x 75 (3,600) miles rather than 40 x 8 x 75 (24,000) miles.
[207] Cf. Orosius, *Historia* I.ii.96-103.
[208] A single manuscript from Anglo-Saxon England, Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.4.34, contains a fragment of this *Cosmographia* along with Orosius' *Historia*. This copy was once complete, however; the rest of the *Cosmographia* was separated into a different manuscript (O.4.36) and was unfortunately destroyed. See: Gneuss, *Handlist* 196.5.

We must therefore acknowledge that at least some of these measurements had a clear geographic purpose to its readers: situating islands. It *matters* that the island of §23 is 360 stadia long because it distinguishes it from the other islands in the Red Sea; it demonstrates that this island is of sufficient landmass to be treated as its own geographic region comparable in size, in fact, to Persia or the land of pepper. Perhaps even more importantly, it gives them concrete, countable information that, in the geographies available to the Anglo-Saxons, is usually reserved for the best-known, heavily populated islands of the Mediterranean. Islands, like forests and mountain ranges, were regarded as dangerous places with little human control, but knowledge of their size, distance from other places, and evidence of habitation "tames" their strangeness.[209] The island of "Quietus" in §23 boasts of strange things, but it is inhabited; it has been measured; and the people, instead of being exotic and strange, are ascetics. Their temples and vineyards are a cause for wonder but not necessarily fear. This stands in stark contrast to the island of the Donestre (§20), which has no measurements to situate it, and whose strange inhabitants deceive and eat travelers.

These island measurements also draw one more, final comparison: that the islands of the East are similar to the island of Britain. As the largest of all the islands in Ocean, it often gets pride of place in geographic text, and often, it is the only island given length, width, or circumference.[210] The Old English Bede describes Britain as follows:

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[209] The analogues to *Wonders* bear this out quite well. EP promises to describe *loca vel insulas in oriente, ubi diversa hominum monstrorumve qualitas nascuntur*, and the Prologue to the *Liber monstrorum* says they are found *per deserta et Oceani insulas et in ultimorum latebris nutrita*. Faral, "Une source latine de l'histoire d'Alexandre," 202; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 254.
[210] Cf. *Etymologiarum* XIV.vi.2.

> Breoton is garsecges ealond, ðæt wæs iu geare Albion haten: is gseted betwyh norðdæle and westdæle, Germanie 7 Gallie 7 Hispanie þæm mæste dæle Euope myccle fæce ongegen. Þæt is norð eahta hund mila lang, 7 tu hund mila brad. Hit hafað fram suðdæle þa mægþe ongean, þe man hateþ Gallia Bellica. Hit is welig þis ealond on wæstmum 7 on treowum misinlicra cynna; 7 hit is gescræpe on læswe sceapa 7 neata; 7 on summon stowum wingeardas growaþ.[211]

In this opening passage, Bede describes the island of Britain in terms of its length, width, and position relative to other major places on the Continent; he stresses its fecundity, pointing out its abundant pasturage for sheep and cattle. How different is this from the unnamed colony near Antimolima, which is measured in stadia, situated at a distance directly opposite the major nations of Babylon, Persia, and the Medes, which grows an abundance of sheep as big as oxen?

The similarity to *Wonders* does not just stop at the unnamed colony's position and natural features. Bede continues his geographic description with its notable wealth and monumental, ancient architecture:

> Her biþ eac gemeted gagates: se stan bið blæc gym; gif mon hine on fyr deþ, þonne fleoþ þær neddran onweg. Wæs þis ealond eac geo gewurðad mid þam æðelestum

[211] "Britain is an island in the Ocean which was in years past called Albion: it is situated between the north and west, at a large distance opposite of Germany, Gallia and Spain, the largest divisions of Europe. That place goes north for eight hundred miles and two hundred wide. In the southern part it directly opposite the land which is called Belgic Gaul. This island is lush with plants and trees of various kinds and well-suited for the pasture of sheep and cattle; and in some places vineyards grow." Thomas Miller, ed. *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2 vols. (London: EETS, 1890-98), 1.24.28-26.5.

ceastrum, anes wana þrittigum, ða þe wæron mid weallum 7 torrum 7 geatum 7 þam trumestum locum getimbrade, butan oðrum læssan unrim ceastra.[212]

The Vitellius *Wonders* talks of an island 360 stadia long, with a jewel-producing vineyard; the place called Quietus is there, and priest who cares for its glass temple practices a noble, ascetic way of life. Bede's Britain may not have vineyards of gold, but it does grow grapes, and the jet it produces has its own strange powers. Much like great works of Alexander remaining in Archemedon, Britain has its own notable monuments, remains of the twenty-nine Roman settlements of ancient Britain. And, like place of "Quietus" and its glass temple, Britain has also turned into a place of "Quietus," where stone churches take the place of the temple of glass, and its holy men and women practice a similar way of life.

In conclusion, what we ultimately find from the geographic elements in *Wonders* is that, despite clear signals that the text and its editors strove for some kind of geographic consistency, it fails to provide the satisfaction that comes from coherence; it does not "penetrate interior enigmas"; it cannot "master and posses." The text cannot quarrantine its creatures within a coherent geographic map or provide a concrete barrier of knowledge that puts the reader at a superior (and safe) remove from the exotic. The Other slips through the textual faultlines of its "joyous excess" precisely *because* its scribes have tried to stabilize the text and reconstruct a coherent geographic construction. Perhaps more importantly, those fragments of geographic discourse draw Britain *closer* to the East instead of building a quarantine fence around it. The *Wonders* echoes the geographic tropes

[212] "Here agates [jet] are also found. The stone is a black gem; if someone puts it in the fire, then snakes flee from there. This island was once adorned with the most noble fortresses, twenty-nine of them, which were built with walls, towers, gates, and the strongest enclosures, aside from a countless number of smaller towns." Ibid., 1.25.14-20.

which Roman authors used to comprehend and isolate Britain, and they were transmitted, via Bede and other authors, to Anglo-Saxon England. If we fail to recognize how and why this geographic information functions in the text, we also risk losing sight of how much the *Wonders* invests in the description of its islands, and how British those islands can look to a sharp-eyed reader.

C. Imperial Containment: Alexander as Ozymandias

Geography has always traveled on the coattails of empire. Some of the earliest Greek accounts of India came from Alexander's conquest, and later Latin geographies reference the greatness of Rome or the Emperor's *imperium* as a matter of course. The anonymous cosmography in Cambridge, Trinity College O.4.36 begins with the story of Julius Caesar's commission to three geographers to map the known world and report their findings to the Senate.[213] Likewise, when Pomponius Mela added Britain to his own map, he anticipated new information gained as "the greatest princeps [Tiberius] is opening the long-closed island."[214] Some decades later, Pliny the Elder began his geographic treatise with Europe as the "nurse of the race that has conquered all nations," and he swelled Europe's size— and importance— to fill half of the known world.[215] From India to Britain, imperial power opens territories to geographers, whose work then display the empire's might. Each authority supports and expands upon the other.

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[213] Riese, *Geographi latini minores*, 71-108. For this specific manuscript, see fn. 208.
[214] [*M*]*ox certiora et magis explorata dicentur. Quippe tamdiu clausam aperit ecce principum maximus.* Translation is Romer's. Although Caligula is a possiblity, the *princeps* is probably Tiberius Claudius Caesar, who celebrated a triumph after conquering island in 44 CE. See: Romer, *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World*, 2-3, 115; Barbarus, *Cosmographia*, 3.49.
[215] *Primum ergo de Europa altrice victoris omnium gentium populi longeque terrarium pulcherrima, quam plerique merito non tertiam portionem fecere verum aequam, in duas partes… diviso. Pliny: Natural History*, III.1.5.

All of the Continental analogues to *Wonders of the East* look at the world from this an imperial and Roman perspective. The ninth- to tenth-century *Fermes* letter[216] (FL) is our best example: its clear and uncorrupted narrative of Roman superiority may very well be the closest we can get to the original form of the *Wonders* tradition.[217] Fermes begins his letter by celebrating both Hadrian's power and the extent of his "cheerful *imperium*," and he later expresses disappointment at failing to capture some ox-tailed women to send back as spoils to Rome.[218] All along his travels, Fermes catalogues different *coloniae* and *civitates* for Hadrian, who presumably reads and approves of all that he sees. This epistolary format creates a space of imperial, authorizing presence, and the epistolary past of that frame gives the illusion that this empire is still present and actively expanding. That format also puts us in a Roman and pagan framework that treats Plinian monsters with "an enormous ethnocentric shrug of distaste" without any competing Christian missiological impulse.[219]

Even though the P-Group only retains the skeleton of FL's imperial epistolary trappings, these texts also each re-draw the Indian landscape to emphasize the great Eastern empires which flourished prior to Rome. In the *Epistola Parmoenis* (EP), for instance, nearly all of the named colonies, rivers, and territories in the vicinity of Antioch

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[216] Knock's text FL, also Faral's text "A." A single copy exists in Paris, BN nouv. acq. lat. 1065, a damaged codex dated saec. ix-x. Origin is unknown but the provenance is Beauvais. See: Knock, "Wonders of the East," 205-6; Faral, “Une source latine de l’histoire d’Alexandre,” 200.

[217] Knock, "Wonders of the East," 216.

[218] *Litteras tuas, domine Caesar, ab Asacrate et Monacrate recepi quibus recensetis quod te fortem atque hilarem imperium tuum amplatumque esse cognovi gavisus sum*. "I have received your letters, Lord Caesar, from Asacrates and Monacrates, who, having recounted that you are powerful, and your joyful imperium is vast, I rejoiced to know it.” *Propter vero desiderium cupivi ut aliquas caperem atque vivas Romanniae adducerem.* "On account of this, I was seized with the desire to capture some and bring them alive to Roman territory." Faral, “Une source latine de l’histoire d’Alexandre,” 202, 10.

[219] Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 37. See also his discussion of the missiological impulse towards monsters in Christian thought, 59-61. Compare this to Lisa Verner's discussion of the epistolary format and how it locks the text into a non-Christian and strictly secular frame of reference. Verner, *The Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages*, 66-67.

disappear, and in Pitra's lost analogue (Pit), the focus shifts to Premo's narration of the world's great pre-Christian empires: Babylon, Archemedon, Alexander. In these analogues, and in the *Fermes* letter in particular, the text subjects the East to imperial knowledge and authority if not outright control, but how much of that framing narrative actually survives in *Wonders of the East*? By the time that the English *Wonders* first appears, all traces of the previous Roman epistolary framework has disappeared.

The first words of the Latin version, *Colonia est initium ad antimolina,* announce that this should be colonial space.[220] Isidore of Seville defines a colony as "what is filled by new inhabitants (*cultor*) when there are no indigenous people."[221] We only see a handful of human communities in *Wonders,* but there are plenty of indigenous monsters, and one would imagine, as Adelinus had explained in the *Liber monstrorum,* that these indigenous creatures were displaced to make way for those human instruments of imperial control.[222] As Alfred Hiatt reminds us, "The notion of the colony is structured by distance— spatial distance from an imperial center or point of origin, but also temporal distance from the pre-colonial past."[223] Nicholas Howe likewise affirms that "[t]he distance of its reach is the measure of the center's power."[224] The Latin *Wonders* therefore steps out into imperial territory, regardless of whose it is, thus reminding the readers of both the distance of its reach and the measure of its power.

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[220] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 175 §1.
[221] *Colonia vero est quae defectu indigenarum novis cultoribus adimpletur*. Isidore, *Etymologies* XV.ii.9.
[222] See fn. 9, above.
[223] Alfred Hiatt, "Mapping the Ends of Empire," in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages*, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[224] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 107.

What these *colonia* in the *Wonders* tradition are and whose power they demonstrate is much more vague. EP[225] lacks the first colony entirely; Pit names it *Antepolis*, which could be either Antinopolis in Egypt or Amphipolis in Macedonia.[226] In the Old French version (OF), all of the *colonia* mentioned in other analogues are islands or nondescript "regions."[227] The Old English translation has no clear equivalent for *colonia*, as Vitellius translates the word as *landbuend* and *londbunis* respectively.[228] Both Gibb and Orchard emend *landbuend* to *landbunis* and translate all instances as "colony or settlement."[229] The former term, according to Bosworth and Toller, simply means a "farmer," "inhabitant," and even "native"; the latter is unique to the English *Wonders.*[230] Neither term invokes Isidore's place "filled by new inhabitants when there are no indigenous people," particularly when the suffix *-buend* is an equally appropriate translation for *accola*, *colonis* and *indigena*.[231] We therefore have settlement and cultivation, but not necessarily *colonization*; in fact, the only direct gloss for a *colonia* in an Anglo-Saxon text specifically defines it as *elelændra eorðbigennys*, "cultivation by foreigners."[232] All of this suggests that our English translator was thinking much more about farming than conquest.

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[225] This text was in Strasbourg, MS C. iv. 15, now lost. Graff, who saw the manuscript prior to its destruction in the Strasbourg fires, dated it to the eighth to ninth centuries. Location is unknown other than the fact that it contained Old Saxon glosses. See: Graff, *Diutiska,* 195.
[226] The manuscript for this text is unknown. In 1884 J. B. Pitra transcribed this text, but he gave no information about the manuscript other than it was in Leiden; the source has never been identified. See: Pitra, "Epistola Parmoenis," 648-49; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 149-50.
[227] Brussels, Bibliotheque Royale Albert Ier, MS 14562, ff. 5v-6v, dated xiv (Knock's MS OF) The manuscript has not been assigned an origin, but Knock suggests that the script is Flemish and its dialect could be from Amiens. She also believes that this is a copy of a much older French translation of the text. See: Hilka, "Ein neuer (altfransösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens," 92; Knock, "Wonders of the East," 173-75.
[228] *Seo landbuend on fruman from antimolime þæm lande*; *betwih þysson twam ean is londbunis · locotheo hatte*. Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 98b.1-2, 101a.16-17.
[229] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 184-5; Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 128.
[230] Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 617.
[231] See fn. 221, above. See also: ibid., 100.
[232] Cf. *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*.

Next, if colonies are supposed to be the perfect demonstration and measure of empire's reach, where is that center in *Wonders*, and under whose authority are they placed? Every Continental analogue mentions either the Emperor Trajan or Hadrian, the two emperors responsible for establishing the Roman *limes*, and so the most likely answer is that they are Roman. The *Wonders of the East* is the only analogue without any Roman attribution whatsoever, which puts its description of the East into a different context. This does not make the text empire-neutral, however, for *Wonders of the East* contains the most intricate layering of empires in the second chapter: "They dwell there all they way to the city of the Medes. The name of that city is Archemedon. It is the greatest city next to Babylon... there are mighty memorials there that are the works which the Macedonian Alexander the Great ordered built."[233] This short passage catalogues four historical empires: Babylon, the Medes, the Achaemedes of Cyrus, and the Macedonians, represented by Alexander himself; the result is a series of "historical strata" which Nicholas Howe associates with post-colonial space.[234] Three of these— the neo-Babylonians, Achaemedes, and the Macedonians— are three of the four great kingdoms in Jerome's interpretation of the visions of Daniel, with Rome as the fourth.[235] The same narrative appears in the OE poem *Daniel*: as the Babylonians decline under Balthazar, God will allow them to be

[233] *se þa buað oð meda burh þære burga nama is archemedon sio is mæst to babilonia burh þonon... þær syndon þa miclan mærða þæt syndon þa weorc þe se micla macedonisca alexsander het gewyrcan·* Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 98v.16-99r.3.
[234] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 87-88.
[235] Jerome identified the four kingdoms in the Book of Daniel, chapter 7 as the neo-Babylonians of Nebuchadnezzar, the Persians/Achaemedians under Cyrus, the Macedonians under Alexander, and Rome; this was the accepted interpretation over much of Christian Europe even though Jewish tradition favors a different reading. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Danielem libri III* ed. F. Glorie, CC ser. lat. 75a (Turnhout: Brepols, 1964), 7.1-7.

overrun the Medes and Persians, who made up the Achaemedean Empire.[236] From a biblical perspective, Babylon therefore can represent not just the punishment of pride and idolatry, but also of God's role in the destruction of these great Eastern empires.

In Paulus Orosius' *Historia contra paganos*, the four great empires are Babylon, Macedon, Carthage, and Rome, but the four mentioned in *Wonders of the East* each play a role in their rise and fall. Orosius places the end of Babylon much earlier than Daniel, under King Sardanapulus; the kingdom succumbed to revolts from the Medes and Achaemedes before the rise of the Macedonian empire.[237] In the OE *Orosius*, each of these four empires forcibly replaced the one preceding it: the Medes revolt against Sardanapalus, Cyrus conquers Medes, and that empire remains until Alexander unseats Darius in the third century BCE. The pattern is clear: we have a stratified history of pre-Christian empire in the *Wonders of the East* contained in a small geographical area, and its epicenter is Babylon.

Each version of the Babylon narrative speaks to an important lesson about the nature of empires. Andrew Scheil has explored in detail how Anglo-Saxons used the myth of Babylon as "a prior backdrop, counterpoint, reference marker of the imaginative

[236] OE *Daniel*, ll. 675-86. See: George Philip Krapp, *The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 130. The poem is incomplete as written, and it unfortunately cuts off just as Daniel begins to interpret the miraculous writing on the wall, which predicts Balthazar's end and the rise of the Medes and Persians (Dan. 5:19 VUL). Although one can reasonably assume that Daniel would have been allowed to finish his speech in a different manuscript, there is no evidence that it ever included the dream of the four beasts in Daniel. 7. See Andrew Scheil's useful reading of the OE *Daniel* and this passage: "Babylon and Anglo-Saxon England," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 36, no. 1 (2003): 52-53.

[237] In Orosius' theory of world historiography, Babylon (technically, Assyria) and Macedonia make up two of the four world's historical empires. At the end of Book I and the beginning of Book II, the OE *Orosius* details how this historical arc starts with Babylon until its conquest by Medes under Arbaces; these were later conquered by Cyrus, whose empire was later defeated by Alexander. See: Janet Bately, ed. *The Old English Orosius*, EETS (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1.12, 2.1.

horizon."[238] One of the most common of those themes is transience of earthly power, and in the Old English *Orosius*, Babylon calls herself a warning to the present:

> Now this very same stronghold [Babylon], which once was the most fortified and most wondrous and greatest of works, is like it were made an example to all middle-earth; and furthermore, she would speak to all mankind and saying: "Now I am thus ruined and have perished: look, that you may recognize and know that you have nothing at all constant or strong among you that might last."[*239*]

Babylon is perhaps far more judgmental about her sins here than in other Old English sources, but it nevertheless shares a common sentiment with *The Wanderer* and *The Ruin*: all earthly power is lost to what Roy Liuzza calls the "Apocalypse of Time," and what is lost to time can never be retrieved.[240] In short, Babylon does not represent the continuous and vigorous continuation of empire; rather, it serves an "anxious memory" of their transience.[241]

Next, although Babylon is the first and greatest of the pre-Christian empires, the *Wonders of the East* gives special attention Alexander the Great and his short-lived Indian campaign. Alexander never appears in the F-Group or in EP, presumably because this material was introduced to a different branch of the tradition; Pit, OF, and *Wonders*,

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[238] Andrew Scheil, "Babylon and Anglo-Saxon England," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 36, no. 1 (2003): 45.

[239] *Nu seo burg swelc is, þe ær wæs ealra weorca fæstast ⁊ wunderlecast ⁊ mærast, gelice ⁊ heo wære to bisene asteald eallum middangearde, ⁊ eac swelce heo self sprecende sie to eallum moncynne ⁊ cweþe: "Nu ic þuss gehroren eam ⁊ aweg gewiten, hwæt, ge magan on me ongietan ⁊ oncnawan þæt ge nanuht mid eow nabbað fæstes ne stronges þætte þurhwunigean mæge* (2.1). Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, 43.33-44.6.

[240] Scheil, "Babylon and Anglo-Saxon England," 44; Roy M. Liuzza, "The Tower of Babel: The Wanderer and the Ruins of History," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 36, no. 1 (2003): 6-8.

[241] Andrew P. Scheil, "Babylon and Anglo-Saxon England," 54.

however, all contain the same interpolations.[242] Alexander holds a particularly strong hold over the Vitellius and OF versions, however, because a translation of *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* immediately follows in their respective manuscripts.[243] Nicholas Howe argues that this juxtaposition gives the Vitellius *Wonders* a clear sense of geography lacking in Tiberius. [244] It would be more accurate to say that it places *Wonders* in a concrete *territory*-- specifically, Alexander's territory, which he both inscribes and conquers in the course of his Letter. The Vitellius version, in short, replaces the oversight of Rome with Macedonia, turning the East into a landscape defined by the reach of Alexander's shadow.

The *Wonders of the East* refers to Alexander three times: his great but unnamed building projects (§2), his annihilation of the ox-tailed women, (§27) and his protection of the extremely generous people (§30). Much like the *colonia* discussed above, the identity Alexander's building project in *Wonders* is fairly vague. Both Pitra's lost manuscript (Pit) and OFr calls the memorial "the Athens of Alexander the Great."[245] The Latin version of the *Wonders*, however, reads *ibi sunt illa magna insignia quae magnus Alexander operari iusserat*.[246] For those readers with a basic understanding of the Alexander legend, the word *insignia* would likely bring to mind either the golden pillars inscribed with his deeds and

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[242] These references also appear in the Old French version (OF) and Pitra's lost analogue (Pit).
[243] Like OFr, the Brussels manuscript version *Letter of Alexander* is little studied, and it is difficult to speculate too deeply on the relationship between the two texts. Initial evidence suggests that the two source-texts were possibly unrelated, as the OFr version has readings more common to a different manuscript class than the OE version.
[244] "With that context established, we can see that many of the seemingly unlocalized or underexplained statements in *Wonders* take on quite a different cast when encountered in Vitellius A xv, that is, they become features on a recognizable map rather than seemingly disconnected items of lore." Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 185-86.
[245] *Hoc est Athenas Magni Alexandri, sunt n. CC.* Pitra, "Epistola Parmoenis," 648. *Et de la dusques a Athaines le grant Alixandre .cxxxiii. liues.* Hilka, "Ein neuer (altfransösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens," 98.
[246] "In that place are those great *insignia* which Alexander the Great ordered done." Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 175.

the altars erected in the north, both both of which are mentioned in the Latin *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*.[247] Alexander explains in the *Letter* that he ordered the pillars, and the statues of Hercules and Liber in India, to literally create his own marvel in the East.[248] The Vitellius version of this passage translates Alexander's "great work" as *þær syndon þa miclan mærða þæt syndon þa weorc þe se micla macedonisca alexsander het gewyrcan*.[249] Orchard correctly retains the meaning of *insignia* in his own translation: "There are great monuments there, which are the works which the mighty Alexander of Macedon had made."[250] Although the context in the Old English is much more vague, the same general idea applies: whatever these structures are, they are intended to be lasting sign of Alexander's imperial conquest, erected over the landscape which he conquered. That the Old English *Orosius* uses those memorials to demarcate the boundary between Europe and Asia testifies to how well these monuments preserved that memory.[251]

It would seem logical that replacing the Trajan/Hadrian frame with a few third person references to Alexander would have very little effect upon the imperialist frame, but it dramatically changes the imperial trajectory of the narrative. For one, Roman expansion

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[247] *Ibique legato meo precepi... ut poneret in Persarum et Babilonorum terris pilas solidas aureas duas pedum vicenum quinum et in his omnia facta mea scriberet.* "And there I ordered my legate... to place two solid gold pillars, each twenty-five feet tall, in the lands of Persia and Babylon, and inscribe all of my deeds upon them." This passage is very notably missing from the Old English version. W. Walther Boer, ed. *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem: ad codicum fidem edidit et commentario critico instruxit* (Meisemhein am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1973), 59.3-6.

[248] *[I]mperavi, quae miraculo futura sunt... posteris saeculis non parvo. Novum perpetuumque statuimus virtutibus monimentum invidendum, ut immortalitas esset perpetua et nobis opinio et animi industriae... indicum.* "We have erected this new and perpetual, enviable memorial to our valor, both our reputation and a mark of our diligence of spirit." Ibid., 59.8-60.4.

[249] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, 99a.1-3.

[250] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 185.

[251] *Europe hio ongið...of Danai þære ie... ⁊ seo ea Danai irnð þonan suðryte on westhealfe Alexandres herga.* "Europe begins from the River Tanais... and the river Tanais runs southward on the western side of the Altars of Alexander." Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, 8.25-9.1.

still frames Alexander's conquest in Pit and OF, and Hadrian's push beyond even where Alexander had once been makes Rome seem the more powerful force. Also, while the Roman Empire eventually evolved into a universalized "Cristendom" with a specifically eschatological mission, Alexander's reign was brief, pre-Christian, and doomed to fragmentation.[252] In his *City of God*, for instance,[253] Augustine points out that Alexander "had acquired an empire of astonishing size but short duration. He subdued the whole of Asia, and indeed almost the whole world, partly by force of arms and partly by terror."[254] Paulus Orosius may have given the Macedonian empire a spot in his four-empire model of Christian historiography, but it only serves as a placeholder to fill in the imperial void between the empires of Babylon and Rome, the only two superpowers that actually matter.[255] The Old English *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* underscores both of these ideas: Alexander's reign is short-lived, doomed to fail, and symbolically inferior to Babylon. After he learns that he has only a few months left to live, he tells Aristotle that "to me the swift ending of my life was not so much pain [*weorce*] as the fact that I had achieved less glory

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[252] For more on the concept of *Cristendom* in Anglo-Saxon England, see: Malcolm Godden, "The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths: Rewriting the Sack of Rome," *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (2002): 47-68.

[253] Evidence for a readership of this text is quite good. Two of the four remaining MSS are dated close to the Conquest, but Lapidge catalogues citations by five different authors including Aldhelm and Bede. See: Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 284.

[254] *Nam post Alexndri Macedonis, qui etiam Magnus cognominatus est, mirificentissimam minimeque diuturnam potentiam, qua uniuersam Asiam, immo paene totam orbem, partem ui et armis, partim terrore subegerat.* Translation is Dyson's. *Sancti Aurelii Augustinii De Civitate Dei,* CC ser. Lat. vol. 47-48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), IV.vii.42; *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 151.

[255] The Old English *Orosius* suggests that the Macedonian kingdom is subservient to Babylon and Rome: *Babylonisce þæt æreste ⁊ Romane þæt siðmeste hie wæron swa fæder ⁊ sunu... þæt Crecisce ⁊ þæt Affri[c]anisce wæron swa swa hie him hiersumedon ⁊ him underþieded wære.* "Babylon and Rome, the first and the last, were like a father and son... the Macedonian and African were just like they obeyed them [Rome and Babylon] and were subjected to them." Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, 36.19-23. The Anglo-Saxons made extensive use of the Latin *Historia contra paganos* throughout the period. In addition to several manuscripts and excerpts, it was a historical reference for Bede, Asser, and the Old English *Martyrology*, among many others. See: Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 323.

[*mærðo*] than I had wished."[256] In the Vitellius manuscript, at least, to reference Alexander's imperial conquest over India is to admire his glory -- the *miclan mærða þæt syndon þa weorc*-- and to see its marks upon the landscape, but also to acknowledge that their time has passed.

When the Alexandrine accretions replace the Roman emperors in the *Wonders of the East,* it pushes the deeds of empire from an epistolary "past imperfect" to a more distant, "past-perfect" chapter of history. The valediction of the *Fermes* letter makes it clear that function of empire continues even after the letter is received and read, but in the *Wonders of the East* the only constantly visible empire we have is Alexander's, which is also the only significant part of the text narrated in the *past tense*. As his memorials in §2 make clear, this empire came after all the others, but even it has long since fallen. Alexander is one more feature of the Indian landscape; his memorials, his acts of genocide or mercy, are the only trace of where he has been, and all of the monstrous nations that he failed to displace still living alongside the strange nations of men who dwell there.

With every step in the *Wonders of the East*, the reader moves through spaces once ruled by empire— Babylon, Antimolina, Archemedon, Locothea— and no longer under its domain. The East is marked by the memory but not the *presence* of empire, where Alexander's great works are worthy of praise but firmly in the past. His monuments, the *miclan mærða þæt syndon þa weorc* are very much like Babylon in the Old English *Orosius*: his own *ealra weorca fæstast 7 wunderlecast 7 mærast* are now a sign, a *bysen* proclaiming

[256] *Ond me næs se hrædlica ende mines lifes swa miclum weorce swa me wæs ic læs mærðo gefremed hæfde þonne min willa wære.* Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 252-53.

that great power cannot last.[257] If anything, Alexander's presence in *Wonders* marks out India as a "postcolonial void," and his "great works" are the *enta geweorc* of the Indian landscape, the "work of giants" whose great accomplishments are now a vague memory written in stone.[258] India and England now share much more than Adelinus would have liked: a common history of imperial expansion and collapse on the far edges of the world now ruled by monsters and strange men.

4. Heavenly and Earthly Considerations of the Margin

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen suggests in his seven theses that "the monster always escapes."[259] Specifically, he points out that "'Monster theory'" must… concern itself with strings of cultural moments, connected by a logic that always threatens to shift."[260] Slightly adapted, his thesis explains the shifting, seemingly immaterial body of the "Wonders of the East": as a Protean, plastic "monster," of a work, the *Marvels* tradition also always escapes. We must concern ourselves with strings of textual moments without a firm footing, grappling with a constantly shifting logic of containment and *variance* between iterations. Nicholas Howe likewise observed that *Wonders* leaves the reader "with pieces that relate to each other and yet is given no way to reconcile their differences or resolve them into a

[257] Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, 43.33-44.1. See also fn. 239, above.
[258] The concept of a "postcolonial void" in Anglo-Saxon England goes back to Nicholas Howe, whose description of the Roman ruins as marking the void shares some similarities to how E. V. Thornbury talks about similar ruins in *Beowulf.* See: E. V. Thornbury, "*Eald Enta Geweorc* and the Relics of Empire: Revisiting the Dragon's Lair in *Beowulf*," *Quaestio* 1 (2000), 82-92; Nicholas Howe, "Anglo-Saxon England and the Postcolonial Void," in *Poscolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages*, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25-47.
[259] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4.
[260] Ibid.

whole or otherwise live with them."[261] This text, like the monster, always escapes; and in its escape, it leaves behind wreckage, Cohen's physical trace of where the monster has been: smashed categories, notions of the Other, cultural fragments with no map to put them back together again.

The *Wonders of the East* thus belies the fantasy that monstrosity is actually containable, but the wider implications are far more dangerous: it denies the belief that *any* textual knowledge, passed through generations of script, can ever be truly grasped. The *variance* of the text, like the ever-evolving hippopotamus, can be slowed down but it cannot be frozen. The discomfort its readers feel leaves them "mourning for the text," not unlike the *Donestre*, over the indigestible fragments of the editorial process.[262]

In his *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England,* Asa Mittman briefly considers an intriguing question: "Perhaps the question ought stand reversed: Could an audience raised on images of hybrid symbols of the evangelists view the Marvels without recalling, on some level, a note of sanctity?"[263] The answer to that question is problematic, and the *Wonders of the East* is not the text to give us any clear answer. It does nevertheless raise the question of whether or not the text engages with the idea of the East in way that goes beyond simple exegetical moralizing. Just as Mittman believes that an Anglo-Saxon reader would look upon the *blemmye* and ponder the sins which deformed it, we should also consider what to do with the *Donestre*'s bloody, anguished Pentecost, not to mention the lion-maned and

[261] Howe, "Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England," 173.
[262] This is not altogether different from Nicholas Howe's conclusion to the *Wonders*: "Reading *Wonders* in company with these other texts makes us in some way like the Donestre, figures who have consumed enough to lament over that which remains." Ibid., 188.
[263] Mittman, *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England*, 110.

dog-faced men in a culture familiar with depictions of Mark the Evangelist.[264] Although the Tiberius version gives the reader no clear imperative to read the text in this fashion, the Vitellius version, nestled between *The Passion of Saint Christopher* and *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, forces us to consider these questions: how do these experiences with the monstrous play out spiritually? Is the margin a place of spiritual awareness or danger?

In the *Passion of Saint Christopher*, the various characters rehearse a wide array of responses to the margin: Some, like Dagnus, reject the margin as the *wyrrest wilddeora* and do their best to contain it. The woman on the edge of town openly marvels at it. Niceaea and Aquilina are terrified at its alterity. And, in the end, Dagnus only accepts its supremacy after he acknowledges its authority, not just over the margin, but over his own life as well. Each creature in the *Wonders of the East* presents the reader with that same interpretive choice, but it fails to indicate which one is correct. Without any comforting, controlling set of paramaters, or physical borders, or hegemonic power structures in the way to brush them aside, the reader is compelled to look upon these marvels and choose without any indication of which one is *right*.

Two final wonders illustrate what that choice may look like. The marvel of the gold-digging ants in §9 describes the river Capi, or *gorgoneus*, and ants as big as dogs who dig up gold from the earth. The boldest and bravest can obtain some of that gold, but only with a lot of courage, a bit of cunning, and one expendable camel. Paul Allen Gibb notes that the story goes as far back as Strabo and is allegorized at least as early as the exegetical works of Rabanus Maurus. The sheer ubiquity of the story makes it hard to believe that a medieval

[264] Ibid., 100.

reader would *not* try to read it as a moral lesson.[265] It would *seem* that the *Wonders of the East* encourages the reader to find some kind of "gold" from the East, probably in the form of wisdom or good works. This is the usual, expected reward for study: mine the text, and it will provide you with something golden. But does one identify with the dutiful ants, as Rabanus had suggested, or the daring robber who cheats death to steal it? The text narrates the story from the perspective of the robber, making this spiritual "gold" enticing, but extremely dangerous, perhaps even immoral, to obtain.

On the other side, one might respond like Alexander the Great. In §§26-27, Alexander encounters two different groups of people: white-bodied, ox-tailed women and generous hosts who give their guests a wife. The ox-tailed women are described as beautiful in some analogues and horrid in others; in the Vitellius version, we are told that Alexander could not capture them alive *for þon hy syndon æwisce on lichoman 7 unweorþe*, "because they were despicable and shameful of body."[266] When he meets the generous people, however, he marvels at their *menniscnesse*—their humanity.

In the *Wonders of the East*, the reader therefore has a choice: to treat the marginal as it is in *The Passion of Saint Christopher,* to go about the dangerous process of digging out gold among the monsters; or, they can sort, categorize, and destroy it the way that Alexander does the ox-tailed women. *Christopher* has already shown us the benefits of the former; as for the consequences of the latter, we will have to turn to *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* for an answer.

[265] Gibb, "Wonders of the East," 47-48, 145.
[266] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts,* 106a.2-3.

Chapter Three: In the Shadow of Babylon: The Imperial Other in *The Letter of Alexander the Great to Aristotle*

> Intelligo ipse quid quaeras. Sapientem me vides, talis et factus sum, itaque vivo ut procreatus sum, et quae Deus faciat agnosco, et quid fieri debeat scio. Vos autem vanitate magna repleti, praesagire vos creditis, cum tamen haec ipsa quae per singulos videtis dies, Dei opera, intellegere nesciatis.
>
> I myself understand what you seek. You think me a wise man, and I was made such; for that reason I live as I was begotten. I see the sorts of things God does, and I know what ought to be done. You, however, full of great delusions, believe that you can divine the future, even though you don't know how to comprehend the very things you see every single day— the works of God.
>
> Dandamis to Alexander the Great,
> *De moribus Brachmanorum*[1]

1. The Deconstructed Center of the Cotton Map

In the same manuscript as the Tiberius version of the *Wonders of the East*[2] is an unusual representation of earthly authority. The Cotton Mappamundi[3] is the only surviving map from Anglo-Saxon England and one of the earliest to feature a detailed coastline. Like all medieval visual maps, it aims to represent world order more than topography, and so the tribes of Israel and Noah's Ark have just as much topographical importance as the destroyed city of Carthage, the Pillars of Hercules, and the land of the Turks. Although later mapmakers often put Jerusalem in the center of world maps, the

[1] *De moribus Brachmanorum,* in *Patrologia Latina* vol. 17, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1845), col. 1177A. Translation is mine.
[2] A fuller description of the Tiberius manuscript is available on p. 120, above.
[3] Source: Patrick McGurk, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B.v, Part I*, EEMF 21 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1983), 164. Analyses of the Cotton Map are mostly cartographic, and the material is vast. For a short bibliography of sources, see: Peter Barber, "Medieval Maps of the World," in *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and Their Context*, ed. P. D. A. Harvey (London: British Library, 2006), 4-8; Leonid Chekin, *Northern Eurasia in Medieval Cartography* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 129-31,448; Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London: The British Library, 1997), 74-80; Martin K. Foys, "The Virtual Reality of the Anglo-Saxon *Mappamundi*," *Literature Compass* 1 (2003); Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 175-177; "Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34, no. 1 (2004): 147-172; Konrad Miller, *Mappaemundi: Die ältesten Weltkarten*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Rothsche Verlagshandlung, 1895), 29-37.

Jerusalem of the Cotton Map sits just off the middle of the horizontal axis and well to the south, leaving the various, unnamed islands of the Aegean at the center of the map. The two largest cities, each in the dead center of their respective halves, are Rome and Babylon, lying in a straight line from the island of Taprobane to the Pillars of Hercules.

The position of these two empires is common to the few English maps of this type, and it is far from coincidental. In the late twelfth-century Sawley map,[4] Rome and Babylon sit close to the middle of their respective domains in that same straight line from Paradise to the *fines Europae* and Herculean pillars. The fourteenth-century Hereford Mappamundi follows the same pattern: Rome and Babel are emphasized, though shifted slightly from their central location, and Rome, scaled to fit better on the Italian peninsula, is considerably smaller than the Tower of Babel.[5] Although they still occupy their line from Paradise to the Pillars of Hercules, Jerusalem now sits in the exact middle of the world in reflection of its importance to the end of the Crusading age. The earliest English map culture makes Rome and Babylon the cultural and religious axes of human history, and the Cotton Map is our earliest known starting point.[6]

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[4] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 66, p. 2, dated to approximately 1190. Provenance is Sawley Abbey, but origin may very well be Durham. The map precedes a copy of the *Imago mundi* by Honorius of Autun. See: Barber, "Medieval Maps of the World," 10-13; Chekin, *Northern Eurasia in Medieval Cartography*, 137-39, 454; Edson, *Mapping Time and Space*, 161-63; Miller, *Mappaemundi vol.* 3, 21-29, pl. 2.

[5] From the Cathedral at Hereford, ca. approximately 1300 and possibly commissioned by either the bishop or a canon there. Barber, "Medieval Maps of the World," 1-44; Chekin, *Northern Eurasia in Medieval Cartography*, 161-69,467; Alfred Hiatt, "Mapping the Ends of Empire," in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages*, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Miller, *Mappaemundi,* vol. 4; Scott Westrem, *The Hereford Map*, ed. Patrick Gauthier Dalché (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

[6] There is some hint of a common source or intellectual culture between these three maps. The Cotton is often talked of as a vague, early Hereford prototype. Barber points out that "a relation to the Hereford map is observable" and stresses the close relationship between the Sawley and the Hereford, no doubt because the Sawley is thought to be a smaller copy of a Hereford-style world map. Others have observed commonalities between the Cotton and the Sawley as well. See: Barber, "Medieval Maps of the World," 5, 11-13.

Since the cosmos serves as a "book of the world" by which one reads about the Creator, the human relations on these maps also point to a higher spiritual order. As Peter Barber notes, "the Anglo-Saxon world map is…linked to the passage of human and divine time as the place where human drama is acted out."[7] The Cotton Map marks that passage of time from the top to the bottom of the map, starting with the pre-Christian kingdom of Babylon in the East to the Roman Empire in the Christian West, and transitioning from the preeminent, pre-Incarnation empire of the pagan world to the supreme rule of Christendom at Rome.[8]

This east-to-west passage of earthly power is a direct reflection of Orosius' political cosmology.[9] In his *Historia contra paganos,* Orosius analogizes this four-part history of world power to inheritance law: Babylon is the aged father and Rome the young heir, with the kingdoms of Macedonia and Carthage acting as legal custodians over Rome until it reaches the age of majority.[10] The Old English *Orosius* renders this idea more or less literally: *Babylonisce þæt æreste 7 Romane þæt siðmeste hie wæron swa fæder 7 sunu. Þonne hie heora willan moton wel wealdan, þæt Crecisce 7 þæt Affri[c]anisce wæron swa swa hie*

[7] Ibid., 8. Barber and Edson also note that the later maps start with Paradise and the Expulsion, but the Cotton map does not due to its Classical underpinnings. Nevertheless, the other Christian elements make it clear that this map fits into the same pattern of history.
[8] For more on the concept of "Christendom" and Rome in Anglo-Saxon England, see: Stephen J. Harris, "The Alfredian World History and Anglo-Saxon Identity," *JGEP* 100, no. 4 (2001): 491-93.
[9] Cf. Foys, "The Virtual Reality of the Anglo-Saxon *Mappamundi*," 4; Edson, *Mapping Time and Space*, 141.
[10] [I]nter *primum ac nouissimum, id est inter Babylonium et Romanum, quasi inter patrem senem ac filium paruum, Africanum ac Macedonicum breuia et media, quasi tutor curatorque uenerunt potestate temporis non iure hereditatis admissi*. "Between the first and the last of them, that is to say Babylon and Rome, just as in the interval time between an old father and his young son, come the short-lived and intermediate periods of the African and Macedonian kingdoms. These fulfilled roles like those of a teacher and guardian, and came into being through force of circumstances rather than from any right of succession." Paulus Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, ed. Karl Zangmeister, *CSEL* vol. 5 (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967), II.1.6. All translations are from *Ororius: Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, trans. A. T. Fear (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010).

him hiersumedon 7 him underþieded wære.[11] Only Babylon and Rome in this scheme served as the double hinges of a vast geographic, historical, and spiritual plan of the cosmos.[12] Sitting between these two kingdoms and off to one side of the Cotton Map is a slightly misplaced Macedonia, lacking any indication of its relative importance. This accords well with an Orosian framework: Alexander conquered the world only temporarily, marking the time until Rome assumed its rightful place as the fourth, final, and Christian kingdom.[13] Even though Alexander's Macedonia sits on this interface of two powerful world orders like a hub of power, the world already harbors two historical centers of power— and Alexander's Macedonia is marginal to them both.

The Cotton Map gives us a vivid visual model for how we might explain the Old English *Letter of Alexander of Aristotle's* engagement with ideas of spirituality, power and place. Alexander's Macedonia sits at a critical turning-point in history, at the moment where the world's attention switches from the East—from the expulsion from Paradise, the Tower of Babel, and the earthly power of Babylon—to the West, towards Rome and the spread of the Gospel to the so-called barbarian world. Even though Alexander regards himself as the center of all worldly power, he sits on the farthest outskirts of the pre-Incarnational world of Babylon and the post-Incarnational world of Rome, constantly at

[11] "The Babylonian, the first, and the Roman, the last, were just like a father and son. When they were capable of wielding their command well, the Greek and the African were just like they obeyed them and were subjugated to them." *Old English Orosius*, ed. Janet Bately, EETS suppl. ser. vol. 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 36.19-24.

[12] As many have noted, the Cotton Map has very clear Orosian influences, but it does not fully embrace an Orosian "four kingdoms" model. Carthage is extremely out of place for a kingdom of the cardinal South, for instance, and Macedonia is not even marked with a citadel. It is thus more accurate to say that the Cotton map embraces the more specific "East to West" direction explained in Orosius, *Historia contra paganos* II.i.

[13] As George Cary also notes, the common interpretation among the moralists was that "God prevented him from achieving world empire because the time was not yet come." George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 104.

battle with a powerful force which he neither recognizes nor obeys. The land of his intended conquest rejects him like a foreign body, and his imperial-minded curiosity gains him only the knowledge of his death, foretold by a pair of oracular trees.

This chapter will investigate Alexander's failure in the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* to properly understand the power dynamics operating in the space of India. First, Alexander believes that the center of the world rests upon him as its conqueror, and so he marches through India believing that he is traveling to the margins. India operates as its own center of secular and spiritual power, however, and Alexander stands peripheral to it. Secondly, Alexander suffers a critical failure of knowledge. Leo of Naples, for instance, called Alexander one of the wise, virtuous pagans who are blinded by the devil so that *ne suum agnoscerent creatorem et servirent creaturae potius quam creatori*: that is, they cannot make that crucial interpretive leap from the creatures of the East to their Creator.[14] In the course of the OE *Letter*, Alexander constantly interacts with an environment that should point him towards God, but his scientific curiosity gets him no further than declaring it "to be marveled at."[15] Without any way to profitably interpret the East and its creatures, Alexander wages a war of attrition against it. Much like Dagnus in *The Passion of Saint Christopher*, The OE *Letter* thus demonstrates how a failure to recognize that authority, as reflected in the creatures of that region, puts Alexander in conflict with the very flesh of the land he wishes to conquer.

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[14] "[they] did not recognize their Creator and mistakenly bound themselves to serve the creature instead." Gustav Landgraf, ed. *Die Vita Alexandri Magni des Archipresbyters Leo (Historia de preliis)* (Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1885), 26.13-15.

[15] *Seo eorðe is to wundrienne hwæt heo ærest oþþe godra þinga cenne, oððe eft þara yfelra* (§3). All quotations and translations from the OE *Letter* will come from: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 224-53.

2. Alexander in Anglo-Saxon Codicology: Vitellius A.xv and Royal 13.A.i

Like *Beowulf* and *Judith*, the Old English *Letter of Alexander* survives only in the Nowell Codex, and, like the other prose texts in this manuscript, the earliest criticism rarely addressed the *Letter* on its own merits. Cockayne's 1861 edition of the *Letter* in his *Narratunculae* was the first editorial venture into the OE *Letter,* followed by Baskervill's dissertation in 1881.[16] Rypins' diplomatic edition arrived in 1924, and due to obvious shortcomings in the aforementioned editions, it became the standard text thereafter.[17] Linguistic analyses by Braun and Hirschl,[18] from the decade before Rypins' work, remained the only in-depth analysis of the text until Sisam revisited the manuscript as a whole in 1954.[19]

This early criticism, unfortunately, has given us only a vague sense of its date of creation or circumstances under which it became a part of the larger collection. John Pickles believed that the Vitellius version was at least two or three generations removed

[16] Thomas Oswald Cockayne, *Narratiunculæ Anglice conscriptæ* (London: Iohannes R. Smith, 1861); William Malone Bakervill, "The Anglo-Saxon Version of the 'Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem'" (Diss., Leipzig, 1881). Rypins and Pickles both discredit Baskervill's edition, but Pickles is more gentle in his censure. See: Stanley Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS. Cotton Vitellius A. xv*, EETS old ser. Vol. 161 (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1924), xxix-xxx; John Drayton Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript" (Diss., University of Cambridge, 1971), 100.

[17] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*. Rypins published his introductory comments on the OE *Letter of Alexander* somewhat earlier. See: Stanley I. Rypins, "The Old English *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*," *Modern Language Notes* 38, no. 4 (1923):216-20.

[18] Adolf Braun, "Lautlehre der angelsächsischen Version der "Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem" (Diss., Universität Würzburg, 1911); Sigmund Heschl," Beiträge zur Untersuchung der altenglischen *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* (Diss., University of Graz, 1913). Heschl's dissertation is unpublished and largely unavailable, but a summary can be found in Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 114-16.

[19] Robert D. Stevick, "Graphotactics of the Old English 'Alexander's Letter to Aristotle'," *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 40 (2004): 3-12.

from the original copy.[20] Sisam likewise asserted that "a certain uncouthness in the translation also points to an early date," though he did not attempt to assign it to any century any more than to point to some stylistic affinity with the Alfredian period.[21] Braun noted a lot of West Anglo-Saxon influence but placed the text near the Kentish border; Hirschl focused on other elements and suggested Anglia.[22] Rypins, seemingly unaware of Hirschl, argued against Braun and also pushed for Anglia.[23] Sisam revisited the text some forty years after Hirschl, arguing for Anglian, but specifically Mercian, origin for the text.[24] Most criticism after this point accepts Sisam's analysis, and, following his lead, many scholars interpret this as evidence for a western origin for the codex as a whole.

Although a Latin source-text for the Old English translation might give us more evidence to answer these questions, that Latin original no longer exists. The murky transmission history of the Latin *Epistola* is partly to blame, for despite its huge codicological footprint, the text's descent is complicated by a fairly open transmission history. D. J. A. Ross, for instance, catalogued well over a hundred full or partial manuscripts.[25] Walther Boer looked at sixty-seven different manuscripts of the *Epistola* for his edition and collates some twenty-eight.[26] Boer managed to sketch out four manuscript

[20] Pickles' list of scribal errors needs careful consideration, however, as some things treated as "errors" may in fact go back to the exemplar(s) employed by the translator. Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 101-07.
[21] Kenneth Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 85, 88.
[22] Summaries and criticism of both studies can be found in: Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, xxviii-xl; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 114-16.
[23] Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts*, xxviii-xl.
[24] Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 92-93.
[25] D. J. A. Ross, "A Check-List of MSS of Three Alexander Texts: The Julius Valerius *Epitome,* the *Epistola ad Aristotelem* and the *Collatio cum Dindimo*," *Scriptorium* 10 (1956): 127-32.
[26] W. Walther Boer, ed. *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem: ad codicum fidem edidit et commentario critico instruxit* (Meisemhein am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1973), 4-21, 22-31.

families from that unruly pool of manuscripts, but his *app. crit*. nevertheless betrays frequent lateral transmissions, especially between classes, in manuscripts further down the genealogical chain.[27] Pickles concluded from his own survey that the transmission history of the copy-text was "open" and that it was impossible to draw any conclusions from it.[28]

Pickles based his argument on a relatively short list of variants, but the evidence from a larger pool yields more useful information.[29] The chart below contains the results of a very conservative analysis of twenty-seven variations in the OE text which are identical or nearly identical to readings in one of Boer's collated manuscripts; readings unique to the OE version are omitted. These variants are then separated into the four main manuscript families of the *Epistola* which are most closely associated with each variant. The variant in §9, for instance, only appears in the alpha and epsilon nodes of Class III, meaning it is limited to Boer's MSS L, M, B, G, A, C, and P. Entries with a strikethrough indicate isolatable readings unique to that class of manuscript.[30]

[27] As Pickles has pointed out, the *app. crit.* in Boer's edition is five times the length of the text. Moreover, it reveals several manuscripts which do not consistently agree with their own manuscript class and adopt the readings of others, confirming the "open" transmission of this particular tradition. See: Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 94.
[28] Ibid., 96.
[29] Pickles' data pool includes what appear to be spelling variants, which seem to be less helpful for determining a recenstion. I have mainly stayed with omissions in the Latin manuscript not found in the OE, additions to the OE, omissions in the OE clearly equivalent to other Latin ancestors, and corruptions passed through multiple manuscripts. This will, I hope, reduce the data to more diagnostic variants.
[30] Table source: Boer, *Epistola Alexandri*; Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 204-23.

Table 3. Summary chart of the variants in the OE *Alexander* and their manuscript family groups

Lemma	Boer I	Boer II	Boer III	Boer IV
§8 Ac ic wolde þæt	ALL	ALL		
§8 þa geseah ic			ALL	
§9 Ða becwom ic on			α, ε	
§10 Ic me ða mid genom		δ		
§15 Het hiera þa bescufan			ALL	ALL
§16 *quae… occurrebant* om.			ɣ	
§17 þa cwomon þær		δ		
§20 ne hit for þæm bryne	ALL	ALL	ɣ	
§21 heo on hringwisan fag		ALL	ALL	Oc Et Es
§24 on seofon nihta fæce			ALL	ALL
§24 wæs he sona swiðe glæd	ALL	ALL	α, ε, ζ	ALL
§25 Þa he þas word gehyrde,			ε	
§25-26 *Epistola Pori* om.	Ol, Pari	ALL	ALL	ALL
§26 middangeard ymbferan	ALL	β, ɣ	ALL	ALL
§27 fen 7 cannon 7 hreod		β, ɣ	ALL	ALL
§27 *duo capita* om.			ALL	excl. S, Oc
§27 hatte quasi caput luna		excl. Mp	ALL	
§28 mine þegnas twegen	ALL	ALL	α, ζ, η	excl. Et
§28 urum swæsendum sitttan			α	excl. S, Et
§28 þæt deor nowþer				Tr
§28 we hit uneaþe	ALL	ALL	Excl. M	ALL
§28 i*ussi… afferret* om.		δ		
§29 hie wæron a men nacod	Pari	Reg	ALL	ALL
§29 hatað Ictifafonas			α, ɣ, ζ	Par
§29 in þæm stanholum			ε?	
§31 asegendnisseum ineode		δ		
Correspondences:	8	15	20	11
Excl. the other (II/III):	-	5	10	-
Exclusive overall:	0	4	5	1
	BOER CLASS II: 7 MSS α: Class II archetype β: Mp ɣ: W Br δ: U R Re Reg ε: U R Re		**BOER CLASS III: 10 MSS** δ: Class II archetype α: L M B G A β: M B ɣ: G A ε: C P ζ: Om η: Pa Mps	

The full data set with Boer's list of variants and manuscripts is found in the Appendix at the end of this dissertation. The evidence suggests that Pickles was *mostly* right, for the copy-text is in fact a product of lateral transmission. The OE translator's source text(s), however, reflected a mix of readings unique to Class II and a Class III manuscripts—specifically, a class II/δ relative and a Class III version descended from slightly before the ɣ/ε split.[31] Based on the number of readings exclusive to the Class II or Class III ancestor, it would appear that the translator either used a hybrid copy or referred to two different manuscripts while translating the text. Either way, a Class III manuscript likely served as the base, which was then corrected against a Class II. [32]

Understanding the source text(s) for the OE *Letter* gives us important new information about the form of the early English Alexander legend. If we focus only on those manuscripts roughly contemporary with Vitellius for sake of convenience, we narrow down the list to only a few possibilities. The two Class III/ɣ manuscripts are: Boer's manuscript "A," London BL Harley 2682 (s. xi^{in}), from Cologne,[33] and Boer's manuscript "G," MS Wolfenbüttel, Herzogliche Bibliothek 3610 (s. xi), from Germany.[34] The Harley manuscript is the closest in age to Vitellius. The third, and the only manuscript unique to Class II/δ, is London, British Library, Royal MS 13.A.i, a tiny volume of Alexander material

[31] The four members of the II/δ family of manuscripts are:
CUL MS 2434 (s. xii), London, BL Royal 15. V. vi (s.xii) Royal 12. C. iv (s. xii), and Royal 13. A. i (s. xi^{ex}, England). There is a slight preference towards Royal 13. A. i as the closest version. The four members of Class III ɣ/ε families are: Wolfenbüttel, Herzogliche Bibliothek 3610 (s. xi), London, BL Harley 2682 (s. xi^{in}, Cologne), Paris, BN lat. 17569 (s. xii, Notre Dame), and Paris, BN lat. 4880 (s. xiv). See: Boer, *Epistola Alexandri*, x-xix.
[32] The one unique reading in Class IV, limited to a single manuscript, comes from a very common word insertion, and it is almost certainly a coincidence. I am quite comfortable with treating it as an outlier.
[33] "Cotton MS Vitellius A.xv," The British Library, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_vitellius_a_xv.
[34] Origin is Germany, from Paderborn. Otto von Heinemenn, *Codex Guelferbytanus 34.1 Aug. 4° Bis 117 Augusteus 4°* vol. 5, Katalog Der Herzog-August-Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel: Die Augustischen Handschriften (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1966), 82.

produced around the time of the Norman Conquest.[35] It also contains the only record of the larger Alexander tradition in Anglo-Saxon England.

The Class III manuscripts hint at a German origin, but the Royal manuscript is a uniquely English production. This manuscript represents, more or less, an anthology of Alexander texts secondary to the Latin Romance: the "Zacher" version of the Julius Valerius epitome,[36] four lines from a verse "Epitapha Alexandri,"[37] the *Epistola* itself, the *Collatio Alexandri et Dindimi*,[38] and a short supplemental text called the *Parua recapitulatio de eodem Alexandro et de suis.*[39] D. J. A Ross notes that these texts formed a core unit of Alexander anthologies popular in the late Middle Ages, and he considered this manuscript the earliest surviving witness to that anthology.[40] With lone exception of the OE *Letter* in Vitellius, none of these other texts survive in any other Anglo-Saxon manuscript. This fact alone makes the Royal manuscript important context material, but Table 3 also confirms that this recension had a major influence on the OE translation. This pushes back the presence of this recension in England to, at a minimum, sometime in the tenth century.

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[35] Gneuss #481, saec. xi^{ex}. Although it is not possible to give an exact date and location to the manuscript, the handwriting and layout point to a Caroline hand from the decades after Tiberius B.v. That manuscript is usually dated to ca. 1050, and it does not yet show the features of a twelfth century Protogothic.

[36] So named after the primary editor. As both Stoneman and Cary have noted, this specific recension of Julius Valerius appears consistently with the *Epistola Alexandri*. See: Julius Zacher, *Julii Valerii Epitome* (Halle: Verlag der Buchandlung des Waisenhauses, 1867); Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, 25-26; Richard Stoneman, "Primary Sources from the Classical and Early Medieval Periods," in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 14.

[37] Terrence Keough, "Another *Epitapha Alexandri*," *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 15 (1973): 57-59; Betty Hill, "*Epitapha Alexandri* in English Medieval Manuscripts," *Leeds Studies in English* 8 (1975): 95-103.

[38] This manuscript serves as Telfryn Pritchard's MS "L" in his edition of the *Collatio*. See his comments in: "The *Collatio Alexendri Et Dindimi:* A Revised Text," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 46 (1995): 260.

[39] J. P. Gilson and George F. Warner, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, 4 vols., vol. 2 (London: The Trustees, 1921), 74; Betty Hill, "The Middle English and Latin Versions of the *Parva Recapitulatio of Alexander the Great*," *Notes and Queries* 27, no. 1 (1980): 4-20. The full text is edited in: David J. A. Ross, "*Parva Recapitulatio*: An English Collection of Texts Relating to Alexander the Great," *Classica et mediaevalia* 33 (1981): 191-203.

[40] Hill, "*Epitapha Alexandri* in English Medieval Manuscripts," 101.

The influence of Royal 13.A.i likely extends even further into the future and the past. Andy Orchard has noted some intriguing correspondences between the "idiosyncratic" Royal manuscript and the source-text for the *Liber monstrorum*.[41] If one accepts an English provenance of the *Liber monstrorum*, then some previous form of the Royal version of the *Epistola* was a source for monster-lore in England from as early as the late 7th century. Orchard also notes that Thomas Hahn's work on the Middle English *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* reveals more shared readings unique to this recension of the Latin *Epistola*.[42] When taken as a whole, this evidence strongly suggests that the Royal manuscript represents a recension of the Latin *Epistola* which was present through nearly the entire English tradition.

3. The Anglo-Saxon Alexander

The Royal and Vitellius manuscripts contain the only texts of the Alexander romance to survive the Anglo-Saxon period, and of those two, only the Royal manuscript is purely devoted to Alexander material. No copies of the Latin Romance survive from this period, and there are no clear quotations from those texts in England, either.[43] That does not mean that Alexander the Great was a marginal figure in Anglo-Saxon England, nor does it mean that source material was in short supply. As the bard of the poem *Widsið* declares,

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[41] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 125-30. Many of these, such as the *dentestyrannus*, the two-headed beast, the shining bats, and the serpents of Iorda are also represented in the chart in Table I, which demonstrates that the OE *Letter* and the *Liber monstrorum* share readings. The fact that we can trace two completely different manuscripts back to the same Latin MS considerably strengthens the idea that Royal represents a much older tradition than the date of the manuscript itself.

[42] Ibid., 130.

[43] The only possible evidence contradicting this claim would be a brief statement in the Old English *Orosius* where the translator correctly supplies the name of Alexander's (otherwise unnamed) father Nectanebus. While this does imply that some portion of the romance tradition existed in the Alfredian period, that material cannot be isolated to a specific author or text. See: Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, 69.20-25.

Þara wæs Hwala hwile selast,
ond Alexandreas ealra ricost
monna cynnes, ond he mæst geþah
þara ic ofer foldan gefrægen hæbbe.[44]

The fact that "Alexandreas" was eventually grafted into a list of Germanic kings containing Eormanric, Offa and Hroðgar shows that that Alexander already typified a powerful ruler. But what kind of legacy was that, exactly? Only a survey of the surviving materials can answer that question.

To start, the classical materials on Alexander in Anglo-Saxon England are fairly meager, and sometimes the evidence is difficult to interpret. The only Classical historical work to survive from this period is the Justin epitome of Pompeius Trogus, which covers the career of Alexander and his generals in Books XI-XII. Representatives of this text survive in one late manuscript, Cambridge, Clare College 18, and a partial, single folio from the eighth century.[45] Justin was often excerpted, however, and neither this manuscript nor the eighth century fragment contain Alexander material.[46] Alcuin's library poem mentions

[44] *Widsið*, lines 14-17: "Of those was Hwala the best for a time, / and Alexandreas most mighty/ of all of mankind, and he succeeded the most / of those whom I have heard of over the earth." George Philip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, eds., *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), 150.
[45] The fragment is Gneuss #441.1: Harley 5915, fol. 10 (viii^{med}, likely Northumbria). The fragment is from Justin, XXIV. iii.i A digital image of the folio is available from the British Library at: http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=5026
[46] Gneuss #32: Cambridge, Clare College 18 (xi/xii or xii^{in}, likely from St. Albans). James' catalog says that the Clare College excerpt begins with Book XVIII of the *Epitome*, which is the start of the Carthaginian Empire, while the Alexander books are XI to XIII. Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 230; M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts in the Library of Clare College* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 36-37.

a "Pompeius" in his collection, and quotations from Asser suggest that at least one copy covering that range of books once existed there.[47]

The most common source material for Alexander the Great would have likely come from Christian history and biblical exegesis. The most detailed and prevalent was Book III of Orosius' *Historia contra paganos*, which survives in an impressive number of manuscripts, excerpts, and quotations from the Anglo-Saxon period.[48] An Anglo-Saxon version was produced at some point during Alfred's translation program, and this English version survives in two manuscripts and a fragment.[49] Biblical histories also give some limited information. Josephus' *Antiquities*, for instance, contains two mythical accounts of the Macedonian king, including an encounter with the Hebrews and the Hebrew God. This text survives in one complete manuscript, another with excerpts, and a prodigious number of references throughout Bede's work.[50] The first chapter of I Maccabees likewise mentions Alexander for his role in setting up the Seleucid dynasty.[51] Although only a single leaf from

[47] According to Lapidge, Asser uses quotations from Books I and XXIV in the *Life of Alfred* Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 230, 39. These citations bookend the three books on Alexander and open up the possibility that Asser *may* have had access to a volume of Justin containing everything up to the Roman empire.

[48] Gneuss #32: Cambridge, Clare College 18 (xi/xii, poss. From St. Albans). This is the same MS with Justin.
Gneuss #196.5: Cambridge, Trinity College O. 4. 34 (xi/xii, Christ Church Canterbury).
Gneuss #820: Düsseldorf, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Haputstaatsarchiv Z 11/ I (viii^2, fragment).
Gneuss #259.5: Exeter, Cathedral Library, FMS/1,2,2a (xi^1, prov. France). See also: Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library,* 323.

[49] Ker #133: London, BL Additional 47967 (xi^1, poss. Winchester?).
Ker #191: London, BL Cotton Tiberius B.i, (xi^1-xi^2 prov. Abingdon).
Ker #323: Oxford, Bodleian Library eng.hist. e.49 (30481) (xi^1, fragment).

[50] Gneuss #225.5: Durham, Cathedral Library B. II. i, (xi/xii, prov. Durham).
Gneuss #485: London, BL Royal 13.A.xxii (xi^2, Mont Saint-Michel; prov. Canterbury). This manuscript is a series of excerpts, but it does contain the material relating to Alexander the Great. See: Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 218, 317; Franz Blatt, *The Latin Josephus*, vol. 1 (Munksgaard: Universitetsforlaget Aarhus, 1968), 90-91.

[51] For more information, see: Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, 121.

the Latin I Maccabees survives,[52] Ælfric translated the work at roughly the same as the Vitellius manuscript was produced, and that homily survived into the modern period in four later manuscripts, an excerpt, and a binding fragment.[53]

The last two Alexander sources are not as frequently discussed in this context: the *Cosmographia of Aethicus Ister* and the Latin translation of pseudo-Methodius' *Revelationes*.[54] These two texts share some strange ties: both are pseudonymous works of Carolingian Latin from the early eighth century, and Michael Herren believes that both were likely written/translated in response to current events of that time.[55] The *Cosmography* mentions Alexander's scientific exploits and makes especial use of the Gog and Magog story, which recounts trapping the unclean peoples in the North behind massive iron gates. The *Cosmography* was not a popular text overall, but it is fairly well-attested in Anglo-Saxon England: it appears in three manuscripts, all within a century of Vitellius and/or Tiberius B.v,[56] and it quite likely served as a distant source for the Cotton Mappamundi in the Tiberius manuscript.[57]

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[52] The fragment is Gneuss #245: Durham, Cathedral Library B.IV.6, fol. 169 (vi, Italy, prov. Northumbria). It contains lines from the end of Chapter 6 and part of Chapter 7.

[53] Ker #18: CUL MS Ii.i.33, fols. 185-93 (xii^{2}, imperfect).
Ker #48: CCCC MS 198, ff. 328-41v (xi^{2}, prov. Worchester?).
Ker #57: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 303, pp. 341-55 (xii^{in}, poss. Rochester).
Ker #81: Cambridge, Queen's College, MS Horne 75 (xi^{in}, binding fragment).
Ker #162: London, BL Cotton Julius E. vii, ff.139v-42v (xi^{in}, prov. BsE).
Ker #332: Oxford, Bodleian, MS Hatton 115 (5135), ff.58–59v (xi^{2}, prov. Worchester, excerpt).

[54] Neither Cary nor Stoneman spend much time discussing either text. Michael Herren's recent edition and translation has greatly opened up the *Cosmographia* for study, as will no doubt the recent Dunbarton Oaks translation of pseudo-Methodius. See: *The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister: Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. Michael Herren, Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Benjamin Garstad, ed. *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius. An Alexandrian World Chronicle*, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[55] Michael Herren, "Constructing the Memory of Alexander in the Early Eighth Century," in *Strategies of Remembrance: From Pindar to Hölderin*, ed. Lucie Doležalová (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 168-69.

[56] Gneuss #386: London, BL Cotton Vespasian B.x, fols. 31-124 (x/xi, poss. Worchester).

The other text, the *Revelationes* of pseudo-Methodius, is a purely eschatological work translated from the Syriac via a Greek intermediary. This Latin version gave Europeans access to an apocalyptic tradition in which Alexander and his world conquest were a cornerstone of the larger history of salvation. The Latin text survives in over 200 European manuscripts, but its presence in Anglo-Saxon England is fairly modest.[58] Although the two Salisbury manuscripts could not have been copied any earlier than Salisbury's foundation in 1075, Michael Twomey notes that the marginalia in one of the two copies (Salisbury MS 165) shows an interest in the Gog and Magog story.[59] Stephen Pelle has also identified a clear citation in an anonymous English homily, hinting at other potential, now lost copies.[60]

With such a range of opinions on Alexander's character across these sources, a lot of critical work on the OE *Letter* has thus focused on whether or not the larger material approves or disapproves of Alexander's conquest. Hildegard Tristam says that the OE *Letter* "lends itself to easy moralization" while Margaret Bridges demonstrates that the first-person narration of the *Letter* complicates any reading of Alexander as a virtuous

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Gneuss #439: London, BL Harley 3859 (xi/xii or xii^{in}, England or France).
Gneuss# 839: Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Scaliger 69 (x^2, St. Augustine's, Canterbury). This manuscript is of the "short" version spanning to I.53.

[57] The phrase *gens griphorum* of the Cotton Map is unattested anywhere else at this time, but the term appears three times in the *Cosmographia*. Likewise, O'Brien O'Keefe notes that the *Turchi* of the Cotton map were still relatively obscure at this point, and that the *Cosmographia* is the only reasonable source. See: McGurk, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany*, 83; Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, "The Geographic List of *Solomon and Saturn* II," *Anglo-Saxon England* 20 (1991): 137.

[58] Gneuss #463.5: London, BL Royal 5.F.xviii, fols. 29v-32 (xi^{ex}, Salisbury).
Gneuss #749: Salisbury, Cathedral Library 165, fols. 1-87 (xi^{ex}, Salisbury).

[59] Michael W. Twomey, "The *Revelationes* of Pseudo-Methodius and Scritpural Study at Salisbury in the Eleventh Century," in *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill*, ed. Charles D. Wright, Frederick M. Biggs, and Thomas N. Hall (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 372-74.

[60] Stephen Pelle, "The *Revelationes* of Pseudo-Methodius and 'Concerning the Coming of Antichrist' in British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D.xiv," *Notes & Queries* 56, no. 3 (2009). The sole manuscript containing this English homily is Ker #209: London, BL Cotton Vespasian D.xiv, fols. 76r-76v (xii^{mid}, Rochester or Canterbury).

pagan or Beowulfian hero.[61] Andy Orchard likewise believes that the OE *Letter* and *Orosius* are extremely negative.[62] Though their conclusions are more muted, Douglas Buttruff and Omar Khalaf also discuss Alexander's hubris, and Margaret Bridges concludes that he is "indubitably a lackluster figure in Anglo-Saxon England."[63] Kathryn Powell and Susan Kim, in contrast, draw completely different conclusions about Alexander's obsessive-compulsive reiteration of the self. Powell concludes that the audience identifies with, but are repulsed by, Alexander; Kim somewhat agrees, but she uses the *Letter* to show how fraught the entire process of identification through language can be.[64] Some scholars including Sisam, however, have argued for a much more subtle portrayal of the conqueror. David Ashurst, for one, argues that Orchard's reading lays "too heavy an interpretive burden on the details whose significance, if any, is not clear."[65] He likewise challenges Orchard's conclusions on the OE *Orosius* because it "shows a markedly greater admiration than does the Latin text for the kind of bloodthirsty and unreasonable behavior that accompanies courage and

[61] Hildegard Tristam, "More Talk of Alexander," *Celtica* 21 (1990): 659. See also her remarks on the OE *Letter* in: "Der Insulare Alexander," in *Kontinuität und Transformation der Antike im Mittelalter: Veröffentlichung der Kongreßakten zum freiburger Symposion des Mediävistenverbandes*, ed. Willi Erzgräber (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1989), 150-51. Margaret Bridges, "Empowering the Hero: Alexander as Author in the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* and Its Medieval English Versions," in *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western Representations of Alexander the Great*, ed. Margaret Bridges and J. Ch. Bürgel, Schweizer Asiatische Studien (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996), 45-59.
[62] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 133-35.
[63] Douglas R. Butturff, "Style as a Clue to Meaning: A Note on the Old English Translation of the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*," *English Language Notes* 8 (1970): 81-86; Omar Khalaf, "The Old English Alexander's Letter to Aristotle: Monsters and Hybris in the Service of Exemplarity," *English Studies* 94, no. 6 (2013): 559-67; Bridges, "Empowering the Hero," 46.
[64] Kathryn Powell, "Laying Down the Law: First-Person Narration and Moral Judgment in the Old English *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 86, no. 2 (2004): 55-68; Susan M. Kim, "'If One Who Is Loved Is Not Present, a Letter May Be Embraced Instead': Death and the Letter of Alexander to Aristotle," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109, no. 1 (2010): 33-51.
[65] David Ashurst, "Alexander Literature in English and Scots," in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiiya (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 260.

heroic prowess."[66] Even Omar Khalaf thought that the text's audience was more interested in Alexander as a positive figure, one whose pride was counterbalanced by other, more positive social traits.[67]

The impasse partly comes from allowing the OE *Orosius* to dominate a discussion which actually has a much broader set of attitudes. Hildegard Tristam identifies two different branches of thought: a Roman/Latin Christian distaste for his corporeal sins and an Eastern vein (that is, the Greek romance and analogues in Hebrew and Syriac) which treated him as a more positive figure.[68] From the balance of this evidence, we can see that the full range of Alexander texts in Anglo-Saxon England is far broader than the Patristic writers, and much of it—the Royal manuscript materials, Josephus, pseudo-Methodius, Aethicus, and even, to some degree, the *Wonders of the East*—all have a foot in that eastern tradition. The totality of the evidence suggests that Alexander's function, rather than his character, should define his place in Anglo-Saxon England, and the material most often looks to Alexander as an imperialist, a tool of God, and a scientist.

A. Alexander the Imperialist

Although it is manifestly obvious, we must first understand that Alexander was, more than anything else, an important locus of earthly power. As Alexander Runni Anderson explains, Alexander's conquest first established the concept of the *oikumene* in the Greek world, uniting all the Eastern lands against the barbarians dwelling outside its

[66] Ibid.; Khalaf, "The Old English Alexander's Letter to Aristotle," 661.
[67] Ibid., 666.
[68] Tristam, "More Talk of Alexander," 660. Carey also talks briefly of this as well. See: *The Medieval Alexander*, 81-82.

borders.[69] This made Alexander a conqueror *par excellence* in the Greek and Latin histories: Justin, for instance, claims that "he did battle with no adversary without defeating him, besieged no city without taking it, and attacked no tribe without crushing it entirely."[70] The vast majority of the available sources in England likewise focus on how Alexander becomes, as he calls himself in the OE *Letter, ealra kyninga kyning*: "the king of all kings."[71]

The Judeo-Christian material takes up the theme of Alexander's imperialistic ambitions and turns him into an important locus of cosmic power. Josephus celebrates Alexander's conquest because it both brings an end to the Persians and guarantees the Jews' religious independence. In the main Alexander episode in Josephus, Alexander visits Jerusalem and reads the prophecies of the Book of Daniel, finally understanding that his empire and imminent defeat of the Persians have the sanction of the Hebrew God.[72] In I Maccabees, however, Alexander's conquest portends disaster for the Jews, as it paves the way for the horrific rule of Antiochus.[73] That interface between Alexander's empire and God's temple is a site of great historical consequence, regardless of whether those consequences are good or bad.

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[69] Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1932), 3.
[70] J. C. Yardley and Waldemar Heckel, eds., *Justin, Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, Books 11-12: Alexander the Great*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), XII.vii.11.
[71] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §4.
[72] Flavius Josephus, *Flavii Josephi viri inter Judaeos clarissimi opera omnia*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Jacob Stoer, 1595), XI.viii.1-6.
[73] The Vulgate text says that Antiochus is a "sinful root" (*radix peccatrix*) sprung from the tap of Alexander's empire (I Macc. 1:11 VUL). Ælfric's sermon calls him the "most perverse" (*forcuðost*) of all the kings who followed after Alexander. See: Ælfric of Eynsham, *Judith, Esther, Maccabees*, ed. Stuart D. Lee (Oxford Text Archive, 1999), http://users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings/main.htm.

Orosius and pseudo-Methodius also link Alexander's empire to prophecies of Daniel, but their interest is in the larger course of salvation history. We have already discussed Orosius' four-empire model of universal history and how Alexander's kingdom in the North serves as a short intermediary between Babylon and Rome. Orosius imagines Alexander's empire as a custodian over the fledgling Romans, but the English version makes Alexander's role more submissive: both Macedonia and Carthage *him hiersumodon 7 him underþieded wære*.[74] Alexander's empire was never meant to be a lasting world order under God's divine plan, and his attempt to turn it into the new Babylon makes it evil.

In consequence, Orosius' view of Alexander borders on caricature; he continuously "thirsts for blood," and his drive for imperial expansion merely feeds that lust rather than sates it.[75] As George Cary puts it, Orosius "did not spare Alexander, rather he carried the Stoic abuse of him to its last extreme for the benefit of his Christian readers."[76] In one telling episode, Alexander returns to Babylon to take his imperial seat in Babylon the ruler of the world; as he hurries there, emissaries from all over the West are drawn to him as if toward a new center of gravity.[77] In his translation, A. T. Fear points out that Orosius turns this moment into a reverse Nativity for an antichrist: instead of the Magi traveling from Babylon to meet the newly-born King of Kings, these ambassadors from the West travel

[74] "they obeyed them [Babylon and Rome] and were subjugated to them." Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, II.i, 36.22-23.
[75] Cf. Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* III.20.4.
[76] Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, 119.
[77] *Post quasi circumacta meta de Oceano Indum flumen ingressus, Babylonam celeriter rediit. ubi eum exterritarum totius orbis prouinciarum legati opperiebantur… tantus timor in summo oriente constituti ducis populos ultimi occidentis inuaserat, ut inde peregrinam toto mundo cerneres legationem, quo uix crederes peruenisse rumorem.* "Alexander entered the River Indus from the Ocean and swiftly returned to Babylon. Here terrified ambassadors from all the provinces of the entire world were waiting for him... So great was the fear of a leader who ruled the far east among the peoples of the uttermost west that you would have seen delegations drawn from all those parts of the world to which you would hardly have believed that rumors of Alexander's existence could have penetrated." Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* III.20.1-3.

that path backwards to see a newly-minted King of Kings die.[78] His death by poison terminates a locus of power which arose "through force of circumstances rather than from any right of succession" before Rome progressed to its proper, God-given place in the world order.[79]

Pseudo-Methodius likewise built its eschatological platform on the prophecies of Daniel, but like many of the other Eastern texts, its apocalypticism creates a far more positive legacy for Alexander. Like the *Cosmographia,* the *Revelationes* was written from the margin of the world but views the world from Greece as its center.[80] Whereas Orosius thought that this Greek center had no right of succession, the *Revelationes* develops a complicated lineage whereby all four of the world's great empires are linked through him into a prophetic version Anderson's vast *oikumene*.[81] That fourth, apocalyptic kingdom of Rome, in fact, is Byzantine, and it hearkens back to Alexander's Greece as its model.[82] Alexander's imperial power and God's rule overlap with almost no tension.

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[78] *Hispanus et Morinus ad supplicandum Alexandro Babylonam adiit cruentumque ultro dominum, ne hostem exciperet, per Assyriam Indiamque quaesiuit, terrarum metas lustrans et utrique infeliciter notus Oceano*. "The Spanish and Morini came to Babylon to grovel before Alexander, and of their own free will sought out this bloodstained warlord through Assyria and India in order to stop him becoming their enemy, scouring the ends of the earth and coming to know in their misfortune both oceans." Ibid., III.20.8.

[79] *uenerunt potestate temporis non iure hereditatis admissi.* Ibid., II.1.6.

[80] Both falsified narrators in these accounts come from far-flung areas of the Greek Roman Empire, and interestingly enough, make Macedonia the axis of world history. Cf. Herren, "Constructing the Memory of Alexander in the Early Eighth Century," 170.

[81] Specifically, the *Revelationes* swaps out Alexander's mother Olympia for an Ethiopian queen named Chuseth. After Alexander's death, she marries a Byzantine king, and their children rule in Rome, Alexandria, and Byzantium. See: Francisco Javier Martinez, "The Apocalyptic Genre in Syriac: The World of Pseudo-Methodius," in *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature (Groningen, Oosterhesselen 10-12 September).* ed. H. J. W Drijvers, Orientalia Christiana Analecta (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1984), 346-49; Garstad, *Apocalypse*, 9.1-7.

[82] Cf. Gerrit J. Reinink, "Alexandre et le deriner empereur du monde: les développements du concept de la royauté chrétienne dans les sources syriaques du septième siècle," in *Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures occidentales et proche-orientales. Actes du colloque de Paris 27-29 Novembre 1997*, ed. L. Harf-Lancner, C. Kappler, and F. Suard (Paris: Université de Paris X-Nanterre, 1999), 153-55.

As Anderson also points out, Alexander both founded the Greek empire and "became the guardian genius to protect its civilization and to keep its frontiers inviolate against the barbarian dwelling outside."[83] Within the wider romance, Alexander's enclosure of Gog and Magog is the key event showing Alexander's "guardian genius," and the *Revelationes* and *Cosmographia* develop this episode more than any of the other texts. In the pseudo-Methodius account, Alexander encounters a host of unclean peoples in the farthest part of the East, and, fearing that they might invade and pollute holy land [*terra sancta*], he drives them to the far north. After praying to the Lord God [*dominus deus*] for assistance, Alexander commands two mountains to block the pass, and he walls them in behind the remaining gap.[84] Alexander's role in the "Wonders" tradition, in fact, is merely an offshoot of this same idea. Susan Kim notes that the very first lines of the *Letter* set up the conflict: once encountered, the monsters of India must be sorted out, classified, and restrained.[85] Alexander protects the *mennisce* "generous men" of India and destroys the ox-tailed women for their *unweorþe* and *æwisce* bodies.[86] The pseudo-Methodius account simply increases the level of danger and pollution: like the ox-tailed women in *Wonders,* the *Cynocephali* and other unclean nations are also *deforma*. Since these people defile everything with their *pollutis suis iniquissimis affectionibus*, Alexander traps their contamination to the far North.[87]

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[83] Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations*, 3.
[84] *Apocalypse*, VIII.5-8.
[85] Kim, "'If One Who Is Loved Is Not Present, a Letter May Be Embraced Instead'," 34-35.
[86] *Three Old English Prose Texts*, fol. 105v.3, 106r.10.
[87] *Apocalypse*, 8.4-5. The phrase *terra sancta* is a little ambiguous. The *Revelationes* does not mention Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, but instead he encounters these unclean nations in the "regio solis" just outside of Paradise. It is thus possible that he fears they might invade the holy grounds of Eden rather than Jerusalem.

We can now draw a few conclusions about Alexander's imperial power: his authority over the East is unquestioned, but its legitimacy within a Christian eschatology is more ambivalent. Furthermore, his role as conqueror also makes him a champion against the danger and pollution of the "outside;" as Susan Kim notes, "The *Letter* begins by marking the boundaries of the *gesetenis*, the territory of the letter—what that territory will include, what it will defend against."[88] As we approach the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle,* then, we should keep in mind how Alexander believes that he functions as a center of power and a definer of boundaries.

B. Alexander as Instrument of God

In his discussion of the miracles of Moses, Josephus cites Alexander's victory over the Persians as proof. "At the path of Alexander," he explains, "the Pamphylian Sea drew back for the Macedonians and opened a path in that place for those having no other passage, because his [Alexander's] deeds were for the purpose of destroying the might of the Persians, just as God had decreed."[89] Although Josephus mainly intends to show that miracles have Classical precedent, his words imply that the reverse is also true: Like Moses, Alexander is a tool of God's will. We have seen in Orosius and pseudo-Methodius that Alexander has an important role in the cosmic scheme of history, but whether or not he worships the God of that cosmic plan is unclear. As George Cary rightly states, "a reverent

[88] "'If One Who Is Loved Is Not Present, a Letter May Be Embraced Instead'," 35.
[89] *Alexandri ductu Macedonibus Pamphylium mare cessit, et aliam viam non habentibus illac iter aperuit, cum Deus eius opera ad destruendum Persarum imperium uti decreuisset.* Flavius Josephus, *Flavii Josephi viri inter Judaeos clarissimi opera omnia*, II.vii.59 (hereafter *Flavii Josephi*). For the equivalent passage in the Greek, cf. H. Thackeray and Ralph Marcus, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1952-63), II.xvi.5.

Alexander… is not necessary to the explanation of this incident which might as well be a step towards the fulfillment of the Daniel prophecy by an unwitting Alexander."[90]

Neither Orosius nor the Classical historical texts give any indication that Alexander is aware of the Judeo-Christian God; in fact, the JV *Epitome* portrays him as a dutiful pagan, Justin mentions that he believes in his own deity, and Orosius stops just short of calling him an antichrist. Both the Latin and OE versions of the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* also reference prayers and sacrifice to Liber and Hercules.[91] In our Latin and Roman texts, Alexander is at best an unconscious tool of God and at worst His enemy. Nearly all Christian Latin materials engage this question at some point, but those which hint at a more positive view always grapple with two episodes: Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, and the enclosure of Gog and Magog in the extreme north.[92]

Josephus is the first writer of the Greek East known in the West to problematize Alexander's Hellenism.[93] In the Latin version of the *Antiquities*, the Jews anger Alexander when the high priest refuses to switch loyalties from the Persians to the Greeks; Alexander marches on the city, and when he meets the high priest in his blue and white robes, he falls to the priest's feet in reverence. He explains that God, dressed in the same robes, appeared in a dream and promised him victory over the Persians. He then proclaims that *puto me non sine numine in Darium exercitum ducere, et brevi fore victoria compotem, et sublatum*

[90] Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, 127.
[91] For examples, see §§25-31.
[92] For a fuller history of these two episodes, see: Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, 127-31.
[93] Ibid., 81-82.

Persarum imperio.[94] He sacrifices at the temple and reads about himself in the Book of Daniel, and, before departing, guarantees the rights of all Jews to live under their own laws.[95] Josephus' account is hardly unique in the Near East: Alexander Runni Anderson chronicles a large body of similar material in Hebrew and Syriac material which cemented his reputation as a Jewish folk hero in the first millennium.[96]

The Josephus account was separately collated with other Alexander material in the Latin *Parva Recapitulatio*, a short historical text in the Royal manuscript which was composed in England.[97] The Jerusalem episode is the longest of the three episodes of the *Recapitulatio*, and a few small details differ markedly from the available versions of the Latin Josephus.[98] In the *Antiquitates*, Alexander merely sees Iaddus' priestly apparel and "worshipped the name" [*solus ad eum acccedens illud nomen adoravit*] written in gold on his headdress, with the insinuation that he understands what it says.[99] In the *Parva recapitulatio,* Alexander not only sees the name of God but explicitly reads it: *et nomen dei quod in aurea scriptum legit lamina adorauit.*[100] He then explains his dream-encounter with

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[94] "I believe that I am not setting out against the army of Darius without divine sanction, and will be the possessor of a speedy victory, and will be exalted against the might of the Persians." *Flavii Josephi,* XI.viii.315. Cf. Thackeray and Marcus, *Antiquities*, XI.viii.

[95] See Josephus, *Flavii Josephi,* XI.viii.315. Cf. *Antiquities*, XI.viii.

[96] Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations*, 3.

[97] fols. 94v-99r. For full information on this text, see fn. 39, above. Both Hill and Ross agree that the episode was copied from Josephus first and not from a later recension of the Alexander Romance.

[98] Without an edition and list of variants for Book XI, it is impossible to prove at this time whether these differences are from editing the original or came from the exemplar.

[99] Josephus, *Flavii Josephi,* XI.viii.315. This reading reflects the Greek as well: *ὁ γαρ Ἀλεξανδρος… ἰδὼν… αρχιερέα… ἔχοντα τήν κίδαριν και τό χρυσοῦν ἐπ' αύτῆς ἔλασμα, ὦ το τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγγέγραπτο ὄνομα, προσελθὼν μόνος προσεκύνησε τὸ ὄνομα καὶ τὸν ἀρχιερέα πρῶτος ἠσπάσατο.* "When Alexander…saw… the high priest…wearing on his head the mitre with the golden plate on it which was inscribed with the name of God, he approached alone and prostrated himself before the Name and greeted the high priest." Thackeray and Marcus, *Antiquities*, XI.viii.5.

[100] "and when he read the name of God which was written on the gold plate he worshipped it, and the chief priest himself, with fawning and greetings." Ross, "Parva Recapitulatio," 199.

the God *cuius instinctu feci quecumque huc usque prosequutus sum in strenue actis rebus.*[101] Alexander behaves like much more than an unwitting pagan: he knows God's name, and everything he does is based on God's *instinctus*, which could mean anything from an "impulsion" to a divine "inspiration." In this context, when Alexander gives sacrifice at the temple and reads the prophecy of Daniel, he does so knowing exactly whose *instinctu* he follows.

This first episode from Josephus opens up the possibility but not the proof that Alexander knowingly served the Hebrew God; the second episode also finds its origin in Josephus but was linked to Old Testament prophecy much later. In *De bello Judaico*, Josephus mentions that Alexander trapped some tribes of Scythians behind a wall somewhere in the far north. At some point, those Scythian nations become conflated with Gog and Magog, the savage children of Japheth who will wreak havoc in the end times.[102] Since the larger Syriac culture already accepted Alexander as a hero of Jehovah, no explanation for his spiritual state or qualifications of his devotion were necessary.[103] After its translation into Greek and Latin, this account became earliest known version of the Gog and Magog story in Western Europe.

The Gog and Magog episode in the *Cosmographi*a is a little more complicated. Here, the tribes of Japheth already live in the North, and Alexander, overcome with revulsion,

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[101] "[the one] at whose urging I have done everything up to this point, I have actively followed in deeds." Ibid., 200.
[102] Cf: Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations*, 44-50; Emeri van Donzel and Andrea Schmidt, eds., *Gog and Magog in Early Syriac and Islamic Sources: Sallam's Quest for Alexander's Wall* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 12.
[103] Cf. Reinink, "Alexandre et le deriner empereur du monde," 140-159; van Donzel and Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Syriac and Islamic Sources*, 6-8.

builds an altar and prays to God "asking for God's guidance and mercy."[104] Alexander does not command the mountains to move, but rather they collapse together when God sends an earthquake. Alexander seizes the opportunity and lures the unclean nations inside with the promise of a sacrifice. The narrator "Jerome" then interjects with the following conclusion:

> Tamen Dei prouidentiam huic magno principe credimus fuisse ostensam. Et non inmerito magnus dici potest qui tam utila argumenta agrestium hominum uesaniam retrudendam adinuenit, quorum solutionem temporibus Antechristi in persecutionem gentium uel ultionem peccatorum credimus adfuturam.[105]

Although the statement seems odd to anyone with knowledge of Jerome's actual writings, here they sound like a ringing endorsement. Stranger still, they appear without any qualification of Alexander's paganism. In an earlier passage, for instance, "Jerome" condemns the Ripharians' ingenuity because "there is nothing of divine grace in their works; they do not acknowledge 'the things that belong to God.'" [106] Even so, he praises the similar deeds of Alexander with no such condemnation. "Jerome" then ends the first book with the reminder that he has only epitomized the true facts and warns that the rest of this ersatz pagan geography is spiritually dangerous.[107] The *Cosmographia* thus gives Alexander a strange and seemingly Christian stamp of approval, from one of the Latin Fathers himself.

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[104] *consilium et misericordiam quaerens.* Herren, *Cosmography*, 41a.15-16. Translations are also Herren's.
[105] "But we believe that the providence of God was shown to this great prince, who found such useful stratagems for checking the rage of these wild peoples, whose release we believe will occur in the times of the Antichrist as a persecution of the nations and the punishment of sinners." Ibid., 41b.14-18.
[106] *Omnia quippe hic philosophus laudabile ingenio mirabiliter operum ipsorum humana arte conlaudia astutia, sed diuinae gratiae nihil in bonis operibus; "Quae dei sunt ignorant."* Herren points out that the last phrase is a direct citation of Matthew 16:23 and Micah 8:33. Ibid., 37d.4-8, see fn. 410.
[107] Ibid., 43.3-4.

Although one could easily assume that any one of these stories qualifies Alexander as a hero of God the Creator, this is hardly the usual interpretation. George Cary's survey of the larger tradition shows that, aside from a small German tradition treating him as a biblical hero, few authors even entertained the notion; the possibility of a proselyte Alexander "was not normally a question seriously considered by secular writers."[108] Augustine of Hippo knew the Jerusalem story, no doubt from Josephus, and he called the conqueror an idol-worshipper who cultivated the true God merely as one in a pantheon.[109] Even Leo of Naples, often cited as the blueprint for positive readings of Alexander, is clear that Alexander and other so-called "virtuous pagans" worshipped the creature rather than the Creator.[110] The same sentiment appears in the Palladius version of Alexander's encounter with the Brahmins.[111] This is certainly the view favored by Orosius, and by sheer prevalence of manuscripts one would assume that the prevailing view in Anglo-Saxon England would have not considered Alexander to be a proselyte.

Turning to the OE *Letter of Alexander,* we find no reason to side with the Greek over the Latin Roman tradition, either. As Anne Bridges and other critics have noted, Alexander is an adept Hellene: he devotes himself to both Hercules and Pater Liber, the two gods with strong associations to India, and he offers repeated sacrifices to them.[112] Moreover, the first-person epistolary format short-circuits any attempt to make Alexander into a more

[108] Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, 188.
[109] *Hostias sane Alexander immolauit in Dei templo, non ad eis cultum uera pietate conuersus, sed impia uanitate cum diis eum falsis colendum putans.* Augustine, *Sancti Aurelii Augustinii de civitate Dei,* CC ser. lat.47-48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), XVIII.45.2. See also Carey's comments in: Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, 128.
[110] See fn. 14, above.
[111] See fn. 1, above.
[112] Bridges, "Empowering the Hero," 53.

virtuous "other" by which a Christian "self" is compared.[113] The *Letter* thus gives us no reason to consider him as anything other than the stereotypical "good" polytheist vilified by Orosius and the Latin Fathers.

Nevertheless, we cannot forget that the only surviving copy of the Latin *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* from Anglo-Saxon England is bound with the *Parva recapitulatio*. The entire Latin romance tradition from Anglo-Saxon England, such as it is, was read in the context of the Jerusalem episode. We should not interpret this evidence as proof that Anglo-Saxons believed that Alexander was a proselyte; rather, the rest of the Royal manuscript merely indicates that the Alexander of the romance tradition was *capable* of it. Both the *Epistola* and the *Collatio Dindymi* indicate that Alexander never stepped beyond that possibility into true knowledge of God. When we look at the OE *Letter of Alexander*, then, the only safe assumption is that the English might have considered Alexander's conversion historically possible, but he either relapsed into paganism or never truly accepted God's authority.

C. Alexander as Scientist

In *Pride and Prodigies,* Andy Orchard separates the main views of Alexander into two camps: he is either a courageous explorer or a murderous tyrant.[114] Although Orosius (and Orchard) favor Alexander the tyrant, Alexander the explorer and scientist is clearly in the forefront of the *Epistola*. John Block Friedman and James Romm have both noted

[113] Ibid., 51.
[114] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 117. Hildegard Tristam and George Cary ascribe to this categorization as well.

Alexander's role as a taxonomer in the larger Marvels tradition,[115] first because he was educated under Aristotle, and also because he supposedly gathered the raw materials for Aristotle's *De animalibus*, which Pliny mentions in his *Historia Naturalis*.[116] Romm, in fact, believes that the Latin *Epistola* "makes clear its scientific pretentions" and that the Pliny account may have been its inspiration.[117]

Like its Latin exemplar, the OE *Letter of Alexander* plays up Alexander's *curiositas,* his thirst for knowledge and new experiences, but many medieval moralists called this a dangerous personality trait. Richard Newhauser notes that "the moralists never considered the desire to know as something evil in itself" and that many treated *curiositas* as a morally neutral trait.[118] In its more positive manifestations, as in Tertullian, a natural thirst for true wisdom could lead non-Christians on the path to discovering God.[119] One can look to Saturn, Solomon's Chaldean *flyhting* partner in the Solomon-Saturn dialogues, or the unnamed thane in King Edwin's court, for examples in the Anglo-Saxon canon.[120] Insofar as Alexander looked for that "perfect wisdom" of the Brahmins in the *Collatio* or suspected

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[115] John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 145-46; James S. Romm, "Aristotle's Elephant and the Myth of Alexander's Scientific Patronage," *The American Journal of Philology* 110, no. 4 (1989): 567.

[116] *Alexandro Magno rege inflammatorio cupidine animalium naturas noscendi delegataque hac commentatione Aristoteli, summo in omni doctrina viro, aliquot milia hominum in totius Asiae Graeciaeque tractu parere ei iussa… ne quid usquam genitum ignoraretur ab eo. Quos percunctando quinquaginta ferme volumina illa praeclara de animalibus condidit.* "King Alexander the Great, being fired with a desire to know the natures of animals and having delegated the pursuit of this study to Aristotle as a man of supreme eminence in every branch of science, orders were given to some thousands of persons throughout the whole of Asia and Greece… so that he might not fail to be informed about any creature anywhere. His enquiries addressed to those persons resulted in the composition of his famous works on zoology, in nearly 50 volumes." H. Rackham, ed. *Pliny: Natural History*, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), VIII.17.44.

[117] Romm, "Aristotle's Elephant and the Myth of Alexander's Scientific Patronage," 569.

[118] Richard Newhauser, "Towards a History of Human Curiosity: A Prolegomenon to Its Medieval Phase," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistegeschichte* 56, no. 4 (1982): 568.

[119] Ibid., 56.

[120] Here I follow Kevin O'Neill's interpretation. See: "On the Date, Provenance and Relationship of the 'Solomon and Saturn' Dialogues," *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (1997):139-68.

some kind of "intelligence" behind the paths of the stars in the *Epistola Alexandri*, his particular flavor of curiosity could possibly fit here.

What made *curiositas* shift from a part of the human condition to a sin was either the misdirection or immoderate increase of the desire. As Newhauser explains, "whether [the moralists] criticized a mental predisposition for knowing obscure, useless or forbidden things, or accused as sinners those who believed in the truth-value of sensory perception, their analysis was a reminder to Christians that true wisdom was only to be had through the faith and the dogma of the church."[121] For this reason, Isidore of Seville warns against such desire for hidden knowledge: "excessive curiosity is a dangerous presumption, it is a destructive experience; it provokes one to heresy, it topples the mind into sacrilegious fables, it makes men audacious in obscure matters, it causes men to rush headlong into things unknown."[122] Augustine of Hippo identifies *vitium curiositatis* as relentlessly pursuing knowledge with the senses instead of the intellect, much like pride and lust.[123]

At least one Alexander text directly addresses Alexander's *curiositas*: the *Alexandri Magni iter ad Paradisum*, a sixth-century Talmudic text translated into Latin sometime in the twelfth century.[124] In this later version of his travels, Alexander encounters a vast walled city at the farthest edge of the East, and he sends envoys to demand tribute. A

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[121] Newhauser, "Towards a History of Human Curiosity," 562.
[122] Quoted in: ibid.
[123] *cum te non secundum intellectum mentis, quo me praestare uoluisti beluis, sed secundum sensum carnis quaererem.* "…when I sought you not according to the intellect of the mind, by which you have willed to distinguish us from the animals, but according to the perception of the flesh." Augustine, *Sancti Augustini: Confessionum Libri XIII* CC ser. lat. 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), II.6.55-58. See also: Edward Peters, "*Libertas Inquirendi* and the *Vitium Curiositas* in Medieval Thought," in *La notion de liberté au Moyen Âge: Islam, Byzance, Occident*, ed. George Makdisi and Dominique Sourdel, Penn-Paris-Dumbarton Oaks Colloquia (Paris: Le belles lettres, 1988), 89-98.
[124] The Latin *Iter ad Paradisum* is dated to c. 1100-1175 based on the language; it is extant in Anglo-Latin manuscripts and a Middle English verse romance ca. thirteenth century. See: Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, 19.

gatekeeper declines to let them in, but he does send a response by way of a mysterious eye-shaped jewel.[125] A wise Hebrew interprets the stone as a warning against Alexander's lust of the eyes, and thus humbled, Alexander retires to a quiet life of contemplation. Although the Latin *Iter ad Paradisum* postdates the Nowell Codex by at least a hundred years, the texts of the Royal manuscript focus on the exact same issues.[126] The *Collatio Dindymi* makes Alexander a travelling peripatetic philosopher like Solomon in the OE poem or Aethicus in the *Cosmographia*.[127] Alexander asks in his first letter that they teach him what Dindimus calls "perfect philosophy," first, because he wants to verify that the legends are true, and next because his upbringing had taught him to love wisdom.[128] Alexander then discovers, to his shock, that their definition of the "good" rejects all of the comforts and pursuits of the human condition. These Brahmins have all of the earmarks of a proto-Christian faith: It is monotheist and recognizes God as Word, Mind, and Creator.[129] It advocates an afterlife of reward or punishment in "hell" [*infernis*]; they beg Alexander to

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[125] Julius Zacher, ed. *Alexandri Magni iter ad Paradisum* (Regimonti, Pr. [Königsberg]: Th. Theile, 1859).

[126] For a detailed analysis of this later tradition (12th-15th CE), see: Hans Holländer, "Alexander: Hybris and Curiositas," in *Kontinuität und Transformation der antike im mittelalter Veröffentlichung der Kongressakten zum freiburger Symposion des Mediävistenverbande*, ed. Willi Erzgräber (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1989), 65-79.

[127] These connections have been noted by both O'Neill and O'Brien O'Keefe. See: O'Neill, "On the Date, Provenance and Relationship of the 'Solomon and Saturn' Dialogues," 150-51; Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, "The Geographic List of *Solomon and Saturn* II," *Anglo-Saxon England* 20 (1991): 139-40.

[128] *Semper enim virtutum studiis ab ineunte aetate dedi operam, traditaque mihi a sapientibus innocentiae mandata non indiligenter, ut arbitror, conservavi… Sed quia vestra excellens, ut fertur, industria, praeter illas philosophicas philosophorum notas usitatasque doctrinas, cultum quendam observantiae singularis inducit, quaeso ut hanc nihil moratus aperias.* "Ever since I was a child I have enjoyed learning. Our own wise men teach us to live well, so that our lives shall not meet with reproach. But I have heard that you adhere to a doctrine which excels that taught by our sages in its wisdom. So my message is a request to send me your teaching without delay." Pritchard, "The *Collatio Alexendri et Dindimi:* A Revised Text," I.2.9-16. All translations from the *Collatio* are Richard Stoneman's: *Legends of Alexander the Great* (London: Tauris, 2012), 57-66.

[129] *Nam verbum Deus est. Hoc mundum creavit, hoc regit atque alit omnia. Hoc nos veneramur, hoc diligimus, ex hoc spiritum trahimus. Siquidem Deus ipse spiritus atque mens est.* "For God is the word. And that Word created the earth, and through that Word we all have life. We worship this Word and adore it and love it, for God is the Spirit and the Mind." Pritchard, "The *Collatio Alexendri et Dindimi*," II.16.

convert for the sake of avoiding eternal punishment in that afterlife. Nevertheless, since Alexander believes in a Greek definition of the "good," he thus chooses, like a good Hellene, an active pursuit of moderation rather than the Brahmins' virtue of negation.[130]

The *Cosmographia* captures Alexander's scholarly ethos better than perhaps any other text outside of the *Epistola* tradition. "Aethicus" idolizes Alexander for his cleverness and ingenuity, calling him "most famous for every kind of invention and useful article." In the course of his own travels, "Aethicus" recounts Alexander's visits to the same places, often telling stories about what Alexander did in each region and trying to perform the same feats for himself. Likewise, the Alexander of the OE *Letter* is a man who thirsts with his eyes. As he tells Aristotle, he needs to see with his own eyes to believe the wonders which others had claimed were real: *Ne gelyfde ic æniges monnes gesecgenum swa fela wundorlicra þinga þæt hit swa beon mihte ær ic hit self minum eagum ne gesawe.*[131] He likewise demonstrates that seeing brings fulfillment: his craving for new sights leads him into the farthest reaches of India long after Porus has been conquered, and the promise of new marvels after India had seemingly been exhausted leads him away from his homeward march and towards the Trees of the Sun and Moon.[132] His *curiositas* leads him to drill through cultic statues and push condemned men into sacred caves, all merely to see and

[130] Cf. ibid., 255-56.

[131] "I would have not believed the words of any man that so many marvelous things could be so before I saw them myself with my own eyes." Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §3.

[132] See, for instance, Alexander's wandering around the coast of India: *[W]e…woldan ma wunderlicra þinga geseon ⁊ sceawian ⁊ mærlicra… Þa ferde ic hwæþre be þam sæ to þon þæt ic wolde cunnian meahte ic ealne middangeard ybferan swa garsecge geligeð… Ond ic þa ða wynstran dælas Indie wolde geondferan þy læs me owiht in þæm londe beholden oððe gedegled wære.* "We… went forth and wished to see and witness more marvelous and noteworthy things… Yet I still traveled along the sea, because I wanted to know if I could go right round the earth, which the ocean surrounds… and then I wished to make a trip through the left-hand region of India, in case anything in that land had been hidden or concealed from me." Ibid., §26.

feel what is hidden to the eyes. He marches his men into increasingly hostile territory for the satisfaction of his curiosity and is easily discouraged by his guides from exploring lands without wonders. By Isidore's definition, Alexander is a perfect example of a man "audacious in obscure matters," who "rush[es] headlong into things unknown," and that desire brings mayhem to his army.[133] In short, even though Alexander's curiosity and desire for true wisdom *could* conceivably lead him to a partial understanding of God, his carnally-minded pursuit of knowledge distracts him from anything higher than the immediate concerns of the body.

To conclude, the English textual tradition reveals that Alexander sees himself as a vast center of political and geographic power, and he believes that his travels into India bring him into contact with an exotic and dangerous margin which, as a center of imperial power, he is obligated to restrain. Secondly, Alexander had the capability to know God even though the *Letter*—and the larger Latin tradition—suggests that he continued to embrace Hellenism. And, finally, Alexander's thirst for new knowledge leads him down the path of fleshly perception towards the creature rather than the Creator. This puts Alexander on a course for disaster in the East: he does not recognize his own marginality to India, and though he may have a liminal understanding of the Creator, he cannot recognize that God by name. How Alexander carries out these roles, however, will depend on the nature of the lands which he explores and conquers.

[133] Quoted in: Newhauser, "Towards a History of Human Curiosity," 562.

4. The Anglo-Saxon East

If we are to understand Alexander's spiritual and geographic alterity to the East, we must explore the geographical situation of the lands of his conquest. Suzanne Conklin Akbari points out that time progresses from its Eastern origins in Paradise to the West, which means that the locations in between—India, Babylon, the Grove of the Sun and Moon— represent moments in time as well as locations in space.[134] As Alexander moves between these locations in space, he also interacts with key points of the historical past; these places carry specific connotations in the cycle of history, and the English perception of those places informs how they would have read Alexander's journey. This point is crucial for Nicholas Howe: as he explains, "That *Alexander's Letter* articulates a narrative both geographical and chronological, through both place and time, explains its presence in Vitellius A.xv."[135]

Secondly, Akbari notes that "[s]ome medieval texts… posit more than a single fixed point, moving from one center to another in a demonstration of the dynamic quality of symbolic geography."[136] Much like the Cotton Map, the OE *Letter* certainly focuses its action on more than one provisional center of power; these range from Babylon and Porus' palace at Fasiacen to the grove of the trees of the Sun and Moon, and its understanding of those provisional centers differs significantly from similar texts. The lands of Asia, for instance, usually had two important centers of power: Jerusalem directly opposite Asia near the center of the *orbis terrarium*, and Eden, thought to exist on the very eastern edge of the

[134] Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 100-1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 3.
[135] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England,* 185.
[136] Ibid., 53.

world.[137] These two sites mark the literal beginning, middle and end of humanity's progression, and in the *Letter* at least, Alexander gives no clear indication that he knows of either.

To start with Paradise, the former dwelling place of Adam and Eve is most closely connected to the creation of mankind and the place of mankind's last unfettered access to God the Creator. As Akbari and others point out, Paradise is both connected and separated from mankind; despite its four rivers that "extend throughout the world, eternally linking the populated world to the now-forbidden Garden," no one can access the place of their pre-Lapsarian origins.[138] Isidore of Seville, for one, treats Paradise as a geographic location; the OE poems *The Phoenix* and *Genesis A* likewise put Paradise on the map of the world, but it is closed to the sinful by God's sovereignty.[139] This point is central to the twelfth century *Iter ad Paradisum,* as the gatekeeper at Paradise tells Alexander's envoys that they can approach no farther than the waters surrounding the city.[140] In this story, Alexander nevertheless takes home from Paradise a small bit of wisdom, an eye-shaped jewel with the power to cure his lust of the eyes; but since the *Letter* gives no indication that he knows of its existence, Alexander blunders towards it without any idea of its blessedness, its abundance, or its larger meaning to the cosmos.[141]

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[137] For more on this concept, see: ibid., chapters 1-2; Mark Bradshaw Busbee, "A Paradise Full of Monsters: India in the Old English Imagination," *LATCH* 1 (2008): 51-72.
[138] Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 52. Cf. *Genesis A*, ll. 215-33; George Philip Krapp, *The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 9.
[139] *Genesis A*, ll. 949-51 and *The Phoenix,* ll. 4b-7: ibid., 31; George Philip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, eds., *The Exeter Book,* ASPR 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), 94.
[140] Zacher, *Iter ad Paradisum*, 23.8-12.
[141] The *Iter ad Paradisum* tradition is the perfect illustration of this point: Alexander may want to subdue Paradise and even reaches as far as its walls, but he can in no way enter or conquer it. We lack any indication, however, that knowledge of the *Iter* tradition was known in Latin at the time that the Nowell Codex was copied.

Situating Jerusalem presents a different problem. Although Jerusalem does not lie at the exact center of the Cotton Map, the Insular tradition nevertheless embraces the idea from an early point. The *Old English Martyrology*, for instance, contains Adamnan's argument proving that Jerusalem lies at the geographic center of the earth; the OE *Elene* places it more figuratively at the center of Rome's struggle for domination.[142] All of the four Danielic kingdoms—the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans—have critical interactions with Jerusalem's temple in the books of the Old Testament, Bede's commentaries, and the works of Josephus.[143] And, while the Royal manuscript puts the *Epistola Alexandri* in context of the trip to Jerusalem in the *Parva recapitulatio*, the Nowell Codex does not. The still point of the moving wheel of Christian time does not even appear on Alexander's map.

Between these two points of the Christian axis are two other important secondary centers of power: Babylon and India. How these two locations interact is central to Alexander's journey. As Andrew Scheil and Roy Liuzza have noted, Babylon functions as a medieval post-Apocalyptic space.[144] In many accounts, Babylon was the first city founded after the Flood, and the Tower of Babel marks the point of no return to a lost past where all peoples and languages were the same.[145] The city represents the eventual decline of all

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[142] Denis Meehan, ed. *Adamnan's De Locis Sanctis* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1958), 57; Christine Rauer, ed., *The Old English Martyrology* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013), 125; Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England,* 121-22.

[143] These include the destruction of the first Temple under the Babylonians, in 2 Kings 24-25 and Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.6-7; the building of the second temple under the Persians, in the Book of Ezra and *Antiquities* 11.1-4; Alexander's sacrifice at the second temple in Josephus, *Antiquities* 12, and the destruction of the second temple under Vespasian in Josephus, *De bello Judaico* 6.4.

[144] See: Andrew P. Scheil, "Babylon and Anglo-Saxon England," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 36, no. 1 (2003):42; R. M. Liuzza, "The Tower of Babel: The Wanderer and the Ruins of History," ibid, 5-7.

[145] This is explicitly laid out in the two *Solomon and Saturn* poems. For a discussion, see: O'Neill, "On the Date, Provenance and Relationship of the 'Solomon and Saturn' Dialogues," 147-49.

earthly power; as Babylon herself warns in the OE *Orosius*, her falls is proof that "you have nothing at all constant or strong among you that might last."[146] As the most powerful empire in the East, it also stands as in opposition to Jerusalem. Andrew Scheil explains that "in Augustinian thought Babylon represents the City of Man, standing in opposition to Jerusalem, the City of God. Thus Babylon serves to represent life on earth, *homo viator* wandering in the exile of the fallen world, awaiting eventual return to the Celestial City."[147] Its association with the captivity of the Jews also makes it a potent symbol for exile.[148] Babylon is not supposed to be a destination or a place to where one returns; its symbolic power for medieval thinkers lies in turning people from its borders onto a one-way journey to somewhere else.

During Alexander's time, however, Babylon was still one of the largest cities in the world, and the city brought to mind a legacy of human and pagan supremacy even if, from a medieval perspective, it had long since sputtered out. The Cotton Map makes Babylon one of the largest structures on the entire map, and "Aethicus" calls Babylon "the Alpha and Omega" [*primam ac novissimam*] of all other cities.[149] The OE poem *Daniel* makes Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon opulent and powerful, full of the wisest Hebrew men; the king's dream of the tree, however, presages its eventual fall.[150] This is the vision of Babylon that drives Alexander there at the end of the *Letter*: a grand pagan city in the center of Asia with a legacy of human wisdom and godlike endeavors.

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[146] *Nu ic þus gehroren eam 7 aweg gewiten, hwæt, ge magan on me ongietan 7 oncnawan þæt ge nanuht mid eow nabbað fæstes ne stronges þætte þurhwunigean mæge* (2.1). Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, 43.33-44.6.
[147] Scheil, "Babylon and Anglo-Saxon England," 39.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Herren, *Cosmography*, §108.3-7.
[150] *Daniel*, lines 495-592; Krapp, *The Junius Manuscript*, 125-27.

Both of these valences—the crumbling omen of confusion and the vibrant kingdom of Nimrud—would be simultaneously in play for the English reader. Alexander is fated to travel to the "Alpha and Omega" of the earth, but the reader knows that both he *and* Babylon are doomed to fail. Like the inhabitants of Heorot in *Beowulf,* the *Letter of Alexander's* protagonists are not privy to the future fall of the nations around them. Babylon is, in a sense, in a permanent state of suspended destruction, always about to have been fallen, always an omen of Alexander's impending demise. Alexander's exploits must be read in the context that nothing will endure long before he learns that he will die in the city of Nimrud.

In contrast to the City of Confusion, India promises the reward of something that Alexander cannot quite grasp. Whereas Babylon gains most of its symbolic power from its historical context, India's power comes from its position on the map. Isidore of Seville placed India immediately to the west of Paradise, the closest any person can fare towards the land of the blessed.[151] For him, India's proximity to Paradise translated to superabundance: the land produces an excess of everything from gold to spices to people. That proximity to the earthly Paradise also translated to vast spiritual possibility. Paul Freedman points out that some of the church fathers called India blessed because it was so near to Eden.[152] Suzanne Conklin Akbari likewise calls India and Ethiopia "repositories of supernatural and arcane knowledge" due to their proximity to the rising of the sun.[153] India

[151] Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 14.III.5 (hereafter *Etymologies*).
[152] Paul Freedman, "The Medieval Other: The Middle Ages as Other," in *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), 30-31.
[153] Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 69.

was especially associated with the Brahmins, and both Anne Bridges and Thomas Hahn likewise note that the Brahmins of India often became "virtuous pagans" and moral foils in the writings Carolingian Europe.[154] Although there are no Brahmins per se in the *Letter*, the priest of the grove operates as a very close stand-in, for trees of his devotion dispense great wisdom, and Alexander approaches them with the same desire for knowledge.

Perhaps most importantly, the tradition usually differentiates between the knowledge and pride that led to the fall of Babel and the transcendent knowledge of God. In the *Revelationes* of pseudo-Methodius, Noah had a fourth son born after the flood named Jonitus; he divided the earth between Shem, Cham, and Japheth in three great continents but sent his fourth son to the farthest reaches of the East to a land called Eoa, also known as *Hiliu Chora* or "the region of the sun."[155] According to this account, God grants Jonitus great wisdom in natural philosophy, and he becomes a counselor to the founder of Babylon. Even though Babylon is the first great city on the earth, Jonitus' kingdom is the second; moreover, whereas Babel is punished for its transgressive pride and curiosity, Jonitus' kingdom in Eoa endures, meaning that a kingdom exists close to Paradise whose people are neither of the line of Shem nor guilty of the curse of Babel. Some of the divine knowledge associated with Paradise is still accessible in Eoa to mankind even though Paradise is not.

Akbari likewise connects Alexander and Jonitus through the *Epistola* tradition: near the end of the Latin *Letter*, Alexander reaches the far eastern coast of Ocean, telling Aristotle that the Indians who lived at the grove "said that I too must be immortal, who had

[154] Thomas Hahn, "The Indian Tradition in Western Medieval Intellectual History," *Viator* 9 (1978): 219-20; Bridges, "Empowering the Hero," 50-51.
[155] Garstad, *Apocalypse*, 3.1-4.

been able to penetrate all the way to this place" [*usque eo*].[156] In some manuscripts of the *Epistola*, the word *eo* is replaced by some version of the word *eoum* (Eous, on the Eastern Ocean), as in Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 82.[157] The Royal manuscript of the Latin *Epistola* has the more common variant *euum*, making the "land of the Dawn [Eoa]" the location of the trees of the Sun and Moon. At least some people caught on to the connection, as the the twelfth-century canon Lambert of St.-Omer made this connection explicit when he compiled the Jonitus material with the Latin *Letter*.[158]

When Alexander travels between the provisional centers of India and Babylon, he is, in a sense, bringing himself into contact with the earthly wisdom and power of Babylon and the arcane wisdom of the pre-Babel East. The farther he penetrates into the land of India as he searches for its secrets, the closer he moves to a pre-Lapsarian, pre-Babel state of spiritual enlightenment. And, the more he spars with the creatures who are the bodily manifestations of that land, the more he tries to impose his own order upon them in his bid to lay claim to their secrets. This chain of events will lead him to the possibility of great enlightenment, but it will only lead to his death.

5. The Imperial Other in the Letter of Alexander

In the OE *Letter,* the perhaps the most defining characteristic of Alexander's world empire is his ceaseless motion without any sense of a true imperial seat. In the larger tradition, he founds a string of cities from Alexandria to Bucephalus without declaring any

[156] *Indi enim sacra deorum ad oceanum colentes dicebant me quoque esse immortalem, qui usque eo penetrare potuissem.* Boer, *Epistola Alexandri*, 53.4.
[157] Twelfth-century manuscript, from France. See: Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 86 fn.42; Boer, *Epistola Alexandri*, xvi.
[158] Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 86.

of them his capital; in each place he travels, he leaves allies to rule in his place. The Cotton Map, tellingly enough, gives no citadel to mark the throne of Alexander, for, though Alexander marks out vast borders deep into India, he does not operate out of any single location. Where, then, is the place from which he projects his authority into the margin? Alexander is, paradoxically, a center of power with no definable geographic center.

Perhaps the best illustration this problem is to compare Alexander to a different world ruler from the Anglo-Saxon canon. In the OE poem *Elene*, the Roman emperor and Christian convert Constantine understands that being a center of power requires his presence at the center of his empire. As Howe explains,

> Constantine comes to represent the still center of Rome, from which power emanates and to which allegiance is due… he develops a fascination with the literal Cross upon which Christ was crucified and makes its rediscovery a primary matter of his religio-political policy. Significantly, however, he enacts this policy by remaining at the center and sending his mother, Elene, to discover the Cross and convert the Jews who have for centuries have kept it hidden.[159]

On the one hand, Alexander's fascination with India seems to align somewhat with Constantine's fascination with the true Cross: both have an intense longing for knowledge and plan excursions into the East to fill the need to satisfy it. On the other hand, Alexander sends no emissaries but takes the role of Elene for himself. He leaves his legates at the center and dispatches himself to the margins; a servant to his own curiosity, he conquers the margins by vacating the center and leaving a power vacuum in his wake. If there is an

[159] Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 121.

imperial lesson here, it is that Alexander does not fit the role of a powerful central force; rather, he is a restless dweller of the margins who tries to possess the great power in the center through invasion. In short, Alexander is an imperial Other, the learned Greek barbarian pressing in at the Indian gates.

Numerous scholars, however, have noted how little of the OE *Letter of Alexander* is devoted to conquest, which, on the surface, at least, would discourage any comparison between *Elene* and the OE *Letter*. The text of the OE *Letter* picks up well after Alexander's defeat of Darius, and its description of the battles with Porus is limited to the opulence of the deserted palace and Alexander's infiltration of the enemy camp. It may seem from this imbalance that Alexander the conqueror is of little interest to the *Letter*, but his curiosity about India is nevertheless a direct manifestation of his "geographical desire." Even though his actual conquest ends with the defeat of Porus, his trek through these lands is intended to convert them from land into territory, and from there, into text—that is, through his letter, sent to his mentor Aristotle.[160] The impulses of the scientist and warlord are one and the same. Alexander's need to impose intellectual order is, in this sense, a frontier war over Creation, making this Alexander's third, final, and failed campaign to conquer farthest India. When Elene penetrates into Jerusalem and finds the True Cross along with the nails, she converts those nails into a sign of great power and invincibility for her son;[161] when

[160] Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles, eds., *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1998), 5. Cf. Anne Bridges: "these [stories] are not reported for the sake of heroic magnification but in the interests of furthering Aristotle's already considerable knowledge. Through the philosopher's doctrine (*ratio doctrinae*) and prudence (*prudentia*), this will in turn be transmitted to the world at large." Bridges, "Empowering the Hero," 55.

[161] As Howe explains, "That a bridle made from the nails of the Cross should control the horse of the true emperor and also render him invincible speaks to the larger meaning of the poem: the act of conversion forever alters a people and their realm." Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, 122-23.

Alexander penetrates India, seemingly to the outlands of Paradise, he discovers his own literal death and the dissolution of his empire.

Much of this difference between Alexander and Constantine/Elene hinges upon a single difference: revelation. In *Elene,* Constantine is granted a vision which leads him to embrace the God of the Christains, and though Alexander is a wise pagan, he must nevertheless learn by conquest what Constantine and his mother gain from a higher wisdom. In the OE *Letter,* Alexander explains what he learned from his conquest of Darius and the Persians: *Ic þe cyþde 7 getacnode be þære asprungnisse sunnan 7 monan 7 be tungla rynum gestenissum 7 be lyfte tacnungum. Þa þing eall ne magon elcor beon buton micelre gemynde swa geendebyrded 7 foresithod.*[162] This new-found knowledge, Alexander tells us, gives him a glimpse of a *micelre gemynd*—a greater intellect—in the heavens, perhaps not as clearly defined as Creator, but certainly at least something like Aristotle's "prime mover." In the larger Alexander legend, the practice of astronomy is associated with the Egyptians and Alexander's father Nectanebus; biblically speaking, however, astronomy was often associated with Babylon and Nimrod, and the Persian Empire of Darius III collected both of these nations under the same banner. When Alexander mentions his knowledge of astronomy, it comes as the spoils of Darius' defeat. Conquest grants him knowledge, just as Elene gains the True Cross and the nails, but for Alexander that wisdom stops short of divine revelation.

[162] "I explained and indicated to you about the eclipse of the sun and moon, and the courses of the stars and configurations. All these things cannot otherwise be arranged and foreordained than by a great intelligence." Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §6.

Just before this, Alexander explains to Aristotle what he has learned from the creatures of India:

> Seo eorðe is to wundrinne hwæt heo ærest oþþe godra þinga cenne, oððe eft þara yfelra, þe heo þæm sceawigendum is æteowed. Hio is cennende þa fulcuþan wildeora 7 wæstma 7 wecga oran, 7 wunderlice wyhta, þa þing eall þæm monnum þe hit geseoð 7 sceawigað wæron uneðe to gewitanne for þære missenlicnisse þara hiowa.[163]

Unlike conquering Babylon and its art of astronomy, conquering India does not raise Alexander's curiosity beyond the level of the earth itself [*seo eorðe*]. Although the natural world is *to wundrienne*, he does not ascribe their properties to any independent, creative force as he had done with the heavens and its "greater intellect." Like Dagnus in the *Passion of Saint Christopher*, Alexander cannot read the marvels of India as signs of anything greater than the land that made them.

Those monsters clearly strain at the limits of Alexander's imagination, and he tries to confine them intellectually just as much as he does physically. Margaret Bridges, for instance, urges us to recognize "an essential difference between those writings which, like the vast majority of Hellenistic and medieval Alexander narratives, claim to be imaginative literature, and those, like the *Epistola,* which claim to constitute… a discourse on the real

[163] "The earth is a source of wonder first for the good things that she brings forth, and then for the evil, through which she is revealed to observers. She is the producer of well-known wild beasts, and plants, and stones and metal-ore, and of wondrous creatures, all those things which are difficult to comprehend for those who look and observe because of the variety of their forms." Ibid., §3.

rather than the marvelous."[164] That distinction between the real and fanciful is just as important for Alexander as it is for Bridges. As Alexander tells Aristotle,

> Ac þa ðing þe me nu in gemynd cumað ærest þa ic þe write, þy læs on me ne mæg idel spellung oþþe scondlic leasung beon gestæled. Hwæt þu eac sylfa const þa gecynd mines modes mec a gewunelice healdon þæt gemerce soðes 7 rihtes. Ond ic sperlicor mid wordum sægde þonne hie mid dædum gedon wærun. Nu ic hwæþre gehyhte 7 gelyfe þæt þu þas þing ongete swa þu me ne talige owhit gelpan 7 secgan be þære micelnisse ures gewinnes 7 compes.[165]

We should focus not so much Alexander's repeated claims to present the unvarnished truth as his confession that the truth is too strange to believe. As the overseeing "intelligence" of the *Letter*, Aristotle's cosmology is Alexander's benchmark for reality; Alexander has no way to fully explain India within the confines of that worldview, and so he suppresses the more incredible experiences to make it fit within an Aristotelian framework. We see Alexander make the same choice in the *Collatio*: when a strange new philosophy contradicts his view of the moral self, he rejects it in favor of his presumably Aristotelian roots. Even though his curiosity prods him to seek these new experiences, he cannot accept those which defy his metaphysics.

In response to India's wonders, Alexander defaults to intellectual responses we have already seen in *Wonders of the East*: taxonomic and imperial containment. When Alexander

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[164] Bridges, "Empowering the Hero," 54-55.

[165] "But now I will write to you about those things that come first to mind, in case I can be accused of empty talk and shameful lies. Look, you yourself know that the nature of my mind is always as such to keep me continually within the boundaries of what is true and right; and I have described things in words more sparingly than they actually occurred. So now I hope and believe that you perceive things so as not at all to reckon me to boast in telling of the greatness of our struggle and contest." Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §4.

calls the earth marvelous, *ærest oþþe godra þinga cenne, oððe eft þara yfelra*, he is sorting the wonders of the East according to their deviation from the Aristotelian norm. The formulation *godra... yfelra* means exactly what it does in modern English, not so much "the good and the bad" as "the good and the evil," just as it is used by Ælfric throughout his sermons or the two trees in the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*.[166] This value judgment runs contrary to a fundamental tenet of Augustine's theology, that those who fully understand the Creator will find nothing evil in Creation:

> Deus enim creator est omnium, qui ubi et quando creari quid oporteat uel oportuerit, ipse nouit, sciens uniuersitatis pulchritudinem quarum partium uel similitudine uel diuersitate contexat. Sed qui totum inspicere non potest, tamquam deformitate partis offenditur, quoniam cui congruat, et quo referatur ignorat. [167]

When Alexander sorts between the "good" and "evil" elements of creation, he proves himself a man who "cannot see the whole" and is "offended by the deformity of the part." Since India is the nearest land to Paradise and thought to partake somewhat of its blessedness, he is essentially forcing the land closest to the original form of Creation to fit his own view of reality.

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[166] [*H*]*eah heofoncyning handum gesette,/ þæt þær yldo bearn moste on ceosan /godes and yfeles, gumena æghwilc,/ welan and wawan.* "The high King of Heaven set them at hand so that the children of men may choose of good and evil, each of them, wealth or woe." *Genesis*, lines 462b-66a; Krapp, *The Junius Manuscript*, 17.

[167] "For God is the Creator of all things: He Himself knows where and when anything should be, or should have been, created; and He knows how to weave the beauty of the whole out of the similarity and diversity of its parts. The man who cannot view the whole is offended by what he takes to be the deformity of the part; but this is because he does not know how it is adapted or related to the whole." Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate contra paganos libri xxii,* edited by Lucas Verheijen, CC ser. lat. 47-48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955): XVI.8.29-36. Translation from: *The City of God Against the Pagans*. Trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998).

Suzanne Conklin Akbari explains that such hierarchies were intended "to impose order on the abundant heterogeneity of creation, to gain control over the world by fitting it into an intellectually coherent system" even though the usual interpretation was that "one 'found' or 'discerned' the order already imposed upon the world and its populations by God."[168] Alexander does likewise, for he believes he is merely "discerning" the things he sees. His violence, however, betrays the truth: only bloodshed makes this land fit the image which he submits, with all protestations of accuracy, to Aristotle.

Alexander's intellectual conquest begins with his defeat of Porus: when he inspects the Indian king's deserted palace, its opulence spurs him to search out further marvels: *Mid þy ic ða wolde geornlicor þa þing geseon 7 furðor eode þa geseah ic gyldenne wingeard trumlicne 7 fæstlice, 7 þa twigo his hongedon geond þa columnan. Ða wundrode ic þæs swiðe… Seldon we þær ænig seolfor fundon.*[169] The golden vineyard represents the first time Alexander thirsts with his eyes, but the reaction comes from a familiar source: its abundant use of gold. In this case, the gold is specifically metalwork, both a demonstration of extreme wealth and great human craft. Margaret Bridges notes that gold works as a shorthand for the marvelous highlighting Alexander's "protagonistic curiosity about the world."[170] In the historical sources, Alexander's army was dubbed the *Argyraspides* or "Silver Shields," but silver is almost never seen in Fasicacen. Alexander upgrades his entire army with gold plate to make them a new marvel, a feast for the eyes:

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[168] Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 21.
[169] "When I wished to see these things more keenly and went further, I saw a golden vineyard, mighty and firm, and its branches hung about the columns... Seldom did we find any silver there." Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §8.
[170] Bridges, "Empowering the Hero," 53.

> On swa micel wundor 7 wæfersien wæs þæs mines weoreds on fægernisse ofer all oþer þeodkyningas þe middangearde wæron. Đa sceawede ic seolfa 7 geseah mine gesælinesse… þa iwæs ic hwæthwugo in gefean in minum mode ahafen.[171]

When Alexander turns his army into a walking *wæfersien,* it hints that he understands the power of the marvelous even if he does not understand what it signifies. Marvels are a sign of power, and so he appropriates that sign—to the great encumbrance of his soldiers— in order to transfer that symbolic power.

Although Alexander here treats Fasiacen like the far end of an extreme, in reality it is the interface between the Asian familiar and an unknown geographical, biological, and spiritual alterity. Something *changes* when he crosses this threshold. Lloyd Gunderson notes that *Fasiacen* likely means the Phasis River, which was often "regarded as the boundary of his part of the world."[172] From this point, Fasiacen functions as "the displaced center of the narrative" and "a place of refuge," as Margaret Bridges calls it.[173] As she explains, "Movement during the Indian campaign takes one of two forms, either away from Fasiacen, towards the remote and ultimately circumambient— as at the outset of the *Epistola*—or towards Fasiacen, which implicitly figures the familiar."[174] At Fasiacen, he reaches the edge of his commonly-recognized *oikumene*, and he transitions from general into a border-keeper, as the majority of his energy is spent protecting the self from the marvelous.

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[171] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §11.
[172] Lloyd LaVerne Gunderson, "The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle About India: An Analysis and Reconstruction" (Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1966), 50.
[173] Bridges, "Empowering the Hero," 49.
[174] Ibid.

Moreover, Alexander behaves like a foreign body in this land, and the land struggles to reject him. For instance, at the end of their dangerous trip with no water, his guides lead them to an oasis with a lake heavily overgrown by trees and accessible by only a narrow trail. Alexander cuts an enormous swath out of the forest blocking their way, brutally reworking the land to suit his needs. Then he camps his army directly in the middle of this new, easy access to the only watering hole for miles. When nightfall approaches and he lights his two thousand golden lanterns to show the way, thousands of animals follow that signal down his freshly-cut trail and directly into his camp.

Behind the "Night of Terrors" lies a well-ordered ecology stymied by the Greek army. The animals are self-organized into herds of similar creatures, each coming to the lake at a different hour of the night to seek either water or their prey. The serpents and scorpions who first appear at the lake, for instance, are merely doing *swa hie ær gewunelice wæron*, following their instinct, and the frightened soldiers attack them as they scuttle to the lake for water.[175] These snakes and the vicious *Dentestyrannus* do the same thing, but the rhinoceros is spurred to charge only when it spots the thousands of golden lights in the Greek camp. The other creatures all prudently leave before the pestilential vapor descends over the lake; the Greeks, however, trapped where they don't belong, suffocate in the fumes. This pattern happens repeatedly: they set camp again in a forest next to a river, and a herd of elephants stampedes through the camp.[176] They take a seemingly sheltered, ominously peaceful valley for refuge, and the valley winds freeze and burn the army all night.[177]

[175] "just as they usually did, towards the water." Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §17.
[176] Ibid., §28.
[177] Ibid., §30

As we have just seen, most of these attacks arise simply because the Greek army prevents the creatures from following their instinct. Margaret Bridges also points out that these attacks are also prompted by Alexander's imperialistically-driven curiosity. She explains,

> [monsters] are frequently mere objects of *curiositas*, conjured up by the desire to see, know and possess. When that desire is experienced as transgressive, the object is figured as aggressive, and the marvelous creatures attack. Most of Alexander's battles are represented as the consequence of both his desire to pursue an object that resists perception and appropriation and the feeling that that pursuit is fraught with danger against which he is, of course, fully armed.[178]

Although I would argue that the monsters are more than "mere objects of *curiositas*," her claims reveal important points. Since Alexander's curious gaze is his instrument of appropriation, the land itself punishes his transgression. When Alexander sends his soldiers into a river to confront some hiding villagers, for instance, a herd of hippopotami attack as soon as the soldiers enter the water. Alexander's resolution that "nothing lay hidden" from him directly leads to the elephant and crocodile attacks, the Cynocephali attack immediately after they harass the Ictifafonas, and his trials in the valley happen just as he reaches the farthest borders of India.

Moreover, since the beasts are as much products of their location as the weather, the land punishes Alexander through the very things he longs to see. Alexander cannot beat India into submission as he does Darius and Porus; he cannot wipe out the

[178] Bridges, "Empowering the Hero," 54.

hippopotami or punish a lake. He instead directs his wrath against the guides who fulfilled their promise to feed his gaze, leaving a hundred and fifty as fodder for the hippopotami and the rest for the serpents at the lake. As Susan Kim points out, "Alexander *uses* the animals. In doing so he acts as an agent, more than a victim of this physical violence. At the same time, however, he also makes it clear that he is conscious of the fact that his own violence is ultimately turned against his own body."[179] Just as he did with the gold of Fasiacen, the only control Alexander has over such marvels is to appropriate their power for himself but at the expense of his soldiers and guides.

In more usual constructions of exoticism, the exotic is often considered a pollution danger to the imperially-minded (and "pure") self. Even though we see this conquest through Alexander's eyes, the pollution here is generated by the "self" and endangers the so-called Indian "Other." When Alexander chases after Porus, his army is so laden with gold that they can scarcely carry anything else, water included. The army becomes so thirsty in the desert that they resort to licking their weapons and drinking oil or urine.[180] The bodies of his army are torn, bleeding, weeping with open wounds from their battles with various creatures, and their bodies litter the desert in a trail from Fasiacen to the farthest edge of the world.

Alexander's presence likewise brings the danger of spiritual corruption. Before each act of pagan sacrifice, his curiosity leads him to profane those sacred spaces. Before he sacrifices to Hercules and Liber, he drills holes through each statue to test whether they are solid gold. When he discovers a cave of Bacchus rumored to kill those who profane it, he

[179] Kim, "'If One Who Is Loved Is Not Present, a Letter May Be Embraced Instead'," 39.
[180] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §13.

shoves criminals inside to see what would happen before offering the proper sacrifices himself.[181] When Alexander enters the grove of the Trees of the Sun and Moon, a place with extreme standards of purity, he comes with three hundred soldiers stained with bloodshed, nourished by urine, and covered in gold, to a place where bloodshed is forbidden and gold is so common that it no longer qualifies as a marvel.

The land of the grove carries distinct echoes of Paradise, which only puts Alexander's corrupting presence in stark relief. The grove seems to be located near the very rim of the known world in the southeast where Alexander had been previously exploring.[182] The priest tells Alexander that, like Paradise, the grove has no rainfall; moreover, *ne cwome ne fugel ne wildeor, ne nænig æternwyrm þæt her dorste gesecan ða halgan gemæro sunnan 7 monan.*[183] Its inhabitants weave no cloth nor wield iron, building no machines; those who enter the grove, in fact, must lay aside their armor, weapons, and all other contrivances associated with the kin of Cain.[184] Their dietary habits also have an air of Paradise, as they live to an astonishing age eating only tears of balsam and water.[185] Their diet and longevity strongly resembles the Brahmins of the *Collatio*; their clothing of animal skins, however, hearkens back to Adam and Eve's first clothes, the hides which God

[181] Ibid., §31.
[182] While the revised ending of the OE version makes this less certain, the Latin version explicitly puts the grove near the end of the known world; furthermore, Alexander's final leg of the journey starts on the far Eastern coast. He travels south to Ethiopia and then back north, on the coast, where he meets the old men. Akbari's link between the grove and the land of Eous strengthens the association. See: Gunderson, "The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle about India," 59-60. See also fn. 157, above.
[183] "nor bird, nor wild beast, nor did any poisonous serpent dare to seek out the holy precincts of the Sun and the Moon." Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §35. One should note the resemblance of this description to the field of Paradise in *The Phoenix,* lines 11-84, and Bede's description of Ireland, where neither serpents nor poisons can survive. See: Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, 95-96; André Crépin et al., eds., *Historie ecclésiastique du peuple Anglais*, 3 vols., vol. 1, Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2005), I.5.5-13.
[184] See Genesis 4:22. Cain's descendent Tubal-Cain is often credited as the first metalworker, and by extension, creator of weapons.
[185] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §34.

gives them after the Expulsion in Genesis 3. Perhaps most importantly, the grove and its trees are the only places called *halig* in the entire text.[186] As Paul Freedman advises, "Paradise itself, like Jerusalem, is a kind of theological centering point, the ideal from which everything else has fallen away. In this sense Paradise is the antithesis of alterity."[187] The grove's holiness is "other" to Alexander only in the sense that Alexander is not a part of its holiness.

Every move Alexander makes in this place risks polluting the atmosphere, which reinforces the Greeks' otherness to the holy grove. The priest of the grove, for instance, demands that only those *clæne from wifgehrine* can enter. Alexander and three hundred of his retinue all agree to the terms, strip naked, and enter the grove.[188] Any reader with a good knowledge of the Alexander legend would find this suspicious: Orosius underscores Alexander's sexual relations with Cleophyle and the Amazon queen Halestris, and those stories are also reported in Justin.[189] Then there is the issue of blood contamination: Alexander wishes to give a blood sacrifice to the trees, but the bishop forbids him—for, as he is told, *nære alænigum men þæt he þær ænig nyten cwealde oþþe blodgyte worhte.*[190] Even the tears of his companions, who weep at the knowledge of his death, are sacrilegious to the trees in the grove, and the bishop forbids their grief.[191]

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[186] The term *halig* is used seven times in the episode of the grove and nowhere else.
[187] Freedman, "The Medieval Other," 33.
[188] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §35.
[189]Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos,* III.xviii.5, xix.1; Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, 71.4-7, 72.2-5. Neither event, however, is mentioned in the Zacher *Epitome*.
[190] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 36.
[191] In the Latin version, the bishop actually expels them from the grove because their weeping angers the trees. See: Boer, *Epistola Alexandri*, 51.4-5.

At the same time that Alexander moves with all his soldiers from furthest India and into the holy grove, he suffers a continuous attrition of power as he comes closer to land of the Sun. At the time of his first fight with Porus, Alexander has a full fighting force, but his force shrinks with each new disastrous encounter with the fauna of India. In the "Night of Terrors" alone, Alexander loses over a hundred and twenty soldiers to poisonous serpents and a charging rhinoceros. When Alexander departs for the grove, he leaves nearly his entire army behind with an expeditionary force of only three thousand. He takes only three hundred retainers with him into the holy grove, and they leave their armor, weapons, and spoils behind them. After the first prophecy, Alexander takes only three friends with him to the Tree of the Moon, partly to keep information secret. In the time it takes him to travel from the path to Fasiacen to the hidden grove, he degrades from a king "whose might stretches from the East of the world to the West" to a naked man, almost entirely alone, prostrated at the foot of the trees.[192] Ironically, the only remaining safe place for him on the earth, in light of his future assassination by poison, is the grove of the trees. Only within that space is there no poison and killing is forbidden, but the Trees, due to their holiness, will not let him remain.

The sequence of prophecies at the end of the letter is a devastating reward for his geographical desire. Alexander visits the grove three times: first to the Tree of the Sun at dusk, then at moonrise to the tree of the Moon, and once more to the tree of the Sun at dawn. In his first encounter, he asks the tree of the Sun about geographic and imperial

[192] Shortly before leaving to find the trees, he declares to his friends, *min þrym is from eastewearde middangeare oþ þæt eastanweardne 7 mec þas forealdodan elreordegan nu her bysmergeað.* Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §33.

matters: will he rule the world, and will he return to Macedonia? What he is essentially asking the tree is whether or not he will define the center and periphery: will this land, on the extreme edge of the world, represent the farthest border of my power, and will I rule from its center? The tree's answer grants him the right to declare borders but denies him a place at the center. In the second exchange with the Tree of the Moon, his request is again geographic: where and when will he die? This time the answer is thick with symbolic irony: he will die in Babylon, the graveyard of pagan, earthly ambition and the OE *Orosius*' chosen prophet-city against the vanity of human endeavors. Alexander's place of death is important for other reasons as well: it signals that the cost of penetrating the farthest reaches of Indian power is the inability to leave. Appropriately enough, the third prophecy tells him that he will die by poison—a source of bodily corruption not unlike the corruption he has brought with him into the heart of India. His series of encounters with the great power at the heart of India gives Alexander the greatest of earthly knowledge: where, when, and how he will die.

This brings us to the question of the OE *Letter*'s idiosyncratic ending. In the Latin version, Alexander has a short series of adventures after leaving the grove. The locals, for one, proclaim him a god for having traveled so far (53.2-4); his army travels along the Ganges to the Ocean (54.57.5); and, after another series of misadventures, make it back safely to the kingdom of Porus, where he commissions giant pillars as a memorial (58.6-10). All of these are missing from the OE version, which ends with a short farewell to Aristotle praising his own might but also admitting his disappointment: *on me næs se hrædlica ende*

mines lifes swa miclum weorce swa me wæs þæt ic læs mærðo gefremed hæfde þonne min willa wære.[193]

Hildegard Tristam notes that no other Alexander text is abridged in this fashion.[194] Although most scholars agree that the final episodes were removed to make a point, there is not much agreement as to what that reason might be. Kenneth Sisam, for instance, looked at the martial focus: "[H]is interest is mainly in the campaign and the general… The real interest ends there."[195] David Ashurst suggested that the new ending was a literary choice to heighten the tragedy of Alexander's fall.[196] Others, such as Hildegard Tristam, Andy Orchard and Douglas Buttruff, believe that the ending "lends itself to easy moralization" and highlights Alexander's faults.[197] Although Orchard feels that the new ending gives "an Orosian perspective to the Latin wonder-tale," Pickles rightly points out that "the translator takes no such Orosian stance," as does Sisam, who finds "the absence of all moralizing" in the ending.[198] What exactly is going on here?

It would be useful to once again put aside the moral questions and look to function. The OE abridgement leaves out two important moments from the Latin text: his identification as a god and the commission of his memorials. Both of these moments suggest that Alexander earns some kind of lasting glory from his journey to the sacred grove. His monuments, for instance, are specifically designed to make him one of the marvels of Asia just as they are recorded in the OE *Wonders of the East*: *miraculo futura*

[193] "And to me the swift ending of my life was not so much pain as the fact that I had achieved less glory than I would have wished." Ibid., §41.
[194] Tristam, "More Talk of Alexander," 658.
[195] Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 88.
[196] Ashurst, "Alexander Literature in English and Scots," 262.
[197] Tristam, "More Talk of Alexander," 658.
[198] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 139; Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," 108.

sunt… posteris seculis non parvo.[199] The five golden statues, to be erected at the world's edge next to the statues of Liber and Hercules, are clearly intended to give himself a similar status of immortality as the two gods honored there. These, he concludes, constitute his *novum perpetuumque… virtutibus monimentum invidendum,* "a new and permanent… enviable monument to my powers."[200] The OE *Letter*, therefore, contains not a single indication that Alexander's campaign will leave any lasting mark of conquest upon India at all. His letter to Aristotle, in fact, becomes the only record of his accomplishments, which he admits to his teacher: the letter is first to let Aristotle applaud his victories, but also [*ond eac*] that his memory will be an exemplum [*bysen*] of his might.[201] The prophecies of the trees cut immediately to the end of the letter, strongly implying a clear cause and effect: the trees have left him no time to create anything more lasting than the letter itself. His conquest leaves no physical proof that he was ever there, only the knowledge passed on to Aristotle.

In conclusion, Alexander's failure in the OE *Letter* is not so much one of character as geographic imagination. Unlike Josephus, the translator of the *Letter* never allows Alexander to recognize the ruling power which protects the land of his conquest. His meeting with the priest of the holy grove triggers no sudden revelation of a higher power, and his devotion in that priest's temple brings a prophecy of failure rather than success. He has no direct revelation of God's existence in the *Letter*, and his considerable thirst for knowledge somehow stops short of bringing that revelation to his conscious mind. He is, as

[199] "will become… a no little marvel to future ages." Boer, *Epistola Alexandri*, 59.8-60.1.
[200] Ibid., 60.2.
[201] *Ond eac swelce ecelice min gemynd stond ⁊ hleouige oðrum eorðcyningum to bysne.* Orchard's choice of punctuation breaks up what should be read as a single thought: that the letter is first for Aristotle's joy and *also* his memorial to other kings. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, §41.

Suzanne Conklin Akbari has said, an example of "the terrible dangers awaiting the man who ventures too far into the dangerous region of the sun."[202] In the *Passion of Saint Christopher*, we saw how an encounter with the margins—and, specifically, the marvelous creatures of the margins—is supposed to direct one's attention to the Creator who governs those margins. Although Niceaea and Aquilina recognize the existence of that Creator in their encounter with Christopher, Dagnus does not—and that denial results in a catastrophic loss of his power, his eyesight, and, temporarily, his own throne. For Dagnus, conversion brings what was in the margins of his kingdom into the center and recognizing the power of God marked as a sign in the body of the geographic Other. For Alexander, that conversion never happens; and so, denied the kind revelation available to Dagnus or the Alexander of the Josephus legend, he reacts violently against the bodies of those in the margins.

The body of India, like the bodies of its creatures, are just as much of a "text" about the margins as the *Wonders of the East*, and Alexander becomes the exemplum of the scribe/reader's struggle for intellectual mastery over its alterity. Alexander mistakenly believes that his military conquest gives him control over its space, but India—Alexander's own "book of monsters"—consistently evades his authorial control. He uses violence to enforce a boundary between himself, the Greek army, and the creatures of the East, but as those monsters constantly penetrate those barriers, it becomes harder and harder to tell the difference between himself and the beasts. His letter to Aristotle is his attempt to convert his newly conquered territories into text, just like Fermes' letter to the Emperor Trajan sends back knowledge of the east to expand Trajan's "joyful *imperium*." Alexander's

[202] Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 89.

letter, however, does not end with the triumphalist praise for his reign like the *Letter of Fermes* but rather with the prophecy of his death and the hope that the textual word might become a lasting monument to his power.

Christopher and Alexander, then, offer opposing viewpoints of how the center interacts with the margins. Christopher represents a view from the margin: he sports all of the virtues of geographic alterity bestowed by God, and his baptism gives him the power to penetrate and overthrow the cultural center of Samos. Alexander, however, sees the world entirely from the center. He has all the might that comes with being the center of a world empire, but his campaign against the spiritually Other margins of India devastates his rule. All that remains, then, is to outline how these ideas might extend to the final two texts of the Nowell Codex: *Beowulf* and *Judith*.

Conclusion: *Judith*, *Beowulf*, and the Marginal Center

> There are also other places
> Which also are the world's end, some at the sea jaws,
> Or over a dark lake, in a desert or city—
> But this is the nearest, in place and time,
> Now and in England.
>
> T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"[203]

In his seminal essay "An Angle on the Earth," Nicholas Howe first sketched out the early English geographic imagination in relationship to Rome. As he explains regarding the Cotton Map:

> If Jerusalem is the centre of its world, then England is at the far end, set at an angle to continental Europe and the rest of the world, both known and imagined. Whatever stands as the centre of the Christian world, whether Jerusalem as on this map or Rome as in Bede's *History*, England remains set off at an angle, and in a corner, far to the northwest.[204]

This "spiritual geography" of the Cotton Map, he explains, comes from its codicological context in Cotton Tiberius B.v: bishops' and regnal lists, an itinerary to Rome, geographic and astronomical tracts, and of course, *Wonders of the East*.[205] What that spiritual geography reveals, as he would later argue in "Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England," was the ever-present influence of Rome as a cultural, spiritual, and intellectual seat of power. "A capital is a capital," he claimed, "because it can extend its influence as far as the distant

[203] T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1971), 50, lines 34-38.
[204] Nicholas Howe, "An Angle on This Earth: Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82, no. 1 (2000): 10.
[205] Ibid., 12-13.

edges of its territory and there work its will through its chosen agents. The distance a center reaches is a measure of its power."[206]

Those two ideas—that Anglo-Saxons shared the modern world's "concern with marginality, as both physical predicament and source of cultural energy," and that they viewed themselves "not as the center of the world… but as set on the periphery of a Europe mapped from Rome"— would directly and indirectly influence much of the later scholarship.[207] For instance, three different monographs released in 2006 directly or indirectly worked with Howe's ideas. Kathy Lavezzo's work *Angels on the Edge of the World*, for one, argues that the English from the Anglo-Saxon to Middle English periods "actively participated in the construction of England as a global borderland" and that "geographic margins had a certain social authority."[208] Fabienne Michelet's monograph *Creation, Migration, and Conquest* is likewise influenced by Howe's work on the English margin, although her main debt is to Howe's *Migration and Mythmaking.*[209] And, though he does not mention Howe specifically, much of Asa Mittman's *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England* dwells at length on the English people's awareness of their own marginality and the feelings of fear and abjection it might bring, as illustrated through the body of its monsters.[210]

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[206] "Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34, no. 1 (2004): 152.
[207] "At an Angle on This Earth," 7; "Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England," 151.
[208] Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1000-1534* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 7.
[209] See: Fabienne Michelet, *Creation, Migration and Conquest: Imaginary Geography and Sense of Space in Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1-34.
[210] See: Asa Simon Mittman, *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

When Howe reassessed that same material two years later, however, he expanded those ideas in his book *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*. After his declaration that "The distance of reach is the measure of the center's power," he added the following:

> That measure of power, as it is registered and accepted on the periphery, comes to influence its sense of place: it always acknowledges that the center is elsewhere. And yet in acknowledging that Rome was a powerful center, the Anglo-Saxons did not thereby relegate themselves to some abject sense of the marginal. There was no self-contempt, I think, in their recognition of themselves as peripheral precisely because it gave them a valuable role in writing the missionary map of northern Europe.[211]

Although this assessment is more or less in accord with his previous scholarship, it signals that perhaps Howe felt the need to reassert that England's geographic position did not inevitably push its people into spiritual inferiority, for early medieval Christianity—and in particular, its missiology—had a rich and sometimes contradictory relationship with the geographic world. For this and other reasons, he argued in his Preface to the same book that "The Anglo-Saxons… were not content to impose a single template on the world and call it mapped."[212]

In its entirety, this dissertation is founded on the idea that each of the texts of the Nowell Codex have a sustained interest in the spiritual geography of the margins, and specifically, the power of those margins to call their relationship to an assumed cultural center into question. As Suzanne Conklin Akbari claims, "Location, in both a literal and

[211] Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 107.
[212] Ibid., x.

figural sense, is key to the medieval articulation of bodily diversity and religious difference";[213] in the case of the Nowell Codex, however, we also see that location and bodily diversity are key instruments for thinking about spiritual authority through its monsters, marvels, and martyrs. Unlike many other Anglo-Saxon works, the Nowell prose texts explore those margins within historical frameworks completely free of Rome's influence, and they largely focus on areas geographically or historically removed from knowledge of a Judeo-Christian Creator. Although Lavezzo rightly argues that the English writers such as Bede and Ælfric constructed their marginal realm as a place of power, the Nowell Codex makes a slightly different claim: there is already spiritual power and wisdom in the margins. More often than not, the emissaries from the various cultural centers of our texts—from Samos, Macedonia, or, in the case of the *Wonders of the East,* an eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon reader—are the ones who lack critical knowledge, and they are forced to learn from the margins what cannot be experienced from an intellectual or spatial position of power.

In the *Passion of Saint Christopher*, we first encounter a missionary from the periphery, baptized in the margins, and bearing the stamp of his Otherness on his canine flesh, who travels to Asia Minor and subverts its entire religious and cultural power structures. Since the Greek *Cynocephalus* tradition had a very Scandinavian counterpart in the European north, Christopher's dog-headedness connects his divine mission directly to the Anglo-Saxons' own geographic and historical circumstances as missionaries to the North. *Christopher* argues that a baptized margin holds great power, but more importantly,

[213] Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 100-1450* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007): 12.

Christopher needs no missionary to enforce that conversion: the margin itself baptizes him and sends him out on a Continental mission. *The Wonders of the East*, in comparison, brings the power of the margins directly to the reader without any intervening editorial framework to make that knowledge "safe." This text has an illustrated equivalent to Saint Christopher, the dog-headed "Conopenas" of Egypt on fol. 99r; through its clothes and implements of regal authority, it directly challenges the Anglo-Saxon reader's assumptions about the Eastern margin. Finally, the *Letter of Alexander the Great to Aristotle* shows what happens when a knowledgeable but earthly world power assumes that his imperial might defines the world's centers and peripheries: the land of India progressively erodes Alexander's power and eventually serves him notice of his miserable demise, trapped on the borders of the land he failed to physically and intellectually control.

Each of these three texts highlights the importance of reading the geographic margin as a witness to the existence and authority of God. Humans in these texts are repeatedly presented with marginal bodies which they suspect carry a deeper meaning, but in contexts where that meaning cannot be deciphered. As was discussed before, Augustine claimed that whoever could not understand the whole of creation—that is, God's providential craft of everything and its purpose therein—would be "offended by what he takes to be the deformity of the part."[214] If we take this statement in tandem with Isidore's proclamation that a prodigy is "not contrary to nature, but what is known nature" as Varro

[214] *Sed qui totum inspicere non potest, tamquam deformitate partis offenditur, quoniam cui congruat, et quo referatur ignorat*. "The man who cannot view the whole is offended by what he takes to be the deformity of the part; but this is because he does not know how it is adapted or related to the whole." Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate contra paganos libri xxii,* edited by Lucas Verheijen, CC ser. lat. 47-48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955): XVI.8.29-36. Translation from: *The City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998).

had claimed, we are left with the implication that non-Christians lack the tools to properly "read" what monsters mean.[215] Those who lived before the Incarnation, outside of Israel, or beyond the reach of the missionary frontier can only partially understand what the referent for those monstrous signs might be. This is why Christopher's miracle of speech is so important: although his monstrosity leads to fear and wonder, his *preaching* leads scores of soldiers and townspeople, Niceaea and Aquilina, and eventually Dagnus himself, to worship of the *Scyppend*.

The other two prose texts, however, take place in an Alexandrian/post-Alexandrian context prior to the Incarnation. Without an interpreter, Alexander has to work out what the monsters of the East "mean" on his own, as does the anonymous reader of the *Wonders of the East*. Alexander, by all accounts, never makes the leap from creature to a Judeo-Christian idea of a Creator, and his standard response to those creatures is mass slaughter; as for *Wonders*, the result of that encounter is very much left up to the reader, without any easy answers to isolate or explain away the marvelous. One imagines that, even if that hypothetical reader had a vague understanding of Augustine's teaching on prodigies, reading *Wonders of the East* next to tales of monsters becoming missionaries or eating people alive would be an uncomfortable experience.

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[215] *Portenta esse Varro ait quae contra naturam nata videntur: sed non sunt contra naturam, quia divina voluntate sunt, cum voluntas Creatoris cuiusque conditae rei natura sit... Portentum ergo fit non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura.* "Varro defines portents as beings that seem to have been born contrary to nature—but they are not contrary to nature, because they are created by divine will, since the nature of everything is the will of God the Creator... A portent is therefore not created contrary to nature, but contrary to what is known nature." Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 14.III.5. Translation from: Stephen A. Barney, trans., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

The three prose texts of the Nowell Codex share the same fascinations with place and spiritual marginality, and those same concerns appear in the poems *Judith* and *Beowulf* as well. Although there is no time to do justice to either text here, both poems take place in vaguely similar geographic and spiritual circumstances: Judith's hometown of Bethulia, besieged by the Assyrians, lies on the interface between the Assyrian empire and the kingdom of God, and Judith herself shows that her pre-Incarnational belief serves God the Creator. For *Beowulf*, however, the borders look different: Hroðgar's domain exists in either a post-Incarnational space beyond the missionary frontier or before the Incarnation altogether, and the only creatures with a clear connection to that biblical past are those who have been cursed. From these historical circumstances, each text explores similar limitations to how humans with a partial understanding of Creation explore the margins of the world. For *Beowulf,* we will look primarily at how the introduction and first encounter with Grendel constructs the land of the Danes on an important interface between two great powers. We shall likewise discover that *Judith* is a near-perfect role reversal of *the Letter of Alexander to Aristotle,* except now the conflict is seen from the perspective of the earthly "margin." This leads to interesting consequences for whoever takes the role of "monster" in her story.

1. God in the Interface: *Beowulf*, lines 1-114

As the medieval geographer Alfred Hiatt has explained, most nineteenth- and twentieth-century discussions of geography in *Beowulf* have been tense and, many times,

driven more by the needs of the modern reader than the poem's Anglo-Saxon context.[216] Many discussions of place in the poem have focused so much on giving the story a spot on a Cartesian map that they have overlooked the fact that the poem itself is not particularly interested in filling those aims.[217] Hiatt therefore declared that "*Beowulf* is not a geographic text" and that the poem's interest in place was more geared towards the people and their relationships. As he concluded, "the space Beowulf writes is regional, a periphery without a centre, whose overriding motifs are exile, mixture, loss— and survival."[218]

Hiatt's point is well taken: *Beowulf*'s main concern is not geographical verisimilitude. It makes no pretensions of situating the different peoples of the poem spatially, and most contemporary readers of the poem likely agree. Both Nicholas Howe and Fabienne Michelet, for example, make nearly identical claims about the poem's concern for relationships between people groups over geographic space. Howe also points out that the Germanic world of the poem is "less as a region to be mapped than as one to be invoked."[219] Michelet treats the world of *Beowulf* as a region off of the geographic map, but she bases her argument on the claim "communities first have to exist in space."[220] Moreover, that the poem is entirely regional—a "chorography," as Hiatt calls it— is itself an important point: *Beowulf* takes place within a world completely undefined by any of the great world empires or Greco-Roman cultures, and that in itself makes it unique to the Nowell Codex. Hiatt's claim that *Beowulf* is "a periphery without a centre" is not quite correct; it is merely

[216] Alfred Hiatt, "*Beowulf* Off the Map," *Anglo-Saxon England* 38 (2009): 11-40.
[217] Ibid., 22-28, 33.
[218] Ibid., 40.
[219] Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven: Yale University Pres, 2001), 143.
[220] Michelet, *Creation, Migration and Conquest*, 74.

without the kind of center one would expect to see on a mappamundi.[221] The centers and peripheries of the Scandinavian world of *Beowulf* do not fill our geographic expectations, but they do exist. If we are to talk about *Beowulf* geographically, we have to look at areas larger than just the Danes, Geats, and Swedes.

The introductory lines of *Beowulf* set up a history of two different geographic and historical domains in the poem—not about the Danes and the Geats, as one would expext, but regarding a Germanic and the Biblical past. The first eighty-five lines give the history of Scyld Scefing's people, the creation of their homeland, and the eventual construction of their own geographic center, Heorot. The text introduces Scyld as follows:

oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,
monegum mægðum meodsela ofteah,
egsode eorl[as], syððan ærest wearð
feasceaft funden. He þæs frofre gebad:
weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,
oð þæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra
ofer hronrade hyran scolde,
gomban gyldan. Þæt wæs god cyning.[222]

Scyld's eventual rise to power turns a geographic commonplace of the Latin world on its head. Although the *orbis terrarium* normally sits in the middle while Ocean makes the ring,

[221] Hiatt, "*Beowulf* Off the Map," 40.
[222] "Often Scyld Scefing seized the mead-benches from many tribes, troops of enemies, struck fear into earls. Though he was first found a waif, he awaited solace for that—he grew under heaven and prospered in honor until every one of the encircling nations over the whale's riding had to obey him, grant him tribute. That was a good king!" R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, eds., *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 4th ed. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), lines 7b-14a. (Henceforth *Beowulf.*) All translations are from: R. M. Liuzza, *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation* (Peterborough: Broadview, 2000).

Danish view of the world puts the sea at the center, and it looks around those lands ringing that sea without any sense that it is marginal to anything else.

This geographic place, regardless of its actual location on a map,[223] also has a clear historical setting. Though not a historical figure by modern standards, Scyld was known well enough to find his way into documents from the Anglo-Saxon period; this alone suggests that some considered his rule an important historical centering point. As Thomas Hill has noted, two manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* have genealogies which link some version of "Sceaf" to an unnamed child of Noah born on the Ark.[224] Although Hill thinks that justifying the existence of the West Saxon royal house would have been a primary motivation for including it in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, perhaps a more appropriate reading in the context of *Beowulf* would consider it as Sceaf's inheritance to a fourth major partition of the known.[225] We have seen this idea appear in the *Revelationes* of pseudo-Methodius, where the fourth son "Jonitus" is granted the land of Eoa, the land where the sun rises, as a comparable endowment to his siblings' inheritance of Asia, Europe, and Africa.[226]

Moreover, it was a generic commonplace of the Classical geographers to describe the world in terms of its tripartite divisions, followed with the coasts and their islands as

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[223] My use of the term "geographic place" does not mean that the Scandinavian world of *Beowulf* can be marked on a Cartesian map; rather, it has a place on the cultural, intellectual understanding of world geography and history. Studies attempting to place the Danes and Geats of *Beowulf* have been fraught, and for various reasons, sharply criticized over the years. For one good exploration, see: Hiatt, "*Beowulf* Off the Map," 11-40.

[224] Thomas D. Hill, "The Myth of the Ark-Born Son of Noe and the West-Saxon Royal Genealogical Tables," *Harvard Theological Review* 80, no. 3 (1987): 379-83. For the text, see: Michael Swanton, trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (New York: Routledge, 1996), *sub anno* 855.

[225] Ibid., 380-81. Note also Hill's discussion of the *Revelationes*, 382.

[226] Benjamin Garstad, ed. *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius. An Alexandrian World Chronicle*, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 3.1-4. See also discussion of this passage, p. 229.

the fourth part.[227] When put into this context, *æghwylc þara ymbsittendra ofer hronrade* would have the geographic status of a major partition of the world established by God through Noah's offspring. Scyld Scefing, a son of the Flood-born, takes a seemingly rightful claim over the rim of the northern seas, and when he dies he departs on *flod*, in a funerary ship like his own little ark.[228] The rim of the world has its own place of centering, and it is here around the mysterious, unknown sea; and for the Danes, the hall built by Scyld's descendant Hroðgar is an political, cultural, and spiritual hub.

The Grendelkin, however, come from a completely different margin of the world than Scyld's people. As the poet explains regarding Grendel's heritage,

> wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten,
> mære mearcstapa, se þe moras heold,
> fen ond fæsten; fifelcynnes eard
> wonsæli wer weardode hwile,
> siþðan him scyppen forscrifen hæfde
> in Caines cynne— þone cwealm gewræc
> ece drihten, þæs þe he Abel slog;
> ne gefeah he þære fæhðe, ac he hine feor forwræc,
> metod for þy mane mancynne fram.[229]

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[227] For two examples of this tendency among Classical authors, see: *Mela Pomponius Cosmographia siue de situ orbis,* ed. Hermolaus Barbarus (Northridge: California State University, 1973); pseudo-Aethicus, *The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister: Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. Michael Herren (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Paulus Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri vii*, CSEL 5 (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967), I.1.
[228] *Him on bearme læg /madma mænigo, þa him mid scoldon/ on flodes æht feor gewitan.* "In [the ship's] bosom lay many treasures, which were to travel far with him into the keeping of the flood." *Beowulf*, lines 40-42.
[229] "[T]his grim spirit was called Grendel, mighty stalker of the marshes, who held the moors and fens; this miserable man lived for a time in the land of the giants, after the Creator had condemned him among Cain's

Grendel and his Mother are Biblical exiles, descended from the first exiled murderer Cain.[230] Pushed from their original lands, they started first among the giants and wandered to the fen, seemingly as far as possible from the land of their cursing.[231] For the Grendelkin, that same region is on the farthest margins of their former *eard*, and Grendel's epithet—*mearcstapa,* or "walker of the limits"—serves to highlight that marginality.[232]

At this point in the story, at least, the mere is not a place in itself but rather a margin at the interface of these two great regions.[233] The farther that Grendel travels from the curse of Cain, the closer he moves to the ancestral homelands of Scyld Scefing. The farther that the Danes travel from Heorot, however, the closer one comes to the borderlands of Old Testament history; the fen, at the farthest edge of Hroðgar's *eard* and the post-Lapsarian lands of Adam and Eve serve as the spiritual interface. Not far from this spot intermingling Germanic and Old Testament history is where the Danes build Heorot, fall into feud with the Grendelkin, and make indirect contact with the God of Creation.

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race—when he killed Abel the eternal Lord avenged that death. No joy in that feud—the Maker forced him forced him far from mankind for his foul crime." *Beowulf,* lines 102-109.

[230] For a summary of this idea, see: Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies,* 58-65.

[231] If we interpret *fifelcynnes eard* as the land of Canaan as described in Numbers 13:1-33, then Grendel and his Mother have come from the spiritual center of the historical world and wandered from there to the extreme margins of the north.

[232] Cf. Michelet: "Hroðgar's adversary is not a perpetually wandering exile; the *Beowulf* poet places him in a wasteland within earshot of Heorot." *Creation, Migration and Conquest,* 50. While I would agree that Grendel's realm is close to Heorot, the Grendelkin are nevertheless exiles because they have been banished from their *original* homeland. The Genesis account, for instance, calls Cain *vagus et profugus* (see Gen. 4:12 VUL). The OE also supports the same reading. Although the root word –stapa itself means a "stepper," many of the common compounds with that root designate creatures in borderlands: *gærs-, wald-*, *hæð-, mar-,* and *anstapa,* which designates a solitary wanderer. All but the final compound, in fact, are used in the corpus exclusively for beasts: locusts, deer, wolves, or bulls. Grendel's life on the margins therefore also includes the margins of humanity. See: Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary,* s.v. *gærstapa, waldstapa*, *hæðstapa, marstapa, anstapa*; Dictionary of Old English Corpus, s.v. "-stapa."

[233] This all changes, of course, when Beowulf finds Grendel's Mother's hall submerged in the mere, but there is no time to properly explore this now. Cf. *Beowulf*, lines 1513-17. See also: ibid., 82-83.

One moment which best demonstrates the power of that interface is the *scop*'s song about the creation of the world, where biblical and Germanic history merge uncomfortably—for scholars, at least, and for Grendel himself. The narrator reports the words as follows:

Sægde se þe cuþe
frumsceaft fira feorran reccan,
cwæð þæt se ælmihtiga eorðan worh(te),
wlitebeorhtne wang, swa wæter bebugeð,
gesette sigehreþig sunnan ond monan,
leoman to leohte landbuendum,
ond gefrætwade foldan sceatas
leomum ond leafum, lif eac gesceop
cynna gehwylcum þara ðe cwice hwyrfaþ. (90b-98) [234]

Often called the "hymn of Creation" for its pious tone, this passage has left scholars torn over the extent to which it represents a Christian or Germanic origin story. The overall context seems impossibly confusing: the story is embedded in a longer discussion of Grendel's biblical origins, and it is hard to tell where one ends and the other begins. As Fred Robinson rightly points out, the song "is one that any pious heathen might sing," making it a demonstration of sincere devotion which a Christian might recognize despite

[234] "He said who was able to tell of the origins of men that the Almighty created the earth, a bright and shining plain, by seas embraced, and set triumphantly, the sun and moon to light their beams for those who dwell on land, adorned the distant corners of the world with leaves and branches, and made life also, all manner of creatures that live and more." *Beowulf,* lines 90b-98.

their differences in theology.[235] William Whallon thought that this song showed that the Danes, like the author, were only rudimentary Christians, prone to backsliding;[236] Blackburn, however, flags this passage as an interpolation by a "monkish copyist, whose piety exceeded his poetic powers."[237]

Perhaps the best way into the song is through Marijane Osborn's reading, which looks to a "double-voicing" in the passage; these lines steep the Christian and the Danish views of the creation story together, but the different listeners have different levels of understanding. As she explains, "For those listening in Heorot the song cannot be a paraphrase because they do not know Genesis. For us it is a paraphrase because we do know Genesis—but the echoes we hear extend far beyond that."[238] The transition into the story of Grendel in particular is an example of the classical scheme *synchysis*, or "liquid syntax," where words or ideas are intentionally mixed, somtimes at the expense of clarity.[239] In this case, the Genesis account blurs into the mead-hall and the introduction of Grendel at the very moment that the Christian reader would expect to encounter Adam, Eve, and the deceiving serpent, and the result blurs what should be clear-cut boundaries.[240]

Osborn's argument is indeed important, but perhaps the Danes' song of Creation knows more of Genesis than her argument claims. As Nicholas Howe has explained,

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[235] Fred C. Robinson, *Beowulf and the Appositive Style*, The Hodges Lectures (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 37.
[236] William Whallon, "The Christianity of 'Beowulf'," *Modern Philology* 60, no. 2 (1962): 89-90. Larry Benson rejects this explanation because backsliders are extremely unsympathetic characters: "it is to those who have not had a chance to know of God... that one can be compassionate." See: Larry D. Benson, "The Pagan Coloring of *Beowulf*," in *Old English Poetry: Fifteen Essays*, ed. Robert P. Creed (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1967), 201.
[237] F. A. Blackburn, "The Christian Coloring in the *Beowulf*," *PMLA* 12, no. 2 (1897): 218.
[238] Marijane Osborn, "The Great Feud: Scriptural History and Strife in Beowulf," *PMLA* 93, no. 5 (1978): 975.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.

insisting that the categories "pagan" and "Christian" were absolute "denies to both any knowledge of their past."[241] In addition, Paul Cavill argues that Old Testament stories like the Creation were considered universal history and that such knowledge was at least partially accessible to anyone who encountered it.[242] As he explains, "the poet makes a perfectly reasonable distinction (for an Anglo-Saxon Christian, at least) between history and revelation: the Creation, flood and giants of Genesis were to him history, the shared history of the world."[243] He concludes that "the writer was making no attempt to reconstruct a Danish creation song, but was having the Danish *scop* sing of the creation as the writer believed it really happened."[244]

Although Osborn rightly claims that the spiritual knowledge available to each side is different, Cavill points out that a Genesis-style understanding of Creation among the Danes is not an unreasonable idea. To borrow a psychological term, perhaps the creation song sits on a *limen* of religious perception where the Danes' threshold of divine knowledge is too low to see a *Scyppend* in the story. The story of Creation blurs the distinction between these two worlds, which merge upon this strange spiritual interface, and only the reader, sitting on the near side of revelation, has enough understanding to pick up on the difference.

What crawls out of that limen, both from the song and from the mere, is a horrifying but manifest proof of God's power to curse. As the following lines explain,

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[241] Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England*, 147.
[242] Paul Cavill, "Christianity and Theology in *Beowulf*," in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. Paul Cavill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 38.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid., 25.

Swa ða drihtguman dreamum lifdon

eadiglice, oððæt an ongan

fyrene fre[m]man feond on helle.

Wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten.[245]

There are more studies on Grendel's origins than one can reasonably count, ranging from his lineage from Cain and the *fifelcynn*, his strange body and cannibalism, and even his existence as cultural symptom.[246] What is important for us, at this point, is his function: he is *prodigia*, to use Isidore's term, a literal manifestation of God's will. Grendel comes from the wilderness, wreaks havoc upon the capital, and displaces the king from his own hall. Upon his death, his body parts carry important symbolic purpose. If this sequence sounds familiar, it is because Christopher does the exact same thing in his passion story.

When we look at Grendel (and his Mother) in the context of Christopher, the other giant, hall-clearing cannibal of the Nowell Codex, we see that they both act as omens, but they carry completely different messages to their respective targets. Like Christopher, Grendel's body is also prodigious and violates the bounds of what "known nature" is considered to be. It likewise carries a message about the nature of God: whereas Christopher's monstrosity, and especially his facility for speech, points to God's authority over all creation, Grendel's body is a sign of God's authority to punish fratricides. Although

[245] "Thus this lordly people lived in joy, blessedly, until one began to work his foul crimes—a fiend from hell. This grim spirit was called Grendel." *Beowulf,* lines 99-102.

[246] The literature on Grendel is simply too immense to plumb here. One should always start with Tolkien, but the more modern criticism includes: R. E. Kaske, "Beowulf and the Book of Enoch," *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 46, no. 3 (1971): 421-31.;Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "The Ruins of Identity," Chapter 1 in *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 1-28; Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies,* Chap. 2-3; Paul Acker, "Horror and the Maternal in Beowulf," *PMLA* 121, no. 3 (2006): 702-16; Paul S. Langeslag, "Monstrous Landscape in Beowulf," *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 96, no. 1-2 (2015): 119-38.

the readers can connect Grendel to the Biblical story of Cain and Abel and see the consequences, the Danes cannot. Their ignorance of that history puts them in great danger from the unknown. Perhaps even more importantly, whereas Christopher is miraculously given speech and the commission to preach in Samos, Grendel and his mother either cannot or do not explain where they fit into the scheme of Creation. The Danes can guess, with only partial success, at what Grendel's attack signifies; their response—the sacrifice, an appeasement of the gods—misses the mark.

The introductory lines of *Beowulf,* as we have seen above, share certain affinities with the prose texts of the Nowell Codex, particularly in its encounters with the monstrous or with pre-Christian encounters with evidence of Biblical history. Moreover, these encounters takes place, not on the periphery of the "Christian" world per se, but near the center of a self-contained region of the earth that is remarkable only for its remoteness from the Gospel. The land of Cain and Abel, not Heorot, is the periphery of this text, and that periphery breaks into (and, occasionally, breaks down) the Danish center through encounters with the monstrous. It also suggests that knowledge from that dimly perceived margin might bleed through, however intermittently, into the Danish culture, and often in forms they don't entirely recognize themselves— in a dismembered arm, for instance, or a mysterious sword-hilt. What these events mean, the wisdom they impart, and whether Beowulf brings that wisdom back with him when he returns to the Geats, are all rich places for further study.

2. Women and Monsters in the Margin: *Judith*

Bringing *Judith* into the whole of this dissertation presents a thornier problem than *Beowulf*—not from a lack of correlation, but from a lack of surviving material.[247] Unlike *The Passion of Saint Christopher*, scholars have no accurate method of measuring how much of the original that one gathering represents. The verse adaptation does not closely follow the Vulgate text, nor does it show relation to Ælfric's homiliy, either.[248] The author compresses certain portions and expands others, and some details, like the number of characters or what Judith takes as her war-spoils, change completely.[249] For this and other reasons, estimates of the missing material have ranged from three full quires to less than a page.[250] All of this means that we cannot be sure which historical details or circumstances the poet chose to include. What we do have correlates roughly with Chapters 12-16 of the Latin Vulgate, which means that we have no evidence of anything before Holofernes' banquet on the fourth day of Judith's occupation.

The general tenor of the surviving text does suggest that the poem followed the basics of the Biblical plotline, however, and if we presume that *Judith* followed the barest details of the Vulgate, some striking correspondences emerge. In the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle,* for instance, we investigated how Alexander suffers a critical dislocation of centers and peripheries in India: he fails to recognize that India was a vast center of

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[247] This problem is outlined in more detail in Chapter One, p. 37.
[248] Ælfric of Eynsham, *Judith, Esther, Maccabees*, ed. by Stuart D. Lee (Oxford Text Archive, 1999), under "Judith," http://users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings/main.htm.
[249] See, for example, Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 5-11.
[250] Cf: Max Förster, *Die Beowulf-Handschrift* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1919), 88-89; Rosemary E. Woolf, "The Lost Opening to the 'Judith'," *The Modern Language Review* 50, no. 2 (1955): 168-72; Albert S. Cook, *Judith, an Old English Epic Fragment* (New York: AMS Press, 1972), 21 fn. 1; Martina Häcker, "The Original Length of the Old English *Judith*: More Doubt(S) on the 'Missing Text'," *Leeds Studies in English* n.s.27 (1996): 1-18.

spiritual power while assuming that he occupies that role himself. What remains of *Judith* follows almost exactly the same structure: the commander of an imperial army pushes deep into an unknown, marginal border of his empire during a world conquest, and upon encountering its vast spiritual power in an unexpected form, he meets with disaster. In *Judith*, that vast spiritual center is Jerusalem rather than Paradise. This puts Holofernes' campaign of terror on Assyria's far western border and its capital, Nineveh, far to the East and North. After laying waste to all his enemies on that trek, he stops at the Hebrew outpost of Bethulia, where he threatens to defile a powerful spiritual figure—in this case, Judith. That presumption leads to more than a prophecy of death; for Holofernes, it specifically leads to decapitation in the middle of his own camp.

Like the mere at Heorot or the trees of the Sun and Moon in the *Letter of Alexander*, Holofernes' camp is also an interface where spiritual power comes dangerously close to the margin. After the Assyrians set up their camp outside the city gates, Judith effectively exiles herself in that interface to dwell with the Assyrians, bringing knowledge of the God of the Hebrews with her. In the *Letter,* that knowledge comes from the Trees of the Sun and Moon; in *Beowulf* and the *Passion of Saint Christopher,* it comes from monsters who "invade" those areas. For the Assyrians, it comes in the form of the vaguely prophetic Judith. In the Vulgate version and Ælfric's sermon of *Judith*, for example, Judith tells Holofernes that she has entered his camp because God will tell her when the Assyrians should attack.[251] Judith's entrance into the camp is missing from the remaining OE text, but

[251] *on asettum timan ic sceal me gebiddan gebigedum ceowum to him ⁊ æt him ofaxian hwænne þu eaðelicost miht to þam folc becuman, mid ealre þinre fare, tomiddes Hierusalem… Forþi ic com to þe, þæt ic cydde þe þis.* Ælfric of Eynsham, *Judith, Esther, Maccabees*, lines 216-220. Compare to the *Book of Judith*, 11:13-16.

the two details important to that storyline are still present. First, Judith sneaks Holofernes' head out in a food-vessel (*faetels*), which she previously explained to Holofernes was a religious necessity; next, her unhindered escape from the camp is usually explained by her custom of leaving the camp to pray every evening.[252] Since these are major plot points, it seems reasonable to think that Holofernes in the OE poem has at least an inkling of Judith's prophetic ability.

The larger historical setting of *Judith,* then, shows clear parallels with *Beowulf* and *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* at a minimum. If we wish to see these correlations extend across the entire Nowell Codex, though, one must tackle a glaring problem: *Judith* has no monsters. Kenneth Sisam declared that "Holofernes is no monster" and took that fact as one of many indications that *Judith* was not an original part of the compilation.[253] Orchard, however, attempts to bring *Judith* thematically into the collection by noting that "[Holofernes'] behaviour is certainly monstrous, and, as others have pointed out, Judith, like Beowulf, disposes of her incapacitated foe by decapitation."[254] If one draws such parallels only between *Beowulf* and *Judith*, one might readily try to slot Holofernes into that role. But is he really the monster, and is it correct to merely assume that only the antagonist can occupy a similar semantic place? As this dissertation has examined in detail, monstrosity is largely defined by *marginality*. Christopher, for instance, is marginal to the great city of Samos; the creatures of the East in *Wonders* and the *Letter* also live in the extreme eastern margins, as far as one can travel from the Greek *oikumene.* If we look to

[252] Mark Griffith, *Judith* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), lines 125-38.
[253] Kenneth Sisam, "The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 67.
[254] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 4.

Judith for a creature on the social and geographic margins, one in whom the power of God is signified, then Holofernes is indeed not the monster. Judith is the Hebrew equivalent of the *Donestre*: she uses language get close to the foreigner, sunders his head from his body, and instead of weeping over the head, exults over it with her fellow Bethulians at the gates to the city.

Chapter Two argued that Christopher's monstrous body serves two important roles: first, it is emblematic of the power in the geographic margin, and secondly, it demonstrates that their bodies should be read—that is, as signs from a transcendental Signifier, resistant to the limits of human understanding. Both the margins and the monstrous bodies which dwell there carry the marks of the Creator which, with the light of revelation, can lead to a proper reading of the "Book of the World" and to a fuller knowledge of God. The first three texts of the Nowell Codex each consider what "right reading" of the geographic body entails. In *The Passion of Saint Christopher*, Dagnus, Niceaea, and Aquilina each read Christopher's monstrous body as a terrifying challenge to their sense of reality, but only Niceaea and Aquilina abandon the gods of the center to embrace the Creator lying in the spiritual margin. In contrast, Alexander responds to the monstrous bodies and geography in the East with both intellectual and physical violence. The readers of the Nowell Codex are presented the same choice in *Wonders of the East*, the text which lies between them. Robbed of all of the intellectual protections which editorial frames can offer the reader, the readers must also decide what these marginal bodies mean. The only person in *Judith* who carries both of those messages is Judith herself.

To think of it another way, if we follow the implications of this thesis and we

acknowledge that there is an association between the margin, the body, and spiritual power, then we have to acknowledge that women and monsters can often sometimes overlap semantically. *The Passion of Saint Christopher,* for instance, highlights a strong correlation between women, monsters, and places of pre-Christian power. Christopher is not the only martyr in the Nowell Codex who performs bodily miracles: so do Niceaea and Aquilina. In four of these texts, encounters with monsters often appear with scenes at pagan altars or temples; in the fifth, Holofernes' bed stands in lieu of that altar, and, much like Niceaea and Aquilina's deceptive sacrifice at the temple, Judith also decapitates Holofernes on that sacrificial "altar" at the center of his own pagan stronghold. In the previous section we also discussed how two of the texts— *Christopher* and *Beowulf*— feature a monster with a specifically Christian backstory who enters a grand hall to wreak havoc on a pagan society; and, if we concede that Judith fills the role of "Christopher" in her own poem, that number rises to three. Nicaea, Aquilina, Grendel's Mother, and *Judith* are all women sneak into the physical or spiritual center of the enemy's power, and, finding their enemy incapacitated, they decapitate them. Each text draws attention to the female body during the act of decapitation just as it draws attention to the monstrous body in *Christopher* and *Beowulf*.

In one sense, both monsters and women in the Nowell Codex operate at margins of power. For monsters, that marginality is a geographic determination, but for women that marginality is social. Nevertheless, Judith's name and actions declare hre to be a creature of her place, and the battle over her body is a very clear stand-in for the struggle for

Bethulia.[255] Likewise, Niceaea and Aquilina determine the fate of Samos: when all the eyes of the city watch them at the temple, their singular act of violence turns the tide of the spiritual battle from Dagnus to Christopher. Women and monsters, then, share some kind of kinship which links them bodily and semantically with monsters, but even so, in no way are these women monsters themselves. Isidore's definition of a "portent" focuses squarely upon the deviant body: what is over- or undersized, mixed with other bodies, disordered, or not present at all. To argue that Holofernes' behavior makes him monstrous, as Orchard suggests, does not fit the medieval definition. And, on the surface at least, the female body does not fit that definition, either. For this reason, Dana Oswald argues that women are not monsters, for, "in order to be a monster, one must possess a monstrous body, largely because actions are temporary and can be changed."[256]

Following this logic, these women don't have monstrous bodies and so cannot be monstrous themselves. But is there enough of a distinction to allow women to function in the same space? As Heidi Estes has explained, Jerome's standard for the "normative" human body was male, and so women's ever-changeable bodies, given over to the processes of sex and fertility, are non-normative as far as the male body is concerned.[257] It is only when those bodies step outside of their given, normative social roles that they take on some characteristics of the monstrous. Niceaea and Aquilina become dangerous to Dagnus, for instance, only when they disavow prostitution; Judith's own power resides in

[255] For a discussion of this idea, see: Karma Davey Lochrie, "Gender, Sexual Violence, and the Politics of War in the Old English Judith," in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature: Intersections,* ed. Britton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1-20.
[256] Dana Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010), 7.
[257] Heide Estes, "Wonders and Wisdom: Anglo-Saxons and the East," *English Studies* 91, no. 4 (2010): 364-65.

her holy, inward beauty, as she is called *halig* and a *mægð,* with seemingly inhuman, *ælfscinu* beauty.[258] Regardless of whether or not the term *mægð* means a virgin or not, Judith is at the least a celibate widow, and her body is no longer defined by her ability to bear children.[259]

If we examine other women of the Nowell Codex, we find strong parallels to the monstrosity seen in *Christopher, Wonders of the East,* and *Beowulf*. First of all, Nicaea and Aquilina steal into Dagnus' temple not unlike how Judith gains access to the Assyrian camp: with a pledge to support their oppressors' goals.[260] They each find their adversaries asleep. They attack their oppressors at the neck and then turn those broken bodies into a sign of God's power.[261] Furthermore, both of these attacks bear the marks of sexual insult. Both Mary Flavia Godfrey and Susan Kim discuss the sexual nature of Holofernes' decapitation, and specifically its relationship to castration, circumcision, and pregnancy.[262] Furthermore, just as Judith submits to being taken to Holofernes' tent where he intends to defile her, Niceaea and Aquilina likewise submit to their forced public sacrifice at the temple where Dagnus intends to defile them with pagan rites. The two sisters, however, turn this attempt on its head. First, they suggest that the silent statues mean that the idols "must be

[258] Griffith, *Judith,* line 14.
[259] Cf. Helen Damico's discussion of the epithets for Judith: "The Valkyrie Reflex in Old English Literature," in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 185-87.
[260] This is according to the major texts on *Judith* available during this period: The Latin Vulgate, the Ælfric sermon, and Raban Maur's commentary. See: Raban Maur, *Beati Rabani Mauri Fuldensis abbatis et Moguntini archepiscopi exposition in librum Judith*, in *PL,* vol. 109 (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1852), Ch. X. See also fn. 248.
[261] *Ingresse sunt in templum. et clamabant idolis dei paganorum. audite nos. et non erat vox in illis. et dicebat iterum. ne forte somnium ceperint et non audiunt.* Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier*, 238.
[262] Mary Flavia Godfrey, "*Beowulf* and *Judith*: Thematizing Decapitation in Old English Poetry," 22-23; Susan Kim, "Bloody Signs," 285-307.

asleep."[263] After insulting the gods, Niceaea strips off her girdle and wraps it around the gods' necks like a lasso.[264] These two women therefore perform the sexual conquest which Dagnus had hoped for, but they complete it against Dagnus' gods rather than against Christopher. We must also consider a third female decapitator in the Nowell Codex: Grendel's Mother. She too steals into a hall after a victory-party and attacks a sleeping man and absconds with his head.[265] After Beowulf takes Grendel's arm and hangs it over the door-post, his mother steals into the sleeping hall and exchanges one sign for another: Æshere's head, discarded like a bloody signpost at the edge of the mere, which more or less serves as the "lintel" to her own watery hall.

Somewhere in all of this information is a subtle yet dangerous suggestion that women have a vaguely monstrous semantic power, one that makes them wielders and interpreters of those signs.[266] In the analogues, at least, Judith presents herself to Holofernes as someone with prophetic knowledge of God, and he recognizes that fact when he permits her to remain in the Assyrian camp.[267] The author of the OE *Judith* writes that knowledge of God on her body through her bodily purity, her inward holiness, and her seemingly unearthly beauty. Holofernes looks upon Judith's body and misses her message about God's sovereignty; instead, he looks upon her body with lust, and *þohte ða beorhtan idese / mid widle on mid womme besmitan*.[268] When Judith then kills Holofernes with his

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[263] Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin*, 238.
[264] *Tunc nicia soluit cinctum suum. et posuit in collo iouis. et traxerunt ambas. et iactauerunt eum in faciem et conteruerunt. Similiter et apollone ficerunt.* Goullet and Isetta, *Le légendier de Turin*, 238.
[265] Fulk, Bjork and Niles, *Beowulf*, lines 1279-1306, 1417-24.
[266] An interesting foray into this idea would be to think of Judith's sign-wielding body in comparison to Janet Thormann's discussion of the Jewish body as a "theophany." See: "The Jewish Other in Old English Narrative Poetry," *Partial Answers* 2 (2004): 1-19.
[267] See *Judith* 11:20-23 VUL.
[268] "he intended to pollute that shining woman with filth and with sin." Griffith, *Judith,* 58b-59a.

own sword, she presents his head to the Bethulians as a *tacen*.[269] As she tells them, *Fynd syndon eowere/ gedemed to deaðe ond ge dom agon,/ tir æt tohtan, swa eow getacnod hafað/ mihtig dryhten þurh mine hand.*[270] Judith's body indicates God's will, and she also turns Holofernes' head into an indication of God's will when he disregarded the message she brought: defile the things of God, and you will be defeated.

And so, to conclude: when we consider the possibility of connection between the prose texts of the Nowell Codex and the poetry, there is a lot of fertile ground for thinking about the spiritual geography of the margins. Like the other three texts, *Beowulf* and *Judith* each investigate the deeds of people thought to live on the cultural or geographic margins of the dominant society, and they each explore ways in which knowledge of God or God's wisdom can reach those people. Both question easy the conflation of geographic, imperial, and spiritual margins, and they likewise feature disruptive figures who bring an Old Testament backstory to bear on an uninitiated culture. The fact that two of those creatures are monsters and one is a Jewish heroine is not a complication; rather, it represents a new way to talk about the role of monsters—and women—within the manuscript.

Although this study does not purport to analyze Nowell Codex merely for the sake of understanding *Beowulf*, it does bring up some interesting implications for future research with this poem as well. For one, putting the Danes of *Beowulf* next to Dagnus, Holofernes, and Alexander the Great suggests a preoccupation with those who dwell on the margins of

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[269] Among the many studies which look at Judith's dexterity with signs, see: Ann Astell, "Holoferne's Head: *Tacen* and Teaching in the Old English *Judith*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 18 (1989): 117-133; Mary Flavia Godfrey, "*Beowulf* and *Judith*: Thematising Decapitation in Old English Poetry," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 35, no. 1 (1993): 1-43; Susan Kim, "Bloody Signs: Circumcision and Pregnancy in the Old English *Judith*," *Exemplaria* 11, no. 2 (1999): 285-307.

[270] "Your enemies are doomed to death and you will have fame, glory in battle, as the mighty Lord has indicated through my hand." Griffith, *Judith*, lines 195b-198.

God's full revelation, what they can know, and how they behave. Moreover, reading *Beowulf* in light of Christopher, Judith, and the holy trees of India highlights how the people on the margins of incarnational knowledge can nevertheless interact with that knowledge, regardless of whether they realize it or not. It brings back, interestingly enough, to the century-old question of whether or not the Danes and the poem's narrator share any common knowledge of the Creator God.

This dissertation cannot answer this question, and to some extent, the question itself may be unanswerable. But before we leave this study, let us turn back to the illustrations in *Wonders of the East* as an entering-point. In the images of this text, the reader sees both the dangers and rewards of stepping into the margin. If one is swift and clever, they can steal the gold from the giant ants of India, the riches of wisdom; and yet, if one sees too much of the self in the margins, they stumble into the ruse of the *Donestre*, to be deceived, devoured, and in some part, mourned. Somewhere in the middle is the enigmatic, dog-faced *Conopenas*, both manifestly Other and yet dressed with the clothes and implements of royalty. Alexander looks upon all of these walking proofs of God's superabundance and slaughters them; Niceaea and Aquilina looks upon it and, through the danger and fear which the monster presents, reach through to find the *Scyppend*.

If, therefore, the *Wonders of the East* forces the reader to contemplate the creatures of the Eastern rim without dismissing them for their inferiority or savagery, and if *Christopher* makes no physical distinction between the "damned" and the "saved," how, then, would an English reader of the eleventh century be challenged to contemplate the Danes of *Beowulf,* dwelling in the North on their own world's end?

DISSERTATION BIBLIOGRAPHY

A note on format:

Facsimiles and textual editions have each been divided into their own sections, followed by the full bibliography of secondary and reference works. In a few cases, works containing both editions and critical work are listed in each category for ease of reference. Ancient texts with known authors or pseudonymously attributed are listed by the author's name; pseudonymous works follow the attributed author's work. Anonymous texts are listed by the main editor of each text.

Abbreviations:

AA-SS	Acta Sanctorum
ASPR	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records
BHL	Bibliotheca hagiographorum Latinorum
BL	British Library / British Museum
CC ser. lat.	Corpus Christianorum, series Latina
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiorum Latinorum
D-R	Douay-Rheims
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile
EETS	Early English Text Society Publications
Gneuss	Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*
JGEP	*Journal of Germanic and English Philology*
Ker	Neil F. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*
L&S	Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*
MGH	Monumenta Germanica Historiae
OLD	P. G. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*
PL	Patrologia Latina
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Society of America*
VUL	Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgata

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APPENDIX

List of significant variants in the OE *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*

A complete list of shelfmarks for all of Boer's sigla can be found on p. iv-v of his edition.

The stemma for the four main manuscript classes are listed on p. xxiii, xxvi, xxix, and xxxi.

Corresponding manuscript families for the OE are recorded in brackets after the lemma.

§8, Ac ic wolde þæt... gemyndum to habbanne

Boer 3.12-13: sed ut cognoscas ea, quoniam mihi memoriae digna esse videbantur] *om*. III, IV
[I II]

§8, þa geseah ic gyldenne wingeard trumlicne 7 fæstlicne, 7 þa twigo

Boer 4.9-10: Vineam quoque solidam auro argentoque] auro sarmentoque, III

§9, Đa becwom ic on Caspiam þæt lond

Boer 6.4: Caspias portas perveneram exercitu] portas *om*. LGMBACP
[III]

§10, Ic me ða mid genom .CC. ladþeowa 7 eac .L.

Boer 6.12: Acceptis igitur centum quinquagenta ducibus] CC, URReReg
[II/d]

§15, Het hiera þa bescufan in þa ea .L. 7 .C.

Boer 13.4-5: iubeo ex his centum in flumen mitti] centum quinquaginta Mp III SParEtEs

§16, immediately following 7 wulfas ure ehtan, 7 we þæm forstodon: a missing line:

Boer 15.4-5: quae genera ferarum promiscua nobis in silvis occurrebant] *om.* GA
[III/ɣ]

§17 Đa æfter þon cwomon þær cerastis þæt nædercyn.

Boer 17.3-4: Haec prodigia est insecuta immensa vis cerastarum humidarumque serpentium] *om*. URRe
[II/δ]

§20 ne hit for þæm bryne wandode þæs hatan leges 7 fyres:

Boer 20.9-10: nec ignium compositis tardatur ardoribus] odoribus LGMBA
[I II III/ε IV]

§21 7 eac missenlices wæs heo on hringwisan fag:

Boer 21.3-4: pestes venere candido versicolores in modum ranarum] zonarum II III OcEtEs

§24, ferdon þa wæs hit on seofon nihta fæce

Boer 23.8: Mox dierum quattuor itinere] *septem* Br'(ex. corr. br') III IV

§24 Þa wæs he sona swiðe glæd

Boer 25.1-3: Tum ille gaudio alacer, qui cum decrepito sene esset proelium commissurus, cum esset ipse iuvanis, elatus tumore] *om*. GA

§25, Þa he þas word gehyrde, ða sealde me an gewrit…

Boer 25.5-7: Tradidit mihi minis plenam epistolam] *ins. before cum* haec audisset CP
[III/ε]

§25-26 *om.* "Epistola Pori"

Boer 26.2-12: Epistola Pori ad Alexandrum…ne capitis tui] *om.* I/δ II III IV

§26 ic wolde cunnian meahte ic ealne middangeard ymbferan swa garsecge beligeð

Boer 27.7-28.1: si possem, orbi terarum circumfluum navigare oceanum] *om*. URReReg
[Not II/δ-ε]

§27 þæt lond eall swa we geferdon adrugad 7 fen 7 cannon 7 hreod weoxan.

Boer 29.1: Palus erat sicca et coeno abundans] canna URReReg III IV (cannis Tr)
[Not I II/δ]

§27 þæt deor seonowealt heafod swelce mona 7 þæt deor hatte quasi caput luna

Boer 29.3-4: duo capita habens unum leanae simile, corcordrillo gerens alterum
duo capita] *om. in* III, ParEtEsTr [Class III/IV]
unum] alterum caput III ParEsEtTr [Class III/IV]
leaenae] lunae II (excl. Mp) III

§27 hit þa þæt deor ofsloh mine þegnas twegen

Boer 29.4-5: quod caput duos milites repentino occidit ictu.
duos] centum et duos CPEt
ictu] *before* ictu *insert* uno: III (excl. CP)

§27 Ond we þa þæt deor nowþer ne mid spere gewundigan ne meahte ne mid nænige wæpne

Boer 29.6: quam hastis non valuimus transfigere.] *after* quam *add* bestiam*:* Tr

§27 ac we hit uneaþe mid isernum hamerum 7 slecgum gefyldon on 7 hit ofbeoton.
Boer 29.5-6: Quam ferreis vix umquam comminuimus malleis] quam… malleis *om.* M

§28 Woldon we þa to urum swæsendum sitttan
Boer 30.1: coeperamus velle epulariepulari] soporari LGMBAOcParEsTr
[III/α IV/β-ɣ, Tr]

§28 *om. before* 7 ic hæfde hie mid fæstene gefæstnad
Boer 23.1-3: Iussi… afferret] *om.* URReReg
[Class II/δ]

§29 hie wæron a men nacod 7 hie nænigs hrægles ne gimdon
Boer 32.7-8: pedem altos novem. Hos indi faunos appellant] *before* hos, *insert* sine veste nudos*:* PariReg III IV (eras. Pari)
[Mainly Class III/IV, with single MSS in I/II]

§29 Ðas men Indeos hatað Ictifafonas
Boer 32.7: Hos indi faunos appellant] ictifanos: L B Mps Pa; ictiphanos: M; ictifangos: G, A; ictufaunos: Om; ictifaunos: Par
[Class III, excl. III/ε, w/Par as the outlier.]

§29 ða flugon hie sona in þa wæter 7 hie þær in þæm stanholum[1]
Boer 32.9-ff: Quos cum adire vellemus vicinus, marini fluminis se immersere verticibus] voraginibus CP
[Class III/ε]

§30 Ond we þa eft in Fasiacen þæt lond becwoman
Boer 33.6: Igitur aditurus Fasiacen, unde veneramus] veniam III (voveram ex corr. Om') IV
[I II]

§31 eft gesund æfter þon beon nymþe <u>he mid asegendnisseum ineode</u> in þæt scræf.
Boer 36.10: tertia die febribus mori qui speluncam dei introissent*]* intrare irreligiose praesumerent
URRe
[II/δ]

[1] The identification of this one is less secure, as it equates *stanholum* with *voraginibus,* which is not a one-for-one translation.

VITA

Teresa Marie Hooper was born in the far northwest corner of Montana in 1980. The child of a Texaco roustabout and a middle school science teacher, she spent most of her childhood with her head in the sky, her feet in the dirt, and her nose in a book. Teresa graduated from high school in Thermopolis, Wyoming, in 1998 and started college at the University of Wyoming as a member of their honors program. After three years she moved south and completed her B. A. and M. A. in English at the College of Charleston, where she studied Medieval Literature under the direction of Dr. Trish Ward. She then joined the Ph.D. program at the University of Tennessee and the Marco Institute in 2006, where she studied Medieval Literature with a focus in Anglo-Saxon studies. She currently lives in Knoxville, Tennessee with her husband David and is an adjunct instructor of English at Maryville College.