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"Our Filthy Liues in Swines are Shewd": Deformed Pigs, Religious Disquiet and Propaganda in Elizabethan England

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Abstract This article takes into account some broadsheets published in London between 1562 and 1570, a span of time in which the birth of deformed pigs is read in the light of the conflicts that destabilised the auroral decade of Elizabeth I's reign. In this period, both Protestants and Catholics fostered a symbolic imagery, as a result of which deformed animals (and humans) were deciphered instrumentally as signs of God's wrath against the religious and political enemy. The pig – a dirty and obscene beast – embodied further meanings when its anatomy exceeded the laws of nature, and could be interpreted as a mirror of moral and social non-conformity.

Keywords Deformed pigs. Elizabethan England. Monstrous births. Religious and political propaganda. Street literature.

Summary 1 Horrible Monster cast of a Sow. – 2 They Threaten I Know not What. – 3 Forked Ears Deaf to the Word. – 4 Monstrous Visions for Monstrous Lives. – 5 Most Swinish are our Lives. – 6 A Miss-Shaped Pig declares this World Turned Upside Down.

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1 Horrible Monster cast of a Sow

In 1531, in an England still a few years shy of the Henrician schism, a broadside circulated with the news of a deformed pig. The document, printed horizontally and lacking a title, is in three parts, with a brief text in the centre between two large images of the monstrous creature. The prose, extremely concise, recounts that at Lebenhayn, a small village in eastern Prussia located two miles from the city of Kunyngbergh (the present-day Königsberg / Kaliningrad), a sow has given birth to a "horryble monster"; the text supplies nothing more that the event's geographical location and a short anatomical description. But the most striking element of the document (and the true 'motor' for its publication) is the two images of the creature (on the left the frontal vision, on the right the posterior), rich, detailed and – as the document itself affirms – "cou[n]terfeyted after the facyon of the sayd Monster". They represent with crude and realistic lineaments two piglets separated as far as the belly and united from the chest to the head: an evident case of what modern veterinary medicine would call craniopagus Siamese twins **[fig. 1]**.

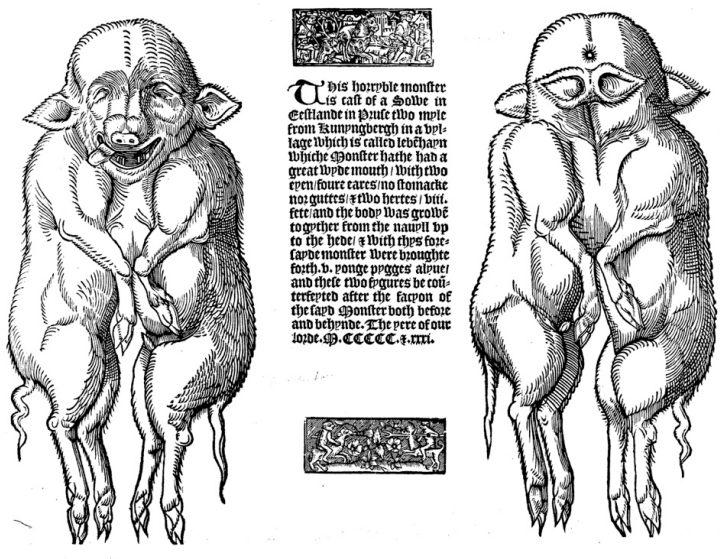

Figure 1 Anonymous, *This horryble monster is cast of a Sowe*. S.n. [Germany], 1531.
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The document, its significance and its *raison d'être* appear at first sight incomprehensible. Why publicise an event undoubtedly singu-

lar, but so apparently insignificant? What messages did the birth of a monstrous animal convey, apart from the taste for the unusual and the grotesque? And why should a deformed pig born in remotest Prussia have meaning for an English public? The present essay seeks to answer these questions, taking into consideration certain broadsides published in London between 1562 and 1570, in which the birth of deformed pigs is read in the light of the bitter conflicts that destabilised the first inaugural decade of Queen Elizabeth I's reign.

Symbolic readings of the freakish body were certainly not an exclusively English phenomenon: in the whole of Europe, at the dawn of the early modern age, both Catholics and Protestants fostered a powerfully numinous imaginative world, in which animals (and humans) born with appalling congenital malformations were interpreted as God's anger against the religious or political enemy (Niccoli 1987; Bates 2005; Crawford 2005; Baratta 2016).

To illustrate the formation, function and chronology of this important cultural phenomenon, this essay first offers a general overview of the allegorical use of monstruosity in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe, emphasising the important role of German printing in this process of symbolic construction. Next, the investigation abandons the continental territories and concentrates on England, to show this process *in actu* in a precise socio-political context, and within the confines of a specific animal species. The pig – perceived *per se* as a shameful, dirty, greedy and obscene beast – embodied further significances when its anatomy exceeded the natural norm, and was capable of embodying moral and social nonconformity.

As will emerge at the end of this study, the 'monstrous pig' could be a polysemic sign in the various phases of the period analysed: in the first years of Elizabeth's reign, it was used as a generic representation of sinful and unstable times, before becoming an unequivocal metaphor for subversive conspiracies against the Queen. No variation in the natural order took place by chance and spiritual disquiet – proper to changing times – offered instruments and occasions for the most unscrupulous political interpretations of the 'signs from heaven'.

2 They Threaten I Know not What

From the end of the fifteenth century, and throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth, in European culture the monstrous body is the object of supernatural interpretations that, despite different nuances and different uses, had long shared a common denominator: physical deformity implies moral monstrosity, and thus becomes a metaphor for the spiritual degradation of individuals, communities, nations and powers.

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In the last four decades, research on the symbolic (and often exploitative) interpretation of monstrous animals or humans has made notable progress. Starting with the seminal study by Jean Céard (1977), it has become clear that the attraction for the monstrous, proper to modern Europe, was not simply linked to a taste for the bizarre or to pre-scientific curiosity but could be tantamount to a privileged key for the understanding of the world. It could also be, from the present point of view, a royal road to the imaginative world of this age. Thus it has emerged that the monster represented a sign in a complex numinous alphabet (also made up of earthquakes, storms, floods, and astral events such as eclipses or comets), where the alterations of nature could be observed, analysed and interpreted as prefigurations of catastrophic events such as war, famine or plague (Daston, Park 1998). In this imaginative world, every alteration in the repetitive order of nature was understood as an instrument for intuiting divine anger, foreseeing future punishment and taking measures to forestall it (Niccoli 1987, 47-52). In this way the Latin divinatory readings, which rested on the etymology (or para-etymology) of the word 'monster' itself, were recovered.[1] Monsters – such was the reasoning – are so called because they show something of the past (the fault) and of the future (the consequent punishment), and thus announce misfortune for the entire community or for the individual families to whom they are born.[2] Enigmatic conveyors of meaning, monstrous bodies thus acted as genuine emblems, whose physical (and therefore signic) ambiguity inevitably made of them symbols to be interpreted and deciphered (Bates 2005).

This is not to say that modern medicine, still substantially Aristotelian and Galenic, did not proffer 'biological' reasons for the formation of monsters: it explicitly appealed to the characteristics of male and female semen, affirming that monsters could be formed because the seed was too little or too much, or else bad (Huet 2004). At the outset of this process, however, even the physicians always placed the divine will, because, while it is true that biological events have

1 See, for example, Cicero, *De divinatione*, I, 93: "Etrusci […] ostentorum exercitatissumi interpretes exstiterunt. Quorum quidem vim […] verba ipsa prudenter a maioribus posita declarant. Quia enim ostendunt, portendunt, monstrant, praedicunt, ostenta, portenta, monstra, prodigia dicuntur" ("The Etruscans have become very proficient in the interpretation of portents. Indeed, the inherent force of these means of divination […] is clearly shown by the very words so aptly chosen by our ancestors to describe them. Because they 'make manifest' [*ostendunt*], 'portend' [*portendunt*], 'intimate' [*monstrant*], 'predict' [*praedicunt*], they are called 'manifestations', 'portents', 'intimations', and 'prodigies'" (Cicero 1923, 324-5). Cicero associates 'monstrum' with the verb 'monstrare' and not – like modern etymological dictionaries – with 'monere' (to warn, to advise). Beyond subtle semantic nuances, the role of the imagination does not change.

2 For example, monsters testify to the lust of their parents, who did not abstain from sexual intercourse during the mother's menstrual periods (Niccoli 1980, 402-28).

their natural causes, it is always the First Cause that acts on the material world, intervening to sicken or to cure (Harley 1993). A powerful nexus was therefore created between humanist recuperation, theology and medicine, which would be gradually unpicked only in the course of the seventeenth century, with the progressive rise of the new Baconian science, whose mature fruit would be the founding of the various national scientific academies (in the case of England, the *Royal Society of London*, with its publishing venture: the *Philosophical Transactions*).[3]

So we begin to glimpse a complex significance in the broadside with which we began: in an imaginative world where aberrations in the order of the cosmos were letters of the divine alphabet, the birth of a deformed animal inevitably acquired a surplus of meaning and presented itself to the reader with all its arcane potential significance. It was the bearer of a sinister premonition, but also of an obscure fascination: for this reason the printers, always in search of material that would generate sales and therefore profits, promoted documents of this type, satisfying and at the same time feeding a need.

But if at this point the motivation (both cultural and commercial) that led to the publication of *This Horryble Monster is Cast of a Sowe* appears less obscure, its significance is still far from evident.

We are helped, at least partially, by what is probably the archetype: *De portentifico Sue in Suntgaudia*, a *Flugblatt* published in Basel in 1496 by the printer Johann Bergmann and devoted to the birth of a deformed pig, which took place in the small town of Landser, in the first months of that year. The author, the Alsatian humanist, jurist and poet Sebastian Brant, is known for a rich series of illustrated broadsides, many of them specifically devoted to monstrous births, human or animal, interpreted allegorically in religious and political terms.[4]

Let us take a quick look at it. At the top of the broadside is a representation of the monster: the double pig appears in the left foreground, dominating the little town which appears on the right. Above the image a short title ("Ad Sacrosancti Romani imperij inuictissimu[m] rege[m] Maximilianu[m]: de porte[n]tifico Sue in Su[n]tgaudia: kale[n]dis Marcijs Anno &c. xcvj. edito: co[n]iectural[is] explanatio. S. Brant"; "To Maximilian, undefeated King of the Holy Roman Empire: Sebastian Brant's conjectural interpretation of the portentous Pig born in Suntgaudia the first day of March 1496") in-

3 For the slow process by which monstrous births were gradually shorn of their numinous qualities to become objects of scientific examination, see Baratta 2016 and 2017. Another important essay on the interpretation of monsters in an English context is that of Crawford 2005.

4 For Brant's interest in monsters and their interpretation in political terms, see Wuttke 1974 and Kappler 1980. The broadside discussed here is reproduced in Brant 1915, 45.

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troduces a long poem in Latin elegiac couplets, divided into two columns **[fig. 2]**.

The composition begins with a long sequence of "crebra ostenta" ("frequent miracles"), a crowd of prodigies that serves to present the climate of obscure menace ("minant | nescio quid"; "they threaten I know not what"), over which the recent monster is to preside (Brant 1496, vv. 23-24).[5]

"Hunc cum porcellum tuerer: miratus habunde" (when you contemplate this piglet, you are filled with astonishment), writes Brant (v. 29), and the declaration of amazement is followed by a detailed description of the monstrous body: "Vidi illi linguas sub capite esse duas | Et fauces binas: unu[m] tantu[m] caput: et cor: | Quattuor auriculas: bis totidemq[ue] pedes. | At duplices dentes sub rostro ostenderat uno. | Iunctus erat supra: sectus ab umbilico" (I saw that it had below its head two tongues and two sets of jaws; the body was one, and so was the heart. It had four small ears and four feet. A double row of teeth grew from a single snout. It was joined in the upper portion, but separate from the belly downwards, vv. 30-34). But the aspect that most interests us is the allegorical reading that immediately follows, where Brant wonders about the monster's significance: "Continuo mecu[m] quaena[m] haec sic tristis imago? | Quid sibi vult facies tetrica & horridula? | Quam vereor ne fors no[n] fausta tomacula: porcus | Hic portentificus porrigat imperio" (I continually ask myself: what on earth is this sinister image? What does this menacing and terrible figure portend? O, how I fear that fate gives us poisoned sausages: this portentous pig weighs heavily on the empire, vv. 35-38).

So the monstrous body has something to do with the imperial power, and with the threats that risk weakening it: further in the text, the enigma of the double pig can thus be explained. In a complex, elaborate sequence of images, all referring to doubleness, division, breaking of unity, the monster slowly turns into a metaphor for the Islamic menace: "Hinc Mahumetana[m]: spurca[m]q[ue] libidine gentem | Hac designata[m] quis negat esse Sue?" (Who can deny that this pig alludes to the Muslim people, contaminated with lust?, vv. 63-64).[6]

At this point the composition closes with a peroration to the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (to whom the broadside is explicitly dedicated), that he might take up arms and unite the Christian peoples against the common enemy: "Aspice maxime Rex: mox invictissime Caesar | Qua[m] tua dilanient regna decora Sues" (O supreme Sovereign, invincible Caesar, see to it that the Swine do not devas-

5 Unless otherwise specified, all English translations are made by the Author.

6 It is not without significance that, to symbolise the "Mahumetana gens", the choice fell on the animal that is impure *par excellence*, both for Muslims and Jews.

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Figure 2 Sebastian Brant, *De portentifico Sue in Suntgaudia*. [Basel], J[ohann] B[ergmann], 1496.
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tate your fair kingdoms, vv. 105-106). For Brant, therefore, the double body of the Landser sow means that the realm is threatened by an obscure and divisive power, in a rich interweaving of political and religious significances.

Perhaps it is an imaginative world of this sort that we may surmise to lie behind *This Horryble Monster is Cast of a Sowe*, the document with which we began: a sheet printed in Germany but with an English text, advertising in England an event that took place near Königsberg, and thus on imperial territory.[7]

The German provenance of the broadside need not surprise us: publications such as Brant's *Flugblatt*, with images and texts that allegorically interpreted monstrous figures, were produced in great numbers, between the end of the fifteenth century and the years of the Lutheran Reformation, by the printers of the Holy Roman Empire, who in this way spread throughout the continent the apocalyptic and numinous imagery related to the deformed body (Ewinkel 1995, 15-58; Spinks 2009, 13-57).

Germany played in fact a key role in the development of street literature, so much so as to be called the "print's engine room" of Europe (Pettegree 2011, 255). To read the double pig of Königsberg in the light of the Landser sow is to identify, at this point, a monster whose evocative power does not stop at the bizarre fact but casts its long metaphysical shadow over the reign of King Henry VIII, already troubled by religious disquiet in the years immediately preceding the break with Rome.

Although this is a plausible hypothesis, it remains a conjecture: the document is laconic, with its double image and brief text that merely sets the monster before the eyes of the reader/spectator, without explaining it, interpreting it or dissecting it metaphorically. This latter transition would be effected by a series of documents dating from the Elizabethan period (1562-1570), using deformed pigs as an explicit instrument of moral and political propaganda. And it is towards this specific cultural *milieu* that we now turn our attention.

7 The document does not bear publication details, but its German provenance is certain: the British Museum has a second version of the same *Flugblatt*, with a bilingual English/German text (Museum number 1928.0310.96); the Schossmuseum Gotha has a third variant with only a German text and the printer's mark of Niclas Meledman, a Nuremberg printer. It is easy to imagine that Meldeman produced all these editions so as to serve an international public (O'Connell, Paisey 1999).

3 Forked Ears Deaf to the Word

In the summer of 1562, the *Stationers' Register* was enriched with a new item, a broadside entitled *The Shape of.ii. Mo[n]sters*.[8] Written by William Fulwood,[9] and prepared for the London book market by the printer John Allde, the document gives an account of the birth in London of a deformed pig, whose appearance is reproduced in a small print that occupies the upper part of the layout **[fig. 3]**.[10]

In the brief piece of prose in the centre of the document, the author reconstructs the setting where the prodigious event occurred and describes the creature's anatomical features:

> One Marke Finkle a Joiner dwelling beside Charing crosse by Westminster had a Sow that brought forth one Pigge onely, vpon the seuenth of Maye being Ascention daye, the whiche Pigge had a head much lyke vnto a Dolphines head with the left eare standing vp forked like as ye see in this picture aboue, and the right eare being like as it were halfe a litle leafe being deuided in the middes sharpe toward then lying downward flat to the head without any holes into the headward. The two fore feet, like vnto handes, eche hande hauinge thre long fingers and a thumbe, bothe the thumbes growinge on the out sides of the handes, the hinder legges growing very much backwarde otherwise then the common natural forme hath ben seen, beeing of no good shape, but smaller fro[m] the body to the middle Joint then they be from the same Joint toward the foot. And the taile growing an Inche neare vnto the back then it doth of any that is of right shape. (Fulwood 1562)[11]

The description is extremely detailed and does not fail to emphasise features useful for increasing the numinous potential of the event: mention of the feast day (the Ascension, that closes the events

8 For information on the context of the document's production, see Rollins 1967, 181.

9 An eclectic personage, William Fulwood was a merchant, a translator of Latin classics and Italian humanists, and author of numerous ballads. His varied interests are testified by the distinct nature of some of his more important publications: in 1563 he published *The Castle of Memorie* (a treatise on mnemotechnics, significantly dedicated to Robert Dudley, the favourite of Elizabeth I and a fervent Protestant) and in 1568 *The Enimie of Idlenesse* (an epistolary manual). For a biographical overview, see Shrank 2008.

10 Consistently with the title, two monsters are illustrated (a case of Siamese twins on the left, a variously deformed pig on the right). The textual part of the document however recounts and describes only the London case, illustrated on the right. Raphael Holinshed writes about these two cases in his celebrated *Chronicles*: "This yeare [1562] in England were manie monstrous births […]. A sow farrowed a pig with foure legs like to the armes of a manchild with armes and fingers, & c. In Aprill, a sow farrowed a pig with two bodies, eight feet, and but one head" (1587, 1195).

11 A modern transcription of the document is given in Lilly 1867, 45-8.

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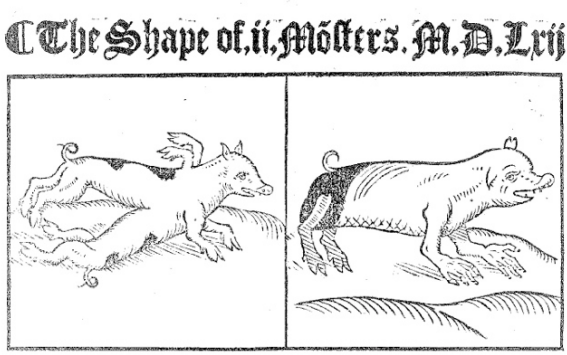


¶ The Shape of.ii. Mõsters. M.D.Lxij

THis present yere of oure Lord God a thousande fiue hundred thre score and two, one Marke Finkle a Joiner dwelling beside Charing crosse by Westminster had a Sow that brought forth one Pigge onely, vpon the seuenth of Maye beinge Ascention daye, the which Pigge had a head muche like vnto a Dolphines head with the left eare standing vp forked like as ye see in this picture aboue, and the right eare being like as it were halfe a litle leafe being deuided in the middes sharpe toward thend lying downward flat to the head without any holes into the headward. The two fore feet, like vnto handes, eche hande hauinge thre long fingers and a thumbe, bothe the thumbes growinge on the out sides of the handes, the hinder legges growing very much backwarde otherwise then the common natural forme hath ben seen, beeing of no good shape, but smaller frõ the body to the middle Joint then they be from the same Joint toward the foot. And the taile growing an Inche neare vnto the back then it doth of any that is of right shape.
These straunge sights, the Allmighty God sendeth vnto vs that we should not be forgetfull of his mighty power: nor vnthankful for his so greate mercies. The which hee sheweth specially by geuing vnto vs his holy word wherby our liues ought to be guided and also his wonderful tokens wherby we are most gentilly warned.
But if we will not be warned, neither by his word, nor yet by his wonderful workes: then let vs be assured that these straunge monstruous sightes doe prȝmonstrate vnto vs that his heauy indignacion wyl shortly come vpon vs for our monstruous liuinge. Wherfore let vs earnestly pray vnto God that he wyl geue vs grace earnestly to repent our wickednes, faithfully to beleue his word: and sincerely to frame our liues after the doctrine of the same.

¶ An Admonition vnto the Reader.

LEt vs knowe by these vgly sights,
and eke consider well:
That our God is the Lord of mights,
who rules both heauen and hell.

By whose strong hand these monsters here,
were formed as ye see:
That it mighte to the world appere,
almightie him to bee.

Who might also vs men haue formde,
after a straunge deuise:
As by the Childe of late deformde,
appeareth in plaine wise.

What might these monsters to vs teache
which now are sent so rife:
But that we haue Goddes word well preacht,
and will not mend our life.

At which straunge sightes we meruel muche,
when that we doe them see:
Yet can there not be found one suche,
That so will warned bee.

And loke what great deformitie,
In bodies ye beholde:
Much more is in our mindes truly,
an hundreth thousand folde.

So that we haue great cause in deede,
Our sinnes for to confesse:
And eke to call to God with speede,
The same for to redresse.

Which if we wyl not fayle to doo,
and purely to repent:
Ye wyl no doubt, vs comfort so,
as shal our soules contente.

Now sith our God so louing is,
and ready to forgeue:
Why doe we not abhorre all vice,
and only to him cleaue.

Sith he also his hande can shake,
And sone destroy vs all,
Why doe we not then feare and quake,
And downe before him fall.

Why doe we not amend I saye,
Either for loue or feare:
Why driue we off from day to daye,
And sinning not forbeare.

Good lawes of late renewde wee see,
Much sinne for to suppresse:
God graunt that they fulfilde maye bee,
To ouerthrow excesse.

O Lord graunt vs also thy grace,
That by repentance pure:
In heauen to haue a dwelling place,
For euer to endure.

Amen. q. w. f.

¶ Imprinted at London at the Long
Shop in the Poultry by John Alde

Figure 3 William Fulwood, *The Shape of.ii. Mo[n]sters. M.D.Lxij*. London, John Alde, 1562. © The British Library Board, London, Shelfmark Huth 50[37]

of Eastertide) serves to convey a supernatural aura on the birth; the dolphin's head is perhaps a reference to spiritual renewal and conversion;[12] the description of the organs of hearing, deformed or inefficient (the left ear is forked, the right ear small and deaf, having no auditory cavity) suggests poor or no attention paid to the truths of faith;[13] the hands, lastly, already supernatural *per se* because they did not conform to the species, are turned outwards (with the thumbs on the outside) and are therefore useless, perhaps a sign of inactivity or spiritual sloth.[14]

However, all these complex readings are left to the free interpretation of the reader/spectator. No explicit connection is made in the text between the animal's severe malformation and a specific human fault, except for 'deafness' to the word of God ('word' appears thrice in the text):

> These straunge sights, the Allmighty God sendeth vnto vs that we should not be forgetfull of his mighty power: nor vnthankful for his so greate mercies. The which hee sheweth specially by geuing vnto vs his *holy word* wherby our liues ought to be guided and also his wonderful tokens wherby we are most gentilly warned. But if we will not be warned, neither by his *word*, nor yet by his wonderful workes: then let vs be assured that these straunge monstruous sightes doe premonstrate vnto vs that his heauy indignacion wyl shortly come vpon vs for our monstruous lyuinge. Wherfore let vs earnestly pray vnto God that he wyl geue vs grace earnestly to repent our wickednes, faithfully to beleue his *word*. (Fulwood 1562)[15]

If spiritual deafness be not corrected – this is the explicit signal sent by God through the "monstrous sightes" – men will be punished for their "monstruous lyuinge".

The same moral concern also animates the ballad that follows ("An Admonition vnto the Reader", comprising thirteen quatrains of alternately rhyming iambic tetrameters and trimeters): the manifesta-

12 See for example Chevalier and Gheerbrant, who in their *Dictionnaire des symboles* write: "[Le dauphin]: symbolique liée à celles des […] transfigurations. Rien d'étonnant que le Christ-Sauver ait été plus tard représenté sous la forme d'un dauphin" (1969, 338-42).

13 See St Paul's epistle to the Romans: "Howe shall they beleue on hym of whom they haue not hearde? Howe shal they heare, without a preacher? […] So then fayth commeth by hearyng, and hearyng commeth by the worde of God" (*Romans* 10:14 and 17). This and the following scriptural citations are taken from the *Bishops' Bible*, which in 1568 replaced the *Great Bible* (1539) as the official text of the English Reformed Church.

14 See again Chevalier and Gheerbrant: "La main exprime les idées d'activité, en même temps que de puissance et de domination" (1969, 599).

15 If not otherwise specified, all italics are added.

tion of the monster fulfils the explicit function of denouncing the discrepancy between the divine gift of the Word and man's reluctance to receive it ("we haue Goddes *wurd* well preacht, | and will not mend our life", vv. 15-16).

So the deformity of the monstrous body does not indicate an individual sin, but is the emblem of the interior monstrosity of the whole human race:

> And loke what great deformitie,
> In bodies ye beholde:
> Much more is in our mindes truly,
> an hundreth thousand folde.
> (vv. 21-24)[16]

The remaining lines of the ballad obsessively reiterate this message, exhorting the reader to penitence and to the request for grace – eminently Protestant themes.

More interesting seems to us the penultimate quatrain, which seems to reflect the crown's religious policies in these years:

> Good lawes of late renewde wee see,
> Much sinne for to suppresse:
> God graunt that they fulfilde maye bee,
> To ouerthrow excesse.
> (vv. 45-48)

The "Good lawes" that Fulwood mentions are probably the recent legislative innovations introduced by Elizabeth in order to favour the consolidation of Protestantism after the Catholic parenthesis of Queen Mary Tudor.[17]

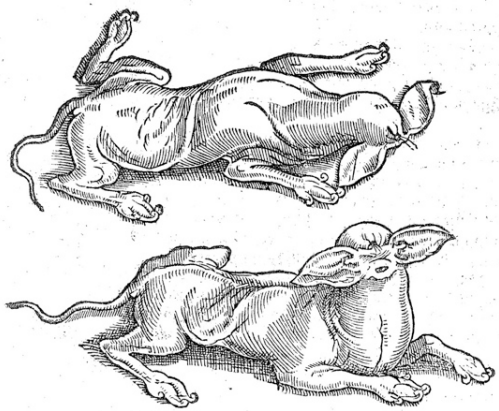
The author of our broadside thus declares his zealous adhesion to the moral renewal promoted by Elizabeth's propaganda and government, and in some way reflects a trend. In October of the same

16 In connection with the ballads of monstrous births, and of the cited lines in particular, Alan W. Bates affirms that "the broadsides describing monstrous pigs […] are significant because they also speak of God's dissatisfaction with contemporary society but in circumstances where the births defects described could not be interpreted as deserved punishment, showing that the malformations are to be interpreted as a general warning of divine displeasure; a call for moral self-examination among those who witness the event" (2000, 204).

17 Having ascended the throne in 1558, Queen Elizabeth became "Supreme Governor" of the Church of England by the *Act of Supremacy* of 1559; in the same year, an *Act of Uniformity* made provisions for the liturgy of the English Church, adding some catholic elements to the more strictly protestant character of the second Edwardian Prayer Book of 1552. For the laborious affirmation of Protestantism in England, see Collinson 1988 and Haigh 1993.

¶ The description of a monstrous Pig,

the which was farrowed at Hamsted besyde London, the .xvi. day of October this present yeare of our Lord God. M. D. LXII.



THis present yeare of our lord GOD, a thousand, fyue hundred, three score and two, one Robert Martin of Hamsted, in the countie of Mid. besyde London, had a Sow the which brought forth .viii. Piggs, the .xvi. day of October, where of .vii. were of right shape and fassion, but the eight was a wonderous Monster, and more monstrous then any that hath bene seene before this time, as you may se by this picture. It hath a head contrary to all other of that kynd, it hath a face without a nose or eyes, hauing a hole standing directly betwen the two eares which eares be broad and long, lyke the eares of a bloude hound, and a monstrous body, lyke vnto a thing that were flean, without heare. It hath feet very monstrous, with ꝑ endes of them turning vpwards, lyke vnto forked endes, as it is playnely set forth here by these two pictures, the one being the backe part, and the other the fore part. This monster lyued two houres, and the rest of them lyued about halfe a day.

¶ These straunge and monstrous thinges, almighty GOD sendeth amongest vs, that we should not be forgetfull of his almighty power, nor vnthankeful for his great mercies so plentifully powred vpon vs, and especially for geuyng vnto vs his most holy word, whereby our lyues ought to be guyded: and also his wonderfull tokens, wherby we ought to be warned. But if we will not be instructed by his worde, nor warned by his wonderfull workes: then let vs be assured that these straunge monstrous sightes do foreshew vnto vs, that his heauy indignation wyl shortly come vpon vs for our monstrous liuyng. Wherefore let vs earnestly pray vnto GOD that he wyll geue vs grace spedely to repent our wickednelles, faithfully to beleue his holy Gospel, and syncerely to frame our lyues after the doctrine of the same to whome be all prayse, honour, and glory. Amen.

¶ Imprinted at London by ALEXANDER LACY for GARAT DEVVES, dwellyng in Poules church yarde, at the East end of the Church.

Figure 4 Anonymous, *The Description of a Monstrous Pig, the which Was Farrowed at Hamsted Besyde London*. London, Alexander Lacy, 1562. © The British Library Board, London, Shelfmark Huth 50[39]

year, in fact, news of the birth of another deformed pig would circulate through the streets of the capital and would stimulate the London public's taste for the bizarre.

4 Monstrous Visions for Monstrous Lives

News of the new case is spread by *The description of a monstrous Pig*, a broadside composed by an anonymous author and printed by Alexander Lacy. Based on William Fulwood's, like its predecessor this broadside reads in the birth of the deformed animal a severe warning for the entire community **[fig. 4]**.[18]

The document is in this case bipartite. Above, we find an extremely detailed image of the animal, enriched with chiaroscuro; below, we find a piece of prose that reproduces the model *verbatim*, only correcting the indispensable i.e. the contextual information (time and place) and the description of the monstrous body:

> One Robert Martin of Hamsted, in the countie of Mid. besyde London, had a Sow the which brought forth.viii. Piggs, the.xvi. day of October, where of.vii. were of right shape and fassion, but the eight was a wonderous Monster, and more monstrous then any that hath bene seene before this time, as you may se by this picture. It hath a head contrary to all other of that kynd, it hath a face without a nose or eyes, sauing a hole standing directly betwen the two eares which eares be broad and long, lyke vnto a thing that were flean, without heare. It hath feet very monstrous, with y^{e} endes of them turning vpwards, lyke vnto forked endes, as it is playnely set foorth here by these two pictures, the one being the backe part, and the other the fore part. This monster lyued two houres, and the rest of them lyued about halfe a day. These straunge and monstrous thinges, almighty GOD sendeth amongest vs, that we should not be forgetfull of his almighty power, nor vnthankeful for his great mercies so ple[n]tifully powred vpon vs, and especially for geuyng vnto vs his most *holy word*, whereby our lyues ought to be guyded: […] But if we will not be instructed by his *worde*, nor warned by his wonderfull workes: then let vs be assured that these monstrous sightes do foreshew vnto vs, that his heauy indignation wyl shortly come vpon vs for our monstrous liuyng. Wherefore let vs earnestly pray vnto GOD that he wyll geue grace spedely to repent our wickednesses, faithfully to beleue his *holy Gospel*, and cencerely to frame our lyues after the doctrine of the same to whome be all prayse, honour, and glory. (Anon. 1562)

18 Modern transcriptions of the document are to be found in Lilly 1867, 112-13 and McKeown 1991, 20-1.

As in the model, albeit without the same symbolic complexity, emphasis is placed on the monstrous body's deafness (its ears are "without heare") and on the incapacity of the limbs to perform their functions ("y^{e} endes of them turning vpwards, lyke vnto forked endes"). Again, from Fulwood derives the insistence on listening to the word of God (here too we have "holy word", "worde", "holy Gospel"); lastly, there is the same parallel between the monstrous body and a monstrous *modus vivendi*.

This obscure association reverberates also in the writings of other contemporaries, in this same year of 1562, which must have been perceived as a genuine *annus horribilis*.

For example, on 14 August the Bishop of Salisbury, John Jewel, sent to his friend the Swiss Reformer Heinrich Bullinger a letter detailing recent events, the *mirabilia* of the weather being matched by those of generation:

> There has been here, throughout the whole of this present year, an incredibly bad season both as to the weather and state of the atmosphere. Neither sun, nor moon, nor winter, nor spring, nor summer, nor autumn, have performed their appropriate offices. It has rained so abundantly, and almost without intermission, as if the heavens could hardly do anything else. Out of this contagion monstrous births […] have been produced in abundance from swine, mares, cows and domestic fouls. (1842, 116-17)

The same almost apocalyptic tone is found in another broadside published at the end of the year, *A Discription of a Monstrous Chylde, Borne at Chychester*: "The scripture sayth, before the ende | Of all thinges shall appeare | God will wounders straunge thinges sende | As some is sene this yeare. | The selye infantes, voyde of shape | The Calues and Pygges so straunge | With other mo of suche mishape / Declareth this worldes chaunge" (J.D. 1562, vv. 49-52).

Comparison between *The Shape of.ii. Mo[n]sters* and *The Description of a Monstrous Pig* reveals another point in common between the two documents that it is important to emphasise: they leave to the total hermeneutic capacity of the reader/spectator the task of personally delineating the symbolic connections between the corporeal imperfections of the animal and the specific sin represented by its disfigured flesh.

Such freedom, on the other hand, disappears in a document published a few years later, also devoted to a deformed pig: here the allegorical reading becomes explicit, and an accurate rhetorical instrument persuasively designed to convey the message.

5 Most Swinish are our Lives

Printed by William How probably in the month of August 1570, *A Meruaylous Straunge Deformed Swyne* presents a tripartite structure which it shares with analogous documents: the image at the top, beneath the title, shows the profile of an extraordinarily shaped pig, described in prose in the centre; lower down is a ballad of eleven quatrains of alternating iambic tetrameters and trimeters, the second and fourth lines rhyming **[fig. 5]**.[19]

Composed by the mysterious I.P.,[20] the text gives an account of an "Englishman" who acquired and brought to London, possibly with a view to exhibiting it to the public, a monstrous pig born in Denmark, whose form suggests a strange hybridisation with quite different animals:

> the forepart therof from the Snoute beneath the foreshoulders are in al pointes like vnto a Swine, except the Eares only, which resemble y^e^ eares of a Lion, the hinder parte (contrarie to kinde) is proportioned in all pointes like vnto a Ram. (I.P. 1570)

The fusion with other species seems to continue in the limbs, called "the most straungest thinge of all", very similar to human hands, but of gigantic size: the feet end in

> certayne Tallents and very harde Clawes, doubling vnder his feete, euery Claw so byg as a mans fynger, and blacke of colour, and the length of euery of them are full.x. inches. (I.P. 1570)

19 The broadside is undated, but was presumably composed and published shortly after 8 August 1570, the date of the execution of John Felton, mentioned in the text as a traitor. In support of this dating, it can be shown that the register of the *Stationers' Company* lists a ballad entitled *Monsterous Swyne*, signed with the same initials I.P. and presented to the printer Richard Jones for the year 22 July 1570-22 July 1571 (for these matters, see Rollins 1967, 155). Modern transcriptions of the document can be found in Lilly 1867, 186-90 and McKeown 1991, 16-19.

20 There are at least two possible candidates for the paternity of this document. Of the first, John Phillips, we do not know the date of birth but we know that he began his career as a writer around the mid-1560s: his first publication, *The Commodye of Pacient and Meeke Grissill*, dramatising the last novella of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, appears in the register of the *Stationers' Company* in 1565-1566. His writings included ballads, epitaphs, sermons, prayer books and short treatises on patriotic and moralistic subjects, which for theme and chronology would suit our broadside. The exact date of Phillips' death is unknown, though it was between 1594 and 1617 (see Walsham 2008). We know even less about the second candidate, John Partridge, a translator and poet. He was the author of three long poems, *Lady Pandavola*, *Astianax and Polixena*, and *The Worthie Hystorie of [...] Plasidas*, all published in 1566 and all in iambics (hexameters and heptameters), just like our document. But what is more interesting is that Partridge composed a pamphlet entitled *The Ende and Confession of John Felton*, the celebrated papist who dared to challenge the authority of Queen Elizabeth and who appears also in the ballad that we are about to examine (see, for more details, Boro 2008).

A meruaylous straunge deformed Swyne.

THere Good Reader shalt thou beholde a straunge and deformed Swyne, farowed and brought forth in Denmarke, and there bought and brought ouer by an Englishman, which hath it at this present, & is to be seen a liue, the proportion wherof is wonderous straunge to beholde and vew: the forepart therofftrom the Snoute beneath the foreshoulders are in al pointes like vnto a Swine, except the Eares only, which resemble þ eares of a Lion, the hinder parte (contrarie to kinde) is proportioned in all pointes like vnto a Ram, having softe woll both white and blacke mixed monge the hard heare, and so groweth from the shoulders downewarde, all the body ouer, and it is a Boare Pyg, how beit, there doth nothing appeare outwarde, but onely the Pysell vnder his Belly, but if a man list to feele & gripe it in the Grindes, there ye may feele his Coddes within his belly: and the most straungest thinge of all, is the misshapen and deformed Feete, wheron grow certayne Tallents and very harde Clawes, doubling vnder his Feete, euery Claw so dyg as a mans Fynger, and blacke of colour, and the length of euery of them are full .x. inches, very straunge and wonderfull to beholde, it feedeth and eateth diuers and sundrie thinges, as well Haye and Gralle, as Beeade and Apples, with such other thinges as sheepe and Swyne do feede on.

¶ An exhortacion or warnynge to all men, for amendment of lyfe.

COme nere god Christians all,
beholde a Monster rare:
Whose monstrous shape, no doubt, fortels
Gods wrath we should beware.
His wondrous works we ought not iudge,
as toyes and trifles vaine:
Whither it be Childe or brutish Beast,
forwarnings they are playne.
As now, this mingled brutish Beast,
Gods creature is we se:
Although as straunge of shape and forme
as pollyble may be.
For if you do way well ech poynt,
his nature and his shape
I feare resembles some of those,
as on the same do gape.
For why most Swinish are our liues,
and monstrous, that is sure:
Though we resemble simple Sheepe,
or Lambes that be most pure.
But euery Tree it selfe will try,
at last by his owne Fruite:
Though on our Backs we cary Woll,
our conscience is pollute,
Though smilingly with flattering face,
we fæme Gods word to loue:
Contrary wise som hate the same,
as well their dædes did prowe.
Who ment the ruine of our Realme,
as Traytours to our Quæne:
Som white faste Libs haue sought to do
(nay, monstrous Swine) I wæne.
I meane not here at large to showe
offences as they bæ:
In whom they raigne, in hie or low,
I name here no degrée.
But generally, I say to all,
repent amend your life:
The grædy rich, the nædy powre,
yea, youngman, Maide, and Wife.
The Protestant, the Papist eke,
what secte so that ye be,
Stripe your own conscience, learne to do
as God commaundeth ye.
For all are sinners Dauid saith,
Yea, do the best we may,
Vnprofitable seruaunts still we be,
we can it not denay.
Judge ye therfore how far amisse,
all those their liues do frame:
That outwardly professe Gods truth,
and inward hate the same.
Judge ye againe that hate your Prince,
and sæke the Realme to spoyle:
What monstrous Swine you prone at
for all your couert coyle. (length,
Experience late by Felton falce,
and Nortons two I wæne:
Their Treason known were wdged at
as they had Monsters bæn.
And surely I ran indge no lesse,
but that they Monsters were:
Quite changed from true subiects shape,
their dædes did so appere.
Then let their dædes example be,
to vs that subiects are:
For treason ends by shamfull death,
therfore by them beware.
I speake not here of monstrous Pryde,
in Man, in Mayde, and Wife:
Nor Wilwysdom which is daily vsde,
in England ranke and rife.
Of Couetousnesse, what should I say,
or Vsery daily don:
It boteth not to speake therof,
so much therby is wonne.
But if they well do count their Cardes,
how God they do offend:
I wis their sweete ill gotten gaines,
hath sowre and bitter end.
From the which end deliuer vs Lord,
and graunt both hie and low,
To become thy seruaunts iuste and true
and then our end we know.
God grant our gracious souerain Quæn
long ouer vs may raigne:
And this life past, with Christ our Lord,
Heauens ioyes the may attaine.

FINIS I. P.

Imprinted at London by VVilliam Hovy, for Richard Johnes and are to be solde at his Shop
lorning to the Southwell doore of Paules Church.

Figure 5 I.P., *A Meruaylous Straunge Deformed Swyne*. London, William How, [1570?].
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There is no doubt however that the most spectacular feature was the animal's strange fur, which had "softe wooll both white and blacke mixed monge the hard Heare, and so groweth from the shoulders downewarde, all the body ouer". And it is this woolly covering, concealing the animal's true nature like a disguise, that the ballad fixes on for its allegorical scheme, constructing a Dantesque *girone degli ipocriti*.

In fact, after some introductory lines appealing to "good Christians all" and inviting them to observe with maximum seriousness the divine prodigies, and not to dismiss them "as toyes and trifles vaine" (vv. 1 and 4), the author exhorts his readers to grasp the meaning concealed behind the monstrous features:

> For if you do way well ech poynt,
> his nature and his shape
> I fear resembles some of those,
> as on the same do gape.
>
> For why most Swinish are our liues,
> and monstrous (that is sure:)
> Though we resemble simple Sheepe,
> or Lambes that be most pure.
>
> But euery Tree it selfe will try,
> at last by his owne Fruite:
> Though on our Backs we cary Woll,
> our conscience is pollute.
> (vv. 13-24)

If we weigh well the body of the monster – says our I.P. – we must acknowledge its resemblance to many of those who gape at it. Our lives are those of pigs, continues the author with grotesque severity, but the tree is recognised by its own fruit,[21] and however much we disguise ourselves as sheep or as lambs, being covered with white wool, we all have filthy consciences, we all conceal some form of duplicity.

But the gravest imposture of all, for our author, the one that most attracts his moral indignation, is hypocrisy in relation to religious or political authority:

> Though smilingly with flattering face,
> we seeme Gods word to loue:
> Contrary wise som hate the same,
> as well their deedes did prooue.

21 An obvious allusion to *Matthew* 7:16-20.

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Who ment the ruine of our Realme
As Traytours to our Queene:
Som white faste La[m]bs haue sought to do
(nay, monstrous Swine) I weene.
(vv. 25-32)

The desecration of the word of God, and the ruin of the kingdom, its terrestrial mirror, are nothing but the shattering manifestation of a single fault. And nobody can say that he or she is truly innocent, everyone must repent, without distinction of gender, class or religious denomination:

But generally, I say to all,
repent amend your life:
The greedy rich, the needy poore,
yea, yongman, Maide, and Wife.

The Protestant, the Papist eke,
what secte so that ye be,
Gripe your own conscience, learne to do
as God commaundeth ye.

For all are Sinners Dauid saith,
Yea, do the best we may,
Unprofitable seruaunts still we be,
we can it not denay.
(vv. 37-48)[22]

But we are not to suppose that the ballad is characterised by an ecumenical spirit. A few lines later the poet pours out his invective specifically on the traitors to Elizabeth, all leading exponents of the Catholic opposition:

Judge ye againe that hate your Prince,
and seeke the Realme to spoyle:
What monstrous Swine you proue at lenght,
for all your couert coyle.

Experience late by *Felton* false,
and *Nortons* two I weene:
Their Treason known were wo[n]dred at
as they had Monsters been.

22 The allusion to David is not specific, though in many places the Psalmist expresses the original condition of man as sinner; see for example *Psalm* 51:5 ("Beholde, I was ingendred in iniquitie: and in sinne my mother conceaued me").

> And surely I can iudge no lesse,
> but that they Monsters were:
> Quite changed from true subiects shape,
> their deedes did so appere.
> (vv. 53-64)

In these lines the monstrous pig suddenly becomes a grotesque correlative for the political crime committed by the traitors to Elizabeth, who are explicitly mentioned by name: "*Felton* false" and the "*Nortons* two".

None of the contemporary readers could fail to realise who it was that the author was attacking. Thomas Norton and his nephew Christopher were both members of a prominent Catholic family in Yorkshire. After constant involvement in conspiracies against the central government in London (culminating in the failed *Revolt of the Northern Earls* of 1569), they were imprisoned and executed on 27 May 1570.[23] John Felton was another Catholic rebel who was put to death on 8 August that year, guilty of having posted in front of the palace of the bishop of London *Regnans in excelsis*, the papal bull with which on 25 February Pius V had excommunicated the queen, denying her legitimacy to reign over the English.[24]

In the words of the anonymous poet, their act of "treason" that had "changed [them] from true subjects shape" is the greatest deformity, the one most to be avoided. Thus, their monstrous acts have led to an equally monstrous end, a warning and an example for all good subjects:

> Then let their deedes example be,
> to vs that Subiects are:
> For treason ends by shamfull death,
> therfore by them beware.
> (vv. 65-68)

Having got over the more specifically political element of his composition, the author proceeds with a rapid listing of other sins common to his people: "monstrous pride", "whordom which is daily vsde | in England ranke and rife", "Covetousness", "Usery daily don" (vv. 69 and 71-74). To this last conventional reprimand I.P. adds an invocation to the divine benevolence, so that everybody – "both hie

23 On the Nortons and their execution we find a reference in the biography of Richard Norton, brother of Thomas and father of Christopher: "Richard's brother Thomas and son Christopher were executed at Tyburn on 27 May 1570: their exemplary Catholic deaths were celebrated in verse and prose by protestants as a warning to papists and traitors and lamented as martyrdom by Catholics" (Hicks 2008).

24 For John Felton, Catholic martyr, see Lock 2008.

and low" – may be liberated from sin; as a good "subject", he ends with a final quatrain requesting a specific heavenly intercession for the beloved Elizabeth:

> God grant our gracious souerain Queen
> long ouer vs may raigne:
> And this life past, with Christ our Lord,
> Heauens ioyes she may attaine.
> (vv. 85-88)

With this declaration of fidelity to the queen, we come to the end of this group of documents sharing the theme of the deformed pig, exploited for moral and political propaganda in the first years of Elizabeth I's reign.

We can identify two different moments, corresponding to different exegetic attitudes to deformity. In an initial phase, represented by the deformed pig of William Fulwood and by the anonymous document that reproduces the model, the monster is not affected, except marginally, by precise symbolic readings: the deformed creature's flesh is marked by the sin of the whole human race and constitutes the activation of a generic peroration exhorting penitence and the request for grace. Only in a second phase do we find, on the other hand, a specifically allegorical reading of the monstrous body: the Danish pig described by I.P., with its disguise as an innocent sheep, supplies an unmistakeable metaphor for hypocrisy pursued to the point of the monstrous crime of treason, in which religious motives fuse with political ones, as appears from the explicit citation of the Catholic traitors against Elizabeth.[25]

6 A Miss-Shaped Pig Declares this World Turned Upside Down

In conclusion, it remains only to investigate the reasons why the deformed pig attracted the curiosity of the authors of these documents, of the printers and booksellers who produced and sold them, and of the public that appreciated them. From this point of view it is illuminating to consider the powerful symbolic charge that was traditionally attributed to the pig (and to its cousin the wild

25 The same process, from a more generic reading to a more rhetorically astute one based on allegory, is found in the same period also in connection with the exploitation of monstrous human births. For this subject, see Baratta 2016, 2017 and 2018.

boar),[26] characterised by strong ambiguities and ambivalences.[27]

The modern era inherited, as was natural, the complex symbolism elaborated in the Christian Middle Ages, in which the dominant Biblical component (negative and stigmatising) coexisted with the pagan and barbarian one (with more positive features). Greco-Roman culture appreciated the pig, for example, as a sacrifice to the gods: a swine, a ram and a bull were the offering that the seer Tiresias advised Odysseus to make in order to placate the wrath of Poseidon (*Odyssey*, XI, 131 ff.), and the same three victims made up the principal Roman sacrifice, the *suovetaurilia*. For the Celts and the Germanic peoples it was a symbol of riches, fertility and prosperity, but also of courage.

In the Christian world, both medieval and modern, the Biblical inheritance predominated, in which the pig and the wild boar were unambiguously unclean and repugnant animals: in the Old Testament the pig is the impure creature *par excellence*, one of the taboo creatures of the Mosaic Law, and the privileged attribute of the pagan world and of Israel's enemies. *Psalm* 80 indicates the wild boar as among the devastators of the Lord's vineyard, presenting it as a disturbing, ferocious being that symbolises blind and destructive violence, an animal "tout droit sorti du gouffre infernal pour tormenter les hommes et défier Dieu" (Pastoureau 2011, 69).

Again, the pig is the symbolic correlative of ignorance, as expressed in the parable of the pearls cast before swine, an image of spiritual truths revealed to those unworthy to receive them (*Matthew* 7:6). Part of the Biblical inheritance is the notion that merely to have dealings with pigs is degrading: in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the fact that he fed the swine was a sign of the ungrateful son's utter degradation (*Luke* 15:14-16). Again, in the repertory of Sacred Scripture the pig is an explicitly diabolical animal, in which Satan takes refuge: the three synoptic Gospels relate the episode of the possessed man liberated by Christ, who orders the wicked spirits to enter a herd of nearby pigs; shortly afterwards, the entire herd plunges from the mountain side into the sea of Galilee (*Matthew* 8:30-32; *Mark* 5:11-13; *Luke* 8:32-33). It is this Gospel episode that has rendered the pig one of the possible incarnations of the devil.

26 "À la fin du Moyen Âge […] on commence à doter le sanglier de tous les vices jusque-là attribués au seul porc domestique: gloutonnerie, intempérance, lubricité, saleté, paresse. Les savoirs et les sensibilités du haut Moyen Âge ne confondaient pas les deux animaux; désormais, entre le cochon domestique et le cochon sauvage la frontière symbolique n'est plus imperméable" (Pastoureau 2011, 69).

27 The pig is one of the animals with the longest historical association with man (at least from the eighth millennium B.C.). For its domestication and raising, see Zeuner 1963; Baruzzi, Montanari 1981; Buren, Pastoureau, Verroust 1987; Steel 2011 and Paravicini Bagliani 2015. For the specifically English context, see Fudge 2000 and 2018.

But there is more. For Christianity the pig became one of the attributes of Judaism and, as we have seen in Sebastian Brant, also of Islam: by a singular semantic reversal, the animal abhorred by Jews and Muslims became one of the symbolic figures used to indicate them.[28]

The allegorical significances of this creature are not however confined to the religious realm: in the later Middle Ages the pig was considered, both by the religious and the lay authorities, as a moral and perfectible being, to whom it was right to attribute responsibility. It is not surprising therefore that the guilty party in the crisis that affected the Capetian dynasty in the twelfth century was considered to be the pig that, on 13 October 1131, caused the young prince Philippe, son of Louis VI the Fat and heir to the throne, to fall from his horse and die. This French experience of 'animal regicide' was repeated in 1314, during a hunt, when Philippe IV the Fair was slain by a wild boar (Pastoureau 2015 and Frugoni 2018, 309-321).

At the same time, the pig was the animal that appeared most frequently at the bar of courts of justice, to answer accusations of crimes usually committed by humans.[29] Infanticide is the most recurrent of these and is well exemplified by the well-known case in Falaise (Normandy), where in 1386 a sow was accused of having eaten the face of a child; it was tried, led to the scaffold dressed as a human and hanged, having suffered unspeakable mutilations.[30]

Whether the stigma was derived from religious tradition or from lay history, the pig seems to have been made the catalyst for every human wickedness and atrocity, becoming, as Chevailer and Gheerbrant suggest, "le symbole des tendances obscures, sous toutes leurs formes de l'ignorance, de la gourmandise, de la luxure et de l'égoïsme" (1969, 778). An attribute of Satan, of the synagogue and the mosque, even guilty of homicide and regicide, the pig appears as the receptacle of every deadly sin: filthiness (*sorditas*), greed (*gula*), lust (*luxuria*), anger (*ira*) and sloth (*acedia*), a powerful image of sinful

28 From the iconographic point of view, the subject was treated in various ways, but one image in particular occurs more frequently and gradually takes over: it shows Jewish children adoring a sow or sucking milk from its teats (see Pastoureau 2011, 224).

29 Evans lists at least thirty-six trials of pigs. The cases run from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century and affect a very large geographical area, mainly in northern Europe but also in some American colonies (1906, 313-34). In these calculations, late-medieval and modern France holds the record for the greatest number of judicial proceedings taken against pigs: about twenty-nine between 1266 and 1613 (Francione 1996, 85-6). A pioneering study was that of Carlo D'Addosio 1892.

30 There is an extensive scholarly literature on this case: see the several studies by Pastoureau 1993, 16-23; 1999; 2001, 77-89; 2004, 33-5. More recent is the volume by Friedland 2012, 1-11.

man wallowing in pleasures and filth, both literal and metaphorical.[31]

England shared this rich continental patrimony of negative associations concerning the pig: echoes of a symbolic world in which the pig appears as an infernal and destructive force are found even in rationalist texts, such as decrees, norms and injunctions. We find, for example, this ordinance of the city of Norwich in the later fourteenth century:

> Boars, sows, and pigs before this time have gone and still go vagrant by day and night without a keeper in the said city [Norwich], whereby divers persons and children have thus been hurt by boars, children killed and eaten, and others [when] buried exhumed, and other maimed, and many persons of the said city have received great injuries as wrecking of houses, destruction of gardens of divers persons by such kind of pigs upon which great complaint is often brought before the said Bailiffs and Community imploring them for remedy on the misfortunes, dangers and injuries which have been done to them. At the assembly held in Norwich, […] By the assent of the Bailiffs and all the Community of the said city present at the said assembly; It is ordained and established that each man or woman of whatsoever estate or condition he may be, who has boar, sow, or other pig within the said city, that they keep them within their enclosure as well by day as by night. (Hudson, Tingey 1906-10, 2: 205-6)

Here the pig is not only associated with the 'vagrant' (the dangerous vagabond who, in his uncontrollability and his being extraneous to society, embodies the chaotic and unstable principle that must be removed from the well-ordered community); it is hyperbolically described as a homicide, an infanticide, an anthropophage and a devastator of houses, orchards and gardens (in Biblical terms, the destroyer of "the Lord's vineyard"): a malign force that every proprietor must keep in check.

Despite all these vices, however, the Christian Middle Ages sometimes viewed the pig in a more positive light, unlike Judaism and Islam (whose judgement on this animal was always absolutely and irrevocably negative). For Christians there was also a good pig, such as the one that accompanied St Antony Abbot (both in hagiography and in folk lore).[32] There are stories in which the pig becomes specifical-

31 A similar imaginative world appears, albeit rarely, in the classical world. Circe transforms men into pigs, in accordance with their character and nature: in this case the mythical narrative also sets up a man/pig analogy, based on blame (*Odyssey* X, 210 ff.).

32 For the figure of St Antony Abbot and his piglet, see the studies by Zambon 2001, 131-49 and Pastoureau 2011, 66-72.

ly the symbol (and analogy) of human innocence: for example, in the legend of St Nicholas, the Saint miraculously revives three children who have been cut into pieces and sold as pork by a wicked butcher (Ferguson 1976; Seal 2005; English 2016). The man-pig connection is not found only in the lives of the saints: late-medieval medical literature describes the internal anatomy of the swine as the most similar to that of human beings (at a time when the dissection of human corpses was forbidden, in the schools anatomists practised on hogs and sows), and both theology and homiletics dealt with this analogy. In one of the sermons of the French theologian Pierre le Chantre or Petrus Cantor (?-1197), the association between man and pig is coloured by moral values:

> Porcus autem multam habet convenientiam cum homine in corpore, sicut ex anatomia et divisione ejus patet: insuper et in spiritu, spiritu hominis rationalis quasi suffocato, et in spiritum bruti per immunditiam converso. […] Propter hoc Dominus etiam super omne edulium, sub figura tamen, prohibuit carnem suillam. (Cantor 1855, 337-8)[33]

The juxtaposition of pig and man on the physiological level opens up spiritual perspectives, in which the animal appears as a sort of de-rationalised man, deprived of higher functions; in this context, the Biblical prohibition found in *Leviticus* 11:7 ("the Swyne […] is vncleane to you") assumes for Cantor a new significance, imposing a reading *sub figura*: the *do not take* swine's flesh means, in other words, *do not become* such flesh, do not give in to the *uncleanness* that suffocates the rational soul. If man and pig are so similar – so the reasoning goes – then 'porcification' is at every moment a concrete danger.[34]

It is against the background of this complex imaginative world – here briefly reconstructed – and of its symbolism that we can finally re-approach the English documents of the early modern age to which this study is devoted. In them, in different forms and to different purposes, the pig is called upon to evoke an obscure force, an element of chaos (as in the two documents of 1562: *The Shape of .ii.*

33 "The pig has much in common with man at the corporal level, as appears from the conformation of his internal organs; moreover, he has much in common with man in the spirit, as though in him the rational soul was suffocated and transformed into the soul of a brute, because of impurity. […] For this reason out of all foods the Lord prohibited swine's flesh, though only allegorically".

34 Fabre-Vassas describes the pig as an 'analogical being' in the sense that the analogy with man makes possible a specular comparison, a correlation that does not sacrifice the dissimilarity between the two species (1994). Again, for the man-pig relationship, see Sillar, Meyler 1961; Hedgepeth 1978; Scott 1981; Jay 1986; Nissenson, Susan 1992; Capatti 1998, 132-67 and Pastoureau 2009.

Mo[n]sters and *The description of a monstrous Pig*), if not the explicit crimes of hypocrisy and treason, or "potential" regicide (as in the document of 1570: *A meruaylous straunge deformed Swyne*).

The ambiguity of the pig, the fruit of several imaginative worlds converging (the pagan, the Germanic, the Christian), favours its profoundly enigmatic signic use and renders it a more or less explicit of evil, but also a conveyor of heavenly truth. The pig, especially when deformed, is therefore fully *sacer* (sacred and disastrous at once) and, by virtue of its analogical relationship with man, it appears the most suited, among animal flesh, to reflect (and denounce) human sins.

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