THE EVIDENCE FOR *MARAN*, THE ANGLO-SAXON 'NIGHTMARES'

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Abstract

This article examines the Old English word *mære*, the etymon of *nightmare*, and its variants. I address a number of questions arising from our basic Old English data in order to underpin future efforts to interpret the Old English material. Four main issues are tackled. Firstly, the existence of a strong noun *mær* as well as the weak *mære* (§2). Secondly, the source and significance of the unique lemma in the gloss *incuba: mære, satyrus*. This was almost certainly a glossed text of Isidore's *Etymologiae* in which *incubi* had been corrupted to *incubae*, a conclusion allowing us to infer with confidence precisely how the glossator understood *incuba* when he chose to deploy *mære* as a gloss (§3). Thirdly, the gendering of the beings denoted by *mære*, emphasising the complexity of the evidence but suggesting the probability that *maran* were invariably female (§4). Lastly, the meaning of the lemma and the significance of the gloss in *Echo: wudumær*. The long-standing interpretation of *wudumær* to mean 'echo' can be dispensed with: it implies instead the nymph Echo, a supernatural female understood to be associated with woods (and possibly seduction), and is probably a gloss-word (§5).

Prominent in the medieval Germanic languages is a group of cognate words which denote supernatural females associated with nocturnal assaults on people, including Old English *mære* (the etymon of *nightmare*), Old Norse *mara* and more distantly *mǫrn* ('giantess'), and Old High German *mara*. These are etymologically related to an Indo-European root **mer-*, to do with crushing, pressing and oppressing (Pokorny 1959–69, s.v. *5. mer-*; de Vries 1961, s.vv. *mara, mǫrn*; cf. Lecouteux 1987, 4–5). This construct, besides being of interest in itself, interacted in the Middle Ages with concepts of *incubi* and *succubi* taken from Latin learning, which themselves became major areas of medical and theological debate (van der Lugt 2001). Since Old English attests to *mære* and its variants reasonably often, then, the word may afford us rare insights into both the nature of traditional beliefs in early medieval culture and their interaction with ideas deriving from intellectual thought. However, a number of

questions arise from our basic Old English data. Not all have been asked before, nor do I have answers for all of them. But addressing them as I do here is necessary to underpin future efforts to interpret the Old English material. I tackle four issues below: the existence of a strong noun *mær* as well as the weak *mære* (§2); the source of the unique lemma in the gloss *incuba: mære* (§3); the gendering of *maran*, particularly in relation to *mære*'s glossing of the masculine *pilosi* (§4); and the meaning of the lemma and the significance of the gloss in *Echo: wudumær* (§5).

1. Attestations

For convenience, I list the attestations of *mære* and its variants as table (1). Different manuscripts of the same text should not, of course, be considered independent witnesses to a given word without careful justification, so I group textually-related examples together, numbering each for convenient reference. Presumably because their textual interrelationships have only been established slowly over the last hundred and fifty years or so, textually related Anglo-Saxon glosses have hitherto been grouped in this way only rarely. A pertinent example is Neville's statement that 'the Latin word most commonly defined by *mære* is *incuba*' (1999, 105): this equation is actually only attested in one textual tradition, so the claim is misleading. (Nor is it helpful to imagine that glosses 'define' their lemmata: they gloss them.) More generally, numerous words in the *Thesaurus of Old English* flagged with ^g indicating that they occur only as glosses ought also to be marked with ^o, indicating that 'the word form is very infrequent' (Roberts et al. 2000, xxi), since the attestations (sometimes numerous) ought to be considered different manuscripts of the same text. Although it is sometimes possible to show that a copyist maintained a gloss while carefully and criticially revising his sources, affirming the continued validity of the gloss, we also have enough examples of the transmission of corrupt and meaningless glosses to warn against assuming this as a rule.

Kiessling has argued that *mære* in *Beowulf* line 103 and *mæra* in line 762 are the short-voweled word for the supernatural being (the latter taken to be a masculine variant), rather than the long-voweled 'glory, fame', and has built further interpretations on this (1968). The reading of 103 is far-fetched and in 762, 'Mynte se mæra' ('the notorious one intended...'; ed. Klaeber 1950, 29), would be unmetrical (*contra* Kiessling 1968, 193, where he seems not to have realised that if short-voweled, *mæra* would resolve to one metrical syllable). I

exclude these readings here, therefore. I should also admit that I have nothing to add to the *Oxford English Dictionary's* suggestion that example 4 includes the otherwise-unattested medieval English etymon of *fetch*, 'portentous apparition or double of a person' (s.v. *fetch*, n.[2]). This would presumably be a gloss whose lemma had been lost. Neville suggested that *faecce* might be Irish (1999, 106–107), but a search of the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* produces no convincing candidate. It is tempting to try to identify the word in Old English place-names such as *fecces wudu* (S 465, 970 in Kelly 1999, tantalisingly near to an *enta hlew*, 'giants' burial mound/hill'), but although *Fecc* does not seem otherwise to be attested as an Old English personal name (Searle 1897; Redin 1919, 192), a personal name here remains a plausible and conservative interpretation (cf. Grundy 1927, 178, 181; Searle 1897, 239–240).

2. Mær *beside* mære

Some of the variation in the forms of *mære* simply reflects synchronic phonological variation (the second fronting of *æ* > *e*; the levelling of *mære*'s root-vowel *æ* to that of inflected forms such as *maran* in which *æ* had been retracted; Hogg 1992, §§5.90, 5.35, 5.37.4); diachronic variation (the early weak feminine nominative singular *-ae* > *-e*; Campbell 1959, §§616–617); and scribal error (such as *menae* for *merae*; *uuydumær* and *windumær* for *wudumær*; probably also *saturnus* for *satyrus*). However, one point of variation is more noteworthy: alongside the weak form *mære* is a strong form *mær*, appearing in the singular in examples 2 and 7 and in the plural in example 3 (for the loss of strong feminine nominative singular *-u* after *-r* and for the early Anglian nominative plural inflexion *-æ*, see Campbell 1959, §§587, 589.4). Example 3 has probably been mistaken hitherto for an archaic weak nominative singular, but the plural lemma suggests otherwise and the strong form *mær* is clearly attested in 2 and 7. *Mær* is not cited by Clark Hall except insofar as it is included in *wudumær* (1960, s.v.), and in Bosworth and Toller likewise only by reference to *wudumær* (1898, s.v.); Dobbie emended *mer* to *mere* in example 7 (1942, 127). But the variation between *mær* and *mære* is no cause for surprise – similar variation exists among other short-stemmed weak feminines (Campbell 1959, §619.4), and both *mar* and *mara* are attested in medieval German (see the citations below, §7). Recognising the *mær~mære* variation adds to our documentation of this

phenomenon. However, I continue in general to use *mære* as my citation form.

3. *Example 1 and* incuba

Two problems arises from example 1. Firstly, the feminine form *incuba* in the lemma is not earlier attested in a relevant sense, according to the *Thesaurus linguae Latinae*, elsewhere in Latin (s.v. *incubus*; the *Dictionary of Medieval Medieval Latin from British Sources*, s.v. *incuba*, does have some post-Conquest attestations, but pre-Conquest cites only example 1). This does not seem hitherto to have been noticed, but demands explanation. Secondly, it is odd that this feminine lemma should be glossed by the masculine *satyrus* as well as by the more congruent feminine *mære*. Although it is sometimes said that Old English grammatical gender was not natural, this observation is not quite true of words denoting beings. There is a small group of neuter words denoting women (e.g. *wif* 'woman', neuter), and another of masculine words denoting men and women (e.g. *mann* 'person', masculine); but feminine words for humans invariably denoted females, while feminine words for animals were almost as consistent (Curzan 2003, esp. 45, 60–66, 91 n. 7; Platzer 2001). This would lead us to expect *mære* to denote females; its cognates support this, and *incuba* itself suggests that *mære* is feminine. *Satyrus* is not attested in all texts, but it is not clear if this is because it was original and removed in one tradition, or added to an earlier gloss containing only *mære*. A further issue is that that the form in the Épinal Glossary is *mera*, which Bosworth and Toller took as a weak masculine form (1898, s.v.). Such a form should, however, show the retraction of *æ, giving **mara. Rather, *mera* is simply a scribal corruption of *merae, either by mis-copying or by Germanisation of the inflection by the Épinal scribe.

Lindsay identified the source for example 1 as the Hermeneumata Glossary (1921b, 19), but the closest parallels offered by texts of this glossary are along the lines of ἐφιαλτης: *incubus* (see Goetz 1888–1923, VI s.vv. *incuba*, *incubo*, *incubus*). This explains neither the lemma *incuba*, nor the gloss *satyrus*. Pheifer, tentatively following Lindsay, suggested that *satyrus* could come from the glosses which I have labelled example 3 (1974, 95), but this is not a particularly satisfactory explanation. Lendinara suggested that influence from the Anglo-Latin *Liber monstrorum* may be involved, but this is *ad hoc* and still does not account for *incuba* (1995,

220–221). The *Thesaurus linguae Latinae*, however, suggests derivation from Isidore of Seville, whose *Etymologiae* include the entry (ed. Lindsay 1911, I 8.11.103–104)

Pilosi, qui Graece Panitae, Latine Incubi appellantur, sive Inui ab ineundo passim cum animalibus. Vnde et Incubi dicuntur ab incumbendo, hoc est stuprando. Saepe enim inprobi existunt etiam mulieribus, ut earum peragunt concubitum; quos daemones Galli Dusios vocant, quia assidue hanc peragunt inmunditiam. Quem autem vulgo Incubonem vocant, hunc Romani Faunum ficarium dicunt. Ad quem Horatius dicit:

> Faune, Nympharum fugientium amator,
> per meos fines et aprica rura
> lenis incedas.

Pilosi, who in Greek are named *Panitae*, in Latin *Incubi*, or *Inui* from mating [*inire*] here and there with animals – from which *Incubi* are also called, from their pressing down [*incumbendus*], that is from raping. For often evil ones even appear to women, so that they succeed in lying with them, which demons the Gauls call *Dusii*, because they perpretrate this impurity continually [*assidue*]. But that which they call *Incubo* in everyday language, the Romans say to be Faunus of the Fig. To whom Horace said:

> Faunus, lover of fleeing nymphs,
> may you step calmly through my bounds
> and the sunny countryside.

Lindsay noted no textual variant *incuba* for Isidore's discussion of *incubi* in the *Etymologiae* (1911, 8.9.103), and without the new edition of Book 8 in the series currently being published in Paris by Les Belles Lettres, it is impossible to be sure where such a variant might have come from. However, we have an excellent candidate in the Anglo-Saxon epitome of the *Etymologiae* identified by Lapidge in a northern French manuscript from the eighth or ninth century, now part of Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 1750. This gives the abbreviated text (ed. Lapidge 1996 [1988–89], 200)

Pylosi, qui graece Paniae, latine Incubae appellant, ab incubando hoc est stuprando. Sepe enim prope existunt etiam mulieribus et earum peragunt concubitum, qui adsidue hanc peragunt inmundiciam; quem autem uulgo incubum hunc Romani Faunum ficarum dicunt.

Pylosi which in Greek are called *Paniae*, in Latin are *Incubae*, from their pressing down [*incumbendus*], that is raping. For often they are also by women and succeed in lying with them, they who perpetrate this impurity continually; but he who in everyday language is called *incubus* the Romans call Faunus of the Fig.

Incubae, presumably a mistake, perhaps prompted by the preceding *Pani(t)ae*, accounts neatly for the lemma *incuba*. The Épinal-Erfurt Glossary has long been recognised to contain items from Isidore's *Etymologiae* (see Pheifer 1974, liv), and Lapidge has shown specifically that our manuscript of the epitome contains eight Old English glosses, two of which also appear distinctively in the Épinal-Erfurt glossaries (1996 [1988–89], 188–193). These must have been gathered from glosses in a manuscript of the *Etymologiae* related to the surviving epitome, finding their way from there into the tradition underlying Épinal-Erfurt. It is likely, then, that a lost text of this epitome contained not only the form *incubae*, but a vernacular gloss *maran*, the pair being later incorporated (in the nominative singular) into the Épinal-Erfurt tradition.

Reasons for the presence of the further gloss *satyrus* are also suggested by the *Etymologiae*. Isidore's discussion of *satyri* does not occur in the epitome, but the full text of the *Etymologiae* associates them, like the *incubones*, with *fauni ficarii* (ed. Lindsay 1911, 11.3.21–22):

Satyri homunciones sunt aduncis naribus; cornua in frontibus, et caparum pedibus similes, qualem in solitudine Antonius sanctus vidit. Qui etiam interrogatus Dei servo respondisse fertur dicens 'Mortalis ego sum unus ex accolis heremi, quos vario delusa errore gentilitas Faunos Satyrosque colit.' Dicuntur quidam et silvestres homines, quos nonnulli Faunos ficarios vocant.

Satyri are little men with crooked nostrils, horns on their foreheads, and feet like goats', of the sort which Saint Anthony saw in the wilderness. Questioned by the servant of God, one is reported to have replied, saying 'I am one mortal from the inhabitants of the desert, whom the deluded heathen by various errors worship as Fauns and Satyrs'. They are also sometimes named men of the woods, whom several call Fauns of the Fig.

A reader of this passage and the one quoted above would observe that both *satyri* and *incubones* were referred to as *fauni*, and might reasonably infer, then, that *satyrus* was a suitable gloss for *incubus~incubo*. The same inference is attested in the *Liber monstrorum* (I.46; ed. Orchard 1995, 282). Any glossator who knew the *Etymologiae* well, then, might have used *satyrus* as a gloss for *incubus*. In that case, however, it remains odd that the masculine *satyrus* was chosen to gloss *incuba* when *succuba* or *larva* could have been used instead.

However, there is evidence that some connection had been made between *incubi/incubae* and *satyri* in the glossed *Etymologiae* itself: immediately following the entry on *incubae* in the Epitome is the

obscure 'Satyria lex est que de rebus plurimis eloquitur quasi a satu-
ritate unde et Satyra scribere est' (ed. Lapidge 1996 [1988–89],
200–201). Quite how we should understand this is unclear: with ref-
erence to Isidore's original statement, and taking the nonsensical
satyria as Isidore's adjective *satura*, it could be translated to say 'the
satirical convention is one which speaks about a great variety of
things, as though from *satiety*, whence also writing *satires* is derived'
(cf. Lindsay 1911, 5.16.1). The note has been moved from its origi-
nal position in the *Etymologiae*; the reasons for this probably lie in
another statement by Isidore involving satire, this time on newer
comedic writers (ed. Lindsay 1911, 8.7.8):

Saturici autem dicti, sive quod pleni sint omni facundia, sive a saturitate et copia: de
pluribus enim simul rebus loquuntur; seu ab illa lance quae diversis frugum vel po-
morum generibus ad templa gentilium solebat deferri; aut a satyris nomen tractum,
qui inulta habent ea quae per vinolentiam dicuntur.

But they are called *satyrici* [satyr-like or satirical men], either because they are filled
with the capacity for eloquence, or from satiety and abundance: for they speak about
many things at once; derived either from that platter on which diverse sorts of crops
or fruits used to be carried down to the temples of pagans [i.e. a *saturica*], or from
the name of satyrs, who have those unpunished things which are named after *vinol-
entia* ['intoxication'].

As I have shown, an attentive reader of the *Etymologiae* would have
seen that *incubus* and *satyrus* were – according to Isidore – partial
synonyms. The epitomator of the *Etymologiae* was in the habit of
bringing dispersed discussions of related topics together, and it
would have been characteristic to move this mention of *satyri* from
its position earlier in Book 8 to stand beside the description of *in-
cubi* (cf. Lapidge 1996 [1988–89], 193, 196–199). Whether the man-
gled text which we have shows that the redactor did this job poorly,
or reflects later corruption, or both, is unclear. Precisely how this
textual history gave rise to *incuba: mære, satyrus* cannot be recon-
structed, but it does explain the collocation of the two Latin words
in the gloss. Perhaps the scribe who collected glosses from the *Etym-
ologiae* found *incubae* glossed with *maran*, with a subsequent discus-
sion of *satyri* in the main text, and lifted not only the gloss *mære*
but the synonym *satyrus*. On the other hand, perhaps the re-ordered
text in the Epitome reflects an early gloss *satyri* on *incubi*, which in-
spired the epitomator to move the passage on *satyri* so that it was
beside the passage on *incubi, maran* being added at a later stage
after the corruption of *incubi* to *incubae*.

These arguments elucidate the origins of an early Anglo-Saxon gloss, and consolidate Lapidge's observations on the early circulation of and engagement with Isidore's *Etymologiae* in Anglo-Saxon England. They are also important for understanding *mære*. We now have a good idea of the contextual information which the glossator who glossed *incuba* with *mære* had before him; moreover, in view of its interlinear origin, unique lemma and early date, it seems reasonably likely that the equation of *incuba* with *mære* was made without interference from other glossing traditions, making it particularly reliable as evidence for the meanings of the English word.

4. *Example 3 and gender*

I have found external reasons why the feminine *mære* appeared alongside the masculine *satyrus* in example 1, but in example 3, where *mære* glosses the masculine *pilosus*, the issue arises once more. The lemma is in a batch of glosses to the book of Isaiah, coming from 13.21–22, 'requiescent ibi bestiae et replebuntur domes eorum draconibus et habitabunt ibi strutiones et pilosi saltabunt ibi; et respondebunt ibi ululae in aedibus eius et sirenae in delubris voluptatis' ('beasts will repose there and their homes will be filled with snakes, and ostriches will dwell there and *pilosi* [literally 'hairy men'] will dance there; and screech-owls will answer in his dwellings, and sirens in the temples of delight'; ed. Weber 1975, II 1110). Steinmeyer and Sievers identified the source for this gloss as Hieronymus's commentary on Isaiah (1879–1922, v 333), which lists *incubones* first of other synonyms for *pilosi* (ed. [Hurst–Adriaen] 1969, 166; Lendinara's suggestion of influence from the *Liber monstrorum* here, 1995, 220–221, is again *ad hoc*). The source of *monstri* is less obvious, but Hieronymus's discussion also implies that *pilosi* are 'daemonum genera' ('kinds of demons'), and offers 'daemones aut monstra' as synonyms for *sirenae*. Since both *pilosi* and *sirenae* were *daemones*, then, it may have been inferred that both were also *monstra*. *Monstrum* was – as in Hieronymus's text – usually neuter; its gender was perhaps changed by the glossator or a later redactor to match that of *pilosi*.

Since, as I have shown in §3, *pilosus* was evidently partially synonymous in early medieval Latin with *incubus*, the choice of the gloss *mære* for *pilosus* is consistent with its use to gloss *incuba*, except with respect to gender. This raises questions about the gendering of *maran* in Anglo-Saxon culture, to which we can respond in four main ways: we can suppose that (a) *mære* could indeed routinely denote male beings as well as female ones; (b) that the glossator did

not mind that there was a gender mismatch between lemma and gloss; (c) that some external factor affected the interpretation of the lemma; or (d) that some other external factor affected the choice of the gloss.

A search of the *Patrologia Latina Database* reveals no obvious basis for a claim that *pilosi* might have been taken as female, besides which the gloss includes *incubi* and the unetymologically masculine *monstri*, so this precludes (c). Arguments (a) and (b) would be supported if there were similar Old English examples of this transgression in gendering. The more convincing examples arising from an exhaustive survey of Latin and Old English words for female supernatural beings among lemmata and glosses in the electronic *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* are both glosses on the feminine *larbula*, a diminutive of *larva* ('spectre') coined by Aldhelm. Épinal-Erfurt and their relatives gloss with the masculine 'egisigrima' (ed. Pheifer 1974, 31 [no. 569]), and glosses to Aldhelm's *Enigmata* in Cambridge University Library MS. Gg. V. 35 use 'puca' (ed. Napier 1900, 191).[1] It has also been observed that in *Beowulf* Grendel's mother is occasionally referred to with masculine pronouns and with nouns usually associated with men, the most convincing example being *secg* (see Chance 1986, 95–97). Such observations could be taken to suggest that our glossator considered the gendering of *maran* to be ambiguous, or – if we take the gender change in *monstri* to be significant – that he was not always concerned about their gender. The comparisons, however, are imperfect: in Old English, masculine grammatical gender was more inclusive of words denoting beings of other natural genders than was the feminine grammatical gender, so for a masculine word to gloss a word denoting females is considerably less surprising than for the feminine *mær* to gloss the masculine *pilosus*. As regards Grendel's mother, historically attested women taking on traditional male roles were referred to as *þegnas* and perhaps *ealdormen*, presumably without connotations of monstrosity (Fell 2002, 207–209). The words used of Grendel's mother, then, may simply reflect her assumption of the role of avenger in the absence of surviving male kin, and this is consistent with various arguments playing down her monstrosity (see Kiernan 1984; Allfano 1992; Taylor 1993–94; cf. Chance 1986, 99–107; Temple 1985–86; illuminating models for this interpretation are suggested by Norse evidence, discussed by Clover 1986, 1993). Assuming that *mære* could denote males, then, is problematic, while simply to assume that the glossator was not concerned about the gender mismatch is unsatisfactory.

We are left with (d), an external explanation for the choice of the gloss *mær*, and I suggest two possibilities: a lexical gap in Old

English for masculine words corresponding to *pilosus*, which meant that the problem of gender in *mær* was less than other problems of semantic correspondence in other potential glosses; or direct influence from the tradition of Isidore glosses just discussed. Detecting lexical gaps is difficult,[2] but potentially an important way of mapping both the Anglo-Saxon lexicon and, potentially, Anglo-Saxon beliefs, as it can tell us what concepts were not natively reflected in the Old English lexicon. However, the Isaiah glosses are dominated by Latin and although the number of vernacular glosses varies from manuscript to manuscript, they are few. It is implausible, then, to imagine a glossator deploying *mær* here because he had to find a vernacular gloss, however inappropriate. As it is, the fact that the vernacular *mær* is used at all stands out as unusual. Moreover, by the eleventh century, the word *wuduwasa* existed, attested glossing *faunus* (ed. Meritt 1959, 43; Wright 1884, I cols 108 [1l. 21–23], 189 [11.13–14]). Although *wuduwasa* is not attested elsewhere in Germanic languages, its long life in Middle English suggests that was in general use rather than a gloss-word, and so it seems reasonably likely to have been in Old English a good while before 1000. Since *fauni* were seen to be like *pilosi*, and since in Middle English *Wodwos* indeed glosses Isaiah 13:21 (*Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. *wodewose*), it would surely have been an excellent gloss for *pilosus* were it available in the seventh century.

One cannot help wondering, then, if the Leiden gloss reflects once more the Isidore text discussed in §3 – reversal of Pheifer's idea that the Leiden gloss might have been the source of example 1. The prospect of the Isaiah glossator, seeking information on the meaning of *pilosus*, turning to a text of the *Etymologiae* like that which I have just discussed, and finding *pilosi* equated not only with *incubae* but with *maran*, is plausible enough in itself. It is hardly an ideal explanation, however, because there is little evidence that he used the *Etymologiae* at all (cf. Steinmeyer and Sievers 1879–1922, v 335). How best we are to read example 3, then, I am not sure, but the problems which it presents are at least clearer.

5. Example 2 and Echo

According to the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, *echo* occurs in pre-Conquest Anglo-Latin only in example 2. Pheifer, following a suggestion of Lindsay's, thought that the lemma came from a phrase in chapter 16 of Evagrius's *Vita Sancti Antonii* (ed. *Patrologiae curses completus. Series Latina*, LXXIII 139a; Pheifer

1974, 83; cf. Lindsay 1921a, 60; 1921b, 114), and my searches of the *Patrologia Latina Database* have identified no likelier source. The meaning of this lemma, however, has generally been misinterpreted.

Understandings of *wudumær* go back to Grimm's interpretation as 'both echo and *nympha silvestris* ["nymph of the forest"]', his reading *echo* being principally on the analogy of Old Icelandic *dvergmál* ('dwarf-speech, echo'), a word in which supernatural beings are associated with echoes (Grimm 1882–88, IV 413). Clark Hall accordingly defined *wudumær* as 'wood-nymph, echo' (1960, s.v.); but Bosworth and Toller, citing Grimm, gave only *echo* (1898, s.v.), and so have many of their successors (e.g. Lecouteux 1987, 9; Neville 1999, 108–109; Roberts et al. 2000, §02.05.10.04). However, the second half of Grimm's interpretation is more plausible. The generic element of *dvergmál* is a word meaning 'speech', which is semantically congruent with its denotation of a sound (and consistent with the other examples adduced by Grimm). But *wudumær* contains no such element and its generic denotes a (female) supernatural being. It is *a priori* unlikely, then, that *wudumær* could mean 'echo'. Moreover, the source-text for the lemma, describing the deceits of demons, runs 'Solent etiam cum modulatione nonnunquam apparentes psallere, proh nefas! ad haec et impuro ore sacra Scripturarum eloquia meditantur. Frequenter enim legentibus nobis, quasi Echo ad extrema verba respondet' ('[Devils], never becoming visible, would even sing psalms in rhythm, sin that it is! And moreover they meditate on the holy utterances of the Scriptures with impure mouths. For often during our readings, it is as though Echo responds to the final words'). As the capitalisation in the *Patrologia Latina* suggests, *Echo* here surely denotes the mythical personification of the echo. That Anglo-Saxons knew the myth of Echo is likely enough: Symphosius's riddle *Echo*, which refers to its subject as 'virgo modesta' ('modest maiden'; ed. Glorie 1968, 719), was known in early Anglo-Saxon England, as, more importantly, were Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which recount Echo's story in full in III.339–510 (Orchard 1994, 155–161 on Symphosius, 145–149, 228–229 on Ovid). All the evidence, then, points towards interpreting *wudumær* to denote some sort of supernatural female, and the sense 'echo' can be culled from the dictionaries. The idea that attestations of *elf* and *dwarf* in English place-names 'refer to there being an echo at that place' (Gelling 1978, 150) probably rests largely on the misinterpretation of *wudumær* and can probably be culled with it.

On the face of it, it seems surprising that a nymph's name should be glossed with the same Old English word as monstrous beings such as *incubae* and *pilosi* (elsewhere, *nympha* and words for *nymphae* are glossed with *gyden*, 'goddess', or variations, usually grammatically feminised, on *ælf*, 'elf', while nymphs were spared inclusion in the *Liber monstrorum*).[3] This might suggest that *mære* could denote beautiful anthropomorphic females (as its cognate occasionally did in the modem Scandinavian tradition: Raudvere 1993, 123–126). However, the *Vita Antonii* affords a context which associates Echo specifically with demons. Nymphs were not, in any case, always kindly treated by Anglo-Saxon glossators: the eleventh-century Harley glossary develops earlier traditions with the gloss 'Castalidas nymphas. pa manfullan gydena. *uel* dunelfa.' ('Castalian nymphs: the sinful godesses, or mountain-elves'; ed. Oliphant 1966, 59 [C475]; for the earliest representatives of its sources see nn. 1, 3). It is also worth noting that Echo tried to instigate a sexual relationship, unlike most nymphs who sought to flee them, which may have encouraged her association with monstrosity and with *maran* specifically. These points suggest that we may take Echo to have been understood in the *Vita Antonii* as a demonic being – perhaps a sexually aggressive one – her name being glossed accordingly with -*mær*.

The reasons why *mær* was compounded with *wudu* to gloss *Echo* are less clear. Old English compounds appearing only in textually-interrelated glossaries may *a priori* be assumed to be gloss-coinages. However, as Pheifer noted (1974, 83), *wudumær* may be paralleled by *wudewasa*, which could lend some support to seeing *wudumær* as a member of the wider lexicon (though this assumes of course that *wudewasa* was available to parallel it already in the seventh century). If *wudumær* was in general use, then it may have been used to gloss *Echo* because Ovid associated Echo with woods, as in book 3, lines 393–394 and 400–401 (cf. lines 388–389; ed. and trans. Miller 1984, I 150–153):

spreta latet silvis pudibundaque frondibus ora protegit et solis ex illo vivit in antris;
...
inde latet silvis nulloque in monte videtur, omnibus auditur: sonus est, qui vivit in illa.

Thus spurned, she lurks in the woods, hides her shamed face among the foliage, and lives from that time on in lonely caves ... She hides in woods and is seen no more upon the mountainsides; but all may hear her, for voice, and voice alone, still lives in her.

Alternatively, *wudumær* might have been coined because Echo was known to have been associated with woods, and to distinguish her as a mythical individual from the kind of being denoted by the simplex *mær*. The ramifications of these two possibilities for our interpretation of the meaning of *mære* are diametrically different. In the one case, we have a day-to-day term attesting to a variety of *maran* which was associated with woods in Anglo-Saxon belief; in the other case, *wudumær* is merely a gloss-word, implying that *maran* were not normally associated with woods. I prefer the latter interpretation, but the decision is not a secure one.

6. Conclusions

Several key points emerge regarding our Old English evidence for *mære* and its strong variant *mær*. The gloss *incuba: mære, satyrus* almost certainly derives from a glossed text of Isidore's *Etymologiae* in which *incubi* had been corrupted to *incubae*. Besides elucidating the transmission of both gloss and source text, this allows us to infer with confidence the information which the glossator had at hand when he chose to deploy *mære* as a gloss: the lemma denoted an implicitly female supernatural being which pressed down on and raped people (§3). That *mære* might denote male beings is hinted at by the gloss *Pilosi: incubi, monstri; id est meræ*, but I have shown various complications and alternative possibilities here, none certain. For now, I am swayed by the other evidence that *maran* were invariably female (§4). The long-standing interpretation of *wudumær* to mean 'echo' can be dispensed with; it implies instead Echo, a supernatural female understood to be associated with woods (and possibly seduction). The balance of probability is that *wudumær* is a gloss-word, in which case the connection of *mære* with woods was not usual in tradition; but this is not certain (§5). The precise import of these collocations for future reconstructions of beliefs concerning *maran* and similar beings remains to be identified, but we stand a better chance of establishing it with the clarification of our data provided here.

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Council) and the SOCRATES scheme; see further <http://www.alarichall.org.uk>.

1. My other possible example is the unique 'Ruricolas musas : landælfe' in the Third Cleopatra Glossary, but its better attested companion 'Castalidas ny*m*phas : dunælfa' shows an unetymological West Saxon strong feminine inflexion, and one wonders if *landælfe*, originating in an Anglian text (Kittlick 1998, §14.3.2) where strong feminine accusative plurals ended in *-e*, was intended likewise as a feminine ō-stem (ed. Rusche 1996, 521 [nos 1100–1101]; another example is quoted in §5; see further Hall 2004, 81-86).

2. The relevant *Thesaurus of Old English* entry (Roberts, Kay and Grundy 2000, §16.01.03.04 'Elfin race') is too unreliable here to be very helpful (Hall 2004, 19–20).

3. See n. 1 for one textual tradition using *ælf* and Meritt 1945, 61 [no. 71] for the most conservative text of the other; see further Hall 2004, 81–92. For *gyden* see Rusche 1996, 225 [C460], 381 [N124], 521 [no.1101]; cf. Lindsay 1921a, 120 [N109]. Despite the inclusion of the mythologically related figures of the *Eumenides*, *fauni* and *satyri*, *nymphae* do not occur in this extensive catalogue of *monstra*. The word occurs once, in entry I.34 (ed. Orchard 1995, 276): 'Et dicunt monstra esse in paludibus cum tribus humanis capitibus et subprofundissimis stagnis sicut nimphas habitare fabulantur. Quod credere profanum est: ut non illuc fluant gurgites quo inmane monstrum ingreditur' ('and they say that prodigies exist in swamps with three human heads and they are rumoured to inhabit the lowest of the depths of pools like *nymphae* [springs] – which it is a profanity to beleive, because floods do not flow to a place into which a huge monster enters'). This puns on the mythological meaning of *nympha*, which the reader initially assumes, taking it rather in the sense 'spring'. This punning and sniping at Classical paganism is characteristic of the *Liber monstrorum* (Orchard 1995, 87–91, 98–101), but does not detract from the striking absence of *nymphae* from the work.

4. The latter gloss occurs in the L section of the glossary, an aberration explained by Steinmeyer and Sievers as being due to a lost lemma *lamia* (1879–1922, IV 204 n. 21). If so, then the gloss would be different from any attested in Anglo-Saxon England. But the extension of the form *incuba*, originally a corrupt lemma (see §3), to the status of a gloss seems unlikely; we have more likely the careless misreading of the *I* of *Incuba* as an *L* during the alphabeticisation of the glosses.

Table 1.

No.	Origin	Text	Form	ed.
1	s. VII[4th quarter] (Pheifer 1987)	Épinal Glossary	incuba. mera uel satyrus	Pheifer 1974, 30 [no. 558]
		Erfurt Glossary	incuba merae ł saturnus	"
		Leiden Glossary	incuba ; merae . *uel* saturus	Hessels 1906, 49 [XLVII.81]
		Corpus Glossary	incuba merae	Lindsay 1921a, 96 [I225]
		Cf. 'Incuba satirus ul trut(e)' (ed. Steinmeyer and Sievers 1879–1922, IV 187; for the links with Épinal-Erfurt-Corpus see 179 n. 11); 'Incuba, mara' (eds. Steinmeyer and Sievers 1879–1922, IV 204; on its textual affiliations see 195 n. 7).[4]		
2	"	Erfurt Glossary	Echo uuydumer	Pheifer 1974, 19 [no. 347]
		Corpus Glossary	Echo wudumer	Lindsay 1921a, 60 [E12]
		1st Cleopatra Glossary	Echo wudumær	Rusche 1996, 260 [E5]
		3rd Cleopatra Glossary	Echo windumær	Rusche 1996, 456 [no. 884]
3	s.VII[2] (Lapidge 1996 [1986])	Leiden Glossary	Pilosi : incubi . monstri; *idest* menae	Hessels 1906, 14 [XIII 24]
		Cf. the other 'Leiden group' glossaries on Isaiah in German manuscripts with variants on the theme of 'Pilosi'. Incubi . monstri .i. maerae' (ed. Meritt 1945, 51; Steinmeyer and Sievers 1879–1922, I 589).		
4	*ante* c. 800 (Bischoff and Parkes 1988, 22–25)	Corpus Glossary	Faece maere.	Lindsay 1921a, 76 [F135]
		1st Cleopatra Glossary	fecce : mere	Rusche 1996 [F151]
5	*ante* s. X med.	Bald's Leechbook I	Læcedomas wiþ ælcre leodrunan & ælfsidenne þæt is fefercynnes gealdor & dust & drencas & sealf & gif sio adl netnum sie. & gif sio adl wyrde maman oððe mare ride & wyrde seofon ealles cræfta	Wright 1955, f. 5
			Gif mon mare ride . genim elehtran & garleac . & betonican . & recels bindon næsce hæbbe him mon & he gange þas wyrte	Wright 1955, ff. 52v-53r.

Table 1. Continued

No.	Origin	Text	Form	ed.
6	*ante* s. X med.	Leechbook III	hi beoþ gode wiþ heafodece & wiþ eagwærce & wiþ feondes costunga & nihtgengan & lenctenalde & maran & wyrtforbore & malscra & yflum gealdorcræftum.	Wright 1955, f. 111v.
7	*ante* s. XI[1] (Ker 1957, 43 [no. 2])	*A Journey Charm*	Sygegealdor ic begale, | sigegyrd ic me wege, / wordsige and worcsige. | Se me dege; / ne me mer ne ge-myrrene | ne me maga ne geswence	Dobbie 1942, 127

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