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SIR JOHN’S ROMANCES:
A STUDY OF TWO EPISODES FROM *THE BOOK OF JOHN MANDEVILLE*

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Acknowledgements

When, in 2010, I entered the amphitheatre of the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon in which Prof.ª Doutora Adelaide Meira Serras lectured Medieval English Culture, I knew only a little about the Middle Ages and nothing about medieval literature. My idea of the period involved beautiful, majestic cathedrals, knights in shiny armour, and people who were reluctant to have a bath. So I was really surprised by what I learned and taken away by what the 'Middle Ages' truly meant, by its complexity and beauty.

Although I followed another professional path, the Middle Ages stayed with me. Many years afterwards, I returned to the Faculty to take a post-graduation in Medieval Studies, it was with great joy that I reencountered some of my former professors, including Prof.ª Adelaide. It was Prof.ª Adelaide who introduced me and my colleagues to *The Book of John Mandeville*, which was completely unknown to us. I became fascinated by what it was, but mostly, by what it pretended to be – a real account of an English knight and traveller who decided to leave his hometown and risk his life to travel the world and see what was there to be seen. It was 2019, and I decided, while listening to Prof.ª Adelaide speaking of Mandeville's encounters with marvellous creatures of the East, that I would write a master's thesis on this enigmatic book, the first in Portugal.

When I enrolled in the MA in English and American Studies in 2020, in the same faculty, I invited Prof.ª Adelaide to be my dissertation co-supervisor. She kindly agreed, somehow completing the cycle that started many years ago in her classes on Medieval Culture. I am in great debt to her and can only thank her.

I want to thank Prof.ª Doutora Angélica Varandas, my dissertation supervisor, for her immense help and support. Prof.ª Angélica's profound knowledge and love for medieval literature and culture has inspired many generations of students – myself included. I will never forget when, many years ago, in one of her classes, I first heard her speak passionately about *Beowulf*, which remains one of my favourite readings. Prof.ª Angélica's insights were crucial, her tireless support and guidance essential, and her words of encouragement a balsam in times of need. I would not have been able to finish this dissertation without her, and I dedicated it to her.

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Abstract

The Book of John Mandeville (c. 1357), supposedly written by an English knight born in St. Albans, whose existence was never proved, is one of the most famous works of the Middle Ages and probably the most-read travel narrative of the medieval period. It fascinated generations of readers and, in modern times, scholars tried to make sense of it, for it is not what it seems to be. From the nineteenth century on, many studies were produced, most of them focused on the author's true identity and the language and location where it was originally written. The 'obsession' with discovering 'Mandeville' meant that many aspects of *The Book* were never thoroughly studied, and seven centuries after its appearance in France, a lot of work remains to be done.

This dissertation, the first master's thesis about *The Book of John Mandeville* in Portugal, aims to analyse two episodes usually considered less relevant in the context of the work because they were apparently written only to entertain. However, it is my view that the stories of Hippocrates' daughter and the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle were masterfully constructed to reinforce the central message of *The Book*, which is to appeal to the realisation of a new crusade as a means of atoning for Europe's sins. On the other hand, the two legends are proof of the author's profound knowledge of medieval literature, namely the romanesque literary tradition, which is an aspect of the work that has rarely been pointed out by the critics. The fact is that Mandeville was influenced both by nonfictional and fictional works, and reminiscences of those influences can be detected throughout his book. A tireless reader, Mandeville knew and approved of many genres, and his work is infused with his readings, which include medieval romances. The episodes considered indicated that he was very much inspired by the genre.

Keywords: *The Book of John Mandeville*, travel writing and peregrination, medieval romance, Middle Ages, Crusades.

Resumo

The Book of John Mandeville (c. 1357), que terá sido escrito por um cavaleiro inglês nascido em St. Albans, é um dos textos mais famosos da Idade Média e, provavelmente, a narrativa de viagem mais lida do período medieval. Imediatamente popular após o seu aparecimento em França em meados do século XIV, o livro continuou a fascinar leitores durante os séculos seguintes. Durante a época moderna, interessou os académicos, que procuraram compreendê-lo. A partir do século XIX, foram produzidos inúmeros estudos, a maioria focada na verdadeira identidade do autor, que continua por identificar, a língua em que o texto original foi escrito e em que lugar. A 'obsessão' em torno de 'Mandeville', que tomou conta dos estudos académicos durante os séculos XIX e XX, fez com que determinados aspetos da obra ficassem por aprofundar ou até mesmo por estudar. Sete séculos depois da sua composião, é seguro dizer que muito permanece ainda por saber sobre o livro de Sir John Mandevile.

Esta dissertação, a primeira em Portugal sobre *The Book of John Mandeville*, procura analisar dois episódios que são habitualmente tidos como menos relevantes no contexto global da obra — as lendas da filha de Hipócrates e da fada do Castelo do Gavião. Estes episódios, aparentemente simples, parecem ter como único objetivo entreter o leitor e afastá-lo da monotonia da descrição da viagem do narrador, mas são, na verdade, uma criação narrativa meticulosa, criada para reforçar a principal mensagem do livro — o apelo à realização de uma nova cruzada para expiar os pecados cometidos pelos europeus e pelos seus líderes.

Por outro lado, estas duas lendas são prova do conhecimento profundo que Mandeville tinha da literatura do período medieval, nomeadamente a tradição do romance, um aspeto da obra que raramente tem sido destacado. As duas histórias indicam que o autor era tão conhecedor da não ficção como da ficção produzida durante a Idade Média. Influências de ambos os géneros podem ser detetadas em vários momentos do livro, incluindo nas passagens alvo de estudo. Mandeville, um leitor incansável, conhecia e aprovava diferentes géneros literários e o seu trabalho foi diretamente influenciado por múltiplas leituras. Os episódios em apreço indicam isso mesmo e evidenciam a inspiração do romance medieval que, no livro de Mandeville, é maior e mais profunda do que foi anteriormente indicado.

Palavras-chave: *The Book of John Mandeville*, narrativa de viagem e peregrinação, romance medieval, Idade Média, Cruzadas.

Introduction

I Ioon Maundeuyle kniȝt, if al it be þat Y be not worþi, þat was ybore in Engelond in þe toun of seynt Albanes … and siþþe hiderward haþ be long tyme ouer þe see; and haþ seye and go þurȝ manye kyngdomes and londes and prouynces and yles …

(*The Defective Version* 5, lines 6-11).

The Book of John Mandeville (c. 1357)[1] is one of the most famous works of the Middle Ages and probably the most-read travel narrative of the period. Known to most ranks of European society, few literate men could have avoided coming across it ("The Availability"). It inspired Christopher Columbus and Sir Walter Raleigh on his journeys (Greenblatt 47-107; 62), and left his mark in the literary compositions of the *Pearl* poet and Geoffrey Chaucer. In France, it was read by Christine de Pizan, and Jean d'Arras used one of its passages in *Mélusine.* It was "a medieval bestseller", Jeffrey Jerome Cohen stated, "and possibly the most popular travel narrative ever composed" ("Pilgrimages, Travel Writing" 611).

This very famous book about the adventures of an English knight in the Near and Far East — even more famous in its time than Marco Polo's travel account ("The Marvels, The Mystery, The Man") — first appeared in Northern France in the second half of the fourteenth century (*Sir John Mandeville* 23), during the One Hundred Years War (1337-1453), a series of intermittent armed conflicts between France and England that divided Europe into two opposing factions for more than a century. Shortly after, various copies were produced in Anglo-Norman and Middle English on the other side of the English Channel. Its immediate popularity is attested by the appearance, only a few decades later, of at least eight translations into languages such as Czech, Italian, Spanish, and even Latin. Many more were produced throughout the fifteenth century, when the first printed editions

[1] Like most medieval texts, *The Book of Mandeville* had no authorial title. Its medieval names included *Itinerary*, *The Book of Wonders*, and *The Book John Mandeville*. Expressions such as 'romance' or '*itinerarium*' were also used (Tzanaki 1). The *Book of John Mandeville* is still the most common title, but some modern editors, such as M. C. Seymour and Iain Macleod Higgins, have adopted the name *Mandeville's Travels*, which only started to being used with Thomas East's edition of 1586 (Tzanaki 1). I have opted for *The Book of John Mandeville* because it emphasizes the intentional role of the author and deludes the idea of 'travel'. Today, it is known that Mandeville did not visit the places he describes and that his book resulted from a creative process.

were made. *The Book* was one of the first non-religious works to have a printed edition, both in France[2] and England[3].

Albeit its reputation, almost nothing is known about it. The author, who introduces himself in the Prologue as John Mandeville, an English knight born in St. Albans, seems to have never existed. He probably never visited most places he says he saw firsthand (he constructed his narrative from previous sources). Many pages have been written on the matter without arriving at a definitive conclusion. For this reason, the identity of Mandeville, whose existence remains to be proven, dominated academic studies since the nineteenth century, when it was demonstrated that *The Book* was written by a very well-read person, not a real traveller. Only recently, with the emergence of new works about other aspects of *The Book*, such as Mandeville's use of genres and literary tropes, did the narrative become the main focus of study[4]. Some of these innovative studies include Higgins' *Writing East. The "Travels" of Sir John Mandeville* (1997), about *The Book*'s representation of the East, and Rosemary Tzanaki's *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences* (2003), about medieval and renaissance reception of *The Book* and how its audiences perceived it. Charles Moseley's many studies, including "The Metamorphoses of Sir John Mandeville" (1974) and "The Availability of Mandeville's *Travels* in England, 1356-1750" (1975), about *The Book*'s versions and their dissemination, also contributed to a better understanding of the work and its dissemination. However, much remains to be done. *The Book* has often been analysed solely within the context of travel and pilgrimage narratives, and although it is presented as such in the Prologue, it encompasses much more than that. It is:

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[2] The first French printed editions were produced between 1480 and 1550 ("The scribal tradition" 34; *Sir John Mandeville* 3).

[3] The first printed edition of *The Book of John Mandeville* in England is the so-called Pynson print, usually dated to 1496, the archetype for other printed editions (Kohanski liv). The Pynson is based on a lost manuscript of the Defective Version, suggesting that this variation was widely known in manuscript form (Kohanski liv). It survives in a copy held by the British Library (*G 6713*) and a fragment in the Bodleian Library (*Arch. G d. 31 (1)*) (Kohanski liv). This version was responsible for bringing the Defective Version "'officially' into the public eye" (Kohanski lv). It was published by Tamarah Kohanski in 2001. The edition is an important contribution to the knowledge of the multiple manuscripts of the Defective Version. See Kohanski liv-lvi.

[4] The change, although overall positive, has caused a diminishing of the importance of the English knight as a literary character. See Cipriano, Rita. "Knight, Traveller, or Author? The Question of Authorship in *The Book of John Mandeville*." *Via Panoramica: Revista de Estudos Anglo-Americanos*, Série 3, Vol. 12, n.º 2, 2023, pp. 31-42. doi.org/10.21747/2182-9934/via12_2a2.

> … a piece of intermittent crusading propaganda; an occasional satire on the religious practices of Latin Christians; an implicit treatise on right rule in both the Christian and the non-Christian worlds (a kind of mirror for Christian princes); a proof of the earth's sphericity, the existence of inhabited antipodes, and the possibility of circumnavigation; a demonstration that most non-Christians have a 'natural' knowledge of the One, True God; and the desultory memoirs – the travels lies, in fact – of a 'verray, parfit gentil' English Knight Errant (*Writing East* 13).

Tzanaki pointed out how readers, responding to this unique mixing of genres, "treated the work as a mine of information on a variety of issues, seeing it as pilgrimage guide, geographical study, collection of marvels, historical source or moral treatise" (11). *The Book*, in itself multiple, was shaped to meet different tastes and expectations, including romanesque ones. This is so because Mandeville worked with all the aforementioned genres and more, including medieval romance. Referring to the many sources consulted by the author, Moseley argued that "so, learned though it is, the book is not simply 'a compendium'. It also includes Romance elements and stories" (16). It is to two of these stories that this master's thesis is dedicated.

Additionally, many doubts persist about *The Book's* production and dissemination, including the language in which it was originally written (French or English?), where it was made (France or England?) and by whom (a French monk or an English knight?[5]). Furthermore, the number of copies in which it survives is so high (three hundred manuscripts and fragments in ten European languages, a considerable number for medieval standards) that it is impossible to reconstruct its original version. No one knows what *The Book* initially looked like, and probably never will, because it survives in so many variations, all different from each other[6], Iain Macleod Higgins suggested that it should be considered not as a single and stable identity or the creation of just one person but as a "multi-text", characterised by the typical intertextuality of the Middle Ages and by "its own distinctive *intra*textual multiplicity" (*Writing East* 19).

> Distinguished as it is by this medieval multitextuality, by its *mouvance*, or continuous recreation in transmission, *The Book* has circulated for some six hundred years not as a single timeless object —

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[5] In his book about Sir John Mandeville, Seymour proposed that the author should have been "an ecclesiastic, with a cleric's knowledge of the Bible, and most likely a member of a regular order", who was a French native speaker and a fluent reader of Latin (*Sir John Mandeville* 23).

[6] "Many new and recast versions of Mandeville's Travels appeared in England between the second half of the fourteenth century and 1750. Some are merely re-editings; some are almost entirely new books; all reflect to a certain degree the tastes and prejudices of their period" ("The Metamorphoses of Sir John Mandeville" 5).

> which is how many of us were schooled to think of texts — but rather as variant versions of a postulated original (*Writing East* 19).

In Cohen's opinion, there is no such thing as *The Book of John Mandeville*. "There is … no single or originary version, no complete source …, just a volatile multiplicity of texts masquerading as a unity" ("Pilgrimages, Travel Writing" 612).

*

This master's thesis is the first one in Portugal about *The Book of Sir John Mandeville*, which has received little attention from the Portuguese Academia. It is focused on two legendary episodes — the stories of Hippocrates' daughter and the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle, narrated in chapters 3 and 14 of *The Book*, respectively. These two marvellous stories are often seen as 'deviations' of the 'main path' in Mandeville's itinerary, a position I disagree with. Instead, I believe they play an essential role in structuring *The Book* and reinforcing the author's position and message, which has to do with the need for moral reform through the process of reconquering the Holy Land. Also, they prove that Mandeville was inspired not only by medieval non-fiction works but also by other literary traditions of the Middle Ages, namely that of romance.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first introduces Mandeville's work and its main themes and issues. It briefly addresses the question of *The Book*'s sources, which has been a matter of great discussion for many years, before delving into its intricate history of production and dissemination. The studies on these issues are sparse. Some have been published long ago, and a good summary is much needed. However, due to the length of this study, I had to resume the chapter to the essential and focus on the work's appearance in France in the mid-fourteenth century and England not long after. The English translations are of utmost importance. Among them, the most significant is the Defective Version (after 1377), to which a considerable portion of the first chapter is dedicated. As the oldest, the most common, and the basis of most English variations, the Defective is the most relevant when studying the history of *The Book*'s translation into the English language. Despite that, it is the English version that has received less attention because it lacks the passage about Egypt (the so-called 'Egyptian Gap') that can be found in the oldest manuscripts produced in French. This has encouraged scholars to opt for other versions — the Cotton and the Egerton — which are considered the 'most complete'. However, this approach ignores the text's transmission and the popularity of the Defective Version among English readers until the eighteenth

century, when another variation was made available in print for the first time. Because of this, I have opted for the Defective Version, although sometimes I refer to other English variations as a matter of comparison[7].

Only a few critical editions of the Defective Version were ever produced. The first was published by M. C. Seymour (2002). Its basis is *Oxford, The Queen's College MS. 383* (c. 1400), a manuscript that belongs to subgroup A (or 1) of the Defective variation, comprised of nine copies that give the most substantial text (*The Defective Version* xv). The other, more recent, was published by Tamarah Kohanski and C. David Benson (2007). It refers to *British Library MS. Royal 17 C xxxviii*, a manuscript not belonging to any previously identified subgroups (it derives from a lost archetype). Therefore, I have opted for Seymour's edition.

The second chapter deals with monster theory and the presence of monsters in *The Book*. Because this dissertation focuses on two episodes with transformative female monsters as main characters, human and female monsters that can metamorphose are given special attention. When speaking about such monstrous beings, it is essential to refer to the *mélusienne* tradition, to which the final part of the chapter is dedicated. Mélusine is mentioned again in chapters III and IV.

The third chapter analyses the episode of Hippocrates' daughter (Chapter 3 of *The Book of John Mandeville*) and the critique against medieval knighthood. The fourth and final chapter is dedicated to the episode of the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle (Chapter 14) and its broader critique of medieval society. Both sections possess distinct characteristics that set them apart from Mandeville's other tales of monsters, such as the Pygmies, to whom he dedicates only a small passage in Chapter 17, in which he describes their physical characteristics and some of their practices, namely that they do not work and keep people of 'normal' stature to do the work for them[8]; or the Cynocephali, which he also presents briefly in Chapter 15 while highlighting their king's religious devotion. The tales' main characters are monstrous female figures who belong to the realm of the fantastic and abnormal and who can change form and transgress the body's natural boundaries. They also contain the structure and motifs of medieval romance. This aspect supports the idea that Mandeville did not only seek inspiration in chronicles, histories and pilgrimage narratives, usually indicated as his primary sources, but also in the literature of the medieval period.

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[7] Although this is not a study about it, I included an appendix (I) with a list of all the Defective manuscripts identified by M. C. Seymour in 1993 and 2002. I have updated the references since many manuscripts have changed hands since then. See pp. 106-8.

[8] See Williams 111-3.

They show the author's profound knowledge of medieval romance's motifs and tropes, and are two of the finest examples of Mandeville's artistry. That is what I argue in the conclusion.

As this introduction suggests, I will be referring to the author of *The Book* as John Mandeville[9]. Whoever he may have been, that is the name he chose to designate himself. That is a choice I will respect throughout this dissertation.

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[9] Some critics have opted for a more neutral approach.

Chapter I

The Book of John Mandeville: an English knight in the Far East

The Book of John Mandeville (c. 1357) describes the journey to Jerusalem and then to Asia of a traveller who presents himself as John Mandeville, an English knight born and raised in the town of St. Albans, Hertfordshire[10]. In 1322, on Michaelmas Day (29th September), during the time of Edward III, king of England from 1327 to 1377[11], Mandeville left his country and crossed the sea to the Holy Land and further East. His sojourn lasted thirty-four years, during which he came in contact with the people and traditions of many places, some strange, full of wonders and monstrous beings. When, tired of travelling, he finally returned "to rest" (*The Defective Version* 135, lines 30-1), he took on the task of writing down his adventures in the form of a book, which, according to the dates on the Defective Version, the oldest and most popular English variation, he finished in the

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[10] St. Albans is an old English pilgrimage site. According to Bede (c. 672-735), it was in that region that St. Alban, the first English saint and martyr, suffered his martyrdom, at the time of the Great Persecution ordered by the emperor Diocletian (fourth century AD) (19). In late Antiquity, a church was built in the place of execution (Bede 19), and a monastery was founded there at the end of the eighth century (Blair 417). The community was later refunded as a Benedictine abbey, around which a small town grew after the Norman Conquest in the twelfth century (Blair 417). In the later Middle Ages, the Abbey of St. Alban was the centre of mapping in England, particularly of the Holy Land, as part of the legacy of the Benedictine monk and chronicler Matthew of Paris (d. 1259), who contributed to the development of English cartography (*The Book of Marvels and Travels* xv). Several manuscripts of *The Book of John Mandevill*e were produced in the Abbey of St. Alban in the late fourteenth century, when it was already well disseminated in England. It is interesting to note how Mandeville chose as his place of birth a town so intimately connected with the history of the Christian faith in England. See Cipriano, Rita. "The Hagiographical Tradition: Bede and Foxe's Account of the Martyrdom of St. Alban." *Via Panoramica: Revista de Estudos Anglo-Americanos*, Série 3, Vol. 11, N.º 2, 2022, pp. 10-20. ojs.letras.up.pt/index.php/VP/issue/view/833; Garcia, Michael Moises. *Saint Alban and the Cult of Saints in Late Antique Britain*. Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Institute for Medieval Studies: The University of Leeds, 2010. academia.edu/3585748/Saint_Alban_and_the_Cult_of_Saints_in_Late_Antique_Britain.

[11] Some manuscripts of the Insular Version have a Latin dedication to Edward III, which appears at the end of *The Book*, "as a rather disconnected afterthought" (Ormrod 326) It reads: "To the most excellent prince, to be chiefly reverenced above all mortals, Lord Edward, by divine providence most serene king of the French and the English, lord of Ireland, duke of Aquitaine, ruler of the sea and of its Western Islands, credit and ornament of Christendom, patron of all men at arms and pattern of probity and strength, the unconquered prince, follower of the wonderful Alexander, to be feared by the whole world" (Ormrod 135-6). Some critics have regarded the dedication as proof that the work found its way into the English royal court at the time of its production, suggesting some degree of early patronage among English courtly audiences. However, most scholars see it as something to avoid using "as evidence in itself of an English courtly context for the *Travels*" (Ormrod 326). See Ormrod.

year 1366 (135-6)[12]. On his way 'home', Mandeville made a stop in Rome to visit the Pope[13] and tell him all about the "mereueyles" he had seen "in dyuerse cuntreez, so þat he wiþ his wise counseyl wolde examyne hit" (*The Defective Version* 136, lines 133-6). After examining the book, the leader of the Catholic Church told the knight that, for sure, all that he wrote was true because he owned a Latin work, according to which the *mappa mundi* was made, that contained all that was exposed by him and "myche more" (*The Defective Version* 136, lines 12-15)[14]. Thus, the book was ratified and confirmed by the Pope and his council "in alle poyntes", hence asserting its authority and authenticity (*The Defective Version* 136, line 15).

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[12] Different versions give different dates for the conclusion of the book and the departure of Mandeville. Higgins pointed out that copy errors were usual due to the use of Roman numerals (*The Book of John Mandeville* 5). Here, I follow the dates in the Defective Version, the basis of this dissertation.

[13] The Pope at the time was John XXII, head of the Catholic Church from 1316 to his death in 1334 (*The Book of Marvels and Travels* 167).

[14] One of the maps produced by Matthew Paris in St. Albans Abbey was a *mappa mundi*, or world map (*The Book of Marvels and Travels* xv). Contrary to modern maps, *mappa mundi* provided an image of the world that was not geographically accurate. Its authors were more concerned with using the terrestrial space to stage a pictorial history of the world that ran from the Fall of Men to the Final Judgement. Although not a map, *The Book of John Mandeville* offers an insight into medieval ideas about geography and how these were shaped by religion, and its similarities with the *mappa mundi*, namely the Hereford Map, the most famous of such world depictions, has been often highlighted. it is interesting to note that these affinities were recognized by the author in the episode of the meeting with the Pope, who says to Mandeville that his book is very similar to another one from which a world map was made. On the *mappa mundi*, see Harvey, P.D.A. *Mappa Mundi: The Hereford World Map*. Herefordshire Cathedral and the British Library, 1996; Terkla, Dan, and Millea, Nick, editors. *A Critical Companion to the English Medieval Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. NED-New edition, Boydell & Brewer, 2019. On Matthew Paris and his maps' production, see Greenlee, John Wyatt. "About Matthew Paris and his Maps." *Historia Cartarum. Meditations on the Historical Production of Spaces*, 2020. historiacartarum.org/about-matthew-paris/.

Mandeville describes from memory[15], presumably in old age[16], the many kingdoms, lands, provinces, and islands he saw and traversed, making a vivid portrait of the landscape, the climate, and the customs of the local people. He pays special attention to Jerusalem, where Christ suffered his death, "for þat is in þe myddel of þe world" (*The Defective Version* 4, lines 1-2)[17]. Arguing that it has been a long time since there was "generale passage ouer þe see", he says that many long to hear about the Holy City, for they take "solace and comfort" from that (5, lines 3-6). The author was clearly interested in religious practices. He thoroughly explains how people in different places worship God and communicate with the divine. These include the Greeks and the Muslims, who were seen with prejudice by Western Europeans[18] but whom he describes with atypical neutrality and tolerance, sometimes by redirecting his sources (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 27). As pointed out by Christiane Deluz, the image of the world in *The Book* is one to be explored ("*parcourir"*): the earth is filled with routes, which are an invitation to travel (21).

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[15] Medieval culture was profoundly memorial in nature. Medieval education valued the training of *memoria* over writing, which was thought of as an aid to memory, not as a substitute for it (Carruthers 195). The valuing of memory persisted after the increasing use and availability of books from the eleventh century on, and long after the book technology had changed (Carruthers 9). According to Mary Carruthers, "in a memorial culture, a 'book' is only one way among several to remember a 'text', to provision and cue one's memory with 'dicta et facta memorabilia'. So a book is itself a mnemonic, among many other functions it can also have" (9-10). *Memoria* was also part of the virtue of prudence. "Training the memory was much more than a matter of providing oneself with the means to compose and converse intelligently when books were not readily to hand, for it was in training memory that one built character, judgment, citizenship, and piety" (Carruthers 11).

[16] "And I schal deuyse a partye of þingis what þei beþ when tyme schal be, aftir þat it may come to my mynde…" (*The Defective version* 5, lines 17-19).

[17] See p. 18.

[18] Both Greeks and Muslims were hated by most Western Europeans. The reasons differ, but in both cases, it is possible to find a combination of religious intolerance and incomprehension. In the case of the Greeks, the lack of understanding comes from the difficulty of defining the type of Christians they are, a lasting consequence of the Great Schism of 1054. For most medieval Europeans, Greeks were "only Christians in the name", as Louis VII of France (1120-1180) stated (qtd. in *A Civilização do Ocidente Medieval* [*Medieval Civilization*] 179), and were guilty of all kinds of heresies (179). Between the crusaders, there was the belief they were not Christians and, therefore, killing them "meant less than nothing" (Louis VII of France qtd. in *A Civilização do Ocidente Medieval* [*Medieval Civilization*] 179). The Muslims were the enemy of choice of Christians — they were the 'infidel'. The antagonism was made clear by Urban II (1088-1099) in his speech at the Council of Clermont (1095), when he called for a crusade to take the Holy Land from Muslim control. The Pope spoke of atrocities committed against Christians in Jerusalem by the "wicked" and "unclean peoples" that held "the holy grave of our Lord and Saviour" ("The Council of Clermont, 1095", Robert the Monk in Thatcher and McNeal 600-1). See *A Civilização do Ocidente Medieval* [*Medieval Civilization*] 179-86.

The exception is the Jews. Mandeville singles them because they have rejected Christ, thus causing his death. On the contrary, the religious practices of Muslims and others non-Christians are shown to have some aspects in common with Christianity, which Mandeville makes sure to highlight. In Chapter 13, about the faith of the Saracens[19], the author informs that Muslims frequently discuss the Virgin Mary. Their sacred book, "þat þei clepiþ *Alkaron*", describes the Incarnation of Christ and says that God sent Jesus to be an example to all people and that God shall judge all men (*The Defective Version* 57). The Qur'an says that the Jews are "wickid" because they do not believe that Christ was sent from Heaven (*The Defective Version* 58), "whereas other non-Christians are yet to receive, or to be turned to, Christianity" (*The Book of Marvels and Travels* xxv). This narrative seems contrary to Mandeville's own apology for the Crusades. However, the author's preoccupation was not with non-Christians who governed the Holy Land but with those who allowed that to happen[20].

It is important to note that *The Book* was written during a time of great violence against the Jewish communities in Europe following the Black Death of 1349. Mandeville may have been affected by antisemitic narratives that circulated at the time (his book was written in c. 1357). Antisemitism was commonplace in the Middle Ages, and various discriminatory laws were introduced against Jews. Anti-Jewish sentiments grew with the spread of the Black Death, and as early as the summer of 1348, as the plague swept across France, Germany and Switzerland, rumours that linked the mortality with a Jewish plot began to appear (Kelly 138-9). One popular explanation for the pandemic, whose origin was then unknown, was that Jews had been recruited by the Devil to carry out his work and had poisoned water wells to infect Christians. As a result, an unknown but large number of European Jews were massacred (Kelly 140), and whole communities were wiped out across Europe[21].

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[19] Mandeville uses the word "Saracen" to speak about Arabs and Muslims (*The Book of Marvels and Travels* 131).

[20] The subject will be addressed later, in Chapters III and IV, specifically on pages 67-76 and 92-98 of this dissertation.

[21] See Kelly 138-41; "Medieval Antisemitism." *The Holocaust Explained*. The Wiener Holocaust Library. theholocaustexplained.org/anti-semitism/medieval-antisemitism/the-black-death. On Mandeville's treatment of Judaism, see Tinkle, Theresa. "God's Chosen Peoples: Christians and Jews in *The Book of John Mandeville*." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 113, No. 4, 2014, pp. 443-471. University of Illinois Press. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jenglgermphil.113.4.0443; Braude, Benjamin. "Mandeville's Jews among Others." *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land*. Edited by Bryan F. Le Beau and Menachem Mor. Creighton University Press, 1996, pp. 133-58; Westrem, Scott D. "Against Gog and Magog." *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*. Edited by Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Giles. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998, pp. 54-75.

Mandeville starts his narrative by depicting Jerusalem and the Holy Land and the routes to it, following the conventional structure of the pilgrimage narrative (*itinerarium*). The paradigm of travel and travel writing in the Middle Ages (Youngs 24)[22], pilgrimage narratives describe the Holy City symbolically as occupying the centre of the world, a geographical position that reflects its importance as the holiest of places according to the Christian religion[23]. Mandeville refers to Jerusalem's centrality in the Prologue to plead for the continuity of the crusading movement. He explains that every good Christian must fight for the rightful inheritance of Christ — the Holy Land — if he has the means for it (*The Defective Version* 4, lines 13-19). In the introduction to his translation of *The Book of John Mandeville*, Charles Moseley pointed out "the medieval (and indeed Renaissance) assumption that all serious writing should have a moral dimension discoverable by intellectual understanding penetrating the surface of the text" (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 14). Likewise, the Earth "is also to be understood morally" besides literally (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 14). As Moseley explains: "The medieval view of the world, as of literature, was that it was polysemous, carrying many meanings; the physical world itself was the *umbra* from which Faith could be supported by Reason …" (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 14).

After Jerusalem and the Holy Land, Mandeville moves further East and deeper into the world's marvels, into India, Cathay, the land of Prester John, and the walls of Paradise. For many of his readers and critics, medieval and modern, which include Malcolm Letts (32), the second part of his book is the most interesting because it reveals Mandeville's true potential as a writer. Distancing himself from the accounts of pilgrimages to Jerusalem focused on the monuments and relics related to the life and death of Christ and not on the narrator, and the initial discourse "intended to instruct, inform, and please pilgrims and armchair travelers interested in biblical and ethnographical material" (*Writing East* 30), the author embraces other genres, including romance, creating a

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[22] Although travel for trade and exploration did occur, pilgrimages were the characteristic form of travel, with Crusades being considered armed pilgrimages. The introduction of indulgences, the remission of individual sins by the Catholic Church, only helped push the movement forward and transform pilgrimage into one of the most important religious and social movements of the medieval period. See Speak, Jennifer, editor. *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*. Volume One. Routledge, 2013, pp. 393-4.

[23] See Mourad, Suleiman A., et. al, editors. *The Routledge Handbook to Jerusalem.* Routledge, 2019, pp. 290-300; 325-34; Renna, Thomas. "Jerusalem in Late Medieval *Itineraria*." *Pilgrims & Travels to the Holy Land*. Edited by Bryan F. Le Beau and Menachem Mor. Creighton University Press, 1996, pp. 199-32; Higgins, Iain Macleod. "Defining the Earth's Center in a Medieval 'Multi-Text': Jerusalem in *The Book of John Mandeville*." *Text and Territory. Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*. Edited by Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998, pp. 29-53.

surprisingly coherent, rich and fascinating account of what lies beyond, at the fringes of the known world, "where symbol and reality are virtually indistinguishable" (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 15). Rosemary Tzanaki believes that the move is related to "the age the *Book* was written and flourished in", a time when a kind of religious tourism *avant la lettre* was growing into "a new kind of travel writing whose empirical aims encouraged an attitude of curiosity rather than piety — an attitude which was to lead to the exploratory spirit of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (11), to which Mandeville gave his contribute.

The author's colourful depiction of the East, a region of never-ending marvels, full of monsters "horrifyingly different … and uncannily connected" (Greenblatt 49), contrasts with the sobriety of the description of the holy places in Jerusalem and the lands thereabout. However, it is possible to find in both an interest in the miraculous and the marvellous that is typical of the period. 'Miracles' and 'marvels' meant different things in the Middle Ages. To Gervase of Tilbury, author of *Otia Imperialia* (early thirteenth century), miracles (*miracula*) are things that do not follow the rules of Nature and are attributed to divine omnipotence, while marvels (*mirabilia*) escape human understanding but are natural in origin (20). Contrary to miracles, which transcend the normal order of things (Cross 1091) and are produced by God for religious ends, marvels belonged "to the order of nature" (*Heroes and Marvels* 16). According to Jacques Le Goff, the place of the marvellous in the Middle Ages is between the miraculous, which originates in God, and magic, whose origins are traced to the devil (*The Medieval Imagination* 35-6)[24]. "It is neither good nor evil and Christianity can therefore tolerate it" (*The Medieval Imagination* 36). However, as with miracles, the occurrence of marvellous events relies exclusively on the will of God (*The Medieval Imagination* 31), and its acknowledgement requires the approval of the Catholic Church, the entity that decides upon their truthfulness (35-6).

In *The Book*, miracles and marvels take various forms, such as local legends connected with the lives of saints or short yet complex tales that break the 'monotony' of the voyage description. They connect the different sections, linking the first part, dealing with the Holy Land, with the second, about the Far East. Some topics are referred to frequently — for instance, "the insistence on Christian's unworthiness to possess Palestine, the corruption and complacency of the Western Church, the goodness in works of non-Christians", Moseley detailed (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 16), stressing that, although the narrative is set primarily far beyond the Western European borders, most episodes are constructed to provide a comparison with Europe — by

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[24] See Chapter III, pp. 61-3.

showing the 'Other', Mandeville intends to reveal the 'Same'. Moseley also noted that there is "a thematic link" between the repeated insistence on the inability of the Christians to take Palestine by not recognising their need for moral and social reform before doing so and the impossibility of Mandeville reaching the balm near Alexander's Trees of the Sun and the Moon, which is told to increase longevity (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 16)[25]. "Mandeville ends as an old man, who has not found the earthly paradise, but is subject to fleshy ills, and needs the prayers of his readers" ("The Marvels, The Mystery, The Man"), as much as the Western lords do. Throughout the narrative, the author upholds the need to organise a new crusade involving all the great European leaders and reconquer Jerusalem and the Holy Land. He believes it to be the only way to save Europe from moral decline, which preoccupies him deeply. The books of Genesis and Apocalypse, about the beginning and end of the world, are referred to many times, as are many apocryphal legends that were still circulating in the late Middle Ages (Tzanaki 182). These works tell a story of decay and sin, which the author believes to be the sole cause of the loss of Jerusalem and the Crusader States in the Near East.

1. Sir John Mandeville: the first great English traveller?

Sir John Mandeville was considered the first great English traveller for many years. The fact that nothing is known about him besides what he tells in his book did not discourage late medieval and early modern readers from believing his words. It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that his fame was put to an end by the discovery that many of his observations were taken from previous works[26]. From then on, he was discredited as an author and his book was

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[25] The fictional *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* (fourth century) tells that Alexander the Great, during his expedition to India, visited a grove with two holy trees. Inside it, he met a high priest more than ten feet tall who explained that one tree was male, could speak the Indian language, and foretold one's future at the rising of the Sun. According to him, the other tree was female, could speak Greek, and foretold one's future at the rising of the Moon. After Alexander prayed at the feet of the holy trees, they answered him that he would conquer the world but die from poisoning in Babylon before he could return home. The oracle trees were well-known to medieval encyclopaedists and chroniclers. In *Speculum Historiale* (thirteenth century), Vincent de Beauvais, one of Mandeville's confirmed sources, stated that the balm of the trees allowed the priests at the grove to live for three hundred years (Drieshen).

[26] In the seventeenth century, Mandeville was regarded, at least by some, as a liar. See *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 9. However, it was only in the nineteenth century that his sources were confirmed. See Letts 34-8. Although primarily written in Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, these were consulted by the author of *The Book* in French translations from the fourteenth century. See *The Book of John Mandeville* xv.

labelled a hoax. The search for the 'real' John Mandeville started[27] and never truly ended, overshadowing the value of the author's work, whose originality lies precisely in the way he employed previous sources to create "something new through active recombination" (*The Book of John Mandeville* x). As highlighted by Moseley, "that his material already existed in other books does not mean that it does not become new when in a new context in a new book" ("The Marvels, The Mystery, The Man"). Mandeville toiled his sources freely, adding new passages, personal insights, disclaimers and interpretations to support his "engaging fiction" (*Mandeville's Travels* xvi). It resulted in "an unprecedented fusion and personal interpretation of both learned and popular traditions of writing that had only ever, and rarely, been brought together in manuscript miscellanies", Iain Macleod Higgins noted (*The Book of John Mandeville* x). Mandeville improved "his material making the information more plausible and simultaneously drawing conclusions which may differ widely from those of his sources", Tzanaki added (7). In some cases, he even contradicted it, like when he states that only camels can cross the desert, implying that the monks of Mount Sinai could not have been the first Christians to ride there on horseback, as reported by William of Boldensele (Tzanaki 8). "So the sources are not always amplified and, so to speak, re-voiced, but sometimes … abbreviated and objectified", Moseley concluded, stressing that "what holds the whole collection of material from many disparate sources together is the device of the journey framework, which provides a plausible sequential order, and the *persona* is never intrusive but occasionally crucial interventions and reactions" (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 21-2).

The result is challenging to define. "In our e-jargon, one might call it a 'mash-up'", Higgins suggested (T*he Book of John Mandeville* xi). "Whatever we call it, though — mash-up, patchwork, or compilation — the new thing that emerged from the author's recombination of sources is a coherent yet digressive work of description, narration, explanation, and exhortation characterized by a shifting mix of genres" (*The Book of John Mandeville* xi). It is like no other work, and it is that distinctiveness that ultimately explains why it was so popular among medieval and early modern readers.

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[27] The uncertainty surrounding the author of *The Book of John Mandeville*'s identity began to be investigated in the nineteenth century parallel to the integrity of his account. Since then, many pages have been written about Mandeville's identity. Different critics have proposed different candidates, but none have been accepted. On the old theories surrounding Mandeville's real identity, see, for instance, Letts 13-22; Deluz 8-12; *The Book of Marvels and Travels* x-xvi. On more recent investigations on the author, see Bennett, Josephine Waters. *The Rediscovery of Sir John Mandeville*. The Modern Language Association of America, 1954*;* Bennett; Ormrod.

> "The reasons for that popularity and the influence it exerted must be sought in the nature of the book and how it treats its material — and in the handling of the audience's assumptions" (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 13).

1.1. An image of the world as it is

Sir John Mandeville's sources were numerous and diverse. Mandeville consulted everything, from the Bible to travel books, histories, encyclopaedias, and scientific treatises. Scholars identified at least thirty sources, but the list is open to new additions[28]. His two primary sources are known to have been the pilgrim narratives of William von Boldensele and Odoric of Pordenone (fourteenth century), which he read in the French translations done in 1351 by Long John of Ypres (d. 1383), a monk of Saint Bertin in Saint-Omer ("Mandeville's Travels"; Emmerson 484). William's itinerary, *Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus* (1337), was employed for the first part of the narrative, about the Holy Land, the countries thereabout and Egypt, and Odoric's *Relation* (1330), an account of his missionary travels in India and China, for the second part, about the author's alleged experiences in the Far East[29]. These genuine traveller's memoirs were spliced together, reworked, and expanded, with the help of other sources ("Mandeville's Travels"), to create a "fictitious travel narrative", an expression applied by Paulo Catarino Lopes to refer to a text in which several previous texts "substitute in large part the events experienced by the actual author" (91).

> This marrying together of fact and fiction seems at first sight a paradox, which critics have been at pains to explain. But once the essential accuracy of the book (within its fictional framework) is recognized, it becomes clear that *Mandeville's Travels* was designed as a popular encyclopedia where the narrator should, like the Dreamer in *Piers Plowman* or Dante Alighieri, hold together the various threads of knowledge (*Mandeville's Travels* xvii).

In his book, Mandeville presented "an image of the world that we can consider representative of European cultured men of the fourteenth century" (Lopes 93). Although filled with fabulous accounts, it summarises the knowledge of the time, explaining, for example, why the

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[28] See Appendix II.

[29] See Moghaddassi, Fanny. "Staging English Contacts with the Middle East in Mandeville's Travels". Lehni, Caroline, et al., editors. *Geographies of Contact: Britain, the Middle East and the Circulation of Knowledge*. Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017, pp. 19-30. books.openedition.org/pus/5999.

world is round, and references important contemporary historical episodes and political facts, like the fall of Christian Armenian in the late fourteenth century after a long period of harassment by the Mamluks[30]. He "clearly intended a wholly unprecedented synthesis, and the mixed generic signals of this problematic and challenging hybrid destabilise the expectations of its contributing genres, challenging audiences to think outside comfortable boxes", Moseley considered, adding that "the book itself is what it represents, a journey to the exotic and the unexpected" ("The Marvels, The Mystery, The Man").

> "At all points the book touched contemporary life — indeed, in a very real sense, it is itself an epitome of the later Middle Ages — and it furnished a splendid and spectacular example of God's plenty" (*Mandeville's Travels* xiv-xv).

For some critics, the fact that *The Book* is based on previous works does not necessarily "rule out real experience of travel, at least as far as Outremer" ("The Marvels, The Mystery, The Man"). It is possible that the author knew the lands he writes about, or at least of the Near East, as suggested by Moseley. The region was frequently visited by pilgrims, traders, soldiers, and mercenaries in the late Middle Ages. As an example of what can be "firsthand reporting", Moseley indicates the story of Hippocrates' daughter, analysed in Chapter III of this dissertation, which has no known source (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 12). That would not have been unusual. Many real travellers, like Marco Polo (c. 1254-1324) and Herodotus (fifth century BCE) before him (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 12), "did flesh out their accounts in exactly this way", soughing out previous works, "sometimes word for word" ("The Travels of Sir John Mandeville and the Moral Geography" 4), including what concerned the marvels that were expected to exist at the margins of the known world[31]. However, it is difficult to arrive at a definitive conclusion about to where Mandeville travelled. The book contains many inaccuracies and inconsistencies. For example, Mandeville could not have met the Pope in Rome as he says he did — at the time, the head of the Catholic Church was not in Italy but in France, in the city of Avignon, where the Papacy was based from 1309 to 1376 following the Great Schism[32]. Thus, the episode, introduced at the

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[30] See Chapter IV, pp. 82-4.

[31] See Chapter II, pp. 36-7.

[32] See Logan, F. Donald. *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages*. Routledge, 2005, pp. 297-314; Mollat, G. *The Popes at Avignon*. Translated by Janet Love. Harper & Row, 1963; Renouard, Yves. *The Avignon Papacy, 1305-1403*. Translated by Denis Bethel, Faber & Faber, 1970; Logan 297-314.

end of the text to lend credibility to the narrative, which may seem otherwise impossible, is pure fiction. This, and other historical errors, give strength to the now widely accepted theory that Mandeville was an "armchair traveller" (*The Book of Marvels and Travels* xxi) and never visited the places he describes with such vivid detail. "The author traveled anywhere, except imaginatively, since his guide is rewritten *entirely* from other's journeys, supplemented by matter about the east from sources as diverse as the Bible, saint's lives, encyclopedias, and the Alexander romance", Higgins stated ("Mandeville's Travels"). Stories such as the meeting with the Pope are part of the "entirely fictitious framework" erected by the author to support the "structure of marvellous fact" (*Mandeville's Travels* xvi) and the apparent thruthness of his account.

The Book's unique mixing of sources and genres encouraged various readings. Some saw it as a guide to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, written following the old itinerary tradition; others were only interested in its recollections about the wonderful East. The multiple interpretations are perceptible in the many versions produced in the late Middle Ages that substantially altered the original source to correspond to different tastes and expectations, such as the Metrical and Latin Vulgate variations, made in England between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The Metrical Version was produced between c. 1375 and 1460 in Middle English and survives in a single copy from the fifteenth century (*The Metrical Version* xvi-xx). The figure of Sir John Mandeville is almost completely deluded (he is mentioned four times), as it is his interest in the Crusades. Nearly all details of the itinerary, except those concerning the Holy Land, are omitted, and the descriptions of wonders, marvellous legends, and tales are highlighted in a "sure understanding of popular taste" (*The Metrical Version* xix). Contrary to the original source, the narrative is told from a different point of view — that of the narrator, who is not Sir John — and described as a "litille tretis" drawn from *The Book* (*The Metrical Version* 4, lines 42-3). "Obviously some audiences were uninterested in the religious aspect and preferred the more exciting thrills of romance and the crudely marvellous", Tzanaki concluded (65). The Latin Vulgate Version is a Latin

translation of the Liège variation produced in 1375[33]. It survives in more than thirty manuscripts, mainly in Central Europe. Contrary to the Metrical variation, it reveals an almost exclusively interest in the passages connected to the history of Christianism and the Catholic Church. It stresses the "pious elements" (Tzanaki 61) and erases "the passages about wonders and miracles, including some related to the history of the Church" (62).

These two versions are so different that they do not seem to be related, but they are. To understand how this is possible, one must look at the complex history of production and transmission of the book written by the elusive English knight from St. Albans.

2. Textual variation, circulation, and reception of *The Book of John Mandeville* in the Middle Ages

The Book of John Mandeville survives in over three hundred manuscripts and fragments in ten European languages, including Czech, German, Irish, and Spanish, produced between the late fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries (*Sir John Mandeville* 3; "The World Translated" 160). The copies vary in quality, from the basic to the deluxe, and several are illustrated with more or less artistry ("Mandeville's Travels"). It is a tremendous number by medieval standards (*The Book of Marvels and Travels* xvii). It is more than three times the number of surviving manuscripts of Marco Polo's account of his travels into Asia (between seventy and one hundred) ("The Marvels, The Mystery, The Man"), suggesting that it enjoyed a wider readership and greater circulation in late medieval and early modern Europe.

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[33] The Liége (or Ogier) Version (also known as Interpolated Continental) is a recension of the Continental Version that is distinguished by a series of 25 interpolations concerning Ogier le Danoies (*Sir John Mandeville* 26), one of Charlemagne's *douzpers*, the twelve legendary paladins represented in Old Frech romances s attendants of the King of Franks (who ruled from 768 until his death in 814). The interpolations give Ogier the credit for spreading Christianity by the sword throughout the East (*The Book of John Mandeville* xv). The variation originated around 1390 in the Liège region, now part of Belgium, and survives in seven manuscripts. It was later adapted into two versions that circulated widely in central Europe: the Latin Vulgate (1375) and Otto von Diemeringen's translation to German (early fifteenth century). Higgins considers the Liège Version "highly influential" (*The Book of John Mandeville* 192) while Seymour believes its only importance lies in the connection with the myth that claims that *The Book of John Mandeville* was written in Liège (*Sir John Mandeville* 4). On the Liège Version, see Tyssens, Madeleine. "La version liégeoise du *Livre* de Jean de Mandeville." *Bulletin de la Classe des lettres e des sciences morales et politiques*, Tome 16, N.º 1-6, 2005, pp. 59-78. doi.org/10.3406/barb.2005.23694; *Sir John Mandeville* 26-30. On Otto von Diemeringen's translation, See Sandbach, Francis E. "Otto von Diemeringen's German Translation of Mandeville's Travels." *The Modern Quarterly of Language and Literature*, Vol. 2, No. 5, 1899, pp. 29-35, Modern Humanities Research Association. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/41065460. Finally, on the Liège myth, see Letts 108-9; *Writing East* 260-1.

Mandeville's work was "beyond question one of the most read, and one of the most respected" secular works of the late Middle Ages ("The Marvels, The Mystery, The Man"). It was known to most ranks of society, and "few literate men in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries could have avoided coming across" it ("The Availability" 125)[34]. The many references in medieval texts are indicative of its literary influence. Allusions can be found in the works of several fourteenth century English authors, such as the *Pearl* poet and Geoffrey Chaucer (d. 1400)[35]. Outside England, it had an impact on the French writers Jean d'Arras (d. 1394) and Christine de Pizan (1364-1430). However, its influence had consequences "far beyond" literature. Representations of travel experiences affected travellers (Youngs 12) and *The Book* was no exception. Christopher Columbus (1415-1506) supposedly carried it on his first great voyage (Greenblatt 47-107; 62). Sir Walter Raleigh (c. 1552-1618) did the same about one century later (Kohanski and Benson 1)[36].

According to Moseley, it was the European interest in sea voyaging in the early modern period that, alongside scholarly activities, helped spread Mandeville's work ("The Availability" 126-7). In the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it was highly sought after in the Iberian Peninsula, notably in Aragon and Portugal, when the Iberian kingdoms attempted to find a sea route to India ("The Availability" 126-7)[37]. Curiously, there is only one known manuscript of *The Book* in the Iberian territory: *MS. Esc. M-III-7*, at the Royal Library of the Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial in Madrid, produced at the end of the fourteenth century at the request of John I of Aragon (1350-1396), who was very much interested in texts on the East (Temperley XVIII; Entwistle 251). According to María Mercedes Rodríguez Temperley, there was at that time in Aragon a great interest in accounts of travellers, namely in those who had been in the court of the Great Khan (as was the case of Mandeville), because their testimonies constituted a *corpus* of actualised news

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[34] See C. W. R. D. Moseley. "'New Things to Speak of': Money, Memory, and Mandeville's Travels in Early Modern England." *The Yearbook of English Studies*. Special Issue: Early Modern Travel Fiction. Vol. 41, No. 1, 2011, pp. 5–20. *JSTOR*, doi.org/10.5699/yearenglstud.41.1.0005.

[35] See Bennett, Josephine Water. "Chaucer and Mandeville's Travels." *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 68, No. 8, 1953, pp. 531-534. John Hopkins University Press. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/3043332; Purdon, Liam O. "Sodom and Gomorrah: The Use of Mandeville's *Travels* in *Cleanness*." *Quidditas*, Vol. 9, Article 6, 1988. scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rmmra/vol9/iss1/6.

[36] See *The Book of Marvels and Travels* xxv-xxviii; *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 29-35.

[37] The sea route to India was discovered by the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama in 1498. See, for instance, Marques, A. H. de Oliveira. *Breve História de Portugal*. 11.ª edição revista e atualizada. Editorial Presença, 2019, pp. 201-249; Ravenstein, E. G., editor. *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama, 1497-1499*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

about the Mongols[38] and their advance in the Near East (XVII-XVIII)[39]. Although often associated with Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460)[40], a key figure in the early days of Portuguese colonial expansion and the main instigator of the so-called 'Age of Discovery', *The Book* does not exist in Portugal in manuscript form.

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Such widespread influence necessarily means an extremely complicated history of production and dissemination. Shortly after *The Book* appeared in France in about 1357, variations materialised outside the French territory, first in England and then in Germany and other parts of Europe. Some were almost unrecognisable versions of the oldest textual versions, with dates, names and places completely altered, local additions and new legends. Certain parts were fully extracted, and the link with the primary source was only kept to give credibility ("The Metamorphoses of Sir John Mandeville" 10). This was not unusual. Medieval authors had little control over the material form of their work. Texts were produced by actualising traditional data rather than reproducing the original composition of writers ("Intertextualité et Mouvance" 10). The process involved different people, "a number of authors" ("From Translator to Laureate" 919), who worked with previously established models (*auctoritas*) that could be shaped to meet their own preferences or intentions.

Intertextuality is one of the main characteristics of medieval manuscript culture. Paul Zumthor described it as the dynamic that exists between the infinity and the indefiniteness of all levels of all properties of a text that evokes or involves different layers or meanings, which constitute its internal plurality, with its own genealogy and network of textual relationships ("Intertextualité et Mouvance" 8-9). According to the Swiss critic, the function and effects of

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[38] The Mongols invaded Eastern Europe in 1241–3. A crusade was declared by Pope Gregory IX. See Jackson P. "The Crusade Against the Mongols (1241)." *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol.* 42, Issue 1, January 1991. Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-18. doi.org/10.1017/S0022046900002554. The Mongol incursion had a profound impact in Poland and especially in Hungary, where the Cumans, a Turkic nomadic people from Central Asia, pushed by the Mongols into Hungarian territory, provoked great anarchy in the country and led to the ascension of Ladislaus IV (1262-1290), also known as Ladislay the Cuman, who ruled from 1272 to 1290 (*A Civilização do Ocidente Medieval* [*Medieval Civilization*] 141).

[39] On the travel writing tradition in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages, see Harney, Michael. "Medieval Iberian Travel Literature." *The Routledge Hispanic Studies Companion to Medieval Iberia. Unity in Diversity*. Edited by E. Michael Gerli and Ryan D. Giles. Routledge, 2021, pp. 408-20.

[40] See *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 32-4.

medieval intertextuality are determined by two factors – models and their variations – that belong to "*la 'mouvance' des textes"* ("the sphere of influence of the texts"), an expression that refers to the hierarchical production of texts in the Middle Ages ("Intertextualité et Mouvance" 9)[41].

> Au-delà de sons temps d'audition, l'oeuvre se propage, à la fois dans la durée et dans l'espace. Non seulement par suite des déplacements du texte (circulation des manuscrits ou des récitants) et du passage à la postérité; mais, plus profondément, par suite d'une mobilité essentielle du texte medieval. La notion d'authenticité textuelle … semble bien avoir été inconnue, spécialment en ce qui concerne la langue vulgaire, au moins jusque vers la fin du xve siècle (*Éssai de Poétique Médiévale* 351).

The same principle was applied to translation. Direct translation was rare and little sought after. Instead, medieval translators aimed to achieve "an equivalence of sense (*sensus pro sensu*), which allowed for differences in idioms and expressions" ("Translation and Adaptation" 167-8), often resulting in variation. The work floated, delineated less by boundaries than by a halo in which several mutations were produced (*Éssai de Poétique Médiévale* 92)[42]. "Because medieval texts are variant by nature, variations produced through error are also more accepted", Tamarah Kohanski pointed out (xii). "Insofar as the medieval world perceived the alteration of texts as an integral part of the process of transmission and embraced the variant texts that process produced, it behooves medieval scholars to emulate that attitude and embraced those variant texts as well", Kohanski explained (xiii).

What distinguishes *The Book* from other medieval works is the extent to which it was made. The number of versions is so high that it is impossible to regard it as a single and stable identity or the product of just one person — the author. Instead, Higgins proposed it should be perceived as a "multi-text" (*Writing East* 19).

2.1. The main manuscript traditions: the Continental and Insular Versions

The Book of John Mandeville survives in two main manuscript traditions, each named after its place of origin: the Continental, produced in France, and the Insular, produced in England, both during the time of the One Hundred Years War (1337-1453). Together, they correspond to almost

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[41] See Cipriano, "Knight, Traveller, or Author?", *op. cit.*

[42] *"L''oeuvre' flotte, s'entoure moins de frontières que d'un halo où se produisent d'incessantes mutations"* (*Éssai de Poétique Médiévale* 92).

half of the surviving manuscripts and show the indisputable superiority of the French versions over the English ones (*Sir John Mandeville* 3). For M. C. Seymour, they prove that the author wrote in French (*Sir John Mandeville* 3), even though he presents himself as being born in England.

The Continental is the oldest and most comprehensive version. It is the most disseminated in French territory and the source for all the early French printed editions of *The Book* produced between 1480 and 1550 ("The scribal tradition" 34; *Sir John Mandeville* 3; *The Defective Version* xi). It is probably the nearest to the authorial text, which is believed to have been written around 1357 in the northern region of France (*Sir John Mandeville* 8; *The Defective Version* xi)[43]. It survives in thirty-two copies, mainly produced in the French language. The earliest dated manuscript, *Bibliothéque Nationale NAF 4515-4516*, was made in Paris in 1371 by the royal stationer Raoulet d'Orléans (active between 1367 and 1396) at the request of Gervaise Crétien (1320-1382), physician to Charles V the Wise (1338-1380). According to Seymour, the Continental is distinguished from other variations "by the presence of a long passage in the account of the Valley Perilous and a shorter passage in Chapter 20 concerning the climates of the world, neither of which are found in the Insular Version" (*Sir John Mandeville* 3).

The Insular Version is the most relevant for studying the English transmission of *The Book.* It is the origin of all variations produced in England during the Middle Ages, both in English and Latin. It derives from the Continental, which arrived in England sometime before 1365, when it developed into its own tradition (*The Defective Version* xi). A copy of a Latin translation produced in 1390 in Abington Abbey (*Ms. Vulcan 96*, now in the Library of the University of Leiden, in the Netherlands) confirms its widespread dissemination by the late fourteenth century (*Sir John Mandeville* 4). The Insular survives in twenty-five manuscripts, written in different forms of Anglo-Norman ("The scribal tradition" 35; *The Book of John Mandeville* 187)[44]. It is distinguished from the Continental by its language (Anglo-Norman), some rephrasing, the absence of part of the

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[43] The exact place of composition of *The Book of John Mandeville* remains a mystery, making room for alternative theories, namely that it was written on English soil but in the French language. "In addition, since the book was composed at a time of considerable cultural traffic between France and England, the book could have been made on either side of the Channel. An English author could have worked in France, for example, or a French author in England might have decided to pose as an Englishman", Higgins suggested ("Mandeville's Travels").

[44] Anglo-Norman was a French dialect spoken in medieval England due to the Norman conquest in the eleventh century. It failed to establish itself, and by the late fourteenth century, it was learned only as a foreign language. See Crystal, David. *The Stories of English*. Penguin Books, 2005, p. 120. For a detailed account of Anglo-Norman and its contexts, see Ingham, Richard, editor. *The Anglo-Norman Language and Its Contexts*. Boydell & Brewer, 2010.

account of the Valley Perilous, and the presence in Chapter 20 of a paragraph concerning the world's climates that does not exist in the Continental Version (*Sir John Mandevill*e 4).

2.2. The textual tradition in England: The Defective Version and its importance

The Insular Version originated four versions in the English language (Middle English[45]): Defective, Egerton, Cotton, and Bodley[46]. The earliest and most important is the Defective Version (produced after 1377), which was the base of two other Middle English versions, Cotton[47] and Egerton[48], which survive in unique manuscripts from about 1400 and have no evident prior scribal tradition (*The Defective Version* xiv-xiii). The most popular variation in England during the Middle Ages, it was the source of the first printed edition by Richard Pynson in about 1496[49] and the only English text edited before 1725, when the Cotton was printed in a first crude scholarly edition ("Mandeville's Travels")[50]. However, the Defective is the English version that has received less critical attention. The Cotton and Egerton have been long regarded as the 'best' versions. They are, supposedly, the most complete in English, while the Defective, with its unique characteristics — namely the 'Egyptian Gap', its defining attribute —, has been considered incomplete. "The ideal of the authorial work, and the perceived distance at which the Defective stand from the lost original version" (Kohanski xv) contributed to that view, which ignores the text's medieval transmission and the manuscript culture's particularities. The Defective was the most prevalent variation in medieval England and was the first to be published. Additionally, it was the only version available in printed form in English until 1725. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Cotton or the Egerton were known outside the libraries in which they were kept.

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[45] On Middle English, see Turville-Petre, Thorlac, and Burrow, J. A. *A Book of Middle English*. Fourth Edition. John Wiley & Sons, 2021.

[46] The Metrical Version also derives from the Insular Version but can be excluded from the group since it acknowledges itself as a "litille tretis" (*The Metrical Version* 4, line 43) drawn from the original source.

[47] See Letts 121; 168; *Sir John Mandeville* 45; "The Metamorphoses of Sir John Mandeville" 6.

[48] See "The Origin of the Egerton Version of 'Mandeville's Travels'." *Medium Ævum*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 1961, pp. 159-69. Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature; Letts 132-3.

[49] See Kohanski liv-lvi.

[50] See Seymour, M. C. "The Early English Editions of *Mandeville's Travels*." *The Library*, Vol. s5-XIX, Issue 1, 1964, pp. 202-7. Oxford University Press.

Kohanski, responsible for the most recent edition of the Pynson text, argued that the search for the authoritative text of *The Book* must be abandoned, and a greater emphasis must be given to its variations. It must be studied "as an organic work, continuously metamorphosing its transmission from manuscript to manuscript, and coming over time to mean many different things to many different audiences" (Kohanski xix), as Moseley and, more recently, Tzanaki have shown in their studies about Mandeville's work's dissemination. However, before this can be achieved, a critical study of the different versions has to be attempted, a work that has yet to be concluded.

The Defective Version can be described as an abridged Middle English version of a lost Insular manuscript (it lacks the description of Egypt, the so-called 'Egyptian Gap', thus its name). It is one of the two variations produced in England that survive in more than one copy (the other is the Bodley, which exists in much smaller numbers[51]). It is extant in over thirty manuscripts[52] and six fragments and extracts, primarily produced in Northern or Western English dialects[53] in the first half of the fifteenth century (*The Defective Version* xv-xvi)[54]. Many more, now lost, are known from fifteenth century sources (*The Defective Version* xvi). All the copies share between them "the general textual instability found in other versions … and so no single Defective text can reasonably stand for the versions as a whole" (Kohanski and Benson 13). Seymour was able to identify five subgroups[55]. The first and most important (A or 1)[56] contains the most substantial text of all the subgroups, but it lacks the part about the Alexander legend (*The Defective Version* xv). It comprises nine copies, including *Oxford, The Queen's College Ms. 383*, one of the oldest manuscripts of the Defective Version, the one published by Seymour in 2002, and the one used in this dissertation.

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[51] The Bodley Version is an abridgement of a lost English translation of the Latin version of an Insular text known as the Royal Version (*London, The British Library Ms. Royal 13 E IX*, dating from the early fifteenth century). It survives in two manuscripts from the fifteenth century (*Ms. Rawl. D. 99* and *Ms. e Mus. 116 - Part 1*, held at the Bodley Library at Oxford University).

[52] The number of surviving manuscripts of the Defective Version varies according to the source. I was able to confirm the existence of 34 manuscripts (see Table 1) by crossing the two lists made by Seymour in 1993 and 2002. The lists were never updated, so other Defective manuscripts may have been discovered since then.

[53] The Middle English period (c. 1100-c. 1500) is characterised by great linguistic diversity. See Thurville-Petre and Burrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-8.

[54] For the list of Defective manuscripts, see Appendix I.

[55] See *The Defective Version* xiv-xxx.

[56] Seymour first used the letters A, B, C, D, and E to identify the five subgroups of the Defective Version. He later adopted numerals (1 to 5) in his edition of the Defective variation (2002).

Chapter II

The monstrous body in the late Middle Ages and *The Book of John Mandeville*

Sir John Mandeville shared with his contemporaries the taste for the monstrous, the unusual, and the exotic that was typical of the late Middle Ages, which was compared by John Block Friedman "to our *National Geographic* interest in primitive and colorful societies today" (1). Consequently, marvellous things, including monsters, are everywhere in *The Book of John Mandeville*. They appear in different settings and stages of the narrative but always on the borders of the European territory and in the Near and Far East, locations "whose outlines were vague to the medieval mind but whose names evoked mystery" (Friedman 1). It was the case of India[57], *"un réservoir onirique de l'Occident médiéval"* (Le Goff and Truong 174).

The frequency with which the marvellous occurs in *The Book* is evidence of its importance to its author. For Mandeville, stories of monsters were not mere curiosities but essential means of transmission of ideas and concepts. His understanding of the monstrous is evident in the two cases I will focus on in the following chapters — the stories of Hippocrates' daughter and the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle. These episodes possess distinct characteristics that set them apart from other tales of monsters narrated by Mandeville: their main characters are female figures who belong to the realm of the fantastic and abnormal and who can change form and transgress the body's natural boundaries, a distinguishing trait of the monster, and they contain the structure and motifs of medieval romance. This later aspect supports the idea that the author did not only seek inspiration in chronicles, histories and pilgrimage narratives, usually indicated as his primary sources[58], but also in the literature of the medieval period. Moreover, they both reinforce the book's message, which has to do with the need for moral reform through the process of reconquering the Holy Land.

1. Monsters: at the edge of the world and the human

The word *monster* comes from the Latin *monstrum*, a "divine omen" (usually indicative of misfortune) or "portent" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, "Monster"). It is a derivative of *monere*, which means "to admonish, advise, warn or teach" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, "Monster"). St. Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), following an old tradition, says that *monstrum* derives from *monitus*,

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[57] India is described by Mandeville in Chapter 15 of his book. See *The Defective Version* 69-88.

[58] See Chapter I.

“admonition”, because, by giving a sign, omens are indicating (*demonstrare*) or instantly showing something (*monstrare*) (*Etymologiae*, Liber XI, iii, 3). This interpretation “points out to the ways in which stories of monsters can be employed to teach viewers and listeners lessons about the correct way to live and the risks you run by wandering from the path of righteousness” (Riches 101). Isidore insists this is the proper meaning of the word, even though it has frequently been corrupted by improper use (*Etymologiae*, Liber XI, iii, 3), but he is not correct (Gil 73). According to José Gil, the original meaning of *monstrare* is much closer “to teach a certain behaviour, to prescribe a path to follow” than “to show” an object (Gil 73)[59], as argued by Isidore. However, the strong connection between *mostrare* and “show”, which has to do with the relationship between the monster and the act of seeing, has often been noted (Gil 73-4).

To the writers and readers or listeners of the Middle Ages, a ‘monster’ was a human or non-human being with a body manifestly different from what was considered ‘normal’ that lived outside the existing order of nature. In the words of the author of the Cotton Version of *The Book of John Mandeville*, it was a “tþing difformed” that could be human, beast or “ony þing elles” (Hamelius, Chapter VII)[60]. The ‘deformation’ could manifest itself in many ways: could consist of the relocation of the common elements of the body (arms, legs, etc.) or in a different combination of those same elements (Kappler 161); the monster could “be formed from too much or too little” (Bildhauer and Mills 10); or could “be too big or too small, possess too many or too few body parts … or combine characteristics of more than one species” (Bildhauer and Mills 10), “amalgamations that seem to present a direct challenge to divine order” (14). In any case, the resulting image was always one of excess, with more substance than is usual in a ‘normal’ body (Gil 75).

In the Classical world, a monster was a disruption of the natural order that showed forth the divine will (Friedman 109), a concept transplanted to the Middle Ages by authors such as St. Augustine and St. Isidore, who tried to conciliate the marvels of the ancient sources with Christian doctrine. Augustine was the first Christian author and thinker to try to bring monsters into line with the authority of the Bible. He maintained that monsters were part of God's divine plan, who has the power to create so many things that would seem impossible and must be understood as such (*De*

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[59] In the Portuguese edition: “Etimologicamente, contudo, *monstrare* significa muito menos ‘mostrar’ um objeto do que ‘ensinar um determinado comportamento, prescrever a via a seguir’” (Gil 73).

[60] The definition is given in the chapter about Egypt. That is why is not included in the Defective Version, which lacks the description of that region (the so-called ’Egyptian Gap’). About the Cotton Version, which derives partially from the Defective, see the previous chapter.

Civitate Dei, Liber XXI, 7). They all descended from Adam, the first man and *"primo patre"* ("original father") of all monstrous human races (*De Civitate Dei*, Liber XVI, 8).

> *Sicut ergo haec ex illo uno negari non possunt originem ducere, ita quaecumque gentes in diuersitatibus corporum ab usitato naturae cursu, quem plures et prope omnes tenent, uelut exorbitasse traduntur, si definitione illa includuntur, ut rationalia animalia sint atque mortalia, ab eodem ipso uno primo patre omnium stirpem trahere confitendum est, si tamen uera sunt quae de illarum nationum uarietate et tanta inter se atque nobiscum diuersitate traduntur* (*De Civitate Dei*, Liber XVI, 8).
>
> [What is true for a Christian beyond the shadow of a doubt is that every real man, that is every mortal animal that is rational, however unusual to us may be the shape of his body, or the color of his skin, or the way he walks, or the sound of his voice, and whatever the strength, portion or quality of his natural endowments, is descended from the single first-created man (*The City of God,* Book XVI, 8, p. 502).]

Following Augustine, Isidore supports in his major work, *Etymologiae,* that monsters are not *"contra naturam"* ("contrary to nature") but part of Creation because they are born by divine will (Liber XI, III, 1).

> *Portenta esse Varro ait quae contra naturam nata videntur: sed non sunt contra naturam, quis divina voluntate fiunt, cum voluntas Creatoris cuiusque rei natura sit. Vnde et ipsi gentiles Deum modo Naturam, modo Deum appellant. Portentum ergo fit non ostentta, monstra atque prodigia ideo nuncupantur, quod portendere atque ostendere, monstrare ac praedicare aliqua futura videntur* (*Etymologiae*, Liber XI, iii, 1).
>
> [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 the Creator. Whence even the pagans address God sometimes as 'Nature' (*Natura*), sometimes as 'God'. A portent is therefore not created contrary to nature, but contrary to what is known as nature. Portents are also called signs, omens, and prodigies, because they are seen to portend and display, indicate and predict future events (Barney, *Etymologies*, Book XI, iii, 1-2).]

Isidore is skeptical about some accounts of monsters (*Etymologiae*, Liber XI, iii, 28-39). However, "there is ample evidence that the Middle Ages believed fully in the physical existence of monstrous beings that they represented in manuscripts and church architecture", David Williams claimed (11). As proof, he indicated what he called the "geographical tradition (including the

‘eyewitness’ accounts)” (11), established in the late twelfth century by authors such as Gervase of Tilbury and Gerald of Wales, who were greatly interested in local European legends and folklore. Gervase and Gerald influenced the travel writing of later periods and authors such as Mandeville. Gervase was the first writer to accentuate the importance of eyewitness and verification when describing marvellous events. “He did not simply repeat the canonical marvels he found in earlier writers”, Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park stated, clarifying that he “sought to supplement them with wonders of his own” (24). In the thirteenth century, Gerald wrote several historical and topographical works that give special attention to wonders of nature (*naturae miraculis*). These are based on what he saw with his own eyes and in the report of “reliable men found worthy of credence and coming from the districts in which the events took place” (Wales 57)[61]. Both authors were trying to provide instructive entertainment. In the prologue to the third part of *Otia Imperialia*, Gervase, speaking about the relationship between marvels and the insatiable human appetite for the rare, the novel, and the strange, stated that the rarity of things such as monsters appeals to the human imagination (20). It also raises curiosity and brings happiness while stimulating reflection and providing an instructive form of entertainment (Tilbury 20), a concept first put forward by Horace (65-8 BCE) in *Ars Poetica*:

> *Aut prodesse uolunt aut delectare poetae*
> *aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere uitae* (Horace 478).
>
> [“Poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse, or to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life” (Horace 479).]

Gervase and Gerald describe miracles and marvels in remote geographic areas within the European territory. That was the case of Ireland, which Gerald depicts in *Topographia Hiberniae* as

[61] Gerald states that he used no written source for the first two parts of his book but admits having consulted chronicles of Ireland in the third part. According to John J. O’Meara, “the chronicles to which he refers certainly include the oldest extant version of the Lebor Gabála” (Wales 17), known in English as *The Book of Invasions* because it describes the six invasions of Ireland. See Dillon, Myles. “Lebor Gabála Érenn.” *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 86, No. 1, 1956, pp. 62–72. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/25509232.

a place of strange costumes and practices[62]. His stories speak of monsters living on the edges of villages or parishes, "beyond which lay the great unknown" (Bildhauer and Mills 8). "An incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond" (Cohen 7), the monster always inhabits outside urban and populated areas, emblems of humanity since ancient times. Towns, and especially cities, provide their residents with a shared setting where they can exercise their human faculties (Friedman 30), an activity in which the monstrous being, an alien living outside the metropole, cannot participate.

By the late medieval period, it became frequent to place monsters in more extreme geographical locations in response to a growing fascination with the East, which, until the nineteenth century, meant India and the Biblical Lands (Said 4). To the man and woman of the Middle Ages, the East was a place of myth. It "was the great repository of the marvelous, the focal point of Western dreams and magic", Jacques Le Goff wrote (*The Medieval Imagination* 41). It "represented the truly foreign" and "had done so for the Greeks and the Romans, at any rate, since antiquity" (*The Medieval Imagination* 41). It was a place "to be turned into a story as well as a place where story originates and where story has political and material effect" (Ballaster 17). Its remoteness, closely related in character and appearance to the monster, meant it was the perfect setting for the strange beings that existed in the world. The place where the monster lives is the reason for its existence, but it also explains the monster in itself — it is literally produced by the land that contains it (Kappler 31). The displacement of the monstrous in the Far East also secured the theory of its "real existence … by guaranteeing that it could not be empirically authenticated, while at the same time securing the symbolic reality as one corresponding to nothing that is" (Williams 11).

The belief in monsters as real beings persisted throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. Not even the increasing knowledge of the Eastern lands, acquired by direct observation, neutralised them. Instead, late medieval and early modern travel writers found a way of combining the old sources with their personal experiences while safeguarding the physical reality of monsters. Similarly, Mandeville based his account on the works of previous authors, thereby establishing his

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[62] Gerald, who was born in Pembrokeshire, in South-West of Wales, made several visits to Ireland in the late twelfth century in the context of the Anglo-Norman conquest (1169-72). See Connolly, S. J., editor. "Anglo-Norman invasion (1169-72)." *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*. Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 17; Barber, Richard. *Henry II. A Prince Among Princes*. Penguin, 2018. Gerald's account, the first written by a foreigner, is of great importance for the knowledge of twelfth century Ireland. However, it has been heavily criticised for its uncomplimentary description of the country and its inhabitants. See Martin, F. X. "Gerald of Wales, Norman Reporter on Ireland." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 58, No. 231, 1969, pp. 279–92. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/30087875.

reputation as a distinguished authority (Greenblatt 46). In the Middle Ages, knowledge was based on established written authorities (*auctoritas*) on which subsequent readers conferred a cultural prestige that made them worthy of repetition ("From Translator to Laureate" 921). As pointed out by Alastair Minnis in *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, "the notion of the *auctor* as an agent engaged in literary activity was submerged", and the author was interested only "as a source of *auctoritas*" (89). The author was seen as the recipient of a message that originated with God, "the sole *auctor* of things" (Minnis 90)[63].

According to Friedman, the persistence of monsters suggests a psychological need for them. "Their appeal to medieval man was based on such factors as fantasy, escapism, delight in the exercise of the imagination, and — very important — fear of the unknown. If the monstrous races had not existed, people would likely have created them", he considered (24). Similarly, Gil emphasises the importance of monsters by highlighting their liberating aspect (82). According to the Portuguese philosopher, monsters allow humans to see themselves as equals with unique and individual traits (81-2). As a result, Gil concluded, humans need monsters to become humans (82)[64].

1.1. The monsters of Sir John Mandeville: transformation, revelation, and the feminine

There are many monsters in the world of Sir John Mandeville. Some look like animals and others are human in appearance. Dana Oswald counted more than twenty human monsters or unusual men and women listed by Mandeville (120), including creatures such as the Blemmyae (a race of men with no heads and with eyes and mouth on their chests), Cynocephali (people with heads of dogs)[65], and Sciapods (people with only one giant foot)[66], and others less strange, like pygmies and giants, which Isidore includes among the monstrous people of the Far East

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[63] See Minnis; Griffiths, Jane. "The Author." *A Concise Companion to Middle English Literature*. Edited by Marilyn Corrie. Blackwell Publishing, 2009.

[64] In the Portuguese edition: "[O monstro] Reordenará do exterior as relações entre os homens sem os fazer sofrer um constrangimento comum; sem os obrigar a acorrentar-se a um modelo rígido e permitindo-lhes reconhecer como humanos, iguais, singulares e diferentes uns dos outros. Os homens precisam de monstros para se tornarem humanos" (Gil 82).

[65] The Cynocephali are referred to by Isidore in *Etymologiae*, Liber XI, iii (12) and by Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*, Liber XXII (29).

[66] The Sciapods are also indicated by Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*, Liber XXII (29).

(*Etymologiae*, Liber XI, iii, 7-12)[67]. Human monsters are perhaps the most interesting of all the unusual creatures referred to by Mandeville because they are the ones that raise the most profound questions about what it means to be human. “The monster is always read against the bodies of those who are not monstrous”, Oswald stated (2). “Monsters, because they do appear different, help humans define themselves. … Monsters remind humans of what it means to be human — they may threaten the human body, but they also confirm notions of its relative cohesion” (Oswald 3).

In her study about monsters, gender, and sexuality in the Middle Ages, Oswald highlighted four human monsters in *The Book of John Mandeville*: Hippocrates’ daughter, who turns from a woman into a dragon (Chapter 3); the dead woman of Satalia, who gives birth to a monstrous flying head (Chapter 3); the Amazons, who sear off one of their breasts and one of their daughters' so they can carry a shield and fight (Chapter 14); and the poison virgins, who have serpents inside their bodies (Chapter 23). A fifth monster can be added to the list — the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle (Chapter 14). The lady lives in an old fortress in Armenia outside the correct route in the company of a sparrowhawk that also appears to have magical properties. It is unclear whether they are two separate beings or the same creature capable of metamorphosis. If they are the same being, it means that, like Hippocrates’ daughter, the fairy has a dual existence and lives between two forms, the anthropomorphic and the animal. Nevertheless, both the fairy and the sparrowhawk have monstrous characteristics — they exist outside the regular order of things in a place where the normal rules do not apply[68] and have bodies that transgress their natural boundaries because of their metamorphic traits.

There are similarities between the five monsters indicated by Oswald. Not only do they undergo some physical transformation or can change from one form into another — what Oswald calls “literal metamorphosis” (121) — but they are all female. It is not coincidental — in medieval literature, metamorphosis and hybridity were the domains of the female.

Metamorphosis is a process of transformation that involves changing from one body or species into another (Bynum 30) while retaining some of the previous form (34; *When a Knight meets a Dragon Maiden* 20-1). Thus, it differs from hybridity, which refers to a fixed reality. According to Caroline Walker Bynum, while hybridity “reveals a world of difference, a world that is and is multiple”, metamorphosis “breaks down categories by breaching them” (31). It shakes “confidence in the structure of reality, in the basic synchrony between inner and outer we tend to

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[67] About the different monstrous races of men, see Friedman 5-25.

[68] The peculiarities of the Sparrowhawk Castle are explored in Chapter IV.

assume" (Bynum 31), creating social and cultural uncertainty and destabilising individual identity, sometimes generating sentiments of loss and ostracisation in those who suffer the transformation. Many stories of metamorphosis portray "the nonhuman or socially inferior human element of any transformation as undesirable, humiliating, or damning" (Griffin 24). However, the transition speaks to contingent and mutable categories, reflecting an ongoing exploration of what it means to be human (Griffin 24).

> To imagine metamorphosis is to mediate upon what it means to have a body; specifically what the human body means, in contradistinction to the animal body or divine body, or the inorganic matter, which might after it or which it might become. Stories of metamorphosis are stories which enable us to consider the ways in which the body conditions one's existence in the world, and informs others' understanding of one's identity (Griffin 23).

In "Seven Thesis", the opening essay of *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen supported that the monstrous body is always a metaphorical representation of a particular cultural moment — "of a time, a feeling, and a place" (4). According to Cohen, the monster often appears "at times of crises as a kind of third term that problematises the clash of extremes" (6). Therefore, it must be examined within the complex matrix of social, cultural, and literary-historical relations that generated it (Cohen 5). In the case of *The Book*, that time was the fourteenth century, a period of social change and significant political and cultural instability in England and other parts of Europe[69]. The social and political convulsions of the time affected how "people functioned socially as well as their perceptions of the body and its integrity" (Oswald 119). According to Oswald, that is why transformative monsters are more common in Middle English than in Old English literature — because they reflect the unstableness of late medieval society[70]. Bodies that change their form are more challenging to identify as a threat. As a result, they are more susceptible to function as a

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[69] See Chapter III.

[70] Europe's new social and political paradigm coincided with the revival of the interest in stories of metamorphosis, popular in Antiquity but not in the early Middle Ages. This was motivated by the rediscovery in the early twelfth century of the works of Classical writers and philosophers such as Aristotle and Ovid. These provided alternative tools for thinking about the 'process of becoming' while inspiring concern for the monstrous, the marvellous, and the peculiar. See Bynum 26-8; 86-9; 98-101. About the influence of Ovid in the Middle Ages, see Barkan, Leonard. *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis & the Pursuit of Paganism*. Yale University Press, 1986; Dimmick, J. "Ovid in the Middle Ages: authority and poetry." *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*. Edited by P. Hardie. Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 264–287.

way of exploring different cultural and social anxieties, particularly those concerning gender and sexuality.

In the case of transformative female monsters, they can also be interpreted as a way of figuring, constructing, and commenting on gender, and as a statement on the nature of women's bodies and the fear they provoke in men. In the Middle Ages, body and flesh were seen "as diabolical, as something akin to a place of debauch. Castigated as the source of sin, the body was deprived of all dignity" (*The Medieval Imagination* 96). Gregory the Great (c. 540-604)[71] considered it the abominable clothing of the soul (qtd. in Le Goff and Truong 39) and "food for the fire" *(Moralia in Job* 14:19 qtd. in *The Medieval Imagination* 94). However, the body was also where the soul lived (39). The taboo of the body was most evident in the case of women. The female body was perceived as self-contaminating and as a source of contagion to others, an old prejudice that had its origins in the classical tradition, responsible for the idea that menstrual blood "possess uncanny powers that could alternately destroy or heal — an association that automatically linked woman's body with supernatural forces" (Elliott 13). It was also believed that a child conceived during the menstrual phase would be born with leprosy, the *"maladie du siècle"* (Le Goff and Truong 45)[72].

Beliefs like these served as justification for women's position of inferiority in society. They were 'imperfect males', an idea that originated with the classical philosophers and was later developed by medieval thinkers such as Augustine. According to Plato, who provided the allegory of Pandora and the Fall of Man with a philosophical basis, the intervention of woman resulted in the "falling away from the perfection of God into the abysmal world of appearances, of suffering and death" (Holland 31). Aristotle, "one of the most ferocious misogynists of all time" (Holland 32), argued that the female is "like a deformed male" (Aristotle 82) whose development stopped because the coldness of the womb of the mother overcame the heat of the semen of the father[73]. The Greek

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[71] About Gregory the Great, his life and works, see Markus, R. A. *Gregory the Great and His World*. Cambridge University Press, 1987; John, Moorhead. *Gregory the Great*. Routledge, 2005; Neil, Bronwen, and Dal Santo, Matthew, editors. *A Companion to Gregory the Great*. Brill, 2013.

[72] Sex during menstruation is condemned in Leviticus 15 and 18, where a number of sexual taboos are enumerated. These prohibitions were taken up by the early medieval Church. In the Middle Ages, leprosy was believed to originate in sin. See *The Medieval Imagination* 93-103.

[73] See Connel, Sophia M. *Aristotle On Female Animals. A Study of the Generation of Animals*. Cambridge University Press, 2016; Trott, Adriel M. "Does It Matter?: Material Nature and Vital Heat in Aristotle's Biology." *Contemporary Encounters with Ancient Metaphysics*. Edited by Abraham Jacob Greenstine and Ryan J. Johnson. Edinburgh University Press, 2017, pp. 158-79.

philosopher's theory, revealed in *Generation of Animals*, one of his most significant works on biology, is that man and woman are contrary principles (warm and cold). They come together to form a third, but it is the male that has the "capacity" of "concocting, composing, and emitting seed containing the starting-point" (Aristotle 137), the semen. The woman does not have that capacity (she does not play any role in reproduction besides pregnancy) because of her "coldness", which also explains why "the female is more abundant in blood in certain parts" (Aristotle 137). "A woman is as it were an infertile man" (Aristotle 65), and "femaleness" is "a natural deformation" (156).

Misogyny was often demonstrated by comparing women to animals, creatures without reason and moral values (Griffin 138). This comparison was further emphasised in the tales of metamorphosis, where women were depicted as half-human and half-animal, reflecting the patriarchal view of medieval society of women as monsters (Cohen 15). The monstrous transformation is also a reminder of the duplicitous nature of women and the instability of their bodies, which undergoes many changes over the years. These occur before the astonished gaze of men — like the metamorphosis of the female monsters in literature. As with hybridity, metamorphosis is frequently used to "figure out" the negative traits of women, which not only include duplicity but also, according to Frederika Bain, "mutability, and the unequal yoking of rationality or control" (in Urban et al. 18).

The idea of women as twofold originated in the Greek myth of Pandora, written down in the eighth century BCE by Hesiod. The story tells how Zeus, father of the gods, furious after being deceived by the titan Prometheus, who stole fire from heaven and offered it to men, decides to avenge himself by devising a trick in the form of a gift, Pandora, and give it to humanity. The Greek phrase used to describe Pandora is *"kalon kakon"*, which means "the beautiful evil" (Holland 13), a reference to the fact that she was created as a deception. In Judaism, the story of Eve, who, in virtue of the original sin, caused the expulsion of humankind from Paradise and the vicissitudes of earthly existence, linked women with the serpent and his guile and to the weakness that led the first woman to sin (Griffin 141). Christianism, which inherited the myth of the Fall of Man and the notion of sin and shame from Judaism, embedded it with aspects of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy, already explained.

No other figure personifies the feminine tradition of hybridity and metamorphosis better than Mélusine. *"Maternelle et défricheuse"* (the title of one of Le Goff's essays), she is one of the *fée amants* ("fairy lovers") identified by Laurence Harf-Lancner in her study about medieval fairies, who lavish their love and wealth on their chosen ones while ensuring a beautiful lineage (22). They

have their origin in the mythical figure of the *"l'amante surnaturelle"* ("supernatural lover"), who can be found in different mythologies (Harf-Lancner 47). Half serpent and half woman, Mélusine, the daughter of a fairy and a mortal, embodies characteristics connected to women, namely to those with supernatural powers, since ancient times, such as abundance, fecundity, and death. Like the *Parcae* (also called *Fata*, "Fates"), the three Roman goddesses of Destiny (Grimal 328), whose characteristics were in part absorbed by medieval fairies, who originated in depictions of the classical underworld but also in Celtic and Germanic legends and folk traditions (Harf-Lancner 47; Saunders 3), Mélusine has the power to give and take — she is the founder of cities and lineages but also the cause of their collapse by depriving them of their richnesses. These characteristics are found in other fairies, too. In *At the Bottom of the Garden* (2000), Diane Purkiss stressed that fairies, like the *Parcae*, preside at and govern "the big crises of mortal life: birth, childhood and its transitions, adolescence, sexual awakening, pregnancy and childbirth, old age, death … the borders of our lives, the seams between one phase of life and another" (4 qtd. in Green 8).

Mélusine's first appearance in written text was in medieval Latin literature, two hundred years before the composition of Jean's d'Arras' romance, for which she is best known and from which she took her name. It is generally understood that her first occurrence was in *De Nugis Curialium* (1181-1193), the major surviving work of Walter Map (d. 1208/9)[74], a cleric of Welsh descent who lived in the court of Henry II of England (1133-1189)[75], where a tremendous literary *corpus* was created (Nunes 4). In his work, full of marvellous tales, Map tells the story of Henno (*Henno cum dentibus*) and his marriage to a young woman that he later finds out to be a dragon after his mother peeks on her while she is taking a bath. He fetches a priest who tries to sprinkle her with holy water, and she jumps through the roof, disappearing into the sky while screaming. In the *Otia Imperalia*, Gervase of Tilbury tells a similar story, that of Raimond, lord of Château-Rousset, in the French province of Aix. Raimond's fairy wife, to whom he marries on the condition of never

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74 See Map, Walter. *De Nugis Curialium. Courtiers' Triffles*. Edited and translated by M. R. James. Revised by C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors. Clarendon Press, 1982, pp. xiii-l; J. L. W. "Walter Map (or Maps)." *The Encyclopaedia Britannica. A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literatures and General Information*. Eleventh Edition. Volume XVII, Slice V, "Malta" to "Map, Walter". The Project Gutenberg eBook of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Edition, n.d., p. 585-9.

75 Gerald of Wales was also courtier of Henry II, whose entourage he joined in 1184 (Wales 12). He dedicated the last part of *Topographia Hiberniae* to the victories and triumphs of the king. Gervaise of Tilbury, who was English, also had connections with the king. Henry II, a "warrior king" and a "chivalric hero" (Jenkins 45), ruled England from 1154 until his death. He was responsible for expanding and securing the English domains in France and for establishing legal order in England. He was married to Eleanor of Aquitaine (c. 1122-1204), a very powerful heiress and patron of the arts.

seeing her naked, turns into a snake and flees when he looks at her while bathing (Tilbury 148-50). The end of their wedding leads to the ruin of the lord.

The same story appears later on but in a different geographical context. In 1190, the Cistercian monk Geoffrey d'Auxerre included in his *Super Apocalypsim*, a collection of sermons about the Apocalypse, a story of a nobleman from the French province of Langres who marries a beautiful lady he meets in a forest (D'Arras 10). Similar to previous accounts, he later finds out that she bathes herself in the form of a serpent (*Para Um Novo Conceito de Idade Média* ["For a New Concept of Middle Ages"] 292)[76]. The same motif of the supernatural lady who disappears after breaking the pact or taboo of 'looking' can also be found in the *lais* of Marie de France (twelfth century), a French writer who worked in the English court. *Lais* are short narratives written in verse that belong to what is known as 'courtly literature' (Burgess and Busby 24). They have several characteristics in common with medieval romance, including the love element (all of Marie's stories are about a romantic relationship) and the supernatural (Burgess and Busby 24; 33-4). Marie often chose folktale material for her *lais*, as in *Lanval*, the story of a knight who falls for a fairy[77] he encounters near a river and who imposes on him the prohibition of never revealing their love to others, which, of course, he does. *Lanval*'s fairy is not a serpent, but she is a source of wealth and good luck, which makes her close to the *mélusiènne* tradition. Written in the last third of the twelfth century, the French verse romance *Partonopeus de Blois* tells how Partonopeus is transported to a mysterious city where he encounters the elusive and beautiful Melior with whom he falls in love. They become lovers, and she prohibits him from ever seeing her in daylight. After breaking the taboo that carries "all the arbitrariness characteristic of fairy mistresses" (Wade 44), he is expelled by her but is eventually pardoned.

This proliferation of texts indicates that the story was known in England and different French regions by the twelfth century but was not connected with any specific lineages[78]. It was only in the late fourteenth century, when two important vernacular works were produced, that Mélusine was perpetuated as the founding figure and mother of the noble house of Lusignan, from Poitou: *Mélusine ou La Noble Histoire de Lusignan* (c. 1393), a romance in prose by Jean d'Arras,

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[76] The episode was later narrated by another Cistercian, Hélinan de Froimont, around the year 1200, and by Vincent de Beauvais in *Speculum Naturale* (thirteenth century) (D'Arras 10).

[77] The description suggests the lady is a fairy, although the term fairy is never used by Marie de France.

[78] From the twelfth century on, the European nobility started to create new dynastic chronicles and genealogies that presented them as descendants of ancient heroes to prove their ancestry and legitimacy. Many of these narratives were of the *mélusiènne* type.

and *Roman de Lusignan ou de Parthenay* (1401-1405), a romance in verse by La Coudrette, which is probably a reworking of Jean's work (*The Mélusine Romance in Medieval Europe* 17)[79]. Mélusine's character is portrayed more intricately in the two late medieval romances than in previous narratives. She is not only a source of wealth and prosperity for her family but also a *"défricheuse"*, a builder and a civiliser, responsible for deforestation and the construction of cities. For Le Goff, she is the fairy of feudalism and medieval economic development (*Para Um Novo Conceito de Idade Média* ["For a New Concept of Middle Ages"] 306), for her story offers "a terrible ambiguous explanation of success in feudal society" (*Heroes and Marvels* 124) — after her disappearance after being seen in serpentine form by her husband, to whom she married on the condition of never seeing her naked on Saturday, when she would become a serpent from the waist down, her lineage enters a phase of decline.

Mélusine is also *"maternelle"*. She gives birth to ten sons and continues looking after the youngest after fleeing the castle she helped build. Her maternal side is also revealed in the way she raises her children as devout Christians, serving as an "intermediary figure" who guides them and her husband "according to God's will" (*The Mélusine Romance in Medieval Europe* 26). She wants her sons to behave as good Christians and encourages them to attend mass daily and ask for God's help before going on an adventure (*The Mélusine Romance in Medieval Europe* 29). Because she failed to instruct her husband in the Christian faith, Jean d'Arras suggests she must suffer penitence until Doomsday: "… had he not broken his word, she suggests, she too might have made a good end" (Green 62).

Contrary to other dragon-women, who are intolerant to holy water or hosts, Mélusine's "hybridity is not necessarily in conflict with her Christian nature", Lydia Zeldenrust noted (*The Mélusine Romance in Medieval Europe* 21).

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[79] It was also in the fourteenth century that the oldest and most famous mélusienne Portuguese story, "A Lenda da Dama Pé de Cabra" ("The Legend of the Lady with a Goat Foot"), was written. The legend is preserved in the *Livro de Linhagens* do Conde D. Pedro (1340-1344), but its most well-known version is the one by Alexandre Herculano in *Lendas e Narrativas* (1851). Ana Maria Machado has shown that "A Lenda da Dama Pé de Cabra" has many aspects in common with the story of Mélusine. See Machado, Ana Maria. "Le merveilleux et la poétique de l'incertain dans La Dame au pied de chèvre (du Moyen Âge au XXIe siècle)." *O Marrare*. Revista da Pós-Graduação em Literatura Portuguesa da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 14:2, 2011; Varandas, Angélica. "Celtic Imaginary: From Medieval Dama-Pé-de-Cabra to Nineteenth-Century Patriotic Versions." *Studies in Medievalism XXXI*. Edited by Karl Fugelso. Boydell and Brewer, 2022. About the *livros de linhagens*, Portuguese nobility books, see Mattoso, José. *Narrativas dos Livros de Linhagens*. Temas e Debates, 2020.

In his study about fairy beliefs and the medieval Church, Richard Firth Green argued that one way in which romance writers responded to clerical disapproval of fairies, which, according to Harf-Lancner, started in the thirteenth century (34-9), was by colliding fairy lore with Christian beliefs (11-41)[80]. An example is the Middle English romance *Sir Gowther* (c. 1400), about a Christian knight born of a noblewoman who is impregnated by a demon[81]. "Few fairy romances provide such a thoroughgoing illustration of cultural compromise formation … but is not uncommon to encounter specific details that betray the author's desire to demonstrate his orthodoxy", Green stated, specifying that, "at times this is clearly a perfectly conscious strategy, but at others it looks more like the involuntary defence of the little tradition to hegemonic clerical models" (69).

> Thus vernacular culture has no problem imagining Christian fairies: Partonope is reassured to hear his invisible lady, whose bed he happens to be staring at the time, swear by the Virgin Mary, and in much the same vein, Oberon presents Huon of Bordeaux with a magic cup whose powers are activated by making the sign of the cross over it (Green 69).

According to Irene Freire Nunes, Mélusine's serpent-like form bears witness to an ancient mythology of the snake, a chthonic creature associated with knowledge and the prediction of the future (11), not the story of Eve and the Bible[82]. Freire Nunes sees Mélusine as an advertiser of things to come (11). This feature enhances her similarity to the *Parcae*, which are associated with fecundity (they were initially the attendant spirits of childbirth) and death. They are considered the

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[80] According to Green, the other ways in which romance writers responded to clerical disapproval of fairies were suppression and displacement (62-71).

[81] See Laskaya, Anne, and Salisbury, Eve, editors. "Sir Gowther: Introduction." *The Middle English Breton Lays*. TEAMS - Middle English Texts Series. Medieval Institute Publications, 1995. d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-sir-gowther-introduction; Marchalonis, Shirley. "'Sir Gowther': The Process of a Romance." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1971, pp. 14–29. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/25093176. There is an old tradition that says that Merlin's father was an *incubus*, a demon in male form that seeks to have sexual intercourse with women while they are asleep. According to *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1136), by Geoffrey of Monmouth, the wizard's mother was the daughter of the King of South Wales. She was impregnated by an *incubus*, who appeared to her in the guise of a man, and who was the source of Merlin's supernatural powers (Bruce 358).

[82] Irene Freire Nunes shares Le Goff's opinion (*Um Novo Conceito de Idade Média* 305) that the popularity of the Mélusine in the Middle Ages is indicative of a much older pre-Christian tradition, which is associated with the great goddess of the Neolithic, whose attributes were fecundity and prosperity (8-9). According to Nunes, in the Middle Ages, the figure of Mélusine reflects the woman's juridical, economic and cultural status in the period (8).

origin of the medieval fairies (Harf-Lancner 25; 47), along with the Great Mother of Celtic mythology, associated with abundance and fertility (Nunes 4).

Perhaps more than any dragon woman, Mélusine can stir deep emotions in readers. “She is good, active, fertile and ultimately unhappy despite herself, unhappy through betrayal”, Le Goff wrote (*Heroes and Marvels* 124). In both *Mélusine* and *Roman de Parthenay*, she is presented as a victim of her husband, becoming suitable for taking the role of the hero of the story (*Para Um Novo Conceito de Idade Média* [“For a New Concept of Middle Ages”] 303), usually played by a man and a knight in the genre of romance.

Chapter III

The legend of Hippocrates' daughter, the dragon woman of Lango, and the critique against late medieval chivalry

Medieval travel writers paid great attention to cities. They served as "an essential reference, through which the description of the itinerary developed" (Lopes 86). Towns and places connected with the history of Christianism and the Catholic Church, such as the birth and burial locations of saints and martyrs, were significant and were often highlighted. Following the example of previous pilgrims and travel narrative authors, Mandeville tells tales of sanctity that he mixes with descriptions of profane wonders, as in the passage where he introduces the legend of Hippocrates' daughter. The story is inserted in the first part of *The Book of John Mandeville* (Chapter 3) when the author describes the way to Jerusalem through Constantinople and speaks about Greece. Mandeville lists several holy places of interest, such as the isle of Patmos, where St. John the Evangelist wrote the Book of Revelation; the city of Ephesus, where the same saint died and ascended to Paradise; and Patara, the place of birth of St. Nicholas[83]. He then speaks about Crete, Kos and Lango, and how the Greek physician Hippocrates once governed the last two islands.

Islands are places for which the imagination has a particular preference. Contrary to the mainland, they belong to an enclosed universe that subsists outside the laws that generally prevail and according to its own set of rules (Kappler 36). The inhabitants of the mainland who arrive there must put aside some of their characteristics and accept the new nature of the space if they want to stay (Kappler 37). For Claude Kappler, islands are the realm of the arbitrary (36). Inspired by the classical myths in which islands were favourite places for the most astounding human and divine adventures (Kappler 37), medieval travel writers were fascinated by them, and their works abound with them. Mandeville is an extreme case, Kappler argued (38), pointing out that once the author reaches East, every chapter of his book speaks of an island (38). Chapter 15, about India, is particularly rich. Mandeville describes islands where people with a wicked nature foster hounds to attack people, including friends who are unwell and are going to die; where fathers eat their sons and the sons the fathers, the husbands their wives or the wives their husbands; and where people have no heads and their eyes are on their shoulders, and their mouths are on their chests.

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[83] Mandeville probably took the information from the lives of St. John and St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, in the *Legenda Aurea*. See *Legenda Aurea* 566-74; 22-28 [*The Golden Legend* 11-5; 33-8].

However, as the legend of Hippocrates' daughter indicates, it is not only when he reaches the East that Mandeville describes mysterious and wonderful islands. Perhaps inspired by the same mythology that stimulated the imagination of travellers to the Far East, the author placed the episode in Lango, one of the many Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. Monsters live outside the limits of the known world, which includes lands of mystery such as the East but also islands. For Mandeville, these two spaces are places of wonder.

It was in Lango[84], the Venetian and Genovese name for Kos, which the author believes to be a separate island, that Hippocrates was born in the first century BCE to a family of Asclepiades, direct descendants of Asclepius, the Greek god of Medicine (Touwaide 601). Snakes were sacred to Asclepius (his emblem was a serpent-entwined rod, the 'Rod of Asclepius'). Because they seemed to renew themselves by changing their skin, it was believed they had the power to heal and were often at the god's shrines assisting in the cures (March 83). Hippocrates was the subject of many legends (according to one story, he had a son, Draco, the Latin word for "serpent" or "dragon"). However, the tale about his daughter seems to be original. There is a consensus among the critics that it made its first literary appearance in *The Book* and that Mandeville was the inspiration behind subsequent narratives with similar storylines. G. Huet put forward the theory of a local origin, suggesting that the English knight reproduced an authentic popular tradition in which Hippocrates was remembered not as a doctor but as lord of Lango (55). Huet also proposed that the episode is related to the ruins of an ancient building on the island (which he does not identify) where an old king was said to have lived (59). Mandeville indicates that he never visited Lango, and the story was based on a second-hand source (*The Defective Version* 15, lines 11-15). Nevertheless, Christine Deluz, who regarded him as a genuine figure, speculated that he was on the island. She based her theory on a local legend recounted by Felix Fabri (c. 1437-1502) in the late fourteenth century (*Le Livre de Jehan de Mandeville: une 'géographie' au XIVe siècle* 216-7 qtd. in Tzanaki 152)[85]. In his pilgrimage narratives, the Dominican friar tells a similar story that was current on Lango when he visited it in 1483 (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 12).

According to Mandeville, Lango is inhabited by Hippocrates' daughter in the form of a dragon that is one hundred feet long (thirty meters long). The islanders say she is the lady of the

[84] Lango was a relevant place of cult in ancient times, but it was in Epidaurus, in the Peloponnese, that Asclepius' cult had its centre in Greece (Grimal 63).

[85] See Beebe, Kathryne. *Pilgrim & Preacher: The Audiences and Observant Spirituality of Friar Felix Fabri (1437/8-1502)*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

country and that she was transformed from a beautiful woman into a dragon by Diana[86], the Roman goddess of wild nature, hunting, the moon, and women, particularly at the time of childbirth, at which she presides alongside Juno, wife of Jupiter and queen of the gods. Diana was early identified with the Greek goddess Artemis, having absorbed many of her traits and myths. Vindictive, her victims were many[87]. According to the legend told by the English knight, these include Hippocrates' daughter, but the reason for her curse is not disclosed. Exiled in her own country, the noble lady dwells in a cave in an old castle and shows herself only three times a year. She harms no man if no man harms her[88]. She will only return to her former state when a brave knight dares to kiss her on the mouth. After that, she will not live long[89]. Mandeville never mentions her name, probably because he does not know it. He admits that he never visited Lango or saw the woman whose legend he learned second-hand. The tale is based on the accounts of

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[86] An interesting alternative version is the one presented in the Metrical Version of *The Book of John Mandeville*, in which Hippocrates' daughter is transformed into a dragon by her evil stepmother because of her beauty (20, lines 672-684), "following a more traditional theme of romance" (Tzanaki 153). In medieval literature, stepmothers and stepfathers are traditionally depicted as jealous and treacherous figures (Shepherd 263). In the case of the first, they are the 'medieval version' of the figure of the older woman who often tries to destroy her rivals by casting a spell in many folk tales. There are many examples of such stories in Norse and Gaelic folklore (Peck in Passmore and Carter 112). "Usually, she [the older woman] is jealous — some cranky fairy or hateful elder person who lacks youth, beauty, or paramour; or perhaps she is one who has simply been passed over herself … but who has, nonetheless, the power to dock her enemies of their sovereignty, leaving them in a state of deformity until that sovereignty can be restored", Russell A. Peck summarised (in Passmore and Carter 113). In the Middle English romance *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle* (c. 1450), the damsel is transformed into an old hag "by nygramancy" by her stepmother (Shepherd 263, lines 691-2). Only the best knight in England (i.e., Sir Gawain) can break the curse. In the ballad *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, presumably written in the late fifteenth century (Shepherd 380), it is explicitly said that the lady is transformed into a hag and condemned "to the green forrest to dwell" (386, line 180) by her stepmother because she is "a faire young lady" (386, line 179). In this version of the story, her brother was also bewitched "to a carlish" (Shepherd 386, line 183). That is why he defies Arthur.

[87] There is one myth that links Diana to Asclepius: according to one legend, the goddess was responsible for the death of Coronis, Apollo's lover and Asclepius' mother, because she was unfaithful to the god, Diana's twin brother. Coronis was pregnant with the god of Medicine when she died. See March 79-8.

[88] "… and heo doþ no man harm but yf ony man do here harm" (*The Defective Version* 15, line 15).

[89] The fact that Hippocreates' daughter will not live longer after the breaking of the spell suggests she is condemned to live forever, and by rules that do not apply to the human world, until it happens.

islanders[90] who tell how two knights tried to free her from her curse and how both failed. By acknowledging that the legend is not the product of his direct experience, Mandeville's readers may question its authenticity without doubting his authority.

The first knight who tried to release Hippocrates' daughter belonged to the Order of the Hospital of Rhodes[91]. He was "douȝty and hardy" (*The Defective Version* 15, lines 21-22). His name, place of origin, and nationality are not revealed. However, it is right to assume he is established on the island since Lango belonged to the Hospitallers since the early fourteenth century. One day, he mounted his courser, drove to the old castle, and entered the cellar where the lady dwelled. When the dragon raised her head to him[92], his horse became frightened and fled, carrying the knight with him. The animal jumped from a cliff into the sea, "and so was þe kniȝt lost" (*The Defective Version* 15, line 27). The second knight was a young man who knew nothing about the lady and who found the island by accident. He arrived at Lango by ship (again, his name and place of origin are not indicated) and went about the place until he found the castle. He entered it and went into the cellar. There, he discovered the damsel in her human form, gazing at a mirror and combing her hair, surrounded by an immense treasure. The youngster concluded she must be a prostitute, not an innocent and vulnerable lady.

> … [we] went so long til þat he found a chamber. And þere he sauȝ a damysel þat kembid here heed and lokid in a myrrour, and heo hadde myche tresour aboute here, and he trowid þat heo hadde be a comyne womman þat dwellid þere to kepoe man. And he abode vnto þe damysele sauȝ þe

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[90] The acknowledgement of the primary source of the legend being the inhabitants of Lango seems to contradict Mandeville's own statement that he never visited the island. The author seems to be following the same validation process as Gervase of Tilbury, whose stories were based on the account of people of confidence that he interviewed during his many travels. See Tilbury 11. However, that may not be the case. Mandeville may have had access to the tale from a source that was at Lango. Nonetheless, it is impossible to retrace the origin of the tale since the author does not give any more information about his source.

[91] Because the knight is a Hospitaller, Seymour suggests Mandeville found the tale in a "crusading story". See *The Defective Version* 140.

[92] The description is very similar to a passage in the life of St. George in the *Legenda Aurea*: *"Dum hae loquerentur, ecce draco veniens caput de lacy levavit. Tunc peella tremefacta dixit: fuge, bone domine, fuge velociter"* (*Legenda Aurea* 261) ["While they were talking, the dragon suddenly lifted its head from the lake. Trembling, the young girl cried: 'Flee, good lord, make haste and flee!'" (*The Golden Legend* 117)]. The legend of George, the knightly saint and killer of dragons, was very popular in the Middle Ages, mainly because of the Legenda. His cult reached its peak in the later medieval period when many countries adopted him as their patron (Farmer 425). The saint was special dear to Edward III of England, the first king to carry only the arms of St. George into battle (Mortimer 60). George was considered the personification of the ideals of Christian chivalry (Farmer 425).

> schadewe of hym in þe mirrour, and þen heo turned here toward hym and askid what he wolde. And he seide þat wolde be here paramour oþer lemman (*The Defective Version* 15-16).

The woman asked him if he was a knight, and he answered that he was not. She told him to return to his ship and tell his fellow mates to make him one. Only then could he kiss her, have all her treasure, and be her husband and lord of Lango. Before he went, she warned him not to be afraid when he saw her again — she would do him no harm. If she seemed hideous to him, it was because of a spell — she was as he saw her at that exact moment. So he went, and after getting himself knighted, he returned to the fortress to meet the woman again and kiss her as arranged. When he arrived, he saw the damsel "come out of þe caue in likeness of a dragoun" (*The Defective Version* 16, line 16), a description that resembles a scene in some versions of the legend of St. George, in which the dragon emerges from a gaping cavern (Williams 204)[93]. The young knight became so frightened that "he fliȝ to þe schip" (*The Defective Version* 16, line 17), ignoring the lady's warming. She followed him.

> "… and when heo sauȝ he turned not aȝen, heo bigan to crie as a þing þat hadde grete sorwe, and heo turned aȝen. And als soone þe kniȝt deide" (*The Defective Version* 16).

After the death of the second knight, no one could see Hippocrates' daughter without dying immediately. Only a man brave enough to kiss her on the mouth could survive the curse, transform her back into human form, and become lord of the land and the surrounding isles, which belonged to her by birthright. Breaking the spell would turn Hippocrates' daughter into a founding figure, the mother of a noble house and lineage, and a source of wealth and prosperity for her husband and descendants, similar to Mélusine[94].

Mandeville then resumes the description of the path to Jerusalem, following the structure he repeats throughout the book: suspension of the travel and pilgrimage narrative and introduction

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[93] In the *Legenda Aurea*, the dragon dwells in a lake. Bestiaries often say the dragon lives in a cave. See, for example, Barber, Richard W., translator. *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford M.S. Bodley 764: With All the Original Miniatures Reproduced in Facsimile*. Translated and introduced by Richard Barber. The Boydell Press, 1999, p. 183; White, T. H., translator. *The Bestiary. A Book of Beasts: Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*. Made and edited by T. H. White. Ninth impression. Capricorn Books, 1960, p. 166.

[94] See previous chapter, pp. 41-6.

of a short tale, usually of classical influence. These digressions[95] are generally used to demand a moral response from the audience, while functioning as supporters to the book's central ideas (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 23-4). Mandeville explains that, from Lango, one can travel to Rhodes, an island held and governed by the Hospitallers. Rhodes belonged to the Byzantine “emperour” (*The Defective Version* 16, line 28), but it was conquered in 1314 by the religious military order. Mandeville says the island used to be called ‘Colles’ and that the Turks still used the name. It was for the inhabitants of ‘Colles’ — the Colossians — that St. Paul wrote the epistle, Mandeville informs, mixing two references that were often confused by medieval authors: the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World[96]; and the epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians, the people from Colossae, in Phrygia, not from ‘Colles’ (*The Book of John Mandeville* 18; *The Book of Marvels and Travels* 130). The Turkish nomenclature for Rhodes is also incorrect: the Turks used the same name as the Greeks, Rodos (*The Book of Marvels and Travels* 130).

1. A very original tale: Hippocrates’ daughter and the tradition of the dragon woman

The dragon woman has its origins in the ancient tales of terrible women who could assume a part-serpent, part-bird or part-piscine form (Urban et al. 1). The archetype is well-attested in the mythology of Ancient and Classical worlds of the Mediterranean and Middle East, for example, in the ancient Mesopotamian myth of Tiamat and the Greek myth of Lamia.

Tiamat or Tamtu is the personification of salt water. She is the wife of Apsu, the freshwater beneath the earth, and is associated with primordial chaos and creation (Parreira 144). She is sometimes depicted as a woman with a tale. Because of those descriptions and her affiliation with monsters, Tiamat is often associated with serpents and dragons (Eldridge, “Tiamat”). Lamia is not a goddess but a victim of divine intervention. A beautiful Lybian woman forcefully seduced by Zeus, the father of all gods and humans, she was cursed to give birth only to stillborn babies by Hera after finding out about his husband’s infidelity. Eventually, she turned into a monster with a hideous face

[95] In the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Chris Baldick defines *digression* as “a temporary departure from one subject to another more or less distantly related topic before the discussion of the first subject is resumed. A valuable technique in the art of storytelling, digression is also employed in many kinds of non-fictional writing and oratory” (67).

[96] See Clayton, Peter A., and Price, Martin, editors. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Routledge, 1990; Hughes, Bettany. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. W&N, 2024.

(Arnold 39-40; March 281). As the myth evolved, Lamia became a serpentine dragon below the waist that kills little children and eats them.

Lamia's physical description is very similar to another female dragon from Greek mythology, Echidna, half a young lady with bright eyes and half an enormous and terrifying serpent (Hesíodo [Hesiod] 54). Echidna is a mother of monsters. She is credited with giving birth to Cerberus, the Chimera, and the eagle of Prometheus, to name a few. The dragons guarding the Golden Fleece and the Garden of the Hesperides are also said to be her offspring (Grimal 133). But "while Echidna is a signifier of female malevolence", tales about the once beautiful Lamia "express the perceived dangers of the transgressive female", Martin Arnold noted (39). That is evident in the development of folktales of a species of dragon women known as the *Lamiai*, "vampiric creatures" that were said to allure young men by hiding their dragon-shaped upper bodies behind dunes and exposing their tales, which took the form of naked women (Arnold 40).

Another female character associated with snakes is Medusa, one of the Gorgons, the monstrous daughters of Phorcys and Ceto and sisters of the three Graeae[97]. According to Greek mythology, the Gorgons have heads entwined with snakes, necks protected by dragon's scales, huge tusks like those of a boar, hands of bronze, and golden wings (Grimal 164). Their gaze is so penetrating that anyone who encounters it turns into stone (Grimal 164). The myth of Medusa, slain by the hero Perseus, evolved as time passed. By the Hellenistic age, she was no longer a monster from the pre-Olympian generation but a victim of metamorphosis (Grimal 164-5). According to this version of the story, she was once a beautiful girl who dared to set her beauty against that of Athena, the Greek goddess of war, handicraft, and practical reason. She was incredibly proud of her hair, so Athena changed it into a mess of snakes (Grimal 64-5). In *Metamorphoses* (first century), Ovid says Athena unleashed her wrath against Medusa because Poseidon ravished the girl in a temple consecrated to her (Liber IV, lines 753-803).

Also relevant are the sirens, half birds and half women, who lure sailors into destruction by singing to them[98]. In the *Odyssey*, Circe warns Ulysses about them, describing them as sea creatures who beguile men "with their clear-toned song, as they sit in a meadow, and about them is a great heap of bones of mouldering men, and round the bones the skin is shrivelling" (Homer, XII, 44-6). The sirens are related to the Asian image of the bird-woman, "a winged ghost that stole the living to

[97] See Grimal 165-6.

[98] Ovid says that the sirens were once ordinary girls and companions of Persephone. Demeter gave them wings to help her in the search for her daughter after her abduction by Hades. They eventually gave up the search and settled on the island of Anthemoessa (*Metamorphoses*, Liber V, lines 47-63).

share its fate" (Britannica, "Sirens"), and sometimes they are described as having wings (Williams 188). In that respect, they have affinities with the Harpies (Britannica, "Sirens"), goddesses of storm winds that carry off people and souls (March 214; Grimal 170). Williams noted that the medieval description of sirens highlights "the contradiction between the visual beauty of the upper body part and the repulsiveness of the lower part …; the same contradiction is extended in the contrast between the harmony and sweetness of the siren's song and their murderous intentions and acts" (188). Over time, the link between sirens and the element of water, and therefore with the symbolic associations of water and the feminine (Williams 189), was emphasised by transforming their bird parts into a fishtail. The first known reference to the fish-siren is in *Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus* ("Book of monsters of various kinds"), a compendium of almost 120 marvellous creatures produced in Latin in English territory in the late seventh or early eighth century (Orchard 86-7)[99]. The author of the *Liber monstrorum* describes the sea girl (*"marinae puellae"*) or siren as having a woman's body from the head to the waist and a fishtail. This tail is reminiscent of the dragon's tail, which also dwells in watery environments. In later representations, the "scaly fishtail" of the siren "looks suspiciously like a scaly serpent's tale …, and even Romanesque bird sirens (generally identified as harpies) often bore a serpent's tail" (Flores 173).

> *Sirenae sunt marinae puellae, quae nauigantes pulcherrima forma et cantu dulcedinis decipiunt, et a capite usque ad umbilicum sunt corpore uirginali et humano generi simillimae, squamosas tamen piscium caudas habent, quibus semper in gurgite latent* (*Liber monstrorum*, Orchard 265).
>
> [Sirens are sea-girls, who deceive sailors with the outstanding beauty of their appearance and the sweetness of their song, and are most like human beings from the head to the navel, with the body of a maiden, but have scaly fishes' tails, with which they always lurk in the sea (*Liber monstrorum*, Orchard 263).]

Tales of dragon women persisted through the Middle Ages. Like all legacies from Antiquity, they underwent a process of Christianisation, through which dragon women became closely connected with Eve[100]. First gathered in Latin encyclopaedias and collections, these stories were later assimilated by the literary tradition of romance, in which they found fertile ground.

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[99] See Orchard 86-115.

[100] See previous chapter.

Medieval romance was a flexible genre[101]. It survives in many shapes and forms. However, it is commonly understood that it recounts, in vernacular language[102], the chivalric adventures of an aristocratic young man in the process of becoming a recognised hero. To Northrop Frye, adventure is "the essential plot in romance", which means that romance is "naturally a sequential and processional form, hence we know it better from action than from drama" (186). The young man must prove his courage and skill by deeds of arms and love (Chism 59; Radulescu 39). Love is so essential that "almost all romances are narratives either of courtship leading to marriage or of trials that part a loving married couple" (*The English Romance in Time* 28), with wedlock being itself a way of self-affirmation of the hero to be (Cardini in *O Homem Medieval* ["The Medieval Man"] 67-8). The protagonist follows a strict code of conduct inspired by Christian morality. It includes values such as kindness, courage, honesty, courtesy, loyalty, piety, and above all, honour, which Nigel Saul defines as "the value which a nobleman placed on himself and the expectation he had that that value would be recognized by others" (187). The moral and spiritual qualities of the young man are as relevant as his physical agility and strength, which he needs to succeed.

According to Frye, romance "tends to limit itself to a sequence of minor adventures leading up to a major or climacteric adventure, usually announced from the beginning, the completion of which rounds off the story" (186-7). This "major adventure, the element that gives form to the romance", is the quest, which, in the same author's definition, is typically represented in three stages: "The stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die, and the exaltation of the hero" (187). These are called, respectively, the *agon* (conflict), the *pathos* (death-struggle), and the *anagnorisis* (discovery or recognition of the hero who has proved himself worthy of such title even if he does not survive) (Frye 187). To Frye, the first two stages are the most important because they relate to the conflict between the hero and his antagonist, the two main characters of romance (187). It is around these elements that the plot develops. "The enemy may be an ordinary human being, but the nearer the romance is to myth, the more attributes of divinity will cling to the hero and the more the enemy will take on demonic mythical qualities", Frye considered

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[101] Romance is an extremely complex genre, and it is thus difficult to define. I have only highlighted a few characteristics for the purpose of this dissertation. For a more complete approach, see, for instance, Fuchs, Barbara. *Romance*. Routledge, 2004; Krueger, Roberta L., editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*. Third printing. Cambridge University Press; Chism 57-70.

[102] The term *romance* derives from the Old French expression *mettre en romanz*, which means "to translate into vernacular French". See Krueger, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-28.

(187). In any case, the opponent is always a creature who seems to live "according to a set of ethical norms different from those of the ordinary mortal" and who shares a knowledge that gives him or her "a limited but threatening power over anyone wandering" within his or her reach (Duggan in Troyes 225).

The quest often includes encounters in unexpected, sometimes marvellous, and magical places[103]. To Frye, "the central form of quest-romance is the dragon-killing theme" (189). The dragon, "the chief deed of the greatest of heroes" ("The Monsters and the Critics" 16), generally appears in the final stage of the quest, after the overcoming of less difficult obstacles by the protagonist. Most stories speak of a helpless king whose land is wasted by a monstrous serpent. The killing of the beast generally results in or includes the winning of the hand of a beautiful lady, usually the king's daughter, following a convention established by the Greek myth of Perseus and Andromeda[104]. The Middle English romances *Sir Degaré* and *Sir Eglamiur of Artois* (fourteenth century) revolve around a similar motif. In both narratives, the heroes seek to prove themselves and marry their beloveds by going on a quest and slaying a dragon. "The ritual analogies of the myth suggest that the monster *is* the sterility of the land itself, and that the sterility of the land is present in the age and impotence of the king, who is sometimes suffering from an incurable malady or wound", Frye concluded (189).

In medieval literature, dragons are usually male. However, there was a practice of depicting them as females, particularly in pictorial representations of the legend of St. George (Riches 103-8). According to Samantha Riches, the vogue for these portraits reached its peak "around the end of the fifteenth century and the start of the sixteenth century" (104). In some images, the female dragons are identified as mothers, and their maternal and protective sides are enhanced (Riches 105-6). Female monsters, including dragons, often occupy central positions in medieval romance, contradicting the passive role typically attributed to women. Misty Rae Urban,

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[103] The marvellous is present in many medieval romances, but not all critics agree that magic and the supernatural are characteristic of the genre. To Frye, "the radical of romance being a sequence of marvellous adventures" (192). A compromised view is shared by Corinne Saunders in *Magic and the Supernatural in Middle English Romances*. To the author, magic and the supernatural are crucial in creating medieval romance's seductive and exotic atmosphere (2). They make it "'something rich and strange'" (Saunders 2). "But the rich and strange is also grounded in cultural reality; it is tangible and possible. In the Middle Ages the marvellous was at least potentially part of everyday knowledge, belief and experience", she noted (2).

[104] Andromeda was punished by Poseidon for boasting that she was more beautiful than all the Nereids, nymphs of the sea. She was chained to a rock by the seashore as food for a sea monster, but Perseus saved her. He killed the monster after asking for her hand in marriage to her father, Cepheus. See Grimal 43-2; Kershaw 141-3; Marsh 53-4.

who studied the role of monstrous female bodies in Middle English romance, argued that they "do far more than simply illustrate or rehearse the standard fears of female corruptibility or influence" (273). Instead, they function as "a self-conscious literary tool to dramatize the contradictory claims of the rhetoric, the constructiveness of the ideology, and the ways in which the cultural hegemony is perpetuated" (Urban 274). By destabilising the world in which they live and belong, female monsters reflect how their monstrosity is created: by the terms which made them 'Others' (Urban 274).

1.1. The Celtic influence

Medieval romances frequently incorporate elements from diverse origins and traditions. Christian motifs coexist harmoniously with pre-Christian elements, such as those drawn from Celtic legends and myths, whose impact on medieval romance has long been acknowledged (T. P. Cross 10). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the episode of Hippocrates' daughter includes references to Celtic tales and tropes, such as those about shapeshifters.

In Celtic mythology, shapeshifting is common among fairies (Monaghan 417), but other beings, like divinities, legendary poets, and witches, can also transform themselves (18; 417). Celtic myths speak about involuntary shapeshifting as well. In such cases, the metamorphosis is often the result of a curse or magic spell (Whittock 98), sometimes cast by a rival. In the Irish tale of Aige, the heroine is transformed by a fairy into a wild doe because of her great beauty (Monaghan 7; 417)[105]. These tales inspired the *loathly lady* motif, about a female shapeshifter who changes form in relation to a character test of the male hero. G. H. Maynadier, author of the first monograph on the *loathly lady*'s European origins, *The Wife of Bath: Its Sources and Analogues* (1901), traced its roots to Irish stories such as *The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedón*. Niall Noígíallach ("Niall of the Nine Hostages"), one of Eochaid's sons, takes up the challenge of an old hag and kisses her, after which she is transformed into a beautiful lady personifying the Sovereignty of Ireland (Passmore; Greg 78). She then bestows him the title of High King of Ireland[106]. The English

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[105] Tales of shapeshifting are not exclusive to Celtic mythology. They exist in many other cultures, notably in the Greek. Zeus is a famous shapeshifter who adopted other forms while seducing his lovers. See Grimal 453-6; March 497-500.

[106] Niall Noígíallach, the founder of the Uí Néill dynasty, is one of the great legendary Irish heroes. See Whittock 144-8.

loathly lady tales[107] retain the centrality of the sovereignty Irish theme, which is absent elsewhere, linking the motif to the question of what women most desire and focusing on concepts of leadership, choice, and control (Passmore). In those narratives, the hero, often a knight, must marry the female shapeshifter as a horrible old hag and give her ascendancy before she can regain her original form of a young and beautiful lady, as in "The Tale of Florent", by John Gower (c. 1330-1408)[108], and "The Wife of Bath's Tale", by Chaucer[109].

The transformation of the hag into a beautiful damsel is usually sealed by a kiss, like in the Middle English romance *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle* (c. 1450)[110]:

> … Kysse me, syr Knyght, evyn now here!
> I pray the be glad and make good chere,
> Por well is me begon!"
> Ther they made joye oute of mynde,
> (So was itt reason and courst of kynde)
> They two theymeself alone (Shepherd 263, lines 703-8).

The *fier baiser* ("fearsome kiss") is a central scene in many *loathly lady* stories, namely in those belonging to the "Fair Unknown" narratives. Nevertheless, some critics have claimed that it is a distinct literary motif with its own name and a genealogy (Salisbury and Weldon 26) that overlaps the *loathly lady* in some points, namely in the centrality of the "fearsome kiss", which disenchants the monstrous-looking lady and transforms her back into a beautiful woman (Salisbury and Weldon 26-7)[111]. In Eve Salisbury and James Weldon's definition, the *fier baiser* is "a popular medieval story in which a young man is required to kiss an enchanted woman who appears in some dormant state of inaction or repulsive physical form, typically as a serpent or dragon, in order to trigger her transformation back to her previous condition" (26). To Roger Sherman Loomis, it is also a separate literary tradition. In "The Fier Baiser in Mandeville's *Travels*, Arthurian Romance, and Irish Saga"

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[107] On the difference between the Irish and the English *loathly lady* tales, see Passmore in Passmore and Carter 3-41.

[108] See Yeager in Passmore and Carter 42-72; Peck in Passmore and Carter 100-45.

[109] See Phillips, Helen. *An Introduction to the Canterbury Tales. Reading, Fiction, Context*. Macmillan Press, 2000, pp. 89-102.

[110] See Shepherd 378-80; Gaffney in Passmore and Carter 146-162.

[111] For a complete list of the motifs and themes which comprise the "Fair Unknown" romances and many of the *loathly lady* stories, namely those belonging to the Gawain tradition, see "The Fair Unknown".

(1947), Loomis argued for the Celtic origin of the "fearsome kiss". At the same time, Madeleine Tyssens in "Les Sources de Renaut de Beaujeau" (1970) and Christine Ferlampin-Archer in "La fée et la *guivre*: *Le Bel Inconnu* de Reanut de Beaujeu" (2000), demonstrated the motif could be found in countries without any Celtic heritage (Salisbury and Weldon 27).

In late medieval England, the most well-known *fier baiser* narrative was *Lybeaus Desconus* ("The Fair Unknown"), a fourteenth century anonymous Middle English romance partly based on the late twelfth century Old French poem *Li Biaus Descounneüesi* (commonly known as *Le Bel Inconnu*), written by Renaut de Bâgé, lord of Saint-Trivier (1165-1230). Renaut adopted folklore and literary materials for his poem, including the sparrowhawk scene in *Érec et Énide* (twelfth century), by Chrétien de Troyes[112]. The Middle English version survives in six manuscripts. The oldest are from about 1400 (*London, British Library, MS. Cotton Caligula A.ii* and *London, Lincoln's Inn, MS. 150*). The number of surviving copies and the continuing references to *Lybeaus Desconus* throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries suggest it was one of the most popular vernacular romances in late medieval England ("*Lybeaus Desconus*"). Mandeville must have known the story, perhaps in its original French, given that most of his sources were produced in the French or Latin languages. The similarities between the romance and specific passages in *The Book of John Mandeville* reinforce that assumption. However, if he really was English, he must have had contact with the Middle English romance at some point.

The story in *Lybeaus Desconus* of the Lady of Synadon, imprisoned in the form of a dragon in her own country by the brothers and masters of necromancy, Iran and Mabon, is reminiscent of the episode of Hippocrates' daughter. The Lady, whose first name is not disclosed, is a wealthy heiress "of knyghtis kynne" (Salisbury and Weldon 72, line 1772) who is condemned to live in the form of a dragon from the head down until she gives away all her property to Iran and Mabon. She is tormented and exposed to all kinds of villainies by the two brothers, and her cry is often heard echoing throughout the land (Salisbury and Weldon 72, lines 1773-6). Only a kiss from Gawain, the flower of chivalry, or one of his descendants can break the spell[113]. The lady is released from her condition after kissing Lybeaus Desconus, Gawain's son[114], whom Arthur sent to her aid.

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[112] See "Lybeays Desconus"; Salisbury and Weldon 2-6.

[113] Gawain, nephew of King Arthur, is described in many Middle English romances as the epitome of chivalric virtue, the most famous example being *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (fourteenth century). See Bruce 211-14.

[114] Known as the "Knight of Maidens", Gawain had multiple lovers and multiple children, including Guinglain, the "Fair Unkown", and Wigalois (Bruce 212).

In exchange, she gives him all her property and her hand in marriage. Libeaus marries her and becomes "lord of both her and her territories, his innate nobility confirmed by action, by recognition, and by the touchstone of magic" (*The English Romance in Time* 332)[115].

Although the resemblance between the two narratives is notorious, it was rarely pointed out. Additionally, the possibility of *Lybeaus Desconus* being one of Mandeville's sources was never seriously considered, nor was the link to the *fier baiser* tradition, except for Loomis' work and some brief references, namely the one made by James Weldon in an entry in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain* ("The Fair Unknown")[116]. However, it is clear that the author knew and was influenced by the fiction of the medieval period, even though only a few fictional works are usually included in his sources.

The most recent overview of works consulted by Mandeville — the list presented by Higgins, which is a modified version of the one assembled by Deluz in 1988 (*The Book of John Mandeville* 219-21) — mentions only two *corpora* of fiction, the so-called "Alexander romances (various dates)", a medieval collection of fiction works about the life and conquests of Alexander the Great, who ruled an extensive empire that stretched from Macedonia to India in the first century BCE, and *Iter Alexandri Magni Ad Paradisum*, a fourth century account of the Macedonian king's journey to Paradise (220-1)[117]. These are also indicated by Kohanski and Benson (136-7) and by Tzanaki. Tzanaki, who also followed the list published by Deluz, refers yet to another 'work of fiction', *Littera Presbyteri Johannis* (142-3). Known in English as the *Letter of Prester John*, the text is a fictional letter written by a mythical Christian king of Asia known as Prester John to the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Commenus (1118-1180) and, in some versions, to the German emperor Frederick I (1122-1190), suggesting an alliance between Christian kingdoms to reconquer Jerusalem (F. L. Cross 1323-4; *Carta do Preste João* 13)[118]. Although the letter is fictional and partly based on the Alexander Romance and the Book of Revelation (*Carta do Preste João* 9), Prester John was believed to be a real priest-king, and his letter was an actual document. Therefore, it can not be included in a catalogue of fiction consulted by Mandeville. Similarly, *Speculum*

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115 On the tradition of the "Fair Unkown", see *The English Romance in Time* 331-40.

116 Unfortunately, a more thorough comparison between the two texts goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

117 David Williams makes an interesting analysis of Alexander's legends. According to the author and critic, the monsters Alexander encounters reveal "Alexander's own monstrosity: the King of Kings is the monster he beholds" (246). See Williams 231-248.

118 See Gumilev, L. N. *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom: The Legend of the Kingdom of Prester John*. Translated by R.E.F. Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2009; *Carta do Preste João* 9-18.

Historiale, by Vincent de Beauvais (thirteenth century), also mentioned by Tzanaki (143), is an encyclopedic work, not a work of fiction.

1.2. Pagan goddesses and the Devil

In the Middle Ages, people believed in the existence of the Devil and the possibility of supernatural intervention, whether demonic or divine (Saunders 5). They also accepted the idea of natural magic. In hagiographical texts, there is often a connection between Satan and his demons and the pagan gods. In Chapter 7 of *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, which deals with the persecution of St. Alban, Bede refers to the shrines of pagan entities as "devil's altars". In *Legenda Aurea*, Jacobus de Voragine (c. 1229-1298) describes how the ancient gods' statues were inhabited by devils that fled when addressed by a saint. In *De Correctione Rusticorum*, by Martin of Braga (sixth century), the bishop says that demons assume the name and form of ancient gods and goddesses to lead men and women to make sacrifices to them in forests and mountains. Martin's letter has the particularity of associating pagan deities with real individuals – long-time criminals and sinners who committed adultery and incest.

> *Tunc diabolus uel ministri ipsius, daemones, qui de caelo deiecti sunt, uidentes ignaros homines, dimisso deo creatore suo, per creaturas errare, coeperunt se illis in diuersas formas ostendere et loqui cum eis et expetere ab eis ut in excelsis montibus et in siluis frondosis sacrificia sibi offerrent et ipsos colerent pro deo, imponentes sibi uocabula sceleratorum hominum, qui in omnibus criminibus et sceleribus suam egerunt uitam, ut alius Ioyem se diceret (qui fuerat magus et in tantis adulteriis incestus et sororem suam haberet uxorem, quae dicta est Iuno, Mineruam et Venerem turpiter incestauerit), alius autem daemon Martem se nominaret (qui fruit litigiorum et discodiae comissor). Alius deinde daemon Mercurium se appellare uoluit, qui fruit omnis furti et fraudis dolosus inuentor; cui homines cupidi quasi deo lucri, in quadriuiis transeuntes, iactatis lapidibus aceruos petrarum pro sacrificio reddunt. Alius quoque daemon Saturni sibi nomen adscripsit, qui, in omni, crudelitate uiuens, etiam nascentes suos filios deuorabat; alius etiam daemon Venerem se esse confinxit, quae fruit mulier meretrix, et non solum cum innumerabilibus uiris, sed etiam cum patre suo Ioue et cum fratre suo Marte, meretricate est* (*De Correctione Rusticorum* 7).
>
> [Then the devil and his ministers, the demons who had been cast out of heaven, seeing that ignorant men had dismissed God their Creator and were mistaken creatures, began to appear to them in various forms and speak with them and demand them that they offer sacrifices to them on lofty mountains and in leafy forests and worship them as God, assuming the names of wicked men who had spent their whole lives in crime and sin, so that one claimed to be Jupiter, who had been a soothsayer and involved in so many adulteries that he had taking his own sister, Juno, to wife and

had corrupted his daughters, Minerva and Venus, and had even committed foul incest with his nieces and all his female relatives. Another demon called himself Mars, who had sown quarrels and discord. Then another demon chose to name himself Mercury, who had been the crafty inventor of all theft and deceit; to him as though to God men anxious for grain heap up piles of stones for a sacrifice whenever they pass a crossroads. Another demon took for himself the name of Saturn, who had lived amid all sorts of cruelty, even devouring his own sons at their birth. Another demon claimed to be Venus; she had been a prostitute and not only participated in innumerable adulteries, but had committed incest with her father, Jupiter, and her brother, Mars (Barlow 74).]

In the *Legenda Aurea*, in the chapter about St. Nicolas, Jacobus de Voragine mentions the cutting down of the tree beneath which pagan rites were performed to Diana and how it infuriated the Devil (*Legenda Aurea* 24). Jacobus narrates how, in the holy man's lifetime, who was a native of the Greek city of Patras, the ancient goddess was worshipped in the southeast Greek region. That may have inspired the reference to Diana in the episode of Hippocrates' daughter.

> *Cum autem region illa ydolis deservisset, prae caeteris nefandae Dyanae simulacrum populous coluerat adeo, ut usque ad tempus viri Dei nonnulli rustici praedicate religioni exsecrabili deservirent ac sub quadam arbore consecrata Dyanae quosdam ritus gentilium exercerent. Ac vir Dei praedictum ritum de omnibus finibus expulit ipsamque arborem praecidi mandavit. Iratus ex hoc contra eum hostis antiquus …* (*Legenda Aurea* 24).

> [Now in the past this whole region had worshipped idols, and the people had long held in particular veneration an image of the infamous goddess Diana. Even in the time of St. Nicholas some countryfolk still adhered to this abominable superstition and performed pagan rites to Diana beneath a tree. In an attempt to stamp out these rites, the saint had the tree cut down. This infuriated the Ancient Enemy … (*The Golden Legend* 13).]

In the chapter about St. John, apostle and evangelist, Jacobus recalls the destruction of the temple and statue of Diana in Ephesus by divine intervention. The worship of the goddess in the Greek city is mentioned in the Bible[119]in a passage about St. Paul and a man called Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines for Diana (Acts 19:24-28). According to the Bible, the citizens of Ephesus became angry after St. Paul declared that "the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised" (Acts 19:27). This suggests that the deity held a special place in Ephesian society, something that is confirmed by historical and archaeological evidence collected at the scene. It is long known to have existed in Ephesus, a great temple dedicated to Artemis and then to Diana – the

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[119] Diana is the only pagan goddess referred in the Bible.

Artemesium, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World[120]. Built about 550 BCE, it was famous not only for its colossal size (about 110 by 55 metres) but also for its works of art, which included a statue of the goddess (Britannica, "Temple of Artemis"). The Goths destroyed the temple in 262 CE (Britannica, "Temple of Artemis"). It is possible that a Christianized form of the cult persisted in the region and that Mandeville knew about it. That would not be unusual. In Portugal, there are some old religious practices in which traces of Diana can be detected, like the cult of St. Mammes in Janes, a small village in the district of Sintra. The tradition is similar to the cult of the ancient goddess (Castelo Branco 11-12). It has also been suggested that *Janas* derives from *Diana* (Castelo Branco 13).

In the Middle Ages, it was believed that metamorphosis was only possible through the intervention of the Devil[121], but Hippocrates' daughter is not depicted as evil. Instead, she appears to be much closer to God. Her immense pain, emphasised by her heartbreaking lament after the refusal of the second knight and his generosity (she is ready to give away all her property in exchange for the breaking of the spell that bounds her)[122] are aligned with the values of the Catholic Church, for which suffering is coupled with the specific idea of the imitation of Christ (*imitatio Christi*)[123], who suffered and died on the cross for the remission of humanity's sin. Also, her largess can be interpreted as a comment on wealth and materialism. There are several passages in which Mandeville criticises avarice in support of a more modest and honest life, as preached by St. Francis of Assisi (thirteenth century)[124]. As noted by Stephen Greenblatt, in opposition to other medieval travellers such as Marco Polo, "Mandeville takes possession of nothing" (37), assuming a personal version of renunciation in the service of Christ. "The dream of riches and ennoblement, which burns in Columbus, Cortés, and others, is present here as something that must be renounced in order to keep the faith", Greenblatt asserted (38).

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[120] See Clayton, *op. cit.*

[121] See Bynum, 82; 102.

[122] Hippocrates' daughter is a giver like Prometheus, whose myth has similarities with the story told by Mandeville. The son of the titan Iapetus tried to improve the life of humankind by stealing fire from the gods. His actions brought him into conflict with Zeus, who punished him by bounding him with steel chains to a rock on Mount Kaukasos, where an eagle, the offspring of Echidna and Typhon, was set to feed daily upon his liver that would continually renew itself. The story of Prometheus is told in *Work and Days*, by Hesiod, and in *Prometheus Bound,* attributed to Aeschylus.

[123] See Cipriano, "Knight, Traveller, or Author?", *op. cit.*

[124] See Le Goff, Jacques. *Saint Francis of Assisi*. Translated by Christine Rhone. Routledge, 2003; *Legenda Aurea* 662-73 [*The Golden Legend* 257-67]; Farmer 203-5.

The story of Hippocrates' daughter generates sympathy for the monster, the outsider, one of the distinctive traits of Mandeville's book. Many critics, including Donald R. Howard and Sebastian I. Sobecki, have stressed and applauded the author's tolerance towards different religions and cultures, which are described positively and without judgment[125] while highlighting their similarities with European reality. Their differences are regarded as pleasing and edifying rather than threatening, even when they are as fundamental as those of faith and language (Howard 68), as is the case of the Muslims, described in great detail in chapters 12 and 13 of *The Book*. The similarity with what readers knew allows Mandeville to introduce what was unfamiliar to them and to criticise Christianity without fear of being misunderstood (Sobecki 335). Also, by praising others' practices, including religious (there are many moments in which he characterises non-Christians as devout and true believers), he is revealing the weaknesses, ill practices, and moral disintegration of his own society (Sobecki 336-7).

1.3. Fluidity and the feminine

The womanliness of Hippocrates' daughter is often highlighted, perhaps even more than her monstrosity. It is suggested, for instance, that it is the promise of her body, beauty, and great fortune — requisites that, along with social prestige, made a bride desirable — that allures knights to Lango, like the music of sirens attracts sailors to their doom. The mirror she is holding when she meets the second knight, a symbol of vanity and narcissism (Ferber 126) associated with Venus, goddess of love, sex and beauty, points out the shallow nature of women. As an object, the mirror marks the limits between the imaginary and the symbolic ("Sobre os Espelhos" ["On Mirrors"] 16). It acts as a prosthesis, extending the field of action of vision and allows the transmission of information ("Sobre os Espelhos" ["On Mirrors"] 22). On a symbolic level, it represents vanity but also truth. It is in that quality that it appears in the episode — as a reminder of the damsel's curse, which is to be perpetually stuck between two distinct forms and identities. As Higgins suggested:

> Perhaps the mirror into which the damsel gazes is a symbol less of vanity than of self-knowledge: powerless to help herself, the passive figure understands her situation and motives far better than the two lecherous suitors do their own (*Writing East* 88).

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[125] See Chapter I, pp. 16-7.

Another less obvious mirror in the story is the sea surrounding Lango, a symbol of mutability. As pointed out by Fernando Pessoa in "Mar Português" ("Portuguese Sea"), the sea is "heaven's mirror"[126], but it is also dangerous and unpredictable, "uniquely penetrable and yet ungraspable" (Bain in Urban et al. 34), characteristics that are considered female (35). There is an ancient tradition that links the element of water and its fluidity with womanhood, as opposed to the stability that supposedly defines masculinity. "Water became gendered at the same time as women were perceived as the natural possessors of, and made to adopt, fluid qualities such as adaptability, or intuitiveness", Béatrice Laurent wrote (*Water and Women in the Victorian Imagination* 2 qtd. in Roussillon-Constanty). According to the author, the contrary characteristics of females and males generate a dialectical bond that is often one of subjection. *Water* (woman) must serve *matter* (men), and like water, women can be purified, tamed, and channelled to become available (Roussillon-Constanty). Similarly, the dragon women of Lango must be defeated so that her goods can become available to the hero.

Dragons were initially associated with the liquid element, especially in the European tradition (Riches 102). It was understood that they lived in wet or marshy places (Riches 102), like the dragon in the legend of St. George, which dwelled in a lake[127]. There are sea serpents in Greek mythology, but the element of water is primarily the realm of the gods. In the Greek myths, the sea and other water sources, like lakes, rivers and fountains, are inhabited by female deities, the nymphs, spirits of nature who also live in woods and grottoes, where they spend their time spinning and singing (Grimal 297). In Celtic mythology, water sources are also occupied by goddesses and fairies, who reflect the fecundity of Mother Earth and secure the healing quality of the waters (*Mitos e Lendas Celtas da Irlanda* ["Celtic Myths and Legends from Ireland"] 18-9). The stories in which a fairy is encountered by a soon-to-be human lover near a fountain or a lake, like in the

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[126] "Mar Português" ("Portuguese Sea") is one of the poems in *Mensagem* ("Message"), the only collection of Portuguese poems published by Fernando Pessoa in his lifetime (1934). There are some English editions of the book. See, for instance, Pessoa, Fernando. *Message / Mensagem*. Translated from Portuguese by Jonathan Griffin. Shearmans Books, 2007; Pessoa, Fernando. *Message*. Edited by Jerónimo Pizarro. Text by António Cirurgião. Translated by John Pedro Schwartz and Robert N. Schwartz. Tinta-da-China, 2022.

[127] Because of the connection between dragons and water and the belief that these creatures could pollute water sources, Samantha Riches suggested that St. George's role as a dragon-slayer may imply that he was originally the protector of watercourses (94), to which he is connected in various European traditions. The author identified several rituals that link the saint to springtime and fertility (71) and hinted he may be a Christianised fertility god. In this sense, the dragon "can be read as a controlled and defeated spirit of wintry sterility", Riches wrote (80). The significance of St. George as a harbinger of Spring can explain why he is associated with water and, more specifically, with wells (Riches 90).

French *lai Lanval,* are reminiscent of that. In the Portuguese oral tradition, there is a set of stories around a female figure who is similar to the ancient nymph or Celtic fairy: the *moura encantada* ("enchanted Moorish woman"), a magic, beautiful, wealthy, seductive, and irresistible woman, who is capable of weaving, cleaning, cooking, singing, and dancing (Parafita 59)[128]. The *moura* usually appears combing her long, blond hair, a symbol of overt femininity and wanton female sexuality (Riches 133). She lives near a source of water or ancient ruins where an enchanted treasure, therefore inaccessible, is hidden. Like in the tale of Hippocrates' daughter, only a man brave enough to kiss her on the mouth while in her animal form (usually a snake) can reclaim the richness she keeps[129]. In the popular imagination, the *moura* represents the ideal woman (Parafita 59). The enchanted treasure symbolises the utopian dimension of wealth that feeds the dream and spirit but can lead to a rupture with the rural society in which these stories were disseminated (Parafita 65).

*

For the episode of Hippocrates' daughter, Mandeville manipulated different traditions, creating its own "internal folklore", an expression employed by James Wade to refer to the "unique imagining of fairies and the Otherworld at large in medieval romance" (22) that can also be applied to *The Book* (which include fairies, as we will see in the next chapter). During the twelfth century, authors such as Gervais of Tilbury, Gerald of Wales, and Marie de France, who worked in the English court, wrote similar texts, but Mandeville's tale is much more intricate. It was not until the composition of *Mélusin*e, more than twenty years later, that a narrative with a similar storyline surpassed *The Book* in terms of complexity and reworking of old sources.

Despite presenting himself as a traveller who had seen the world, Mandeville did not write down his stories to entertain his readers. He aimed to convey a message. This brings him much closer to fiction than to travel writing and other forms of medieval non-fiction. Furthermore, the tale of the dragon woman of Lango proves that Mandeville had a deep knowledge of the literary tradition of the Middle Ages, namely that of romance, and that he was influenced by it.

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[128] Although called *mouras*, they are not connected with the so-called Moorish people (*mouros*), Muslins who had a real presence in the Iberian territory for many centuries. See Parafita, Alexandre. *A Mitologia dos Mouros*. Gailivro, 2006.

[129] For a selection of legends, see Parafita 239-70.

2. Hippocrates' daughter and the rhetoric of the Crusades in *The Book of John Mandeville*

Hippocrates' daughter's body combines two familiar characters in medieval chivalric romance: the dangerous serpent or dragon and the beautiful lady. Like Mélusine, she is "a figure that challenges conventional norms, bringing great distress to the knight who encounters her" (*The Mélusine Romance in Medieval Europe* 27). She is the defying creature the hero must overcome to prove himself, and she is also his prize. The challenge is particularly demanding for the knights in the story Mandeville tells. The male heroes of medieval romance often have distinguishing qualities, but the knights in *The Book* are far from exemplary. They are ungallant — they fail to live up to chivalric standards; are not brave, gentle, or dedicated; do not offer protection to the lady in need; do not behave appropriately in love affairs but harass the damsel they are trying to court; and are not concerned with the feelings of others, an attitude that lies at the root of courtliness (Duggan in *Yvain* 208). They act precisely contrary to the advice given by Perceval's mother at the beginning of Chrétien de Troyes' *Le Conte du Graal*:

> Se vos trovez ne pres ne loing
> dame qui d'aïe ait besoing,
> ne pucele desconselliee,
> la vostre aïe aparelliee
> lor soit, s'eles vos an requierent,
> que totes enors i afierent.
> Qui as dames enor ne porte,
> la soe enors doit estre morte.
> Dames et puceles servez,
> si seroiz partot enorez;
> et se vos aucune an proiez,
> gardez que vos ne l'enuiez;
> ne fetes rien qui li despleise ("Perceval chez sa mère", *Le Conte du Graal*).
>
> [Should you find a lady in need —
> Anywhere, near or far —
> Or a girl in need of protection,
> Always offer your aid,
> If they ask it, for there's no honor
> That isn't built on that base.

A knight indifferent to a lady's
Honor has lost his own.
But serve ladies and girls
And honor will always be yours.
And if you court a woman,
Be careful you don't harass her:
Do nothing that might displease her (*Perceval* 18, lines 532-545).]

The second knight is not even a real knight. He is knighted in a rush on board of a ship. In the late Middle Ages, investiture was a central event in the life of all knights. It was often the culmination of several years of training in a noble household. It followed specific procedures, and the honour had to be bestowed by a knight. The episode in *The Book* does not include any information about how and by whom the young man was knighted, so the validity of the ceremony can be questioned. It indicates that, in the time of Mandeville, the old practices and traditions of knighthood were no longer being respected, and the institution was entering a phase of decline. The deterioration is evident in the way chivalric values were becoming unimportant to the military class (Saul 358).

Mandeville was not alone in his concern. Other late medieval authors commented on the state of knighthood, too. Gower reflected "on the falseness of knights, lambasting them for their self-indulgence, their cruelty and their quest for worldly glory" (Saul 129), stating that "the number of knights increases, but their Sactivity decreases; thus honour is empty since it is without responsibility" (qtd. in Saul 129). Addressing the question of war in *Confessio Amantis*, he described it as "a worldly cause" that violated charity, adding that even a just cause attracted the unscrupulous (qtd. in Saul 129). Chaucer also reflected on the subject. In the *Wife of Bath Tale*, a knight abuses his power to rob a maiden of her virginity. Also from the same period, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* portrays Gawain, Arthur's nephew and member of his court, as the last representative of the golden age of chivalry.

Socially, knights and their affinities were also not very popular, notably among urban merchants and the lesser gentry, who repeatedly criticised them in the English Parliament (Yeager in Passmore and Carter 52). The seller's representatives accused them of being responsible for "the empty losses and expenditures in the failing French war, and increasingly decrying the abuses fostered on them by the liveried (and hence legally exempted) affinities of the great lords" (Yeager in Passmore and Carter 52). However, the number of knights increased. "Socially, chivalry was

important … because it helped to bring the nobility together and set it apart from the rest of society. Chivalry created a noble fellowship and a litmus test of honour. Edward III understood this and used chivalry to glorify himself and his war, inspire knights and magnates, and bind them to him" (Waugh 130). The king's military victories in the One Hundred Years War and chivalric policies, which included the foundation of a chivalric order, the Order of the Garter, around 1348, and the organisation of annual tournaments on the feast of St. George (23 April), sparked a revival of knighthood (Waugh 126). The number of knights in England increased during Edward's reign, and knighthood entered a golden era (Waugh 119; 126). However, it was of a very different kind. Because of the conflict, "the individual interests of knights were being subordinated to collective action and commands in the cause of achieving nationally agreed goals. Against this background, individual knights could no longer go their own way questioning for personal honour and renown. … the greater good of the many took precedence over pursuit of individual knightly self-interest" (Saul 356-7). With the death of Edward in 1377 and his son, Edward of Woodstock, the Black Prince[130], in 1376, the numbers fell again (126).

By transforming the hero of chivalric medieval romance into the anti-hero and the monster into the wronged victim with a higher morality, Mandeville is subverting a well-known literary model to criticise medieval knighthood and its values, to question its status, and to acknowledge its decline and exhaustion in the late Middle Ages. Similarly to the English *loathly lady* tales, nobility of character is revealed through behaviour rather than appearance, which can be deceptive (Passmore and Carter 22). The male characters may seem noble because they are knights, but the horrible dragon woman behaves nobly and teaches them a lesson. The fact that little is told about the characters in the episode leads to the conclusion that they are used to develop a social and political analysis of late medieval society. The criticism becomes explicit when the author refers directly to the Knights Hospitaller of Rhodes, at first when describing the first knight, a "hardy" member of the military religious order (*The Defective Version* 15, line 22), and when resuming the description of the voyage (16, lines 26-30).

Initially called the Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem, the Hospitallers were founded shortly before the 1070s (Nicholson 3) and officially recognised by a papal bull in the early twentieth century. Like the Order of the Temple, formally founded in 1120 to defend pilgrims visiting the Holy City, the Knights Hospitallers were under the direct order of the pope but acted independently (Nicholson 8). Their link with the Papacy was indicative of the increasing authority

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[130] See Jones, Michael. *The Black Prince*. Head of Zeus, 2017.

and control of the pope over the Catholic Church from the mid-eleventh century on (Nicholson 8). As the situation in the Crusader States became more difficult from the mid-twelfth century on, the order also defended the Holy Land, a function shared with the Templars. Their militarization did not reflect a rivalry with the Order of the Temple but "the desperate need of the kingdom of Jerusalem for military forces, which the Templars also tried to supply" (Nicholson 13). After the loss of the port city of Acre (1291), on the Mediterranean coast of the southern Levant, where the Hospitallers had established themselves alongside the Templars after the fall of Jerusalem (1187), they moved to Limassol in Cyprus and then to Rhodes in Greece. In 1306, with the approval of Pope Clement V (ruler of the Papal States from 1305 to his death in 1324), a pact was made with Vignolo dei Vignoli, a Genovese pirate and landowner of Rhodes and other smaller islands, by which the Hospitallers became rulers of Rhodes, Lango, and Leros (Nicholson 46-7). With the extinction of the Templars in 1312, after a series of scandals promoted by Philip IV of France (1268-1314)[131], the Hospitallers became the most important military religious order. That did not mean they were exempted from being criticised. On the contrary, critical voices were raised against them in the fourteenth century — the order was accused of not doing enough and not defending the Christian interests in the East (Nicholson 50).

By then, Europe's social and institutional landscapes had profoundly changed. With the replacement of feudal summons with a system of contracts in the thirteenth century, the importance of the idea of military service as a feudal obligation started to diminish, causing the weakening of the old institution of feudalism (*English Medieval Knight 1200-1300* 7; 10-11; *English Medieval Knight 1400-1500* 6). Because knights no longer needed to fight for their lord in return for land, many preferred "the lifestyle of the landowner, man-about-town and parliamentary representative" (*English Medieval Knight 1400-1500* 6), "the by-product of a more general demilitarising of society" (Saul 358). On the other hand, at the end of the thirteenth century, many knights started to refuse the title, which was hereditary, because of the costs involved in maintaining it (Waugh 119). "As a result, after 1300 many who did not want to become knights, yet still wanted an honorific title, called themselves esquires, raising the status of the title" (Waugh 119). As pointed out by Franco Cardini, the chivalric adventure that dominated the European landscape for centuries was, at its core, a search for new sources of wealth and the possibility of military conscription (in *O Homem Medieval* ["The Medieval Man"] 68). Without it, it meant that chivalry and all that it

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131 See Frale, Barbara. *Os Templários*. Tradução de Helena Sousa Leitão. Edições 70, 2021. [Frale, Barbara. *The Templars: The Secret History Revealed*. Translated by Gregory Conti. Foreword by Umberto Eco. Arcade, 2009.]

represented was in crisis. G. G. Coulton suggested that "in England, the decay of knighthood was due partly to the rise of the citizen class, partly to the Hundred Years' War and the War of the Roses" (1455–85) (59)[132]. "Many barons and their retainers exhausted themselves in civil wars so that feudalism had ceased to be a serious political force even before the Middle Ages were over", Coulton noted (60).

The One Hundred Years War divided Europe into two rival factions for more than a century, consuming resources on both sides of the English Channel. It started after Edward III, a descendant of the late king of France by his mother's side, publicly claimed his right to the French throne after his position as Duke of Gascony had been threatened by Philip VI following years of tense relations due to the war in Scotland, a historic French ally. The conflict began in 1337 and continued for a long time after the death of Edward III in 1377. What was not taken by war was taken by disease. In the 1340s, Europe was ravaged by the Black Death. It arrived in England by 1348 and struck again in 1360, 1369, and 1374, killing nearly one-half of the people living in the kingdom (Waugh 21). The pestilence provoked a dramatic fall in the English population, already in inflation due to the return of famine in 1315-7, which had practically disappeared in the West during the thirteenth century, transforming the crisis into a catastrophe (*A Civilização do Ocidente Medieval* [*Medieval Civilization*] 143)[133]. "The dramatic fall in population resounded throughout the economy, affecting wages, prices, and agricultural production. It marked a significant turning point" (Waugh 90). Historians debate if its impact was felt only in the social and economic plans or if the pandemic also altered the balance of political power, "perhaps expediting the collapse of feudalism and severely denting faith in the Church" (Jenkins 75), which was already greatly shaken by the Great Schism (1378-1418)[134]. By the end of the Middle Ages, "almost everywhere in Europe

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[132] The Wars of the Roses (1455–85) was a series of dynastic civil wars fought between the houses of Lancaster and York that preceded the government of the Tudors. The conflict was named many years afterwards from the badges of the contending parties: the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster. See Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Wars of the Roses." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 5 Dec. 2023. britannica.com/event/Wars-of-the-Roses.

[133] In the Portuguese edition: "A diminuição da resistência física subsequente ao agravamento da subalimentação deve ter tido o seu papel nos estragos que, por fim, a partir de 1348, a Peste Negra veio fazer, provocando uma descida brutal da curva demográfica, já em inflexão, e transformando a crise em catástrofe" (*A Civilização do Ocidente Medieval* [*Medieval Civilization*] 143).

[134] See Logan, F. Donald. *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages*. Routledge, 2005, pp. 297-331.

there was war, overpopulation (relative to resources), economic stagnation and decline, filth, overcrowding, epidemic (nonplague) disease, and famine", John Kelly concluded (xvi)[135].

In parallel, the crusading movement entered a phase of decline. The Fifth Crusade (1213-1229) is usually considered the final significant effort to take the Holy Land. Its primary focus was Egypt, the heart and operative centre of the Ayyubid dynasty, founded by Saladin[136] in the eleventh century and the main threat to crusader forces in the East since then[137]. After 1229, the situation worsened, and the Crusades in the East progressed from pragmatism into optimism and into despair (*Pequena História* [*The History of the Crusades: A Very Short Introduction*] 67). With lesser intervention from European kings, the sending of troops became the responsibility of the high nobility, the original driving force behind the Crusades. In 1270, the future Edward I, inspired by the example of Richard I, led a military expedition to the Holy Land, one of the last *passagium* undertaken by a prominent Western leader. With the fall of Acre in 1291, at the hands of Al-Ashraf Khalil, the eighth Mamluk sultan of Egypt, the Crusader States in the East ceased to exist (Saul 230). After that, the expeditions became smaller and smaller, and their aims more modest. The target was shifted to regions with European borders and the expeditions were organised by individuals not belonging to the nobility. However, the importance of the Crusades as an expression of the knightly ideal did not disappear (Saul 230), as the initial interest shown by Edward III in the preparations for a *passagium* under the leadership of Philip VI of France demonstrates. For the young king, the expedition was a way of asserting himself as ruler in the first years of his reign (Keen 89-90; Mortimer 95). But Edward III had other plans, and although he discussed the organisation of a crusade in Parliament, he soon abandoned the idea. The war in Scotland, a kind of "prelude" to the One Hundred Years War (Keen 87), and the growing hostility with France led to the

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135 See Belich, James. *The World the Plague Made: The Black Death and the Rise of Europe*. Princeton University Press, 2022.

136 See Philips, Jonathan. *A Vida e Lenda do Sultão Saladino*. Tradução de Luís Santos. Desassossego, 2021. [Philips, Jonathan. *The Life and Legend of the Sultan Saladin*. Yale University Press, 2019.]

137 In Mandeville's time, Jerusalem was ruled by the Mamluks, who conquered the city in 1250 after a plot that put an end to the Ayyubid dynasty. The Mamluk period lasted until 1517 when Jerusalem was peacefully captured by the Ottomans after a military campaign in Syria and Palestine. See Atrim, Zayde. "Jerusalem in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods." *Routledge Handbook on Jerusalem*. Edited by Suleiman A. Mourad, Naomi Koltun-Fromm and Bedross Der Matossian. Routledge, 2019, pp. 102-110. On the Ottomans, see Baer, Marc David. *The Ottomans — Khans, Caesars and Caliphs*. Basic Books, 2021. (Portuguese edition: Baer, Marc David. *Os Otomanos — Cães, Césares e Califa*s. Tradução de Artur Lopes Cardoso. Temas e Debates, 2022).

definitive abandonment of the project. Edward III was the first English monarch since Stephen (1135-54) to not take the cross (*England and the Crusades* 246-7).

Mandeville comments on Europe's political situation and how it affected the crusading movement. In the Prologue to his book, he declares, somewhat bitterly, that pride, greed, and envy have so inflamed the hearts of the lords that they are more interested in fighting against "here neiȝeboris" (*The Defective Version* 4, line 22)[138] than reclaiming the Holy Land, the inheritance left by Christ to the Christian community[139].

> "… now pruyde, eunye, and couetise haþ so enflawmed þe hertis of lordis of þe world þat þei beþ mre besy for to disherite here neiȝeboris þan for to calenge or conquere here riȝt heritage biforesed" (*The Defective Version* 4, lines 20-23).

The author's argument is similar to the one used by Urban II (1088-1099) in his speech at the Council of Clermont (1905), when he called for a crusade to take the Holy Land from Muslim control. According to the chronicle of the First Crusade by Robert the Monk (d. 1122), the Pope urged the Franks to stop fighting against each other for a land that had "not much wealth" and whose "soil scarcely" yielded "enough" (in Thatcher and McNeal 601). "On this account you kill and devour each other, and carry on war and mutually destroy each other. Let your hatred and quarrels cease, your civil wars come to an end, and all your discussions stop. Set out on the road to the Holy Sepulchre, take the land from the wicked people, and make it your own", he appealed (Robert the Monk in Thatcher and McNeal 601). Stressing that God gave Jerusalem, "the best of all lands", to the "children of Israel", the Pope added that the "royal city" was being "held captive by her enemies" and longed to be liberated (Robert the Monk in Thatcher and McNeal 601). Although Mandeville does not speak of atrocities committed by the Muslims against Christians — on the contrary —, he also accuses the leaders and other influential members of society of wasting their time in useless wars instead of concentrating their efforts on what really matters.

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[138] When Mandeville speaks about "here neiȝeboris" (*The Defective Version* 4, line 22), he is possibly referring not only to the One Hundred Years War but also to the conflict in Scotland. The Treaty of Berwick (1357), which officially ended the Second War of Scottish Independence, was signed in the year usually pointed out as the possible date of the conclusion of *The Book of John Mandeville.*

[139] The idea of Jerusalem as the rightful inheritance of Christians is not an original one. It can be found in one of Mandeville's sources, *Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus* (c. 1336), by William of Boldensele. William describes the Holy City as "heritage" at the beginning of his book, repeating the same idea further on, at the start of the first chapter. See *The Book of John Mandeville* 221-4.

Further, Mandeville states that ordinary people would gladly risk their lives to fight for Jerusalem if they had a lord's guidance. He compares them to a flock of sheep that need a shepherd, stressing the importance of good leadership and example.

> And þe comyn puple þat wolde putte here bodies and catel for to conquere our heritage, þei may not do wiþoute lordis, for assemble of þe puple wiþoute [a chief] lorde þat may gouerne hem is as a flok of scheep þat haþ no scheephurd, þe which is departi asunder and woot neuer whide þei schulde go (*The Defective Version* 4, lines 23-27).

Mandeville suggests that the situation in the Christian East could be different if the great European lords, namely the kings of England and France, acted differently. In Chapter 7 of *The Book*, while speaking about the territories that were once conquered by the first Christian emperor, Constantine, and that used to be inhabited by eremites, the author insists again on the need to fight for the holy places, regretting that they were lost to heathens and Saracens through sinfulness (*The Defective Version* 30-1). The idea of moral decadence is also present in the episode of Hippocrates' daughter. The two knights are not moved by chivalrous ideals but by greed and lust, two of the Seven Deadly Sins, the capital vices according to Christian teachings[140]. Because of their dubious morality, they cannot fulfil the quest and save the damsel. They have proven themselves unworthy of the treasure — "which in mythopoeic romance often means wealth in its ideal forms, power and wisdom" (Frye 193) — that the body of the dragon hides and the prosperity that that same body could give them. Similarly, the Muslims conquered the Crusader States because knights and lords were no longer worthy of Christ's inheritance. Only "when God wol, riȝt as þese londis beþ lost wiþ synne of christen men, so schal þei be wonne aȝen by help of God þurȝ cristene men" (*The Defective Version* 31, lines 2-4). However, that will only happen when they prove themselves capable of reversing the process of moral decadence into which Christian European society fell. In Mandeville's view, the only way to do it is by arranging a new *passagium* and recovering the lost holy places in Palestine and Syria as a way of doing penitence[141]. Sir John was not the only English author to appeal. Other fourteenth century fiction and nonfiction writers expressed similar concerns, as Suzanne M. Yeager demonstrated in *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative* (2008). The difference between them and Mandeville lies in how and why the English knight chose to do it.

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[140] The Seven Deadly Sins, also known as cardinal sins, are: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth.

[141] Just like Mandeville. See Chapter I.

In “The Social Function of the Middle English Romances”, Stephen Knight upheld that these narratives are infused with “ideological material” (93). In the case of what he called “interrogative romances”, such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (late fourteenth century) and Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur* (1485), he argues that “they show an instinctive grasp and a distinct critique of the social structures of feudal England and its cultural projections” (100) that was understood by the audience, which was mainly composed of “people who were not in positions of power but accepted the values of those who were” (90). In *The English Romance in Time*, Helen Cooper argued that many medieval romances were “designed not just for reading but for discussion” (12). Audiences were expected “to respond actively to them, and the writers encouraged such a response” (*The English Romance in Time* 13).

> It is this kind of engaged reception of romances — by audiences who could and did *think* about what they were reading, and who could recognize the resonances of the story across the whole genre — that helped to make plot motifs become memes, with their ability to replicate and adapt (*The English Romance in Time* 13).

The reworking of old patterns by romance authors enabled audience recognition. It made possible “a much greater and more concise subtlety of response than could be achieved by invention from scratch” (*The English Romance in Time* 21). The distinction and the originality are in how authors handled the material and their ability to disrupt and shock. These reactions could come from “upset expectations” or “the recognition of something long known but in circumstances that defamiliarize it” (*The English Romance in Time* 21).

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Instead of laying out his intentions clearly, Mandeville chose to play with the possibilities of romance and the familiarity of the readers with its standard episodes and motifs, creating an exciting and entertaining narrative that invites them to think beyond the story and discover the

importance and centrality of Jerusalem in the Christian world[142]. Episodes such as the tale of the dragon woman of Lango reveal the degradation of morality in fourteenth century Europe and how it affected the finer part of European society — chivalry —, Mandeville's primary concern. As highlighted by Howard, *The Book of John Mandeville* "is meant to delight, and its popularity shows it succeed in this; but it is meant to teach as well" (2).

While writing, Mandeville may have considered the necessity of hiding his criticism. The dangers inherent in explicit criticism against those in power often led to authors using "camouflaged texts" (Fester, *Fictions of Advice* 4 qtd. in Passmore and Carter 5), especially by those who relied on patronage from the nobility. In *Vox Clamantis,* Gower, "a self-conscious moralist … who wrote in order to affect social change" (Yeager in Passmore and Carter 43), used several strategies to establish the idea that the material in Book I was the product of Antiquity. Many stories, like "The Tale of Florent", are set in a distant time and place and not in the reign of Richard II, the target of the poet's critique (Passmore in Passmore and Carter 13-4; Yeager in Passmore and Carter 50). There is no way of knowing Mandeville's social position. However, he might have wished to protect himself against future attacks (especially if he was a runaway, as has been suggested[143]) by concealing his more powerful commentaries in legends and marvellous stories that could easily pass out as fictional creations. To understand what he was trying to convey and "find the political in the fairy tale", readers had to "properly" connect the dots (Yeager in Passmore and Carter 51).

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[142] See Higgins, Iain Macleod. "Defining the Earth's Center in a Medieval 'Multi-Text': Jerusalem in The Book of John Mandeville." *Text and Territory. Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*. Edited by Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998, pp. 29-53; Moseley, Charles. "The Travels of Sir John Mandeville and the Moral Geography of the Medieval World." *PORTAL – Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*. Geographies of Identity: Special Issue, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2015. Guest edited by Matthew Graves and Elizabeth Recniewski. UTSePress. epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/portal/article/view/4381.

[143] Many questions persist on why Mandeville left England to go on such a long journey. At the beginning of his book, he deems himself "unworthy" and ends the narrative by beseeching the readers to pray for him and request God to forgive his sins. Perhaps he was just presenting himself in humble terms or, perhaps, he was suggesting he had done something that needed to be pardoned. The Liège Version is the only one to offer an explanation for Mandeville's departure: according to the text, the knight left after killing a nobleman (Bennett 280). On the Liège Version, see note 33.

Chapter IV

The legend of the Sparrowhawk Castle and the decadence of late medieval European society

In Chapter 14, after describing the Holy Land and the nearby countries, Sir John Mandeville tells the story of the Sparrowhawk Castle, an old fortress between the cities of *Larrays* (now Ayas) and *Parcipie* (Perşembe) in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (also known as Lesser Armenia). The castle stands on a cliff and belongs to the "lord of Croke" (now Korykos), whom he describes as "a riche man" (*The Defective Version* 65, line 18). Inside it, there is a hawk on a perch that is kept by a beautiful lady "of fayrie" (*The Defective Version* 65, lines 19-20). If anyone keeps the animal awake for seven days and seven nights (some say three days and three nights) without any other company or sleep, the fairy will appear and give that person the first earthly thing he or she wishes for.

> In þat cuntre is an old castel is vpopn a roche wiche men clepiþ *le castel desperuer*, whiche is bitwene þe cite of Larrays and nere to þe cite of Parcipie, of whom is þe lord of Croke lord and he is a richer man. And in þat castel men found an hauk sittying vpon a perche riȝt wel ymade and a fayrie þat kepiþ it. And he who wole wake þis hauk vii. daies and vii. niȝtes (and somme seiþ iii. dayes and iii. nyȝtes) aloone wiþoute cumpenye and slepe not, þis faire lady schal come to hym at vii. day (oþer iii. day) ende and heo schal graunte hym [the first þynge] that he wole aske of þingis þat beþ wordelich (*The Defective Version* 65, lines 15-24).

Mandeville says this has often been tried and describes two of those attempts.

The author of the manuscript of the Defective Version edited by Seymour, which is the basis of this dissertation, refers to the fortress by its Anglo-Norman name, *le castel desperuer*, which means "the Sparrowhawk Castle" in English (65, line 16). The composer of the Egerton Version does the same but adds the English translation of the name, *"þe Castell of þe Sperhawke"* (Warner 74)[144]. In both manuscripts, several names of relevant landmarks are written in Anglo-

[144] In the Metrical Version, the castle has no name. It is identified as "an oolde forleten castelle" where "there is a wondir grete meruelle", "a faire sperhauke" (*The Metrical Version* 42, lines 1549-50; line 1552).

Norman, like *Port de Pounce*[145], referred to just before the story about the Armenian fortress (*The Defective Version* 64, line 27). According to Christine V. Bourgeois, this approach suggests "that the literary professionals responsible for the English language transmission of the *Livre des merveilles du monde* regarded the original presentation of French as a privileged vehicle of meaning making, a feature of textual experience worthy of translation proofing" (11).

Although the bird is evidently a sparrowhawk, the author refers to it to as *hauk*, the Middle English word for "hawk" or "falcon" (R. Lewis). The redactor of the Defective Version certainly knew the word *sperhauke*, which he uses in Chapter 19, about the court of the Great Khan. The choice of words, which probably has to do with the fact that both birds belong to the same animal family (*Accipitridae*), but which may also have resulted from a copy error (there are others in the same passage), is apparently common to all Defective manuscripts. The text of *British Library, MS. Royal C.xxxviii* (1400-1425), edited by Kohanski and Benson[146], uses *hauke* (58-9, lines 1406-1433). The Pynson Edition (1496), the earliest printed edition of *The Book of John Mandeville* in England, which is based on a lost manuscript of the Defective variation (Kohanski liv), employs the words *hawke* and *hauke* (46). The Egerton and Cotton versions are more assertive, but the Middle English for "hawk" is also used (two times in both variations). For reasons of coherence, I will refer to the bird as "sparrowhawk".

1. The two attempts

The first attempt to keep the sparrowhawk awake, described by Mandeville, involves a king of Armenia, "a douȝty man" (*The Defective Version* 65, lines 26-7). After keeping the

[145] *Pontus Euxinus* was the name given to the Black Sea. Here it is applied to the port city of Trebizond, on the coast of the Black Sea, in what is now northern Turkey (Tzanaki 120). The city was founded by Greek colonists in 756 BCE. In 1204, after the sack of Constantinople by the crusaders, an offshoot of the Byzantine Empire was founded with Trebizond as its capital. It was annexed to the Ottoman Empire in 1461. See Knowles, Elizabeth, editor. "Trebizond." *The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press, 2005. oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780198609810.001.0001/acref-9780198609810-e-7246. On the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond, see Vasiliev, A. A. "The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond (1204-1222)." *Speculum*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1936, pp. 3–37. *JSTOR*, doi.org/10.2307/2846872; Vasiliev, A. A. "THE EMPIRE OF TREBIZOND IN HISTORY AND LITERATURE." *Byzantion*, Vol. 15, 1940, pp. 316–77. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/44168532.

[146] The *British Library, MS. Royal C.xxxviii* does not belong to the five main subgroups of the Defective Version. See Chapter I.

sparrowhawk awake for seven days[147], the fairy came to him and told him to make a wish, for he had accomplished the task. The king answered that he was "a grete lord and in good pees and þat he was riche, so þat he wolde aske noþing but þe body of þe faire lady to haue to his wille" (*The Defective Version* 65, lines 29-30; 66, line 1). The lady said he did not know what he was asking for — he could not have her because she was not a material thing; therefore, he should ask for another thing. The lord insisted, and so the fairy chose for him: for nine generations, there would not be peace in his kingdom, which would be constantly under the threat of Muslims.

> "'Sire kyng, ȝe schal [haue were withoute pees alweye vnto þe degree and ȝe schalle] be in subieccioun of ȝoure enemys and ȝe schal haue grete neode of good and catel.' And siþþe þat tyme alle þe kynges of Ermonye haue be in were and neodeful [and vndyr tribute of Sarzyns]" (*The Defective Version* 66, lines 6-10).

The story is told in a slightly different way in the Egerton Version. In this variation, the fairy gives a longer answer to the king, in which she affirms her supernatural characteristics: "'Vnhappily', quod scho, 'and vnwisely has þou asked. For my body may þou noȝt hafe, by cause I am noȝt erthely, bot spirituall'." (Warner 75). In the Metrical, which highlights the passages about wonders, the story appears in second place, not first. While answering the monarch, the lady says she is "noo woman erthely" (*The Metrical Version* 43, line 1600). As punishment, she puts the lord and his "ospringe alle affter the / Til ye come to the nyneth degre" in subjection "of the Cane" (*The Metrical Version* 44, lines 1607-8; 1605), who is not referred to in the manuscripts belonging to the Defective group.

The second attempt was made by "a pore mannus sone" (*The Defective Version* 66, line 11). After succeeding in keeping the sparrowhawk awake, the youngster asked the fairy to make him prosperous in his trade businesses. The lady conceded to him what he wanted but warned him that, by asking for wealth, he desired his own perdition, "for grete pruyde þat he schulde haue" (*The Defective Version* 66, line 14). Some members of the commercial sector, particularly bankers, were viewed unfavourably by the Church due to their association with the sins of usury and greed, which were severely condemned in sermons and *exempla* (Gurevič in *O Homem Medieval* ["The Medieval Man] 168-9). During the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, merchants emerged as vital members of medieval society. They held significant positions in some cities, particularly in Italy,

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[147] Although Mandeville seems uncertain about the number of days needed to complete the task (*The Defective Version*, lines 20-23), he specifically says the king spent seven days with the sparrowhawk: "…at þe ende of þe seuen dayes þe lady come to hym…" (65, lines 27-8).

where they wielded significant power. Unlike knights, whose nobility was inherited, merchants relied solely on their entrepreneurial skills to succeed, and the nobility often looked upon them with contempt (Gurevič in *O Homem Medieval* ["The Medieval Man"] 175-6).

The story of the "pore mannus sone" in the Defective Version (66, line 11) is different from the ones in the two English variations based on it, the Egerton and Cotton. In the Egerton Version, the youngster became "þe ricchest marchand of all þat land, so þat he knew noȝt þe thowsand parte of his gude" (Warner 75) without any warning from the fairy. Instead, the text concludes, "he was wyser þan þe kyng before" (Warner 75). The Cotton follows the same storyline without alluding to the sin of pride, which is only mentioned in the third attempt, which is absent in the Defective manuscripts. This was made by a knight from the Order of the Temple, who asked the fairy for a purse always full of gold[148]. The lady granted him the wish, but she told him that, by desiring the bag, he had asked for the destruction of his order, warning him that its members had great pride. "And so it befell afterward", the Egerton text concludes (Warner 75). As mentioned before, the Templars, the most influential and wealthy military religious order of the Middle Ages, were extinct in 1312 by order of the Pope, some decades before the conclusion of *The Book*. However, its violent suppression, which culminated with the execution of the last Gand Master, Jacques de Molay, who was burned at the stake by Philippe IV of France in 1314, was in recent memory.

The Egerton Version derives from the Defective, but it splits from it after the 'Egyptian gap', which occurs before Chapter 14 (in the Insular versions, the description of Egypt corresponds to Chapter 7)[149]. This could explain the difference. However, Seymour suggested that the two "anecdotes … are merged" because of "a scribal omission" that has nothing to do with the gap (*The Defective Version* 151). Errors were common, and a mistake may have been made while the text was copied from the original French.

The episode of the Sparrowhawk Castle ends with a warning: anyone who wishes to watch over the bird must never fall asleep. Otherwise, he or she will be lost forever. Mandeville then observes that the Sparrowhawk Castle is not on the correct route, and it is only relevant because of the "merueyl" hidden behind its walls (*The Defective Version* 66, line 17).

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[148] During the kingdom of Levon I, the military religious orders increased their presence in the Cilician kingdom. According to Dweezil Vandekerchove, by 1250, the Templars, Hospitallers, and Teutonic held castles inside or on the fringes of Armenia (41).

[149] See Chapter I.

> “But he þat schal wake þis hauk haþ nede to kepe hym fro slepe, for yf he sleepe he schal be lost þat he chal nuer be seye. But þis castle is not [þe ryght wey bot for] þe merueyl” (*The Defective Version* 66, lines 14-17).

2. Origins

Similarly to the legend of Hippocrates’ daughter, the episode of the Sparrowhawk Castle has no known origin. However, most scholars agree that Mandeville relied on previous sources that have yet to be identified. Albrecht Classen, who studied the ‘Sparrowhawk Mountain’ motif, pointed out that, by admitting the test may consist of three days and nights, showing he is not sure of the time needed to overcome the challenge, the author is indicating that he “drew from older sources, which are, however, very hard to detect” (50). Seymour is of the same opinion:

> … it seems certain that ‘Mandeville’ merged two accounts of the legend; in all other versions [besides the Metrical, in which he refers exclusively to the period of three days and nights[150]] he gives an alternative time limit …, which perhaps argues two distinct versions of the legend unless an early version *in vii.* has been misread as *iii. vii* (*The Metrical Version* 107).

Higgins and Deluz compared Mandeville’s tale to a supposedly analogue legend told by Wilbrand of Oldenburg (d. 1230), whom the critics do not consider one of the English knight’s sources[151]. In the first part of *Itinerarium Terrae Sanctae,* Wilbrand relates that in 1211, while visiting the Cilician Kingdom of Armenia, he passed by “a fairly pleasant mountain, which they call the mountain of things to come” (*montem de aventuris*), located near the castle of *Toprak* (“Thila”) (in Pringle 80-1). According to what the German cleric and his travel companions heard “from a reliable source” while on their way to Korykos, “whoever fasts for six weeks, participates in the penances undertaken for those days and having thus fasted enters the said mountain, to him will come without doubt good and happy experiences” (in Pringle 81). As proof of the possibility of “such experiences”, Wildbrand described what happened to “a certain knight”, whom he met while in Antioch (in Pringle 81):

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150 Concerning the suppression of an alternative time limit in the Metrical Version of *The Book of John Mandeville*, Seymour suggested it may be due to the author’s knowledge of falconry. The traditional method of taming a wild hawk is to keep it awake continuously until it falls asleep from exhaustion on the falconer’s writs (*The Metrical Version* 107). It usually takes three days and nights (*The Metrical Version* 107).

151 See Appendix II.

> He found there, by his kind of good fortune, a towel, which provided his family and whatever guests he was accustomed to invite with all necessary foodstuffs, in such a way that they would be found already prepared on it on the table. If only a servant could run to attend to my needs in just the same way! (in Pringle 81).

The two tales have very little in common except that they are set in Armenia, albeit in different locations, and both reference a fasting period. It is not much, and both Higgins and Deluz note that, stressing that there is no proof that Mandeville knew Wilibrand's tale. Seymour speaks yet of another similar story. In his *Relatio*, Odoric of Pordenone, one of Mandeville's primary sources, refers to a castle in Zegana, near Trebizond, in Greater Armenia, associated with partridges (*The Metrical Version* 107). Perhaps the sparrowhawk replaced the partridges in *The Book*, Seymour suggested (*The Metrical Version* 107). However, as pointed out by Classen, all "efforts to track down Mandeville's source … remain, until today, mostly speculation" (52), and the author, as far as it is known, was responsible for the introduction of the episode into the Western narrative tradition (60)[152].

Some things may be of unknown origin, but others were evidently of historical origin. In the late fourteenth century, the time of Mandeville, the Cilician Kingdom of Armenia was going through a moment of significant political instability from which it never recovered. Founded two centuries earlier in southeast Asia Minor, the kingdom was a former province of the Eastern Roman Empire (like Cyprus), whose Byzantine suzerainty was shaken off by the Armenian population (Coureas 35)[153]. Following the downfall of the Latin East in the late thirteenth century, Cyprus, which had also been founded in the mid-twelfth century and whose rulers led the title of 'King of Jerusalem' without interruption since the reign of King Hugh III (d. 1284), and Cilician Armenia became easy targets for the Mamluks, who wanted to enlarge their domains in the region (Edbury 113). Cyprus remained unscathed, but Armenia came under considerable pressure and suffered constant attacks (Edbury 107), especially during the reign of Hetum I, whose son and future king, Levon, was taken prisoner by the Mamluks in 1266, spending one year and ten months in Egypt

152 The second known occurrence of the tale, as it is told by Mandeville, is in *Mélusine*. In Jean d'Arras' romance, the lady of the Sparrowhawk Castle is one of Mélusine's two twin sisters, Melior. It is believed that *The Book of John Mandeville* directly inspired Jean's romance. Referring to the connection between Mandeville and Jean d'Arras, Moseley suggested that the episode of the Sparrowhawk Castle is "a version of the Mélusine romance" (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 41).

153 On the foundation of the Cicilian kingdom of Armenia, see Ghazarin 29-80.

(Ghazarian 58-9). In the fourteenth century, struggles within the Armenian ruling house led to feudal anarchy that culminated in the ascension of the Lusignan of Cyprus (Ghazarian 158; Edbury 115), the noble house of French origin to whose *Mélusine*, by Jean d'Arras, is dedicated. They were still in power in Armenia when Mandeville wrote his book.

The house ruled the Kingdom of Cyprus from 1192 to 1498 and had strong connections to Cilician Armenia, reinforced from the thirteenth century on by marriage, starting with the marriage of King Leo II of Armenia with Sibylla, half-sister of King Hugh of Cyprus, in 1210, according to Armenian chronicles (Edbury 115; Coureas 34). In 1237, King Henry I of Cyprus married Stephania, sister of King Hayton of Armenia (Coureas 35). Margaret of Lusignan (1276-1296), daughter of Hugh III of Cyprus, married Toros (c. 1271-1298), who reigned briefly as Toros III from 1293 to 1298; Amaury de Lusignan, lord of Tyre, married Isabel, daughter of Levon II (c. 1236-1289) and sister of Toros III and Oshin I (1282-1320). Amaury's and Isabella's two sons, John and Bohémond, held high positions in Cilician Armenia — in 1329, John was appointed constable of the kingdom and Bohémond lord of Korykos (Ghazarian 158: Coureas 43). It was Bohémond who incited Jean d'Arras to associate the history of the family with the *mélusienne* tradition (Deluz 120)[154]. Marriage alliances were not limited to the royal houses of both kingdoms but extended to their respective aristocracies (Coureas 35)[155]. In 1306, the Armenian kingdom became involved in the royal affairs of Cyprus after Oshin I accepted to receive in his court the exiled Cyprian king, Henry II de Lusignan (1270-1324), known as 'the Epileptic', who had been deposed by his brother, Amaury, lord of Tyre (c. 1272-1310) (Edbury 119; Ghazarian 157-8). Amaury's coop was partially justified by Henry II's inability to deal with the situation in the region (Edbury 115). In a declaration released against him by Amaury and the group of nobles behind the coop, the king was accused of misgovernment, abuse of power, failure to administer justice and to provide for the defensive needs of the kingdom (Coureas 40)[156].

Oshin I, who died in 1320, was succeeded by his ten-year-old son, Levon IV, who was murdered in 1341 by his own people after his position had been weakened following two Mamluk incursions in 1322 and 1335 (Ghazarian 158). The throne was then offered to Levon's first cousin, John de Lusignan, and after John's assassination in 1344, again at the hands of the populace, to his

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[154] As pointed out by both Deluz (120) and Tzanaki (164-5), Jean d'Arras probably chose to incorporate the tale into his romance due to its connection with the house of Lusignan.

[155] See Coureas 34-40.

[156] See *op. cit.* 40-1.

elder brother, Guy de Lusignan (d. 1344) (Ghazarian 158-9). Guy was crowned Constantine II in 1342, establishing a dynasty of the house of Lusignan in Armenia. He also died in an uprising and was succeeded by a distant cousin, Constantine III (1313-1362).

The Lusignan rule of Armenia was brief: the house governed the Cilician Kingdom until the end of the fourteenth century when the Mamluks finally conquered it after decades of harassment (Ghazarian 160-70) – just like the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle predicted. By 1375, the country was overrun by Muslims, except for Korykos, which the Cypriots had captured in an attempt to help the Armenians fight the Mamluk invasion (Coureas 54; 71). "Its occupation in 1448 by the emir of Karaman put an end to the last connection between Cyprus and Lesser Armenia" (Coureas 54).

Mandeville took the information about the political instability in Armenia, which in the tale is the result of an offence made to the fairy, from historical works, namely *La Fleur des Histories de la Terra d'Orient* (1307), by Hayton of Korykos (d. 1314), son of Prince Oshin (d. 1264), Count of Korykos, a position held by Hayton himself after 1280 (*The Defective Version* 151)[157]. *La Fleur* is Hayton's most important and influential work. It inspired "generations of Western kings and monarchs to remain loyal to the basic inspirations of their crusading predecessors" (Ghazarian 61)[158]. Originally dictated in French to a clerk at the court of Pope Clement V (ruler of the Catholic Church from 1305 to 1314) in Poitiers, it was translated into Latin for presentation to the pontifice in August of 1307 (Ghazarian 61; Brigante 216; Vandekerckhove 7). Divided into four books, the work describes the lands of the East and pays special attention to the Muslim conquest of the Near East and the Mongol invasion of Eastern Europe (Ghazarian 61; Vandekerckhove 7)[159]. In Book 4, entitled "Passage to the Holy Land", a new crusade is proposed, with the intent of installing in the Western leaders a renewed desire for the recovery of Jerusalem. Hayton recommends the establishment of alliances to fight the Mamluks (if necessary, with the Mongols, who are portrayed in his work in a favourable light to promote cooperation between them

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[157] Hayton was a member of the royal Armenian family. His uncle, Hayton I (king from 1223 until his death in 1268), in whose court he spent his childhood, had close contact with the Great Khanate and was one of the main sources of *La Fleur des Histories de la Terra d'Orient* (Brigante 217; Kohanski and Benson 136). Hayton's account was also based on his own experience and knowledge of the neighbouring regions, which he gained while participating in different military and political events involving Cilician Armenia in the first half of the fourteenth century (Brigante 217).

[158] See Ghazarian 61-3.

[159] See note 39.

and the Christians[160]) and the use of Cyprus and Armenia as locations for launching the attacks (Ghazarian 61; Brigante 217). Besides Hayton's book, Mandeville may have been aware of other historiographical works about the Latin East that have not yet been identified, which describe the degradation of the political situation in the region.

The castle of Mandeville's story is probably the castle of Korykos, the ancestral seat of Hayton of Korykos. The fortress is also mentioned by Wilbrand of Oldenburg, who dedicated the first part of his account to the description of Cilician Armenia (the second part is dedicated to Jerusalem and the holy places). Wilbrand visited the kingdom between 1211 and 1212. His stay lasted eighteen weeks and was connected with a diplomatic mission from the German emperor, Otto IV (d. 1218) (Pringle 25). He left in the spring of 1212, taking a ship from Korykos (Pringle 25). Korykos and Ayas were the main coast cities of the realm. As the only coastal sites with a natural harbour, these settlements had great economic importance as key trade links between the West, the kingdom of Armenian Cilicia, and the Mongol territories to the East (Vandekerckhove 84). The harbour of Korykos was protected by a large fortified complex that, in medieval times, extended from the mainland along a dyke to an island just offshore (Edwards 173). The dyke has long disappeared, creating two separate forts that are nowadays known as the 'land castle' and the 'sea castle' or *Kızkalesi* ("Maiden Castle"), thus known because of a local legend about a maiden and a king[161]. Both castles were probably built at the same time, at the beginning of the twelfth century (Vandekerckhove 105; 118). As mentioned before, Wilbrand's itinerary is frequently overlooked when speaking of the works consulted by Mandeville. Nonetheless, it is plausible that it was one of the books he used. Nothing suggests the contrary and further investigation is needed.

Mandeville was responsible for introducing the Sparrowhawk Castle motif in medieval literature, but he was not the first to describe a game involving such a bird. The challenge of the sparrowhawk, a recurrent theme in the medieval literature about King Arthur's court, is a central episode in the first part of *Érec et Énide*, by Chrétien de Troyes, in which a bold knight has to claim for his lady the reputation and honour of being the most beautiful and have her take a sparrowhawk from its perch in front of everyone if no one dares to oppose him (Troyes 44). *Lybeaus Desconus* includes a similar challenge involving a "gerfawkon, white as swanne" (Salisbury and Weldon 48,

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[160] On the relationship between Mongols and Armenians, see Dashdondog, Bayarsaikhan. *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*. Brill's Inner Asian Library. Brill, 2011: Stewart, Angus. "Reframing the Mongols in 1260: The Armenians, the Mongols and the Magi." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2018, pp. 55–76. Published online by Cambridge University Press. doi.org/10.1017/S1356186317000414.

[161] I was unable to find further information on the legend.

line 746) that probably derives from Chretien's romance (160). Though no direct source has been identified, the episode in both *Érec et Énide* and *Lybeaus Desconus* is very similar to the Welsh romance *Geraint, Son of Erbin*, which is found in the *Mabinogion*, the most important collection of early medieval Welsh prose that survives in two collections of manuscripts produced between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries (Kibler in Troyes 9; *Mitos e Lendas do País de Gales* 15)[162]. The similarities between the Welsh romances, including *Owain or the Lady of the Fountain* and *Peredur, Son of Evrawc*, and Chrétien's work, have been a motif of discussion between the critics for many years[163]. William W. Kibler, editor and translator of Penguin Books' edition of Chrétien's romances' (2004), argued in the introduction to the volume that *Geraint* could not have influenced the French author "and marked differences in details, tone and artistry suggest that it was not directly influenced by Chrétien's work either" (in Troyes 9). Instead, in his opinion, they attest to "an earlier common source, which most critics now assume to have been Celtic in origin and oral, rather than written" (Kibler in Troyes 9). Mandeville was likely influenced by medieval literature but probably did not know the older Celtic tradition.

3. The Sparrowhawk Castle: a "merueyl" outside the correct route

Similarly to the tournament of the sparrowhawk in *Érec et Énide*, the challenge of the Sparrowhawk Castle in *The Book of John Mandeville* functions as a test in which the male hero has to prove himself before a female figure who has the power to decide his future. In *The Book*, this role is played by the fairy who inhabits the Sparrowhawk Castle. The episode is the only one in which the author refers to *fairies*, supernatural entities, usually female, who were very popular in the literature of the late Middle Ages, especially romance. It again points out Mandeville's deep knowledge of the medieval romance tradition.

The fairy is a key figure in the history of supernatural representations of women in Western imagination (Harf-Lancner 19). Originally from the oral tradition, the fairy was introduced into the scholarly European culture in the twelfth century with the emergence of vernacular literature and romance (Harf-Lancner 19). Medieval fairy lore was complex. It was an amalgamation of different sources, ranging from Classical to popular, which resulted in significant variation. Christian

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[162] See *Mitos e Lendas Celtas do País de Gales* 15-25; Whittock 166-83; MacKillop 276-80.

[163] For a brief resume, see *Mitos e Lendas Celtas do País de Gales* 17-18. See also Roberts, Helen A. "Court and *Cyuoeth*: Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enid* and the Middle Welsh *Gereinti*." *Arthurian Literature XXI. Celtic Arthurian Material*. Edited by Ceridwn Lloyd-Morgan. D. S. Brewer, 2004.

authors, who first collected fairy stories, influenced how these were transmitted and adapted, contributing to the incredible complexness of its tradition. Acknowledging that intricateness, Richard Firth Green upheld that it is impossible to "attempt at a totalizing definition" of *fairy* in the Middle Ages (2). Even "fairy taxonomy seems to have been problematic", he observed (Green 3), noting that these magical beings could be of any size and colour (not only small and green, as it was later popularised) (4) and that their stories could be found in almost any place in medieval Europe and not only in Celtic countries (7). "Perhaps the key to all this is the innate volatility of fairies", he suggested (4).

However, some characteristics are transversal to medieval fairy lore. For example, fairies are described as having some physical particularity that makes them recognisable as such (C. S. Lewis 130-1). They are usually young and beautiful, with long silky hair and a glowing complexion (Monaghan 167). They can also be old and ugly, like the old hags in the *loathly lady* stories. Fairies can see into the future and into the heart of men and women, and recognise "both the imperfection of human attempts at justice and the mismatch between the exercise of justice and power" (Cooper 197). Originally from another world — the *Otherworld* — without death or pain, they live outside nature's common laws and rules. Commonly designated as *Fayrie*[164], the land of fairies is usually located underground (under a hill, in a cave or a burrow), underwater or on an enchanted island that drifts along, is not tied down to any place and appears at intervals and in different sites (MacKillop 177; Monaghan 167; 173). It is often believed that fairies are immortal. Although "popular tradition certainly regarded them as long-lived, it did not regard them as immortal", Green observed (59) — at least, not in the world of humans. In Marie de France's *Yonec*, the fairy knight who visits her beloved in the form of a hawk is killed by her jealous husband; and in an early version of *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*, known in English as *Knight of the Swan*, the hero's mother, the fairy Elioxe, dies in childbirth (Green 59). Several centuries before, acknowledging this tradition, Martianus Capella used the word *longaevi* to describe fairies and similar creatures that live longer than humans but are not immortal (Green 59; C. S. Lewis 122).

In the human world, fairies prefer to live in isolated places, such as forests, distant islands or mysterious palaces like the Sparrowhawk Castle. In the Celtic tradition, one of the sources of medieval literature, they are often invisible or can become so at their own will and power (MacKillop 177). They usually like to be alone or in the company of others like themselves.

[164] The name of the world of fairies can have multiple forms (*Faery*; *Faerie*; etc.). Here I follow Seymour's edition of the Defective Version of *The Book of John Mandeville*.

Nevertheless, they are attracted to humans and often provide opportunities for encounters (*Mitos e Lendas Celtas da Irlanda* ["Celtic Myths and Legends from Ireland"] 267). These meetings depend on the fairy's will and cannot be forced. There are many popular stories, both in Ireland and Wales, that speak of generous fairies who visit humans to offer them gifts (*Mitos e Lendas Celtas da Irlanda* ["Celtic Myths and Legends from Ireland"] 267; *Mitos e Lendas Celtas do País de Gales* ["Celtic Myths and Legends from Wales"] 292), a motif absorbed by the stories of *fées amants* ("fairy mistresses"), in which the fairy seeks a lover in the human world, becomes his mistress and lays upon him a taboo, the breach of which results at the end of their relationship and in the downfall of the man. The best example of the fairy mistress *topos* is the story of Mélusine, examined in a previous chapter[165].

Although known for their ability to fulfil romantic desires, *fées amants* provide other gifts to their lovers and help them socially, economically, and politically. These presents may include things most desired by knights, such as "rich garments, a valuable chess-board, a gilt chariot, impenetrable armor, and magic horses", Tom Peete Cross enumerated (630), but also "gifts of unlimited wealth, supernatural healing, magical objects, protective aid, even prophecy — gifts that help knights rise in their chivalric and feudal worlds", Wade acknowledge (161).

3.1. Fairy gifts and fairy taboos

Fairy gifts are not ordinary, so they always hold the potential to be as much a reward as a curse (Wade 113). Wade linked the nature of the gift with the fairy that bestows it. In medieval romance, if the fairy is evil, her gift is often dangerous. On the other hand, if the fairy is of the wish-fulfilment type, her gift is probably a reward. However, "in most cases the two hold the potential — at least for a time — to turn into the other, but these dangerous fairies can be distinguished from the fairies of wish-fulfilment in that rather than primarily function to reward the knightly virtue, they instead work to challenge it", functioning as "the challenge against which these knights can test and define their knighthood" (Wade 113). Fairies are ideal figures for testing the heroes of romance on physical, psychological, and moral levels (Green 113). Their "freedom from moral constraints, combined with their propensity for arbitrary or illogical behavior, and, most visibly, their unmatched supernatural powers", characteristics that make them "dangerous beyond

[165] See Chapter II, pp. 41-6.

normal — dangerous in a way that other adversaries, such as rival knights, opposing armies, or even giants and dragons, are not", Green stated (113-4).

The fairy challenge often takes the form of an offering. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, in the absence of her lord, who is hunting outside in his game park, Lady Bertilak, who, although not a fairy, acts at the orders of one (Morgan Le Fay)[166], offers herself to Gawain. But the knight does not succumb to the seduction and excuses himself, proving to be worthy of his host's confidence. In other cases, the test occurs in relation to a fairy taboo. This prohibition can result in catastrophic consequences if not followed, as in the story of Mélusine, whose husband loses all her good fortune after breaking the deal and seeing her naked on a Saturday. Similarly, in the French *lai Lanval*, the knight loses his high position in Arthur's court after disclosing the existence of her beloved contrary to her expressed will. He faces a trial after Guivenere accuses him of offending her by saying that even the poorest of his fairy lover's servants is more beautiful, wise and good than the queen. In *The Book*, the taboo of the fairy body serves to test the king of Armenia's nature. By asking for the very thing he cannot have, the body of the lady, the monarch proves himself unworthy of a rewarding gift and sets in motion a series of events that will lead to the conquest and destruction of his kingdom.

In traditional tales, modification of wealth was associated with fairies. It was also believed these magical beings could influence the weather, the crops, and the health of humans and animals, cause trouble to benighted travellers, and predict the future (Green 8). They were not generally harmful — they usually brought good fortune to humans — but could be vindictive if affronted (*Mitos e Lendas do País de Gales* ["Celtic Myths and Legends from Wales"] 293; MacKillop 177). According to Cross, the "formula of the Offended Fée is widespread in the folk-lore of many ages and countries", including those of Celtic origin (588-9; 594). While speaking about fairies in English folk tales, Katharine Briggs observed that these creatures have "a code of behaviour which they exacted from the humans they happened to meet" (222). "Kindliness, courtesy, open-handedness and orderly ways, these were essential in gaining their favour", Briggs noted (222). When not respected, fairies could punish humans by burning houses or destroying crops

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[166] See Baughan, Denver Ewing. "The Role of Morgan Le Fay in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." *ELH*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1950, pp. 241–51. *JSTOR*, doi.org/10.2307/2872048; Friedman, Albert B. "Morgan Le Fay in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." *Speculum*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 1960, pp. 260–74. *JSTOR*, doi.org/10.2307/2851343; Moon, Douglas M. "THE ROLE OF MORGAIN LA FÉE IN 'SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT.'" *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, Vol. 67, No. 1, 1966, pp. 31–57. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/43315321.

(MacKillop 177). These punishments, the most common fairy penalties in Celtic legends, reflect the rural environment in which those tales initially circulated. In medieval romance, the fairy's vengeance is often more sophisticated. Because the encounter usually occurs in an urban and courtly setting, it frequently affects the hero's position in society, which he strives to maintain.

Echoes of these traditions can be detected in the episode of the Sparrowhawk Castle. The fairy gift offered to those who win the challenge is both a reward and a curse. After succeeding in keeping the bird of prey awake, the king of Armenia loses all his wealth by offending the lady and insisting that the only prize he wants is her body. Because she warned him, the punishment seems appropriate and not a simple whim — it was the monarch's excess, greed, and recklessness that led to his downfall. On the contrary, the poor man's son is rewarded — he receives money — but his gift is also the cause of his perdition. Therefore, it is not only the monarch's character that is tested but also the poor man's son's.

3.2. *Fayrie*, the Otherworld where everything is possible

In the episode of the Sparrowhawk Castle, the lady is described as "of fayrie" (*The Defective Version* 65, line 20). *Fayrie*, the land of the fairies, is a conventional feature of medieval romance. According to Saunders:

> It presents a parallel sphere of marvellous adventure and is often the provenance of enchanters, enchantresses, and magical objects. It is literally the otherworld, tangential, a place into which anyone may step by chance, the inhabitants of which may stray into the human world. It is shifting and vaguely defined, not always explicitly as faery, not always given boundaries. Instead, romances tend to create a nebulous ethos of the supernatural associated with a particular figure, place or landscape (179).

The status of this "figure, place or landscape" (Saunders 179) is usually uncertain. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the castle of Hautdesert, where an essential part of the action occurs[167], appears out of nowhere after Gawain prayed to God and the Virgin Mary for a safe place to rest and hear mass (lines 753-4). The supernatural side of the episode is enhanced by the description of the fortress shining through the oaks. Nevertheless, the words used to describe its barbican "leaves the audience unsure whether the castle, which seems to appear miraculously …, is

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[167] See Chism, Christine. "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*." *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain*. Edited by Siân Echard and Robert Rouse. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2017. doi.org/10.1002/9781118396957.wbemlb276.

other-wordly, or a demonic manifestation, or perhaps linked to the divine providence that seems to have Gawain in view" (Saunders 195). In *Perceval*, which inspired *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the castle of the Fisher King materialises when the hero loses hope of finding it. *The Book of John Mandeville* describes the Sparrowhawk Castle as something out of the ordinary. Initially, the fortress appears to belong exclusively to the human sphere, as the author provides its exact location — between *Larrays* and *Parcipie*, on the top of a cliff in Celician Armenian — but then the description of the events that occur inside the castle raises suspicion about its true nature. Its marvellousness is confirmed when the author warns that anyone who wishes to watch over the sparrowhawk must never fall asleep or will be lost forever and by the claim that the castle is a "merueyl" outside the correct route to Armenia (*The Defective Version* 66, line 17).

The fine line that divides the human world from that of fairies is challenging to identify, but once a mortal enters it, there is no way of mistaking it. Usually idyllic and immensely beautiful, it is a place where the normal rules do not apply, nothing is what it seems (Wade 124; 127), and the truth may be unknowable (Saunders 180). Characterised by ambiguity and force, but also betrayal and transgression (Saunders 180), it is also dangerous. Many stories, in both folk and literary traditions, speak of humans who entered the fairy world by the insistence of a fairy or by their own will and were incapable of returning to the mortal world. Such is the case of Heurodis, Sir Orfeo's wife in the homonymous Middle English romance (fourteenth century), who is forced to join the Fairy King's entourage. The description of the Sparrowhawk Castle as a place where one could be lost forever refers to this tradition and the idea that fairies regularly steal from humans, including humans themselves (brides and babies were more prone to fairy kidnapping) (Monaghan 170; 173). In folk tales, those who are kidnapped by fairies and later discarded by them die not long after returning to mortal life (Monaghan 174)

Fayrie is "an adoxic place where the human victims are abandoned to the arbitrariness of the supernatural sovereign sphere" and "where danger is ever present, though how and when it may unfold, and what shape it may take, is left to the imagination" (Wade 127). But it "is also often a place of learning" (Saunders 179). It is "associated with magical medicine and healing, marvellous gifts, immortality, and wish-fulfilment, including hidden or forbidden desires" (Saunders 180), and its "figures associated with the faery tend to be distinguished by knowledge and skill in sophisticated arts" such as magic, divination and metamorphosis (179). These figures are often shape-shifters, as is probably the case of the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle. The text is ambiguous, and it is unclear if the lady and the bird are the same entity or two separate beings. As it

was already exposed, shapeshifting is common among fairies in Celtic mythology. Furthermore, fairies often kept magical animals, and the Otherworld was also inhabited by fairy animals that were not necessarily under the command of the fairy folk but were connected to them by their otherwordly nature (Monaghan 169). Birds were symbolic, and crows, cranes, doves, ducks and eagles (but not hawks) are often referred to in Celtic myths and legends. They were primarily associated with goddesses, particularly as emblems or escorts (Monaghan 46). According to Michael Ferber, birds were often considered incarnations of gods or their messengers because they can fly and seem to link the sky with the earth and the sea (26). Also, they sometimes represent souls leaving the body (Monaghan 46).

Because they "move incalculably between the register of human, divine and demonic, beautiful and horrific, beneficent and maleficient" (Saunders 180), fairies reflect "the fundamental ambiguity of the supernatural that is so apparent in attitudes to magic" in the Middle Ages (Saunders 206). In the medieval period, the otherworldly integrated the Christian supernatural, which comprehended "a spirit world just beyond human reach" and manifested itself in visitations, dreams, visions, and miracles but also in demonic intervention and temptation (Saunders 3). Other realities, such as the Otherworld of fairies, originated in depictions of the classical underworld, Celtic and Germanic legends, and folk traditions, coexisted, not always peacefully, with it since some of these beliefs did not fit readily with Christian ideas (Saunders 3; 4). The Church was very suspicious of magic[168], associated with paganism and heresy[169], but ideas of supernatural beings and magical practices survived in different levels of society (Saunders 4). In vernacular culture, some adjustments had to be made to harmonise the old beliefs with the orthodoxies of the Catholic Church (Green 2). According to Green, that is why some fairies swear by the Virgin Mary, are eager to attend mass and anticipate salvation on Doomsday (2)[170].

The fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle is not described as a creature of faith, but Christian principles, such as chastity, modesty, and frugality, govern her. She criticises those who give too much attention to worldly goods and punishes those who wish for more than they should have. In a distinguishable yet similar way to the episode of Hippocrates' daughter, the tale of the Sparrowhawk Castle introduces a plea for a more modest and honest life[171]. It also delivers a harsh

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[168] See Green 11-75.

[169] See previous chapter.

[170] See Chapter II.

[171] See previous chapter.

critique of European leaders and monarchs, whose behaviour was, in Mandeville's point of view, the sole cause of the fall of the Christian kingdoms in the East into the hands of enemies and infidels[172].

In *Fairies in Medieval Romance*, Wade noted that fairies are "free not only from the physical laws of normal time and space, but also from the standard laws of logic, and from the moral strictures of ordinary human interaction" (19). They have their own unique set of rules, and humans who enter their world are left to their mercy. These are the qualities that give these supernatural entities their narrative interest and creative potential (Cooper 173; Wade 19) and which ultimately explain their popularity among the authors of the Middle Ages, who used fairy lore to achieve different literary purposes and narrative effects that could not have been accomplished otherwise. By doing so, they bestowed their works with their own "internal folklore" — its "unique imagining of fairies and of the Otherworld at large" (Wade 22) — and created unique fairy worlds. Mandeville is no exception. By relying on different literary traditions, which he infused with authentic historical details, he created the perfect set for his story — his own *Otherworld*.

3.3. Monks and hawks

Hunting was a popular activity among the medieval elite. Nobles received education in hunting and hawking from a young age. "Because of this early instruction, the upper classes took hunting and hawking as part of their existence for granted and, in addition, the rest of society expected them to participate in these activities" (Almond 26). Edward III was especially fond of hunting, a game he appreciated almost as much as jousting, his favourite entertainment[173]. But while hunting was practised by other sectors of medieval society, although mainly as a means of providing fresh meat, hawking "was very much an upper-class sport, largely because of the huge cost of birds and equipment, and the inordinate amount of time necessary to train the falcon or hawk" (Almond 31).

The training process was slow and required the falconer's deep involvement. It involved the process of 'seeling', in which the young hawk or falcon, after being caught with a net, was temporarily blinded by sewing up its eyelids so it would not be startled by strange objects (Almond 49; Oggins 24). "The reason for hooding [or seeling] a falcon is to blindfold her and render her

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[172] See previous chapter, pp. 67-75.

[173] See Mortimer 87-90; Jones, Michael. *The Black Prince*. Head of Zeus, 2017, pp. 46-52.

impervious to external visual stimuli. These visual stimuli are of overwhelming importance to a hawk, for it is through them that all her actions and reactions are governed" (Woodford in Oggins 24)[174]. Next, the bird was trained to stand on the keeper's glove fist and accustomed to human contact, a procedure called 'manning' (Oggins 25). It was then placed in a darkened room and carried around for a day and a night, during which it was kept awake and not fed (Oggins 25). Only after it was it fed some food (Oggins 25). When the bird had grown accustomed to being handled, it was moved into a lighter room and carried around until it was no longer alarmed by normal (Oggins 25). This process generally took three days and nights (*The Metrical Version* 107).

> She then had her eyesight partially restored by loosening the stitches. After this, the half-seeled bird was again carried around for a night and a day in a darkened room. When she was used to this situation, she was moved to a lighter room, taken outdoors and carried on foot, and finally carried on horseback (Oggins 25)[175].

Because of its popularity among medieval nobility and knighthood, hunting as a literary motif was especially favoured among writers. The stag was the quarry most often hunted in medieval romances (alongside the bear), and its chance was considered the noblest sport (Thiébaux 19). However, hawking was also described, with the bird sometimes symbolising the hero to be, as in *Érec and Énide* (Thiébaux 112-3).

> European literature between the eighth and the fifteenth centuries is full of casual illusions to hunts: Heroes hunt on their way to getting somewhere, they hunt as a means of showing their rank and prowess, of seeking out their enemies in disguise, or of agreeably passing the time. … A hunting expedition will launch a hero in the direction of important deeds, military triumphs, the founding of cities and cloisters. It may guide him, as it did Guy of Hampton, to his death (Thiébaux 17).

The episode of the Sparrowhawk Castle seems to have been influenced by the watching of the hawk until it falls asleep, "part of the falconer's lore in taming wild birds", as noted by Seymour (*The Defective Version* 151). Mandeville specifies that, to pass the test, one has to keep the sparrowhawk awake for seven days and seven nights (some say three days and three nights)[176]

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[174] Following the literary tradition of hawking, Michael Woodford, author of *A Manuel of Falconry* (1960), refers to hawks as being female, a generalisation I avoid. Although female hawks were preferably used for hawking because of their size and strength, males were also employed. Robin S. Oggins does the same.

[175] See previous note.

[176] The process of 'manning', briefly explained in the previous page, requires three days.

without any other company or sleep, a process that mimics the manning of wild birds of prey, which are kept awake at night "to initiate a systematic forgetting of old memories and accretion of new ones" (Petrosillo 112). Similarly, after the time spent alone in the darkness, those who participated in the test of Sparrowhawk Castle leave with a new understanding of the world and their place in it. However, the light of a new day, which in medieval discourse is associated with clear memories and thoughts (Petrosillo 113), does not give them a better insight but reveals his true fowl nature.

Seven is a crucial number in Western and Judeo-Christian imagination. The number of days in the Hebrew week, of sacraments, gifts of the Holy Spirit and deadly sins[177], structures the first chapter of Genesis and the whole Book of Revelation, the beginning and the end of the Christian Bible (Ferber 142; *O Homem Medieval* ["The Medieval Man"] 27). It symbolises the perfect order and a complete period or cycle (Circlot 233). It is also the symbol of pain (Circlot 233), an essential concept of Christianism. Thus, it is possible that the number seven was not chosen lightly but taking into account all its meaning and symbolism.

Birds are also symbolic. They are frequently used to symbolise human souls, an interpretation found in different mythologies (Circlot 27; 28). Like angels, they are symbols of thought, imagination and swiftness of spirit (Circlot 28). Medieval bestiaries often compare the hawk with the religious and the holy man. According to one of such texts (*Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Bodl. 764*), produced in Latin in England in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, hawks lose their old feathers and put on new ones "just as a monk, once he is confined to the cloister, will put off his previous vices and adorn himself with the clothing of a new man" (Barber 156). When the hawk is ready to fly after being manned, "he is released and will fly to hand. In like fashion, if a new monk has to leave the monastery he must return his hand to good living" (Barber 156). On the sparrowhawk, the same bestiary says it is strong in spirit but small in body. It emphasises its spartan qualities and harsh parenting by describing how it drives its children off the nest and makes them seek prey at a very young age, "lest they become lazy when they are grown" (Barber 155). "It takes care that they are not idle when they are young, lest they abandon themselves to luxury, and become weak through ease …" (Barber 155).

The Latin Aviary of Hugh of Fouilloy (twelfth century), prior to St. Laurent[178], dedicates seven chapters to hawks. Hugh describes two types, the tame and the wild, and interprets them

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[177] See F. L. Cross 1489.

[178] See Clark 1-26; Clark, Willene B. "The Illustrated Medieval Aviary and the Lay-Brotherhood." *Gesta*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 63-74. The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the International Center of Medieval Art, 1982.

allegorically, linking them to monastic life. Monasticism is a form of Christian life characterised by ascetic practices, including frequent prayer following a daily plan that generally includes a nocturnal vigil, renunciation of material goods, celibacy, and separation from society (Patte 830; 832). Dietary restrictions such as fasting and abstinence from meat or other animal products are also typical, especially on certain days and during liturgical seasons of penance (Patte 832). Hugh starts his treaty by establishing a link between the tame hawk and the preacher who draws laypeople into religion and compels them to die to the world through the mortification of the flesh (Clark 143). Further, he compares the hawk's taming with the monk's training. According to him, like the bird that casts aside its old feathers, the monk, when entering the monastery, is stripped of his former vices and gains the virtues of a new man; and like the bird that returns to the falconer's hand, so the monk must continue to do good deeds when he has to leave the monastery (Clark 145). In the next chapter, the prior interprets the hawk's perch as a symbol of the righteousness of monastic life:

> *Pertica accipitris designat nobis recitudinem vitae regularis, quae a terra longe suspenditur, quia a terrenis desideriis huius mundi longe separatur. In hac pertica ligatus sedet qui regularis vitae statuta firmiter tenet. Duobus parietibus inhaerere dicitur a quibus ex ultraque parte sustentatur. Duo parietes quibus pertica sustentatur sunt activa et contemplativa vita, quae pie viventium rectitunem portant* (Clark, *Aviarium* 144).
>
> [The hawk's perch symbolizes for us the righteousness of the monastic life, which is suspended far above the ground, because it is separated far from the earthly desires of this world. He who steadfastly abides by the laws of the monastic life sits tied to this perch. It is said to be attached to two walls by which it is supported from either side. The two walls by which the perch is supported are the active life and contemplative life, which sustain the righteousness of those living piously (Clark, *The Aviary* 145).]

Hugh dedicated the Aviary to a certain Rainier, a former knight who had become a lay brother and to whom he refers as "dearest friend" (*carissime*) (Clark 116; 117). The French prior describes himself as a dove, who represents "any faithful and simple soul" ("*quaelibet fidelis et simplex anima"*) (Clark 124; 125), and Rainier as a hawk, and says that both are on the same perch, symbolising the monastic rule. In the Prologue, he states that, as Rainier was "accustomed to seizing domestic fowl", he "now with the hand of good deeds may bring to conversation the wild ones, that is laymen" (Clark 119).

Ecce in eadem pertica sedent accipiter et columba. Ego enim de clero, tu de militia. Ad conversionem venimus ut in regulari vita quasi in pertica sedeamus; et qui rapere consueveras domesticas aves, nunc bonae operationis manu silvestres ad conversionem trahas, id est saeculares.

Gemat igitur columba, gemat et accipiter; vocem doloris emittat. Vox enim Columbae gemitus, vox accipitris questus (Clark, Aviarium 118).

[See how the hawk and the dove sit on the same perch. I am from the clergy and you from the military. We come to conversion so that we may sit within the life of the Rule, as though on a perch; and so that you who were accustomed to seizing domestic fowl, now with the hand of good deeds may bring to conversation the wild ones, that is, the laymen.

Therefore, let the dove sigh and the hawk sight; let <each> utter the cry of grief. For the voice of the dove is sigh, the voice of the hawk is lament (Clark, *The Aviary* 119).]

According to Willene B. Clark, lay brothers were given religious training only to the extent that required them to lead a Christian life and fulfil their proper roles in the monastic community (14). "The teachers of lay-brothers were sometimes themselves brothers who had had some education, and Rainier was probably such a person", Clark suggested (14). "The prologues contain implied references to lay-brothers, and the main body of the text often addresses itself both to them and to their teachers" (Clark 14).

In the treatise on hawking in *The Book of St. Albans* (fifteenth century), which ends with a list of various species and their appropriateness to different people, the sparrowhawk is the ideal hawk for the priest (*The Boke of Saint Albans* 155). The choice is not explained, but it is related to the tradition of bestiaries.

Another symbolic tradition links birds of prey with love and the idea of love as a chase[179]. According to John Cummins, "the bird of prey's characteristics of physical beauty and independence of mind enable falconry practices to serve, as symbol or in simile, to express the emotional and physical attractiveness of woman to man: the man's obsessive wish to bend a free-ranging spirit to his own desires" (227). The love symbolised by the bird can be of a religious kind — that of God for man (Cummins 230). In an anonymous Spanish poem quoted by Cummins, the falcon is both God and Christ, and the thicket and the crown of thorns are one (231).

[179] See Cummins 229-30; Thiébaux 89-143.

It is worth noting that Mandeville chose a bird with a symbolism connected with spirituality, Christian values, and monasticism, whose emphasis on discipline and a particular way of life subjected to regulation is mirrored in the episode. The fasting and sleep deprivation required to pass the test are similar to monastic practices, such as abstaining from meat and staying awake at night, which the author praises in his book.

Literary texts explicitly influenced by Christian beliefs and imprinted with moral lessons, like bestiaries, ignore a particularity of hawking highlighted by treatises and romances: hawks are usually female. Female hawks and falcons are generally larger and more robust. They can bring down larger prey and are consequently more used and valuable than males (Oggins 12). Because of that, "textual representations of falconry often depict hawks and women together" (Petrosillo 13). Furthermore, hawking was among the few outdoor activities available to aristocratic women in the Middle Ages (Petrosillo 5-6; 11). Portraits of women holding a hawk in their fists are common in medieval miniatures. The *Bodleian Library MS. Bodl. 764*, already mentioned, has an image of a woman holding a hawk while hunting ducks (fol. 76v)[180]. Records of queens and noblewomen employing falconers and purchasing birds and falconry equipment show they knew how to breed and use falcons and hawks, specially sparrowhawks, which were considered the most suitable partners for female falconers because of their small size (Petrosillo 5-6). Ladies often carried these in aristocratic country picnic hunts (Cummins 194).

Contrary to hawking, haunting was a profoundly masculine activity. However, ladies rode with or behind the company of men, sitting their mounts astride and riding singly or in pain and couples (Marvin in Schaus 386), as the beginning of *Érec and Énide* illustrates. Sara Petrosillo proposed that falconry was being used in literature by the late Middle Ages to express "profound fears of women's sexual sovereignty" (19). According to the author, late medieval narratives show the existence of "an anxiety that falconry had allowed women too much freedom of both expression and physical movement" (19), which the fairy, as a female figure that dwells between two worlds, also has. At the same time, this "contains lessons for us about how women resisted within a culture of training" (23).

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[180] The manuscript is available online at the site of the Bodleian Library at digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/ecf96804-a514-4adc-8779-2dbc4e4b2f1e/surfaces/861ad634-1d6a-4673-9096-8f2120ecf9f4/#.

In the episode of the Sparrowhawk Castle, Mandeville combines the literary trope of the fairy gift and taboo of Celtic origin with the "foolhardiness punished" (Tzanaki 160), both common motifs in the literature of the Middle Ages, to show the flaws of the protagonists and, thus, make a comment on the sins and vices of the members of the main sectors of medieval society: kings and nobles, and merchants. To these elements, he added, "the demonstration of worldly pride abase" (Tzanaki 160), explored in the *fall of princes* literature, a genre intended to teach kings and princes the virtues of wisdom and moderation and to point to them the dangers of pride and unbridled ambition. The most famous of such texts is Boccacio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium* (late 1350s), which narrates the fall of distinguished figures from the Bible and classical and medieval history. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, John Lydgate (1370-1451) composed the poem *Fall of Princes* (1431-1439) to serve as an "edifying instruction" to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390-1447), his noble patron (Copeland and Sluiter). The text was based on Laurent de Premierfait's *Des Cas de nobles hommes et femmes* (1409), a prose translation of Boccaccio's treaty. The idea of "formative instruction" also permeates the English *loathly lady* tales (Passmore in Passmore and Carter 3). According to S. Elizabeth Passmore, the protagonists of such stories "lack some essential interior quality which they require in order to fulfil their noble roles, and the English Loathly Lady guides the hero to this goal through the advice she gives" (3). Passmore believes that the *loathly lady* counsel is "inspired by 'mirrors for princes' literature", pointing out that compositions such as *Regiment of Princes* (1411), a book of governance of princes by Thomas Hoccleve (1368/69–1426)[181], "were increasingly popular with aristocratic readers in the late fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries" (3). Again, all these references reinforce the theory, exposed in the previous chapter, that the author was knowledgeable about romance and other medieval literary traditions.

Similarly to the legend of Hippocrates' daughter, in the Sparrowhawk Castle, Mandeville achieves his purpose by balancing the mythical and the political. He carefully sets the story in a recognisable place, Christian Armenia, thus linking it with the problems in the Christian East and the decline of the crusading movement. The sins of the Christian lords and the loss of the Crusader States are, for Mandeville, part of the same problem, which can only be solved by promoting a more pious and tolerant way of living, one that contradicts the established norms promoted by romance literature.

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[181] See Pearsall, Derek. "Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*: The Poetics of Royal Self-Representation." *Speculum*, Vol. 69, No. 2, 1994, pp. 386–410. *JSTOR*, doi.org/10.2307/2865088.

However, Mandeville is not attempting to criticise the genre. Nothing indicates that. An avid reader, the author enjoyed all literary genres, which he celebrates in his book. When speaking more openly about the problems in Western Europe and the fate of the Holy Land, like in the Prologue and in the chapter about Jerusalem, where he states that the Holy City has been in many different peoples' hands contrary to Christ's wishes, Mandeville repeatedly blames the Christian lords for it and insists on the need for moral reform before they can hope to possess the holy places. Nobility and knighthood are the most targeted, and the way Mandeville carefully mixes historical facts with fantasy indicates that his concern is with reality, not the literary tropes he masterfully reworked to convey his message.

Conclusion

The episodes of Hippocrates' daughter and the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle in *The Book of John Mandeville*, addressed in this dissertation, have as main characters feminine figures with supernatural characteristics that impose upon the male characters a challenge that has to be successfully overcome to give them access to a gift. The accomplishment of the task depends on them showing a set of characteristics that was expected of them as relevant members of medieval society. Knights, who are given special attention in the legend of Hippocrates' daughter, were considered the best society had to offer. Above them was the king, who was expected to behave with dignity, in an honourable and gentle way, and to keep and defend the Christian faith[182]. However, in the episode, all the male characters (knights) fail and meet a tragic end. In the story about the Sparrowhawk Castle, although the male characters are able to complete the challenge, they act wrongly when confronted with the possibility of asking for a reward, leading to catastrophic events. In the two stories, the gift is presented to the men by an independent female figure who herself defies women's position in medieval society. As exposed in chapters II to IV, there is an old literary tradition of supernatural women who challenge men's character by imposing on them a taboo whose acquiescence results in good luck and wealth. The most famous of these figures is the half-fairy Mélusine, whose legends undoubtedly influenced Mandeville, who was one of the inspirations behind Jean d'Arras' romance about the mythical origins of the house of Lusignan.

Both episodes show that 'the best figures society had to offer' were no longer ruled by Christian moral values — knights do not save the damsel in need and are only interested in the profit of the fight; kings lead a sinful existence and are more interested in pursuing their personal interests and pleasures than in ruling with wisdom. In the tale of the Sparrowhawk Castle, it is the poor man's son, a future merchant, who makes the clever choice and not the king, who should be wiser. *The Book* was written at a time when merchants were gaining more importance and emerging as vital members of society, and, in a way, replacing the old institution of knighthood that was starting to decline. The deterioration process is evident in how chivalric values were becoming unimportance to the military class (Saul 358), which, at the end of the fourteenth century, boosted by a world in transformation, was starting to change (362). However, the fact that the youngster

[182] Chaucer describes the qualities that make a good king at the beginning of "The Squire's Tale" (Part I, lines 16-27).

also encounters perdition suggests a widespread moral decadence that was not exclusive to the high hanks of medieval society.

Nevertheless, it is the leaders that Mandeville holds responsible. There are several passages in *The Book* in which he speaks about the lack of guidance from the European lords, who are more interested in fighting against each other and pursuing their own interests than in doing what is most important, which is to defend Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and the Christian religion. It is because it had been a long time since there was a crusade in the East that Mandeville decided to write his book, so people could take solace in the description of the holy places and inspire a new desire in the heart of man to reconquer the Holy City. For him, the conquest is not only a question of keeping under Western leadership a place of crucial importance for the Christian religion. The author believes that only by organising a new crusading expedition — an armed pilgrimage and a way of doing penance — can the European lords atone for their sins and reverse the process of moral decline in Europe. The situation is so unacceptable that it can only be reverted by going on a pilgrimage to the holiest of places and by seizing it from the hands of the Muslims. The salvation of Europe's lost souls is Mandeville's main preoccupation. It is what drives him[183]. It is his eurocentricity that explains his position regarding Muslims and other non-Christians, which he describes with tolerance (except for Jews). Furthermore, he is rarely unpolite when referring to foreigners, and even when referring to monstrous beings, he is overall positive, highlighting their marvellous traits instead of their abnormal features. These people's behaviour — the 'Other' — contrast with that of the Europeans — the 'Same' —, highlighting their character's faults.

As pointed out by many critics, the apology of the crusading is one of the central themes of *The Book*. It crosses the whole work. There are passages in which the issue is addressed more directly than others. Still, the question is everywhere, including in those episodes that have been regarded as pure entertainment and to break with the monotony of the itinerary description, as is the case of the legends of Hippocrates' daughter and the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle. As I tried to show throughout this dissertation, the two tales are a masterful construction of the same critique, delivered in a way that both entertains and provokes reflection. This concept was first put forward by Horace in *Ars Poetica* in the first century BCE and applied by medieval authors such as Gerald of Wales and Gervase of Tilbury in the late twelfth century. They are "not frivolous entertainment" (Tzanaki 171), as stated by the Host in the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* and later confirmed by "The Nun's Priest's Tale", a story that can be read as amusement — a fun tale about a cock and a

[183] Perhaps because there was also a time when Mandeville was lost (is that why he left England and perhaps never came back?).

hen, Chanticleer and Pertelote — or as an ethical lesson (*moralite*) on sin and temptation (Phillips 186).

> And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle,
> That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
> Tales of best sentence and moost solaas,
> Shal have a soper at oure aller cost
> Heere in this place, sittynge by this post,
> Whan that we come agayn fro caunterbury
> (*The Canterbury Tales*, "The General Prologue", lines 796-800).

Furthermore, the two episodes reflect the author's deep knowledge of the culture and literature of the Middle Ages, which critics have widely ignored. Mandeville makes use of several romance motifs, including the supernatural, love, and chivalry, elements that "might have led contemporaries to classify the work among diverse types of 'romance'" (Tzanaki 133). According to a survey done by Tzanaki, *The Book* was described as romance at least in three medieval manuscripts (135), and later 'romanesque' authors borrowed from it, which demonstrates "the many different ways in which the book could be viewed and used as a romance" (171). It also inspired the production of a later verse variation focused on the marvellous adventures of Sir John Mandeville[184]. However, nowadays, when speaking about Mandeville's sources, medieval works of fiction are rarely named, except for the so-called Alexander Romances, a corpus of narratives about the life and conquests of Alexander the Great that inspired some of the passages about the Far East.

Although it is difficult to indicate with assurance which literary works were consulted by Mandeville, there is no doubt that some influenced him. He definitely knew chivalric romances, which directly inspired the episode of Hippocrates' daughter, including Chrétien de Troyes' Arthurian romances and, possibly, Marie de France's *lais,* a genre that celebrated *gentillesse*[185], magic, love and delight (Phillips 144). Additionally, these authors were so well known that it is almost impossible for someone so well-read as Mandeville not to be acquainted with them. He was also undoubtedly aware of the "Fair Unknown" narratives and the *fier baiser* theme ("fearsome kiss"), whose best-known example in late medieval England was *Lybeaus Deconnus*, a fourteenth

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[184] However, as noted by Tzanaki, "this usage has gone against or ignored the *Book*'s underlying intentions" (171).

[185] On the concept of "*gentilless"*, see Lindsay A. Mann. '"Gentilesse' and the Franklin's Tale." *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 1966, pp. 10–29. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/4173516.

century romance partly based on a late twelfth century French poem. The similarities between the romance and some passages in *The Book*, exposed in Chapter III, reinforce that assumption.

In conclusion, the episodes of Hippocrates' daughter and the fairy of the Sparrowhawk Castle rely both on medieval romance tropes, which Mandeville knew perfectly well, and the familiarity of the readers with it, to reinforce the line of thought of *The Book* and invite the audience to think beyond those stories, acknowledging the centrality of Jerusalem (both geographically and spiritually), the decadence of Western Christendom, and the necessity of spiritual and moral reformation that could be achieved by going on a pilgrimage and, perhaps even more, by leaving behind all that is superfluous and marvel at the natural world, God's most wonderful creation.

Appendix I
The manuscripts of the Defective Version

The table below (1) includes the manuscripts of the Defective Version identified by M. C. Seymour in 1993 (*Sir John Mandeville* 43-5) and 2002 (*The Defective Version* xvi-xxvi)[186]. I have organised them into subgroups and put them in chronological order. I also added the possible dates of production, which Seymour's original summary did not include.

Table 1. The Defective Version: manuscripts

Subgroup	Location/Reference	Date
A	Cambridge, University Library MS. Dd.1.17	Late 14th century-early 15th century
A	Oxford, The Queen's College MS. 383	c. 1400
A	Cambridge, University Library MS. Ff.5.35	Early 15th century
A	Oxford, Balliol College MS. 239 Miscellanea	15th century
A	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Rawlinson D 101	15th century
A	Cambridge, Magdalene College MS. PL 1955	15th century (with an epitaph added in the 16th century)
A	Oxford, Bodleian MS. Douce 33	Middle of the 15th century
A	Oxford, Bodleian MS. E Musaeo 124	Middle of the 15th century
A	Corning, N.Y., Corning Museum of Glass	1483-1500
B	San Marino, CA, The Huntington Library MS. HM 114	1425-1450
B	London, British Library MS. Royal 17 B.xliii	First quarter of the 15th century
B	London, British Library MS. Harley 3954	First half of the 15th century
B	London, British Library MS. Arundel 140	15th century
B	London, British Library MS. Harley 2386	15th century
C	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Rawlinson D 100	Beginning of the 15th century
C	Yale, Beinecke Library Takamiya MS. 64 *(former Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS. Bradfer-Lawrence Dep BL7)*	Early 15th century
C	San Marino, CA, The Huntington Library MS. HM 83694 *(former Rugby School MS. Bloxam 1008)*	Second half of the 15th century
C	London, British Library MS. Additional 33758	15th century

[186] I have not included extracts and fragments. See *The Defective Version* xxv-xxvi.

Table 1. The Defective Version: manuscripts

C	Cambridge, Trinity College MS. R. 4.20	15th century
C	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Douce 109	15th century
C	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Rawlinson B 216	15th century
C	Yale, Beinecke MS. Osborn a55 *(also known as the 'Lost' Manuscript or Sneyd Manuscript)*	c. 1440
D	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Additional C 285	c. 1400
D	Princeton, University Library MS. Taylor 10	1403-1409
D	Manchester, Chetham's Library MS. 6711	Early 15th century
D	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Tanner 405	15th century
D	Cambridge, University Library MS. Gg.1.34.3	Late 15th century
E	Dublin, Trinity College MS. 604 *(former MS. E.5.6)*	1430-1469
E	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Laud Misc. 699	Third quarter of the 15th century
E	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Rawlinson D 652	15th century
E	London, British Library MS. Additional 37049 (epitome)	15th century
E	Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS. Advocates 19.1.11	c. 1568
Other	London, British Library MS. Royal 17 C.xxxviii	1400-1425

About the list

The lists made by Seymour are still the most complete summary of the Defective manuscripts. However, they are now very much outdated in terms of references. Some shelfmarks have been updated since the publication of the philologists' studies, and some manuscripts have changed hands, making it impossible to do any work based on them. The fact that the lists were never updated since their publication indicates the lack of interest and attention in the textual tradition of *The Book of John Mandeville* in the last decades, especially in the Defective Version. I have, therefore, updated the references, indicating the previous shelf marks and locations. To access the most recent data, I contacted the institutions.

In some cases, such as *Yale, Beinecke MS. Osborn a 55* (c. 1444), the information was found online[187], and there was no need to get in touch with Yale University. In 1993, the

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[187] See "THE BOOK OF JOHN MANDEVILLE, or, Sir John Mandeville's Travels, in Middle English, ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT ON VELLUM." Christie's, 2010. christies.com/en/lot/lot-5320068.

manuscript's whereabouts were unknown (*Sir John Mandeville* 44). In 2002, Seymour erased it from his lists, presuming it was 'lost' and "not available for study" (*The Defective Version* xiv). In June 2010, it was acquired in an auction by Yale University. In 2014, a study by Katherine Hindley was published in *The Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History*[188].

Another manuscript wiped off by Seymour from its list was *Takamiya Ms. 64* (former *Ms. Bradfer-Lawrence Dep BL*7) (early fifteenth century). Originally part of the Harry Lawrence Bradfter-Lawrence's collection, it was temporarily deposited at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge on an extended loan after the English antiquary and collector's death in 1965 (Giles 86). It was later acquired by the Japanese academic Toshi Takamiya, owner of an important collection of manuscripts and printed books, partly in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University since 2017[189]. At the time of the publication of Seymour's edition of the Defective Version, the manuscript was in Tokyo, Japan (Clemens et. al). It is not clear why it was left out. The copy contains "an abridged version of Mandeville 's *Travels* in prose" in Middle English (Clemens et al. 81).

The former *Rugby School MS. Bloxam 1008*, which belonged to the Rugby School Library in England, is now *The Huntington Library MS. HM 83694*. It was purchased in 2018 in an auction by Maggs Bros. Ltd. on behalf of The Huntington, in the United States of America[190], which owns another Defective manuscript, *Ms. HM 114*.

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[188] Hindley, Katherine. "*Mandeville* Rediscovered: Examining Beinecke MS Osborn a55, the 'Lost' Manuscript of *Mandeville's Travels*." *The Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History.* Edited by Martha W. Driver. Vol. 17, 2014. Pace University Press, pp. 180–192. academia.edu/6239630/Mandeville_Rediscovered_Examining_Beinecke_MS_Osborn_a55_the_Lost_Manuscript_of_Mandevilles_Travels.

[189] See "The Medieval Manuscripts of Toshiyuki Takamiya at the Beinecke Library." Yale University Library - Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, 2024. beinecke.library.yale.edu/medieval-manuscripts-toshiyuki-takamiya-beinecke-library.

[190] See "Book of John Mandeville: [Manuscript]." The Huntington. hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/52232/rec/1.

Appendix II
The sources of *The Book of John Mandeville*

The information below was gathered from two editions of *The Book of John Mandeville* that present the more recent overview of the works consulted by its author: Tamarah Kohanski and C. David Benson's *The Book of John Mandeville* (2007, 135-42), and Iain Macleod Higgins' *The Book of John Mandeville with Related Texts* (2011, 219-21). Higgins' list is a modified version of the one published by Christiane Deluz in 1988 (*The Book of John Mandeville* 219). It does not include some of the works mentioned by Kohanski and Benson.

I organised the sources alphabetically by the author's name (when available), except for William von Boldensele's and Odoric of Pordenone's accounts due to his importance in structuring *The Book*. As it was exposed in Chapter I, William's itinerary was employed for the first part of the narrative, about the Holy Land, the countries thereabout and Egypt, and Odoric's account of his missionary travels in India and China was used for the second part, about the Mandeville's alleged experiences in the Far East.

Scholars and editors have identified more than thirty sources of *The Book*. More may be added to the list in the future, as the study of the work and its sources still needs to be concluded. Throughout this dissertation, I suggested some readings Mandeville may have done (Chapters III and IV). I have not included them in this list, given that it pretends to be a summary of the sources already confirmed and published.

As Deluz stressed, the reconstitution of Mandeville's library is an opportunity to apprehend Sir John's culture (12) and the culture of the late Middle Ages, of which his book is a brilliant compendium.

I. Main sources

1. **Odoric of Pordenone**, *Relatio (Account)* (1330).
2. **William von Boldensele**, *Itinerarius* or *Liber De Quibusdam Ultramarinis Partibus* (*Itinerary* or *Book of Certain Regions Beyond the Mediteranean*) (1336).

II. Other sources

1. **Abu Abdullah Mohammed Ibn Al-Sharif Al-Idrisi (Idrisi)**, *Geography* (twelfth century).

2. **Albert of Aachen (Albert of Aix)**, *Historia Hierosolimitanae Expeditionis* (*History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*) (c. 1125).
3. **Bede**, *De Temporibus* (*On Systems of Time*) (early eighth century).
4. **Brunetto Latini**, *Li Livres Dou Tresors* (*The Book of the Tresures*) (early 1260s).
5. **Burchard of Mount Sion**, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae* (*Description of three Holy Land*) (c. 1283).
6. **Caesarius of Heisterbach**, *Dialogus Miraculorum* (*Dialogue of Miracles*) (c. 1219-1223).
7. **Continuator of William of Tyre**, continuation of *Historia Rerum In Partibus Transmarinus Gestarum* (*History of the Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*) (thirteenth century).
8. **Defensor of Ligugé**, *Liber Scintillarum* (*Book of Sparks*) (late seventh to early eighth centuries).
9. **Eugesippus**, *Tractatus De Distanciis Locorum Terrae Sanctae* (*Treatise on the Distances of the Places of the Holy Land*) (twelfth century).
10. **Flavius Josephus**, *Vita* (*Life*)*, De Bello Judaico* (*The Jewish War*), and *Antiquitates Judaicae* (*Jewish Antiquities*) (early first century).
11. **Gervase of Tilbury**, *Otia Imperialia* (*Recreation for an Emperor*) (early thirteenth century).
12. **Hayton the Armenian**, *La Fleur des Histories de la Terra d'Orient* (*Flower of Histories of the East*) (1307).
13. **Honorius Augustodunensis** (Honorius Of Autun), *Elucidarium* (*Explanation*) and *Imago Mundi* (*Depiction of the World*) (early twelfth century).
14. **Ibn Khallikan (Catholonabeus)**, *Kitab Wafayat Ul Ayn* (*The Obituaries of Eminent Men* or *The Biographical Dictionary*) (late thirteenth century).
15. **Isidore of Seville**, *Etymologiae* (*Etymologies*) (early seventh century).
16. ***Iter Alexandri Magni Ad Paradisum*** *(Alexander the Great's Voyage to Paradise)* (fourth century).
17. **Jacques de Vitry**, *Historia Orientalis (Eastern History*) (c. 1218).
18. **Jacobus of Voragine**, *Legenda Aurea* (*Golden Legend*) (1260s).
19. **Johannes de Sacrobosco**, *Tractatus de Sphera* (*Treatise on the Sphere*) (early thirteenth century).
20. **John of Plano Carpini**, *Historia Mongolorum* (*History of the Mongols*) (thirteenth century).
21. **John of Würzburg**, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae* (*Description of the Holy Land*) (mid-twelfth century).
22. **Macrobius**, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipio* (*Notes on Scipio's Dream*) (earl fifth century).
23. **Martinus Polonus** (Martinus Oppaviensis or Martin von Trappau), *Chronicon Pontificum Et Imperatorum* (*Chronicles of Popes and Emperors*) (c. 1277).

24.**Orosius**, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Livri VII* (*Seven Books of Histories Against the Pagans*) (early fifth century).

25.**Peter Comestor**, *Historia Scholastica* (*Scholastic History*) (c. 1170).

26.**Pseudo-Odoric**, *Liber De Terra Sancta* (*Book of the Holy Land*) (c. 1330).

27.**Pseudo-William of Tripoli**, *Tractatus De Statu Sarracenorum* (*Treatise on the State of the Saracens*) (after 1273).

28.**Riccold de Monte di Croce**, *Liber Peregrinationis* (*The Book of the Pilgrimage*) (1299-1300).

29.**Solinus**, *De Mirabilibus Mundi* (*On the Wonders of the World*) (third century).

30.**Sydrach**, *La Fontaine De Toutes Sciences* (*The Source of All Knowledge*) (thirteenth century).

31.***Alexander Romances*** (various dates).

32. ***Littera Presbyteri Johannis*** (*The Letter Of Prester John*) (late twelfth century).

33.**Theodoricus**, *Libellus De Locis Sanctis* (*Little Book of the Holy Places*) (twelfth century).

34.**The Bible**.

35.**Thietmar**, *Peregrinatio* (*Pilgrimage*) (1217).

36.**William of Rubruck**, *Itinerarius* (*Itinerary*) (late thirteenth century).

37.**William of Tyre**, *Historia Rerum In Partibus Transmarinus Gestarum* (*History of the Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*) (after 1170).

38.**Vincent of Beauvais**, *Speculum Historiale* (*Mirror of History*) and *Speculum Naturale* (*Mirror of Nature*) (1240s-1250s).

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