

**The Old English Medical Collections
in their Literary Context**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the literary and historical contexts of four collections of medical material from Anglo-Saxon England. These collections are widely known under the titles *Bald's Leechbook*, *Leechbook III*, the *Lacnunga*, and the *Old English Pharmacopeia*. As medical literature, these texts have tended to be primarily approached through the lens of the history of medicine or cultural history and folklore. However, as textual compositions carefully engaging with learned culture, these texts are relevant to the wider literary history of the period. The aim of this thesis is to examine these collections within specifically literary contexts, where they have been frequently overlooked. Towards this end, I take the approach of considering each of the four collections as individual, coherent texts, rather than treating them as simply as part of a general corpus of Old English medical literature, as has sometimes been done. This approach is reflected in the organisation of this thesis, which dedicates one chapter to each collection, with a final chapter on the characterisation of medicine within broader Anglo-Saxon literary culture. Each of these chapters details what I view as the distinctive qualities of a particular collection and considers what intellectual and literary milieu it may reflect. Chapter 1 discusses the strategies of compilation and translation employed in *Bald's Leechbook* and the relation of some passages within the text to translations associated with the Alfredian revival. Chapter 2 considers the incorporation of liturgical material within *Leechbook III*, while at the same time exploring the relationship of *ælfes* (elves) and the Christian demonic in these texts. Chapter 3 explores the textual and manuscript relationships surrounding the *Lacnunga* and argues that this collection reflects interests consonant with early insular expressions of *grammatica*. Chapter 4 examines the translation style used in the *Old English Herbarium* (comprising the first half of the *Old English Pharmacopeia*) and the place of this collection within the context of the tenth-century Benedictine Reform movement. Finally, Chapter 5 considers the representation of medicine within the larger Old English literary corpus and suggests that the depiction of medicine in these sources is ultimately positive, something that perhaps encouraged the flourishing of vernacular medical production we see testified to in the Old English medical collections. It is my hope that by highlighting the literary and learned aspects of these collections this dissertation will bring a new appreciation of these texts to a wider readership interested in Old English literature.

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List of Abbreviations

- ASE* *Anglo-Saxon England*
- ASPR* *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie. Six Volumes. Columbia University Press: New York, 1932–53.
- BL British Library
- BLB* *Bald’s Leechbook in Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England, Being a Collection of Documents Illustrating the History of Science in this Country Before the Norman Conquest*, ed. and trans. Oswald Cockayne. 3 vols. Rolls Series. London, 1864-66. Reprinted as part of the Cambridge Library Collection. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2012. Volume II, Books I and II.
- CCCC Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
- DOE *Dictionary of Old English: A to H*, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey, *et al.* Dictionary of Old English Project: Toronto. Consulted at <www.doe.utoronto.ca>.
- EETS o.s. Early English Text Society – original series
- EETS s.s. Early English Text Society – supplementary series
- G&L Gneuss, Helmut and Michael Lapidge. *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto and London, 2014.
- JEGP* *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
- Ker Neil R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1957.
- LAC* *Lacnunga from Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms, and Prayers from British Library MS Harley 585: the Lacnunga*, ed. and trans. with

Introduction, Appendices and Commentary by Edward Pettit. Edwin Mellen Press: Lewiston, 2001.

- LBIII* *Leechbook III* in *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England, Being a Collection of Documents Illustrating the History of Science in this Country Before the Norman Conquest*, ed. and trans. Oswald Cockayne. 3 vols. Rolls Series. London, 1864–66. Reprinted as part of the Cambridge Library Collection. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2012. Volume II, Book III.
- MÆ* *Medium Ævum*
- MDQ* *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* from *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus*, ed. Hubert Jan De Vriend. EETS o.s. 286. Oxford University Press: London, 1984.
- MED* *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Hans Kurath. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1952–2001. Consulted at <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>>. Accessed on August 10 2016.
- OEH* *Old English Herbarium* from *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus*, ed. Hubert Jan De Vriend. EETS o.s. 286. Oxford University Press: London, 1984.
- PL* *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne. 221 volumes. Presses Universitaires de France: Paris, 1844–65.

Introduction

There are four complete medical collections extant in Old English.¹ As medical works, whose aims are principally functional, these works can be considered part of *Fachliteratur* or technical literature, a genre that is generally excluded from literary analysis, and as such have most frequently attracted attention from the perspectives of the history of medicine, paleography and manuscript culture, cultural history or folklore, and sometimes philology.² However, though these collections offer a significant testimony to the condition of science and medicine in the Anglo-Saxon period, I suggest that they can also be considered alongside literary compositions and in relation to literary movements, genres, and styles.

The purpose of this study is to examine these works in literary contexts; I will consider these collections in terms of content, structure, and form in relation to the wider corpus of Old English and Anglo-Latin poetry and prose more generally,

¹ This tally does not include the *Peri didaxeon*, about which there is some debate as to whether it should be considered as Old English or Early Middle English. This text is discussed on pp. 4–5.

² Important studies taken from perspective of the history of medicine include: J. F. Payne, *The Fitz-Patrick Lectures for 1903: English Medicine in Anglo-Saxon Times* (Oxford, 1904); S. Rubin, *Medieval English Medicine* (Newton Abbot, 1974); L. Voigts, ‘Anglo-Saxon Plant Remedies and the Anglo-Saxons’, *Isis* 70 (1979), 250–268; M. L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (Cambridge, 1993). Important studies primarily concerned with cultural history or folklore include: F. Grendon, ‘The Anglo-Saxon Charms’, *The Journal of American Folklore* 22 (1909), 105–237; W. Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study in History, Psychology and Folklore* (London, 1963); J. H. G. Grattan and C. Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine, illustrated specially from the semi-pagan text ‘Lacnunga’* (Oxford, 1952); K. Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill, 1996). Codicological studies include: C. B. Voth, ‘An Analysis of the Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Manuscript London, British Library, Royal 12. D. xvii’, unpublished PhD dissertation (Cambridge, 2015); A. Meaney, ‘Variant Versions of the Old English Medical Remedies and the Compilation of *Bald’s Leechbook*’, *ASE* 13 (1984), 235–268; C. Wright, *Bald’s Leechbook: British Museum Royal Manuscript 12 D. xvii*, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* 5 (Copenhagen, 1955), introduction; R. S. Nokes, ‘The Several Compilers of *Bald’s Leechbook*’, *ASE* 33 (2004), 51–76. Important cultural and philological studies include the introduction to Cockayne’s editions in T. O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England: Being a Collection of Documents, for the most Part Never before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in this Country before the Norman Conquest*, 3 vol. (London, 1864), hereafter cited as Cockayne; A. Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity* (Woodbridge, 2007).

rather than against a more narrowly defined corpus of medical material. This dissertation will argue that aside from being a repository of folkloric beliefs (as they have sometimes been viewed), these collections represent complex textual entities, continuously engaged with learned traditions and written culture.

This dissertation will also emphasise the usefulness of viewing each of these collections as an individual and distinctive text. In the world of Old English scholarship more generally (and even within many studies specifically concerned with the medical texts) the Old English medical corpus has been often been treated as a more-or-less homogenous body of evidence. This approach can be seen, for instance, in studies which isolate a single group of remedies related by a particular subject or style, as has been done most frequently with the Old English metrical charms and remedies related to elves. There is much to be gained by this approach, and it is perhaps the only way to approach certain subjects. However, there is also much to be lost when remedies are removed from their context within a particular collection. Although these texts are clearly interrelated, I suggest that each collection reflects the different concerns of different compilers, locations, and times. While in all cases the dates and origins of these texts are to varying degrees uncertain, I aim to show in this dissertation that these individual collections can be best appreciated in the context of certain literary developments, genres, or movements.

The Collections

The Old English medical collections were first edited for the Rolls Series by Oswald Cockayne in the 1860s as part of a three-volume publication under the title *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*. These collections are still largely known by the names given in Cockayne's editions. The most famous of these

collections is widely known as *Bald's Leechbook*. This title refers to the first two books of the three found in British Library MS Royal 12 D. xvii.³ This text is likely the oldest of the collections, and will be the subject of Chapter 1. The title *Leechbook III* refers to the third book found in this same manuscript, and although Cockayne's edition printed all three books as part of a single collection, this text is now widely recognised as an independent collection and will be the focus of Chapter 2. *Lacnunga* ('remedies') is the title widely used to refer to the second independent collection of remedies found in British Library MS Harley 585.⁴ This work was less clearly organised with the intention of forming a discrete medical collection and will be the focus of Chapter 3. The title the *Old English Pharmacopeia* will be used in this dissertation to refer to the composite collection made up of the *Old English Herbarium* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*, respectively, and found in four manuscript copies: British Library MS Cotton Vitellius CIII,⁵ Bodleian Library MS Hatton 76,⁶ British Library MS Harley 585 (in which it precedes the *Lacnunga*), and British Library MS Harley 6358b. This collection, and in particular the *Old English Herbarium*, will be the focus of Chapter 4. Of these four collections, only the *Old English Pharmacopeia* and the *Lacnunga* have since been republished in new editions.⁷ In their various manuscript copies, together these texts span across five

³ Ker no. 264; G&L no. 479.

⁴ Ker no. 231; G&L no. 421.

⁵ Ker no. 219; G&L no. 402.

⁶ Ker no. 328; G&L no. 632, 633.

⁷ A critical edition of the *Old English Herbarium* was published in 1984 by Hubert Jan De Vriend; this is referenced as *OEH*. A new translation of this text is also available: A. Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies: The Old English Herbarium and Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (London, 2002). The most recent critical edition of the *Lacnunga* was published in 2001 by Edward Pettit. However an earlier edition had been published in 1952: Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine*. I rely on Pettit's edition, which is referenced as *LAC* throughout. Editions of *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook III* have each been edited as an unpublished PhD dissertation. These include M. Deegan, 'A Critical Edition of MS B.L., Royal 12. D. xvii: Bald's "Leechbook"', unpublished PhD dissertation (Manchester, 1988); a less thorough treatment of the third book is found in B. Olds, 'The Anglo-Saxon *Leechbook III*: A Critical Edition and Translation', unpublished PhD dissertation (Denver, 1984). I have made reference to both of these editions. However, I have worked primarily from

manuscripts and more than five hundred folia and represent the earliest complete collections of medicine in a Western vernacular language.⁸

These four collections will be the focus of my study. By choosing to focus on these works, I do not intend to suggest that they represent the entirety of medical writing from the Anglo-Saxon period. Aside from the undoubtedly substantial body of works lost to time, there are also numerous remedies (or sometimes groups of remedies) found in otherwise non-medical manuscripts, as well as smaller portions of what may have once been complete collections.⁹ The importance of these sources as a testimony to the practice of Anglo-Saxon medicine in the period must be recognised. However, as this dissertation is primarily concerned with considering the medical collections as coherent texts, these other sources are generally only of secondary or comparative interest to my study.

Another work, which has greater claim to being called a complete medical collection, is the so-called *Peri didaxeon*. This text is found only in MS Harley 6258b, a manuscript of the twelfth century that also contains the latest extant version of the *Old English Pharmacopeia*. Like the *Pharmacopeia*, the *Peri didaxeon* is a translation of a Latin treatise, the *Epistola peri hereseon*, which is followed by an

Cockayne's editions of these two collections, with reference to the published facsimile (Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*) and in some cases the British Library manuscript.

⁸ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 35.

⁹ What is perhaps the final leaf of an originally complete collection of medical material is found in Université Catholique de Louvain, Centre Général de Documentation, Fragmenta H. Omont 3(2). These remedies mostly relate to foot and thigh problems, with three remedies related to paralysis. This suggests the head-to-foot order found in other Old English medical collections. Another collection of multiple remedies was originally found in BL MS Cotton Otho B. xi (Ker no. 180; G&L no. 357). This manuscript was damaged during the Cotton fire of 1731. However, the folia containing these remedies were missing prior even to this event and survive only in Lawrence Nowell's sixteenth-century transcript (now BL MS Additional 43703). Both of these fragments share a close connection with *Bald's Leechbook*. For a discussion of these relationships, see Meaney, 'Variant Versions'; Voth 'An Analysis', pp. 115–25. A collection of five medical remedies is also found in Wellcome Library, MS Western 46, a loose leaf dating from the eleventh century, but these do not appear to have been part of a discrete medical collection (for discussion, see S. Gilbert, 'Anglo-Saxon Medical Fragments: Wellcome Library, Western MS 46 and the Omont Leaf in Context', unpublished MPhil dissertation (University of Cambridge, 2011)).

adaptation of the *Disputatio Platonis et Aristotelis*.¹⁰ Analysis of the *Peri didaxeon* could certainly prove relevant to discussions in this dissertation, especially as regards its approach to translation, but I have excluded it due both to its late date and the already large scope of the thesis.¹¹ Whilst acknowledging these limitations and the difficulty of tackling such a broad body of evidence, I hope that some of the conclusions put forth in this thesis will be of benefit to the continuing study of the Old English medical collections and to the wider field of Old English.

History of Scholarship

Since Cockayne published the four Old English medical collections as part of his *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft* in the 1860s, these texts have been the subject of on-going interest and inquiry to different generations of scholars. Although the medical collections have never received the sustained focus enjoyed by many other Old English texts, across the decades many scholars have made valuable contributions towards the study of these collections, not least beginning with

¹⁰ In his edition, Löweneck erroneously asserted that the primary source of this translation was the *Practica* of Petrocillus the Salernitan. However, as Charles Talbot demonstrated, the source was certainly earlier than Petrocellus: C. H. Talbot 'Some Notes on Anglo-Saxon Medicine', *Medical History* 9 (1965), 156–168, cf. M. Löweneck, 'Peri didaxeon, eine Sammlung von Rezepten in englischer Sprache aus dem 11./12. Jahrhundert. Nach einer Handschrift des Britischen Museums'. *Erlanger Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie und vergleichenden Litteraturgeschichte* (Erlangen, 1896), pp. v–vi. A new edition is available in an unpublished dissertation: D. Maion, 'Traduzione e Commento del *Peri didaxeon*', unpublished PhD dissertation (Università degli Studi Roma Te, 1998). For the most up-to-date discussion of this collection, see D. Maion, 'The Fortune of the So-Called *Practica Petrocelli Salernitani* in England: New Evidence and some Considerations', in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence: Papers Presented at the International Conference, Udine, 6–8 April 2006*, ed. P. Lendinara, L. Lazzari, and M. A. D'Aronco (Turnhout, Belgium, 2007), pp. 495–512; F. E. Glaze, 'Master-Student Medical Dialogues: the Evidence of London, British Library, Sloane 2839', in *Textual Healing: Essays in Medieval and Early Modern Medicine*, ed. E. Furdell (Leiden, 2005), pp. 53–75. For background on the *Epistola peri hereseon*, see F. E. Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall: The Ownership and Circulation of Medical Books in Medieval Europe, ca. 800–1200', unpublished PhD dissertation (Duke, 1999), pp. 47–56.

¹¹ For a discussion of *Peri didaxeon* in a broader context of new medical texts arriving in the eleventh century to England, see D. Banham, 'England Joins the Medical Mainstream: New Texts in Eleventh-Century Manuscripts', in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, ed. H. Sauer and J. Story (Tempe, 2011), pp. 341–352; D. Banham, 'A Millennium in Medicine? New Medical Texts and Ideas in England in the Eleventh Century', in *Anglo-Saxons: Studies presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, ed. S. Keynes and A. P. Smyth (Dublin, 2006), pp. 230–242.

Cockayne himself. Instead of offering a strictly chronological overview of the study of these collections, in this section I will emphasise the development and evolution of the recurrent themes frequently treated in the study of these texts.¹² As the medical collections remain largely unknown to many scholars of Old English texts, it is my hope that this overview might be helpful not only in providing background to this study but also as an aid to study for future scholars interested in these collections.

The place to begin any discussion of the Old English medical corpus is undoubtedly with the work of Oswald Cockayne. The significance of Cockayne's editions for the subsequent study of medical collections cannot be overstated. Cockayne was a skilful philologist and his editions are generally reliable and accurate.¹³ The facing-page translations provided by Cockayne, however, have been the subject of some criticism, mostly for their antiquating and Germanising style.¹⁴ This is highlighted in particular by Ann Van Arsdall in her new translation of the *Old English Herbarium*. Van Arsdall gives illustrations of Cockayne's translation style, pointing to examples from his prose such as 'In case that any man with difficulty can pass water, take ooze of this same wort with vinegar, give it him to

¹² For an excellent chronological overview of scholarship on Old English medicine, see Van Arsdall's *Medieval Herbal Remedies*, pp. 40–55. Pettit's edition of the *Lacnunga* also contains a less thorough, but still useful, summary of scholarship relevant to that collection: *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms, and Prayers from British Library MS Harley 585: The Lacnunga*, ed. and trans. by E. Pettit (Lewiston, 2001), pp. xxxv–xliv. See also S. Hollis and M. Wright, *Old English Prose of Secular Learning* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 212–229.

¹³ Cockayne's general accuracy has been acknowledged by all editors of new editions of these collections: Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*, pp. 27–28; Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies*, p. 63; *Lacnunga*, p. xxxv. De Vriend makes no comment on the quality of Cockayne's edition of the *Herbarium*, but suggests that his purpose in creating a new edition was not to supersede Cockayne's version in *Leechdoms*, but instead to provide facing-page Latin text and an edition of Manuscript O: *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus*, ed. H. J. De Vriend, EETS o.s. 286 (London, 1984), preface. Voth, however, suggests that in some cases Cockayne's edition provides an edited version of the text without noting manuscript readings in his critical apparatus: Voth, 'An Analysis', p. 18.

¹⁴ The most sustained discussion of the deficiencies of this style is found in the introduction to Van Arsdall's new translation of the *Old English Herbarium; Medieval Herbal Remedies*, pp. 54–64. For a discussion of this translation style in its historical context, see S. Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, revised edition (London, 1980), pp. 68–73.

drink; wonderously it healeth'.¹⁵ She has argued that 'Cockayne's style of translating transformed the Anglo-Saxon text from a medical reference written in a reasonably plain style into fanciful literary aracana.'¹⁶ However, Van Arsdall disputes the style and impression given, not the general accuracy of Cockayne's translations. Despite their outdated style, the learned editions produced by Cockayne had a significant role in making widely available for the first time the major works of the Old English medical corpus.

Beyond simply providing reliable editions, Cockayne also took the first steps towards understanding the Latin sources underlying many of the Old English cures found in the medical collections. Wherever Cockayne was able to identify a classical source for a passage, he makes note of it in the margins alongside his edition of the Old English text. However, Cockayne appears to have drawn on a reasonably small selection of classical medical works, so in some cases this sourcing is likely inaccurate. Additionally, he believed that Anglo-Saxon translators would have been drawing directly on Greek medical sources, where later scholars have generally agreed that Greek sources would only have been known through Latin translations.¹⁷

The next scholar to make a major contribution to the study of the sources of these collections was M. L. Cameron, whose work culminated in the publication his book *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* in 1993; this book drew on several earlier articles published by Cameron and can be considered the most significant piece of scholarship on the medical collections since Cockayne's original editions.¹⁸ Aided

¹⁵ Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies*, p. 63.

¹⁶ Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies*, p. 57.

¹⁷ Cockayne, vol. II, p. xxix; cf. M. L. Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook: Its Sources and Their Use in its Compilation', *ASE* 12 (1983), 153–182, at 154.

¹⁸ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*. Previous articles published by Cameron on related topics include: M. L. Cameron 'The Sources of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 11 (1982), 135–155; Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook: Its Sources and Their Use in its Compilation'; M. L. Cameron, 'Anglo-Saxon Medicine and Magic', *ASE* 17 (1988), 191–215; M. L. Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook and Cultural Interactions in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 19 (1990), 5–12.

by Cockayne's marginal notation, Cameron identified numerous sources for passages in the Old English texts, with a particular emphasis on *Bald's Leechbook*. Marilyn Deegan also made a significant contribution to the study of Latin sources of *Bald's Leechbook* in her unpublished doctoral dissertation.¹⁹ However, the question of which Latin medical sources were available in Anglo-Saxon England and how, when, and why these were translated into Old English is still an area in need of much further research and is one which I have examined in Chapters 1 and 4.

The advancing research on the Latin background of the Old English medical collection has increased scholarly appreciation for the learned nature of these collections. Some early commentators, by contrast, emphasised what they perceived to be the foolish and ineffective nature of Old English medicine. This viewpoint is most strongly voiced by Charles Singer, whose incendiary comments are often quoted in accounts of the mid-twentieth century scholarship of these texts. Singer writes, for instance, that '[the Anglo-Saxon leech] had no understanding of even the rudiments of the science of classical antiquity', and that Anglo-Saxon medical texts should be considered as 'good examples of the darkest and deliquescent stage of an outdated culture.'²⁰ However, Charles Talbot, a contemporary of Singer, expoused a different view, praising the sophistication of *Bald's Leechbook* as containing 'the teaching of Greek writers as transmitted by Latin translations' and 'embod[ying] some of the best medical literature available to the West at that time'.²¹ More recent scholarship has continued to combat Singer's portrayal, showing the intelligent way Anglo-Saxon compilers and translators dealt with their classical sources. This has

¹⁹ Deegan, 'A Critical Edition of MS B. L. Royal 12 D. xvii: Bald's "Leechbook"'.
²⁰ These quotations come from Singer's introduction to the 1961 reprint of Cockayne's editions: *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*, ed. T. O. Cockayne with a new introduction by C. Singer (London, 1961), vol. I, pp. xix, lvii. See also Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 34–35.

²¹ C. H. Talbot, *Medicine in Medieval England* (London, 1967), pp. 18–19.

been emphasised in particular by work done on the *Old English Herbarium* by Linda Voigts, Maria D’Aronco, and Ann Van Arsdall.²² Cameron’s work on *Bald’s Leechbook* has also served to expose the complex organisational structure underlying this collection.²³ The use of classical sources in *Leechbook III* and the *Lacnunga* has received the least attention, but these collections also demonstrate in some cases a sophisticated use of Latin material, as will be seen in Chapters 3 and 4.

A related area of debate has been the efficacy and usability of the medical collections. Cockayne himself saw Anglo-Saxon medicine as necessarily lower than classical medicine in terms of sophistication and effectiveness, yet he did not deny that some cures may have had efficacy, writing in the preface to the first volume of his *Leechdoms*: ‘perhaps herbs are more really effectual than we shall easily believe’.²⁴ However, Singer (and his student Bonser) questioned whether such texts were made to be used and suggested that the *Herbarium* in particular contained ‘sterile formulae’ which were copied without being used or even properly understood.²⁵ The general scholarly consensus no longer supports this conclusion, and the medical texts are now widely considered to have been intended as useful

²² See L. Voigts, ‘Anglo-Saxon Plant Remedies and the Anglo-Saxons’, *Isis* 70 (1979), 250–268; M. A. D’Aronco, ‘The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England: The Voices of the Manuscripts’, in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence*, pp. 35–58; M. A. D’Aronco, ‘Anglo-Saxon Plant Pharmacy and Latin Medical Tradition’, in *From Earth to Art. The Many Aspects of the Plant-World in Anglo-Saxon England* (Amsterdam, 2003), pp. 133–151; M. A. D’Aronco, ‘L’erbario anglosassone, un’ipotesi sulla data della traduzione’, *Romanobarbarica* 13 (1994–1995), 325–365; Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies*; A. Van Arsdall, ‘Challenging the “Eye of Newt” Image of Medieval Medicine’, in *The Medieval Hospital and Medical Practice*, ed. B. Bowers (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 195–206; A. Van Arsdall, ‘Rehabilitating Medieval Medicine’, in *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, ed. B. Grigsby and S. Harris (New York, 2008), pp. 135–141.

²³ Cameron, ‘*Bald’s Leechbook*: Its Sources and Their Use in its Compilation’; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, ‘Making a Leechbook’, pp. 74–99.

²⁴ Cockayne, vol. I, p. liii.

²⁵ Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 35. See also Singer, *From Magic to Science: Essays on the Scientific Twilight* (New York, 1958), p. 24.

works.²⁶ However, the question of efficacy of individual remedies is much more fraught. The fundamental argument of Cameron's *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* is that, far from being based solely on superstition, many remedies in Old English are in fact 'rational' and would in all likelihood have had some degree of efficacy. Positioning himself against Singer and Bonser, Cameron writes:

'Did ancient and medieval physicians use ingredients and methods which were likely to have had beneficial effects on the patients whose ailments they treated?' [...] I think the answer is 'Yes, and their prescriptions were about as good as anything prescribed before the mid-twentieth century.'²⁷

Cameron based his analysis of the efficacy of individual remedies on his background as a biologist. Since the publication of *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* in 1993, some of the conclusions made by Cameron have been questioned; in particular, a remedy from *Bald's Leechbook* involving garlic, ox gall, and other ingredients (which Cameron describes as 'an outstanding example of a remedy likely to have been helpful') has been the topic of ongoing debate.²⁸ One of the difficulties in addressing the efficacy of individual remedies lies in correctly identifying the modern equivalents of medieval herbs, an area in which current research is being undertaken by Debby Banham.²⁹ However, questions of efficacy are unlikely ever to be completely resolved and this is not an area that I engage in this dissertation.

²⁶ A counterpoint to this trend is found in Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 5–9, 143–157. Glaze positions herself between these two viewpoints, suggesting that some medical texts were not studied or copied primarily for practical purposes but instead for their linguistic qualities.

²⁷ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 117.

²⁸ See B. Brennessel, M. D. C. Drout and R. Gravel, 'A Reassessment of the Efficacy of Anglo-Saxon Medicine', *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, 34 (2005), 183–195; E. Rayner, 'AncientBiotics – A Medieval Remedy for Modern Day Superbugs?' (University of Nottingham), consulted at <<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/news/pressreleases/2015/march/ancientbiotics---a-medieval-remedy-for-modern-day-superbugs.aspx>> (Accessed June 27 2016). Cf. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 119. For a more general discussion of the potential of the Old English medical collections for providing insights into new medicinal uses of drugs, see F. Watkins *et al.*, 'Anglo-Saxon Pharmacopoeia Revisited: A Potential Treasure in Drug Discovery', *Drug Discovery Today* 16 (2011), 1069–1075; F. Watkins *et al.*, 'Antimicrobial Assays of Three Native British Plants Used in Anglo-Saxon Medicine for Wound Healing Formulations in 10th Century England', *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 144 (2012), 408–415.

²⁹ Banham introduces her project and discusses the difficulties it involves in D. Banham, 'Investigating the Anglo-Saxon *Materia Medica*: Archaeobotany, Manuscript Art, Latin and Old

Another topic of ongoing discussion debates the status of the medical collections (or at least some individual remedies) as licit or illicit within the Anglo-Saxon Church. Whereas the discussion of Latin sources, translation, and efficacy has largely centred around *Bald's Leechbook* and the *Old English Herbarium*, the question of theological acceptability has more frequently revolved around the *Lacnunga*. Amongst the medical corpus, the *Lacnunga* is widely held to contain the largest number of 'charms', and, as that term suggests, it is these remedies that have been at the centre of the debate over acceptability. In 1909, Felix Grendon's 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms' included a list of the laws prohibiting the practice of magic and the use of charms (*galdra*).³⁰ Grendon suggests that the 'uncompromising tone' of these injunctions should be taken in contrast to earlier more liberal positions held before Christianity was fully 'entrenched in the soil of Europe'; it was during this earlier, less-regulated period that many heathen charms were essentially Christianised, he argues.³¹ The idea that a number of remedies within the medical collections were forbidden within the Anglo-Saxon Church is also evident in Grattan and Singer's 1952 edition of the *Lacnunga*. They suggest that the *Lacnunga* was compiled in stages, with one stratum of remedies being added by a 'leech who was only very superficially Christianised and was quite familiar with the persistent

English', in *The Archaeology of Medicine: Papers Given at a Session of the Annual Conference of the Theoretical Archaeology Group held at the University of Birmingham on 20 December 1998*, ed. R. Arnott (Oxford, 2002), pp. 95–99. For further discussion, see J. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin, 1985), pp. xxii–xxv. For an example of the exceptional complexity of this issue, see also M. A. D'Aronco 'A Problematic Plant Name: *Elehtre*. A Reconsideration', in *Herbs and Healers from the Ancient Mediterranean through the Medieval West: Essays in Honor of John M. Riddle*, ed. A. Van Arsdall and T. Graham (Farnham, 2012), pp. 187–126.

³⁰ Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', pp. 140–142.

³¹ Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', pp. 143–150. Grendon gives several examples of how these practices would have been Christianised: 'Christian ritual was boldly introduced in the charms to replace Heathen rites. Making the sign of the cross naturally became a favorite observance in magical remedies [...]. To give a flavor of Christianity to the herbal hodge-podges which had long been brewed according to Heathen recipes, the exorcist added holy water or a little frankincense.'

Paganism of local folk. He was not a resident in a monastery'.³² As can be seen from this observation, the debate over the acceptability of these cures also intersects with the broader question of how 'popular' we should consider the remedies of the medical collections, in particular those relating to elves or dwarves. The perception that many of the remedies found within the *Lacnunga* (and elsewhere in the corpus) were essentially unorthodox has since been challenged, in particular in the work of Karen Jolly.³³ Jolly argues that the remedies commonly referred to as charms have in fact been thoroughly Christianised in their textual manifestations and exhibit a Christian worldview. Similarly, Lea Olsan has emphasised the necessary involvement of clergy in many medical remedies.³⁴ This is still an open area of discussion, however, with some critics such as Edward Pettit and Stephanie Hollis still asserting the essentially pagan (and likely officially forbidden) nature of some entries.³⁵ This is an area I will discuss in my final chapter, which focuses more generally on the place of medicine in Anglo-Saxon England.

Together these represent the themes most recurrent in scholarship on the Old English medical collections. However, other significant studies also bear mentioning. The process of compilation and in particular the transmission of medical material between collections has been the subject of an important study by Audrey

³² Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine*, p. 19.

³³ K. Jolly, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in the Context of a Christian World View', *Journal of Medieval History* 11 (1985), 279–293; Jolly, *Popular Religion*. See also V. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1991); C. Arthur, 'Ex Ecclesia: Salvific Power Beyond Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon Charms', *Incantatio* 3 (2013), 9–32.

³⁴ L. Olsan, 'Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in a Christian Oral Tradition', *Oral Tradition* 7 (1992), 116–142. Focusing on a slightly later period (1200–1500), Olsan has also drawn attention to the occurrence of amulets and charms in important medical works produced by authors with university training, suggesting that the dichotomy sometimes assumed between trained physicians using university medicine and local healers practicing charms is inadequate: L. Olsan, 'Charms and Prayers in Medieval Medical Theory and Practice', *Social History of Medicine* 16 (2003), 343–366.

³⁵ Hollis and Wright, *Old English Prose of Secular Learning*, pp. 225–229; *Lacnunga*, pp. xlviii–li.

Meaney.³⁶ Meaney's study showed that some remedies were transmitted in the vernacular prior to the compilation of the existing collections. More recent research in this area has been undertaken by Christine Voth.³⁷ Another subfield that has seen recent development is the study of *ælfes* ('elves') in these texts; important contributions in our understanding of Anglo-Saxon world-views concerning elf-related ailments have been made by Karen Jolly, Alaric Hall, and Rudolf Simek.³⁸ As the Old English medical collections are one of the primary testimonies in Old English to this phenomenon, these studies are relevant to an informed reading of these collections. A final acknowledgement must be made of the extensive work that has been done on the Anglo-Saxon metrical charms. Remedies with passages more or less loosely corresponding to the customs of Old English metre are scattered throughout *Bald's Leechbook*, *Leechbook III*, and, in particular, the *Lacnunga*. Some of these studies have considered the entire corpus of these charms and others have focused on individual remedies. In particular, Charles Grendon, Godfrid Storms, Thomas Hill, Edward Pettit, Lea Olsan, and Tiffany Beechy have made significant contributions in this area.³⁹

In this overview I have attempted to demonstrate the general lines of enquiry that have been taken by scholars towards the medical texts and to illustrate the

³⁶Meaney, 'Variant Versions'.

³⁷Voth 'An Analysis', pp. 111–168.

³⁸These studies have taken different, if generally complementary, angles. Karen Jolly has emphasised the place of elves within the Christian worldview of the tenth and eleventh centuries, whereas Alaric Hall has also considered earlier, pre-Christian conceptions of elves; Simek has emphasised elf-related sources from the continent as well as later periods. Jolly, *Popular Religion*; Hall, *Elves*; R. Simek, 'Elves and Exorcism: Runic and Other Lead Amulets in Medieval Popular Religion', in *Myths, Legends, and Heroes: Essays on Old Norse and Old English Literature*, ed. D. Anlezark (Toronto, 2011), pp. 25–52; R. Simek, 'Demons and Alfar', in *Conversions: Looking for Ideological Change in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. L. P. Slupecki and R. Simek (Vienna, 2013), pp. 321–342.

³⁹See for instance Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms'; G. Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (The Hague, 1958); T. D. Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm and its Christian User', *ASE* 6 (1977), 213–221; T. D. Hill, 'The Rod of Protection and Witches' Ride: Christian and Germanic Syncretism in Two Old English Metrical Charms', *JEGP* 111 (2012), 145–168; Olsan, 'Latin Charms of Medieval England'; L. Olsan, 'The Inscription of Charms in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts', *Oral Tradition* 14 (1999), 401–419; T. Beechy, *The Poetics of Old English* (Burlington, 2010). See also *Lacnunga*, vol. II.

evolution of central debates in the field. In the following section I will consider the contribution of this thesis to these existing conversations, as well as the new avenues it explores.

Thesis Organisation and Methodologies

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first four chapters each focus on one collection. The fifth chapter positions these texts in a broader context, looking specifically at the place of medicine in Anglo-Saxon literary and Christian traditions. There is also an appendix containing passages and translations too long to be included within individual chapters.

I have chosen this organisation to allow me to consider each text individually, as an independent work with distinctive qualities. The benefits of this approach will, I hope, be apparent. However, choosing to focus one chapter on each collection also raises its own difficulties. The first is that, by emphasising each medical collection as a separate text, I could be seen to overlook important commonalities between these collections. The connections between these texts are clear to anyone familiar with the medical corpus. In many instances these collections were drawing upon the same sources, both in the vernacular and in Latin; indeed, in some cases, the same English translation of a Latin remedy is found in multiple collections.⁴⁰ Beyond this, *Bald's Leechbook*, the *Lacnunga*, and *Leechbook III* can also be seen as occurring in broadly the same tradition.⁴¹ Each of these works collects entries from a variety of disparate texts and appears to aspire (successfully or otherwise) to the same organisational style of bringing together remedies for particular parts of the body or similar conditions (unlike, however, the *Old English*

⁴⁰ This is discussed in Chapter 1, pp. 40, 47–51.

⁴¹ These collections belong to the broader medical tradition *dynamidia*. For more information on this, see L. C. MacKinney, “Dynamidia” in *Medieval Medical Literature*, *Isis* 24 (1936), 400–414.

Pharmacopeia, which is organised by the herb and animal products used in its recipes). On an even more general level, all four collections share a predominately pharmaceutical outlook, that is, they rely primarily on the use of herbal, and in some cases animal-based or mineral, treatments.⁴² It is not my aim in this dissertation to ignore or diminish these important similarities. Instead, I hope to demonstrate that, while these texts occur in broadly the same tradition, consideration of each of the Old English medical collections in its own right can contribute in different ways to a richer understanding of the literary production of the Anglo-Saxon period.

The other risk taken by my organisation is that it may tend to overemphasise the planned and intentional aspect of these texts. It is the nature of manuscript culture for texts to be somewhat fluid; each scribe can unwittingly create errors, produce emendations, or otherwise affect the text. This is particularly true of medical compendia, where adding new recipes (whether known from other sources or from personal experience) appears a logical and obvious thing to do.⁴³ The best evidence of later additions or changes in the Old English medical collections can be seen in *Bald's Leechbook*. Although this collection was meticulously organised, remedies listed in particular chapters often do not correspond directly to the tabulation of remedies given in the table of contents. This clearly suggests that

⁴² The fact that these texts were primarily pharmaceutical does not mean that surgery was not practiced in Anglo-Saxon England; it may have simply been learned through experience rather than through written sources. For a discussion of this issue, see D. Banham and C. Voth, 'The Diagnosis and Treatment of Wounds in the Old English Medical Collections: Anglo-Saxon Surgery?', in *Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture*, ed. L. Tracy and K DeVries (Leiden, 2015), pp. 153–174. For a more general discussion of the non-textual aspects of medical training in the Anglo-Saxon period, see A. Van Arsdall, 'Medical Training in Anglo-Saxon England: An Evaluation of the Evidence', in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence*, pp. 415–434.

⁴³ Faith Wallis has argued that, unlike texts with canonical status, in the case of medical texts, 'the more important the text was for the early medieval reader, the more it was used, and hence the more it was subject to dismemberment, rearrangement, abbreviation, interpolation and so forth'; F. Wallis, 'The Experience of the Book: Manuscripts, Texts, and the Role of Epistemology in Early Medieval Medicine', in *Knowledge and the Scholarly Medical Traditions*, ed. D. Bates (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 101–126, at 104.

remedies were added, removed, or moved in subsequent copies of the collection.⁴⁴ Some remedies were also added to the end of the *Lacnunga*, apparently by someone other than the original compiler as they occur in a different hand.⁴⁵ Rather than existing as static monuments, these collections were part of the living tradition of Anglo-Saxon medicine. However, while this is important to acknowledge, I do not believe that it contradicts the fundamental nature of these collections as independent (if evolving) works created in different times and places and to different purposes.

The methodologies employed in this dissertation reflect the heterogeneous nature of these texts. Although I have dedicated a chapter to each collection, these chapters often take different approaches to their text. Nor does each chapter attempt to ask precisely the same question of its text, although each addresses the relevance of its collection to particular literary movements or genres. I believe this approach best accommodates the texts which themselves differ from one another.

Chapter 1, on *Bald's Leechbook*, concentrates primarily on the compilation and translation of the collection. As this work boasts the most complex organisational structure of all the texts, and the highest proportion of translated Latin-based cures (necessarily excluding the *Herbarium*), this approach is particularly useful. In this chapter, I also compare the literary styles found in this collection with other examples of translation from Anglo-Saxon England, in particular those texts associated with the Alfredian Revival, a movement likely close in time and place to the compilation of the extant collection's exemplar.

Chapter 2 focuses primarily on *Leechbook III* but also considers how remedies within this collection relate to liturgical traditions from Anglo-Saxon England. As part of this discussion, I also consider the place of exorcism within the

⁴⁴ Voth, 'An Analysis', p. 134.

⁴⁵ Pettit, vol. I, pp. 134–135, n. 10.

collection and revisit the question of the relationship between demonic possession and elf-related illness. Although this discussion is relevant to the broader medical corpus, it is especially pertinent to *Leechbook III* as this collection has the most instances of remedies against figures such as *ælfes* ('elves') and demons.

Chapter 3 considers the *Lacnunga*. Compared to the other collections, this text contains a much higher percentage of remedies written in verse and in languages other than Old English. This work also contains the least clearly medical content and thus its status as a medical collection is arguably less clear. This chapter explores the distinctive characteristics of this collection through an examination of the relationship between the manuscript copy of the *Lacnunga* and other related texts from Anglo-Saxon England, something facilitated by the close relationship of some entries within *Lacnunga* and the marginalia of CCCC 41.

Chapter 4 turns to the collection known as the *Old English Pharmacopeia*. As this text is essentially a translation of complete Latin treatises, in this chapter I return to the question of translation and consider what the translation method employed in this text can tell us about where and why it might have been created. Ultimately I suggest that this collection was translated as part of the tenth-century Benedictine Reform movement, and is best read alongside other translations produced in that period.

In my final chapter, I widen my focus and look more generally at the place of doctors and medicine within Anglo-Saxon literary culture. By looking at poetic texts, penitentials, and homilies, I highlight the generally positive portrayal of the medical art in Anglo-Saxon England. From this foundation, I also consider the place of forbidden forms of healing, including *galdra* ('charms'), and their relationship to

the medical collections. This chapter is meant to provide a wider lens for understanding vernacular medical writing within Anglo-Saxon learned society.

As can be seen, these chapters encompass a wide range of diverse material, from medical material to liturgical and ecclesiastical texts, as well as poetry and prose in Old English, Latin, Old Irish, and sometimes other languages. To accommodate this wide array of disparate material, a variety of methodological methods were necessary. These five chapters, therefore, represent five diverse approaches to the texts of the Old English medical corpus. However, in each chapter I have tried to shed new light on the intellectual and literary milieu that fostered each text. Above all, I have attempted to show the fundamentally learned and literary nature of these collections. In many cases the conclusions reached were only made possible by viewing each collection as a unique and coherent work. Although these collections have sometimes been dismissed as fringe texts, they are each relevant in different areas to the wider literary history of the period.

This Dissertation within the Broader Field

It might be observed that the main themes of this thesis do not generally reflect the recurrent debates in the scholarship of these works, and it is my hope that this dissertation will open up new avenues of inquiry for the study of these collections. Nevertheless, some of the findings of this dissertation are relevant to popular areas of discussion in the field. Chapters 1 and 4 on *Bald's Leechbook* and the *Old English Herbarium* both address the way that classical and Late Antique medical materials were used by Anglo-Saxon compilers and translators. It is my hope that this will be of interest to those interested in the art of translation in Anglo-Saxon England and the production and compilation of manuscripts. Chapter 4, in particular, focuses on

the practicality clearly sought in the translation of the *Old English Herbarium*, something that complements other recent research on the functional nature of texts of the medical corpus. I have also attempted to expand the discussion of Latin (or otherwise learned) source matter revolving around *Bald's Leechbook* and the *Old English Pharmacopeia* to include the other collections and other types of materials. This is seen mostly in Chapter 2 (which examines the use of liturgical material in *Leechbook III*) and Chapter 3 (which highlights the use of devotional and Irish material in the *Lacnunga*). I envision these chapters as also being of interest to scholars concerned with the practical use of liturgical texts or the influence and development of *grammatica* in England. Chapter 2 would also be of interest to those researching the phenomenon of *ælfes*, as it comments on the distribution and appearance of these figures across the corpus. Finally, Chapter 5 makes a contribution towards the already fraught debate over the place of magic in Anglo-Saxon England, although it does so from the wider angle of the general perception of medicine in Anglo-Saxon texts. I intend that the content of this dissertation will be of interest not only to scholars of Anglo-Saxon medicine, but also to a general readership interested in Old English literature.

It is my hope that the texts of the medical corpus will, over time, become less marginalised within the general field of Old English literature, and that these texts will become increasingly valued not only by medical historians or paleographers but also by scholars of literature. The aspiration of this thesis is to constitute one step in that direction.

However, before proceeding to a detailed discussion of these texts, it will be necessary to briefly introduce the types of Latin medical sources used in these

collections. This discussion will provide a background for my exploration of the way these sources were translated and compiled by Anglo-Saxon authors.

Background to the Latin Sources of the Medical Collections

The Old English medical compilations contain selections drawn from a large variety of Latin medical texts. As Latin medical works often contain overlapping material it can be difficult to discern with certainty the origin of a particular passage. However, a general list of works probably used would include the works of the Herbarium complex (most notably the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal* and Pseudo-Dioscorides' *Liber medicinae ex herbis femininis* and *Curae herbarum*), Oribasius' *Synopsis* and *Euporistes*, the *Practica Alexandri* of Alexander of Tralles, *De medicamentis* by Marcellus, the *Physica Plinii*, and possibly the *Medicina Plini*, *Epitome Altera* by Vindicianus, Galen's *Ad Glauconem de methodo medendi*, the *Liber tertius*, and the *Passionarius Galeni*.⁴⁶ It is beyond my scope to address each of these works individually, and the discussion following will focus on the most influential or frequently cited.⁴⁷ However, it should be mentioned that these texts represent mainstream popular medical treatises from the early Middle Ages. In particular, these texts correspond closely to the medical texts being used and copied in Carolingian monasteries.⁴⁸ It is probable that many of these collections may have come to Anglo-Saxon England through Carolingian channels.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ This list is primarily reliant on Cameron and Deegan's findings: Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 65–73; Deegan, 'A Critical Edition of MS B. L. Royal 12 D. xvii: Bald's "Leechbook"'.
⁴⁷ Background on these texts is available elsewhere. For the works of Pliny, Dioscorides and Pseudo-Dioscorides, Oribasius, Alexander of Tralles, the *Liber tertius*, and the *Passionarius Galeni*, see below. The texts of the Herbarium Complex are treated in Chapter 4, pp. 179–183. For the other works and their authors, see Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 24–39 and Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 65–73.

⁴⁸ In his survey of medicine in France during the reign of Charles the Bald, Contreni offers a list of the most frequently cited medical authors, which overlaps closely with those used in the Anglo-Saxon medical corpus: 'Hippocrates, Galen, Oribasius, Dioscorides, Soranus, Alexander of Tralles, Theodorus Priscianus, Pliny, Quintus Serenus, Cassius Felix, and Marcellus Empiricus': J. Contreni,

Excepting Pliny and Dioscorides, the majority of these collections do not represent Greek or Roman medicine directly but are compilations and diminutions of these authors produced in Byzantium and North Africa in the fourth to sixth century.⁵⁰ These texts tend to favor the practical and reduce and confuse the theoretical elements found in earlier Greek medicine. However, this does not mean that Anglo-Saxon or Carolingian scholars had no interest in the theoretical aspects of medicine, as this transformation of Greek medicine was largely accomplished prior to the medieval era.⁵¹ The fact that these texts were being copied and—in the case of the Old English tradition translated—shows that medicine was valued and respected during this period. The following sections will introduce some of the most influential authors and works used by the compilers and translators of the Old English medical collections.

Pliny the Elder and Dioscorides

Two of the most influential authors for Anglo-Saxon medicine were Pliny the Elder and Dioscorides. Pliny the Elder's medical writings formed the basis for much of medicine practiced in the early Middle Ages. In particular, the two longest works used in the *Old English Pharmacopeia*, the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal* and the *Liber medicinae ex animalibus*, owe much of their content to Pliny.⁵² Remedies from Pliny are also found in *Bald's Leechbook*, the *Lacnunga*, and *Leechbook III*.⁵³ This material, however, was probably not taken directly from Pliny's great work, the

'Masters and Medicine in Northern France During the Reign of Charles the Bald', in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, ed. M. Gibson and J. Nelson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 262–282, at 269.

⁴⁹ See D'Aronco, 'L'erbario anglosassone', pp. 353–355 and Chapter 4, pp. 203–205.

⁵⁰ See Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 18–36.

⁵¹ Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 4, 17.

⁵² De Vriend, p. lvii–lviii, lxvi.

⁵³ J. Adams and M. Deegan, 'Bald's Leechbook and the *Physica Plinii*', *ASE* 21 (1992), 87–114. For examples of the use of Plinian remedies in the medical collections, see Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 36–37 and Chapter 10, 'The Making of a *Leechbook*'.

Naturalis historia, but from derivative works compiled in the Late Antique period. In the fourth century, the medical material found in Pliny's *Naturalis historia* was extracted and compiled into a shorter collection now generally known as the *Medicina Plinii*; this work in turn was the basis for the *Physica Plinii*, a later work that drew mainly upon the *Medicina Plinii* but also used other sources.⁵⁴ It is unclear whether the translator of the remedies found in *Bald's Leechbook* was using a no longer extant, expanded version of the *Physica Plinii* or if he had access as well to the more complete *Medicina Plinii*.⁵⁵

As far as we know, Pliny's great work the *Naturalis historia* was never translated in its entirety into Old English, yet it was a text known to the Anglo-Saxons as sections are cited by Bede and other significant Anglo-Saxon authors including Aldhelm, Alcuin, and Byrhtferth. Lapidge records four manuscripts from Anglo-Saxon England that contained some of the *Naturalis historia*, and Bede's library likely contained about half of its books.⁵⁶ In its complete form, Pliny's large work contains 37 volumes addressing the very broad subject of the *rerum natura, hoc est vita* ('the nature of things, that is life').⁵⁷ In his preface, Pliny claims that he drew upon some 2,000 sources for this endeavour. Pliny plainly intended this achievement as a reference text and appended a list of contents to its preface.⁵⁸ A large share of this work was therapeutic, with Books 20 to 32 dealing extensively

⁵⁴ Adams and Deegan, 'Bald's Leechbook and the *Physica Plinii*', p. 89; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 69.

⁵⁵ Adams and Deegan, 'Bald's Leechbook and the *Physica Plinii*', p. 110. Adams and Deegan argue that 'the compiler was either using a fuller version of the *Medicina Plinii* than that which is extant, or a version of the *Physica* which was closer to the original *Medicina Plinii* in various respects.'

⁵⁶ M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006), p. 325; M. Chibnall, 'Pliny's *Natural History* and the Middle Ages', in *Empire and Aftermath: Silver Latin II*, ed. T. Dorey (London: 1975), pp. 57–78, at 61.

⁵⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: With an English Translation in Ten Volumes*, ed. by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, I (Cambridge, 1975), preface, 13. Henceforth referred to as *Naturalis historia* (citations are given by chapter number and paragraph number). This edition is used for the Latin text; translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

⁵⁸ *Naturalis historia*, preface, 33.

with medical material. The books range between various topics; some of them appear to be organised by drug origin (for example, Book 24 deals mostly with drugs obtained from foreign trees), but others are arranged by disease.

Regardless of the accuracy of his mention of 2,000 volumes, Pliny doubtless drew upon many sources for his remedies, both of Roman and Greek origin.⁵⁹ However, throughout his books on medicine his own voice is always paramount. After only a few pages, any reader of Pliny becomes well-acquainted with his medical philosophy. Pliny advocates simple, naturally derived medicine; he writes that *hinc nata medicina. Haec sola naturae placuerat esse remedia parata vulgo, inventu facilia ac sine impendio et quibus vivimus.*⁶⁰ Although cures are easily available through natural remedies, Pliny laments that these simple cures have been forgotten and replaced with complicated mixtures peddled by foreign doctors. He decries this situation exclaiming:

ulcerique parvo medicina a Rubro mari inputatur, cum remedia vera cotidie pauperrimus quisque cenet. nam si ex horto petantur, aut herba vel frutex quaeratur, nulla artium vilior fiat. ita est profecto, magnitudine populi R. periit ritus, vincendoque victi sumus. paremus externis, et una artium imperatoribus quoque imperaverunt.⁶¹

As reflected here, the medical remedies Pliny records are often very simple in their ingredients and preparation. This medical philosophy was inherited by the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal* and later by the Latin *Herbarium Complex*, whose remedies rarely require many ingredients or extensive instructions.

⁵⁹ M. Beagon, *Roman Nature: The Thought of Pliny the Elder* (Oxford, 1992), p. 204.

⁶⁰ *Naturalis historia*, XXIV, 4. 'From this was born medicine, these things alone nature approved to be remedies, [those things] provided for everyone, easy to find and without cost, things by which we live.'

⁶¹ *Naturalis historia*, XXIV, 5. 'For even a small sore, medicine is imported from the Red Sea, when true remedies are consumed daily by even the poorest people. For if [remedies] were to be sought from the garden, or a plant or bush, no art would be cheaper than medicine. Thus it is certain, that through their greatness the Roman people have abandoned their customs, and having been conquerors we ourselves have been conquered. In one art we are the subject of foreigners and they control their rulers.'

A second major influence on the Old English medical collections, and early medieval medicine more generally, was the Greek author Dioscorides. Unlike his contemporary Pliny, who was trying to record all things pertaining to the natural world, Dioscorides' aim was to systematically and conclusively cover the subject of pharmacy.⁶² Like the *Naturalis historia*, Dioscorides' *Περὶ ὕλης ἰατρικῆς* ('On Medical Materials') is a massive work that comprises, in its full form, information about over 600 medical substances and around 2,000 recipes.⁶³ However, Dioscorides' influence in the Middle Ages came not only from his *Περὶ ὕλης ἰατρικῆς*, which was probably fully translated into Latin by the sixth century and is known under the title *De materia medica*, but also from derivative works. As the foremost ancient author on pharmacy, his work was the *fons et origo* for other medieval herbals, and, because of the magnitude of Dioscorides' work, it was often abridged and used in new smaller herbal collections.⁶⁴

Although there is no indication that the Anglo-Saxon compilers of the remedy collections had access to the full *De materia medica*, two derivative collections were clearly known, as they supply most of the remedies found in the last third of the *Old English Herbarium*.⁶⁵ These two works, the *Curae Herbarum* and

⁶² P. Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, trans. L. Beck (Hildesheim, 2011), p. xv. In her introduction, Beck notes that Dioscorides' observations on pharmacy may well have been written the same decade as the *Naturalis historia*.

⁶³ Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, p. xviii; Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine*, p. xviii. Riddle remarks on the size of Dioscorides' endeavor: 'when one considers that the entire Hippocratic corpus listed only about 130 medicinal substances—and the Hippocratic works were by far the largest in volume of the extant medical writings before Dioscorides—then the scale of Dioscorides' work becomes clearer.'

⁶⁴ J. Riddle, "'Pseudo-Dioscorides' *Ex herbis femininis* and Early Medieval Medical Botany', *Journal of the History of Biology* 14 (1981), 43–81, at 43; J. Stannard, 'The Herbal as a Medical Document', in *Herbs and Herbalism in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 212–220, at 215.

⁶⁵ Philip Rusche has argued that the Greek text of the *De materia medica* may have been known at the school of Theodore at Canterbury in the late seventh century. However, if this is the case, there is no evidence that it was known in the later period or to the compilers of any of the Old English collections. See P. Rusche, 'Dioscorides' *De materia medica* and Late Old English Herbal Glossaries', in *From Earth to Art: The Many Aspects of the Plant-World in Anglo-Saxon England*;

the *Liber medicinae ex herbis femininis*, are now most often attributed to ‘Pseudo-Dioscorides’ because they differ from Dioscorides’ original work in significant ways. The *Ex herbis femininis* in particular enjoyed great popularity in the early Middle Ages.⁶⁶ Dioscorides’ *De materia medica* very much constitutes the core source for this text, but the sixth-century author was keen to amend or modify the remedies as well as to reduce its size to only seventy-one chapters. These factors led Riddle to label this a ‘largely new work’, one which ‘reflects a higher level of medical-botanical lore than currently attributed to the era, an uncommon linguistic skill in Greek and Latin, and some degree of originality, perhaps as much as can be expected in any herbal, whatever the time.’⁶⁷ The name *Ex herbis femininis* pertains to the idea that this tract contains information on female herbs, according to the classical system in which plants were sometimes categorised by gender.⁶⁸ The title of this treatise may in fact be related to its association with the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal*, which is occasionally referred to as being a reference for masculine herbs.⁶⁹ The *Curae Herbarum* is a similar work, sharing about a third of its chapters with the *Ex herbis femininis*, and both deriving from a lost Latin translation of the Greek version of Dioscorides’ work.⁷⁰

proceedings of the First ASPNS Symposium, University of Glasgow, 5–7 April 2000, ed. C. P. Biggam (Amsterdam, 2003), pp. 181–194, at 191–192.

⁶⁶ Riddle, ‘Pseudo-Dioscorides *Ex herbis femininis*’, pp. 43–44. The Old Latin full version of this text has survived in three complete or nearly complete manuscripts dating from the ninth and the tenth century; the shorter *Ex herbis femininis* is found in some 29 manuscripts, 13 of which date from the twelfth century or earlier.

⁶⁷ Riddle, ‘Pseudo-Dioscorides, *Ex herbis femininis*’, p. 43.

⁶⁸ Riddle, ‘Pseudo-Dioscorides, *Ex herbis femininis*’, p. 47. Male plants were those generally considered to be harder, drier, and less fruitful than female plants, which were softer and more moist.

⁶⁹ Riddle, ‘Pseudo-Dioscorides *Ex herbis femininis*’, p. 47. Riddle argues that ‘undoubtedly the unknown authors of both herbals worked independently, at separate times, but later some manuscriptorium combined the two. The copyist, simplistically and incorrectly, said that one was an herbal of masculine herbs, the other of feminine herbs. In time, *male* was dropped from the title of *Pseudo-Apuleius*’ herbal, but Pseudo-Dioscorides’ work retained the designation female.’

⁷⁰ A. Bracciotti, ‘Osservazioni sulla forma del latino *lauer* nell’edizione Wellmann di (pseudo-) Dioscoride e nelle edizioni di alcuni erbari latini’, *Filologia antica e moderna* 26 (2004), 45–55, at 46.

De materia medica is noteworthy on several accounts, not only for its volume but perhaps even more so for its thoroughness and organisation. Like the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal*, Dioscorides' compendium is organised by herb (or substance), with entries generally following a specific pattern. Lily Beck outlines this general structure as: morphology, habitat, relative qualities, method of preparation, general properties and specific therapeutic applications, adulteration, compounding, and directions for storage.⁷¹ Not every drug contains all of these pieces of information in its entry, but the details included typically follow this structure. Dioscorides is the first author to reference at length the idea of 'properties' (in Greek, *δυνάμεις*) of different medical substances.⁷² According to this theory, every substance has properties that refer to its effect on a patient. A drug can be, for example, warming or cooling, staunching, binding, or softening. This theory of therapeutics would come to full fruition in the works of Galen in the second century.⁷³ Dioscorides takes this principle of properties and uses it as his basis of organisation for *De materia medica*. In its complete form, *De materia medica* has five books, generally organised by the property of the herbs contained within them. By organising his books according to the properties of his ingredients, Dioscorides not only makes the properties of different drugs easier to memorise, but also makes it simpler for his readers to make substitutions between different drugs that have the same properties.⁷⁴ This organisation was later lost in the Latin translation of his text,

⁷¹ Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, p. xxiii.

⁷² Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, p. xxiii. Pliny mentions properties in passing but never treats them systematically.

⁷³ *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. M. D. Grmek, trans. A. Shugar (Cambridge, MA, 1998), p. 120. For more background on Galen and his influence, see below.

⁷⁴ Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, p. 2. In the preface to his work, Dioscorides complains about other authors of pharmacological texts who often 'used an alphabetical arrangement, separating materials and their properties from those closely connected to them. The outcome of this arrangement is that it is difficult to commit to memory' (translation by Beck from the Greek version of *De materia medica*).

which reorganised the herbs into an alphabetical order. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, alphabetic order would largely become prevalent in herbals.⁷⁵

Although the Anglo-Saxons had access to Dioscorides' work only through derivative collections, these collections maintained his basic structure within herbal entries and his philosophy of the properties of drugs. Thus, the medical philosophy of Dioscorides, like Pliny's, was foundational in much of the Latin material known to the Anglo-Saxons. Both authors tended to de-emphasise the symptoms and causes of diseases, being more interested in their cure. Their aim was to create useful, practical guides, rather than texts heavy with theory. This practical, straightforward approach to medicine is evident to some degree in each of the Old English remedy collections, but perhaps most notable in the *Old English Herbarium*.⁷⁶

Byzantine and Galenic Medicine

Although practical, pharmaceutical medicine was the most widely translated medical material in Anglo-Saxon England, at least as evidenced by surviving sources, more theoretical humoral medicine was also known.⁷⁷ This type of medicine is most evident in certain long passages of *Bald's Leechbook*, which drawn on a variety of Late Antique sources heavily influenced by Galen's medical theory.⁷⁸ Galen, born in Pergamon in the second century, is best known for his humoral theory. He believed that there were four major humours: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm, which correspond to the four elements: fire, earth, air, and water.⁷⁹ Galen is also

⁷⁵ J. Stannard, 'Medieval Herbals and their Development', in *Herbs and Herbalism in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 23–33, at 23.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of the increased presence of more theoretical medicine in the eleventh century and onwards, see Banham, 'England Joins the Medical Mainstream'.

⁷⁷ For an overview of humoral theory and outline of which Old English remedies reference the humours, see L. Ayoub, 'Old English *wæta* and the Medical Theory of the Humours', *JEGP* 94 (1995), 332–346.

⁷⁸ For a discussion of the character of these passages in *Bald's Leechbook*, see Chapter 1, pp. 54–64.

⁷⁹ O. Temkin, *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (London, 1973), p. 17.

famous for his theories of anatomy, based in part on the dissection of animals, as well as his philosophical theories.⁸⁰ He was an exceedingly prolific author, yet due in part to the extreme length and verbosity of his works, they were most often known in the Middle Ages through later authors, in particular in the works of Byzantine physicians Oribasius and Alexander of Tralles, who helpfully excerpted and abridged Galen's work.⁸¹

Oribasius was born in the Greek city of Pergamon near the beginning of the fourth century.⁸² He is most famous for having been the personal physician of the Roman Emperor Julian, known as 'the Apostate'. In the 350s, Oribasius completed his great work *Medical Collections* (Ἱατρικαὶ Συναγωγαί), in 70 books.⁸³ Later in his life, he produced two abridgements of this massive work: the *Synopsis to Eustathius* and the *Synopsis to Eunapius*, also known respectively as the *Synopsis* and the *Europistes*.⁸⁴ The greater part of the *Medical Collections* had been lost by the seventh century, and it is mostly through these shorter works that Oribasius was known in the medieval West.⁸⁵ These two collections were translated into Latin twice in the Late Antique period; originally scholars referred to these two translations as the 'old' and 'new' translations, yet more recently they have been shown to both date from around the same period—probably from the late sixth or early seventh century.⁸⁶ The corresponding passages in *Bald's Leechbook* appear to

⁸⁰ In his own time Galen was as well known as a philosopher as he was as a physician, to the extent that some of his colleagues would go so far as to decry him for being a 'physician in words only'. 'De libris propriis', *Scripta minora*, ed. I Müller (Leipzig, 1891), vol. 2, p. 96, 11, quoted in Temkin, *Galenism*, p. 47.

⁸¹ For a discussion of Byzantine influences on medieval western medicine, see Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 32–36.

⁸² M. Grant, *Dieting for an Emperor: A Translation of Books 1 and 4 of Oribasius' Medical Compilations with an Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden, 1997), p. 1.

⁸³ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 67.

⁸⁴ Grant, *Dieting for an Emperor*, p. 4; Oribasius, *Œuvres d'Oribase*, ed. U. C. Bussemaker, C. Daremberg, A. Molinier, 6 vols. (Paris, 1856–76), VI, p. ii.

⁸⁵ *Œuvres d'Oribase*, VI, p. xv.

⁸⁶ For a short overview of this debate, see Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 24.

be taken from both translations, suggesting the availability of multiple copies of the text in Anglo-Saxon England.

The second author mentioned above, Alexander of Tralles, was born two centuries after Oribasius, probably near the beginning of the sixth century, in a region now located in modern Turkey.⁸⁷ Like Oribasius, Alexander's works were originally written in Greek, the most famous being the *Therapeutica* (Θεραπευτικά), which gives advice on the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases, the majority of which deal with internal problems. Its chapters are ordered, like the *Leechbook*'s, generally from the head downwards.⁸⁸ The exact date is uncertain but at some point, probably close to the creation of the Greek text, a shorter Latin translation was made, covering about 80% of its content.⁸⁹ This 'Latin Alexander' included both the *Therapeutica* and a tract by Alexander on fevers.⁹⁰ It is likely that this is the form in which the Anglo-Saxons would have encountered Alexander's writings.

The medical texts of both Oribasius and Alexander are encyclopedic works. Neither author is praised by modern medical historians for their originality or ingenuity. However, both are important conduits of classical medical learning—Oribasius especially was often content to simply compile what he viewed as the best works on a certain subject without heavily editing them.⁹¹ The primary sources for each author were the texts of the Greek Hippocratic corpus, and, most significantly, those of the famous Roman physician Galen.⁹² It is principally through the works of Alexander of Tralles, and Oribasius, that the Anglo-Saxons would have been

⁸⁷ D. Langslow, *The Latin Alexander Trallianus: The Text and Transmission of a Late Latin Medical Book*, Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, monograph 10 (London, 2006), p. 2.

⁸⁸ Langslow, *The Latin Alexander Trallianus*, p. 6.

⁸⁹ The earliest manuscript copy of the Latin Alexander dates c. 800 AD: Langslow, *The Latin Alexander Trallianus*, p. 6.

⁹⁰ Langslow, *The Latin Alexander Trallianus*, pp. 6, 8.

⁹¹ *Œuvres d'Oribase*, VI, p. iv.

⁹² Langslow, *The Latin Alexander Trallianus*, p. 6; *Œuvres d'Oribase*, VI, p. iv.

exposed to the theory of these famous doctors (albeit in a derivative and hapazard form).

In addition to these two major authorities, there is another group of texts worth mentioning because of their frequent use in *Bald's Leechbook*. These include Galen's *Ad Glauconem de methodo*, the pseudo-Galenic *Liber tertius*, and the *Aurelius-Esculapius* complex.⁹³ These texts are best known in the form in which they were edited and compiled in the mid-eleventh century by the Salernitan author and physician, Gariopontus. This compilation is known as the *Passionarius*, or the *Liber nosematon*.⁹⁴ The Anglo-Saxons would not have had the texts in their post-Salernitan form, as this medical movement postdates the Anglo-Saxon period, but it is clear from the extended quotations in the *Leechbook* that some of the individual treatises and possibly an early form of composite text were consulted. The most frequently used is the *Liber tertius*, an anonymous early Byzantine work.⁹⁵ However, other sections appear to be taken either from the *Ad Glauconem de methodo medendi* or from an early version of the *Passionarius*.⁹⁶ Alongside the *Latin Alexander*, the *Europistes* and *Synopsis* of Oribasius, these treatises provide *Bald's Leechbook* with many of its more theoretical passages. They also represent some of the popular medical treatises being studied and copied on the continent.

⁹³ F. Glaze, 'Galen Refashioned: Gariopontus in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance', in *Textual Healing: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Medicine*, ed. E. Furdell (Leiden, 2005), pp. 53–75, at 53–54. The *Ad Glauconem de methodo* is a loose translation of Galen's original (Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 71; Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', p. 39). For more information on this text, see also: P. Kibre and I. Kelter, 'Galen's "Methodus medendi" in the Middle Ages', *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 9 (1987), 17–36.

⁹⁴ Glaze, 'Galen Refashioned', pp. 53–54.

⁹⁵ For more background on this text, see K. Fischer, 'Der pseudogalenische *Liber tertius*', in *Galenismo e medicina tardoantica: Fonti greche, latine e arabe: Atti del seminario internazionale di Siena, Certosa di Pontignano, 9–10 settembre 2002*, ed. I. Garofalo and A. Roselli (Naples, 2003), pp. 101–132.

⁹⁶ The difficulty of sometimes distinguishing passages from these sources is discussed by Cameron: 'Bald's *Leechbook*: Its Sources and Their Use in its Compilation', pp. 163–166.

Medical Texts and Anglo-Saxon Libraries

This section has surveyed the Latin texts most influential upon the Old English medical collections. Although it is difficult to prove that any one of these collections was known, entire, to an Anglo-Saxon audience, the works mentioned in this section (or in some cases their Late Antique derivations) were sufficiently available to allow them to be drawn upon at considerable length by Anglo-Saxon translators and compilers.

It is perhaps worth taking a moment to consider this testimony against the manuscript record from Anglo-Saxon England, in which only a few Latin medical texts survive; these include: some books of the *Naturalis historia*, the *Herbarium Complex* texts (including the *ex herbis femininis*), Galen's *Ad Glauconem de medendi methodo*, and a text by the same author on fevers.⁹⁷ However, extant manuscripts represent only a percentage of those existing in Anglo-Saxon libraries. This is acknowledged by Michael Lapidge in his 'Catalogue of Classical and Patristic Authors and Works Composed before AD 700 and Known in Anglo-Saxon England', in which he also includes works cited directly by major Anglo-Saxon authors, as well as those found in booklists from the period. Yet in the case of medical collections, the only texts to be included in his catalogue are those still surviving in manuscript form. This likely reflects both the difficulties sometimes encountered with identifying medical quotations as well as the treatment of medical texts in the booklists, which is not helpful in identifying particular texts.

In Lapidge's collection of booklists from Anglo-Saxon England, medical texts are decisively mentioned four times, and less conclusively in two additional

⁹⁷ Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, pp. 303, 325, 340. The text on fevers refers to *Epistula de febribus* which appears in London, BL MS Sloane 475.

instances. The only author or text to be identified by name is Pliny (this presumably indicates some books of his *Naturalis historia* or the *Physica Plinii*). In other instances, manuscripts are simply identified simply as *liber medicinalis*, *medicinalis*, or *lece boc*.⁹⁸ It is difficult to know if these titles indicated collections in Latin or Old English. The individual texts specified here are impossible to identify, yet these lists do provide evidence that medical texts were reasonably standard features of Anglo-Saxon libraries.

The booklists can also sometimes reveal something about how these manuscripts were used. In a list of books in the possession of monks of Bury St Edmunds, a ‘Sigar preost’ is recorded as having two books: *þe lece boc ond blake had boc*.⁹⁹ The *lece boc* is obviously a medical text of some sort, yet it seems possible that the *blake had* book might also refer to a collection of medical cures specifically relating to leprosy.¹⁰⁰ If this were the case, it would seem to be evidence of a member of the monastic community specialising in medicine. A further point of interest is an erased entry in this same list which Lapidge reads as *þe [lece]*.¹⁰¹ This too, may well be a medical text of some sort, in which case this list of 15 books could contain two or three independent medical collections. This might reflect a level of specialisation within the monastic centre.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ M. Lapidge, ‘Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 33–89, at lists I, IV, VIII, and XII.

⁹⁹ Lapidge, ‘Booklists’, list XII.

¹⁰⁰ Lapidge, ‘Booklists’, pp. 75–76. Lapidge suggests several possible meanings for this designation. It is possible that ‘had boc’ could stand in for ‘hand boc’ with a missing suspension-mark, or that ‘blake’ could refer to the colour of the binding. Most interestingly, however, is the suggestion that it could be a form of *blæco* (meaning pallor or leprosy) plus *had* and meaning ‘a condition of leprosy’. If this were the case, a ‘blake had boc’ would probably designate a collection of treatments for leprosy.

¹⁰¹ Lapidge, ‘Booklists’, list XII.

¹⁰² Debby Banham has suggested that there might have been some form of ‘medical school’ at Bury in the late eleventh century under abbot Baldwin (D. Banham, ‘Medicine at Bury in the Time of Abbot Baldwin’, in *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, ed. T. Licence (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 226–246, at 244–245). This might possibly reflect a continuation of an earlier tradition at the monastery.

This type of record, as well as internal analysis of the texts of the Old English medical corpus, suggests that current catalogues such as Lapidge's *Anglo-Saxon Library* do not fully convey the variety and number of Latin medical texts available to an Anglo-Saxon audience. This collection of texts surely testifies to importance of classical and Late Antique medical learning to the Anglo-Saxon intellectuals and, in particular, the compilers of the Old English medical collections. Building on this foundation, the chapters following will consider the works of the Old English medical corpus.

Chapter 1: *Bald's Leechbook*: a Medical Compendium

Bald's Leechbook is the best known of the Old English medical collections. It is also likely the oldest and contains some of the earliest extant medical remedies in a European vernacular.¹ This collection is found in only one manuscript: London, BL, MS 12 D. xvii.² This manuscript contains three books of medical material. Cockayne referred to the collections in this manuscript as a *Leech Book*, which he then further divided into three volumes. However, he recognised the third book as having a different 'somewhat more monkish character', and it is now widely agreed that these three volumes actually represent two separate collections of medical material.³ This final book is identified by scholars as *Leechbook III* (a name taken from Cockayne's original idea of a *Leechbook* in three parts) and will be the focus of Chapter 2. The name *Bald's Leechbook* is taken from a verse colophon that occurs at the end of the second book. This colophon serves to divide the two books of *Bald's Leechbook* from *Leechbook III* and is written in Latin hexameters:⁴

Bald habet hunc librum cild quem conscribere iussit;
 Hic precor assidue cunctis in nomine Xristi.
 Quo nullus tollat hunc librum perfidus a me.
Nec ui nec furto nec quodam famine false.
Cur quia nulla mihi tam cara est optima gaza.
Quam cari libri quos Xristi gratia comit.⁵

¹ The dating of the collection will be discussed on pp. 64–65.

² Ker no. 264; G&L no. 479.

³ See Cockayne, vol. II, p. xx; Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*, p. 14.

⁴ For discussion of *Leechbook III*'s status as a separate collection, see Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*, p. 14. See also Chapter 2, p. 80; Cameron, '*Bald's Leechbook*: Its Sources and their Use in its Compilation', p. 153; Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', p. 54.

⁵ BL, Royal MS 12 D. xvii, f. 109r; *hund* emended in line 1 to *hunc*, following Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*, p. 13; expansions also following this edition. 'Bald owns this book, which he commanded Cild to write/copy. I earnestly ask this of everyone in the name of Christ, that no perfidious person take this book from me either by force, or by stealth, or by any false speech. Why? Because the

The colophon has attracted some attention because it associates the collection with a named author (this is the only one of the four Old English medical texts to be associated, however tenuously, with an author). The names themselves are unusual and it seems most likely that they are shortened versions of longer names.⁶ The shortened versions are probably given to meet the requirements of the hexameter verse. Although little attention has been given to the literary value of these verses, they exhibit considerable alliteration (marked in the edition given above by underlining), a feature frequently found in Anglo-Latin verse. Line four is particularly artful, exhibiting triple alliteration on ‘n’ and ‘f’ while presenting a thought-word-deed triad (‘by force, by stealth, or by any false speech’).⁷ The cadence *famine falso* is also used by Aldhelm and Milo of Amand.⁸ *Conscribere iussit* occurs in a series of colophons also associated St Amand.⁹ These similarities reinforce the place of these lines within the wider genre of scribal colophons and

highest treasure is not more dear to me than those dear books which the grace of Christ adorns/brings together.’ Throughout the dissertation expansions will be rendered silently; the symbol *wynn* is normalised as *w* and the Tironian note as *ond*. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

⁶ Both the words ‘Bald’ (or ‘Beald’) and ‘Cild’ appear much more often as a component in Anglo-Saxon names rather than a name itself. PASE lists the colophon as the only instance of the name ‘Bald’, and ‘Cild’ occurs elsewhere only as the name of an eleventh-century moneyer: ‘bald’, ‘cild’, ‘Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England’, consulted at <<http://www.pase.ac.uk>> (accessed Sept. 26, 2017). Cecily Clark suggests the possibility of shortening two-part names and Colman lists both names as potentially hypocoristic (short names) or bynames (nicknames): C. Clark, ‘Onomastics’, in *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Volume 1: The Beginning to 1066*, ed. R. M. Hogg (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 452–489; F. Colman, *The Grammar of Names in Anglo-Saxon England: The Linguistics of Culture of the Old English Onomasticon* (Oxford, 2014), p. 253. See also: W. Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum: A List of Anglo-Saxon Proper Names From the Time of Beda to that of King John* (Cambridge, 1897), pp. 82–83, 135.

⁷ I am very grateful to Prof. Andy Orchard for making me aware of these points.

⁸ Aldhelm, *De virginitate*, in *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. R. Ehwald, *Monumenta germaniae historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*, vol. XV (Berlin, 1919), l. 940. Milo of St Amand, *De sobrietate*, ed. L. Traube, *Monumenta germaniae historica, Poetae Latini Carolini*, vol. III (Berlin, 1896), l. 4199.

⁹ These are colophons associated with a monk, Lotharius. The closest match is: *Clauiger exiguus quondam Lotharius istum/ Librum, quem cernis, lector, conscribere iussit* (‘Lotharius, the humble key-bearer, formerly ordered this book, which you behold, to be written/copied). This colophon is found in a ninth-century Amand collection of excerpts from the works of St Augustine (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 2109). Two other colophons associated with Lotharius contain the phrases *scribere iussit* and *scribere fecit*: ‘Appendix ad Milonem’, ed. L. Traube, *Monumenta germaniae historica, Poetae Latini Carolini*, vol. III (Berlin, 1896), p. 675.

suggest that the author was drawing on literary models in the creation of this colophon, perhaps from the continent.

As has been noted frequently in the scholarship surrounding this collection, the colophon does not make it clear if Cild is the author of the text or merely a scribe; similarly Bald could be either the author or simply the owner.¹⁰ The difficulty lies in the *conscribere* which could mean to write in the authorial sense or it could mean to produce a copy or even to compile collection. There may be a play on this last meaning in the final line of the colophon where *comit* could mean to adorn or ornament but can also carry the meaning of bringing together or compiling. This sense might be appropriate here, as, aside from being the only collection associated with a named author, *Bald's Leechbook* stands apart from the other extant Old English medical collections for its complexity of organisation. The process of compiling such a text could have been lengthy and involved. However, although *Bald's Leechbook* is clearly a compilation of a variety of different types of texts (and contains some remedies also found in other Old English collections), it also includes longer, more detailed passages taken from Late Antique medical works that are unique in Old English. In this chapter I suggest that these longer passages demonstrate a higher degree of stylistic consistency than elsewhere in the collection and appear to be the work of a single translator, perhaps the compiler of *Bald's Leechbook* himself.

This chapter will begin with an introduction to the two books of *Bald's Leechbook* and their layout, before surveying the scholarship surrounding its sources and compilation. It will then consider some of the types of remedies found within the text and suggest that the most plausible theory for the compilation of *Bald's*

¹⁰ Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*, p. 13.

Leechbook is that an individual guided the assembling of pre-existing cures in Old English and then supplemented this body with his (or her) own translations of longer, more complex passages from specific Latin texts. Finally, I will consider the translation style employed in these passages. Although several scholars have considered the collection to belong (at least in a loose sense) to the revival of vernacular writing and learning associated with King Alfred and his court circle, the style and methodology of the collection has never been seriously considered in comparison to other works in this corpus. I will suggest that the translation style found in the long passages of the collection can be fruitfully compared to other literary works from this period, some of which exist in manuscript copies closely related to the Royal manuscript.

Introducing the Text

British Library MS 12 D. xvii, containing the two books of *Bald's Leechbook*, is written in a clear Anglo-Saxon minuscule, with rubricated title letters but little other decoration and no illustrations.¹¹ The two books are each headed by a table of contents and contain chapters demarcated by roman numerals. Both books are generally organised to follow the body in a head-to-foot organisation, with the first chapter of Book I beginning: *On þissum ærestan læcecræftum gewritene sint læcedomas wið eallum heafdes untrymnessum*.¹² This organisation (also known as *a capite ad calcem*) is not unusual amongst Late Antique and early medieval medical

¹¹ For a recent and thorough description of the manuscript, see Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 23–38.

¹² *BLB*, I 1.1 (references to *Bald's Leechbook* are given first by book in roman numerals, followed by the chapters in Arabic numerals; these follow the numeration in Cockayne's edition. If there are further subdivisions within a chapter in Cockayne's edition, these are designated by the number following the full stop). 'In these first remedies are written treatments for all sicknesses of the head'.

collections.¹³ This system continues throughout Book I from head diseases, down through problems like knee and thigh pain, to remedies for cold feet in Chapter 30. In the second half of Book I, the organisation is less clear, but similar diseases are grouped together, with Chapters 31–44 generally dealing with skin conditions, 45–53 dealing with sicknesses from various worms, and 54–65 mostly relating to fever or paralysis.¹⁴ The last chapters, 66–88, have no discernible organisation and address a large variety of ailments, ranging from the bite of a rabid dog to hair thinning.

The chapters of Book I vary considerably in length and content. Some sections, for example Chapter 2 (which provides remedies for eye conditions), stretch for multiple folios, while other sections, such as Chapter 11, *wip sarum weolorum* ('for sore lips'), last only a few lines and may give only a single remedy. In general, *Bald's Leechbook* is a very practical text with the majority of chapters containing little overt theory or discussion of symptoms, but instead launching directly into a listing of potential remedies for the ailment in question. Certain chapters in Book I, however, stand out against this practice and provide more information about their diseases, most notably in chapters 18, 35, and 42, although there are smaller selections in a few other chapters that also seem to fall into this category. The significance of these sections will be discussed later in this chapter.

On the surface, the structure of Book II appears relatively similar to Book I. Typically, scholars have described the two books as treating external and internal ailments respectively.¹⁵ The second book does not move as clearly down the body, but instead describes different internal organs (and their ailments) in turn. Thus, the first 16 chapters relate to the *maga* (considered to be the digesting part of the

¹³ Perhaps most famously this arrangement is used in the Latin version of Alexander of Tralles, a text discussed in the introduction, pp. 27–28.

¹⁴ Cf. Wright's description of contents, *Bald's Leechbook*, p. 14.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*, p. 14; Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', pp. 55–56; Meaney, 'Variant Versions', p. 251.

stomach),¹⁶ chapters 17–24 on the liver, 25–35 on the *wamb* (the belly), 36–45 on the spleen, 46–50 on sore of the side, and 51 on lung disease. These sections are followed by a few chapters on making *spiwedrencas* (‘emetic drinks’) and *leohte drencas* (‘light drinks’),¹⁷ after which occur a variety of remedies for various ailments without clear organisation.¹⁸

A closer inspection of Book II, particularly the first 51 chapters related to bodily organs, reveals a more subtle structure than that typically employed in Book I. Each section on a different organ tends to begin with a description of that organ, its location, and typical ailments. Following this, there are generally several chapters with remedies for different sorts of afflictions relating to that organ. Another distinction is that often (although not exclusively) chapters in Book II include long passages taken from a single source, whereas in Book I they are more likely to be made up with remedies from many sources. The next sections will consider these sources and how they were used in the compilation of the books.

¹⁶ There are two organs associated with the stomach in the Old English medical collections, the *maga* and the *wamb*. It is difficult to know exactly how the difference between them was conceived, but they appear to correspond at least partially to the Latin distinction between *stomachus* and *venter*, which they gloss (cf. J. Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth*, Supplement by T. Northcote Toller (Oxford, 1908–1921), s.v. ‘maga’, (‘wamb’). *Stomachus* refers more specifically to the digesting organ and *venter* refers to whole abdomen area, i.e. the belly (although in some Latin texts the *venter* can also refer to the bowels, see D. Langslow, *Medical Latin in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 150–153). This distinction would fit with Cockayne’s description of the *maga* as the ‘organ of digestion’ (Cockayne, vol. II, p. 163.)

¹⁷ Cockayne translates *leohte drencas* as light drinks. Deegan notes that in some cases these occur with *unspiwol* (‘non-emetic’) and *stille* (‘calm’) and suggest that these drinks might have been used to soothe an upset stomach (Deegan, ‘A Critical Edition of MS B.L., Royal 12. D. xvii’, vol. II, p. 322).

¹⁸ It is possible that these last chapters found in each book could be later additions to the original collection. However, as they are included in the table of contents at the beginning of each book and written in the same hand as the body of the text, such additions must have preceded the Royal manuscript. There is also other evidence of emendations and additions being made to the original exemplar of the text. Christine Voth discusses these at length: Voth, ‘An Analysis’, Chapter 5, pp. 129–168.

Latin Sources and the Creation of the Text

In his early work on the Latin sources of *Bald's Leechbook*, Cameron identified 'a small number of works which were unquestionably known at first hand to the compiler'¹⁹ and proposed that Old English remedies which differ significantly from their Latin counterparts were encountered at second hand.²⁰ This theory was built on the underlying assumption that the compiler of the collection was also in fact the translator of its remedies, which he drew from Latin sources that he had to hand. This assumption was challenged by Audrey Meaney's study of variant versions of remedies in the Old English collections, which identified numerous Old English remedies preserved in two or more separate instances, normally in different manuscripts.²¹ She compares the 52 occasions where individual remedies (or occasionally passages including several remedies) are shared between two or more sources. Her analysis of these comparisons indicates that although material was shared between these Anglo-Saxon collections, no single extant collection was the direct ancestor of another.²² She suggests instead that a body of remedies was translated at an early date into Old English, 'circulating more or less independently' and in 'little groups' rather than in intentionally collated collections.²³

¹⁹ Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook: Its Sources and their Use in its Compilation', pp. 154–155. He includes in this list Oribasius' *Synopsis* and *Euporistes*, the *Practica Alexandri*, *De medicamentis* by Marcellus, the *Physica Plinii*, and possibly the *Medicina Plinii*. The Latin sources used in the Old English medical collections are discussed at more depth in the introduction, pp. 18–31.

²⁰ Cameron, 'Bald's Leechbook: Its Sources and their Use in its Compilation', pp. 161–166. He included in this second category the *Epitome altera* by Vindicianus, the *Herbarium Complex* texts, Galen's *Ad Glauconem Liber I*, *Ad Glauconem Liber II*, and *Liber tertius*, the *Passionarius Galeni*, the *Petrocellus*, the *Liber Aurelii* and *Liber Esculapii*. For more information on these works, see the introduction, pp. 28–29.

²¹ See Meaney, 'Variant Versions'. Meaney considers not only the four major Old English medical collections but also remedies that occur on single leaves of manuscripts dedicated to other uses, as well as the transcript made by Lawrence Nowell in 1562 of MS Cotton Otho B. xi, which contained over fifty remedies but was damaged beyond legibility in the Cotton fire of 1731. A new transcription and translation of this text is now available in Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 182–190.

²² Meaney, 'Variant Versions', *passim*. Meaney reaches this conclusion by contrasting specific remedies that have obvious similarities yet often have additions, exclusions, or copying errors unshared by the other versions. See also Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 115–125.

²³ Meaney, 'Variant Versions', pp. 250–251.

This new evidence challenged the traditional view of the creator of *Bald's Leechbook* as the independent translator of the content of his text, causing Cameron to revise his prior position. Speaking of the similarities between the remedies of the Nowell transcript and *Bald's Leechbook*, he writes that:²⁴

we cannot claim that [the compiler of *Bald's Leechbook*] had copies of the works of Pliny and Marcellus and Oribasius before him as he worked. What we can say is that, if he did not have them, someone before him had access to them, so that Anglo-Saxons had in their libraries the works (or extracts from them) which we find used as sources for these entries in the *Leechbook*. Bald himself may have had them too, but the evidence does not permit us to say so.²⁵

The suggestion that the achievement of the creator of *Bald's Leechbook* lies not, as originally thought, in translating, but in compiling and organising already circulating translated material raises the question, 'In what sense, if any, can we call this text a translation?'

As we have seen, the general view taken of the role of the creator of *Bald's Leechbook* has oscillated between two extremes. At one point he was imagined to be the original mind behind a large literary project that would have involved first-hand translation from numerous Latin texts. Now, however, it is more popular to view him instead as a compiler and organiser, but not necessarily a translator of texts. I would suggest that this second perspective might be seen as an over-correction. Meaney's analysis of the shared remedies is convincing: it is clear some Latin remedies had already been translated into Old English prior to creation of *Bald's Leechbook*, and that the creator drew upon these sources in his formation of the text. However, this chapter will argue that the creator of *Bald's Leechbook* may have in fact translated a significant portion of his text. And furthermore, although Cameron

²⁴ For information on the Nowell Codex, see n. 18.

²⁵ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 88.

stated that it was impossible to identify these sources, I will offer some suggestions as to which texts might have made up the library of the creator of *Bald's Leechbook*.

Distinctive Features of the Collection

It is clear that one of the main roles of the redactor of *Bald's Leechbook* was the compilation of remedies. As Meaney has established, some of the remedies in the *Leechbook* are shared with other Old English leaves or collections. In some instances it seems likely that these were single remedies, yet they would have often travelled in small groups, which were then sorted and rearranged according to the complex classification system of the *Leechbook*.²⁶ Richard Nokes suggests that various remedies were written out on small slips of parchment that were then organised and copied into the chapters of the text.²⁷ This system, or another similar to it, seems likely to achieve the complex organisational system found in the text. As has been noted above, it is clear that additions were made to the collection following its original compilation. The organisational system begins to break down in the last few chapters of each book, which is probably a result of this fact.²⁸ Furthermore, the table of contents often varies from the chapters themselves. In both books the table of contents normally gives a tally of how many remedies for an ailment are found within a chapter, but in many cases this differs (sometimes significantly) from the number of remedies actually found in the chapter. Voth has analysed these deviations in detail and suggests that they demonstrate extensive scribal interaction with the text following the creation of the original exemplar.²⁹ However, if this is the case, these remedies were inserted carefully to preserve the original organisational

²⁶ Meaney, 'Variant Versions', p. 251.

²⁷ Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', p. 51.

²⁸ Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*, p. 14; Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', pp. 66–70.

²⁹ Voth provides a useful table detailing the remedy tallies reported in the table of contents and those found in the chapter itself: Voth, 'An Analysis', p. 137.

scheme established by the compiler. This itself is a testimony to the impressive and sophisticated organisation of the original compilation.

The notable differences between the two books of *Bald's Leechbook* have fostered some speculation over their origin and compilation. Nokes has put forward the suggestion that there was no single individual masterminding *Bald's Leechbook*, but at least two principal writers with discernibly different styles. He posits a 'Writer A', who 'wrote most of book I and seems to have influenced Writer B, who wrote the greater part of book II.'³⁰ He supports this theory by a rhetorical analysis of the text, but his analysis is undermined by the fact that he focuses on the Old English text alone and does not examine its Latin source material, apparently relying only upon Cockayne's marginal notation, which he references in a few instances.³¹ His analysis focuses on the transitional phrases at the beginning and end of remedies, which he saw as being independent from the source texts.³² However, many of these transitional phrases are in fact borrowed directly from their Latin source.³³ Although there are some cases where the Old English introduction might vary from its Latin counterpart, these occasions are fewer than those where they align, and often those

³⁰ Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', p. 57.

³¹ See, for example, Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', pp. 56, 59.

³² Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', p. 55.

³³ For instance, Nokes observes a preference for beginning a remedy with *wip* and *gif* in Book I compared to *be* (or other more elaborate phrases) in Book II, which he sees as deliberate stylistic choices. However, this is misleading as most often these formulaic phrases have distinct Latin counterparts. Generally, *wip* ('against/for [a condition]') functions as a translation of the Latin *ad* ('against/for [a condition]'). This can be seen throughout the text. For some examples, see Chapter 10 in *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 83–88, where Cameron gives the first nineteen remedies of Chapter 2, Book I of the *Leechbook*. In some remedies beginning with *wip*, the correlation is less clear because the Latin source might begin with *item* ('the same'). Yet most often the head title of the chapter from which this remedy is taken will contain the *Ad* formula- this is particularly true in those chapters borrowed from the *Physica Plinii* or Marcellus' *De medicamentis*. Similarly, the Old English phrases introduced by *gif* ('if'), generally replaces Latin clauses introduced by *si* ('if'). For examples, see the appendix to Cameron's '*Bald's Leechbook: its sources and their use in compilation*', pp. 178–181. Likewise, the Old English *be* ('about') is generally correlative with the Latin *de* ('about/concerning'), which is also used frequently in the *Liber tertius* and is the introduction of choice in the *Passionarius*.

instances isolated by Nokes as expressing the stylistic proclivities of the Anglo-Saxon writer are in fact closely following a source text.³⁴

Although *Bald's Leechbook* clearly exists in two separate books with different focuses, I find no reason for viewing them as two separate collections, either in origin, or in compiler. Although both books are of a mixed dialectal character, in her recent analysis of the language of the collection Voth suggests a basic linguistic similarity between both books (and a clear distinction between these books and *Leechbook III*).³⁵ Additionally, both books follow a clear organisational system. The system employed in the sections on the organs in Book II is particularly complex, and appears to show the inclinations of an individual more readily than the chapters of Book I. However, the broad vision of the two books is similar and complementary. There is very little overlap in content between the books and in each the main focus is on providing useful remedies for a practicing doctor. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that if Book I were produced independently it would overlook a number of basic conditions that arise in Book II. If Book I was originally independent, or fashioned out of an existing collection, then the creator of Book II exercised strong editorial oversight over the refashioning of Book I. It is uncertain, but not improbable, that this master compiler was either the Bald or Cild of the colophon.

I would suggest that the differences between the two books reflect differences in source content rather than the rhetorical penchants of different

³⁴ For example, Nokes attempts to distinguish a second voice in the text by pointing to the chapter beginning *Her sint tacn aheardodre lifre* ('here are the signs of a hardened liver'), noting that this is 'much more conversational than we usually see in the *Leechbook*.' Yet although this type of introduction differs from most chapters which often begin with the simpler *wip*, the content of this chapter is in fact derived largely from the Latin text of Alexander of Tralles, where the opening formula *signa si* occurs frequently, e.g. *signa si in cirta epatis flegmon fuerit* ('signs if there should be inflammation around the liver') (*Alexandri Practica cum optimis declarationibus Jacobi de Partibus et Simonis Januensis* (Venice, 1522), ch. 58).

³⁵ Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 46–47.

compilers.³⁶ Of course it is possible (perhaps even probable) that *Bald's Leechbook* was in some way a group project, yet there is no compelling reason to believe that there are two or more main voices at work in the text. Indeed, I believe that it is more helpful when considering style to think not in terms of books but rather passage-type: those made up of groups of short, practical remedies, and those passages which tend to be longer, more complex, and often causally oriented. More passages of this second sort appear in Book II, whereas Book I is more dominated by the first type, but examples of each type of passage are found in both books. All the remedies from *Bald's Leechbook* identified by Meaney as being shared between two or more sources, 49 in all, are remedies or passages of this shorter, more practical sort. I propose, therefore, that rather than seeing the two books of *Bald's Leechbook* as the work of two different Anglo-Saxon authors, we should consider its two books as comprising a single unified text, combining short, useful remedies with longer more theoretical sections. Moreover, I suggest that it is at least possible that the author or compiler collected and organised these short remedies (many of which likely already existed in a translated form) but may have also himself translated the longer, more detailed passages, perhaps with the idea of supplementing the existing body of cures available.

This theory is based both on the discernible differences between these two sorts of passages, and that the long passages, which exhibit particular traits but are shared with no other collection, can be found in both books of *Bald's Leechbook*. The translation method employed in these longer passages differs markedly from that used in the shorter remedies.³⁷ The consistency of stylistic approach in these

³⁶ Differences have been noted in Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', pp. 55–57; Wright, *Bald's Leechbook*, p. 15; Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 14–15.

³⁷ I am using the terms 'shorter remedies' and 'longer passages' as a shorthand way to refer to these two categories of content, but the main issue involved is more content (which tends to be more

longer passages suggests the work (or at least oversight) of a single person. It is possible that these longer passages were translated by someone else, separately from the creation of the exemplar for *Bald's Leechbook*, before being recopied. Yet the fact that these longer passages are found in no other text, while not conclusive, would suggest otherwise. The next part of this chapter will explore these claims in more depth, giving examples of each type of passage before arguing for the continuity of the two books as a single whole.

Short Remedies: Translation Styles

In my discussion of translation, the greater part of my focus will be devoted to what I have designated the 'long passages'. The reasons for this are several-fold. First, the nature of the short remedies is inconsistent, making them difficult to characterise usefully as a unit. Secondly, the longer remedies carry particular interest in this chapter for being, as I have argued, possibly translated by the compiler of the text. However, as the shorter remedies form the greater bulk of the text of *Bald's Leechbook*, the following section will comment briefly upon their form and translation styles. This discussion is also relevant to the *Lacnunga* and *Leechbook III*, as these collections also contain remedies of this type and also display many inconsistencies in their translation style and method. This is doubtless a testimony to the many remedies circulating in Old English prior to the creation of these collections. Due to our lack of knowledge of the precise nature of the Latin sources available to the Old English authors, the following discussion is necessarily somewhat provisional.

theoretical or descriptive) and the complexity of the passages rather than length. In general, however, the straightforward, practical remedies that I am placing in this first category do tend to be shorter than their theoretical counterparts.

The shorter remedies generally demonstrate less stylistic consistency than the longer, more theoretical passages of the medical collection. This is reasonable, however, as many of these remedies are shared between other Old English sources. If many of these shorter remedies were not translated by the author of the text but instead by numerous Anglo-Saxon predecessors, a unity of style could hardly be expected. Yet it is difficult to know exactly what percentage of these shorter remedies would have been drawn from pre-existing collections or flyleaves. Given that so many works from Anglo-Saxon England are no longer extant, the simple fact that a remedy is now evidenced only in *Bald's Leechbook* does not demonstrate it was original to that text. I am inclined to believe that a very large proportion of the shorter remedies were of this already pre-translated sort, which were collected by a skilled compiler who organised them into an impressive text. This would account for discrepancies of form found among these remedies.

While bearing in mind that there is no single style or form used for this class of remedies, a simple way to begin our discussion of them is to provide some examples. Below I have listed four remedies taken from Chapter 2 of the first book with the Latin source version of the remedy in brackets above.³⁸ I provide two cures which appear to be translated from cures in the *Physica Plinii* and two from Marcellus's *De medicamentis*. It is unknown exactly which version of either the *Physica Plinii* and *De medicamentis* was known to the Anglo-Saxon author, but the

³⁸ I would also like to credit M. L. Cameron for much of the work in identifying sources here and elsewhere in this chapter. Although in every instance quotations given are from original texts, his work on discerning the Latin source material is foundational for any scholar in this endeavour. Marilyn Deegan's unpublished edition has also been helpful to me (Deegan, 'A Critical Edition of MS B.L., Royal 12. D. xvii').

similarities between the remedies suggests a close relationship.³⁹ The chapter itself is titled *Læcedomas wiþ eagne miste*.⁴⁰

[Physica Plinii 13.9: Item coriandrum viridem trito admixto lacte mulieris inunguis et super tumentes oculos inpones.]⁴¹

2.5 Eft grene cellendre gegniden ond wiþ wifes meoluc gemenged alege ofer þa eagan.⁴²

[Physica Plinii 18.3: Item de fel leporinum subinde inungue, et caliginem tollit.]⁴³

2.6 Eft haran geallan genime ond smire mid.⁴⁴

[De medicamentis 138.9: Adipes omnium fluuialium piscium in sole liquefactae adiunctoque melle inunctioni adhibitae mirifice oculis caligantibus prosunt.]⁴⁵

2.8 Eft rýslas ealra ea fisca on sunnan gemylte ond wið hunig gemengde smire mid.⁴⁶

[De medicamentis 136.5: Feniculi radices contusae suco tantundem mellis optimi despumati utinam Attici misceto eaque lento igne ad mellis crassitudinem discoquito repositaque in pyxide etiam aerea habeto. Cum erit opus, cum aqua cisterina aut muliebri lacte inungueto; quamuis crassas caligines cito discuties.]⁴⁷

2.9 Eft finoles wyrtruman gecnuadne gemeng wið huniges seaw seoð þonne æt leohtum fyre listelice oþ huniges þicnesse. gedo þonne on ærene ampullan

³⁹ As much of Latin medicine contains cures being shared between multiple sources, at times it can be difficult (or impossible) to determine from which source exactly any recipe was taken. In this instance, these cures seem to parallel the versions found in the *Physica Plinii* and *De medicamentis* sufficiently closely for me to assume these are the sources. However, even in this case, it is impossible to know the exact form of the remedy that occurred in the particular Latin exemplar for the translation.

⁴⁰ *BLB*, I 2.1. ‘Remedies against eye mistiness (cloudiness)’.

⁴¹ *Physica Plinii*, 13.9: ‘For the same, smear green *coriandrus* with mixed, rubbed (sifted?) woman’s milk and put it over swollen eyes’. Citations from the *Physica Plinii* are taken from Pliny the Elder, *Physica Plinii Bambergensis*, ed. A. Önnersfors (Hildesheim, 1975). Due to the degree of uncertainty in identifying the modern equivalent of medieval herbs, I have left all herb names in the Old English or Latin in my translations. For a discussion of this problem, see the introduction, p. 10, n. 27.

⁴² *BLB*, I 2.5: ‘Again, rubbed green *cellendre* mixed with woman’s milk, lay over the eyes.’

⁴³ *Physica Plinii*, 18.3: ‘Likewise grease frequently with hare’s gall, and it removes the cloudiness’. *BLB*, I 2.6: ‘Again, take hare’s gall and anoint [the eyes] with it.’

⁴⁴ *BLB*, I 2.6: ‘Again, take hare’s gall and smear [the eyes] with it.’

⁴⁵ *De medicamentis*, 138.9: ‘The fats of all river fish, melted in the sun, and with honey added, applied as an ointment [this is] wonderfully helpful for clouded eyes’. Citations are given from Marcellus, *Marcelli de medicamentis liber*, ed. M. Niedermann (Leipzig, 1916).

⁴⁶ *BLB*, I 2.8: ‘Again, the fats of all river fish melted in the sun and mixed with honey, anoint with [it]’.

⁴⁷ *De medicamentis*, 136.5: ‘Mix the same amount of the best skimmed honey, ideally Attic, with the juice of the pounded roots of *feniculum* and carefully cook the same with a light fire until the honey thickens and have it kept in a small brass box. When there should be a need, anoint with well water or with woman’s milk, however thick the darkness you will remove it quickly.’

ond þonne þearf sie smire mid þis todrifþ þa eahmistas þeah þe hie þicce synd.⁴⁸

A quick overview of even just these four examples shows that the technique of translation appears to differ somewhat from one to the other. The rendering of the Latin word order seems to stay similar throughout while the loyalty to the source text varies, with no apparent consistency within the remedies taken from individual texts. Although we must allow for the possibility that the three Old English versions were translated from different Latin originals, comparison of the texts nonetheless is suggestive of the different approaches of each translator. The second and the third remedies, seemingly based on the *Physica* and *De medicamentis* respectively, are those which appear to render the source text most closely, and in each case the main difference is that the closing assurance of the remedy's efficacy has been skipped. It appears fairly typical for the *Leechbook* remedies to skip this unnecessary comment on the effect of a cure, although by no means in every instance.⁴⁹ As can be seen, even though the last remedy given is appears to be more significantly altered, it has kept the declaration of result found in the source text.

The first and final cures appear to differ more markedly from their source texts, although some of these changes could have existed in the Latin source text used by each translator. The Old English version of the first cure for eye disease seems to make better sense than the Latin version; the Old English may possibly render the intended meaning of the Latin but at the loss of the literal grammatical meaning of the source text. In the Latin, *trito* ('rubbed') and *admixto* ('mixed') are

⁴⁸ *BLB*, I 2.9: 'Again, mix pounded root of *finol* with the juice of honey [pure honey?], then cook it down over a slow fire to the thickness of honey; put it in a brass *ampulla* and when there is need, anoint with it. This drives away the eye-mists though they might be thick.'

⁴⁹ For other instances where the assurance is omitted, cf. *BLB*, I 2.1 and *Physica Plinii* 17.1 and 17.8; *BLB*, I 2.3 and *Physica Plinii* 17.8; *BLB*, I 2.4 and *Physica Plinii* 17.11; *BLB*, I 2.8 and *De medicamentis* 138.9; *BLB*, I 2.11 and *Physica Plinii* 17.9; *BLB*, I 4.3 and *De medicamentis* 15.5 and 15.83.

adjectives in the ablative agreeing with *lacte* ('milk'). The Anglo-Saxon translator appears to have altered the passage so that, more logically, it is the herb that is 'rubbed' and then mixed with the milk. Additionally, the detail describing the eyes as swollen has apparently been removed. Similarly, the fourth remedy also seems to deal rather freely with its source. It removes the Latin aside that ideally one use Attic honey (classically honey from Athens was viewed as the purest and of the highest quality), as well as the instruction at the end that the herbal mixture should be combined with well water or woman's milk before being used on the eyes.

It is difficult to know if this type of substantive variation between the Old English text and the Latin source material marks a deliberate change by a translator or the accumulation of small errors made in copying over time. In a system like that described by Meaney, where, once translated, remedies became a common commodity, it is predictable that as translated remedies were recopied, certain errors are more likely to occur. For instance, although this chapter in the *Leechbook* is for eye mistiness (or cloudiness), the second remedy listed above is actually part of a Latin chapter called *Ad acie oculorum* ('for keenness of sight'). Although ostensibly related, this is of a different purpose than a remedy for clouded sight (generally *caligines oculorum*). Since the Latin remedy begins with *Item*, translated by *eft* and meaning *likewise*, or *again*, it was probably disassociated from its original purpose, especially through multiple instances of recopying or reordering. It is easy to see how this sort of error could occur.

In discussing style, it can be useful to compare the remedies of *Bald's Leechbook* with the variant versions sometimes found in other sources. In some instances, the *Leechbook* remedies are very close in form to the remedies found in another collection. For instance, the remedies in the Nowell transcription are in most

cases very similar.⁵⁰ But in other collections, the remedies appear to be shared at a greater distance with perhaps more intermediary steps between. I am not going to detail each extant collection of remedies and its relation to the *Leechbook*, as this has largely already been done by Audrey Meaney.⁵¹ Instead, I am going to briefly consider the parallel cures in the *Old English Herbarium*. These cannot technically be considered shared remedies in the sense that the *Old English Herbarium* appears in all accounts to be an independent translation. However, these parallel remedies provide an opportunity for considering and contrasting the treatment of sources in these two different collections.

The treatment of the sources found in the short remedies collected in *Bald's Leechbook* stands out against the methods of the *Old English Herbarium*. As will be seen in Chapter 4, the translation in the *Herbarium* appears to have a general unity of style and purpose; minor changes were made by the translator to make the text of the *Herbarium* more usable for his (likely monastic) audience, yet there was a high level of attention and general faithfulness to the source text.⁵² This faithfulness and consistency stands in marked contrast to many of the remedies found in *Bald's Leechbook*. Listed below is a remedy found in both collections with its Latin equivalent (in so far as can be identified):

Latin (*OEH*, 1.8):

Ad dentium vitia. Vettonica ex vino veteri aut aceto ad tertias decoque, gargarizet, dentium dolorem discutiet.⁵³

Old English Herbarium: MS V: 1.8

⁵⁰ For a more in-depth examination of the correspondences between the remedies of the Nowell transcript and *Bald's Leechbook*, as well as a discussion of their possible relation, see Meaney, 'Variant Versions', pp. 245–250, 265–268. See also Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 117–125.

⁵¹ See Meaney, 'Variant Versions'.

⁵² For background on this text and a discussion of its status as a translation and possible audience, see Chapter 4.

⁵³ *OEH*, 1.8. 'For diseases of the teeth, reduce *vettonica* down to a third in aged wine or vinegar. Let him gargle it, [and] it dissipates the pain of the teeth.'

Wiþ toðece genim þa ylcan wyrte betonican ond wyl on ealdan wine oþþe on ecede to þriddan dæle, hit hælþ wundurlice þæra toða sar ond geswell.⁵⁴

Bald's Leechbook: I 6.2

Wið toþ wærce. betonican seoð on wine oþ þriddan dæl swile þonne geond þone muð lange hwile.⁵⁵

Given the level of variation within the short remedies, single examples cannot be comprehensive but certain aspects of the translation here, if not universal, appear to be typical of the *Leechbook*. In particular, the fact that the *Leechbook* version seems to skip the assurance of efficacy is similar to those remedies seen in the previous section and appears to be a fairly standard variation in *Bald's Leechbook*, it is certainly more common than in the *Herbarium*. In general, the *Herbarium* remedies tend to be more faithful to the Latin, but this example is interesting because each Old English version omits an instruction that the other includes. The version in *Bald's Leechbook* seems to simplify the instruction that the herb be boiled in either wine or vinegar, mentioning only wine, whereas the *Herbarium* version completely omits the direction that the herb be gargled, an instruction that is emphasised and expanded in the *Leechbook* remedy. Perhaps the *Herbarium* author thought this instruction was redundant in a remedy for tooth pain.

We can also consider a set of remedies from the Herbarium Complex found not only in the *Bald's Leechbook* and the *Old English Herbarium* but also in the *Lacnunga*:

Latin (*OEH*, 1.9):

Ad lateris dolorem. Vettonicae dragmas iii cum vino veteri quiatos iii et piperis grana xxvii, contritum et calefactum ieiunus bibat.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *OEH*, 1.8. 'For tooth ache, take this same herb *betonica* and boil in aged wine or vinegar to the third part, it wonderfully heals soreness of the teeth and swelling.'

⁵⁵ *BLB*, I 6.2. 'For tooth ache, boil *betonica* in wine to the third part, swill it then in the mouth for a long while.'

⁵⁶ 'For pain of the side, three drams of *vettonica* with three cups of aged wine and 27 grains of pepper; let [him] drink this ground together and warm while fasting.'

Old English Herbarium MS V: 1.9

Wip sidan sare genim þære ylcan wyrte þreora trymessa wæge; seoð on ealdum wine ond gnið þærto xxvii piporcornu, gedrinc his þonne on niht nistig þreo full fulle.⁵⁷

Bald's Leechbook I 21

Eft betonican swilc swa þry penegas gewegen. ond pipores seofon ond xx. corna to Somne getrifulad. geot ealdes wines þry bollan fulle to. ond gewlece sele nihtnestigum drincan.⁵⁸

Lacnunga 116:

Wyrce godne drenc wið sidece: wyl betonican ond pollegan in aldum wine; do in XXVII piporcorn gegrundenra; syle him on nihtnyhstig godne scenc fulne wearmes, ond gereste gode hwile æfter ðæm drenc on ða saran sidan.⁵⁹

Here we find that the remedy in the *Leechbook* is more precise than the *Herbarium's* version. In this triad, the *Leechbook* remedy is the only one to retain the specification of how much wine is to be added. Additionally, this version uses the rare and technical term *getrifulian* (from the Latin *tribulare*) to describe the condition of the peppercorns, a very close rendering of the Latin term used. In general, the tone and diction of this remedy are more technical than those found in the previous remedy listed above. This is a typical example of the diversity among the short remedies of *Bald's Leechbook*. In this instance, the most elaborate departures from the Latin remedy are found in the *Lacnunga* version. Rather than being incomplete, this remedy expands upon the original, adding an ingredient *pollegie* (pennyroyal), as well as the instruction that the patient rest on his side after partaking of the remedy. These sorts of additions likely indicate a further distance from the original translation than the version found in the *Leechbook*.

⁵⁷ 'For sore of the side, take three shillings weight of this same herb, simmer in old wine and grind with 27 peppercorns; then drink it after a night of fasting, three bowls full.'

⁵⁸ 'Again, in the same way, three pennyweight of *betonica*, and seven and twenty corns of pepper triturated together, add old wine, and give to drink three bowls full, warmed, after a night of fasting.'

⁵⁹ *LAC*, vol. 1, CXVI. 'Make a good drink for side-pain: boil betony and pennyroyal in old wine; put in twenty-seven ground peppercorns; give him a good full cup of the warm drink, fasting for a night, and let him rest for a good while after the drink on the painful side'. Translations from the *Lacnunga* are Pettit's unless otherwise noted; herb names have been kept in translation, as according to his translation.

So, here we can see three translated remedies, each with a different style. The *Leechbook* version is uncharacteristically technical; the *Lacnunga*'s apparently amended and expanded, the *Herbarium* straightforward and generally faithful. These remedies provide a practical example of how a single Latin source could give birth to a variety of Old English cures. The level of variation found in the *Lacnunga* remedy demonstrates how these remedies could become so changed over time as to be almost unrecognisable. Audrey Meaney even records examples where the same Latin remedy could appear twice in a collection, when the variants apparently rendered the two different enough to have been not recognised as sharing the same identity.⁶⁰ In comparison, the *Herbarium* stands out for its consistency and the straightforward nature of its translation. A combination of different translators as well as this sort of process of change over time is likely responsible for the level of variation found in *Bald's Leechbook*'s short remedies.

Long Passages: Structure

The next several sections will consider the long passages from *Bald's Leechbook*, beginning with a discussion on their form and structure before addressing the question of style of translation and consistency between the two books. As above, this discussion is provisional due to our lack of exact knowledge of the form of source texts available to the translator. However, comparison of the available texts might, nonetheless, reveal something of the Anglo-Saxon author's interests.

As we have seen, the short remedies tend to be small, self-contained units. Although occasionally a couple of these remedies might be taken together from a source text, most of the time the chapters will be made up of individual remedies

⁶⁰ Meaney, 'Variant Versions', pp. 249–250.

taken from a variety of sources. The long passages are structured differently. Indeed, the use of the term ‘passage’ rather than remedy is expressive of this distinction, for these chapters or sections are made up of longer extracts from source texts, each often being made up of several remedies. As an illustration, let us consider an outline of the structure found in the first 16 chapters of Book II, the section related to the internal organ the *maga* (‘stomach’):

Chapter 1: a long extract taken that appears to be taken from the Latin Alexander of Tralles, informing the reader about the signs of a diseased *maga* and its location next to the heart and spine.

Chapter 2: cures for swollen and sore *maga* from Alexander of Tralles.

Chapters 3–7: chapters taken from a variety of chapters in the *Liber tertius*. These treat a number of conditions associated in that text with the *stomachus* (the Latin equivalent for the *maga*).

Chapters 8–16: chapters with content mostly taken from the *Liber tertius*, and from Alexander of Tralles.

The organisation of the following sections on the liver, *wamb*, and spleen follow a similar structure, with an introductory section followed by a number of chapters providing cures and other information. This type of careful, sustained, and at least partly theoretical discussion of particular organs or ailments is not found in the other medical collections extant from Anglo-Saxon England.

The distinction between this sort of structure and that found in the chapters containing shorter remedies is obvious. Additionally, differences in source text are also noticeable. Although not conforming to a strict rule, the shorter passages tend to draw on a different group of sources from the longer passages. The majority of the short remedies come from Plinian sources (including the *Physica Plinii* and occasionally the *Medicina Plinii*), Marcellus’s *De medicamentis*, or the various

treatises making up the Latin *Herbarium Complex*.⁶¹ Many of these sources are the same as those which lie behind the *Old English Herbarium*, and the theory of medicine found therein generally has its genesis in Pliny the Elder or Dioscorides. The longer passages, on the other hand, are rarely taken from this sort of herbalist source. Indeed, the nature of those texts would make it difficult to elicit a single, long passage that was not made of up of numerous remedies. Instead, the compiler draws on a collection of sources of a different nature, some of which may have been accessed only through excerpts, but with the greater part taken from the medical works of Alexander of Tralles, and Oribasius, as well as the *Liber tertius*, an early Byzantine work which also forms part of a group of texts later known as the *Passionarius Ensemble*.⁶² Although there are no long sections taken from the Latin Oribasius texts in these chapters on the *maga* they are still sources used frequently in other sections.

To understand the structure of one of these chapters, it is useful to look at an example passage. It is difficult to convey structure with a small excerpt, so I have provided the entirety of Chapter 21 of Book II, along with the corresponding chapters from Latin sources that make up its contents.⁶³ Due to the length of this excerpt, I have included it as Appendix 1–A at the end of the thesis. I will use this extended selection as a starting point for discussing both structure and translation in these longer passages. The chapter deals with hardness (or dryness) of the liver. In Galenic tradition the liver was seen as the centre in which food was converted into

⁶¹ For discussion on the potential availability of the *Medicina Plinii* in Anglo-Saxon England, see the introduction, p. 20.

⁶² For background on these collections and authors, see the introduction, pp. 26–29.

⁶³ For other examples of these ‘long passages’, see *BLB*, I 35, 18; II 17, 21, 22, 30, 36. Sections of Chapter 22 of Book II are discussed alongside their Latin source in D. Banham and C. Doyle, ‘An Instrument of Confusion: The Mystery of the Anglo-Saxon Syringe’, in *Recipes for Disaster*, ed. J. Rampling, D. Banham, and N. Jardine (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 27–38.

blood.⁶⁴ The particular disease described relates to inflammation of the liver resulting in mal-digestion of food.

In this chapter several independent paragraphs from Latin sources have been melded together by the translator into a single cohesive piece in the Old English. Often, long passages are arranged in the *Leechbook* into chapters formed from a single source, yet it is almost as common for a chapter to be made up of long sections from several sources (as is the case here).⁶⁵ However, when they contain material from more than one Latin source, these excerpts are still comparatively longer rather than the individual remedies we encountered earlier. The translator and compiler of Chapter 21 apparently went through both the Alexander and *Liber tertius*, extracting whatever material he deemed related to his topic. Indeed, in the case of the chapters taken from the *Liber tertius*, he has taken two chapters dealing with two specific ailments, *scleria* and *scirrosia* (both generally meaning ‘hardness’), and combined them into this single chapter.⁶⁶ The translator differentiates between different manners (*gerad*) of this hardening with different symptoms, but does not give separate names to the ailments. This type of free use of source texts is not particularly unusual in early medieval medicine, as medical texts were especially likely to be subject to change and dismemberment.⁶⁷ However, the

⁶⁴ M. Grant, *Galen on Food and Diet* (London, 2000), p. 8; A. Debru, ‘Physiology’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, ed. R. J. Hankinson (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 263–282, at 265–266. For more background on the medical theories associated with Galen, see Temkin, *Galenism*; J. Longrigg, *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians* (London, 1993).

⁶⁵ Other examples of chapters drawn from two or more Latin sources in Book II include Chapter 16, which appears to be formed from various portions of the *Passionarius* and from the Latin Alexander; Chapter 17, which appears to be taken largely from the *Liber tertius* but also contains an extract similar to a passage in the *Epitome altera*; Chapter 19 which appears to be taken from the *Passionarius*, the *Liber tertius* and an unidentified source; Chapter 27, which seems to be taken largely from Oribasius but also contains portions from another source (Cockayne identifies this as Paulus of Ægina, p. 220, but I have not been able to locate this passage).

⁶⁶ More chapters from the *Passionarius* discussion of liver hardness were the source for Chapter 22 of Book II, for a discussion of this, see Banham and Doyle, ‘An Instrument of Confusion’, pp. 31–37.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of the treatment of medical texts as ‘non-canonical’ types of texts and especially subject to rearrangement or abbreviation, see Wallis, ‘The Experience of the Book’, pp. 103–107.

use of this technique shows the confidence of the translator, who, sorting through Latin texts, collected those remedies for ailments which he judged to be fundamentally the same, even if they were labelled differently in the Latin sources. The next section will consider the translation styles employed in these passages, which often deal with several Latin sources, melding them into a harmonious whole in Old English.

Long Passages: Style

Even from first glance at the example chapter, there is an obvious difference between the Latin and Old English in regard to length. The Old English chapter is condensed from a significantly larger amount of Latin material. Five chapters dealing with liver hardness, taken from two different works, have been combined into a single cohesive chapter in the Old English. More than this, however, the translator has apparently sifted through the Latin material, condensing and synthesising his sources.

In the appendix, I have made clear which parts of the Latin content were incorporated (however loosely) into the Old English by putting these sections in bold. As can be seen, in many of the Latin chapters the content has been cut by around a third, and by more than half in Chapter 58 from the Latin Alexander. It is always possible this could reflect a heavily abridged source text. However, in general, most of the omitted material appears to have been skipped because of its repetitive nature. For instance, the translator often apparently omits the beginning sections of chapters where the disease is being introduced, as these sections would be necessary as an introduction to individual chapters, but unnecessary when those chapters become incorporated into the more comprehensive Old English chapter.

The sentence skipped at the end of Chapter 59 from the Latin Alexander is repetitive, restating what has come before it, and was probably omitted for a similar reason. In other instances, however, it can be harder to understand why certain sections were omitted. For instance, in the Latin Alexander Chapter 57, two partial sentences and one whole sentence have been omitted. Perhaps the author found the Latin text's description of the absence of a symptom (that is, that there will not be fever if the patient suffers from liver inflammation) unnecessary. How the author dealt with this particular omission will be considered more carefully below.

In a few instances, omissions in the text may reflect a difference of opinion between the Anglo-Saxon translator and his source texts. For instance, there are passages such as in Book I Chapter 35 where ingredients listed in the Latin version of a cure are exchanged for others in the Old English. In this instance the Latin calls for a poultice of *hordeo calido* ('warm barley'), but the Old English has *weax hlafe ond of wearmum bere. ond of swelcum þingum* ('wax cake and warm barley and such things').⁶⁸ Changes like this seem like a clear, knowing departure from the source text. However, there are other instances where the motivation is less clear. For instance, there is a passage in Chapter 17 of Book II where the Anglo-Saxon version differs significantly from the description in the Latin of the liver as both creating blood (*inde sanguinem fit*) and as containing the *anima* or spirit.⁶⁹ The Old English version does not say that the liver creates blood, simply that it collects it (*blod gesomnab*), and also skips all reference to the *anima* as dwelling in the liver. Omissions such as this could be similar to those mentioned above where

⁶⁸ *Passionarius*, V 34; *BLB*, I 35. Citations from this text are taken from *Galenii Pergamensis Passionarius, a doctis medicis multum desideratus: Egritudines a capite ad pedes usque* (Lyon, 1526) (references are by book and chapter). With many others, I wait in anticipation for Professor Eliza Glaze's edition of the *Passionarius* texts to be completed.

⁶⁹ Cf. *BLB*, II 17 and *Theodori Prisciani Euporiston libri III cum physicorum fragmento et additamentis pseudo-Theodori, accedunt Vindiciani Afri quas feruntur reliquiae*, ed. V. Rose (Leipzig, 1874), *Epitome altera* XVIII.

unnecessary information is omitted or they might reveal differences in opinion between Anglo-Saxon tradition and the Latin sources. In this instance, the belief that the *mod* or mind was located in the chest—not the liver—is a well-recognised Anglo-Saxon tradition of belief.⁷⁰ In general, however, the majority of omissions appear to be less a matter of medical doctrine and more one of making a clearer, more direct text.

Another stylistic feature of these passages is a tendency to simplify overly complex Latin syntax. The translator does this in a number of ways, one of which is to render passive Latin constructions into active ones.⁷¹ Old English prose does not rely as heavily on passive constructions as Latin, so this is not unusual. Sometimes the translator also helps to clarify slightly opaque Latin sentences by providing a subject. For instance where he translates the last sentence in *Alexander* Chapter 57, *si enim hec omnia cognoscuntur uel determinantur, curatio fit citata et sine aliquo impedimento adhibentur adiutoria*,⁷² as *þonne se læce þæt ongit þonne mæg he þone læcedom þe raðor findan*.⁷³ In the Latin, the subject is unidentified, but the Old English makes clear that it is the doctor who should be able to understand these signs, rather than the patient.

Likewise, the abundant Latin use of impersonal constructions in these passages is reduced. An extreme example of this is found in an earlier section of the same chapter mentioned above. The Latin version begins with a particularly convoluted sentence: *quomodo autem oporteat agnoscere aut discernere seu in ipso*

⁷⁰ See L. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (Toronto, 2011), pp. 55–62; M. Godden, ‘Anglo-Saxons on the Mind’, in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 271–298.

⁷¹ Passive constructions occur 27 times in the Latin chapters listed in the appendix and only twice in the Old English chapter. For more examples, cf. BLB, I 35 and *Passionarius*, V 34; BLB, II 4 and *Liber tertius*, 17.1; BLB, II 7 and *Liber tertius*, 21.1, 22.1.

⁷² ‘Truly, if all these things are known or figured out, the cure is speeded up and aid is applied without impediment.’

⁷³ ‘When the doctor understands this, then he may more quickly find the treatment.’

*epate contingat inflammatio siue in tunicis ipsius aut in aliquibus locis sit qui extrinsecus circumposita sunt considerari oportet.*⁷⁴ This sentence is tricky to render clearly even in modern English because of its double impersonal construction with *oportet* and *oporteat*. The Old English is executed much more clearly and compactly. Additionally, the complex hypotactic Latin sentence structures used both in the *Liber tertius* and Alexander chapters are rendered into generally paratactic Old English, most often using *ond*. Together these traits combine to make a readable and clear style in these longer passages.

The passage from Alexander Chapter 57 mentioned above, beginning with the sentence with the impersonals, also demonstrates another notable trait of our translator. Near the middle of the Latin chapter, the translator has skipped a section of the text, one full sentence and two half sentences. However, he handles this transition with noteworthy skill, seamlessly reforming the two bookending sentences into a single, cogent Old English sentence. In Book II Chapter 17, the translator does something very similar, apparently omitting the middle of a Latin sentence, and re-stitching it into a comprehensible whole.⁷⁵ This method, of re-crafting Latin sentences or clauses around skipped material into a new sentence in Old English, is common in the translation of these longer passages.⁷⁶ In general, this type of translation exhibits a higher level of skill than that required in the short remedies.

⁷⁴ ‘How therefore one should know or learn whether the inflammation is happening in the liver itself or in the sheaths or in other places which are externally located around it.’ For other similar examples, compare *BLB*, I 35 and *Passionarius*, V 34 and 35 and *BLB*, II 17 and *Epitome altera* XVIII and *Liber tertius*, 36.1, 37.1.

⁷⁵ In this instance, the Latin appears to be taken from the *Epitome altera*, XVIII: *tunc que sordidissima et iudicio suo reprobata sunt, exonerantur in ventrem, intestines repletantur. accipit iecor sordidissima ex cibo et illa calore suo tam diu decoquendo liquescit.* (‘Then the things which are most dirty, and condemned by its judgement, are unloaded into the stomach; the intestines are filled up. The liver receives the very dirty things from food and melts them by cooking down in its own heat for quite a long time.’) The Old English reads: *þonne þara metta meltung biþ ond þynnes þa becumað on þa lifer þonne wendaþ hie hiora hiw ond cerrað on blod. ond þa unsefernessa þe þær beoþ hio awyrpþ ut.* (‘Then there is a melting of the foods, and fluid is produced in the liver; then they change their character, and turn into blood; it [the liver] rejects the impurities which are there.’)

⁷⁶ For examples from Book I, compare: *BLB*, I 2.30 and *Œuvres d’Oribase*, V 33; *BLB*, I 36 and the *Epitome altera*, XX.

The translator clearly feels enough confidence with his Latin source material that he is able to manoeuvre with ease, restructuring and in some instances transforming it.

Continuity Between Books One and Two

Thus far, in discussing these longer passages I have focused most of my attention on the sections from Book II related to the bodily organs. However, I will now turn to Book I. As I have mentioned, scholars have generally noted differences between the two books, with some even proposing different authorship. Instead, in the previous sections, I have defined two distinct types of passages within the text: short self-contained remedies which vary in their style, but tend to be basically literal in their translation, and longer passages which differ more elaborately from their source text, often severely condensed—simplifying and synthesising sometimes repetitive and pedantic Latin authors. This section will suggest that this type of more-involved translation, although more common in Book II, is also found in several places in Book I.

The greater majority of Book I is made up of the short-type remedies, yet in a few instances a style similar or identical to the long passages of Book II can be seen. An example is Chapter 18 of Book I, relating to a condition called *micla geoxa*, roughly translated as ‘great spasm’. The majority of the passage appears to have been translated from an Oribasius chapter on *singultus* (spasm or hicup).⁷⁷ However, as in the example chapter given above from Book II, this passage has been dramatically altered by its Anglo-Saxon translator. For the sake of comparison, this

⁷⁷ The last few lines of text are not from Oribasius’s works. In Cockayne’s edition he indicates that the entire chapter was taken either from Alexander of Tralles or Paulus of Aegina. However, the last few lines are not found in either of these sources (indeed, the whole chapter is missing from the Latin Alexander, and only the first section is found in the Greek version). After comparing these texts, I have found that the chapter in Oribasius’ *Synopses* is much closer to the Old English passage than those found in the other two authors and seems more likely to have been the source text. However, I have not been able to locate the origin of the final lines.

passage has also been included in the appendix. As in Chapter 21, discussed above, the Latin passage here has been dramatically shortened, reduced by about a third, and these omissions have been handled in a very similar way to those longer passages discussed in the previous section. The section from Oribasius' text is less verbose than previous examples taken from Alexander, using fewer passive or impersonal constructions. However, the Old English again restructures and clarifies syntax at the same time as synthesising the content. The omissions of the Latin are handled with skill: omitting a section on pepper and other causes of hiccups, our translator binds together an early mention in the Latin passage of vomiting with a later elaboration on the same cure. This treatment appears very similar to that examined in the previous chapter.

Similar stylistic techniques are at work in other places in Book I. Instances of this sort of translation are not only found in stand-alone chapters but also sometimes in passages interspersed among lists of shorter remedies. For instance, a passage taken from Oribasius occurs near the beginning of Chapter 2, a chapter on eye diseases and containing a compendium of different cures. I have not reproduced this entire passage as it can be found in Cameron's *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*.⁷⁸ However, an example reveals similar methods to those seen above. The Latin source reads:

in aqua frigida [...] longius videre possunt in visum. Non enim inpedit ad legendum visio; additus enim ex hoc virtus. In suspitionem sit vinus multus et dulces et cibos qui in superiora ventris multum manet et indigestis [...]⁷⁹

The Old English shortens this, apparently omitting references to the cure actually enhancing one's vision and dropping the reference to reading:

⁷⁸ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 84–85.

⁷⁹ Oribasius, *Synopses*, V. 33. '[If immersed] in cold water, they are able to see things further away. Nor does it impair the vision for reading, for from this [treatment] the strength is increased. Let much wine be distrusted, and sweet things, and foods which in the upper stomach (*venter*) frequently remain in the upper abdomen without digesting'. Citations for this source are taken from *Œuvres d'Oribase*, ed. Bussemaker, VI, p. ii (references are by volume and chapter number).

Wip eagna miste monige men þy læs hiora eagan þa adle þrowian lociað on ceald wæter. ond þonne magon fyr geseon ne wyrft þæt þa seon. ac micel win gedrinc ond oþre geswette drincan ond mettas [...] ⁸⁰

The manner of translation here is characteristic of earlier examples; the translator binds two sentences together around the omitted content forming a logical and plausible edition.

I would argue that certain passages in *Bald's Leechbook*, which I designate as the 'long passages', appear to show a stability of translation style across the two books. One plausible explanation for this occurrence is that while there was already a significant body of cures translated into Old English, an individual translator decided to supplement this collection by translating more theoretical passages from the Latin texts in his library. Although it is conceivable that this might have occurred at any time in the early history of Anglo-Saxon medicine, it may well have happened in tandem with the original creation and compilation of *Bald's Leechbook*, as these longer passages are shared with no other text. I suggest that this collection was an important achievement, supplementing the practical cures of Pliny and Dioscorides with much hitherto un-translated Galenic and Late Antique material, and that its creator saw his text not simply as a practical guide for doctors but also as a type of compendium, an encyclopedia of medical learning.

The final part of this chapter will consider what sort of milieu could have fostered this type of intellectual project. I will suggest that the two books of *Bald's Leechbook* can be profitably considered alongside Alfredian translations such as the Old English *Orosius*, which is probably near contemporary in date.

⁸⁰ *BLB*, I 2.1 'Against cloudiness of the eyes, many people, lest their eyes should suffer from this ailment, look into cold water and then they can see far, nor does that harm the vision, but drinking much wine, and other sweet drinks, and foods [...]'.

Situating *Bald's Leechbook*

It is difficult to date the original compilation of *Bald's Leechbook* or to securely locate it in a particular place. The majority of studies have placed the creation of the original collection in Winchester.⁸¹ However, some voices have questioned this association. In particular, Christine Voth has recently argued that the language of the collection reveals an 'underlying Anglian dialect' and suggests that it is more reasonable to assume a West Mercian centre.⁸² She records the two principal dialectal components as Anglian and West Saxon. However, Voth acknowledges the 'mixed' nature of dialectical features found in the manuscript and refers to the text as a '*Mischsprache*, a mixture of linguistic and orthographic forms from a variety of sources.'⁸³ This must be at least partly a result of the fact that the collection was partially compiled from pre-translated remedies. Dating this original exemplar collection is also difficult. Even if it originated in an Anglian centre, as Voth suggests, this tells us little about the date of the collection. The extant manuscript is dated by Ker to s. x^{med}.⁸⁴ The additions and emendations made to the text suggest that there was time for substantial interaction following the drafting of the exemplar, yet a more precise date is elusive. Notwithstanding the difficulty of dating or locating the original exemplar of the collection, there are several reasons for linking the existing manuscript copy with the period of Alfredian translation.

The nature of 'Alfredian translation' has long proved contentious. In the twentieth century, the King of Wessex was regarded as the personal translator of a number of works in Old English, although which texts specifically belonged to this

⁸¹ Ker, p. 333; Meaney, 'Variant Versions', p. 236; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 30; S. Hollis, 'The Social Milieu of *Bald's Leechbook*', *Avista Forum Journal* 14 (2004), 11–16, at 12.

⁸² Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 43–50, 158–159.

⁸³ Voth, 'An Analysis', p. 46.

⁸⁴ Ker no. 264; G&L no. 479.

royal corpus was a point of contention. Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, Augustine's *Soliloquies*, Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, and sometimes the *Prose Psalms* are the works that have most commonly been considered to have been either translated by Alfred himself or under his direct oversight.⁸⁵ However, in the last decade, largely due to the work of Malcolm Godden, the question of the king's personal authorship of any of these works has come under scrutiny. The Old English versions of the *Boethius*, *Soliloquies*, *Pastoral Care*, and *Dialogues* all contain prefaces explicitly claiming royal authorship, while other works do not contain royal prefaces but make reference to Alfred internally in their translation. Yet Godden suggests that the invocation of the king in these prefaces is not to be taken literally but is better understood as a conventional literary trope.⁸⁶ In response to these concerns, scholarship in recent years has generally shifted from viewing Alfred as a translator to the broader focus of a period of cultural renaissance and the flourishing of vernacular writing (especially prose) during his reign and in the decades following.

⁸⁵ Cf. D. Whitelock, 'The Prose of Alfred's Reign', in *Continuations and Beginnings*, ed. E. G. Stanley (London, 1966), pp. 67–103, at 71; M. Alexander, *Old English Literature* (London, 1983), p. 153; *King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation of the First Fifty Psalms*, ed. P. O'Neill (Cambridge, 2001), introduction; J. Bately, *The Literary Prose of King Alfred's Reign: Translation or Transformation* (London, 1980), pp. 14–15; D. Pratt, *The Political Thought of Alfred the Great* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 118.

⁸⁶ For this argument, see M. Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?', *MÆ* 76 (2007), 1–23; as well as M. Godden, 'The Alfredian Project and its Aftermath: Rethinking the Literary History of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 162 (2008), 93–122, at 99. See also, 'Authorship and Date', in *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. S. Irvine and M. Godden, (Oxford, 2009), pp. 140–151. Responses to Godden's article include J. Bately, 'Did King Alfred Actually Translate Anything: The Integrity of the Alfredian Canon Revisited', *MÆ* 78 (2009), 189–215, and D. Pratt, 'Persuasion and Invention at the Court of King Alfred the Great', in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. J. Nelson (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 162–191. Both authors maintain that although the degree to which Alfred, with his own hand, translated these works is unknown, it is most plausible that he had at least some level of involvement.

However, despite the recent revival of interest in Alfredian texts, *Bald's Leechbook* and its place within this context has been largely ignored.⁸⁷ This exclusion is at least partially due to the fact that, unlike some of the other texts, *Bald's Leechbook* was never thought to be a translation in the king's own hand. However, as the debate within the field of Alfredian scholarship moves away from a focus on personal royal authorship toward a looser understanding of a vernacular revival centered in Wessex, the peripheral status of *Bald's Leechbook* in this discussion needs to be reevaluated. Indeed, as with the *Orosius* and *Soliloquies*, *Bald's Leechbook* situates itself in an Alfredian context by direct textual reference to King Alfred. This comes at the end of Chapter 64 of Book II, a chapter offering numerous remedies, mostly for internal disorders. The description of this chapter in the table of contents summarises its contents thus:

Læcedom semonian wiþ innoþes forhæfdnesse ond gutomon. wið milte wærce ond stice ond spican wiþ utsihtan ond dracontian wiþ fule horas on men. ond alwan wiþ untrymnessum ond galbanes wiþ nearwum breastum. ond balzaman smiring wiþ eallum untrumnessum ond petraoleum to drincanne an feald wiþ innan tydernesse ond utan to smerwanne. ond tyriaca is god drenc wiþ innoþ tydernessum. ond se hwita stan wið eallum uncuþum brocum.⁸⁸

Unfortunately, in the body of the text, the beginning of this passage is on a missing quire, yet the second half of the prescription is intact. After giving instructions for treating the ailments listed above, the chapter ends with the inscription: *bis eal het*

⁸⁷ It is not mentioned for instance in Dorothy Whitelock's foundational piece on Alfredian prose or in any of Malcolm Godden's seminal work in this area. It is briefly mentioned in the work of Janet Bately, who discusses its linguistic features, and it receives one passing reference in David Pratt's treatment of the king's political thought: cf. Whitelock, 'The Prose of Alfred's Reign'; Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?'; Godden, 'The Alfredian Project and its Aftermath'; Pratt, *The Political Thought of Alfred the Great*, p. 118; J. Bately, 'Old English Prose Before and During the Reign of Alfred', *ASE* 17 (1988), 93–138, at 100–103.

⁸⁸ *BLB*, I 64 (table of contents). 'A remedy: *semonia* for constipation of the innards, *gutomon* for spleen pain and stabbing pain, and *spica* for diarrhea; and *dracontia* for vile phlegm in a person; *alwe* for infirmities; and *galbanes* for narrow chests [possibly asthma, angina]; and balsam ointment for all infirmities; and *petraoleum* to drink unmixed for inner tenderness, and to be applied externally; and *tyriaca* is a good drink against intestinal tenderness, and the white stone for unusual diseases.' *An feald* read according to Voth's edition. For background and analysis of these ingredients, see Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 164–165.

bus secgean ælfrede cynige domne helias patriarcha on gerusalem ('All this Lord Elias, the Patriarch in Jerusalem, commanded to be said to King Alfred').⁸⁹ This suggests that the recipes listed above, and perhaps others, were sent from Jerusalem in the late ninth century to the court of Alfred. Asser, in his *Life of Alfred*, records seeing letters and gifts sent to Alfred by the patriarch in Jerusalem, and Audrey Meaney, in her analysis of the remedies in this chapter, has demonstrated that the drugs mentioned are products that would have been available in Syria and the surrounding regions.⁹⁰ There is no strong reason, therefore, to suspect the report of this passage to be false.⁹¹ Christine Voth has suggested these remedies are written in a West-Saxon dialect (as would be expected if the remedies are genuine) and suggests that this is a later addition to the collection, which she believes to be originally Anglian.⁹² It is certainly a possibility that this section could have been added to an already extant collection. Nevertheless, such an addition would still underline that a purposeful adaptation of this collection was being made, likely somewhere close to the court circle surrounding the king, whether during his life or in the period following.

This view is supported by the fact that the Royal manuscript was almost certainly produced in Winchester. In his catalogue entry for the manuscript, Ker notes that the main hand of the text is identical to the third hand of the Parker Chronicle, that responsible for the years 925–955. This manuscript houses the oldest

⁸⁹ *BLB*, II 64.

⁹⁰ *Asser's Life of King Alfred: Together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, ed. W. Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), ch. 91. *Nam etiam de Hierosolyma ab Elia patriarcha epistolas et dona illi directas vidimus et legimus* ('For we have even seen and read the letters and gifts sent directly [to Alfred] from Elias the Patriarch in Jerusalem'). A. Meaney, 'Alfred, the Patriarch and the White Stone', *AUMLA: Journal of Australian Universities Language and Literature Association*, 49 (1978), 65–89, at 66–70.

⁹¹ See Cockayne, vol. II, introduction, pp. xx–xxvii; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 73.

⁹² Voth writes: 'The chapter's location at the end of the second book, the singular subject in the table of contents and its unusual form and style are indicative of an addition to the text rather than part of the original compilation': 'An Analysis', p. 160.

extant version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and laws and was probably copied at Winchester.⁹³ It is logical that this scribe would have still been located there when he produced the copy of the medical texts. This seems even more likely considering the similarity of this hand to the two previous hands found in chronicle: these similarities are so great that Malcolm Parkes has argued that they were all produced as part of the same scriptorium and represent ‘different states in the evolution of what was, in the first instance, a local style’.⁹⁴ This same ‘scriptorium’ is associated with other Alfredian works, as the second hand of the chronicle—responsible for the entries immediately preceding those copied by the *Leechbook* scribe—is also the main hand of the Tollemache manuscript, which contains the oldest extant copy of the Old English *Orosius*.⁹⁵ The two hands are similar enough that Alistair Campbell believed the two manuscripts to be the product of a single scribe, although this is not widely accepted.⁹⁶ Voth catalogued some differences between the two hands but concurs that similarities in script and punctuation indicate that the two scribes were ‘trained in the same centre.’⁹⁷ The hand responsible for the *Orosius* is very close in date to that found in the *Leechbook*, with the former being dated by Ker as s. x¹ and the latter s. x med.⁹⁸ All evidence therefore appears to indicate that the Royal manuscript and the Tollemache *Orosius* were produced in the same place at nearly the same time, and it seems not too far a leap to suggest that their scribes either knew one another or, alternatively, that the scribe of the *Leechbook* could have been the earlier scribe’s replacement.

⁹³ The Parker Chronicle is CCC 173 (Ker no. 39; G&L no. 52).

⁹⁴ M. Parkes, ‘The Paleography of the Parker Manuscript of the Chronicle, Laws and Sedulius, and Historiography at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries’, *ASE* 5 (1976), 149–71, at 159.

⁹⁵ The Tollemach *Orosius* is London, BL, MS Add. 47967 (Ker no. 133; G&L no. 300).

⁹⁶ *The Tollemache Orosius (British Museum Additional Manuscript 47967)*, ed. A. Campbell (Copenhagen, 1953), p. 16, cited in Voth, ‘An Analysis’, p. 23; see also Wright, *Bald’s Leechbook*, pp. 19–21.

⁹⁷ Voth, ‘An Analysis’, pp. 54–55.

⁹⁸ Ker, p. 332. Wright also dates the text to c. 950 (*Bald’s Leechbook* p. 23).

Of course, neither the extant copy of *Bald's Leechbook* nor of the *Orosius* are thought to be the original manuscript copies of these works.⁹⁹ Thus, the simple fact that both extant manuscripts were copied in Winchester does not mean that the originals were necessarily compiled there. As has been discussed, the mixed dialectical features of *Bald's Leechbook* suggest that large sections of the book might have originally been composed in a different centre. However, this itself does not preclude an association with the period of Alfredian translation, as the figure of Wærferth, bishop of Worcester, has been associated with the translation of Gregory's *Dialogues*, a project undertaken perhaps even at King Alfred's request.¹⁰⁰ The importance of Mercian scholars in the translation project begun at Winchester is generally acknowledged, and could alternatively possibly account for some Anglian lexical features.¹⁰¹ The evidence linking the Royal manuscript with the West-Saxon capital and the presence of the remedies referencing King Alfred (included both within the body of the text and in the table of contents) suggests that, even if the original collection may not have been compiled in Winchester, at the very least this was where a new and revised copy was made.

Irrespective of the level of Alfred's direct personal involvement, the late-ninth and early-tenth century saw the translation of a number of famous Latin works into Old English. The surviving corpus includes the translation of practical works

⁹⁹ Ker, p. 332.

¹⁰⁰ Wærferth's involvement in the translation is mentioned in *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ch. 77. For a discussion of Wærferth's role in the Alfredian translation, see M. Godden, 'Wærferth and King Alfred: The Fate of the Old English *Dialogues*', in *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately on the Occasion of her Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. J. Roberts and J. Nelson with M. Godden (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 35–51.

¹⁰¹ The importance of Mercian learning to the Alfredian revival has been discussed by several scholars, including M. Brown, 'Mercian Manuscripts? The "Tiberius" Group and its Historical Context', in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, ed. M. Brown and C. Farr (London, 2001), pp. 281–291; *Life of St. Chad: An Old English Homily*, ed. R. Vleeskruyer (Amsterdam, 1953), pp. 38–62. Other scholars have stressed the presence of Mercian 'helpers' at Alfred's court: Bately, 'Old English Prose', p. 103; A. Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in its Historical and Cultural Context* (Göttingen, 2015), pp. 98, 104.

such as the *Prose Psalms* and the *Pastoral Care*, supplemented by philosophical and theological works like the *Boethius* and *Soliloquies*, as well as historical and geographical works such as the *Orosius* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The location of the extant copy of *Bald's Leechbook* in Winchester proposes the relevance of this collection to the literary projects being undertaken in Wessex during this period, and a work on medicine and medical theory would fit well within this corpus of works.

The possibility of *Bald's Leechbook* being in some sense a part of the larger Alfredian canon has been discussed from linguistic and paleographical angles. However, its relationship in form and style to other Alfredian texts has never been explored. The next section will discuss the most stylistically consistent portions of *Bald's Leechbook* (the long passages) and consider how the methods of translation employed in these passages compare to other translations from this period.

The *Leechbook* in the Context of Other Alfredian Texts

Even within the collection of works traditionally considered to be 'Alfredian' there appears a variety of styles. It is generally acknowledged that the *Dialogues* and the *Pastoral Care* follow their Latin source more closely than do the Old English *Orosius*, *Boethius*, or *Soliloquies*. Now that these texts are generally assumed to be independent works, undertaken by different translators, they can be used to convey the varieties of translations that were being undertaken in Wessex in the late-ninth and early-tenth centuries.¹⁰² Comparison with other texts associated with the Alfredian programme helps us to situate *Bald's Leechbook*, and in particular the long passages, within the context of Old English prose of this period.

¹⁰² However, the *Soliloquies* and *Boethius* are likely by a single author, see below.

As a translation which makes Latinate learning accessible in the vernacular, *Bald's Leechbook* shares the educational aims of several other Alfredian works. Like the *Leechbook*, the Old English *Boethius*, *Orosius*, and *Soliloquies* all attempt something more than simply translating an important Latin work into Old English. Each translation is filled with extra details beyond what is necessary for understanding the argument of the text. For instance, Godden and Irvine comment that: 'rewriting the [*De Consolatione Philosophiae*] was evidently an opportunity to embed and communicate a world of information about the contemporary and classical world.'¹⁰³ In some ways, these texts seem as concerned with communicating as much information as possible (whether about philosophy, or in the case of the *Orosius*, history) as with faithfully translating a Latin source. Although these other works reflect on spiritual themes, a similar educational ambition may have been shared by the compiler of the *Leechbook*. Just as the authors of the Old English *Boethius* or *Soliloquies* embellish their sources with outside information, so the translator of the *Leechbook* supplemented the existing body of cures available in Old English with new, more-complex passages taken from Latin texts.

The Old English versions of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and St Augustine's *Soliloquia* are the most free of the Alfredian translations.¹⁰⁴ In both of these texts, the translator (generally considered to be a single author) makes significant departures from his source, often omitting long sections as well as adding

¹⁰³ *The Old English Boethius*, p. 68.

¹⁰⁴ I am aware that the categories 'free translation' or 'loose translation' tend to be only vaguely defined. However, both texts make significant departures from their Latin source, with some passages falling into the category of imitation, as defined by John Dryden, where 'the translator [...] assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the groundwork as he pleases.' J. Dryden, *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford, 1926), p. 237. See also *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. M. Baker and G. Saldanha (Abingdon, 2009), 'Imitation', pp. 111–112; 'Free Translation', pp. 87–90.

large amounts of original material.¹⁰⁵ In *Bald's Leechbook*, by contrast, major alterations to content are more likely to be through selection and omission.¹⁰⁶ In general, the translator of the long passages is less creative with his source content than the author of the Old English *Boethius* and the *Soliloquies*. He (or she) appears happy to condense, reword, and omit long passages of his source text but rarely adds more than minor details to its content. The closer comparison might instead be made between the style of *Bald's Leechbook* and the Old English *Orosius*. Lacking an explicit attribution to Alfred, this text has long occupied a contentious place within the Alfredian corpus. Yet, similarly to *Bald's Leechbook* (as well as the *Soliloquies*), it includes an internal reference to the king.¹⁰⁷ The Anglo-Saxon translator of the *Orosius* adapted and amended his source, adding supplementary content not in the original Latin version. However, the most significant changes in the creation of this edition involve condensing the Latin original to around one half the length of the source text.¹⁰⁸ This tendency towards extreme abridgement and recasting mirrors the style of the *Leechbook* compiler. In both instances, the respective Anglo-Saxon authors apparently found sizable sections of their sources to be either repetitive or unnecessary. Although in both cases not as extreme as the transformations made in the *Boethius* or the *Soliloquies*, these works demonstrate a similar sense of the confidence and control felt by their translators, and the general sense of mastery exhibited in some of these other Alfredian texts.

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of the authorship of the Old English *Boethius* and *Soliloquies*, see *The Old English Boethius*, p. 136. For a detailed overview of the differences between these Old English texts and their Latin Sources, see N. Discenza, 'The Old English *Boethius*', in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. N. Discenza and P. Szarmach (Leiden, 2015), pp. 200–226; P. Szarmach, 'Augustine's *Soliloquia* in Old English', in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, pp. 227–254.

¹⁰⁶ This is not to say that all the content of the text is Latinate. However, in regard to translation we can only consider those passages with a Latinate origin. Non-Latinate material will receive greater attention in Chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁰⁷ *The Old English Orosius*, ed. J. Bately, EETS s.s. 6 (Oxford, 1980), I. I l. 29–30, p. 13: *Ohthere sæde his hlaforde, ælfrede Cyninge, þæt he ealra Norðmonna norþmest bude* ('Ohthere said to his Lord, King Alfred, that he lived the furthest North of all Norwegians').

¹⁰⁸ M. Godden, 'The Old English *Orosius* and its Sources', *Anglia* 129 (2012), 297–320, at 318–319.

Nonetheless, a major distinction between other Alfredian translations and *Bald's Leechbook* is the fact that the former purport to be, although expanded, translations of a single text, whereas the *Leechbook* is an independent vernacular creation made from passages taken from numerous texts. This distinction is particularly true in the cases of the Old English *Boethius* and *Orosius*, where most expansions seem to have come from glossed versions of the text rather than outside sources.¹⁰⁹ However, although the Old English *Soliloquies* is generally seen as a translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*, it is in reality something closer to a pastiche. The first and second books of the Old English *Soliloquies* are drawn primarily from Augustine's original, although the second book departs more dramatically from its source. However, the Anglo-Saxon 'translator' ventured to add a third book to what is in the Latin original an unfinished text in two books. This third book appears to be drawn from multiple sources, most notably the homilies of Gregory the Great and Augustine's *De videndo deo*.¹¹⁰ The author somewhat foreshadows this method in his preface to the text when he compares his task to the building of a house:

Gaderode me þonne kigclas, and stuþansceaftas [...] and bohtimbru and bolttimbru, and, to ælcum þara weorca þe ic wyrcan cuðe, þa wlitegostan treowo be þam dele ðe ic aberan meighte. Ne com ic naþer mid anre byrðene ham þe me ne lyste ealne þane wude ham brengan, gif ic hyne ealne aberan meighte; on ælcum treowo ic geseah hwæthwugu þæs þe ic æt ham beþorte.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ For a discussion of this related to the Old English *Boethius*, see *The Old English Boethius*, pp. 54–55. For a similar discussion relating to the Old English *Orosius*, see Godden, 'The Old English Orosius and its Sources', pp. 301–305, and *The Old English Orosius*, ed. J. Bately, EETS s.s. 6 (London, 1980), pp. lv–lxxii.

¹¹⁰ M. Gatch, 'King Alfred's Version of Augustine's *Soliloquia*: Some Suggestions on its Rationale and Unity', in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. P. Szarmach (Albany, 1986), pp. 17–46, at 35–36; Pratt, *The Political Thought of Alfred the Great*, pp. 318–322.

¹¹¹ *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies*, ed. T. Carnicelli (Cambridge, 1969), preface. 'I then gathered for myself sticks and posts... and crossbars and beams and for each one of the structures which I knew how to build the finest timber in the quantites which I might carry. I never came away with one load without wishing to bring home whole forests, if I could have carried it all: in every tree I saw something for which I had a need at home.'

Similar metaphors such as blossoms being gathered into a bouquet, or nectar gathered by a bee, were used throughout the Middle Ages to refer to the reading and collecting of classical texts.¹¹² However, Godden has argued that this metaphor in particular is an apt description for the Alfredian ‘translations’, for the author is not treating the texts of the Fathers as integral units but rather sources from which bits and pieces can be taken at will. Godden writes: ‘the works of the Fathers cannot easily be equated to trees in the forest, they are rather the houses which the Fathers themselves had built, buildings from which Alfred is apparently taking materials in order to construct a different kind of house of his own.’¹¹³ He relates this method to the looser ‘translations’ which are reworked to say and mean new things. However, on a more literal level the closest parallel to the type of endeavour described in the preface is *Bald’s Leechbook*, which does not claim to reproduce any single text but rather gathers ‘timber’ and ‘crossbeams’ from a large variety of sources.

Within the Alfredian corpus there appears to be an underlying desire to convey previously unavailable Latin content to a vernacular audience, albeit often in a revised, expanded, or condensed form. Malcolm Godden has argued that the purpose of Alfredian translations such as the *Boethius* and *Orosius* was largely encyclopaedic, intended to provide Anglo-Saxon readers with factual information about history, geography, and customs of the peoples of the world.¹¹⁴ A work such as *Bald’s Leechbook* might well have proved useful alongside these other vernacular works, as they could have been seen as sharing an educative purpose. I would suggest that the educational purposes of this text are best seen in the addition of

¹¹² For a discussion of these metaphors and the preface’s choice of one in the *silva* [woods] tradition, see M. Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: ‘Grammatica’ and Literary Theory 350–1100* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 435–437.

¹¹³ M. Godden, *The Translations of Alfred and his Circle, and the Misappropriation of the Past* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 4.

¹¹⁴ M. Godden, ‘The Old English *Orosius* and its Context: Who Wrote It, for Whom, and Why?’, *Quaestio Insularis* 12 (2011), 1–30; *The Old English Boethius*, p. 68.

descriptive and theoretical material in the long passages of the text, passages not found in the other collections of medicine in Old English, and that it may have been for these passages in particular this this work was copied during this period. However whether the Alfredian ‘project’ initiated the compilation of the original collection, or simply the revision and recopying of an extant text, is unclear.

Conclusions

This chapter has discussed the compilation of the Old English medical collection known as *Bald’s Leechbook*. It has focused on the use of Latin source material within the collection, and in particular on the specific sources and methods used in the more stylistically consistent portions of the text. Beyond this, however, this chapter has attempted to begin exploring the literary context of this collection. Although the conclusions offered are not meant to be final or exhaustive, it is my hope that this discussion can encourage this collection to be viewed not only as a piece of medical or paleographical interest but also of literary significance within the field of Anglo-Saxon studies.

This collection has received more attention than any other medical collection in Old English, and many valuable studies have already been made concerning its manuscript context and compilation. In keeping with this, my work in this chapter has built on foundations laid by other scholars, in particular the work of M. L. Cameron, Audrey Meaney, and, most recently, Christine Voth. It has not been my ambition to contest this excellent tradition of scholarship, but instead to help further clarify and augment some of the positions and ideas expressed by these scholars.

One contribution this chapter makes is to extend work done by Cameron on the sources and compilation of the collection. In his early work on Anglo-Saxon

medicine, Cameron began the process of collecting a list of those sources he believed to be known at first hand to the compiler of *Bald's Leechbook*, but some of his assumptions compromised the accuracy of these results and resulted in his later retraction of those conclusions.¹¹⁵ This has left the subject in need of revisiting. As Cameron demonstrated, *Bald's Leechbook* reproduces material from a large variety of Latin sources including Piny's *Naturalis historia*, the later Plinian abridgment the *Physica Plinii* (and possibly the *Medicina Plinii*), Marcellus' *De medicamentis*, Oribasius' *Synopsis* and *Euporistes*, the Latin Alexander of Tralles, the *Epitome altera* by Vindicianus, the *Liber tertius*, possibly an early version of the *Passionarius*, as well as other possibly yet unidentified sources. It seems unfeasible for this large selection of medical texts to have been available, entire, to an Anglo-Saxon audience, particularly in a single monastic house or secular library. As Cameron suggests, it is very possible that some sources would have been available only in selections.¹¹⁶ For instance, the *Epitome altera* of Vindicianus is the source of some of the long quotations in Book II, but the fact that it is used only in a very few instances suggests that the work entire may not have been available, and perhaps only excerpts embedded within another collection.

However, I would suggest that some complete works do appear to have been in the hands of the compiler of *Bald's Leechbook*. As has been shown in this chapter, a particular group of sources—the *Latin Alexander*, the *Euporistes* and *Synopsis* of Oribasius, and the *Liber tertius*—are all quoted with frequency and at length in the longer passages of *Bald's Leechbook*. If it is indeed the case that these longer passages were added by the compiler, as seems likely, it seems very probable that he had this collection of texts to hand. Although we cannot know for certain the

¹¹⁵ See pp. 5–7.

¹¹⁶ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 88.

form these collections would have taken, the length of the segments borrowed and the frequency of their citation suggests that he had the texts entire, rather than simply extracts embedded in other works.¹¹⁷ This conclusion is further evidenced by the head-to-toe order attempted not only in *Bald's Leechbook* but also *Leechbook III* and the *Lacnunga*. It seems most likely that a Latin medical collection, organised in a head-to-foot order (such as the Latin Alexander), was responsible for influencing the organisational structure of these collections.

Whatever library contained these texts must have possessed an unusually well-stocked collection of medical texts. This location may have been Winchester, as has been suggested by several scholars. The *Old English Herbarium* was likely translated there in the tenth century, a fact which suggests that at least by this later date the library had an exceptionally good collection of medical texts.¹¹⁸ However, this is not to preclude other possible centres where *Bald's Leechbook* could have been compiled, such as Worcester, as has been suggested by Voth.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, irrespective of its place of compilation, this collection should be recognised as a complex and scholarly endeavour to make a comprehensive collection of Latin (and native) medical material available in the vernacular. Part of the plan for the collection also appears to have been to supplement the existing translation of Latin cures with more sustained and more theoretical sections taken from Late Antique

¹¹⁷ There are two manuscripts from the Carolingian monastery of St Gall written in an insular hand and containing large portions of Oribasius' texts (and in one case Galen's *Ad Glauconem de medendi methodo*). These are MS St Gall 761 and MS St Gall 759, both date to the ninth century. See W. M. Lindsay, *Notae Latinae: An Account of Abbreviation in Latin MSS. of the Early Minuscule Period (c. 700–850)* (Cambridge, 1915), p. 237; cf. Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', p. 123. However, these manuscripts are not listed in G&L, which would suggest that in the authors' view they are not of Anglo-Saxon provenance. Beccaria describes MS 761 as having both Insular and continental elements but suggests that MS 759 may have drawn on exemplar from Britain: *I codici presalernitano (secoli IX, X, e XI)* (Rome 1956), pp. 384–387. Bischoff, however, suggests that MS 759 may be from Brittany: B. Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 2014), vol. III, p. 333.

¹¹⁸ For an overview of the evidence for a Winchester location for this collection, see Chapter 4, pp. 202–209.

¹¹⁹ Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 125–126.

authors. This is a distinctive quality of *Bald's Leechbook* among the Old English medical collections and highlights its educational purpose. By applying the approach of considering this collection individually, rather than simply as part of a larger corpus, these characteristic qualities are brought to light.

A final area this chapter revisited was the status of *Bald's Leechbook* as a work of translation. Unlike the *Old English Herbarium*, many of the remedies included in this collection were likely translated prior to its compilation, probably by a variety of authors. However, I have suggested in this chapter that some passages were more consistent and capable of being considered from a stylistic viewpoint. Although *Bald's Leechbook* is sometimes referenced as within the corpus of 'Alfredian translations', its place as a literary work within this corpus has never been assessed. After looking more closely at the long passages within the text, I have found the style employed in these sections to be similar to the traditions of translation found in some of the 'Alfredian' texts, perhaps particularly the Old English translation of *Orosius* or the *Soliloquies*. This text appears to share the educational or encyclopaedic ambitions of other texts involved with this programme of translation, traits which may well have inspired either its compilation or its revision and recopying at this time. Although its status as *Fachliteratur* has excluded *Bald's Leechbook* from many literary studies, this collection was clearly a complex and careful production and can usefully be considered as part of broader literary movements in translation in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Chapter 2: Elves, the Demonic, and *Leechbook III*

Leechbook III is perhaps the least famous of the Old English medical collections. It follows *Bald's Leechbook* in MS Royal 12 D. xvii and was originally published as part three of that collection by Cockayne, although he acknowledged its different (in his words, 'more monkish') character.¹ *Leechbook III* does share a basic resemblance with *Bald's Leechbook* in that they both contain medical remedies from Latin and native English sources, are prefaced by a table of contents, and more or less follow a head-to-toe organisational structure (although this structure is much weaker in *Leechbook III* than in *Bald's Leechbook*). It is easy to see these texts as three volumes of cures amounting to one very thorough reference text of remedies and information, and indeed whoever brought these collections together probably intended them to be used as such. However, as was discussed in Chapter 1, *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook III* were most likely originally separate pieces. A colophon follows the two books of *Bald's Leechbook*, identifying them with the mysterious figures Bald and Cild, and separating them from the third book, which follows on immediately from the colophon on the same page. This suggests that the scribe had two exemplars to hand as he worked. This second collection is now widely known as *Leechbook III*.

Of all the surviving Anglo-Saxon medical collections, *Leechbook III* is frequently held to be the most reflective of native English medical practices. M. L. Cameron, who made extensive study of the Latin sources of the Old English medical

¹ Cockayne, vol. II, p. xx.

collection, described *Leechbook III* as containing the least Latinate material and thus argued that it ‘reflects most closely the medical practice of the Anglo-Saxons while they were still relatively free of Mediterranean influences.’² This should not be taken to suggest that *Leechbook III* contains no Latinate content, as it still has many remedies translated from Latin sources. However, *Leechbook III* is distinctive among the medical corpus for containing a much greater percentage of remedies for ailments related to *ælf*e (‘elves’), and other seemingly northern European afflictions including the *mæra* (‘the mare’) and *nihtgengan* (‘night-goers’) than any other collection.³

As well as offering an analysis of the contents of *Leechbook III* and an assessment of its position within the Anglo-Saxon medical corpus, this chapter will consider how the testimony of *Leechbook III* aids our understanding of these afflictions and, in particular, the contentious term *ælf*e. Elves in Anglo-Saxon England have been the subject of extensive recent scholarship, including book-length studies by Alaric Hall and Karen Jolly.⁴ However, in general these studies have considered the testimony of the medical texts *en masse* or by individual remedy. The first part of this chapter will attempt to redress this by considering the individual testimonies of the different medical collections to these phenomena. Ultimately, I will suggest that *Leechbook III*, which contains the majority of extant elf-related remedies and conditions, provides a different testimony to these conditions from that found in the *Lacnunga*. Although the *Lacnunga* contains some of the most famous attestations to elves in the corpus, it is not well recognised that

² Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 35.

³ For a discussion of these terms, see pp. 81–99.

⁴ Hall, *Elves*; Jolly, *Popular Religion*. For article length studies, see, Simek, ‘Elves and Exorcism’; Simek, ‘Demons and Alfar’; L. Motz, ‘Of Elves and Dwarfs’, *Arv: Journal of Scandinavian Folklore* 29–30 (1973–1974), 93–127. T. A. Shippey, ‘Light-Elves, Dark-Elves, and Others: Tolkien’s Elvish Problem’, *Tolkien Studies* 1 (2004), 1–15.

these remedies differ noticeably in character from the (more prolific) record of *Leechbook III* and *Bald's Leechbook*.

The second part of this chapter will consider the relationship between *ælf*e and the Christian demonic in the medical texts. Although the medical texts demonstrate a close association between ailments that involve elves and those that involve demons, I will argue that in both cases these remedies do not resemble the practice of exorcism or the patterns of behaviour associated with demonic possession. This suggests that the paradigm, typical of much scholarship on the medical collections, in which elves were seen to have quickly become equated with demons, and thus responsible for 'possession' of their victims, is not as simple or as obvious as has sometimes been assumed. Finally, I consider what remedies such as those found in *Leechbook III* can reveal about the intersection of ecclesiastical and medical forms of healing in this period.

Introducing the Text

The only extant copy of *Leechbook III* occurs in the same manuscript as *Bald's Leechbook*, Royal 12 D. xvii. It is written in the same hand, and was apparently seen by the compiler of that manuscript as a complement to the two books of that collection. However, there are some noticeable differences between the texts. As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the most distinctive qualities of *Bald's Leechbook* is its thoroughness. Comprising two books, one focused mainly on external ailments and the other on internal ailments, this collection contains remedies for a large number of ailments and in many cases lists multiple remedies for a single disease. As I have argued above in Chapter 1, *Bald's Leechbook* (at least in its present form) was designed to be an encyclopaedic medical tool, a detailed reference text for a

medical practitioner. *Leechbook III*, on the other hand, is much less comprehensive. It is the shortest of the three collections, spanning only eighteen folia in comparison to the fifty–six and fifty–two folia of Books I and II of *Bald's Leechbook* respectively.⁵ The table of contents lists seventy-six different chapters, although four are missing from the body of the text.⁶ Many of the illnesses treated are the same as in *Bald's Leechbook*. However, the entries for individual afflictions tend to be much less extensive, generally listing only one or two remedies (whereas *Bald's Leechbook* is more likely to list several, in some cases upwards of twenty remedies or more for a single affliction). Additionally, the text appears less well organised, with remedies beginning at entry 30 occurring in little groups of related remedies but less clearly designed to reflect a top-down structure. A final point of difference between the two collections is that the distinctive ‘long remedies’ described in Chapter 1, and characteristic of *Bald's Leechbook*, do not occur in *Leechbook III*, a point that supports the argument that they were meant by the compiler of *Bald's Leechbook* as an intentional supplement to existing remedies. Together these various discrepancies support the widely accepted conclusion that these books should be considered as two separate collections.

In keeping with this conclusion, Audrey Meaney has suggested that ‘so far there are no clues to the provenance of *Leechbook III*, except that it is unlikely to have been produced at the same centre as *Bald's Leechbook*, or to have become available there until after the compilation of the more substantial work was

⁵ I have used Voth's foliation (‘An Analysis’, p. 26). In this count I have omitted the folia and quires missing from the manuscript.

⁶ *LBIII*, 72 (table of contents). *Wið attre drenc ond smiring* (‘against poison: a drink and ointment’) is missing, as well as the final three chapters of the collection, cf. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 36. Citations from *Leechbook III* are given by chapter number; if there are further subdivisions within a chapter in Cockayne's edition, these are designated by the number following the full stop.

complete.⁷ As she suggests, it seems very unlikely that *Leechbook III* was produced at the same centre as *Bald's Leechbook*, a text that, as part of its extensive project of compiling and organising, would have simply absorbed the remedies therein. However, I would like to suggest in this chapter that, although there are notable differences between these two collections, *Leechbook III* in fact has a closer relationship to the two books of *Bald's Leechbook* than it does with the *Lacnunga*.

Leechbook III contains fewer remedies shared with the other collections than either *Bald's Leechbook* or the *Lacnunga*. It shares six remedies with *Bald's Leechbook* (one of the which is also found in the Nowell Codex), and four with the *Lacnunga*.⁸ Four of the remedies shared with *Bald's Leechbook* occur in close proximity in *Leechbook III*. However, Meaney has suggested that these remedies were probably not copied directly from *Bald's Leechbook* but that both collections reproduce an earlier grouping of remedies, which the compiler of *Leechbook III* entered *en bloc*, and the compiler of *Bald's Leechbook* reorganised according to his schema.⁹ Similarly, Meaney suggests that the remedies paralleled between the *Lacnunga* and *Leechbook III* (all related to the disease *peor*)¹⁰ do not suggest direct borrowing in either direction, but instead support the theory of groups of 'floating' remedies extant in Anglo-Saxon England.¹¹ This chapter will suggest that, although it does not share a close textual relationship with either collection, *Leechbook III* reflects the concerns and worldviews present in *Bald's Leechbook* more closely than it does those of the *Lacnunga*. Some of the important differences between these two

⁷ Meaney, 'Variant Versions', p. 237.

⁸ Meaney, 'Variant Versions', pp. 238–239.

⁹ Meaney, 'Variant Versions', pp. 237–240.

¹⁰ This term is tricky to define definitively as it seems to refer to a variety of different conditions. However, most often it appears to describe a skin condition. For more information on this disease, see M. L. Cameron, 'On *Peor* and *Peoradl*', *Anglia* 106 (1988), 124–129; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 96.

¹¹ Meaney, 'Variant Versions', pp. 257–258.

collections will be dealt with later in this chapter. Prior to this, however, the following section will introduce the most distinctive features of *Leechbook III* amongst the Old English medical corpus.

Distinctive Qualities of the Collection

The idea that *Leechbook III* is somehow the most ‘native’ of the Old English medical collections is widespread. Cameron was the first to observe that, of the extant Anglo-Saxon medical collections, *Leechbook III* contains the fewest remedies discernibly drawn from Latin sources. He also observed that ‘the number of remedies containing only native ingredients is high and these ingredients are usually given native English names, not Anglicised Latin ones.’¹² Based on these observations, he argued that *Leechbook III* was probably the most indicative of the traditional English medical practice prior to the influence of literacy and Mediterranean learning.

More than simply representing ‘English’ practice, however, *Leechbook III* is also often taken to be most reflective of Anglo-Saxon popular belief. Thus, Jolly describes *Leechbook III* as having ‘more of the Christian-folk amalgamations’ than *Bald’s Leechbook*.¹³ In a similar vein, Cameron also suggests that from *Leechbook III* ‘we can learn something about the common folk background’ of the people of Europe.¹⁴ Jolly and Cameron are using the term ‘folk’ somewhat differently: Cameron means to signify herbs and remedies natively used in Britain prior to the influence of Latin medical texts and traditions, whereas Jolly is concerned with popular practices in England concurrent with the extant medical corpus. However, in both cases these observations likely stem in part from the fact that there is a higher

¹² Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 36.

¹³ Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 106.

¹⁴ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 38.

number of cures in *Leechbook III* for ailments apparently associated with traditional Germanic folk-belief. These include elves (*ælf* in Old English), the ‘mare’ (*mære*), and possibly a category of figures known as night walkers (*nihtgengan*).¹⁵ Of these three terms, *ælf* is the most prominent, and will be the focus of some discussion in this chapter. However, I will now briefly comment on these other terms.

Both *mære* and *nihtgenga* are somewhat opaque terms. Excluding occurrences in glossaries, the word *mære* or *maran* occurs four times in the Old English corpus: twice in *Bald’s Leechbook* (once in the table of contents and in one remedy), once in *Leechbook III*, and once in the Old English ‘Journey Charm’.¹⁶ The Epinal, Leiden, and Corpus glossaries all record *incuba* as a gloss for Lat. *mera* or *merae*.¹⁷ Hall notes that the usage here is distinctively female, where one might expect the masculine *incubus*.¹⁸ This general meaning of something that presses down or sexually assaults someone in some way appears concordant with the description in *Bald’s Leechbook*: *Gif mon mare ride* (‘if one is ridden by a *mære*’).¹⁹ A more definite meaning of the word is elusive, although Hall suggests that associations between *maran* and *ælf* were ‘well established and widespread in the West Germanic-speaking world.’²⁰ The term *nihtgenga* occurs four times in *Leechbook III*, in two separate remedies. The only other occurrence in the medical corpus is in the *Old English Herbarium*, where it is used to translate the Latin *nocturnas ambulationes*. The meaning in this instance appears to be straightforward sleepwalking, as it is grouped with *egeslicum gesihðum ond swefnum* (‘terrifying

¹⁵See DOE, s.v. ‘ælf, ylfe (pl)’. Following the example of Hall, throughout the chapter I use the Old English term *ælf* and *ælfe* (pl.) rather than *ælf* and *ylfe* (pl.). For the linguistic background of this term, see Hall, *Elves*, pp. 3–6.

¹⁶For all the attestation of *mære* and variants, see A. Hall, ‘The Evidence for *Maran*, the Anglo-Saxon “Nightmares”’, *Neophilologus* 91 (2007), 299–317, at 313–314.

¹⁷Hall, ‘The Evidence for *Maran*’, p. 313.

¹⁸Hall, ‘The Evidence for *Maran*’, p. 302.

¹⁹*BLB*, I 64.

²⁰Hall, *Elves*, p. 125.

visions and dreams’).²¹ However, the context of one remedy where it occurs in *Leechbook III* suggests a less run-of-the-mill meaning, where it occurs listed beside the devil and *ælf*-kind.²² This usage appears more evocative of Grendel, the *sceadugenga* (‘shadow-walker’), than a mortal sleepwalker.²³ However, as this term only occurs in these five places in the Old English corpus it is hard to offer a more precise definition.

As we have seen neither *nihtgengan* nor *maran* are common in the corpus of Old English medicine. Both appear in *Leechbook III*, but with less frequency than *ælfe*, although the fact that three of the six remedies dealing with these afflictions occur in *Leechbook III* (the shortest collection in the corpus) is perhaps slightly suggestive. It might also be noted that neither of these terms appears anywhere in the *Lacnunga*. However, a more important point of application for this chapter is that both of these terms are clearly associated within the medical texts with *ælfe*, or elves.

Of the four extant Old English medical collections, *Leechbook III* contains the largest proportion of elf-related remedies. In the two books of *Bald’s Leechbook*, there are three remedies explicitly described as being for types of ailment containing some form of the term *ælf*.²⁴ There are a further two remedies also presumably for treating elf-diseases because they immediately follow treatments for elf-related ailments and do not name a new ailment. Four of these five remedies occur in a single chapter of the first book. *Leechbook III* contains five remedies explicitly directed at ailments containing forms of the word *ælf*, and two additional remedies that follow on from such ailments beginning with the words *eft wiþ þon* (‘again for

²¹ *OEHD*, I. 1.

²² *LBIII*, 61. *Wyrce se ælfe wiþ ælfcynne ond nihtgengan ond þam mannum þe deofol mid hæmð* (‘Make a salve for *ælf*-kind, *niht-gengan*, and those with whom the devil has intercourse’).

²³ *Klaeber’s Beowulf*, ed. R. D. Fulk, R. E. Bjork, J. D. Niles, 4th Edition (Toronto, 2008), I. 703.

²⁴ These remedies are *BLB*, I 64, II 5.

this’) and *wip þon ilcan* (‘for the same’).²⁵ Only two remedies in the *Lacnunga* involve the word *ælf*.

Based on these summaries, we can see that of the four collections, *Leechbook III* contains the most remedies involving elves; *Bald’s Leechbook* contains the second highest number. However, the difference between these collections becomes more pronounced when we consider that in these tabulations I have counted the two books of *Bald’s Leechbook* as a single text, and that each of its two books individually cover more than double the folia of *Leechbook III*. The distinction may perhaps be further amplified as Hall and Nokes have both suggested that some of the elf-related diseases from *Bald’s Leechbook* might represent a later addition to the text.²⁶ However, more significant than the fact that *Leechbook III* simply has ‘the most’ elf-related remedies is that the elf-diseases reflected therein are more clearly differentiated from one another than in the other collections, and appear to reflect a more complex series of relationships. The following sections will investigate these peculiarities, by presenting first the occurrences of *ælf* (‘elves’) in the other medical collections and then considering the more complex contents of *Leechbook III*.

²⁵ *LBIII*, 62.

²⁶ A. Hall, ‘Calling the Shots: The Old English Remedy *Gif hors ofscoten sie* and Anglo-Saxon “Elf-Shot”’, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 106 (2005), 195–209, at 196, n. 3; Nokes, ‘The Several Compilers of *Bald’s Leechbook*’, pp. 66–68. Nokes suggests that both Chapter 64 of Book I and Chapter 65 of Book II (containing together all the elf-remedies in the collection) are later additions to the text. However, this analysis appears to rely too heavily on the assumption that the compiler of *Bald’s Leechbook* had an inherent suspicion of ‘supernatural’ causes of disease, and I am not convinced that Chapter 64 must be a later addition. Nonetheless, the evidence that Chapter 65 might not have been original to the collection is slightly stronger, as the chapter is the last section of remedies (the obvious location for any addition) and is followed by a somewhat incongruous piece on the properties of agate. Finally, as Hall points out, the remedy in Chapter 65 appears to be for the same ailment found in Book I chapter 89 and ‘it would have been characteristic of the compiler of *Bald’s Læceboc* to have included such related remedies together if he meant to include them at all.’

Elves and Elf-Disease in *Bald's Leechbook* and the *Lacnunga*

This section will briefly survey the occurrence of terms related to *ælf* ('elves') in the Old English medical corpus. The word *ælf* does not occur in any form in the *Old English Pharmacopeia*, so this study will limit itself to *Bald's Leechbook*, the *Lacnunga*, and *Leechbook III*.

Two remedies in *Bald's Leechbook* reference some form of elf-disease in their title. The first remedy including the term *ælf* from *Bald's Leechbook* reads *wiþ ælcra yfelre leodrunan ond wið ælfsidenne* ('against every evil *leod-rune* and against *ælf-siden*').²⁷ Interestingly, this remedy is close in form to one found in *Leechbook III*, *wið nihtgengan*.²⁸ The precise meaning of the term *ælf-siden* is unclear. Hall argues that *siden* is likely cognate with Old Norse *síða*, meaning 'to work magic'. Therefore he suggests then that *ælf-siden* 'probably meant something along the lines of "the magic of *ælf*"'.²⁹ *Leod-rune* is also mysterious. It does not occur elsewhere in the corpus of Old English in this form. Meaney has suggested that *rune* denotes some form of supernatural female.³⁰ However, Fell and Hall both follow Cockayne's earlier suggestion that the term means something closer to 'rune lay', as it appears to imply singing.³¹ This would be concurrent with the suggestion that *ælf-siden* might represent some type of elf-magic. The other occurrence of the word *ælf* in *Bald's Leechbook* is in a remedy *wið ælfe ond wið uncuþum sidsan* ('against *ælf* and against unknown *sidsa*'). As Hall suggests, it seems possible that this term *sidsa*

²⁷ *BLB*, I 64.

²⁸ Hall, *Elves*, p. 124; Meaney, 'Variant Versions', p. 239.

²⁹ Hall, *Elves*, p. 119; see also DOE, s.v. 'ælf-siden'.

³⁰ A. Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Medicine in Early Medieval England: Four Papers*, ed. D. G. Scragg and M. Deegan (Manchester, 1989), pp. 9–40, at 14–15.

³¹ Hall, *Elves*, p. 124; C. Fell, 'Runes and Semantics', in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, ed. A. Bammesberger (Heidelberg, 1991), pp. 195–229, at 225–227.

(dat. *sidsan*) is related to *siden*.³² In that case, it is notable that there appear to be both known and unknown forms of this *siden*. Together these two remedies are the only ones directly purporting to cure an exclusively elf-related affliction in *Bald's Leechbook*. In both cases these remedies appear to be directed against potentially similar ailments—something known as *siden* and associated with *ælfe*.

However, there is one more occurrence of *ælf* in *Bald's Leechbook*, which occurs in Book II, Chapter 65. In this case, however, elves are mentioned only at the end of the remedy, and not included in title of the remedy or in the table of contents heading. The remedy begins with the title *Gif hors ofscoten sie* ('if a horse is *ofscoten*'), and ends: *sy þæt ylfa þe him sie þis him mæg to bote*.³³ Hall suggests the translation: 'should it be *ælfe*'s, which is on it [the horse], this will do as a remedy for it [the horse]'. *Ofscoten* is often translated as 'shot' in this phrase and thus this remedy has often been taken as proof of the ailment 'elf-shot', that is the idea that elves were seen to shoot their victims with darts (either real or metaphorical).³⁴ However, as Hall has argued, in this remedy the involvement of elves in this disease appears of secondary importance (as can be seen in his translation of the final phrase, given above).³⁵ Although Hall posits that there is a collocation of *ælfe* with *sceotan* evidenced in Western Germanic languages,³⁶ this remedy seems to imply that while a horse *can* become *ofscoten* through the agency of an *ælfe*, this affliction does not intrinsically need to be caused by them. This reading would suggest that we

³² Hall, *Elves*, pp. 119–20. Cockayne instead suggests that we might translate this as 'against an elf and against a strange visitor': *BLB*, II 65.1.

³³ *BLB*, II 65.1.

³⁴ Cockayne, vol. II, p. 401. This method of translation owes something to Cockayne's rendering of the title as 'If a horse is elf shot'. However, Cockayne suggests that this is to be understood 'in the Scottish phrase', which is elaborated in his glossary to mean 'dangerously distended by greedy devouring of green food'.

³⁵ Hall, *Elves*, pp. 100–102.

³⁶ Hall, *Elves*, pp. 102–103; Hall, 'Calling the Shots', pp. 201–203. As evidence for this collocation, Hall points to compounds involving *elf* and *shot* in Older Scots and an example in German of *schuessen* (cognate with *sceotan*) being used in close connection with *elbe* ('elves').

ought not to view *gescot* as an affliction inherently related to elves, and that possibly we ought not to translate it as ‘shot’ at all. Hall suggests it is better to understand the word having the more general sense of internal pains, which comes to be its meaning in later English.³⁷

As mentioned above, the term *ælf* occurs twice in the *Lacnunga*. This collection contains only one remedy explicitly aimed at an elf-related disease. Entry 29 details instructions for the creation of a *halga drænc* (‘holy drink’) against *ælfside* and *wið eallum feondes costungum* (‘*ælf-siden* and against all the temptations of the Enemy’). The relationship between the devil (or demons) and elves will be explored later in this chapter. However, from its title, it appears that this recipe treats a similar type of ailment to that seen in *Bald’s Leechbook*. It is difficult, of course, to know what symptoms might have been associated with this illness, and some of the ingredients prescribed in the remedies differ (the herbs in these cures will be discussed later in this chapter) but both collections testify to some type of affliction(s) known as *ælf-siden*.

The second, and final, instance where elves appear in the *Lacnunga* is in the remedy known as *Wið færstice*.³⁸ Like *Gif hors ofscoten sie*, this remedy does not name a specific elf-related ailment. Indeed, it arguably does not identify its use at all. The title *Wið færstice* (‘for sudden stabbing-pain’) comes from a short herbal remedy immediately preceding the metrical piece. This remedy has generally been assumed to be related to the metrical composition; for instance, perhaps one sings the poem while preparing the herbal salve, though if this is so, this relationship is not made explicit. The reference to elves instead occurs twice in the middle of the poetic piece:

³⁷ Hall, ‘Calling the Shots’, p. 202.

³⁸ See Chapter 3, p. 154.

Gif herinne sy isenes dæl
 hægtessan geweorc, hit sceal gemyltan.
 [...]
 Gif hit wære esa gescot, oððe hit wære/ *ylfa gescot*,
 oððe hit wære hægtessan gescot, nu ic wille ðin helpan.
 Þis ðe to bote esa gescotes, ðis ðe to bote *ylfa gescotes*,
 ðis ðe to bote hægtessan gescotes; ic ðin wille helpan.³⁹

Here we see elves occur alongside other threatening forces, any of which apparently could have caused the ailment of the sufferer. This is clearly different from some of the other remedies mentioned, and perhaps most similar to *Gif hors ofscoten sie*, in considering *ælf*e as one of several possible causes of the ailment treated. For the moment it is sufficient to say that *Wið færstice* does not introduce or name explicitly a specific category of elf-related ailment.

To briefly summarise, *Bald's Leechbook* contains one remedy in Book I against *ælf*siden (with three untitled remedies immediately following), and a remedy in Book II against *ælf*e and *uncupum sidsan* ('unknown *siden*'). Both of these remedies appear to relate to some type of power known as *siden* associated with elves. This same ailment appears in the prologue of a cure in the *Lacnunga*. Finally, two references (one in *Bald's Leechbook* and one in the *Lacnunga*) seem to associate *ælf*e with internal stabbing pains, but in this case it is not at all clear that elves are seen to be the exclusive cause of this ailment. If *Leechbook III* had not survived *ælf*-*siden* would be the only named ailment from Anglo-Saxon sources linked explicitly to elves, and the only identifiable symptom of elvish trouble would be some type of internal pain. However, as will be examined in the following section, the folia of *Leechbook III* reveal a greater variety of medical terms related to elves.

³⁹ *LAC*, vol. I, CXXVII b, ll. 16–17, 21–24. 'If there should be herein a sliver of iron/ the work of a witch [or witches], it shall melt [(?)or heat shall melt (it)]. / [...] / If it were shot of gods [or spirits], or if it were *shot of elves*,/ or if it were shot of witch [or witches], now I will help you. This is your cure for shot of gods [or spirits], this is your cure for *shot of elves*,/ This is your cure for shot of witch [or witches]; I will help you.' (Emphasis mine; text and translation by Pettit). For the Old Norse collocation *æsir ok álfar*, see p. 105, n. 64.

Elves and Elf-Disease in *Leechbook III*

Five remedies directly employ some form of the term *ælf* in *Leechbook III*. Each of these remedies uses the term in a different form, in some cases clearly indicating a separate ailment. Four of these remedies occur in close context in chapters 61, 62, and 63; one mention occurs earlier in the collection in chapter 41. The remedy found in Chapter 41 is the only one to use the term *ælf-siden*.⁴⁰ The fact that this remedy occurs separately from the other elf-related remedies, and that it is the only one to contain an elf-related term shared with the other collections, could suggest that this remedy and the second grouping of elf remedies might derive from separate sources.⁴¹ My analysis of the remedies in the later grouping of remedies suggests that they display a different (and more complex) understanding of elf-related afflictions than is found elsewhere in the Old English medical corpus.

Chapters 61, 62, and 63 of *Leechbook III* contain six remedies purported to be against *ælf* in some form. These include one for *ælf-cynne* (apparently, ‘elven-race’),⁴² three remedies for *ælf-adl* (apparently, ‘elf-disease’),⁴³ one for *ælf-sogopa* (‘elf-pains/hiccup?’), and one for *wæter-elf-adl* (‘watery-, or moisture-elf-disease’).⁴⁴ As we have seen, none of these terms occur in the other medical

⁴⁰ *LBIII*, 41. The remedy begins with the title *wyrc gode sealf wip feondes costunga* (‘make a good salve against all temptations of the Enemy’). However, following the recipe for the salve, the remedy ends with the assurance that *þeos sealf is god wip ælcfe feondes costunga ond ælfsidenne ond lencten adle* (‘This salve is good against every temptation of the Enemy, and *ælf-siden*, and spring-sickness (malaria?’). The relationship between elves and the demonic will be discussed later in this chapter. For *lencten adl*, see Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 10.

⁴¹ This is not to suggest that this source represents a clearly separate tradition, as Hall and Meaney have both shown that there is a strong textual relationship between the earlier remedy against *ælf-siden* and a remedy from entry 61, *Wið ælfcynne*.

⁴² See DOE, s.v. ‘ælf-cynn’.

⁴³ See DOE, s.v. ‘ælf-ād’.

⁴⁴ The Bosworth and Toller dictionary renders *wæter* as a modifier of *ælf*, suggesting the interpretation that this designation refers to an illness caused by a particular category of elf (*An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.v. ‘wæterælf-ād’). This reading is certainly possible. However, as there is no other evidence for *wæterælf* and there are examples of *wæter* being used as a modifier for illnesses in Old English it seems more likely to me that this term instead is meant to represent a

collections from Anglo-Saxon England.⁴⁵ Of course, although it is easy to see that *Leechbook III* contains more remedies, and reflects a more variegated terminology related to elf-ailments, identifying these ailments is a difficult task. In some cases it is very difficult to know whether a difference in terminology reflected a perceived difference in ailment. This difficulty is exacerbated by the lack of description of symptoms in most of the remedies found in the Old English medical texts. For instance, the degree to which *ælf-siden*, *ælf-cynne*, and *ælf-adl* represented different afflictions is unclear from texts. As Hall has noted, *Leechbook III*'s remedy *wiþ ælfcynnne ond nihtgengan ond þam mannum þe deofol mid hæmð* shares a high degree of textual similarity to the earlier remedy found in Chapter 41 against *feondes costunga ond ælfsidenne ond lencten adle*.⁴⁶ This at least suggests at least that *ælf-siden* and *ælf-cynne* were similar enough afflictions to be remedied with the same type of treatment (and perhaps furthermore a relationship between these ailments and malaria or fever, signified by *lencten adl*). However, *Leechbook III* is unique in positing a degree of distinction in at least some cases of elf-related diseases.

The remedies for *ælf-sogoba* and *wæter-ælf-adl* are the only recipes for elf-related ailments in the corpus to come with a description of symptoms. The entry for *wæter-ælf-adl* begins: *Gif mon biþ on wæter ælfadle, þonne beoþ him þa hand næglas wonne and þa eagan tearige, and wile locian niþer*.⁴⁷ The symptoms described here remain somewhat mysterious. It has been suggested that the disease

particular subtype of *ælf-adl*, as Hall and Bonser have argued: see Hall, *Elves*, pp. 106–107; Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 162–163

⁴⁵ Hall discusses the possible meaning of all these terms in more detail, pp. 105–107, 126–127. Hall translates *ælf-sogoba* as ‘internal pain caused by elves’. Simek, however, suggests that it ‘might simply refer to “illness,” corresponding to the most common MHG term for illness, *suhtin*’: Simek, ‘Elves and Exorcism’, p. 40.

⁴⁶ Hall, *Elves*, p. 127.

⁴⁷ *LBIII*, 62. ‘If one has water/moisture elf-disease, then the fingernails will be dark and the eyes tearful, and he/she will look down.’

described could be a skin disease, possibly chickenpox or measles.⁴⁸ This might make sense, as there is some precedent for linking *ælf*e and cutaneous disorders more generally.⁴⁹ An equally mysterious, albeit more elaborate, description proceeds the treatment for *ælf-sogopa*:

Gif him biþ ælfsogopa him beoþ þa eagan geolwe þær hi reade beon sceoldon. Gif þu þone mon lacnian wille þænc his gebæra ond wite hwilces hades he sie. gif hit biþ wæpned man ond locað up þonne þu hine ærest sceawast ond se andwlita biþ geolwe blac. þone mon þu meht gelacnian æltæwlice gif he ne biþ þær on to lange. gif hit biþ wif ond locað niþer þonne þu hit ærest sceawast. ond hire andwlita biþ reade wan þæt þu miht eac gelacnian. gif hit bið dægþerne leng on þonne .xii. monaþ ond sio onsyn biþ þyslicu þonne meht þu hine betan to hwile. ond ne meht hwæþere æltæwlice gelacnian.⁵⁰

It is not my aim here to attempt to provide a specific clinical diagnosis for these afflictions.⁵¹ What is more significant for this discussion is the more basic fact that, while the vast majority of disorders occurring in the Old English medical corpus contain no description of symptoms, these two remedies both list their symptoms, which in the case of *ælf-sogopa* are quite elaborate.⁵² This is suggestive on several accounts.

First, the level of description in these remedies at least implies that the compiler of the collection thought that these two ailments might not be recognisable to some potential users of his text. We can see this purpose evidenced in the table of contents entries for these remedies:

⁴⁸ Hall, *Elves*, p. 107; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 154–155.

⁴⁹ See Hall, *Elves*, p. 107; Simek, 'Elves and Exorcism', p. 40. See also above, p. 102, n. 58.

⁵⁰ *LBIII*, 62. 'If someone has *ælf-sogopa* their eyes will be yellow where they ought to be red. If you want to treat the person, consider their behaviour and know which sex they belong to. If it is a male person, and [he] looks up when you first examine him, and the face is yellow [or] colourless, you may be able to cure him completely, if he hasn't had it too long. If it is a woman, and looks down when you first examine it, and her face is red [or] dark, you can also treat it. If it has been going on a day longer than twelve months, and the appearance is like this, then you may be able to improve it for a while, but you will not be able to cure it completely.'

⁵¹ *DOE* suggests 'anaemia' for *ælf-sogopa*; see *DOE*, s.v. 'ælf-sogopa'.

⁵² An exception to this is several of the 'longer remedies' in *Bald's Leechbook* taken from the works of Alexander of Tralles or Oribasius, which sometimes contain descriptive passages borrowed from their Latin source.

LXII. Wiþ ælf adle læcedom ond eft hu mon sceal on þa wyrte singan ær hi mon nime ond eft hu mon sceal þa wyrta don under weofod ond ofer singan. ond eft tacnu be þam hwæper hit sie ælf sogopa ond tacn hu þu ongitan meht hwæper hine mon mæg gelacnian ond drencas ond gebedu wiþ ælcra feondes costunge.

LXIII. Tacnu hu þu meht ongitan hwæper mon sie on wæter ælf adle. ond læcedom wiþ þam ond gealdor on to singanne ond þæt ilce mon mæg singan on wunda.⁵³

In both cases, *tacnu* ('signs') are necessary for the text's user to be able to correctly identify the disease in question. This seems to suggest that although there were widely known elf-related condition(s) designated by names such as *ælf-siden*, *ælf-cynne*, and *ælf-adl*, the diseases signified by *ælf-sogopa* and *wæter-ælfadl* would only be known by some select group. This could either mean that these terms were old terms in the process of becoming obsolete at the time in which these remedies were written down, or that they represent a facet of elf-related mythology particular to a certain milieu or sub-culture in Anglo-Saxon England.

Secondly, by the simple fact of describing different symptoms, these remedies suggest that elves could be associated with a variety of conditions (rather than simply internal pains). The two remedies clearly distinguish themselves from one another, and both also, it seems, differentiate themselves from the more general *ælf-adl*, which is not accompanied by a description of symptoms and thus presumably would have been generally recognisable. *Ælf-sogopa* appears as part of the entry beginning with *Wið ælfadl* and Hall has suggested that it might represent a subcategory of that condition.⁵⁴ The support for this suggestion comes from the table of contents, where, as we have seen, the phrase *eft tacnu be þam hwæper hit sie*

⁵³ *LBIII*, 62, 63 (table of contents). 'LXII. Against *ælf-adl* and also how one must sing on the herbs before he picks them and afterwards how one shall place the herbs under the altar and sing over [them] and also the signs by which [you can know] whether it is *ælf-sogopa* and the signs how you can know if it is possible to cure him and drinks and prayers against each temptation of the Enemy. LXIII. Signs how you might understand whether one has *wæter-ælfadl* and a remedy against that and a *galdor* to sing over it and the same [*galdor*] one may sing over wounds.'

⁵⁴ Hall, *Elves*, pp. 105–106.

ælsogopa ('the signs by which [you can know] whether it is *ælf-sogopa*') occurs within the larger entry for *ælfadl*. It does not appear too much of a stretch to suggest that *wæter-ælfadl* might similarly represent a type of sub-category of the more general *ælf-adl*, as is reflected in its name. This stratification with a general ailment manifested in widely known forms with two related but less widely-known ancillary conditions is certainly a more nuanced portrayal of the possibilities of elf-disease than found in the other medical collections extant from Anglo-Saxon England.

Continuity and Discontinuity in the Description of *Ælfe*

The questions 'What are *ælfe*?' and 'What diseases were they associated with?' have attracted the focus of several scholars, including two book-length studies, one produced by Karen Jolly and another more recently by Alaric Hall.⁵⁵ Jolly takes a historico-theological approach to the role of elves. She addresses early twentieth-century criticism, which tended to associate the elf-related remedies with the categories of paganism and magic. Instead, Jolly emphasises the Christian content found in the 'elf charms' and argues that they should be considered in the theological context of the period. Hall, by contrast, takes a more philological approach, exploring the changing conception of elves during the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond through linguistic analysis and comparative study from Scandinavian sources. Both of these studies contribute important perspectives to the question of how Anglo-Saxons might have conceived of *ælfe*. Yet in both cases, each author's principal concern is with the mythology of elves and their role in society and practice, rather than the medical texts *per se*. In keeping with this, neither Hall nor Jolly fully attempts to distinguish the presentation of *ælfe* in one

⁵⁵ For these references and others related to the study of elves in Anglo-Saxon England, see p. 13, n. 38.

medical context from another. Instead, they place more emphasis on creating a cohesive image of elves and their attributes. I would like to suggest that there are some points of difference in the appearance of elf-remedies in the various medical collections. In particular there are differences between those remedies epitomised in *Leechbook III* but also found in *Bald's Leechbook*, and those of the *Lacnunga*. This section will outline some of these differences.

Table 1: Herbs used against Elves		
	<i>Herb Name</i>	<i>Number of Occurrences</i>
<i>Bald's Leechbook</i>	elehtre	2
	bisceop-wyrt	2
	cropleac	2
	reademagþan	2
	armelu	2
	hegerifan corn	2
<i>Leechbook III</i>	elehtre	5
	bisceop-wyrt	4
	wermod	4
	cropleac	3
	elenan	3
	finol	3
<i>Lacnunga</i>	cassoc	1
	cristallan	1
	disman	1
	feferfuige	1
	finol	1
	reade netele	1
	sidewaran	1
	wegbrædan	1

Table 1 summarises the most common herbs used in the remedies for elf-diseases found in the medical collections. In the case of *Leechbook III* and *Bald's Leechbook* only the most frequently occurring herbs are listed; in the case of the *Lacnunga* all the herbs are listed. The relatively small numbers of remedies for these conditions limits the usefulness of this type of data analysis, as in the case of *Bald's Leechbook* or the *Lacnunga* the addition of a single remedy could change totals dramatically. However, this table is helpful in illustrating the fact that the majority of remedies against elf-diseases rely on a fairly stable selection of herbs in *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook III*, but a quite different selection in the *Lacnunga* (a point that will be soon returned to). As Jolly has also indicated, the most frequently recurring herbs in the treatment of these types of diseases are *elehtre* and *bisceop-wyrt*.⁵⁶ Additionally, we could add *cropleac* and *wermod* to this list, although as can be seen there are other herbs that also recur.

⁵⁶ Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 135.

Table 2: Herbs used against Devils

	<i>Herb Name</i>	<i>Number of Occurrences</i>
<i>Bald's Leechbook & Leechbook III</i>	elehtre	9
	bisceop-wyrt	6
	finol	6
	cassoc	5
	betonica	4
	gyþrife	4
	garleac	4
	wermod	4

Table 3: Herbs used in only Elf-Related Remedies

	<i>Herb Name</i>	<i>Number of Occurrences</i>
<i>Bald's Leechbook & Leechbook III</i>	elehtre	6
	bisceop-wyrt	4
	finol	5
	cassoc	5
	betonica	4
	gyþrife	3
	garleac	3

The stability of identifying a particular group of herbs for treating elf-disease is enhanced when we consider the herbs used in treating ailments related to the demonic (Table 2). If we do this, we see a very similar breakdown of herbs in the remedies used for ailments against the *deofol* ('devil'), *deofles costunga* ('temptations of the devil'), *deofle-seocnysse* ('devil-sickness'), and *feond-seocnysse* ('enemy-sickness'). Again only the most commonly occurring herbs are listed in the table. The correlations between the herbs listed here and those used against elves is exaggerated by the fact that three remedies from *Leechbook III* and *Bald's Leechbook* list both devilish and elvish causes (of course, this is in itself telling). However, when we subtract these remedies from the totals (Table 3), the parallels in treatment between these two types of diseases are still clear. In these remedies, we see a general stability across the herbs used to deal with these afflictions. *Elehtre* and *bisceop-wyrt* remain the most consistently used. *Finol* also reappears. Further connections are found when we consider that *betonica* may indeed be another name for *bisceop-wyrt*, and that *garleac* and *cropleac* both appear to be words for types of garlic.⁵⁷ Outside of remedies for ailments directly associated with *ælf*e or demons, these herbs most frequently occur in remedies for mental ailments or headache and for skin conditions.⁵⁸ This is in keeping with the link sometimes made between *ælf*e and mental and cutaneous disorders.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ See DOE, s.v. 'crop-lēac', 'betonice', 'bisceop-wyrt'. See also *Dictionary of Old English Plant Names*, ed. P. Bierbaumer and H. Sauer with H. Klug, and U. Krischke (2007–2009), consulted at <<http://oldenglish-plantnames.org>> (accessed March 15 2016), 'bisceop-wyrt' for a discussion on the difficulties associated with identifying this plant-name.

⁵⁸ I have counted twenty remedies within the larger corpus that contain two or more of these herbs (for this purpose I considered only the most recurrent herbs: *elehtre*, *bisceop-wyrt*, *cropleac/garleac*, *wermod*, and *finol*). For remedies against mental ailments or headpain involving these herbs, see BLB I 53, BLB I 62.2, BLB I 63 [two recipes], BLB I 66 [two recipes], BLB II 65.5, LBIII 68, and LAC 49. For treatments for skin conditions or *peor*, see BLB I 31.7, BLB I 39.3, BLB I 47.3, and LAC 49. Other remedies involving these two or more of these herbs include: a remedy for *lencten adle* (BLB I 62.2), three recipes for *leoht drenças* ('light drinks') or *unspiwol drenças* ('non-emetic drinks') (BLB II 53 [three remedies]), three remedies for sudden sickness or death in animals or people (BLB II

This basic similarity of treatments for these types of ailments is of course suggestive from various angles about the relationship between the Christian category of the demonic and the figure of *ælf*. This will be the focus of some later discussion in this chapter. Nevertheless, for the moment let us satisfy ourselves with saying that *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook III* demonstrate an established set of herbs used in the treatment of elf-related or demonic ailments, and that the remedies of the *Lacnunga* do not adhere to this pattern. In the case of *ælf*, we see an entirely different group of herbs being used in the *Lacnunga*, with the only overlap being *finol*. I have not given a formal tabulation of herbs used against demonic agents in the *Lacnunga*, because there is only one remedy purporting to treat such an affliction, which is also one of the two remedies for treating elf-diseases in the collection. So, again we would see *cristallan*, *disman*, *sidewaran*, *cassuc*, and *finol*, a group clearly divergent from the established herbal practices seen in the other collections. It might also be worth mentioning that the herbs whose powers are extolled in the 'Nine Herbs Charm' do not align with the herbs typical of these afflictions in the other collections, again with the exception of *finol* and less significantly *mægðe*, which is likely a similar herb to *reademagþan* listed in Table 1.⁶⁰

Certainly it is difficult to talk about routine practice or convention in treating these conditions when we only have such a tiny selection of remedies as in the *Lacnunga*. However, the paucity of remedies is itself suggestive. In a text that has been described by Singer as the 'our best source of the primitive medicine of this

55.2, LAC 134, LAC 136), a remedy for side pain (LAC 50), a recipe for a green salve (LAC 15), a recipe for a holy salve (LAC 63).

⁵⁹ See pp. 122 and 94–95.

⁶⁰ For more information on the 'Nine Herbs Charm', see Chapter 3, pp. 153. Although not mentioning the demonic or elvish explicitly, the 'Nine Herbs Charm's refrain *heo mæg wið ða[m] laðan ðe geond lond fereþ* ('It has power against the loathsome one that travels throughout the land') (text and transition, *LAC*, vol. I, LXXVI, l. 20) is possibly suggestive of this type of affliction.

country’, by Bonser the most ‘pagan’ of the medical texts, and ‘reflect[ing] more of the actual practice’ by Jolly, it is noteworthy that we find the fewest remedies related to *ælf*, and none at all for the seemingly related conditions of *maran* and *nihtgengan*.⁶¹ This is not to suggest that there is no ‘popular’ or ‘Germanic’ element in the *Lacnunga*, only that its extent might perhaps have been exaggerated in some cases. As discussed in Chapter 3, the fact that many of the remedies in the *Lacnunga* diverge from the standard presentation of Old English prose might not be the result of them being more ‘native’, but instead shows a heavier influence from foreign or literary traditions, including early insular texts.

In the cases where typically Germanic ailments are presented, the *Lacnunga* appears to bear witness to a medical tradition separate from the other collections. As mentioned above, there is one occurrence of the term *ælf-siden* in the *Lacnunga*, but the ailment is treated with decidedly different herbs from those typically used in the other collections. It is perhaps significant that the other reference to elves in the collection (occurring in *Wið færstice*) uses the term *ylfa* (gen. pl. of **ylf*), identified by Hall as the West-Saxon form.⁶² The spelling *ælf*, by contrast, which appears in every instance in *Leechbook III* and generally in *Bald’s Leechbook*, is the Anglian form. The only other instance of the West-Saxon spelling within the medical texts occurs in *Gif hors gescoten si*, of *Bald’s Leechbook*. In both cases, then, the (late) West-Saxon *ylf** appears to be used in the context of shooting pains—although that is not to say other elf-diseases might not also relate to internal pain, as Hall has argued.⁶³ However, in both cases, the disease in question appears to be only potentially rather than necessarily linked with elves, and is treated primarily through

⁶¹ C. Singer, ‘Early English Medicine and Magic’, *PBA* 9 (1919–1920), 341–374, at 342. Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 25; Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 107.

⁶² Hall, *Elves*, pp. 4–5.

⁶³ Hall, *Elves*, pp. 105–108.

incantation (*Wið færstice*) or inscription (*Gif hors ofscoten sie*) rather than through application of any of the herbs normally associated with elf-afflictions. Moreover, in *Wið færstice* elves do not occur with the *maran* or *nihtgengan* of *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook III* but instead *hægtessan* and *esa*, figures not mentioned in any other collection. This provides an interesting parallel to Old Norse, where *álfar* and the *Æsir* are routinely evoked together.⁶⁴ This could perhaps provide some evidence to the influence of different traditions on the *Lacnunga*.

Additionally, the *Lacnunga* is the only medical collection in Old English to testify to a different and perhaps also traditionally northern affliction: *dweorh* ('dwarf').⁶⁵ This term occurs three times in the *Lacnunga*, in two separate remedies.⁶⁶ Cameron argues that we should understand the word *dweorg* as an Old English word for 'fever'. This is because there is a series of Latin remedies against fever with close textual relationships to the first part of the remedy in *Wið dweorh*; additionally, in the *Medicina de quadrupedibus, ad fugandam febrem* ('to banish fever') is translated as *dweorg onweg to donne* ('to get rid of *dweorg*').⁶⁷ As a result of this reasoning, Pettit translates *dweorh* (in its various forms) as 'fever' throughout his edition; this is in distinction to his treatment of *ælf-siden* which he translates as '(?)elvish magic'.⁶⁸ Although Cameron's argument about the association between *dweorg* and fever is persuasive, there is no reason for doubting at least the original association of this ailment with a creature known as dwarf.⁶⁹ In Norse lore, dwarves

⁶⁴ The collocation *æsir ok álfar* (and its variants) occurs fourteen times in Old Norse. This is discussed by Hall in *Elves*, pp. 35–39. See also Shippey, 'Light-Elves, Dark-Elves, and Others', p. 3.

⁶⁵ The term *dweorge* also appears once in the twelfth-century *Peri didaxeon*, but this later text is beyond the scope of my study.

⁶⁶ Two of these reference occur in *LAC*, vol. I, LXXXI. For discussion over whether they should be treated as a single entry or two distinct pieces, see *LAC*, vol. II, LXXXI. The other remedy contains a metrical charm and is widely known as *Wið dweorh* ('against dwarf'), *LAC*, LXXXVI.

⁶⁷ *MDQ*, 10.17 (MS V), see also the note, p. xxx, cf. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 152.

⁶⁸ See *LAC*, XXIX, LXXXI, LXXXVI.

⁶⁹ For a more detailed study of this relationship, see C. Doyle, 'Dweorg in Old English: Aspects of Disease Terminology', *Questio Insularis* 9 (2008), 99–117.

and elves are related entities.⁷⁰ Although it is difficult to know its meaning to the compiler of the *Lacnunga*, these remedies are the among the only extant evidence of an ailment known as *dweorh*.

Although it is not occurring frequently enough to be considered one of the most-used herbs listed above, an herb called *ælf-þone* occurs only in *Leechbook III* and *Bald's Leechbook*.⁷¹ The first element in this name is clearly *ælf*, the second appears to mean 'vine or creeper', being cognate with the Old High German *thona*.⁷² This term appears in *Bald's Leechbook* in a remedy against *lyft-adl* (probably 'paralysis') and in a recipe for a *leoht drenc* ('light drink').⁷³ It appears in *Leechbook III* in a remedy for *micel lic* ('large body', possibly elephantiasis) and in another remedy for a *leoht drenc wiþ wedenheorte* ('*leoht drenc* against mad-heart'), and finally in a remedy for *ælf-adl*. Hall has argued that this herb is likely woody nightshade, and was used to heal ailments associated with elves, particularly fever and altered mental states, and, in extreme doses, possibly was seen to cause these types of symptoms.⁷⁴ If *ælf-þone* is a traditional and archaic herb name, as Hall argues, then again it is interesting to note its complete absence from the *Lacnunga*.

I would like to suggest that the *Lacnunga* should be viewed as participating in a different tradition of folk belief than that exhibited by *Leechbook III*. *Leechbook III* testifies to the existence of a complex network of ailments associated with elves. These diseases in turn were treated by a generally stable assortment of particular herbs. The influence of these same traditions is also exhibited, although to a lesser

⁷⁰ Motz, 'Of Elves and Dwarves', p. 106.

⁷¹ See DOE, s. v. 'ælf-þone'.

⁷² A. Hall, 'Madness, Medication—and Self-Induced Hallucination? *Elleborus* (and Woody Nightshade) in Anglo-Saxon England, 700–900', *Leeds Studies in English* New Series XLIV (2013), 43–69, at 55.

⁷³ For discussion of the first term, see L. Bezzo, 'Parallel Remedies: Old English "Paralisin þæt is lyftadl"', in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence*, pp. 435–445. For the second term, see p. 39, n. 17.

⁷⁴ Hall, '*Elleborus*', pp. 58–59, 61–62.

extent, within *Bald's Leechbook*. However, the *Lacnunga* diverges from this standard. In the *Lacnunga*, diseases involving *ælf* are decidedly less prominent, the herbal reflex *ælf-bone* is entirely absent, and there is at least residual attestation to another creature known as *dweorh*. This is possibly reflective of regional differences within England, and might suggest that depictions of *ælf* and their relationship to disease may not have been as stable across Anglo-Saxon England as has been assumed in previous studies.

Having established the appearances of *ælf* within the Old English medical collections, the second part of this chapter will consider more closely the place of these 'elf-related remedies' in the spiritual landscape of ninth- and tenth-century England. I will explore first the relationship between English *ælf* and the Christian demonic, before considering what these remedies reveal about the relationship between medicine and liturgical practice in this period. The majority of this discussion will orient itself around *Leechbook III*, as the text most plentiful in example and most consistent in approach to these conditions.

Elves and Demons in the Medical Collections

Elves are clearly presented in the medical texts as agents of disease and bodily harm. Traditionally, this has been viewed as the result of a process whereby this element of native belief became 'demonised' through its encounter with Christianity. Bonser, for example, expresses this view clearly: 'When Christianity came, the elves of heathendom were equated with demons, and therefore elf-shot and flying venom were thought to be the same as demonical possession (*deōfol-seōcnes*).'⁷⁵ This

⁷⁵ W. Bonser, 'Magical Practices against Elves', *Folklore* 37.4 (1926), 350–363, at 359. See also: Jolly, *Popular Religion*, pp. 136, 160, 164; S. Zavoti, 'Blame it on the Elves: Perceptions of Illness in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Medieval and Early Modern Literature, Medicine and Science*, ed. R. Falconer and D. Renevey (Tübingen, 2013), pp. 67–78, at 74–75.

general perspective has characterised discussion of *ælf*e in Anglo-Saxon England. Recent scholarship, however, has led to a more nuanced reading of this relationship. Alaric Hall and Rudolf Simek have both emphasised that the association between elves and disease probably reflects older Germanic tradition and pre-dates the coming of Christianity to England.⁷⁶ However, the fact that there exists a clear connection between *ælf*e and demons within the Old English medical corpus is nonetheless widely acknowledged.

As has already been seen, several remedies against elf-related afflictions state that they also benefit demonic afflictions. A clear example of this is the entry in the *Lacnunga* which records the recipe for a holy salve, useful *wið ælfsidene ond wið eallum feondes costungum* ('against *ælf*-sidene and against all temptations(?) of the Enemy').⁷⁷ The meaning of *feondes* (or sometimes *deofoles*) *cost[n]unge* has been the occasion of some discussion as 'costung' generally has the meaning of a mental test or temptation rather than a physical condition clearly associated with a particular disease.⁷⁸ This is the word, for instance, that Ælfric uses to describe the temptation of Christ by the Devil in the desert.⁷⁹ However, although the symptoms suggested by this condition are uncertain, it appears to involve demonic agency. The relation between those illnesses which are *ælf*-related or demon-related is also seen in several remedies from *Leechbook III*. For instance, in a remedy discussed above,

⁷⁶ Hall, *Elves*, pp. 97–98; Simek, 'Demons and Alfar', pp. 336–337.

⁷⁷ *LAC*, vol. I, XXIX

⁷⁸ DOE, s.v. 'costung, costnung', 1, 2.b.ii. Meaney has suggested that perhaps we should think of this as some type of hallucination thought to have been caused by the devil: A. Meaney, 'The Devil Can Seriously Damage Your Health: Reflections on Anglo-Saxon Demonology', in *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe*, ed. R. Raiswell and P. Dendle (Toronto, 2012), pp. 69–108, at 96. For further discussion, see also A. Meaney, 'The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness', in *Health, Disease and Healing in Medieval Culture*, ed. S. Campbell, B. Hall, and D. Klausner (Basingstoke, 1992), pp. 12–33, at 17–18; A. Hall, 'The Meaning of Elf and Elves in Medieval England', unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Glasgow, 2004), p. 113.

⁷⁹ Ælfric, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series. Text*, ed. P. Clemoes, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford, 1997), p. 270. This edition will be used throughout for citations from the first series of homilies. This will be referred to as Clemoes in the footnotes.

we have seen a salve useful against *ælfcynne nihtgengan þam mannum þe deofol mid hæmð* ('elf-kind, *nihtgengan* and those persons who have sex with the devil'). In this remedy we see these various afflictions placed in parallel as seemingly independent afflictions but apparently closely enough linked to benefit from the same treatment.⁸⁰ The remedy beginning *Gif him biþ ælfsogopa* ('if a person has *ælf-sogopa*') concludes with the statement *þes cræft mæg wiþ ælcra feondes costunge* ('this craft is strong against every temptation of the Enemy').⁸¹ This conclusion might suggest that *ælf-sogopa* is here being included under the (presumably broader) category of *feondes costunge*, yet it is unclear whether *cræft* refers to the methods prescribed in the entire remedy or only to some part—or, alternatively, *cræft* could carry a more general meaning such as 'strength' or 'power'. In any case, the two conditions were evidently seen as similar by the compiler.

The relationship between ailments in some way involving *ælf*e and those involving demonic agencies is demonstrated at an even more fundamental level in the ingredients involved in these remedies. As was seen earlier in this chapter, treatments for elf-ailments in *Leechbook III* and *Bald's Leechbook* rely on a relatively stable group of herbs, and these same herbs occur routinely and pervasively in remedies said to address demon-related sicknesses. The only herb from Table 2, 'Herbs used against Devils', not to occur in Table 1, 'Herbs used against Elves', is *garleac*.⁸² The herbs *elehtre* and *bisceop-wyrt* are the most frequently occurring in both types of remedies. However, if some sort of relationship between elves and demons in these texts is clear, the features of this relationship are still obscure. As Hall has suggested, although elves and demons appear to occupy a similar category in the medical collections, it does not necessarily follow that they

⁸⁰ See also *LBIII*, 41.

⁸¹ *LBIII*, 62.

⁸² See pp. 99, 101.

were synonymous.⁸³ Ultimately, while we cannot know precisely what an Anglo-Saxon would have thought about *ælfes* and the devil, it is clear that at least within the existing medical tradition the same treatments were seen as effective against both.

The real but obscure relationship between demons and elves within the medical texts has no doubt contributed to the common identification of elf-remedies with demonic possession and the practice of exorcism in critical scholarship.⁸⁴ In some cases this association appears to rest on a group of assumptions, which can be seen in the quotation given above from Bonser.⁸⁵ These assumptions are as follows: one of the main attributes of demons is their ability to possess human victims; demons are equivalent to elves in the medical texts; therefore elves also should be considered as possessing their victims. In the next part of this chapter, I will question the validity of this correlation and consider in detail the relationship between the practice of exorcism and the remedies of the medical collections.

Before I begin this discussion, it must be acknowledged that terms such as exorcism and possession are difficult to define. Certainly some scholars use these terms loosely; for instance, ‘exorcism’ can be used to mean the removal or expulsion of something damaging from the body without it necessarily following that an indwelling spirit was involved.⁸⁶ In this sense, anything involving some type of purge could be viewed as ‘exorcistic’. There is no difficulty with using the word in

⁸³ Hall, *Elves*, p. 173. He argues that a variety of beliefs concerning *ælfes* survived throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.

⁸⁴ For examples of the use of these terms in relationship to elf remedies, see Singer’s preface to the 1961 reprinting of Cockayne’s editions, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft* (London, 1961), vol. I, p. xxxvi; Bonser, ‘Magical Practices Against the Elves’, p. 358; Meaney, ‘The Devil Can Seriously Damage Your Health’, p. 95; N. Thun, ‘The Malignant Elves’, *Studia Neophilologica* 41 (1969), 378–396, at 381; Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 136; Zavoti, ‘Blame it on the Elves’, p. 74; Hall, ‘Calling the Shots’, p. 201; R. North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 52.

⁸⁵ See p. 107.

⁸⁶ See OED, s.v. exorcise v 2.. For examples of this more general usage, see K. Jolly, C. Raudvere, and E. Peters, *Witchcraft and Magic in the Middle Ages*, vol. III (London, 2001), p. 50; G. Hübener, ‘Beowulf and Germanic Exorcism’, *Review of English Studies* 42 (1935), 163–181; I. Duncan, ‘Epitaphs for *Æglæcan*: Narrative Strife in *Beowulf*’, in *Modern Critical Interpretations: Beowulf*, ed. H. Bloom (New York, 1987), pp. 111–130.

this sense. However, instead of debating the applicability of a particular word, my intention is to consider the remedies of the medical texts against a particular concept present in medieval thought. In keeping with this, I am using the terms exorcism and possession in a rigorous and specific way, as defined by Augustine:

spiritus immundus [...] qui extrinsecus invadit animam sensusque conturbat, et quemdam hominibus infert furorem; cui excludendo qui praesunt, manum imponere vel exorcizare dicuntur, hoc est, per divina eum adiurando expellere.⁸⁷

In this paradigm, possession involves the indwelling of a demon within a person, generally resulting in a recognisable set of symptoms. In his recent monograph, *Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon England*, Peter Dendle defines the traditional symptoms of demonic possession as ‘the falling to the ground, thrashing about, lashing out violently, shouting abusively, raving’.⁸⁸ Exorcism, then, is the expulsion of this spirit normally through a formula of adjuration, generally involving the command *adjuro te* (‘I command you’) or *exorciso te* (‘I exorcise you’).⁸⁹ This same meaning is echoed in Ælfric’s description of the role of an exorcist in his *Pastoral Letter to Wulfsige: Exorcista is on englisc: se þe mid aðe halsað þa awyrgeðan gastas, þe wyllað menn dreccan þurh þæs hælendes naman, þæt hy þa men forlæton*.⁹⁰ Of course, even in the Middle Ages there was no single systematic

⁸⁷ Augustine, *De Beata Vita* (Turnhout, 2010), 3.17 ‘An unclean spirit... invades the soul from the outside, perturbs the senses, and brings on men a certain madness; to remove it, the ones who preside over removing it are said to impose hands or to exorcise, that is, they expel it, adjuring it by divine things.’

⁸⁸ P. Dendle, *Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon England* (Kalamazoo, 2014), p. 1. See also F. Chave-Mahir, ‘Medieval Exorcism: Liturgical and Hagiographical Sources’, in *Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. H. Gittos and S. Hamilton (Farnham, 2015), pp. 159–175, at 159: she describes the symptoms of possession as ‘consisting of fits, shouting incomprehensible words in an unknown language, or committing acts of extreme violence’.

⁸⁹ H. Amirav, ‘The Application of Magical Formulas of Invocation in Christian Contexts’, in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, ed. N. Vos and W. Otten (Leiden, 2011), pp. 117–127, at 118; T. Bastiaensen, ‘Exorcism: Tackling the Devil by Word of Mouth’, in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, pp. 129–144, at 132; Chave-Mahir, ‘Medieval Exorcism’, p. 170.

⁹⁰ *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in Altenglischer und Lateinischer Fassung*, ed. B. Fehr (Darmstadt, 1966), Brief I.32 ‘Exorcist is in English: he who with oaths adjures cursed spirits—those who torment men—through the name of the Savior that they depart from the men’. This is reading in MS O

categorisation of demons and their influence in human lives.⁹¹ What I term ‘demonic possession’, then, is only one of several ways demons were seen to afflict human persons and societies. However, it does reflect a real and influential facet of the medieval understanding of demons.

The next section will provide an overview of the evidence for exorcism and demonic possession in Anglo-Saxon England, before comparing these practices to the remedies of the medical texts. This majority of emphasis in this discussion will be placed on the remedies of *Leechbook III*, because it contains the greatest number of remedies related to elves and to demonic forces and because these remedies demonstrate a consistency in approach lacking in the *Lacnunga*. Ultimately, this chapter will consider what the practice of exorcism can reveal about *ælf*e in the tenth-century and more generally about the relationship between medical texts and ecclesiastical ritual in this period.

Exorcism in Anglo-Saxon England

There are numerous examples of exorcism within the New Testament, performed both by Jesus and by the Apostle Paul.⁹² In the early Church, the ability to discern and cast out demons was not limited to the ordained but instead was seen as a spiritual gift that could be practiced by all Christians.⁹³ However, between the third and fifth centuries, the practice of exorcism increasingly became the domain of the

(CCCC 190). MS X (Bodley Junius 121) reads: *Exorcista is on englisc: se-be mid aðe halsað þa awyrgeðan gastas, þe wyllað men dreccan Him be-beodeð þurh þæs ælmihtigan naman* (‘he who with oaths adjures cursed spirits, those which torment men; he commands them through the name of the almighty’).

⁹¹ Dendle, *Demon Possession*, pp. 10–11. See also N. Caciola, ‘Discerning Spirits: Sanctity and Possession in the Later Middle Ages’, unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Michigan, 1994), vol. I, pp. 246–247. For a general description of demons in the Middle Ages, see A. Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*, 2 vol. (Friburg i. B., 1909), vol. II, pp. 19–37.

⁹² For background on exorcism in the New Testament, see Bastiansen ‘Exorcism: Tackling the Devil by Word of Mouth’; E. A. Leeper, ‘Exorcism in Early Christianity’, unpublished PhD dissertation (Duke, 1991), pp. 75–80. See also Dendle, *Demon Possession*, pp. 53–54.

⁹³ Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 61.

clergy, with ‘exorcist’ becoming an established ecclesiastical office in its own right.⁹⁴ The fifth-century Gaulish *Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua* contains the first example of the ordination rite for an exorcist:

Exorcista cum ordinatur, accipiat de manu episcopi libellum in quo scripti sunt exorcismi, dicente sibi episcopo: Accipe et commenda, et habeto potestatem imponendi manus super energumenum sive baptizatum sive catechumenum.⁹⁵

This office was considered one of the minor orders of a church, alongside reader (lector), doorkeeper, and acolyte, for instance.⁹⁶ The fact that the exorcist in the quotation above is presented with a *libellum* (‘little book’ or ‘booklet’) of exorcisms suggests that by this time exorcism was meant to be confined to established written rituals rather than charismatic inspiration.⁹⁷ Although there are some early examples of exorcism formulas from the East, the oldest datable ecclesiastical formulas from the western Church date to the turn of the eighth century.⁹⁸

It is difficult to know how widely established was the office of exorcist within Anglo-Saxon England. There is only one exorcist known by name from Anglo-Saxon England—Pinewald—who is recorded as a witness on a seventh-century charter.⁹⁹ Dendle suggests that this paucity relates in part to the insignificant status of the office, as ‘exorcists were usually too low a rank to appear as signatories in official documents.’¹⁰⁰ Ælfric mentions an ‘exorcist’ in his description of the

⁹⁴ Leeper, ‘Exorcism in Early Christianity’, pp. 318–325. Leeper links the clericalisation of exorcism with the increasing role of exorcism as part of the baptismal ceremony in this period.

⁹⁵ Leeper, ‘Exorcism in Early Christianity’, p. 324. ‘When the exorcist is ordained, let him accept from the hands of the bishop a little book (*libellum*) in which are written exorcisms, [while] the bishop says to him: “Accept, and cherish, and have the power to lay hands on the possessed, whether baptised or catechumens.”’

⁹⁶ Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 63. This is a general list of potential offices (cf. Ælfric’s list below). Of course, different offices and their responsibilities varied from place to place in the early Church.

⁹⁷ See Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 134 n. 174, for a discussion what these *libelli* might have contained.

⁹⁸ Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen*, vol. II, p. 577.

⁹⁹ W. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum: A Collection of Charters Relating to Anglo-Saxon History*, 3 vols. (London, 1885–1893), item 77, vol. I, p. 113 (Sawyer 75).

¹⁰⁰ Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 104.

seven orders of the Church, which he lists in apparently ascending order of importance as: *hostiarius* ('door keeper'), *lector* ('reader'), *exorcista* ('exorcist'), *acolytus* ('acolyte'), *sub-diaconus* ('sub-deacon'), *diaconus* ('deacon'), and *presbiter* ('priest').¹⁰¹ This, alongside the fact that some Anglo-Saxon liturgical books contain rubrics for the ceremony of ordination, suggests that at least in some regions Anglo-Saxon churches would have followed the practice of ordaining exorcists.¹⁰²

Presumably these exorcists would have made use of the exorcism rituals recorded in liturgical books. There are many examples of these types of rituals found in existing service books from Anglo-Saxon England. The most prevalent of these types of formulas are 'exorcisms' of sacramentals used in the Church and as part of the mass. Throughout the Middle Ages, formal rituals of exorcism could be addressed towards inanimate objects such as water and salt (during the creation of holy water) or even bread and cheese (to be used in the judicial trial of ordeal).¹⁰³ In this case, 'exorcism' appears to mean something more like purification than expulsion of an indwelling spirit.¹⁰⁴ The second most common type of exorcism ritual is that involved in the baptismal ceremony; in this instance, once again, exorcism appears to achieve something more general than the expulsion of an indwelling spirit.¹⁰⁵ Finally there are those rituals to be said over an *energumen* (demoniac). These various rituals were clearly related, and in practice the formulas

¹⁰¹ *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics*, Brief I.29. This is also mentioned in Meaney, 'The Devil Can Seriously Damage Your Health', p. 88. For examples of rubrics in liturgical books, see *The Leofric Missal*, ed. N. Orchard (London, 2002), vol. II 2309–2311, p. 394, and *Pontificale lanaletense*, ed. G. H. Doble (London, 1937), p. 51.

¹⁰² For examples of rubrics in liturgical books, see *Leofric Missal*, 2309–2311, v. II, p. 394, and *Pontificale lanaletense*, p. 51.

¹⁰³ For general background on the types of exorcisms performed in Anglo-Saxon England and where those rituals are recorded, see S. L. Keefer, 'Manuals', in *The Liturgical Books of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. R. W. Pfaff (Kalamazoo, 1995), pp. 99–110. For the use of exorcism within the trial of ordeal, see S. L. Keefer, 'Ut in omnibus honorificetur Deus: the *corsnæd* ordeal in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Community, the Family and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. J. Hill and M. Swan (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 237–264.

¹⁰⁴ *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, IV Sacraments and Sacramentals, ed. A. J. Chupungco (Collegeville, MN, 1997–98), pp. 400–401; Keefer, 'Manuals', p. 108.

¹⁰⁵ For discussion of the symbolism of exorcism in baptism see Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 113.

associated with the various types of exorcism were often adapted or reused for different purposes. Indeed, Franz suggests that baptismal exorcisms of the Latin Church were originally derived from exorcisms for the possessed.¹⁰⁶

However, if the rituals employed were similar, conceptually these types of exorcism probably differed. Dendle makes a distinction between ‘procedural exorcism’ (including those during baptism and in preparation of sacramentals), which occur as a normal part of life in the Church, and ‘solemn exorcism’ (practiced on a demoniac), which occurs only as need arises.¹⁰⁷ A further point of contrast between these ceremonies is that ‘procedural exorcisms’ can be seen as types of speech acts, as Dendle puts it: ‘it is inconceivable that a correctly performed prebaptismal exorcism will not work’.¹⁰⁸ Solemn exorcisms on the other hand were known to occasionally fail or need to be repeated several times.¹⁰⁹ These fundamental differences justify treating the exorcism of a demoniac as a separate action from other types of exorcisms.

In general, it is difficult to know how solemn exorcisms would have actually been performed in this period. In most cases, exorcism formulas occurring in early medieval liturgical books do not come with corresponding *ordines*.¹¹⁰ This means that we can know the words recited during the ceremony, but it is more difficult to know the rituals that would have accompanied these words. There is one, reasonably late, example of an ordo for an exorcism in the *Lanalet Pontifical*.¹¹¹ In this pontifical, the bishop (who performs the exorcism) is to fast and pray for three days. The possessed person is then meant to eat food containing specially prepared holy

¹⁰⁶ Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen*, vol. II, p. 577.

¹⁰⁷ Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 107. See also Keefer, ‘Manuals’, p. 108.

¹⁰⁸ Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁹ Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 109.

¹¹⁰ Chave-Mahir, ‘Medieval Exorcism’, p. 159.

¹¹¹ *Pontificale lanaletense*, pp. 111–116. The *Lanalet Pontifical* (Bibliothèque de la ville de Rouen MS A. 27) is an English pontifical of the late tenth or early eleventh century.

water and salt, following which the priest recites a number of exorcism formulas over the patient. It is hard to determine the degree to which this would have represented normal practice in this period. However, there is evidence elsewhere for the importance of fasting and prayer prior to the exorcism ritual.¹¹² Taken together, I would suggest that the use of formulas of command by an ordained member of clergy (or possibly an official exorcist), preceded by fasting, and perhaps accompanied by other rituals, probably defined the practice of exorcism within the Church in the Anglo-Saxon period. This rough outline will form the foundation for the discussion in the following section of the relationship between exorcism and the elf remedies of the Old English medical collections.

Exorcism and the Medical Texts

This section will consider the practice of exorcism (in so far as it can be understood in the Anglo-Saxon period) against the remedies recorded within the medical compilations. Many of the remedies described in the first half of the chapter are occasionally referred to by scholars as being ‘liturgical’ or containing liturgical elements, with one scholar going so far as to suggest that certain types of ailments associated with the demonic including dementedness and fever ‘required Christian liturgy’.¹¹³ Given this frequent usage, it is useful to consider what ‘liturgy’ or ‘liturgical’ means in the context of the medical collections. Liturgy itself is a modern term used to encompass a wide variety of activities related to Christian worship. In the Middle Ages, however, there was no such blanket term, and it was instead usual

¹¹² Chave-Mahir, ‘Medieval Exorcism’, p. 166; Leeper, ‘Exorcism in Early Christianity’, pp. 223–226.

¹¹³ Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 145, see also 165, 167–168. See also K. Jolly, ‘Cross-Referencing Anglo-Saxon Liturgy and Remedies: The Sign of the Cross as Ritual Protection’, in *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. H. Gittos and M. B. Bedingfield (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 213–243; K. Jolly, ‘Tapping the Power of the Cross: Who and for Whom?’, in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C. Karkov, S. Keefer, and K. Jolly (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 58–79, at 59.

to refer to particular types of texts—such as prayers or *ordines*—or types of collections, including sacramentaries, rituals, and pontificals.¹¹⁴ It is therefore worth making the distinction that when medical remedies are sometimes described as ‘liturgical’ this term should be understood in the very general sense of containing rituals associated with the Church (most notably the use of sacramentals such as holy water or the sign of the cross), and should not be taken to imply that these remedies mirror any specific liturgical ceremony performed within the Church. Rather than comment on the general Christian nature of the remedies considered within this chapter,¹¹⁵ which I do not dispute, this section will consider these cures against the very specific liturgical practice of exorcism, at least in so far as it can be understood in the Anglo-Saxon period.

As has been suggested, one possible point of connection between the demonic and elf-related remedies of the medical texts and the practice of exorcism is the widespread use of sacramentals related to the mass. Aside from a core group of herbs that are characteristic of the remedies from the medical corpus involving elves, slightly more than half of these remedies make use of either holy water or holy salt. The remedy against *ælf-sogopa* calls also calls for *oleum infirmorum* (the oil of unction) and a remedy from the *Lacnunga* involves for holy wine. The situation is very similar in demon-related remedies, where half use either of these substances. To view which remedies involving these diseases call for these sacramentals, see Table 4 (given below). In most cases, these sanctified substances are used in the preparation of drinks or salves to be given to the patient. This practice bears some likeness to the ritual described in the *Lanalet Pontifical* where the possessed person is made to eat food prepared with holy water and salt. However, it is difficult to

¹¹⁴ H. Gittos and S. Hamilton, ‘Introduction’, in *Understanding Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 1–10, at 4.

¹¹⁵ For a general overview of the Christian elements found within the elf-related remedies, see Jolly, *Popular Religion*, Chapter 5.

know how widespread this practice would have been or whether it was unique to exorcism. If we take the presence of either a priest or an official exorcist, a preparatory period of fasting and prayer, and the use of a command formula as the defining features of exorcism in our period, the dissimilarity between this ceremony and those detailed in the medical texts becomes striking.

Table 4: Sacramentals in the Elf and Demon Remedies					
	<i>Involving Elves</i>	<i>Involving Demons</i>	<i>Involving Holy Water</i>	<i>Involving Holy Salt</i>	<i>Involving other Sacramentals</i>
BLB I 63.1		x	x		
BLB I 63.2		x	x		
BLB I 64.1	x				
BLB I 64.2	x		x		
BLB I 64.3	x				
BLB I 64.4	x		x		
BLB II 65.1	x				
BLB II 65.3		x			
BLB II 65.5	x				
LBIII 1.5		x			
LBIII 41.1		x	x		
LBIII 41.2		x			
LBIII 61	x	x		x	
LBIII 62.1	x		x		
LBIII 62.2	x		x		
LBIII 62.3	x		x	x	
LBIII 62.4	x	x	x		x
LBIII 63	x		x		
LBIII 58		x			
LBIII 64.1		x			
LBIII 64.2		x	x		
LBIII 67.1		x	x		
LBIII 67.2		x			
LAC 29	x	x			x
LAC 127	x				

The adjuration (or formula of command) is arguably the most defining feature of exorcism. This is the prayer in which the indwelling spirit is commanded to leave its host, normally through the invocation of the power of Christ over the devil. The statement of command is a common feature in some form or another of nearly every prayer of exorcism found in liturgical texts, even those for the inanimate objects of salt or water. However, in all the remedies lexically linked to elves or demons in *Leechbook III* and *Bald's Leechbook* only one contains a formula of command.¹¹⁶ This occurs in the remedy against *ælf-sogoba*. The appearance of this type of formula in this remedy is certainly interesting and will be discussed later in this chapter. However, this is a unique occurrence and is not echoed in any of the other remedies related to elf- (or even demon-) related illness in these texts.

Interestingly, some episodes from early Anglo-Saxon saints' lives depict the curing of a possessed person without the use of a command formula. In Felix's *Life of Guthlac*, the saint heals a demoniac by blowing on his face, an action associated with exorcism, but without verbally adjuring the spirit (or at least this is not mentioned).¹¹⁷ Even more strangely, in the anonymous *Life of St Cuthbert*, a woman *a demonio vexatam* ('vexed by a demon') is cured by touching the bridle of Cuthbert's horse.¹¹⁸ These episodes and others like them present a much more charismatic vision of exorcism than that defined within liturgical manuscripts. These examples shift the focus away from particular rituals to the power and charisma of

¹¹⁶ There are more adjurations in the *Lacnunga* than in the other collections. These occur in entries 25, 63, and 158. None of these, however, occur in remedies explicitly stated to be for a demonically- (or elvishly-) induced ailment, although entry 63 is for the creation of a holy salve, which could imply some of these influences.

¹¹⁷ *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1985), p. 131. For background on insufflation (or blowing air) as part of exorcism, see: Leeper, 'Exorcism in Early Christianity', pp. 150–152; S. Foot, "'By Water in the Spirit': The Administration of Baptism in Early Anglo-Saxon England", in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharp (Leicester, 1992), pp. 171–192, at 177.

¹¹⁸ *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1985), p. 93.

the holy man. Yet the hagiographical record too presents a point of noticeable contrast with the remedies of the medical texts. Although the office of exorcist was probably somewhat accepted during the ninth and tenth centuries (when *Leechbook III* and *Bald's Leechbook* were probably compiled) there is no evidence that any of these cures for elf- or demon-related afflictions would have involved someone of this order. Indeed, there is little hard evidence to prove that these remedies would have necessarily been carried out by a priest. The involvement of masses in several remedies (normally to be said over certain ingredients) and the use of sacramentals associated with the Church imply some level of involvement by ordained clergy.¹¹⁹ However, the only remedy of this type that explicitly addresses the question of performer directly contradicts that a priest is necessary for its function. This occurs at the end of the remedy for *ælf-sogoba*, where the remedy directs:

wæt þæt gewrit on þam drenc ond writ cruce[m] mid him on ælcum lime ond
cweð signum cruceS christi conseruate In uitam eternam. amen. Gif þe ne
lyste hat hine selfne oþþe swa gesubne swa he gesibbost hæbbe ond senige
swa he selost cunne. þes cræft mæg wiþ ælcra feondes costunge.¹²⁰

It is unclear why exactly the reader of this remedy would not want to perform these rituals on the patient. Storms suggested that a priest might have had qualms about carrying out the remedy because it was not sufficiently orthodox.¹²¹ Yet Jolly argues that there is no reason for reading the instruction this way as all elements in the remedy are clearly Christian. Instead she suggests that perhaps there was some hesitation or repugnance around touching the sick man.¹²² Nevertheless, irrespective of the reason for this instruction, it is clear that this remedy allows it to be performed

¹¹⁹ Jolly discusses the employment of specifically ecclesiastical rituals and equipment in a number of remedies lacking overt mentions of clergy: *Popular Religion*, pp. 119–120, 142–143, 148, 153–154.

¹²⁰ *LBIII*, 62. ‘Wet that writing in the drink and write a cross for him on each limb, and say: *signum cruceS Christi conseruate in uitam eternam, amen*. If you do not wish [to do this], have him [do it] himself or such relative as he is most closely related to, bless [him] as best he can. This remedy is powerful against every temptation of the Enemy.’

¹²¹ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 233.

¹²² Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 164.

by a variety of possible figures, without any indication that they need have prior ecclesiastical training. Indeed, none of the other remedies explicitly invoke the figures of exorcist, or bishop, whom we would normally associate with exorcism. There is also no evidence that a preparatory period of fasting and prayer was required (or even recommended) before the performing of these remedies. When we consider this lack of fasting, coupled with the absence of command formulas, and the only questionable involvement of ordained clergy, I would suggest that the elf- and demon-related remedies of the medical texts bear no clear relationship to the formal practice of exorcism as it was known in the Anglo-Saxon period.

It is furthermore unclear that the afflictions signified by terms such as *ælf-adr* or *deofol-seocnysse* would have been seen as similar in their symptoms to demonic possession. There is some agreement that in some cases elves appear linked to causing mental problems in their victims, and the remedies for elf-related or demon-related illnesses sometimes also explicitly relate that they can cure mental disorders.¹²³ Madness is a traditional and perhaps the most widespread sign of demonic possession. It is possible this might have encouraged some semantic overlap between some of these remedies and the concept of demonic possession. However, it is also worth noticing that the other symptoms traditionally associated with possession (such as frenzy, lashing out violently, thrashing about, or shouting abusively)¹²⁴ do not occur in these remedies, although they do occur in hagiographical sources from the Anglo-Saxon period. Such an observation is complicated by the fact that in general the remedies of the Old English medical collections do not describe their symptoms, and that many of the words for mental

¹²³ Hall, 'Elleborus', pp. 60–62. See also Hall, *Elves*, pp.119–156; Jolly, *Popular Religion*, pp. 132–133.

¹²⁴ This list is reliant on one given by Dendle, *Demon Possession*, p. 1.

conditions in Old English are difficult to define with confidence.¹²⁵ Yet internal evidence within these remedies suggests that frenzy and loss of control were not among their assumed symptoms. Fourteen of the elf- or demon-related remedies in *Bald's Leechbook* or *Leechbook III* call for the patient to be given something to eat, or more commonly, to drink. On several occasions, it is instructed that the patient only receive the drink at night after fasting. This type of treatment presupposes cooperation of the patient. There is no hint in any of these remedies that the patient would have to be bound, or in any other way restrained, as would be expected at least in some cases involving frenzy or loss of control. This type of argument is somewhat speculative given the general lack of description offered within the medical collections. However, it is worth remarking that in the two instances where symptoms of an elf-disease are described in detail these look nothing like demonic possession.¹²⁶ Even if it is difficult to know what conditions these remedies actually describe, change of skin colour or nail colour and watery eyes are hardly the quintessential traits of possession. Ultimately, I would suggest that, although firm conclusions are impossible, there are reasons for doubting the clear correlation of ailments described in the medical remedies with the symptoms of demonic possession, at least when this is understood in a formal and rigorous sense.

If the elf-remedies of the medical collections do not appear to include the defining elements found in the formal practice of exorcism and the symptoms treated do not clearly parallel those of demonic possession, it is perhaps best not to refer to these remedies as 'exorcisms' and the victims as 'possessed', unless these terms are being used in a very loose sense. Rather, I suggest that if we would like to look for a

¹²⁵ This is due in part to the difficulty of assigning distinct definitions to different Anglo-Saxon terms related to the mind. For a discussion of this difficulty, see A. Low, 'Approaches to the Old English Vocabulary for "Mind"', *Studia Neophilologica* 73 (2001), 11–22.

¹²⁶ For these descriptions, see pp. 111.

closer parallel to these types of remedies among the liturgical ceremonies practiced at this time, it might be more useful to consider the rituals for the infirm.

Some of the manuscripts brought together under the title of the *Romano-Germanic Pontifical* contain elaborate rituals for the sick.¹²⁷ For instance, the *Ordo ad visitandum et unguendum infirmum* includes sprinkling the infirm with holy water, the recitation of prayers and psalms, the use of incense, and the blessing of the sick person by the priest. Another rite, *Ordo ad unguendum infirmum* involves anointing the sick person with oil.¹²⁸ Similarly, the *Leofric Missal* also contains an *ordo ad visitandum et unguendum infirmum* which includes the singing of various prayers including the Pater Noster and the sprinkling of the sick with holy water.¹²⁹ All of these actions occur with varying degrees of repetition in the remedies directed towards *ælf*e in the medical corpus.

I do not suggest that the medical procedures of *Leechbook III* and the ecclesiastical rituals such as the *ordo ad visitandum et unguendum infirmum* should be seen as equivalent. As has been seen in this chapter, one of the chief characteristics of the remedies against elves (or demons) in the medical texts is their use of a stable group of particular herbs—these herbs are never used in liturgical rituals for treating the sick. These parallels between these two types of rites can suggest, however, that the ‘liturgical’ elements occurring in certain medical remedies need not be linked to the ritual of exorcism, as has been widely surmised, but can also be thought of as common elements of the treatment of the sick within an ecclesiastical community.

¹²⁷ For a current assessment of the difficulties in talking of the *Romano-Germanic Pontifical* as testimony to a single tenth-century exemplar, see H. Parkes, ‘Questioning the Authority of Vogel and Elze’s *Pontifical romano-germanique*’, in *Understanding Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 75–101.

¹²⁸ *Le pontifical romano-germanique du dixième siècle*, ed. C. Vogel and R. Elze, 3 vols, ST 226, 227, 229 (Vatican City, 1963), vol. I, pp. 246–256, see also vol. II, pp. 258–270.

¹²⁹ *Leofric Missal*, ‘Incipit ordo ad visitandum et unguendum infirmum’, 2507–2522, vol. II, pp. 444–447.

Ælf-sogoba and the Leofric Missal

The only example of the use of a command formula or adjuration in elf- or demon-related medical remedies occurs in the remedy against *ælf-sogoba*. However, the fact that this remedy employs a command formula does not mean that the term *ælf-sogoba* should be taken as synonymous with demonic possession, as there are other uses of command formulas within the medical corpus which occur in remedies clearly unassociated with the normal symptoms of possession.¹³⁰ Furthermore, the symptoms described at the beginning of this remedy bear no resemblance to the traditional symptoms associated with an indwelling spirit. Yet even if this disease was not seen as a case of ‘possession’ it is clear that words of exorcism were seen to enhance its efficacy, perhaps in the more general sense of purification or blessing, although it is difficult to know how this would have been understood. However, this remedy provides a window into the interaction possible between established liturgical rites and a medical procedure that is unparalleled in the other remedies.

The instructions for preparing the remedy against *ælf-sogoba* are quite complex. After the instructions for identifying the ailment, quoted above, the remedy prescribes:

Writ þis gewrit:

Scriptum eSt rex regum et dominus dominantium. byrnice. beronice. lurlure. iehe. aius. aius. aius. Sanctus. Sanctus. Sanctus. dominus deus Sabaoth. amen. alleluiah.

Sing þis ofer þam drence ond þam gewrite:

‘Deus omnipotens pater domini nostri iesu cristi. per Inpositionem huius scriptura expelle a famulo tuo N. Omnem Impetum castalidum. de capite. de capillis. de cerebro. de fronte. de lingua. de sublingua. de guttore. de

¹³⁰ These include remedies for the ‘black blains’ (or blisters) (*LAC*, vol. I, XXV), tooth pain (*LAC*, vol. I, CLVIII), and fever (*BLB*, I 62). For a general discussion of the use of formulas of command in medieval charms, see L. Olsan, ‘Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in a Christian Oral Tradition’, *Oral Tradition* 7 (1992), 116–142, at 133.

faucibus. de dentibus. de oculis. de naribus. de auribus. de manibus. de collo. de brachiis. de corde. de anima. de genibus. de coxis. de pedibus. de compaginibus. omnium membrorum intus et foris. amen.'

Wyr̅c þonne drenc font wæter. rudan. Saluian. cassuc. draconzan. þa smeþan wegbrædan niþewearde feferfugian. diles crop. garleaces .iii. clufe. finul. wermod. lufestice. elehtre. ealra emfela. writ .iii. crucem mid oleum infirmorum ond cweð 'Pax tibi.' Nim þonne þæt gewrit writ crucem mid ofer þam drince ond sing þis þær ofer.

'Deus omnipotens pater domini. nostri. iesu cristi per Inpositionem huius scripturæ et per gustum huius expelle diabolum a famulo tuo .N.'

ond credo. ond pater. noster. wæt þæt gewrit on þam drenc and writ crucem mid him on ælcum lime and cweþ '*signum cruciS christi conseruate In uitam eternam. amen.*' Gif þe ne lyste hat hine selfne oþþe swa gesubne swa he gesibbost hæbbe and senige swa he selost cunne. þes cræft mæg wiþ ælcra feondes costunge.¹³¹

As can be readily observed, this remedy contains two (I would suggest related) exorcisms. These exorcisms are clearly variants of an exorcism also found in the *Leofric Missal* and other sources.¹³² Patrick Sims-Williams has argued that this exorcism is probably Irish in origin, as two of the earliest two copies are found in the *Stowe Missal* and the *Antiphony of Bangor* and there appears to be a fragment of

¹³¹ *LBIII*, 62. 'Write this writing: "It is written, King of kings and Lord of lords. Veronica, Veronica, *lurlure*(?) Yahweh (?) holy holy holy [in Greek], holy holy holy [in Latin], Lord, God of Hosts. Alleluia." Sing this over the drink and the writing: "All-powerful God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the imposition of this writing expel from your servant N. every attack of *castalidae*, from the head, from the hair, from the brain, from the forehead, from the tongue, from below the tongue, from the throat, from the neck, from the teeth, from the eyes, from the nostrils, from the ears, from the hands, from the neck, from the arms, from the heart, from the mind, from the knees, from the thighs, from the feet, from the joints of all the limbs internal or external. Amen." Work then a drink [with] font water, *rudan*, *saluian*, *saluian*, *cassus*, *draconzan*, the lower part of the smooth *wegbrædan*, *feferfugian*, *diles*' top, three cloves of *garleac*, *finul*, *wermod*, *lufestice*, *elehtre*, of all the same amount. Write three crosses with oil of unction and say 'peace to you'. Take then this writing, write a cross over [it] with the drink. Then sing this over: "All-powerful God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the imposition of this writing and through the taste of this, expel the devil from your servant N." And [then] the Creed, and the Pater Noster. Wet that writing in the drink and write a cross on each limb and say "May the cross of Christ keep you in life eternal, amen." If you do not wish [to do this], have him [do it] himself or whichever relation that is closest to him, sign [him] as best he can. This remedy is powerful against every temptation of the Enemy.' I have accepted Cockayne's emendations in his edition of this section (although not those made in his 'translation' of the Latin), additionally quotation marks have been added by me for clarity; my translation of the garbled *gewrit* is dependent upon Jolly's translation in *Popular Religion*, p. 164. For a discussion of the meaning of *castalidae*, see below.

¹³² This is also noted by Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 163.

the same exorcism in an eighth-century Irish liturgical fragment.¹³³ The closest versions to the *Leechbook III* formula are those in the *Leofric Missal* and the French *Sacramentary of Ratoldus*. The editor of the *Sacramentary of Ratoldus* suggests that that text relied in part on an English pontifical, and that this prayer was most likely borrowed from an English source.¹³⁴ In the *Leofric Missal* the exorcism is titled *alia* ('another') under the larger heading *item super energumino baptizato* ('in the same way [to be said] over a baptised demoniac'):

Domine sancte pater omnipotens aeterne deus, per impositionem scripture huius et gustum aquae, expelle diabolum ab homine isto. De capite, de capillis, de uertice, de cerebro, de fronte, de oculis, de auribus, de naribus, de ore, de lingua, de sublingua, de gutture, de collo, de corpore toto, de omnibus membris, de compaginibus membrorum suorum, intus et foris, de ossibus, de uenis, de neruis, de sanguine, de sensu, de cogitationibus, de omni conuersione, et operetur in te uirtus christi, in eo qui pro te passus est, ut uitam aeternam merearis. Per.¹³⁵

Although the exorcisms are clearly related, there are several significant points of contrast between the *Leechbook* remedy and the other versions of the formula. Although presented separately, the second command formula in the remedy seems to be drawn originally from this same exorcism, as can be seen from its close similarity to the first line of the *Leofric* formula. In the first version of this exorcism, *expelle diabolum* (present in all other known versions of this exorcism) has been replaced

¹³³ P. Sims-Williams, 'Thought, Word, Deed: An Irish Triad', *Ériu* 29 (1978), 78–111, at 88–91. Sims-Williams notes that versions of this exorcism also occur in *The Collectar-Pontifical of Baturich*, edited in *Das Kollektar-Ponifikale des Bischofs Baturich von Regensburg*, ed. F. Unterkircher (Freiburg, Switzerland, 1962), p. 128; Munich, MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 17027, edited in Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen*, vol. II, pp. 601–602; *The Ritual of St Florian*, edited in *Das Rituale von St Florian aus dem zwölften Jahrhundert*, ed. A. Franz (Freiburg, 1904), p. 18. However, he does not note the version in *Leechbook III* or that found in the *The Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, ed. N. Orchard (London, 2005), 2231, p. 419.

¹³⁴ *The Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, pp. cxci, clxxxii.

¹³⁵ *Leofric Missal*, vol. II, 2479, pp. 437–438. This exorcism occurs as part of *Leofric A*, the oldest part of the compilation, dating from the late-ninth or early tenth-century: *Leofric Missal*, vol. I, p. 23. 'Lord, holy father, all-powerful eternal God, through the imposition of this writing [or scripture] and taste of water, expel this devil from this man, from the head, from the hair, from the top, from the brain, from the forehead, from the eyes, from the ears, from the nostrils, from the mouth, from the tongue, from under the tongue, from the throat, from the neck, from the whole body, from all the limbs, from the joints of all the limbs, internal or external, from the bones, from the veins, from the tendons, from the blood, from the senses, from the thoughts, from every habit, and let Christ's virtue work in you, who died for you, that you may merit life eternal. Through.'

with *expelle [...] omnem impetum castalidum* ('expel [...] every attack of elves'). *Castalidae* here appears to be a reference to the Castalian spring on Parnassus; the term is ultimately derived from Aldhelm, who uses it to refer to the Muses.¹³⁶ In glossaries *castalidae* is sometimes glossed by *dun-ælf*a ('mountain-ælf'), where the mountain probably refers to Parnassus. The term *dun-ælf*a is probably a nonce-form and occurs nearly exclusively in glossaries.¹³⁷ However, it does suggest that *castalidas* was a known translation for the term *ælf*, and, given the exorcisms' context within the remedy for *ælf-sogoba*, it seems very likely that this is the intended meaning. This could be interpreted as evidence of belief in the elvish possession, and of the general synonymy of demons and elves in this period.¹³⁸ However, as noted by Hall, the fact that the remedy presents two separate formulas, one for a demon and one for elves, could suggest that these two causes needed to be treated separately.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the fact that while in one case we have the demon itself being expelled and in the other only the *attacks* of elves being expelled may reveal a fundamental difference between these afflictions. As the reference to *castalidas* does not occur in any other version of this exorcism, this appears to be evidence for how this type of formula could be adapted to a new context.

There are other examples of how this general exorcism formula was adapted within the remedy. The formula in the *Leofric Missal*, and the (nearly identical) formula found in the *Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, state that the demon is to be

¹³⁶ E. Thornbury, 'Aldhelm's Rejection of the Muses and the Mechanics of Poetic Inspiration in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007), 71–92, at 89–91.

¹³⁷ Hall, *Elves*, pp. 78–83; see also Shippey, 'Light-Elves, Dark-Elves, and Others', pp. 2–3. The only occurrence of this word outside of a glossary is in a passage from Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Enchiridion*. However, he also uses the term effectively as an intertextual gloss for *castalidae*: *Ic hate gewitan fram me þa meremen, þe synt sirene geciged, ond eac þa Castalidas nymphas (þæt synt dunylfa)* ('I order to leave from me those sea-people (who are called sirens), and also the Castalian nymphs (who are called *dunylfa*): *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, ed. P. S. Baker and M. Lapidge, EETS s.s. 15 (Oxford 1995), pp. 134–136, cited in Thornbury, 'Aldhelm's Rejection of the Muses', p. 91.

¹³⁸ See, for instance, Zavoti, 'Blame it on the Elves', pp. 74–75.

¹³⁹ Hall, *Elves*, p. 106.

expelled *per impositionem scripture huius et gustum aquae* ('by the placing of this writing and the taste of water'). Aside from the remedy for *ælf-sogopa*, none of the other versions of this exorcism include similar instructions. The phrase appears to some degree unusual in itself and does not regularly appear in exorcisms.¹⁴⁰ It appears to suggest that some type of writing, likely holy scripture, is placed on the sufferer prior to (or possibly during) the exorcism and that he or she is given to drink a sip of holy water as part of the ceremony.

However, in its place in the medical remedy, the phrase appears to take on a wholly different meaning. The instruction within the exorcism that it is to be done *per inpositionem huius scriptura* occurs in close proximity to instructions for creating a *gewrit* ('piece of writing') containing a string of somewhat scrambled Latin and Greek words. When the exorcism formula indicates that *this* writing is to be placed on the patient, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that this should refer to the piece of writing just prepared. This adaption is supported by the second exorcism formula in the remedy where *per impositionem scripture huius et gustum aquae* has been replaced with *per inpositionem huius scriptura et per gustum huius* ('through the placing of this writing and the tasting of this'). This formula is immediately preceded by a recipe for creating a herbal drink, and reference to this drink also immediately follows the formula. It seems very likely that this drink is the referent meant by *huius* ('this') in the formula. I would suggest that what we have here is an example of an exorcism formula being adapted to a specifically medical scenario. This would suggest the possibility for intersection between formal liturgical rituals and a medical procedure.

The other major difference between the exorcism within the remedy for *ælf-*

¹⁴⁰ I have not been able to find another example of its use in an exorcism formula. Its unusual nature is also remarked on by Nicholas Orchard in his edition of the *Leofric Missal*, vol. I, p. 112.

sogoba and how this remedy occurs in other sources is that the final part of the remedy has been reduced. Although the other extant versions of this formula vary to some degree from one to another, all other versions continue beyond the listing of physical body parts to include non-corporeal aspects. This can be seen in the *Leofric Missal*'s instruction that the demon also be expelled *de sensu, de cogitationibus, de omni conuersatione* ('from the senses, from the thoughts, from all habits'). Some other versions also include *de verbis* ('from words') and *de operibus* ('from deeds') to this list.¹⁴¹ Sims-Williams has argued that these non-corporeal elements formed a part of the exorcism in its original form.¹⁴² With the single exception of *anima* ('spirit/mind'), which is listed alongside parts of the body, the *Leechbook III* exorcism excludes these elements to focus entirely on the physical. It is possible this was not a deliberate choice and could reflect changes in an exemplar of the exorcism prior to its inclusion in this remedy. Yet is it also possible that this could be yet another adaptation of this formula to a specific medical scenario. As previously argued, the symptoms of *ælf-sogoba* appear to be physical rather than mental, in which case the author of the remedy might have viewed the more psychological elements of the exorcism unimportant.

The inclusion of this exorcism formula within the remedy for *ælf-sogoba* is noteworthy. It provides an example of how contemporary ecclesiastical ritual could be specifically adapted for a medical scenario. References to elves normally occur only within poetic or medical texts from Anglo-Saxon England and are not treated in ecclesiastical texts. However in this remedy we see a traditional exorcism adapted

¹⁴¹ These are the versions found in the *Stowe Missal*, and the *Antiphonary of Bangor*.

¹⁴² Sims-Williams, 'Thought, Word, Deed', p. 90. He lists this among some of the earliest evidence for the use of the 'thought, word, deed' triad in liturgical sources.

specifically to a medical condition related to *ælf*.¹⁴³ As has been seen, however, the revision of this exorcism is deeper than simply changing the addressee, and involves altering the nucleus of the ritual to include a herbal drink and written incantation, both of which would normally have no place in an ecclesiastical ritual. Rather than simply including liturgical elements, such as holy water or incense, this remedy effectively creates a medical *ordo* for treatment of the disease that includes both prayers and actions. However, it should be stressed that this remedy is unique among the remedies examined in this chapter in doing so. It seems clear that ecclesiastical ritual was not necessary for treating elf or demon-related ailments in the medical texts, although the inclusion of sacramentals such as holy water were clearly seen to be beneficial in many cases. The inclusion of this ritual in the remedy for *ælf-sogoba* confirms the unusual nature of this remedy (and that for *wæter-elf-adl*) among the remedies for elves in the medical collections, not only for being otherwise unattested conditions, but also for their elaborate descriptions of symptoms and the careful and complex treatments offered. Nevertheless the remedy for *ælf-sogoba* shows the possibility for the fusion of medical and ecclesiastical ritual, and illustrates how this might look in practice.

The Testimony of *Leechbook III*

Although the shortest of the Old English medical collections, *Leechbook III* provides an invaluable testament to facets of medical practice in Anglo-Saxon medicine.

¹⁴³ The only other example similar to this from Anglo-Saxon England occurs in the Royal Prayerbook, which contains an adjuration that begins: *adiuro te satanae diabolus aelfae* ('I conjure you, Satan, devil, elves'). The Royal Prayerbook is also known to be the most medically concerned of the early Insular prayerbooks, which might suggest a similar type of adaption of an existing formula: *The Prayer Book of Aedelwald the Bishop, Commonly Called the Book of Cerne*, ed. A. B. Kuypers (Cambridge, 1902), p. 221. The translation is with reference to Simek's in 'Elves and Exorcism', p. 43. Simek argues that *aelfae* should be read as a vocative, rather than Hall's suggestion that it is a genitive singular modelled after *satanae*, cf. Hall, *Elves*, p. 72.

While containing the short, Latinate remedies common to all the medical collections, *Leechbook III* contains our greatest testament to a category of diseases seen to be caused by *maran*, *nihtgengan*, and *ælf*. Although these types of ailments occur in the other medical collections, they do so only rarely and sporadically. Without *Leechbook III* it would be impossible make general inferences about these ailments and how they might have been treated.

From the evidence of *Leechbook III* we are able to conclude that there was a consistent approach to these ailments, one that is also attested in *Bald's Leechbook*. In these remedies we can see that a certain core group of herbs was used in the treatment of these ailments.¹⁴⁴ An analysis of the twelve remedies related to elves in *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook III* also highlights the exceptional nature of the *Lacnunga's* remedy *Wið færstice*. Although this is indisputably the most famous 'elf-remedy' from the medical corpus, and comprises the first entry discussed in Hall and Jolly's books on elves, we should not take this remedy as typical of medical responses to elves in the Anglo-Saxon period. Although the attraction of the vibrant narrative in this remedy is obvious, it stands in distinction to the majority of remedies involving *ælf* that contain herbal cures accompanied by simple rituals including the sign of cross or the use of holy water. Indeed, the singularity of the testimony of the *Lacnunga* in regards to these types of diseases is only made clear when the Old English medical collections are treated individually, rather than as one homogenous body of evidence.

The testimony of *Leechbook III* also provides evidence of the interrelation of traditional figures such as *ælf* and the Christian demonic within the practical sphere of medicine. The remedies of *Leechbook III* point towards a significant overlap

¹⁴⁴ For a discussion of where else these herbs tend to occur, see p. 102.

between these types of afflictions, as they frequently receive the same type of treatment and occasionally are even featured within the same remedy. The fact that these afflictions are treated with the same group of herbs, but without the presence of exorcism, furthermore suggests that the traditional paradigm of elves undergoing ‘demonisation’ after the coming of Christianity, and the assertion that ‘elf-shot’ was ‘the same as demonical possession’, at best represent only a partial truths. There is in fact very little evidence that elf-related diseases were seen as instances of possession by an indwelling spirit, in need of exorcising. The medical texts appear to testify instead to demons that are being treated with remedies for elves. If elves were indeed undergoing the process of being demonised, it appears demons were also being ‘elfified’.¹⁴⁵ The permeability of the terms for *ælf*e (‘elves’) and demons in the Old English medical texts is yet another testimony to the syncretic nature of Anglo-Saxon culture and society.

Finally, *Leechbook III* complements the testimony of the other medical collections in its incorporation of liturgical elements and ritual into the process of medical treatment. This incorporation could involve the use of individual rituals or elements associated with the Church, such as holy water, holy salt, and certain prayers, but could also extend to the inclusion and adaptation of complex rites to the specific needs of a medical environment, as is seen in the remedy of *ælf-sogoba*. In this way, *Leechbook III* can assist our understanding of the potential for interaction between these two spheres of influence in this period.

In these ways, *Leechbook III* forms an important and unique addition to the surviving medical corpus from Anglo-Saxon England. Scholars have been too quick to link this collection to the *Lacnunga*, simply because both contain unusual or non-

¹⁴⁵ This type of paradigm might also explain the general lack of exorcism accounts in hagiography and preaching material dating from after the eighth century. For a discussion of this trend, see Dendle, *Demon Possession*, pp. 149–174.

Latinized material. Nor should it be viewed as ‘bridge text’ between *Bald’s Leechbook* and the *Lacnunga*.¹⁴⁶ Instead *Leechbook III* should be evaluated as a collection in its own right, different in character, and offering its own testimony to facets of Anglo-Saxon medicine under-represented in the other collections.

¹⁴⁶ R. S. Nokes, ‘The Old English Charms and Their Manuscript Context: British Library Royal 12 D. XVII and British Library Harley 585’, unpublished PhD dissertation (Wayne State University, 2002), p. 122. See also D’Aronco, ‘L’erbario anglosassone’, pp. 337–338.

Chapter 3: The *Lacnunga* and Insular *Grammatica*

This chapter will introduce the medical collection commonly known as the *Lacnunga*. This text has frequently been treated as somewhat different in character from the other collections in scholarship. Indeed, it contains a larger share of non-medical material than the other collections, which has led Debby Banham to argue that the title *Lacnunga* ('remedies') is actually a misnomer and that it might have been compiled for a different reason (such as antiquarian or anthropological) rather than strictly medical.¹ However, the differences separating this collection from *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook III* have typically been framed in terms of the superstitious versus the rational. Cameron, for instance, described the *Lacnunga* as 'invaluable as a source of superstitious medicine', but lamented that 'it nowhere reflects the best Anglo-Saxon medical practice.'² Although some have found the 'superstitious' nature of the collection as worthy of praise rather than censure, this general portrayal has characterised much scholarship of the collection.³

The impression that the *Lacnunga* is more superstitious and less rational than the rest of the Old English medical corpus is largely drawn from the fact that it contains less strictly medical material as well as a comparative profusion of certain forms of entries; these include prayers and liturgical material in Latin, remedies containing passages in exotic languages (most notably cures written in Old Irish) and

¹ Banham, 'Attribution and Authority in Old English Medical Texts', pp. 59–60.

² Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 47.

³ Singer, for instance, described the collection as 'our best source of the primitive medicine of this country untouched by Christian influence' (Singer, 'Early English Magic and Medicine', p. 342). See also Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 25; Talbot, *Medicine in Medieval England*, p. 23; Flint, *Rise of Magic*, pp. 312–313.

remedies written in Old English poetic metre. All of these varieties of cures occur more frequently within the *Lacnunga* than within the other medical collections in Old English.

This chapter will consider this text, and in particular the types of remedies most distinctive of this collection, in their wider context within Anglo-Saxon England. I will propose that the varieties of cures typical of the *Lacnunga* do not solely exhibit superstitious or ‘magical’ interests on the part of the compiler, as has been suggested, but that these remedies instead demonstrate a common belief in the healing power of words alongside an interest in language, letters, and the alphabet. I will further suggest that these general preoccupations can be best understood in the context of early Insular conceptions of *grammatica*. The second part of the chapter will examine this hypothesis through an exploration of these themes in the *Lacnunga* and related texts from Anglo-Saxon England, in particular MS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41. Finally, I will consider what type of cultural and intellectual milieu might have allowed for the creation of this distinctive collection.

Introducing the Text

The BL manuscript Harley 585 is significant for containing two distinct collections of medical material: it begins with a copy of the *Old English Pharmacopeia*, which is followed immediately by a second, independent collection of cures in Old English. This second text is the only extant copy of the medical collection known to scholars today as the *Lacnunga*. ‘Lacnunga’ is the Old English word for ‘remedies’, a title given to the collection by Cockayne, who first edited the text in the 1860s. Ker dates the majority of the manuscript to x/xi, with the table of contents to the *Herbarium*

and the final part of the *Lacnunga* as perhaps slightly later (xi¹).⁴ Pettit concurs with this date, adding, ‘a late tenth- to mid-eleventh-century date accords with the predominately late OE linguistic features of the *Lacn.*’⁵ This dating would position the compilation of the *Lacnunga* as very likely later than *Bald’s Leechbook*, and perhaps not too distant in time from the translation of the *Herbarium Complex*.⁶

The majority of remedies found in the *Lacnunga* are the simple, herbal remedies common in some percentage to each of the Old English medical collections.⁷ That many remedies found in the *Lacnunga* have variant versions in the other Old English medical collections (38 or 39 are shared with *Bald’s Leechbook* and 9 with *Leechbook III*) indicates that the compiler (or possibly compilers) was drawing, in part at least, on the same body of pre-translated cures used by the compilers of these other texts, even if more non-medical material has been included.⁸ The handling of these short remedies in the two collections is more a question of organisation than of character, as the complex system of organisation observed in *Bald’s Leechbook* or *The Old English Herbarium* is lacking in the *Lacnunga*. There seems to be some tendency on the part of the *Lacnunga*’s compiler(s) to group similar remedies together, and at the beginning he appears to attempt a head-to-toe order, but this is not consistent throughout.⁹ Additionally, unlike the other medical collections, it lacks a table of contents. For that reason, several scholars have argued that the *Lacnunga* may never have been intended to be

⁴ Ker no. 231.

⁵ One exception to this, Pettit notes, is the *Lorica of Laidcenn*, which linguistically appears to be much earlier (*LAC*, vol. I, pp.135 and 201). Citations in Pettit’s edition are generally given by entry number in Roman numerals. Translations given from the *Lacnunga* are also Pettit’s unless otherwise stated; translations from other sources are my own unless otherwise stated.

⁶ For a discussion of the dating of the *Old English Pharmacopeia*, see Chapter 4, pp. 183–188, 202–209.

⁷ For further discussion, see Chapter 1, pp. 46–54.

⁸ *LAC*, vol. I, pp. 163–165; Meaney, ‘Variant Versions’, pp. 238–239. Meaney’s table records 39 remedies from the *Lacnunga* found in the *Leechbook*, and Pettit’s similar table records 38 variants with 2 additional possible variants. The count for *Leechbook III* is taken from Pettit’s table.

⁹ *LAC*, vol. I, p. 159.

a polished collection like the Leechbooks or the *Old English Herbarium*, but instead more of a commonplace book or notebook.¹⁰

The short, simple remedies found in the *Lacnunga* are primarily translated from Latin sources and are similar to those dealt with in the previous chapters. Significantly, the majority of remedies discussed in those chapters were presented as Old English prose. Indeed, this is the form taken by the majority of remedies in the Old English medical corpus. However, certain types of non-standard remedies are particularly common in the *Lacnunga*; these include remedies in Latin or containing sections in other languages foreign to Anglo-Saxon England, as well as remedies in Old English poetic metre. The following section will begin by introducing these various types of remedies, before considering their wider manuscript context.

***Lacnunga* Remedies Not Expressed in Old English Prose**

This section will offer a brief introduction to the content of the *Lacnunga* through an examination of some of its characteristic remedies. These remedies are noteworthy for representing a deviation from the most typical form taken by remedies in the Old English medical corpus: Old English prose. Although these remedies distinguish themselves by their form, they comprise an array of different types of texts, ranging from remedies calling for the recitation of Latin prayers or psalms, to garbled incantations in Old Irish or other languages, to pieces of Old English written in alliterative verse. It would be foolish to suggest that these various pieces represent a single category of remedy or that they are likely to have been regarded as similar by an Anglo-Saxon audience. However, by deviating from the standard form of Old English prose, these various types of remedies all suggest, beyond their content, that

¹⁰ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 46; *LAC*, vol. I, p. xlvi.

the words and language employed in the remedy are themselves important. This section will offer a brief survey of some of these cures, with more extensive examples being given in the sections following.

I will begin with Latin remedies. At first glance, the increased presence of Latin text in the *Lacnunga* is conspicuous. Although *Bald's Leechbook* and the *Old English Herbarium* draw significantly upon Latin sources, the preponderance of these texts are written in Old English. While Old English is still the primary language of the *Lacnunga*, more than 40 of the *Lacnunga's* 190 remedies are in Latin or call for the recitation of Latin words.¹¹ Latin, of course, was not the native language of the Anglo-Saxons. It was, however, the language of the universal Church and of literary education more generally. Because of its relationship to the Church, Latin was widely considered to be one of the *tres linguae sacrae* ('three sacred languages'), alongside Greek and Hebrew. These languages were considered 'not only as the languages of scholarship, but in a deeper, mystical way as *tres linguae sacrae*, sacred indeed, because they were employed in the supscription of the cross of Christ'.¹² This trinity of languages held significance since the Patristic period, but were particularly revered in the early Insular Church.¹³ The employment of all three sacred languages is found in the *Lacnunga*,¹⁴ but Latin is by far the most common and extensively used. Because of its status as the language of the Church and of intellectual thought in the West, it would also have been certainly the most familiar to any literate user or reader.

¹¹ This is in comparison to eight such treatments in *Bald's Leechbook* and two in the *Old English Herbarium*. These numbers are my own estimate and do not include treatments where the names of herbs, ingredients, or illnesses are given in Latin.

¹² R. E. McNally, 'The *Tres Linguae Sacrae* in Early Irish Biblical Exegesis', *Theological Studies* 19 (1958), 395–403, at 395.

¹³ For more information, see D. R. Howlett, "'Tres Linguae Sacrae" and Threefold Play in Insular Latin', *Peritia* 16 (2002), 94–115; McNally, 'The *Tres Linguae Sacrae*', pp. 395–396.

¹⁴ See below, pp. 140–142.

Much of the Latin employed in the remedies of the *Lacnunga* is closely related to liturgy and common prayers of the early medieval Church. The *Pater Noster* and the *Credo* are the most frequently called for Latin prayers. Additionally, calls for ten separate Latin psalms occur throughout the text.¹⁵ Aside from specific prayers, some remedies also call for readings from the Gospels or Old Testament, from the divine office, from the prayers and hymns used during the celebration of mass, or the recitation of litanies. These recitations are hardly ever given in full, and instead are referred to by name or by their first words.¹⁶ Entry XXIX provides a good example of how prayers and passages are referenced in some of the remedies:

Pis is se halga drænc wið ælfsidene ond wið eallum feondes costungum:
Writ on husldisce: ‘In principio erat uerbum’ usque ‘non comprehenderunt’,
et plura ‘Et circumibat Ihesus totam Galileam docens’ usque ‘et secuti sunt
eum / turbe multe’; ‘Deus in nomine tuo’ usque in finem; ‘Deus misereatur
nobis’ usque in finem; ‘Domine Deus in adiutorium’ usque in finem.

Nim cristallan ond disman ond sidewaran ond cassuc ond finol, ond nim
sester fulne gehalgodes wines; ond hat unmælnne mon gefeccean swigende
ongean streame healfne sester yrnendes wæteres; nim þonne ond lege ða
wyrta ealle in þæt wæter ond þweah þæt gewrit of ðan husldisce þærin swiðe
clæne; geot þonne þæt gehalgade win ufon on ðæt oþer.

Ber þon to ciricean; læt singan mæssan ofer, ane / ‘Omnibus’, oðre ‘Contra
tribulatione’, þridan ‘Sancta Marian’.

Sing ðas gebedsealmas: ‘Miserere mei Deus’, ‘Deus in nomine tuo’, ‘Deus
misereatur nobis’, ‘Domine Deus’, ‘Inclina Domine’, ond ‘Credo’, ond
‘Gloria in excelsis Deo’, ond letanias, ‘Pater noster’; ond bletsa georne in
ælmihhtiges Drihtnes naman ond cweð, ‘In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus
Sancti sit benedictum’; bruc syþþan.¹⁷

¹⁵ This estimation relies on Pettit’s identification of psalms in the commentary to his edition. It is possible that other psalms also occur in the text but that references to them are corrupted or unclear.

¹⁶ For instance, *LAC*, vol. I, CXXXIII. This is a remedy against lung-disease in cattle requires the practitioner to *sing ymb þone ceap*: ‘*Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore*’ usque in finem, ond ‘*Benedicte*’ ond letanias ond ‘*Pater noster*’. *Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore* are the first words to Vulgate Psalm 33, *Benedicte* is a reference to Vulgate Daniel 3: 57–90, *letanias* or litanies refers to series of specific prayers; the *Pater Noster* is the ‘Our Father’ prayer from the Gospel of Mathew, ch. 6 (citations follow Douay-Rheims).

¹⁷ *LAC*, vol. I, XXIX.

‘This is the holy drink for (?)elfish magic and for all the temptations of the Devil:

In this example, the recitations required are referred to in a kind of shorthand, rather than given in full (these types of shortened forms are also found in liturgical books and preaching materials). Thus the use of many of these cures would require either a reasonable degree of training or the availability of a variety of religious texts to the practitioner.

In other instances passages of Latin prose or poetry are found quoted in their entirety in the *Lacnunga*. The longest, and most famous, of these texts is the Hiberno-Latin prayer known as the *Lorica of Laidcenn*. This long metrical prayer concerns itself with bodily and spiritual health and was probably written in Ireland in the seventh century.¹⁸ This prayer and the influence of Hiberno-Latin on the *Lacnunga* will be discussed at greater length below, as will some other Latin passages which are found in the collection and drawn from a variety of ecclesiastical or devotional texts.

The use of Latin in these remedies signals their status as prayers and has a clear association with the power of God to bring about healing through the instruments of the Church. However, there also appears to be a recognition of Latin as a sacred language, its words becoming powerful in their own right. This is particularly evident in some cures where Latin words or saints' names are used

Write on a paten: "In the beginning was the word" as far as "comprehended it not", and furthermore "And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching" as far as "and great crowds followed him"; "God in your name" until the end; "May God have mercy on us" until the end; "Lord God to my aid" until the end. Take "crystallium" and *disme* and zedoary and *cassuc* and fennel, and take a full sextarius of consecrated wine; and have a virgin fetch in silence against the current half a sextarius of running water; then take and place all the plants in the water and wash the writing off the inside of the paten very cleanly; then pour the consecrated wine from above onto the other [liquid].

Then carry it to the church; have masses sung over it, first "By all [the saints]", second "Against trouble", third "Holy Mary".

Sing these precatory psalms: "God have mercy on me", "God in your name", "May God have mercy on us", "Lord God", "Turn, Lord", and the Creed, and "Glory to God in the highest", and litanies, the Our Father; and zealously bless [it] in the name of the almighty God and say, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit let it be blessed"; then use it.'

¹⁸ This prayer has sometimes been attributed to Gildas and known under the name *Lorica Gildae*, but this attribution is very likely incorrect; see M. Herren, 'The Authorship, Date of Composition and Provenance of the so-called *Lorica Gildae*', *Eriu* 24 (1973), 35–51.

totemically, for instance, the use of the names of the four evangelists (or a Latin phrase which includes their names) which appear in several entries, in one case with the instruction that they be written on a stick used in a remedy.¹⁹ The same notion seems to be present when short Latin phrases and allusions are appended to otherwise vernacular remedies.²⁰

The other two ‘holy languages’ also occur, albeit infrequently, in remedies in the collection. This infrequency is no doubt partially due to the fact that knowledge of Greek and Hebrew was extremely limited in the Anglo-Saxon period, and tended to be confined to the knowledge of specific words without an understanding of syntax.²¹ This limited knowledge of Hebrew and Greek is probably at least one factor in influencing the fact that the remedies employing words in these languages are normally exceedingly garbled and difficult to understand. It appears that someone involved in producing the Old English medical collections knew Greek, as Latinised Greek words are often translated correctly (for instance, in the long passages of *Bald’s Leechbook*). However, the garbled nature of these remedies in the *Lacnunga* makes it doubtful that the meaning of their words would have been understood, even by an exceptionally learned reader. It appears that the words themselves, rather than their meaning, were the locus of power in the remedy.²²

Greek occurs alongside Latin in remedy LXXXVIII, *wið omum ond blegnu[m]* (‘For erysipelas and boils’) which reads: *Cristus natus aaius sanctus a Cristus passus aaius a Cristus resurrexit a mortuis aaius sanctus aa superare*

¹⁹ *LAC*, vol. I, LXIII. Other uses of the names of the four evangelists include: CXXXVI, XXXI.

²⁰ For instance *in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti* is sometimes appended to incantations otherwise in Old English or Old Irish; the Hebrew term ‘amen’ is used similarly. For examples, see *LAC*, vol. I, XXII, XXV, XXXI, LXIV, LXXXVI, CXLIX, CXXVI.

²¹ M. C. Bodden, ‘Evidence for Knowledge of Greek in Anglo-Saxon England’, *ASE* 17 (1988), 217–246; D. Fleming, “‘The Most Exalted Language’: Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of Hebrew”, unpublished PhD dissertation (Toronto, 2006).

²² For a discussion of these unintelligible texts, see L. Arnovick, *Written Reliquaries: The Resonance of Orality in Medieval English Texts* (Amsterdam, 2006), ‘Speaking Gibberish’, pp. 27–59.

potens. ‘Aaius’ appears to be a misspelling of the Greek ἅγιος.²³ The Greek letter omega is also evident in remedy LXXXI: *writ ðis ondlang ða earmas wiþ dweorh: +T+ Aω. ond gnid cyleðenigean on ealað; Sanctus Macutus, Sancte Uictorici.*²⁴ Other exotic tongues are discernible amidst other of the remedies. Greek, Hebrew, and possibly Aramaic all appear to occur in remedy CLX. This remedy purports to record the content of a letter sent from heaven that will cure diarrhoea.²⁵ The letter reads:

Ranmigan adonai. Eltheos. mur. O ineffabile. O miginan. midanmian. misane. / dimas. mode. mida. memagartem. Orta min. sigmone. beronice. irritas. uenas quasi dulap̄. feruor. fruxantis. sanguinis. siccatur. fla. fracta. frigula. mir gui. etsihdon. segulta. frautantur. in arno. midomnis. abar utho. sydone. multo. saccula pp pppp. sother. sother. miserere mei Deus Deus mini. Deus mei. AMEN. Alleluia, Alleluia.²⁶

According to Pettit, *ranmigan adonai* can be translated as ‘shout, my shield is the Lord God’ in Hebrew, and the Greek *theos* is probably intended in *Eltheo*. He also suggests that *etsihdon. segulta* might translate as Latin *et* (and) and Aramaic *saderian segulta* (‘send us a remedy’) and *mur* might correspond to the aramaic *mar* (‘Lord’), although these connections are not certain.²⁷ Additionally, several Latin words are easily discernible in this same remedy.

²³ *LAC*, vol. I, LXXXVIII.

²⁴ *LAC*, vol. I and II, LXXXI. ‘Write this along arms for fever: +T+ ωA. And (?)crush greater celandine in ale; Saint Machutus, Saint Victoricus’. An expanded version of this follows later in the remedy: T + p + T + N + ω + T + UI + M + ωA.

²⁵ For a background on heavenly letters as a wider genre, see R. Hebing, ‘The Textual Tradition of Heavenly Letters Charms in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts’, in *Secular Learning in Anglo-Saxon England: Exploring the Vernacular*, ed. L. S. Chardonnens and B. Carella (Amsterdam, 2012), pp. 203–222.

²⁶ *LAC*, vol. I, CLX.

²⁷ *LAC*, vol. II, CLX. Pettit is reliant for this suggestion on an article by Magoun who cites his personal correspondence with H. A. Wilson of Harvard University: F. Magoun, ‘Zu den ae. Zaubersprüchen’, *Archiv für der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 171 (1937), 17–35, at 32. However, I have discussed these terms with an expert in Aramaic (Dr Salam Rassi) and he expressed doubts that *etsihdon. segulta* derives from Aramaic, unless possibly *segulta* is a corruption of Syriac *asyuta* (‘remedy’). *Mar* (‘Lord’), however, which occurs in First Corinthians 16:22 (*maran atha*, ‘Come, Lord!’), may well be the intended meaning of *mur* as it occurs in what is apparently a list of terms for God, although this may well have been taken for Hebrew by a medieval readership.

However, more commonly than Greek or Hebrew, Old Irish is likely to appear in these unintelligible types of cures. By my own measure, I have counted eleven cures in the *Lacnunga* that either involve the recitation of words that are either completely incomprehensible or are in languages foreign to England.²⁸ Out of these eleven, six have been discerned by earlier scholars to be likely to contain Old Irish words.²⁹ This is a markedly higher percentage than in the other medical collections, which only contain two such cures combined. One of the clearest examples of this is found in *Lacnunga* entry XXVI:

Wið ðon þe mon oððe nyten wrym gedrince, gyf hyt sy wæpnedcynnes sing ðis leoð in þæt swiðre eare þe heræfter awriten is; gif hit sy wifcynnes sing in þæt wynstre eare: ‘Gonomil orgomil marbumil marbsai ramum tofeð tengo docuillo biran cuiðær cæfmiil scuiht cuillo scuiht cuib duill marbsiramum.’ Sing nygon/ siðan in þæt eare þis galdor ond ‘Pater noster’ æne.³⁰

The majority of the words of the song in the centre of this remedy have been reconstructed, with some emendation, from Old Irish. Pettit, drawing on the work of scholars of Old Irish,³¹ offers a tentative translation:

I wound the animal, I hit the animal, I kill the animal. Kill the (?)persistent creature! Its tongue will fall out. I destroy the little spear with verse. Against the (?)dear-beast (?)An ending. I destroy. (?)An ending. (?to the) (?)dear-animal. Kill the (?)persistent creature!³²

However, as in several of the remedies seen above, the Old Irish appearing in these charms is most often corrupted to the point of near or total unintelligibility. It seems

²⁸ These are entries XXII, XXV, XXVI, LXIII, LXXXIII, CXXXVII, CLIV, CLX, CLXIV, CLXVIII, and CLXXXII. However entries LXXXVIII, and CLXV might be considered borderline cases that come much closer to being comprehensible with only a few illegible or foreign words. In her chapter on ‘Speaking Gibberish’, Leslie Arnovick counts 17 such ‘gibberish charms’. However, her criteria are slightly different from mine here. In particular, she includes those remedies where a meaning has been fairly clearly established by scholars or where a single word is unintelligible. Arnovick, *Written Reliquaries*, pp. 43–46.

²⁹ H. Meroney, ‘Irish in the Old English Charms’, *Speculum* 20 (1945), 172–182; H. Zimmer, ‘Keltische Studien, 13. Ein altirischer Zauberspruch aus der Vikingerzeit’, *KZ* 33 (1895), 141–153.

³⁰ *LAC*, vol. I, XXVI. ‘In the event that man or beast drinks an insect, if it is male sing this song which is written hereafter into the right ear; if it is female sing it into the left ear. *Gonomil orgomil marbumil marbsai ramum tofeð tengo docuillo biran cuiðær cæfmiil scuiht cuillo scuiht cuib duill marbsiramum*. Sing this incantation nine times into the ear and the Our Father once’.

³¹ Cf. Meroney, ‘Irish in the Old English Charms’; Zimmer, ‘Ein altirischer Zauberspruch’.

³² *LAC*, vol. II, XXVI.

unlikely that even an Anglo-Saxon medical practitioner with some knowledge of Irish would have been able to understand the literal meaning of these cures. What is more likely is that, when articulated, these cures would have carried a generally exotic 'Irish sound' to their reciters. Pettit suggests that the reasons for the inclusion of these cures could possibly stem from folk belief in the healthfulness of Ireland; he cites Bede's description of Ireland as a land whose very air drives away snakes, and whose products are useful against poison.³³ However, one would not have to look far for reasons why 'Irish-ish' might have been an appealing sound to an Anglo-Saxon listener, as in the early centuries particularly of the Anglo-Saxon period the Irish were distinguished for their great learning and erudition. The significance of Irish influence upon the *Lacnunga* will be discussed in greater depth later in the chapter.

There is a final category of remedies found within the *Lacnunga* that differs from the standard format of Old English prose. These remedies are not distinguished by language, but by form. These are remedies found written in Old English alliterative verse. There are by my count seven entries in the *Lacnunga* containing discernible Old English verse. This is an exceptionally high number in comparison to the other Old English medical collections. The metrical remedies found in the *Lacnunga* differ from one another substantially in both purpose and form, apparently treating a wide variety of ailments or conditions. These seven entries are easily the most studied texts in the *Lacnunga*. Though clearly different from the remedies discussed above, the fact that these remedies (or, in some cases, parts of these remedies) are written in verse again seems to indicate a level of importance being attached to the form and words in these remedies above and beyond their semantic

³³ Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave (Oxford, 1969), bk. 1.1, cited in *LAC*, vol. I, XXXI.

content. Several examples of this type of remedy will be discussed later in this chapter.

This has only been a very brief survey of the varied and complex contents of this collection. However, even such a brief survey is suggestive that a general preoccupation with words, language, and esoteric knowledge is characteristic of the *Lacnunga* to an extent not found in the other Old English medical collections. The next part of this chapter will attempt to situate this collection of remedies, first by exploring its manuscript context and then by addressing its broader literary background.

Manuscript Context and MS CCCC 41

As a compilation of pieces taken from other texts and collections, the *Lacnunga* forms the centre of an intricate web of connections to other texts from Anglo-Saxon England. Pettit, in his edition, offers a list of 27 Anglo-Saxon manuscripts containing sources, variant versions, or analogues to remedies found in Harley 585.³⁴ Pettit writes that the predominant dialect of the text is Late West Saxon, although ‘such clusters of linguistic features untypical of LWS—combined with the haphazard ordering and presentation of the text in MS—lend support to the common opinion that the compiler(s)/scribe(s) of the *Lacn.* were working from more than one (and probably many) exemplars, which may well have had distinguishing linguistic features.’³⁵ This proliferation of relationships can make drawing closer connections, assessing provenance, and dating the compilation more difficult. In such a varied compilation of sources, it is easy to over-value the significance of particular analogues. Bearing this in mind, however, I will tentatively put forward the case for

³⁴ See *LAC*, vol. I, pp. 151–157.

³⁵ *LAC*, vol. I, p. 201.

the relationship of the *Lacnunga* to certain texts, with the ultimate goal of envisioning the type of *milieu* in which the development of such a collection could take place.

MS Cambridge Corpus Christi College 41 is most famous for containing a copy of the Old English version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*.³⁶ However, it has also long been of interest to scholars for a collection of entries in its wide, ruled margins. Almost all of these entries appear to have been written by a single scribe, but one distinct from the two scribes responsible for copying the Old English *Bede*.³⁷ It has been proposed that the margins in the manuscript functioned as a sort of archive for storing and organising texts.³⁸ The contents of this marginal archive are varied but not unrelated, with entries being written both in Old English and in Latin. Grant describes the Old English contents as being: six charms, selections from a martyrology, a portion of the *Solomon and Saturn*, six homilies, rubrics for Latin masses and for Latin charms, the *Metrical Epilogue* to the *Ecclesiastical History*, and the record in Old English of the gift to Exeter. In Latin there is also a version of the record of the gift to Exeter as well as five charms, church offices, and rubrics for two of the Old English homilies.³⁹ In his *Catalogue*, Ker dates these marginal additions to s. xi¹ or xi (med).⁴⁰ This dating is similar to the proposed dating of the *Lacnunga*, although potentially slightly later, and the content of these marginal additions bears a similarity to some portions of the *Lacnunga*, particularly the

³⁶ Ker no. 32; G&L no. 39.

³⁷ S. M. Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 23–24; see also R. Grant, *Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41: The Loricis and the Missal* (Amsterdam, 1979), p. 1.

³⁸ See S. Keefer, 'Margin as Archive: The Liturgical Marginalia of a Manuscript of the Old English Bede', *Traditio* 51 (1996), 147–177, at 148–149. For an exploration of the relationship between the marginal additions and the *Old English Bede*, see K. Olsen, 'Thematic Affinities between the Non-Liturgical Marginalia and the *Old English Bede* in Cambridge Corpus Christi College 41', in *Practice and Learning: The Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. R. H. Bremmer Jr. and K. Dekker (Paris, 2010), pp. 133–145.

³⁹ Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Ker no. 32.

classes of remedies mentioned above. The relationship between these two texts has never been thoroughly explored, yet there are multiple points of comparison between MSS CCCC 41 and Harley 585 with regard to both the general characteristics shared between the two manuscripts and in individual entries and sources.⁴¹

The marginal additions of CCCC 41 and the Harley 585 both represent eclectic collections of various types of texts. Of course, the *Lacnunga* is, first and foremost, a remedy collection. Nearly all of its two hundred entries relate in some way to either spiritual or physical health.⁴² However, as we have seen, the form taken by its entries ranges widely, from simple herbal remedies to long metrical incantations in Old English, to Latin prayers, to extracts from liturgical rites, to passages in Old Irish. The compiler of CCCC 41 also apparently had no qualms about collecting seemingly incongruous pieces: storing prayers, incantations, homilies, and liturgical rubrics all in one place; placing Latin texts side by side with vernacular.⁴³

Indeed, the aims of the two collections may not be as distant as they appear at first glance. Grant proposed that the liturgical material found in the margins of CCCC 41 was perhaps copied from an otherwise no-longer extant Anglo-Saxon missal.⁴⁴ This theory, however, has been rejected by Keefer and Jolly, both of whom consider the liturgical material to be derived from a variety of texts.⁴⁵ Jolly argues that the wide variety of apparently disparate types of texts in the collection is instead motivated by the broader theme of protection and protective texts:

⁴¹ Jolly has alluded to some similarities between these collections but has not explored them in detail: K. Jolly, 'On the Margins of Orthodoxy: Devotional Formulas and Protective Prayers in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41', in *Signs on the Edge: Space, Text and Margins in Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. S. L. Keefer and H. Bremmer (Leuven, 2007), pp. 135–183, at 160.

⁴² An exception is *LAC*, vol. I, CLI. This entry is a prayer for the consecration of a church, and, although ultimately related to spiritual health, this could not be classified as a 'remedy'.

⁴³ Jolly, 'On the Margins of Orthodoxy', pp. 145–146.

⁴⁴ Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Keefer, 'Margin as Archive', p. 148; Jolly, 'On the Margins of Orthodoxy', pp. 142–143.

Viewing the Latin and Old English formulas together regardless of their liturgical pedigree reveals that the protection theme is central not only in placement but in the way it connects the earlier liturgical and later homiletic strands. Inter-related elements of protection from spiritual forces visible in CCCC 41's marginalia include the Pater Noster, the cross, the Resurrection and Last Judgment, and angelic beings.⁴⁶

A similar perspective is shared by Richard Johnson who examines the protective presence of angels in several of the marginal texts.⁴⁷ Considered in this light, the collection of texts found in the margins of CCCC 41 perhaps reflects interests not so different from those of the *Lacnunga*. In the following sections of this chapter I will explore the relationship between these two manuscripts, beginning with content shared between the two collections, before looking more broadly at their shared sources. Finally, these collections will be considered within the wider context of literary production in Anglo-Saxon England.

The *Lacnunga* and CCCC 41: Variant Versions

Grant describes CCCC 41 as having eleven charms, six in Old English (three of which have some Latin passages) and five in Latin.⁴⁸ The Old English charms deal with a variety of topics including eye ache, protection against theft of one's possessions, theft of bees, and protection on a journey. The Latin formulae deal with a variety of medical conditions including eye soreness, ear soreness, stomach sickness, and one that is against the cruelty of all enemies (*wið ealra feonda grimnessum*); finally there is an incantation for giving birth that includes the 'sator' formula.⁴⁹ Many of these remedies are comparable to types of passages found in the

⁴⁶ Jolly, 'On the Margins of Orthodoxy', p. 145.

⁴⁷ R. Johnson, 'Archangel in the Margins: St. Michael in the Homilies of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41', *Traditio* 53 (1998), 63–91, at 67–69.

⁴⁸ Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, p. 2.

⁴⁹ The 'sator' formula is an ancient palindrome reading 'sator arepo tenet opera rotas'. The origins of the formula are unknown; the earliest known version was found carved on a column in Pompeii. The

Lacnunga or in the Old English medical corpus more broadly. However, three in particular are of interest to this study because they have variant versions in the *Lacnunga*. In my discussion below I will be referring only to the most pertinent parts of these passages, but their full text is listed alongside the relevant entries from the *Lacnunga* as an appendix (1–B) to the thesis.

A parallel version of *Lacnunga* entry CXLIX is found in the margins of page 206 of CCCC 41.⁵⁰ This is a remedy for the recovery of lost cattle; it has both an Old English metrical and prose component. It was apparently a popular remedy in Anglo-Saxon England, appearing in various forms in several manuscripts.⁵¹ However, the remedy found in CCCC 41 is a particularly close parallel to the one found in Harley 585.⁵² The transmission of the remedy is difficult to nail down, but, in his analysis, Grant proposes a rough stemma of the relationship between versions of the charm. The closest connection is between the version found in the *Lacnunga* and that found in CCCC 41, which Grant suggests were copied from ‘a common exemplar or a close copy of it.’⁵³

However, the situation is confused further by another remedy immediately following in the Corpus manuscript. This second remedy, also apparently against the theft of cattle, has an introduction in Old English, which is followed by a long section in Latin. The last few lines of the Latin formula provide a striking parallel to the final lines of the Old English theft charm mentioned above: ‘Iudei *Christum* crucifixerunt *pessimum* sibimet ipsum *perpetrauerunt*. Opus celauerunt quod non

letters can be arranged according to several models (Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, pp. 19–22). This charm will be discussed at greater length below, p. 157.

⁵⁰ I have followed Grant in referring to entries in CCCC 41 by page rather than folio.

⁵¹ Aside from MSS Harley 585 and CCCC 41, versions occur in CCCC 190, CCCC 383, BL MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii, and Textus Roffensis. See Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, p. 7.

⁵² Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, pp. 7–8.

⁵³ Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, pp. 8–9. For a more thorough discussion of the parallels (and differences) between these charms, see P. Dendle, ‘Textual Transmission of the Old English “Loss of Cattle” Charm’, *JEGP* 105 (2006), pp. 514–539, at 517–524. Dendle argues that the charms reflect the same living tradition.

potuerunt celare; sic nec hoc furtum celatum nec celare possit. Per dominum nostrum'.⁵⁴ Could these lines represent the original Latin source for part of the Old English formula found earlier in CCCC 41 and in the *Lacnunga*? The correspondences between these passages appear too close for mere coincidence.

The middle section of this second formula is taken from an Irish hymn to St Patrick. The section of the charm beginning *Christus illum sive* and ending with *illo defendat deus* are the last three stanzas of the *Hymnus S. Secundini in Laudem S. Patricii*, which is recorded in full only in the Irish *Liber Hymnorum*.⁵⁵ Stephanie Hollis has argued that the occurrence of these lines of the Irish hymn resulted from an error in the recording process in which pages of the exemplar being copied were erroneously flipped.⁵⁶ However, regardless of whether this happened or if the passage from the hymn was intended as part of the charm, it is likely that all three were copied from the same exemplar.⁵⁷ The invocation of the Irish saints Patrick and Bridget in the second cattle theft charm also indicates Irish origin or influence.

Immediately following the formula against theft found in the *Lacnunga* is another remedy which is paralleled in CCCC 41. Both remedies are for eye problems and recount the apocryphal story of Tobit, who was miraculously cured of his blindness by fish gall. As in the case of theft formulae, the relationship between these two prayers appears to be very close. The main difference between the

⁵⁴ 'The Jews crucified Christ, they performed for themselves the worst thing itself, they concealed the deed which they could not conceal; so may this theft not be concealed, nor may he be able to conceal it. Through our Lord.' Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, pp. 9–10.

⁵⁶ S. Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms": Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses', *Anglia* 115 (1997), 137–164, at 147–149. Hollis suggests that part of the passage 'ond Petur, Pol, Patric, Pilip, Marie, Brigit, Felic, in nomine dei, ond Chiric. Qui queri inuenit' is actually meant to be the end of the formula, but was miscopied because the exemplar which the scribe was using had a reversed page. The final verses to the hymn of St Patrick were then listed following the end of the formula, with the middle section of the formula on the following page.

⁵⁷ As Jolly notes, the theft formulae and the hymn are set apart by blank pages from other marginal contents, presumably indicating that they all were copied from a single exemplar (Jolly, 'On the Margins of Orthodoxy', p. 154).

passages seems to be the result of an eye-skip on the part of CCCC 41's scribe, who jumped from *cecorum* to *caecorum* omitting Harley 585 *Domine tu es oculos* ('Lord you are the eyes').⁵⁸

The final remedy from the *Lacnunga* that is paralleled in CCCC 41 is the Latin prayer forming part of entry LXIII, a recipe for making a *haligre sealf* ('holy salve').⁵⁹ The instructions for making this salve are complex, calling for a long list of ingredients and many recitations. Following the instructions for physically crafting the salve are several extended passages and prayers in Latin including a passage paralleled in CCCC 41, which begins with *cedita a capite*. This sort of extended enumeration of body parts is also associated with Irish tradition.⁶⁰ The two versions of this formula are not as close as in the previous examples, with many more variants existing between the two manuscript copies, suggesting several degrees of removal between the exemplars for the two charms. The remedy reinforces, however, the probability that both compilers had a variety of Hiberno-Latin (or otherwise Irish influenced) material on hand.

A final point of comparison between these two collections is that both are unusual for containing long metrical formulae in Old English. As mentioned before, seven entries in the *Lacnunga* contain discernible Old English verse.⁶¹ Some of these entries only contain a few lines of verse; for instance the first theft formula seen

⁵⁸ It is possible that the scribe skipped even more text if, as Pettit believes, additional text is missing from the Harley 585 version following *quos*, see *LAC*, vol. II, CL.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of the possible sources of text, see Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', pp. 164–165.

⁶⁰ C. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 263; A. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, 1983), pp. 86–88; *Hisperica Famina II: Related Poems*, ed. and trans. M. W. Herren (Toronto, 1987), p. 25. There are also significant parallels here with the exorcism formulas discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 126–131.

⁶¹ *LAC*, vol. I, entries: LXXVI, LXXXVI, CXXVII, CXLIX, CLXI, CLXII, CLXIII. There is some debate over which remedies in the collection contain verse or simply patterned prose. In my numeration, I have followed Pettit. Additionally, the final three entries listed above have sometimes been classified by editors as a single remedy. Pettit argues for the original independence of the three cures, yet the similarity of theme (childbirth and child rearing) and form has led most commentators to treat them together.

above is partially in verse. However, some entries provide examples of the longer metrical compositions possible in Old English medicine; this chapter will look at two, referred to respectively as the ‘Nine Herbs Charm’ and *Wið færstice*.

The ‘Nine Herbs Charm’ is a long, metrical passage to be sung in the preparation of an herbal remedy.⁶² It devotes most of its length to extolling the virtues of nine different herbs and is followed by a prose remedy that details how these herbs can be used to make a salve.⁶³ The purpose of the remedy appears to be found in a line quoted (with slight variation) at the end of the first three stanzas *þu miht wiþ attre ond wið onflyge,/ þu miht wiþ þa[m] laþan ðe geond lond færð*.⁶⁴ This sentiment is repeated later in the poem: *Nu magon þas VIII wyrta wið nygon wuldorgeflogenum/ wið VIII attrum ond wið nygon onflognum*.⁶⁵ *Onflyge* probably indicates some type of flying contagion, but the ‘nine fugitives from glory’ and the ‘loathsome one’ who roams across the land are harder to identify. Some light might be cast on this second peril by a formula found in the margins of CCC 41. The ‘Journey Charm’ provides the only close analogue for the ‘loathsome one’ of the ‘Nine Herbs Charm’.⁶⁶ This long composition, also Old English metre, is found in the margins of pages 350–353 of CCC 41. As the title indicates, this formula is

⁶² For important studies on this piece, see *LAC*, vol. II, LXXXVI, ‘Survey of Previous Scholarship’. Pettit’s commentary also includes a discussion of the structure of the remedy and its sources and analogues. Important studies post-dating Pettit’s edition include: S. Glosecki, “‘Blow these Vipers From Me’”: Mythic Magic in *The Nine Herbs Charm*’, in *Essays on Old, Middle, Modern English and Old Icelandic in Honour of Raymond P. Tripp, Jr.*, ed. L. C. Gruber (Lewiston, 2000), pp. 91–123; D. Banham, ‘The Old English Nine Herbs Charm’, in *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, ed. M. Rubin (Princeton, 2009), pp. 189–193; L. S. Chardonnens, ‘An Arithmetical Crux in the Woden Passage in the Old English *Nine Herbs Charm*’, *Neophilologus* 93 (2009), 691–702.

⁶³ *LAC*, vol. I, LXXVI. The poem itself declares that there should be nine herbs, but scholars differ over exactly what those nine herbs are. The situation is slightly complicated by the fact that several of the herbs have a second name in the poem. Additionally, there is a crab-apple which may or may not have been intended to count as one of the herbs. For a detailed discussion of this question, see Pettit’s commentary in *LAC*, vol. II, LXXVI.

⁶⁴ *LAC*, LXXVI, ll. 4–5, 12–13, 18–19. ‘You have power against poison and against flying disease./ You have power against the loathsome one that travels throughout the land.’

⁶⁵ *LAC*, vol. I, LXXVI, ll. 45–46. ‘Now these nine plants have power against nine (?)fugitives from glory./ against nine poisons and against nine flying diseases’.

⁶⁶ *LAC*, vol. II, LXXVI.

apparently intended to grant protection on a journey or undertaking. The first lines of this formula bear some resemblance to the ‘Nine Herbs Charm’. In particular lines 2–5:

wið þane sara stice, wið þane sara slege,
 wið þane grymma gryre,
 wið ðane micela egða þe bið eghwam lað,
 and wið eal þæt lað þe in to land fare.⁶⁷

The final line quoted provides an almost direct parallel to the ‘Nine Herbs Charm’: *miht wiþ þa[m] laþan ðe geond lond færð*. Additionally, the clustering of various dangers, each preceded by *wið*, is evocative of the charm from the *Lacnunga*. In both cases, the threats addressed are obscure or very general. In the ‘Journey Charm’ it is difficult to know if the ‘gruesome horror’ and the ‘frightful terror’ are supposed to be identified with the ‘loathsomeness’ or if they represent different perils.

Another metrical remedy from the *Lacnunga* possibly provides another parallel for these loathsome travellers. Although the word *laþan* (‘loathsome or impure’) is not used, the formula beginning *Wið færstice* and sometimes called ‘For Sudden Stabbing Pain’ also describes enemies travelling across the land.⁶⁸ The remedy begins: *Hlude wæran hy, la hlude, ða hy ofer þone hlæw ridan,/ wæran anmode ða hy ofer land ridan*.⁶⁹ It is tempting to imagine these riders as embodying a similar Anglo-Saxon belief to the ‘loathsome one’ in the ‘Nine Herbs Charm’ and the ‘Journey Charm’ but it is difficult to be sure. There may be a point of contrast between the shadowy horrors present in the ‘Journey Charm’ and the named and noisy figures of the elves, *ese*, and *hægtessan* of *Wið færstice*. The latter remedy

⁶⁷ ‘A Journey Charm’, *ASPR*, vol. VI, p. 126. ‘Against the painful stitch, against the painful blow./ against the cruel horror/ Against the great dread that is loathsome to all./ And against all that loathsomeness which may enter the land.’

⁶⁸ For important studies on this piece, see *LAC*, vol. II, CXXVII, ‘Survey of Previous Scholarship’. Pettit’s commentary also includes a discussion of the structure of the remedy and its sources and analogues. Important studies post-dating Pettit’s edition include: Hall, *Elves*, pp. 108–118; Hill, ‘The Rod of Protection and the Witches’ Ride’.

⁶⁹ *LAC*, CXXVII [b]. ‘Loud were they, lo, loud, when they rode over the mound,/ they were fierce when they rode over the land’.

appears to be directed towards either real or symbolic projectiles being hurled by this variety of hostile forces, although it is unclear which (if any) of these figures ought to be identified with the loathsome traveller(s).⁷⁰

Together the ‘Nine Herbs Charm’, the ‘Journey Charm’, and *Wið færstice* represent three of the longest metrical charms from Anglo-Saxon England. Only four extant metrical charms exceed 25 lines—the fourth is the *æcerbot* formula, or ‘Field Remedy’, which is found in BL MS Cotton Caligula A. vii.⁷¹ The three described above are each distinctive pieces. In particular, the use of Christian imagery, including the names of the evangelists, and Old Testament figures, is much more pronounced in the ‘Journey Charm’, although these elements can be seen elsewhere in remedies from the *Lacnunga*. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see the presence of this same unidentified menace (‘the loathsome one’) in Harley 585 as well as CCCC 41. It is possible that they arose out of a similar cultural milieu which was particularly troubled by these concerns. If not, the presence of these three unusually long metrical formulae in the two manuscripts suggests at the very least that this type of vernacular composition was available to compilers of each collection.

As we have seen, the remedies of the *Lacnunga* and the marginal entries of Cambridge Corpus Christi College 41 reflect similar interests. Although the texts differ significantly, primarily in the *Lacnunga*’s clearly medical intention, and in CCCC 41’s much greater proportion of liturgical and homiletic material, they both appear to reflect a broader preoccupation with divine protection for spirit and body. Both collections seamlessly mix Latin and the vernacular, liturgical material and charm-like formulae. In some cases they appear to draw on similar source material.

⁷⁰ Finding modern definitions of these words is difficult. Pettit offers ‘gods [or spirits]’ for *esa*, a word seemingly etymologically related to the Norse *Æsir*, and ‘witch [or witches]’ for *hægtessan*. For a discussion of this second term, see Meaney, ‘Women, Witchcraft and Magic in Anglo-Saxon England’, pp. 15–18.

⁷¹ This statement is based on the line lengths given in Grendon, ‘The Anglo-Saxon Charms’.

The next section will continue to examine the relationship between these collections by exploring some of their shared literary interests.

Literary Context and *Grammatica*

The following section will argue that parts of the *Lacnunga*, especially the categories of remedies highlighted above, reflect the concerns of early Insular and Hiberno-Latin authors. Irish influence on the collection is explicit in many instances, including those remedies demonstrating knowledge of Old Irish or texts of Irish origin, such as the *Lorica*. However, I suggest that even some of the less obviously Irish-influenced remedies implicitly reflect an early Insular preoccupation with grammar, words, and letters. I will also explore the influence of these same ideas in the marginalia of CCCC 41. Prior to this, however, I will offer a brief outline of some aspects of Insular conceptions of grammar and their influence in early Anglo-Saxon England.

The *Book of Cerne*, the *Royal Prayerbook*, and the *Book of Nunnaminster* are all collections for private prayer and devotion dating from the eighth and early ninth century that have content overlapping with the *Lacnunga*.⁷² A fourth collection, the *Harleian Prayerbook*, is also generally included in this group of interrelated texts.⁷³ Irish influence on these collections is evident, even though there are no extant

⁷² See *LAC*, vol. II: entries LXIV, LXV have direct parallels in the prayerbooks; entries XXIX, LXXXVI, CLIX, CLX have analogous examples or passages. The *Book of Cerne* is Cambridge, University Library MS L1.1.10 (Ker no. 28; G&L no. 27). It was edited Kuypers, *The Prayer Book of Aedelwald the Bishop, Commonly Called the Book of Cerne*. The *Royal Prayerbook* is London, BL, MS Royal 2 A. xx (Ker no. 207; G&L no. 450) and is also found in Kuypers's edition. The *Book of Nunnaminster* is London, BL, MS Harley 2965 (Ker no. 237; G&L no. 432) and was edited by W. Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century; Formerly belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester* (London, 1889).

⁷³ The *Harleian Prayerbook* is London, BL, MS Harley 7653 (Ker no. 245; G&L no. 443) and was edited by F. E. Warren, *The Antiphony of Bangor: An Early Irish Manuscript in the Ambrosian Library at Milan* (London 1893–1895), appendix. For more information on this group of texts, see P. Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 275–276, 279–282.

collections for private prayer dating from early Ireland. Some of these collections contain remedies or prayers of a medical nature; the *Royal Prayerbook* in particular contains several remedies and charms, a fact that has led some to speculate that it may have been a physician's book.⁷⁴ Patrick Sims-Williams suggests that the *Royal* and *Harleian* Prayerbooks are especially preoccupied with 'the theme of protection against illness, death, and supernatural adversity'.⁷⁵ I would suggest that there are clear links between these early collections and the *Lacnunga*, first through actual overlaps in content, and secondly through general preoccupations with physical and spiritual health. The emphasis in the *Lacnunga* is upon physical healing, but in some cases this shares a permeable border with spiritual afflictions, as can be seen for instance in remedies *wið eallum feondes constungum* ('for all temptations of the Enemy').⁷⁶ Similarly, although spiritual purity and health are what is emphasised in the prayerbooks, their compilers apparently did not find occasional remedies for ailments such as eye problems out of place.⁷⁷

Jennifer Reid has shown that these collections for private prayer, aside from having a general preoccupation with health, reflect an underlying emphasis on the power of words to effect bodily change. This principle is grounded in biblical and Patristic understandings of the efficacy of words and prayer, with a particular emphasis on the idea of Christ as the living word, the word made flesh.⁷⁸ Yet although this theme is traditional, and perhaps even fundamental, it is articulated in these texts within the particular context of early Insular conceptions of grammar. In

⁷⁴ M. Brown, *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage and Power in Ninth-Century England* (London, 1996), p. 152; M. Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England: the Evidence of the Ninth-century Prayerbooks', in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Papers in Honour of Jane Roberts* (Amsterdam, 2001), pp. 45–68, at 57. Brown suggests that the collection may have belonged to a female physician.

⁷⁵ Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, p. 285.

⁷⁶ *LAC*, vol. I, XXIX.

⁷⁷ Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, p. 152.

⁷⁸ Cf. John 1:14; J. Reid, "'Caro Verbum Factum Est": Incarnations of Word in Early English and Celtic Texts', unpublished PhD dissertation (Toronto, 2007), pp. 25–39.

the medieval period, *grammatica* was a broad category that extended beyond rules for the proper usage of language and could include methods of reading and approaching texts.⁷⁹ Reid suggests that many early Insular authors make use of a hermeneutic of *grammatica*, which is characterised by ‘enumeration, definition, and distinction’ and the principle of analogy.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Vivian Law details a range of comparisons between early Irish biblical exegesis and exegesis found in Insular grammatical commentaries; these include, among other things, an interest in the three holy languages and a tendency to compile word lists.⁸¹ These descriptions, although representative only of general tendencies, can help us to conceptualise some distinctive characteristics of early Insular prose.

This hermeneutic of *grammatica* also extends to the use of individual letters as signifiers. Reid draws attention to the use of the alphabet as a tool used within the prayerbooks for ‘transcending corporeality’ by allowing the abstraction of the physical body. The alphabet ‘suggest[s] to the poet a world of interconnection, often with spiritual and metaphysical implications.’⁸² She gives an example from Byrhtferth’s *Computus*, in which the first letters of the cardinal directions (*Anatole*, *Didis*, *Arcton* and *Mesembellos*) form the name ADAM, thereby, ‘interconnecting the letters of the alphabet with the constitution of man in the elements, and in relation to the unity of the microcosm and the macrocosm in Christ crucified’.⁸³ This conception of the alphabet might take some inspiration from the description of the role of letters in Isidore’s *Etymologiae*:

Litterae autem sunt indices rerum, signa uerborum, quibus tanta uis est, ut nobis dicta absentium sine uoce loquantur. (Verba enim per oculos non per

⁷⁹ Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 68–74.

⁸⁰ Reid, ‘Incarnations of Word’, pp. 124, 126.

⁸¹ V. Law, *The Insular Latin Grammarians* (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 83–85; cf. Reid, ‘Incarnations of Word’, pp. 123–124.

⁸² Reid, ‘Incarnations of Word’, p. 130; see also Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance*, pp. 85–87.

⁸³ Reid, ‘Incarnation of Word’, p. 131.

aures introducunt.) Vsus litterarum repertus propter memoriam rerum. Nam ne obliuione fugiant, litteris alligantur.⁸⁴

The *Etymologiae* were known to the Irish at a very early date, and the idea of letters as the signs of words might help to understand the popularity of acrostic and acronymic features in early Insular prose.⁸⁵

The potential for conveying meaning through an alphabetic scheme appears in several poems from the Insular prayerbooks, but most impressively in the *Royal Prayerbook* where a number of individual prayers were combined to create a long abecedarian piece containing 23 sections.⁸⁶ The Royal manuscript also demonstrates a particular interest in Greek, both in the form of transliteration as well as Greek letters.⁸⁷ Interest in the alphabet can also be seen in similar poetic forms used in these collections such as the acrostic, where letters beginning lines or stanzas are used to form words. An example of this can be seen in the dedicatory prayer found in the *Book of Cerne*, which spells the name AEDELVALD EPISCOPUS.⁸⁸ Although acrostics, abecedarians, and other grammar-focused poetic tools certainly exist outside Insular tradition, there seems to be a particular emphasis on *grammatica* amongst Hiberno-Latin and early Anglo-Latin authors.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ *Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. S. Barney *et al.* (Cambridge, 2006), vol I.iii., p. 39. ‘Indeed, letters are tokens of things, the signs of words, and they have so much force that the utterances of those who are absent speak to us without a voice (for they present the words through the eyes, not through the ears). The use of letters was invented for the sake for remembering things, which are bound by letters lest they slip away into oblivion.’ Cf. Anlezark’s discussion of this passage in *Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, ed. D. Anlezark (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 29–30. Isidore follows this with a description of the alphabets of the holy languages, beginning with Hebrew (which he believed to be the originator of the Greek and Latin alphabets).

⁸⁵ Some Irish texts from the mid- to- late-seventh century demonstrate knowledge of the *Etymologiae*, and the earliest manuscript fragments of the *Etymologiae* are written in an Irish scribal hand (*Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 24).

⁸⁶ *The Prayer Book of Aedeluald*, ff. 29a–38b; cited in Reid, ‘Incarnations of Word’, pp. 138–139.

⁸⁷ Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, p. 152.

⁸⁸ Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, pp. 131–136; cf. Reid, ‘Incarnations of Word’, pp. 148–149.

⁸⁹ A. Orchard, “‘Audite Omnes Amantes’: A Hymn in Patrick’s Praise”, in *Saint Patrick A.D. 493–1993*, ed. D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 152–173, at 155; Reid, ‘Incarnations of Word’, pp. 22, 132–137, 147–150. For the influence of this style in later English texts, see M. Lapidge, ‘The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature’, *ASE* 4 (1975), 67–111.

***Grammatica*, the *Lacnunga*, and MS CCCC 41**

Some of these literary tendencies can be seen in the early the Insular prayer collections, as well as, I would argue, in the *Lacnunga* and the marginalia of CCCC 41. This section will begin by talking about the presence of *loricae* and similar prayers in these texts, before considering the possible influence of *grammatica* in other types of cures from the collections.

The Insular focus on detail and proclivity to compile lists of words or synonyms can be easily associated with the *lorica* tradition of prayer shared between these collections.⁹⁰ This type of prayer is generally considered to be originally an Irish tradition which later spread to England.⁹¹ The most famous example of this type of prayer is St Patrick's Breastplate, a portion of which reads:

Crist do'mm imdegali indiu
[...]
Crist lim, Crist rium,
Crist i'm degaid, Crist innium,
Crist íssum, Crist úasum,
Crist dessum, Crist tuathum [...]⁹²

This same desire to, as it were, cover all of one's bases is also present in the *Lorica of Laidcenn*, common to the *Book of Cerne*, the *Book of Nunnaminster*, and the *Lacnunga*.⁹³ This listing tendency can be seen even in this short excerpt:

⁹⁰ Godel offers the following fairly comprehensive definition of this genre of prayer: a 'litany form of prayer, usually fairly long, in a Latin or Celtic language, in which earnest expressions are used to invoke the protection of the three Divine Persons, the angels and the saints, in times of material or spiritual danger. The dangers are minutely detailed, mentioning various organs of the body for which protection is specifically asked. The petitioner asks God or the saints to shield him as a defensive wall against all hostile attack: hence the name "*lorica*" (breastplate)' (W. Godel, 'Irish Prayer in the Early Middle Ages', *Milltown Studies* 4 (1979), 60–99, at vol. 5, p. 85). See also T. Hill, 'Invocation of the Trinity and the Tradition of the *Lorica* in Old English Poetry', *Speculum* 56 (1981), 259–267.

⁹¹ *Hisperica Famina II: Related Poems*, p. 26. See also the discussion in Franzten, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 84–88.

⁹² *Irish Liber Hymnorum*, ed. J. H. Bernard and R. Atkinson (London, 1898), vol. I, p. 135. Translation by N. D. O'Donoghue, 'St Patrick's Breastplate', in *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*, ed. J. P. Mackey (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 45–63, at 48: 'Be Christ this day my strong protector [...] Christ beside me, Christ before me/ Christ behind me, Christ within me,/ Christ beneath me, Christ above;/ Christ to the right of me, Christ to the left of me [...]'.

Gigram ceph(a)le cum iäris et conas,
 Patham liz(a)nam sennas atque michinas,
 cladum carsum madianum talias
 bathma exugiam atque binas idumas.⁹⁴

The detailed enumeration of the parts of the body to be protected follows in the next twelve stanzas. Herren notes that this type of prolonged anatomical listing gives one ‘the impression of reading a medical tract rather than a prayer.’⁹⁵ Although poetical, such a prayer was clearly meant to serve a practical purpose, probably apotropaic.⁹⁶ Yet the *Lorica of Laidcenn* acts as a repository not only for members of the body, but for unusual vocabulary more generally. It is considered to be ‘Hisperic’, that is, belonging to a group of texts related to the seventh-century *Hisperica Famina* and principally characterised by a playful use of obscure and arcane vocabulary. ‘Hisperic’ texts also display an interest in the sacred languages, and frequently employ words of Greek or Hebraic origin, often giving them Latin inflections. The *Lorica of Laidcenn*, as part of this tradition, exhibits a highly literate interest in words, their form, and their power as tools in a spiritual battle.

CCCC 41’s marginalia is also sometimes referred to as containing *loricae*.

This term has been applied to both the hymn to St Patrick (which forms part of the

⁹³ *Hisperica Famina II*, p. 9. In the *Lacnunga* and the *Book of Cerne* the prayer has an Old English gloss, increasing its legibility to a wider audience. However, the glosses found in the *LAC* do not appear to be derived directly from those in the *Book of Cerne*. Herren suggests that the versions found in the *Book of Cerne* and *Book of Nunnaminster* were both copied from an earlier, probably eighth-century, Mercian exemplar and that the scribe of the *Lacnunga*’s *lorica* appears to have worked simultaneously from the original exemplar as well as the *Book of Nunnaminster*.

⁹⁴ *Hisperica Famina II*, ‘The *Lorica* of Laidcenn’, ll. 35–38 (translation Herren). ‘(Deliver) my skull, head with hair, and eyes/ mouth (?), tongue, teeth, and nostrils (?),/ neck, breast, side, and limbs,/ joints, fat, and two hands’.

⁹⁵ *Hisperica Famina II*, p. 25.

⁹⁶ *Hisperica Famina II*, pp. 26–31. Herren suggests that *loricae* may have originally arisen to counter heathen magic or curses. He compares them to enumerative lists found in some early curse tablets. This might hint at a connection between obscure or secret vocabulary and supernatural power, which may also undergird other entries in this collection.

theft charm) and the ‘Journey Charm’.⁹⁷ However, in this description the term is generally applied rather liberally to indicate the protective purpose of these texts. Not technically a *lorica*, the ‘Hymnus S. Secundini in Laudem S. Patricii’, also known as ‘Audite omnes amantes’, is a long abecedarial hymn in praise of the virtues of St Patrick.⁹⁸ The version found in the Corpus manuscript contains the last three stanzas of this hymn (corresponding to X, Y, and Z) followed by the first stanza. Although the inclusion of these stanzas might have resulted from confusion in copying the exemplar, it is perhaps significant that the final stanzas of the hymn were credited with especial power against damnation and plague.⁹⁹ This suggests a similar concern with spiritual and bodily health seen in the *Lorica of Laidcenn* and elsewhere in the early prayerbooks.

The inclusion of the hymn within the theft charm indicates some relationship between these two pieces. Even if, as Hollis has argued, the hymn was miscopied out of sequence, then both pieces were travelling together in the same exemplar. This close positioning of charm-texts with Hiberno-Latin prayer is evocative of the position of the *Lorica of Laidcenn* within the *Book of Nunnaminster*. As Brown comments: ‘Gospel extracts relating to the Passion were followed by a long cycle of meditative prayers which were apparently unrelated to the preceding or subsequent matter, which, from fol. 37r, consisted of an extraneous group of prayers of Irish origin: a charm against poison, the *Lorica of Laidcenn*; and a prayer to protect the eyes.’¹⁰⁰ It seems to me highly likely that this type of grouping—combining

⁹⁷ Grant, *The Loricas and the Missal*, p. 13; M. Amies, ‘The Journey Charm: A *Lorica* for Life’s Journey’, *Neophilologus* 67 (1983), 448–462; Hill, ‘Invocation of the Trinity’, pp. 262, 266; Jolly, ‘On the Margins of Orthodoxy’, p. 158.

⁹⁸ For a study of the literary qualities of this hymn see Orchard, ‘Audite omnes amantes’.

⁹⁹ Grant, *The Loricas and the Missal*, pp. 12–13. Cf. also Orchard, ‘Audite omnes amantes’, p. 163; Jolly, ‘On the Margins of Orthodoxy’, p. 158.

¹⁰⁰ Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, p. 152. The first two of these entries have parallel versions in *LAC* entries LXIV, and LXV (although the *Book of Nunnaminster* was not the exemplar for either entry). See *LAC*, vol. II, LXIV, LXV, and vol. I, p. 157.

Hiberno-Latin hymns with prayer and charm material—was a source for portions of the *Lacnunga*, as well as for this section of CCCC 41's marginalia.¹⁰¹ These passages could have been drawn either from no-longer-extant prayerbook(s) of a similar type to the *Book of Cerne* group, or from a florilegium which, in turn, reproduced their content.¹⁰²

The enumeration of parts of the body seen in the *Lorica* is also found in *Lacnunga* remedy LXIII and in CCCC 41. In the *Lacnunga*, the anatomical list comes as part of a prayer which begins: *Domine, sancte Pater, omnipotens eterne Deus per inpositionem manum mearum refugiat inimicus diabolus a capillis, a capite, ab oculis, a naribus, a labis, a linguis [...]*.¹⁰³ The variant version in CCCC 41 is part of the remedy *wið ealra feonda grimnessum* ('against the cruelty of all enemies'). This remedy also has the general purpose of exorcism.¹⁰⁴ In both cases, the textual enumeration of all of the parts of the body suggests a similar understanding of the interrelationship between word and body found within the *Lorica*. Both exorcisms share a basic similarity with an enumerative exorcism found in the *Stowe Missal* and the *Antiphonary of Bangor*, which reads:

Domine sanctae pater omnipotens aeterne deus expelle diabolum et genitilitatem ab homine isto de capite de cappillis de uertice de cerebro de fronte de oculis de auribus de naribus de ore de lingua de sublingua de gutore de faucibus de collo de pectore de corde de corpore toto intus de foris de manibus de pedibus de omnibus membris de compaginibus membrorum eius

¹⁰¹ Another possibility would be that a collection more narrowly concerned with personal welfare (perhaps similar to the *Lacnunga*) could have been a source for portions of the prayerbooks. As far as I am aware, there are no examples of this type of collection from such an early date, but this would hardly be surprising given the small number of surviving sources and does not rule out such a possibility.

¹⁰² For a discussion of this type of florilegium, see M. Garrison, 'The *Collectanea* and Medieval Florilegia', in *Collectanea pseudo-Beda*, ed. M. Bayless and M. Lapidge (Dublin, 1998), pp. 42–83. See also below, p. 159.

¹⁰³ For references, see appendix. 'Lord, holy Father, omnipotent (and) eternal God, by the application of my hands may the Enemy, the Devil, flee from the hair, from the head, from the eyes, from the nose, from the lips, from the tongues [...]'. The entirety of this prayer is given in the appendix to the thesis.

¹⁰⁴ The entirety of the remedy is given in the appendix to the thesis.

et de cogitationibus de uerbis de operibus et omnibus conuersationibus hic et futuro per te iesu christus qui regnas.¹⁰⁵

This passage is noteworthy as one of the earliest Insular instances of the thought-word-deed triad, which later became very popular in Hiberno-Saxon sources.¹⁰⁶ Sims-Williams argues that this exorcism prayer is ultimately of Irish origin,¹⁰⁷ and draws attention to the fact that the purely physical listing of members of the body is followed by the immaterial concerns of thoughts and words.¹⁰⁸ This same structure is shared by the enumerative passages found in the Corpus manuscript and the *Lacnunga*, where physical parts of the body are followed by more immaterial actions such as speaking and laughing. However, it is in contrast to the treatment to the related exorcism in *Leechbook III*, in which immaterial actions are reduced.¹⁰⁹ This would suggest that the two ‘medical’ exorcisms, while textually related, are performing differently in each collection. While the exorcism in *Leechbook III* appears to have been knowingly altered to focus on healing physical symptoms, the passages in the *Lacnunga* and CCC 41 appear to link the spiritual and physical body, and fundamentally emphasise the power of words and naming to heal affliction of both types.

Although clearly different in meaning, it is also possible that the long, alliterative lists of herb types found in several remedies of the *Lacnunga* are also

¹⁰⁵ *Antiphonary of Bangor*, fols. 30v–31r. ‘Lord, Holy Father, almighty, eternal God expel this devil and heathendom from this person from the head, from the hair, from the top, from the brain, from the forehead, from the eyes, from the ears, from the nostrils, from the mouth, from the tongue, from the under tongue, from the throat, from the windpipe, from the neck, from the chest, from the heart, from the whole body inside and outside, from the hands, from the feet, from all the members, from the joints of all his members, and from the thoughts, from the words, from the deeds, and from all habits now and in the future through you Jesus Christ who reigns.’

¹⁰⁶ Sims-Williams, ‘Thought, Word, and Deed’, pp. 88–89.

¹⁰⁷ Sims-Williams, ‘Thought, Word, and Deed’, pp. 90–92. Sims-Williams suggests that the language of the passage indicates that ‘the exorcism probably derives from the same glossary-steeped milieu in seventh-century Ireland as Laidcenn’s *lorica*.’

¹⁰⁸ Sims-Williams, ‘Thought, Word, and Deed’, p. 89.

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter 2, p. 130.

indicative of this repository interest.¹¹⁰ Sims-Williams has suggested that the Irish drive towards enumeration has its origin in ‘mnemonic techniques of the secular learned classes’.¹¹¹ If this were the case, herbs (an integral part of medical practice) would have been an excellent candidate for mnemonic attention. An example of this practice is found in remedy XXXI, as part of the recipe *to godra bansealfe* (‘for a good bone salve’). This section of the remedy calls for 36 separate herbs, which are listed in a broadly alliterative pattern beginning: *rude,/ rædic ond ampre, uane, feuerfuge, æscðrote, eoforðrote, cilðenige, bete ond betonican, ribbe ond reade hofe* [...].¹¹² Although this collection of herbs is ostensibly all for use in creating a particular salve, one wonders if it may possibly been drawn from an earlier, possibly oral, general mnemonic list of herbs.

It seems probable, given the significant evidence of Irish influence on these collections, that early Insular ideas about grammar were also influential on other types of remedies found within the *Lacnunga* and the *Corpus* manuscript. For instance, the *Lacnunga* remedies which display garbled forms of different languages have been referred to as ‘gibberish’¹¹³ and more recently as ‘spirit code’;¹¹⁴ yet might these remedies instead demonstrate a distillation (and perhaps debasement) of early Insular interest in language and etymology? Certainly, works such as the *Hisperica Famina* or *Lorica of Laidcenn* exhibit an exceptional degree of erudition, something lacking from the charms mentioned above. However, I would suggest that these pieces share an underlying interest in foreign tongues (in particular the *tres*

¹¹⁰ See *LAC*, vol. I, XIV, XXXI, LXIII; cf. also CLXX which lists 27 different types of seeds.

¹¹¹ Sims-Williams, ‘Thought, Word, and Deed’, p. 78.

¹¹² *LAC*, vol. I, XXXI. ‘Rue, radish and dock, iris, *feuerfuge*, *æscðrote*, carline thistle, greater celandine, beet and betony, *ribbe* and red ground ivy’.

¹¹³ Grendon, ‘The Anglo-Saxon Charms’, pp. 105, 114; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 149.

¹¹⁴ Arnovick, *Written Reliquaries*, p. 33.

sacrae linguae), and in the foundational belief that words have a spiritual power independent of knowledge of their semantic meaning.

It is equally possible that the use of textual amulets might bear some relation to the popularity of Insular alphabetical traditions. In remedy LXXXI mentioned above, the letters ‘T + p + T + N + ω + T + UI + M + ωA’ are meant to ward off fever. This charm features two of the sacred languages, through important theological concepts rendered by their first letter, with ‘t’ possibly standing in for *trinitas* (‘trinity’), and Greek letters signifying God, the beginning and end of all things.¹¹⁵ The meaning behind the charm is effectively encrypted, as is not unusual in charms,¹¹⁶ but this also appears somewhat reminiscent of the ‘scrambling’ strategies promoted by the Insular grammarian Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, who advised authors on how to conceal the meaning of their words.¹¹⁷ The two saints indicated here by the first letters of their names are mentioned earlier in the remedy as Saint Macutus (‘Machutus’) and Uictorici (‘Victoricus(?)’), one (or both?) of which appear to have connections with Ireland.¹¹⁸ I suggest that at a foundational

¹¹⁵ *LAC*, vol. I & II, LXXXI.

¹¹⁶ H. S. Versnel, ‘The Poetics of the Magical Charm: An Essay in the Power of Words’, in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, ed. P. Mirecki and M. Meyer (Leiden, 2001), pp. 105–158, at 135–141.

¹¹⁷ *Epitomi ed epistole: edizione critica*, ed. G. Polara (Gennaio, 1979), A X.1; cited in Reid, ‘Incarnation of Word’, pp. 139–140. Virgilius suggests this should be done: *prima est ut sagacitatem discuntium nostrorum in inquirendis atque inveniendis hiis quae obscura sunt approbemus; secunda est propter decorem aedificationemque eloquentiae; tertia ne mystica quaeque, et quae solis gnaris pandi debent, passim ab infimis ac stultis facile repperiantur* (‘First, in order that the shrewdness of our students in inquiring and discovering those obscure things may be established; second, for the purpose of beauty and the cultivation of eloquence; third, lest secret things, which ought only be exposed to the skilful, are easily discovered everywhere by the foolish or lowest [of individuals]’). This same ideal can be seen in later examples such as the commentary tradition of the Irish *Auraicept na nÉces*, which suggests letters in words should be re-ordered to reflect their alphabetical order, or the Welsh treatise *Ymborth yr Enaid* which creates acronymic words out of the seven virtues and vices. For further discussion, see Reid, ‘Incarnation of Word’, pp. 140–141.

¹¹⁸ Saint Machutus (also known as Malo) was a bishop in Brittany, probably of Welsh origin, who according to tradition travelled with Saint Brendan: S. Baring-Gould, *Lives of British Saints: The Saints of Wales and Cornwall and such Irish Saints as Have Dedications in Britain* (London, 1907), pp. 411–434. The identity of Saint Victorici is less clear; Pettit suggests that the remedy might refer to a fourth-century French martyr of that name. However, this is also the name given to St Patrick’s visionary visitor in the Confessions (*St. Patrick: His Writings and Muirchu’s Life*, ed. and trans. A. B. E. Hood (London, 1978), ch. 23).

level many of the atypical cures found in the *Lacnunga* demonstrate a fundamentally literary and grammatical interest in the power of words and letters.

Another very interesting piece of possible relevance to this discussion is the SATOR formula of CCCC 41. This charm was very popular in the Late Antique and Medieval world, and is certainly not of Irish origin.¹¹⁹ It is uncertain whether the charm was originally Christian or Jewish, yet in medieval practice it was clearly associated with the power of the cross. The letters of the charm can be arranged in several styles including as a palindrome square and a cross, and rearranged spell out ‘PATER NOSTER A O’ twice (with ‘A O’ presumably standing in for alpha and omega).¹²⁰ In the Corpus manuscript the letters of this charm are printed linearly as part of a longer charm for childbirth. However, it appears that the reader was intended to reconstruct the shape of a cross—a way the charm is popularly rendered—which is indicated by a cross on the left.¹²¹ Although not originally Insular, it is easy to see how this charm might appeal to an audience interested in encryptions, word games, and the protective power of the cross.

Taking into consideration the foreign provenance of the SATOR formula, it must also be remembered that many of the types of charm-texts found in the CCCC 41 and the *Lacnunga* are not unique to these texts or even to Anglo-Saxon

¹¹⁹ Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, pp. 19–24.

¹²⁰ Cf. Apoc. 1: 8. Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, p. 20.

¹²¹ Jolly, ‘On the Margins of Orthodoxy’, p. 169. An example of this type of reconstruction might be:

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      P
      A
A    T    O
      E
      R
PATERNOSTER
      O
      S
A    T    O
      E
      R

```

England.¹²² Indeed, some of the remedies found in the *Lacnunga* share partial analogues with continental manuscripts.¹²³ Yet the fact that so many of these types of remedies are collected together in this particular compilation, exceeding that of any other medical collection extant from Anglo-Saxon England, indicates that they were both available and of interest to the compiler of the text. I suggest that the enthusiasm in this collection for these types of remedies might best be explained by the influence of early Insular ideas about language and grammar, a theory that is strengthened by the clear evidence of Irish influence upon the collection and its relationship to early Insular prayerbooks. Some of these same factors appear to have motivated the compiler of the marginalia in the Corpus manuscript. The following section explores the particular expression of these ideas in the *Solomon and Saturn Dialogues*.

The *Solomon and Saturn Dialogues*

Perhaps the best example from the Corpus manuscript of these intersecting interests in grammar, enumeration, and encryption is the *Solomon and Saturn Dialogues*. Alongside its other marginalia, CCCC 41 contains one of the two extant copies of the poem *Solomon and Saturn I*.¹²⁴ This is one of two poetic dialogues and one prose piece known collectively as the *Solomon and Saturn Dialogues*. All three pieces reflect similar themes and either share common authorship or are the work of a close circle.¹²⁵ These three texts exhibit highly literate wordplay and an interest in books and the power of words.

¹²² For a study on magical words going back to Pliny the Elder, see Versnel, ‘The Poetics of the Magical Charm’.

¹²³ E.g. *LAC*, vol. II, XXV, CLX, LXVII.

¹²⁴ *Solomon and Saturn*, p. vii. CCCC 41 does not contain the entire dialogue and drops off abruptly after 94 lines; a more-complete version is found in CCCC 422.

¹²⁵ See Anlezark’s discussion in *Solomon and Saturn*, pp. 41–57.

There is evidence for the influence of Irish texts and traditions on these dialogues both in individual detail and in choices of style and content.¹²⁶ Several passages from the *Solomon and Saturn Dialogues* are paralleled in the *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae*. It is uncertain where the *Collectanea* was compiled, but significant Irish influence on the collection is evident.¹²⁷ The contents of the *Collectanea* are diverse and include trivia questions, riddles, and prayers. Several of the prayers included are in the abecedarial form, and some portions are shared with the *Book of Cerne*.¹²⁸ The *Solomon and Saturn Dialogues* also draw upon Christian apocryphal texts such as the *Visio S. Pauli*, which were probably transmitted to England via Ireland.¹²⁹ The use of these Irish materials by the author(s) of the *Dialogues* is discussed by Anlezark in his edition.¹³⁰

One of the most interesting aspects of the *Solomon and Saturn Dialogues*, however, is in their exploration of the power of books, words, and letters.¹³¹ *Solomon and Saturn I* and the *Solomon and Saturn Pater Noster Prose* are both chiefly concerned with the power of the Pater Noster. The Pater Noster, the prayer given by Christ when his disciples asked Him, ‘Lord teach us to pray’, has been one of the central prayers of Christianity since its beginnings.¹³² The prayer was often seen as having a protective dimension and could function as a type of *lorica* that could protect its user from demonic attack.¹³³ The power of the prayer against

¹²⁶ Some of these parallels are discussed in *Solomon and Saturn*, pp. 15–23, 26–28; Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, pp. 245–252.

¹²⁷ M. Lapidge, ‘The Origin of the Collectanea’, in *Collectanea pseudo-Bedae*, ed. M. Bayless and M. Lapidge (Dublin, 1998), pp. 1–12, at 3–4.

¹²⁸ Lapidge, ‘The Origin of the Collectanea’, pp. 10–11.

¹²⁹ *Solomon and Saturn*, p. 27.

¹³⁰ *Solomon and Saturn*, pp. 12–41.

¹³¹ For a discussion of the themes of speaking versus writing in the *Dialogues*, see K. O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge, 1990), ch. 3, pp. 47–76.

¹³² Luke 11:1–4; cf. Mathew 6: 9–13.

¹³³ *Solomon and Saturn*, p. 24.

demonic attack became an especially prominent motif in Ireland.¹³⁴ It was not simply the prayer that was powerful, but its individual parts were sometimes given demon-fighting power, such as in the Old Irish *Geinemain Molling ocus a Bethae* ('Birth and life of St Moling'): *Pater noster ardom-thá. frisna huile eccrotá/ rop lemsa mo pater noster[...]* *Qui in celis, Dé bi. dom snadadh ar urbhaidhí, / ar demnaib co n-ilar. snaidsium sanctificetur.*¹³⁵ A similar synecdochical idea can be seen in Solomon's praise of the Pater Noster in *Solomon and Saturn I*:

Gylden is se godes cwide gymmun astæned,
hafað seolofren <leaf>. Sundor mæg æghwylc
purh gæstæs gife godspellian.¹³⁶

Solomon appears to suggest here that each individual utterance of God (in this case the Pater Noster) can convey the whole force of the gospel message. This concept is enhanced later in the poem when the individual letters of the Pater Noster become entities capable of warding off demonic attack. Solomon explains how the letters of the prayer become personified attackers of the *feohtende feond* ('hateful Enemy'):

prologo prim ðam is. P. nama;
hafað guðmaga gyrde lange,
gyldene gade, and þone grymmn feond
swiðmod sweopeð. And on swaðe filgið
.A. oferlægene, ond hine eac ofslehð
.T. ***¹³⁷

This is where the version found in CCCC41 is cut off, but the full version continues through all the letters used in the words 'pater noster'. Given the known use of the

¹³⁴ *Solomon and Saturn*, pp. 25–26; Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, pp. 240–241.

¹³⁵ *Solomon and Saturn*, p. 26. 'Pater noster is for me against all horrid(?) things! with me be my paternoster [...] *Qui es in caelis*, O living God, to protect me from bale: from demons with many sins(?) may *sanctificetur* protect me'. *The Birth and Life of St. Moling*, ed. W. Stokes (London, 1907), p. 52, cited in *Solomon and Saturn*, p. 26 (trans. Stokes). See also Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, pp. 240–241.

¹³⁶ *Solomon and Saturn*, 'Solomon and Saturn I', CCCC 41, ll. 63–65. 'Golden is the word of God, decorated with gems/ they have silver leaves. Separately each may tell the gospel through the gift of the spirit.'

¹³⁷ *Solomon and Saturn*, 'Solomon and Saturn I', CCCC 41, ll. 89–94. 'The first letter is that named "P"; the warrior has a long staff with golden pointed head and, stout-hearted, he drives away the grim Enemy. And in the footsteps follows "A" with overwhelming force, and also "T" attacks him'.

Hiberno-Latin sources by the dialogue authors, it seems probable that this animated exploration of letters and their power for symbolism is rooted in Insular conceptions of the alphabet like those earlier in this chapter.¹³⁸

In the full version of this dialogue, found in CCCC 422, runic letters occur alongside the letters of the Pater Noster. The most recent editor of the text has agreed with previous scholarship that the runes were probably not part of the poem as it was originally written.¹³⁹ Even if this is the case (which seems likely), the presence of the runes in the poem suggests a milieu interested in the alphabet and alternative alphabet systems.¹⁴⁰ Thomas Birkett has suggested that the appellation *gepalmtwigude* to the Pater Noster might refer to its being written in runes.¹⁴¹ In the dialogue itself, the Latin letters appear to be implied in their descriptions; for instance ‘P’ is described as carrying a long staff with a golden goad (which he uses to attack the devil), which appears to have taken inspiration from the letter’s shape.¹⁴² In this type of description we can see the author’s fascination with the idea of letters not simply as sound or a pieces of a word but as objects in their own right.

Collectively, the inclusion of *Solomon and Saturn I*, alongside the SATOR charm (which has its own relationship to the Pater Noster), Irish abecedarian hymn to Saint Patrick, and the charms, prayers and homilies of the CCCC 41 suggests a general preoccupation with the alphabet, enumeration, and the power of words for protection on the part of its compiler.

¹³⁸ F. B. Jonassen discusses the possible influence of the genre of acrostics, riddles, and abecedarian poetry on this passage in ‘The Pater Noster Letters in the Poetic “Solomon and Saturn”’, *The Modern Language Review* 83 (1988), 1–9.

¹³⁹ *Solomon and Saturn*, pp. 28–29.

¹⁴⁰ *Solomon and Saturn*, p. 29.

¹⁴¹ T. Birkett, ‘Rað Rett Runar: Reading the Runes in Old English and Old Norse Poetry’, unpublished PhD dissertation (Oxford, 2011), pp. 141–142.

¹⁴² Jonassen, ‘The Pater Noster Letters’, p. 1.

Situating the Texts

As we have seen, the remedies of the *Lacnunga* and the marginal entries of Cambridge Corpus Christi College 41 reflect similar interests. Although the texts differ significantly, primarily in the *Lacnunga*'s medical focus, and in CCCC 41's much greater proportion of liturgical and homiletic material, they both appear to reflect a broader preoccupation with divine protection for spirit and body and show the influence of Irish and early Insular texts, in particular in their emphasis on the alphabet, enumeration, and other precepts of Insular grammar. I would suggest that both manuscripts reflect the influence of similar intellectual and cultural milieux. The final part of this chapter will offer a tentative exploration of the question of where and when these collections may have been compiled.

Little is known about the provenance of Harley 585, yet slightly more information is available relating to CCCC 41, which bears a donation notice from Bishop Leofric to Exeter Cathedral. This indicates that it belonged to Exeter's library prior to Leofric's death in 1070, but that it was not originally composed there. In his description, Ker attributes the main text of the *Bede* to a Southern scriptorium in the early eleventh century. The marginal editions were probably added not long after (before mid-century) and thus predate its arrival in Exeter.¹⁴³ Two scholars have suggested that the manuscript may have its provenance in or around the monastery at Glastonbury.¹⁴⁴ The strongest case for this has been made by Robert Butler. He points to several reasons for attributing CCCC 41 to

¹⁴³ R. Butler, 'Glastonbury and the Early History of the Exeter Book', in *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context*, ed. J. Lionarons (Morgantown, 2004), pp. 173–215, at 212. Butler quotes Grant's description: 'The greatest likelihood is that the additional matter was already in the margins when Leofric obtained the manuscript.'

¹⁴⁴ See C. Hohler, Review of Grant, *Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41: The Loricis and the Missal*, *MÆ* 49 (1980), 275–278; Butler, 'Glastonbury and the Early History of the Exeter Book', p. 194.

Glastonbury. These include the appearance of the Irish saints Patrick and Bridget in the second theft charm: by the tenth century Glastonbury was a cult centre for St Patrick and claimed to have not only his relics but also those of St Bridget (who was supposed to have lived for some time on an island near there).¹⁴⁵ Secondly, a homily for the Feast of the Assumption is the second listed among CCCC 41's marginal homilies, a feast day of special importance for Glastonbury.¹⁴⁶ Finally, he argues that the two Anglo-Saxon names found in CCCC 41, 'Ælfwine' and 'Ælfwerd', can easily be associated with Glastonbury, the first as either a Bishop or monk based at Glastonbury, and the second as the name of two different abbots of the monastery.¹⁴⁷

Although suggestive, none of these arguments are exceptionally compelling given the miscellaneous nature of the collection. However, it is worth noting that the most recent edition of the *Solomon and Saturn Dialogues* has suggested a Glastonbury origin for the composition of the dialogues.¹⁴⁸ If this is indeed the case, it would bolster the evidence for the Corpus manuscript also being compiled there, where such texts were written and were presumably also in circulation. If Glastonbury is not after all the locus of the marginalia, it seems that it must not be far removed. I would suggest that if the *Lacnunga* was compiled in a similar milieu as CCCC 41, then Glastonbury Abbey in the tenth century would provide an example of the type of intellectual climate that could have cultivated such a collection.

The pervasive influence of Irish and Irish-influenced material in both collections must reflect a centre containing a wide variety of such texts. The earliest life of St Dunstan (first a monk and later abbot of the monastery) records that Irish

¹⁴⁵ Butler, 'Glastonbury and the Early History of the Exeter Book', p. 213.

¹⁴⁶ Butler, 'Glastonbury and the Early History of the Exeter Book', p. 213.

¹⁴⁷ Butler, 'Glastonbury and the Early History of the Exeter Book', p. 214.

¹⁴⁸ *Solomon and Saturn*, pp. 49–57.

pilgrims would visit Glastonbury bringing with them various books.¹⁴⁹ Intriguingly, the *vita* also hints that these books might not have been completely orthodox (or at least, that they might have seemed so to some), for reading them results in Dunstan being expelled from court. Dunstan's accusers charge him with learning *auitae gentilitatis uanissima [...] carmina* ('the vain spells of ancestral heathendom') and *histrarum friuoleas coluisse incantationes* ('cultivating the empty incantations of wizards(?)').¹⁵⁰ The author, anonymously known as 'B', vehemently argues that there is no truth to this claim, yet it is an intriguing charge given the nature of some of the contents of the *Lacnunga* and the Corpus manuscript. The fact that this charge resulted in Dunstan's expulsion from court suggests that some at least took it seriously. Indeed, it seems unlikely that B would make up a story of such a damaging accusation being directed against the saint.

Although a connection directly with Ireland would be an obvious channel for Irish charms and Hiberno-Latin texts such as those included in the *Lacnunga*, it is also possible that the early Insular influences found in the *Lacnunga* and CCC 41 could owe a debt to Welsh materials, as Wales was another main inlet by which Hiberno-Latin materials could reach English monasteries.¹⁵¹ From the earliest period, Wales and Ireland shared a close relationship.¹⁵² Indeed, distinctively 'Irish' traits are so frequent in Welsh manuscripts that it is difficult to determine which culture influenced which; certainly intellectual traffic ran in both directions.¹⁵³ Once again, Glastonbury, with its location near to the border of South Wales, provides an

¹⁴⁹ *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, ed. M. Winterbottom and M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2012), pp. 18–20.

¹⁵⁰ *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, p. 20 (text and translation by Winterbottom and Lapidge). An alternative translation of *histrarum* could be 'of jesters'.

¹⁵¹ M. Lapidge, 'Latin Learning in Dark Age Wales: Some Prolegomena', in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Celtic Studies*, ed. D. E. Ellis, J. Griffith, and M. Jope (Oxford, 1986), pp. 91–101, at 98–90; Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 269.

¹⁵² Lapidge, 'Latin Learning in Dark Age Wales', p. 80. Wales played an important role in the conversion of Ireland; St Patrick himself was a British bishop in Ireland.

¹⁵³ Lapidge, 'Latin Learning in Dark Age Wales', pp. 89, 102.

example of this type of intellectual environment, although other English monastic houses had similar connections.¹⁵⁴

Irish or Welsh material could have arrived at English monastic houses at any number of points in time across the period.¹⁵⁵ However, given the presumably late dates of composition for both the *Lacnunga* and CCCC 41's marginalia, one might be reminded of the rise in popularity of the 'Hermeneutic style' in England during the tenth century.¹⁵⁶ This style of Latin composition is heavily associated with that found in Irish Hisperic texts, although its success in England was mostly through the influence of Aldhelm, who was in turn at least partially influenced by Irish works.¹⁵⁷ Wright points to the popularity of this style during the reign of Athelstan and suggests that the extensive contact between England, Wales, and Brittany at this time would have allowed for the transmission of Hiberno-Latin texts.¹⁵⁸ Although beyond proof at this point, it may well be that the *Lacnunga* could reflect the intellectual climate of this era, and the marginalia of CCCC 41 (possibly dating slightly later) its aftermath. In any case, both collections demonstrate a literate interest in words, letters, and the alphabet that would be fitting in such an environment.

I suggest that it is in this context that we should view the *Lacnunga*. The collection has often been treated by scholars as outside the 'mainstream' of Anglo-

¹⁵⁴ For a description of Glastonbury's interaction with Wales see C. H. Slover, 'Glastonbury Abbey and the Fusing of English Literary Culture', *Speculum* 10 (1935), 147–160, at 155–156.

¹⁵⁵ C. Wright, 'The Irish Tradition', in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. P. Pulsiano and E. Treharne (Oxford, 2001), pp. 345–374.

¹⁵⁶ Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature', pp. 73–76. See also Lapidge, 'Schools, Learning and Literature in Tenth-Century England', in his *Anglo-Latin Literature, 900–1066* (London, 1993), pp. 1–48.

¹⁵⁷ Wright, 'The Irish Tradition', pp. 436–439; D. R. Howlett, 'Aldhelm and Irish Learning', *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 52 (1994), 37–75; B. A. E. Yorke 'Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections', in *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric*, ed. K. Barker and N. Brooks (Oxford, 2010), pp. 164–180. It is worth noting that Aldhelm's style was not modelled on the *Hisperica Famina* although he was familiar with those texts.

¹⁵⁸ Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 269. See also D. Dumville, *Wessex and England: From Alfred to Edgar* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 156–159.

Saxon medicine. This can be seen, for instance, in the distinction drawn by Storms who writes: ‘the Leechbook may be characterised as the handbook of the Anglo-Saxon medical man, the *Lacnunga* may be characterised as the handbook of the Anglo-Saxon medicine man.’¹⁵⁹ However, the tendency to link the collection with popular, illiterate ‘magical’¹⁶⁰ practice is, I think, largely mistaken. I believe that the distinctive features of this collection, in particular the greater proportion of liturgical material, ‘gibberish’ foreign language charms, and Latin exorcisms and hymns reflect not the presence of a superstitious and ill-educated compiler, but instead a learned interest in the power of letters, words, and language consonant with early conceptions of *grammatica*.

¹⁵⁹ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 24; Talbot also expressed that the *Lacnunga* is ‘nonsense’ and is ‘not typical of the culture of the period’: Talbot, *Medicine in Medieval England*, pp. 22–23. For a fuller description of the history of scholarship of the *Lacnunga*, see Pettit, pp. xxxv–xliv.

¹⁶⁰ For a discussion of the difficulties in using this word, see Chapter 5, p. 231.

Chapter 4: The *Old English Herbarium* and the Monastic Reform

Although one of the arguments of this dissertation is that each medical collection extant in Old English is a unique piece, formed by different influences and towards different purposes, it is still true that the *Lacnunga*, *Bald's Leechbook*, and *Leechbook III* share basic structural similarities. As has been observed, these collections all appear to aspire (to varying degrees) to follow a head-to-toe organisation. Additionally, each of the three collections contains cures drawn from a large variety of different medical texts, ranging from the works of Pliny to Dioscorides to Late Antique medical authors. As we have seen, all three of these works also share entries apparently drawn from a pool of pre-existing remedies circulating in translated form, some of which are shared between two or more collections. Throughout this dissertation I have frequently used the terms 'collection' and 'compilation' to describe these works, as each appears intended primarily as a compilation of useful information (mostly medical) more or less irrespective of source. In this sense, these compilations are entirely different in character from the *Old English Pharmacopeia*.

The so-called *Old English Pharmacopeia* is formed of two halves, the *Old English Herbarium* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*, respectively. Transmitted together in all witnesses, these two texts made available in Old English a set of Late Antique medical treatises. These treatises were very popular medical pieces in the early Middle Ages; they often circulated as a group in the Latin tradition, although the individual treatises maintained a separate identity. In the hands of Anglo-Saxon

translators these treatises were combined to form two complementary units.¹ The method of translating entire texts, rather than simply individual remedies, sets this work in stark contrast to the other medical texts available in Old English. However, it also places the *Old English Herbarium* within a larger tradition of translated texts in Anglo-Saxon England. The study of translation and translated texts has been a rich area in Anglo-Saxon scholarship, from discussion of the the very loose, transformative translations found in the Old English *Boethius* or *Soliloquies*, to the Latinising approach of the *Old English Bede* or Gregory's *Dialogues*, to the skilful close-rendering of the Old English *Benedictine Rule*. However, as has been seen in my discussion of *Bald's Leechbook*, the place of the medical collections have often been neglected in assessments of translation approaches used in Anglo-Saxon England. This chapter will take further steps towards addressing this problem by assessing the *Old English Herbarium* primarily as a translation and then considering in what context we might best read this text.

This chapter will begin by outlining the nature of the project involved in the creation of the *Old English Pharmacopeia*, before overviewing current theories on the dating of the translation. The second part of the chapter will then focus in detail on one half of the *Pharmacopeia*, the *Old English Herbarium*; it will examine the method used by its translator, who, while preserving the integrity of his source material, subtly and skilfully alters the texts to enhance their usability and practicality. Finally, I will suggest that this translation project makes most sense in the context of the Benedictine Reform of the tenth century.

¹ L. Voigts, 'The Significance of the Name "Apuleius" to the *Herbarium Apulei*', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 52 (1978), 214–227, at 214–215. For more details on this, see below.

The *Old English Herbarium* and its Sources

The *Old English Pharmacopeia*, known alternatively as the *Old English Herbarium Complex*, is distinctive among the Old English medical corpus for occurring in multiple manuscript copies. The manuscripts containing the *Pharmacopeia* date from the late tenth to the twelfth century. Most prominent among these is BL MS Cotton Vitellius C. iii, which, although damaged during the Cotton fire, is generally legible and contains beautiful illustrations. This manuscript has been used as the main text for the two published editions of the *Old English Herbarium* (first, Cockayne's edition in the 1860s and, more recently, DeVriend's edition for the EETS series). Other copies of this text occur in Bodleian Library MS Hatton 76, whose version of the *Pharmacopeia* is closely related to the Cotton manuscript (although containing empty spaces intended for illustrations), BL MS Harley 585, which is the oldest version of the text and also contains the only extant copy of the *Lacnunga*, and BL MS Harley 6258 B, which dates from the twelfth century and is the latest extant copy of the text.² The fact that we have four separate complete editions of this text clearly testifies to the importance and popularity of this medical compilation in the late Anglo-Saxon period.

The *Old English Pharmacopeia* is divided into two distinct halves, which are generally known as the *Old English Herbarium* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*. The *Old English Herbarium* precedes the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* in all four manuscripts, but is treated as a separate piece.³ Both of these works are drawn from Latin sources. However, these texts represent the innovative work of their Anglo-Saxon translator-compiler who formed them from

² For manuscript descriptions, see De Vriend, pp. xi–xxxviii. See also D'Aronco, 'L'erbario anglosassone', pp. 353–355.

³ De Vriend, p. lxii.

seven Latin treatises, which although sometimes transmitted together, had until then always been treated as distinct works.⁴ In this process he effectively created a comprehensive, vernacular pharmacopeia for the early Middle Ages. This section will introduce the various Latin treatises that together form the sources for the *Old English Pharmacopeia*.

The first text of the *Old English Pharmacopeia* is generally referred to as the *Old English Herbarium* as it is essentially herbal in its focus. This text represents a coherent work formed from three separate Latin treatises. The majority of its content comes from the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal*; this herbal is probably of North-African origin and was immensely popular in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.⁵ Each chapter of the herbal is dedicated to a particular herb; following the title, remedies involving the herb are listed as well as general information about the appearance and character of the herb. Typically there are 130 of these chapters in total.⁶ However, from an early point this herbal circulated in an enlarged form together with several additional treatises. This enlarged *Herbarium* enjoyed great popularity in the early Middle Ages, with as many as forty-seven attested manuscript copies or fragments.⁷ The Old English manuscripts of this text are translations of the enlarged *Herbarium* and the first to integrate these treatises together into a single work.⁸

The Old English translation of the *Herbarium* begins with a treatise on betony, the *De herba vettonica liber*, which is appended to the beginning of the

⁴ D'Aronco, 'The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 55–56.

⁵ Voigts, 'The Significance of the Name "Apuleius" to the *Herbarium Apulei*', p. 217; M. Collins, *Medieval Herbals: The Illustrative Tradition* (London, 2000), pp. 165–166; De Vriend, pp. 1., lvii–lviii. The herbal probably dates from the fourth century and was almost certainly not compiled by its namesake Apuleius, a second-century Roman orator.

⁶ Collins, *Medieval Herbals*, p. 165.

⁷ De Vriend, p. 1.

⁸ D'Aronco, 'The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 55–66.

Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal. In its Latin versions this treatise is often attributed to the Roman physician Musa, but the Old English version lacks this dedication and presents the treatise as though it were the first chapter of the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal*.⁹ The actual author is unknown. Following the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal*, chapters 133–85 of the *Old English Herbarium* contain remedies taken primarily from Pseudo-Dioscorides' *Liber medicinae ex herbis femininis* and *Curae herbarum*. These texts represent an abridgment and revision of Dioscorides' immense work, *De materia medica*.¹⁰ A few remedies in this section are also of uncertain origin.¹¹ These chapters follow the same layout as the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal*, relating information about additional herbs. These pieces—the *De herba vettonica liber*, the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbal*, and the remedies taken from *Liber medicinae ex herbis femininis* and *Curae herbarum*—are all presented as a continuous text within the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. I will use the term *Old English Herbarium* to refer to this enlarged, composite collection, whereas the *Old English Pharmacopeia* will refer to the combination of this with its complement: the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*.

Medicina de Quadrupedibus ('medicine from quadrupeds') is the appellation given by Cockayne to this second collection of medical material.¹² The *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* consists of three originally distinct pieces: the *Liber de taxone* ('book of the badger'), an untitled treatise on the mulberry, and the *Liber medicinae ex animalibus* ('book of medicines from animals'). However, as is the case in the

⁹ This results in the fact that the numbering of the chapters of the *Old English Herbarium* is off by one from most Latin recensions. See for comparison *Antonii Musae de herba vettonica liber. Pseudoapulei herbarius. Anonymi de taxone liber. Sexti Placiti liber medicinae ex animalibus etc*, ed. E. Howald and H. E. Sigerist, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum*, vol. iv (Leipzig, 1927). Henceforth referred to as Howald and Sigerist.

¹⁰ Riddle, "'Pseudo-Dioscorides" *Ex herbis femininis*', p. 43; Bracciotti, 'Osservazioni sulla forma del latino lauer nell'edizione Wellmann di (pseudo-)Dioscoride', p. 46. For more information on Dioscorides' and his influence, see the introduction, pp. 22–25.

¹¹ M. A. D'Arconco, 'The Old English Pharmacopeia: A Proposed Dating for the Translation', *Avista Forum Journal* 13 (2003), 9–18, at 10. This article is a shortened version of an Italian article by D'Arconco: 'L'erbario anglosassone'.

¹² De Vriend, p. lxii.

Old English version of the *Herbarium*, these distinct treatises are presented as one continuous text by their Anglo-Saxon translator. These texts began circulating together around the sixth century, with the texts individually dating to either the fourth or fifth century.¹³ This date of compilation for these treatises is later than the date normally ascribed to the Latin *Herbarium* complex; judging by its content, it may well have been compiled as a complementary text. Aside from the anonymous tract on the uses of mulberry, these treatises supplement the herbal knowledge of the previous texts in the *Herbarium* by presenting the healing properties of animal-derived products (hence the title, ‘medicine from quadrupeds’). The *Liber de taxone* is a short tract related to the healing properties of the badger, while the *Liber medicinae ex animalibus* mirrors the organisation of the *Herbarium*, with each chapter containing remedies derived from a specific animal listed together. This treatise is traditionally ascribed to Sextus Placitus, although attempts to identify this name with a historical author have been unconvincing.¹⁴ Evidently this text was seen to form a useful complement to the *Old English Herbarium*.

The texts of the *Old English Pharmacopeia* represent a different approach to their Latin source from the other extant Old English medical collections in that they render entire Latin treatises into Old English. However, although these two texts are similar to each other in this regard, and clearly complementary, they employ different translation techniques and should not be considered the work of single compiling-translator. As D’Aronco has demonstrated, one of the chief differences between the two translation styles is that the *Herbarium* tends to take a more idiomatic approach to rendering Latin syntax (for instance rendering a Latin participial construction or ablative absolute with an imperative or subjunctive)

¹³ De Vriend, p. lxiv.

¹⁴ De Vriend, p. lxvii.

whereas the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* tends more frequently to imitate Latin syntax.¹⁵ The translation style of the *Old English Herbarium* will be the focus of further discussion later in the chapter. However, for the moment it is sufficient to emphasise that these are the work of two separate translators, although it is probable that they were created as complementary texts (as neither collection is ever attested to have travelled by itself). Together these two composite works represent much of the most popular herbal and animal-based knowledge of the early Middle Ages. The next section will consider when and where such a project might have been undertaken.

Dating the *Old English Herbarium*

Now that the sources that make up the Latin *Herbarium Complex* have been introduced, the next several sections of this chapter will consider the use of this Latin content in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon translator of the *Herbarium*. As a translation, the *Herbarium* differs significantly from *Bald's Leechbook* and the other Old English medical compilations, as these other medical collections compile various pieces of material (at least some of which had been previously translated). Thus, they necessarily display inconsistency in their approach to translating Latin sources. These texts are better thought of, then, as independent compilations than as translations, and represent a different type of project from that involved in creating the *Old English Pharmacopeia*. Certain portions of *Bald's Leechbook* form an exception to the general inconsistency seen among the other collections.¹⁶ However, the style of these passages is looser and more transformative than that employed in the *Herbarium's* translation. Given the presumed dating of *Bald's Leechbook*, this

¹⁵ D'Aronco includes several examples where this distinction is clear ('L'erbario anglosassone', pp. 334–336).

¹⁶ For more discussion of this, see Chapter 1, pp. 54–64.

translation style can be seen as perhaps in keeping with some translations associated with the Alfredian programme, such as the Old English *Orosius*. However, the *Old English Herbarium* makes less sense in this context. The following section will introduce the various arguments related to discerning the date and probable context of this text. Ultimately, I will argue that this collection probably originally dates to the tenth century and makes most sense when considered in the context of the Benedictine Reform movement.¹⁷

The earliest manuscript containing the *Old English Pharmacopeia* is Harley 585, which is dated to either the late tenth or early eleventh century. The Cotton and Hatton manuscripts both date to the eleventh century, and the more recent manuscript (Harley 6358) dates to the twelfth.¹⁸ Scholars agree that the extant manuscripts ultimately relate back to the same exemplar, as they share three conspicuous errors,¹⁹ although the relationship between the manuscripts is not clear.²⁰ The Cotton manuscript (known as V) and the Hatton manuscript (B) have a close relation: both follow exactly the same layout (although B only has empty spaces for illustrations). Additionally, as D’Aronco has shown, the oldest manuscript Harley 585 (H) is also related to the same illustrated original.²¹ However, the question of when and where the original text might have been translated has been the subject of some debate. De Vriend, in his edition of the *Herbarium*, argues that it was likely translated during the period of the Northumbrian ascendancy in the

¹⁷ This argument draws heavily on the research of Maria D’Aronco, who has published several articles on the subject (cited below). As several of these publications are only published in Italian journals and are unavailable to some readers, I have spent some space overviewing and revisiting her arguments.

¹⁸ De Vriend, pp. xi–xxxvii. See also Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies*, pp. 101–105.

¹⁹ Two of these errors are identified by De Vriend, pp. xliii–xliv; for the third, see D’Aronco, 'The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 40.

²⁰ Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies*, p. 103; De Vriend, p. x.

²¹ H is not illustrated but contains some drawings of little snakes. Although these were previously taken to only be decorative embellishments, D’Aronco has shown that these snakes occur exactly where snake illustrations appear in the illustrated manuscripts: 'The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 42–43.

seventh and eighth centuries. This conclusion is largely due to the presence of what he sees as early Anglian characteristics in the text, especially in the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*.²² Such a dating would make sense, he argues, given that ‘the study of herb medicine flourished throughout the post-classical and early medieval periods’, and he imagines such a project fitting well in a monastic setting where herb gardens could have been cultivated.²³

More recently Maria D’Aronco has proposed a much later dating for the translation, one after the composition of *Bald’s Leechbook*. She argues that the mainstay of De Vriend’s argument—the so-called Anglian features of the text—has been overstated. Drawing on Janet Bately’s well-known arguments about the sometimes problematic nature of determining early Mercian works, D’Aronco suggests that the Anglian features of the text do not present conclusive evidence, as the features identified by De Vriend as Anglian are in fact very few in comparison to the vast majority of the text, which is clearly predominantly in a West-Saxon dialect.²⁴ Further, she suggests that the analysis of De Vriend (and later by Hofstetter) *non tenga conto della specificità dei testi di argomento medico e li consideri sullo stesso piano del resto della produzione anglosassone* (‘does not take into account the specificity of texts on medical topics and considers them on the same level as the rest of the Anglo-Saxon corpus’).²⁵ It is no surprise, she suggests, that Hofstetter identified only one term from the ‘Winchester group’ when this analysis concerned words related to friendship, martyrdom, daring, preparing,

²² De Vriend, pp. lxii–lxxiii.

²³ De Vriend, p. xlii.

²⁴ For a detailed discussion of these features, see D’Aronco, ‘L’erbario anglosassone’, pp. 330–336; see also J. Bately, ‘Old English Prose Before and During the Reign of Alfred’, *ASE* 17 (1988), 93–138, at 109.

²⁵ D’Aronco, ‘L’erbario anglosassone’, p. 332.

ecclesia, virtue, strength/valour, terror, justice, breaking, penance, pride, and crown, few of which are likely to occur in a medical context.²⁶

Moreover, the evidence from the glossaries instead suggests a later date, most likely in the tenth century. As D’Aronco’s work on the botanical glosses found in the *Herbarium* demonstrates, the Anglo-Saxon compiler was not creating a vocabulary for his text, but using an accepted lexicon, and in instances where he knew no equivalent, the Old English name was simply omitted.²⁷ In light of this, it is unusual that so few of the plant names found in the *Old English Herbarium* are recorded in the earliest Anglo-Saxon glossaries if the translation was known and used from the eighth century, as De Vriend suggests.²⁸ Furthermore, it is not until the eleventh century that we can find glosses of plant names which were left untranslated in the *Old English Herbarium*. This indicates that the lexicon used in the *Herbarium* was still being developed in the time before the tenth century and only began to be superseded in the eleventh. This conclusion is supported by the fact that, although *Bald’s Leechbook’s* contains some remedies from the *Herbarium Complex* texts, it never relies on the translation given in the *Old English Herbarium* but instead contains independent translations.²⁹ It seems unlikely that a compilation endeavour of the size required for the creation of *Bald’s Leechbook* would have

²⁶ W. Hofstetter, *Winchester and der spätaltenglische Sprachgebrauch: Untersuchungen zur geographischen und zeitlichen Verbreitung Altenglischer Synonyme* (Munich, 1987), pp. 7–18, cited in D’Aronco, ‘L’erbario anglosassone’, pp. 332–333.

²⁷ M. A. D’Aronco, ‘The Botanical Lexicon of the Old English *Herbarium*’, *ASE* 17 (1988), 15–33, at 17–18.

²⁸ In the Épinal, Erfurt, and Corpus glossaries there are only 26, 23, and 30 plant names from the pseudo-Apuleius herbal and 5, 5, and 6 from the pseudo-Dioscorides texts. In the Cleopatra glossary, dating from the mid-tenth century, there are 55 and 8 names respectively and 58 and 11 from the Antwerp-Additional glossary of about the same date. This rises to 75 from the pseudo-Apuleius and 18 from the pseudo-Dioscorides in the early eleventh-century Brussels, Bibl. Royale 1829 glossary, and rises even further in Durham and Laud glossaries of the twelfth century, to 107 and 20 and 102 and 17 respectively. D’Aronco, ‘The Old English Pharmacopoeia: A Proposed Dating for the Translation’, pp. 14–15. D’Aronco includes a table with all the herb names from the *Herbarium* and records their presence in each glossary in ‘L’erbario anglosassone’, pp. 357–366.

²⁹ D’Aronco ‘The Old English Pharmacopoeia: A Proposed Dating for the Translation’, pp. 12–13. For more information on what texts the term ‘Herbarium Complex’ designates, please see the following section of this chapter.

overlooked this text whose popularity is demonstrated by its existence even today in several manuscript copies. These considerations together suggest that, as D’Aronco argues, the *Old English Herbarium* was very likely translated in the tenth century subsequent to the compilation of *Bald’s Leechbook*.

Dating the *Old English Herbarium* to the mid or late tenth century would place this text in a different context from *Bald’s Leechbook*. If, as seems likely, *Bald’s Leechbook* was compiled or revised and recopied in Winchester at the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century, then it should probably be read in the larger context of the translation project associated with King Alfred’s court, which aimed to make essential texts available in the vernacular. As I argued in Chapter 1, the method of the compiler of *Bald’s Leechbook* of compiling various different sorts of pieces of medical knowledge (whether from Latin or English sources) makes sense alongside translation projects such as the Old English *Orosius* which supplemented the original Latin source with glossary and other outside material.³⁰ However, the *Old English Herbarium* is a different type of project; it is less a compilation of various pieces than a vernacular rendering of popular Latin medical treatises. The proposed dating of the translation places it in the second half of the tenth century, in what would have surely been a quite different political and scholarly environment from the creation of *Bald’s Leechbook*.³¹ There is some evidence for suggesting that the special environment needed to foster the scholarly and complex project of translating the *Herbarium* and *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* would have been perhaps best offered by centres heading the Benedictine Reform movement in England. D’Aronco has gone so far as to suggest that a translation project of the scope and skill of the *Herbarium* would likely have taken place under

³⁰ For more information, see Chapter 1, p 71.

³¹ For discussion of the changes that occur in scholarship across the tenth century, see Lapidge, ‘Schools, Learning and Literature in Tenth-Century England’.

the purview of Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester from 963–984.³² The evidence for this will be considered in more depth at the end of the chapter, which will also discuss what impact such a background might have upon our interpretation of the text.

The next part of this chapter, however, will consider the translation style of the *Old English Herbarium* in detail. It will attempt to demonstrate the aims and methodologies of its translator, before considering what the style of the translation might reveal about the milieu for which such a text was composed. The *Herbarium* has sometimes been seen as an antiquarian text, with some early- and mid-twentieth-century scholars expressing the view that the ‘practical value of the *Herbarium* must have been slight’.³³ Recent work on the *Herbarium*, however, has suggested the opposite conclusion: that instead of being simply academic exercises, medical texts of this period were in fact intensely practical.³⁴ My examination of the style of the translator of the *Herbarium* will confirm this view and demonstrate that in every instance practicality and usability appear to be the underlying principles of his translation.

Structuring the Text

This section will consider the ways the translator of the *Herbarium* restructured his source-text.³⁵ Allowing for the possibility of variations in the Latin texts used by our author giving rise to some of the differing versions we find in Old English, it is

³² D’Aronco, ‘The Old English Pharmacopoeia: A Proposed Dating for the Translation’, p. 16.

³³ Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 308. For a similar view, see also Talbot, *Medicine in Medieval England*, pp. 20–21. Both of these authors voice concerns related to herb identification. For this particular issue, see the studies by Voigts, ‘Anglo-Saxon Plant Remedies’, pp. 250–68, and Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies*, pp. 77–79.

³⁴ See for instance Voigts, ‘Anglo-Saxon Plant Remedies’, pp. 250–268; Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies*, pp. 77–79; D’Aronco, ‘The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England’, pp. 50–55.

³⁵ I use male pronouns in my discussion, as a male translator seems most likely given his proclivity to omit feminine diseases, discussed on pp. 200–201.

nonetheless instructive to compare the *Old English Herbarium* with its known sources. As we have seen, the texts of *Old English Pharmacopeia* are formed from what were originally seven separate treatises. In most senses the *Herbarium* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* appear to represent literal translations of their Latin source material, although in distinctly different styles. My focus in the following analysis is specifically on the first half of the *Pharmacopeia*, the *Old English Herbarium*. However, before considering the translation of the *Herbarium* in detail, a few words regarding the manuscripts and the transmission of the texts are necessary. As there are four different manuscript copies of the *Old English Herbarium*, naturally there are slight differences from text to text, yet there are few major differences in content, except where one version may occasionally skip a remedy. The exception to this is Harley 6258 B, the latest manuscript, which drastically reorganises the content to follow an alphabetical pattern. For my own analysis, I follow De Vriend's edition of the text, which is principally based on the Cotton manuscript. In this choice, De Vriend follows Cockayne's earlier edition, as this manuscript contains a complete version of the text in good condition.³⁶

The particular Latin exemplar for the Old English edition of the *Herbarium* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* has been lost. This exemplar would have belonged to the α -recension of the tradition, but there is no existing single manuscript version of the Latin text which appears to parallel the exemplar for the Old English texts at all points.³⁷ De Vriend dealt with this issue by taking his Latin parallel texts from seven manuscripts for different sections of the text.³⁸ In his

³⁶ De Vriend, p. xlv. Bodleian Library MS Hatton 76 also contains a good edition of the text but is missing four folios.

³⁷ Collins, *Medieval Herbals: The Illustrative Traditions*, pp. 166–167; cf. *OEH*, p. 1.

³⁸ See De Vriend, 'The Latin Manuscripts Used for this Edition' and 'The Relations Between the Latin and the OE Versions', pp. xlv–lv. See also D'Aronco, 'The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 36–37.

edition, however, the Latin passages have been reordered to mirror their Old English counterparts, and those sentences or entries not present in the Old English version have been omitted. This aligns with De Vriend's aims in creating an edition focused on the Old English content, yet it obscures any study that is interested in the Latin as well as the Old English transmission of these texts. As a result, I have often found it necessary to consult an additional version of the Latin text printed in the *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* series and edited by E. Howald and H. E. Sigerist, and in a few instances, H. Kästner's edition of *Ex herbis femininis* for cures not found in Howald and Sigerist's edition.³⁹ In some circumstances I found the Latin text in either one edition or the other more appropriate to be cited; this choice is always made clear in my footnotes.

Because of the length of the *Old English Herbarium*, which contains in total 185 chapters and over 500 individual remedies, it is impossible within the scope of my analysis to highlight every passage of interest. However, I have chosen to discuss those aspects of the translation that seem to be most revealing of the translator's preferences. With these caveats in place, the most direct way to begin talking about the methods used by the compiler of the *Old English Herbarium* is to give a sample passage. The chapter for *Chufwyrte*, the tenth herb listed in the *Herbarium*, acts as a useful illustration of a typical passage. Before the Old English passage, I have included the Latin for comparison:

IX. Herba botracion statice.

1. Ad lunaticos. Herba botracion statice si lunatico in collo ligetur lino rubro luna decrescente cum erit signum tauri vel scorpionis parte prima, mox sanabitur.

³⁹ Howald and Sigerist; H. F. Kästner, 'Pseudo-Dioscorides *De herbis femininis*', *Hermes* 31 (1896), 578–635; 32 (1897), 160.

2. Ad cicatrices nigras. Herba botracion tunsā cum sua radice, mixta cum aceto imponis [his] qui habent cicatrices nigras, eximit eas et similem corpori [reliquo] facit colorem.

Nascitur locis sablosis et campis arenosis. Radix eius verticulo est similis, radículas paucas et tenuissimas habet.⁴⁰

X. Clufwyr̥t

Ɗeos wyr̥t þe man batracion ond oþrum naman clufwyr̥t nemneð bið cenned on sandigum landum ond on feldum, heo bið feawum leafum ond þynnum.

1. Wið monoðseoce genim þas wyr̥te ond gewrið mid anum readum þræde onbutan þæs monnes swyran on wanwegendum monan on þam monþe ðe man Aprelis nemneð ond on Octobre foreweardum, sona he bið gehæled.
2. Wiþ ða sweartan dolh genim þas ylcan / wyr̥te myd hyre wyr̥twalan ond gecnuca hy, (m)engc eced þærto, lege to ðam dolchum, sona hyt fornimð hy ond gedeð þam oþrum lice gelice.⁴¹

A quick overview of these entries reveals a number of small but significant differences: the information regarding the habitat of the plant has been moved to the front of the entry in the Old English and the Latin phrase *radix eius verticulo est similis* has been omitted from this section; the reference to the nature of the root of the herb in the Latin has been replaced in the Old English with information about the leaves; the reference in the Latin version of the first remedy to astrological signs has been replaced with Old English month names; the Latin phrase *inponis his, qui habent cicatrices nigras* has been syntactically reordered in the Old English and the

⁴⁰ *OEHL*, 10.1–2 (MS Vo.) The Latin text is taken from De Vriend's edition, but has been reordered with reference to Howald and Sigerist to reflect the Latin original; translations are my own. 'IX Herb *Botracion Statice*. For lunatics, if the herb is tied to a lunatic's neck with red thread, when the moon is waning, when it is the sign of Taurus or the first part of Scorpio, they will soon be healed. For black scars, lay the herb *botracion*, pounded with its root, mixed with vinegar, on those who have the black scars. It will take them away and make them the same colour as [the rest of] the body. It is found in sandy places and sandy fields. Its root is similar to a spindle, having few and thin root hairs.'

⁴¹ *OEHL*, 10.1–2 (MS V). Translations from the Old English are my own, with reference to Arsdall's translations in *Medieval Herbal Remedies*. 'X Clufwort. This herb which some call *batracion* and others *clufwort* is found in sandy places and in fields. It has few leaves and thin ones. For lunacy (lit. moon-sickness), take this herb and string it with a red thread around the person's neck during a waning moon in the month called April and in the beginning of October. He will be cured at once. For black scars, take this same herb with its root and pound it. Mix this with vinegar and lay it to the scars. Soon it takes them away and makes them like the rest of the body.'

phrase *similem corpori facit colorem* has also been rendered differently. It is possible that some of these changes may reflect differences of source text. However, the next few paragraphs will discuss the changes that appear to have been made within the broader context of translation in the text.

One of the most obvious changes between the Latin entry for *Batracion Statice* and *Clyfwort* is that in the Old English remedy the physical description and the information regarding the herb's habitat have been moved from its place at the end of the chapter in the Latin version to the beginning. Linda Voigts comments upon this change in the *Old English Herbarium*, emphasising how it could be counted as one of several organisational improvements of the Old English version of this text over its Latin counterparts.⁴² Moving this information, found in Latin recensions at the end of the chapter, to the beginning of the Old English text makes this essential information easier to access and recognise. Voigts also mentions the table of contents, which forms a part of all four manuscripts of the Old English text. This table of contents is somewhat simplified from the *tituli morborum* found in some Latin recensions of the text.⁴³ The *tituli morborum* lists ailments in a head-to-foot order along with the numbers of the herbal chapters involving that condition. The table of contents in the Old English edition simply gives the different herbal chapters with remedies involving the plant listed following, often with rubricated numerals. This method is straightforward but serviceable to any reader of the text and the fact that such a table of contents is found in every extant edition of the *Herbarium* testifies to the importance of usability and organisation to both its compiler and later scribal copyists and readers.

⁴² Voigts, 'Anglo-Saxon Plant Remedies', p. 2.

⁴³ Collins, *Medieval Herbals: The Illustrative Traditions*, p. 166.

Another fairly common change in the English version of the sample passage, and elsewhere in the remedies, involves syntactically reordering the Latin source. As mentioned earlier, one of the features distinguishing the translation style of the *Old English Herbarium* from the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* is that the *Herbarium* renders Latin phrases more idiomatically whereas the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* attempts to imitate Latin syntax.⁴⁴ Thus the translator of the *Herbarium* regularly renders Latin non-finite clauses into a more intuitive finite clause in Old English (as can be seen both in the directions for the remedies *ad lunaticos* and *ad cicatrices nigras* given above). However, although the translation is made more idiomatic, the translator normally still follows the ordering of the Latin instructions closely. Consider, for example, the second remedy, for black scars. Here, the Old English instructions follow the Latin step-for-step: take the herb (with its roots) and pound it, mix it with vinegar, lay it on the scars. This example is reflective of a general tendency of the Old English translator to render the Latin, if not word for word, then phrase by phrase into Old English. Major changes to the syntactic structure of a remedy generally only occur in two instances: where the Latin syntax is confusing or unclear, or when explanatory clauses are added in the Old English. The addition of alternative instructions or ingredients also sometimes affects the syntax of the remedy, but this will be dealt with later in this section.

The first type of change, simplifying cumbersome passages, can be seen in the remedy against black scars cited above. The Latin text *inponis qui habent cicatrices nigras* ('lay it on those who have black scars'), while intelligible, is certainly more unwieldy than the Old English *lege to ðam dolchum* ('lay it on the

⁴⁴ See pp. 182–183.

scars’).⁴⁵ The second type of change, the addition of explanatory phrases, occurs with some frequency in the *Herbarium*. One example can be found in a remedy given under the herb *æscprote* (L. *hierobotana*). The beginning of the Latin remedy reads: *Ad eos qui induratas venas habent et cibos non recipiunt*.⁴⁶ The Old English, clarifying the perhaps obscure *induratas venas*, renders the sentence as: *Wið ða þe habbað ætstandene ædran swa þæt þæt blod ne mæg hys gecyndelican ryne habban ond heora þigne gehealdan ne magon*.⁴⁷ An example of another similar type of change can be seen in chapter 13, the second chapter on herbs known in Old English as *Mugwyr*.⁴⁸ The Anglo-Saxon translator, no doubt aware of this potential for confusion, expands upon his Latin source text adding after *genim byssæ wyrte seaw* the phrase *þe man eac mugwyr nemneð, seo ys swapeah opres cynnes*.⁴⁹ In each of these instances mentioned above, the Old English version has taken potentially confusing sections of the Latin text and clarified them. This results in a vernacular text that is overall more usable and clear than its Latin source text.

A final change in the translation of the *Herbarium* occurs in the first remedy where the astrological references are switched for Old English month names. In the first remedy, the Latin text suggests that remedy should be done *cum erit signum tauri vel scorpionis parte prima* (‘when it is the sign of Taurus or the first part of

⁴⁵ For another example, compare *OEH*, 30.1 (MSS Vo and V). In this instance, the somewhat cumbersome title of the Latin remedy: *Ad vitia quae in ore nascuntur* (‘for pain which is found in the mouth’) has been rendered more simply by the translator as: *wið muðes sare* (‘for sore of the mouth’).

⁴⁶ *OEH*, 4.3 (MS Vo). ‘For those who have hardened veins and those who do not take food.’

⁴⁷ *OEH*, 4.3 (MS V). ‘For those that have stopped veins, so that the blood may not have its natural run and for those who are not able to hold down food.’ In this example, the translator has also altered symptoms involved. Where the Latin text implies that patient cannot eat food, the Old English seems to imply that food eaten is vomited up. It is hard to know what might have motivated this more fundamental type of change.

⁴⁸ *OEH*, 12.1 (MSS V and Vo). This change appears to be a response in part to a mistake made in the copying of the exemplar where Chapter XI *Herba Artemisia Tagantes* of the *Pseudo-Apuleius Herbarium* was combined with Chapter XII *Herba Artemisia Leptofillos*. The need for extra clarity in this situation is logical. For discussion of this error, see *OEH*, 12, explanatory notes; D’Aronco, ‘The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England’, pp. 40–41. For other examples of these types of changes, see *OEH*, 23.1, 35, 34.1

⁴⁹ *OEH*, 12.1 (MS V). ‘Take the juice of this herb [...] which some call *mugwyr* but is another type.’

Scorpio’), which is rendered in Old English as *on þam monþe ðe man Aprelis nemneð ond on Octobre foreweardum* (‘in the month called April and in the beginning of October’). The translator here changes the astrological signs for the Latin month names, which he apparently saw as more comprehensible. However, this change comes at the expense of accuracy, as the months and signs do not directly correspond. This type of change helps frame the overall status of this translation, which promotes clarity and usability but probably shouldn’t be called ‘nativising’.⁵⁰ Although some passages from the Alfredian translations substitute English traditions for Classical ones—notably the substitution of Weland for Fabricius in the *Boethius*—the translation clearly asserts itself within the learned and written traditions.⁵¹ This can also be seen in the treatment of herb names at the beginning of entries. The original Latin version of the *Herbarium* stresses the universality of its content. Generally in the *Herbarium*, the name of each herb is given not only in Latin but also in Greek, Mediterranean vernaculars, or in other tongues. It is clear the usability of the text was meant to transcend the language and culture of its author. These appellative passages have generally been simplified in the Old English version to include only the Latin name (and occasionally the Greek name) in addition to the Old English designation. An extreme example can be seen in entries for the herb *proserpinace* (I have listed the Latin first with the Old English following):

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the term ‘nativising’, see H. Magennis, *Translating Beowulf* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 20–26; N. Jardine, ‘Avoiding Disaster in Translation: On the Advantages of “Old Friends”’, in *Recipes for Disaster*, ed. J. Rampling, D. Banham, and N. Jardine (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 39–46, at 41–46. The strengths and pitfalls of different types of translations are discussed by Umberto Eco in his *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation* (London, 2003).

⁵¹ For a discussion of the Latin month names and their use in Anglo-Saxon England, see *The Old English Metrical Calendar (Menologium)*, ed. K. Karasawa (Cambridge, 2015). For a discussion of translation techniques found in the Old English *Soliloquies* and *Boethius*, see K. O’Brien O’Keefe, ‘Old English Literature and the Negotiations of Tradition’, in *A Companion to British Literature Volume I: Medieval Literature 700–1450*, ed. R. Demaria, Jr, H. Chang, and S. Zacher (Chichester, 2014), pp. 16–29.

A Graecis dicitur poligonos, alii cinocalce, alii poligonatos, alii aspaltion, alii policarpon, alii carcinetron, alii echinopodion, alii mirtopetalon, Aegyptii zeclias, alii thepin, alii setempin, profetae gonos eroos, alii onix mios, Romani sanguinaria, Itali proserpinaca, alii statunaria, alii serutum, alii scorpinacem.⁵²

Deos wyrt ðe man proserpinacam ond oðrum naman unfortredde nemneð [...].⁵³

This example suggests that the universality of the text was more important in the Latin tradition (which would have circulated more widely), than in the insular English version. However, the parallelism in the English entry serves to emphasise the equal significance of the English name of the herb with the Latin. This structure is common throughout the collection and can also be seen in the description of *clufwyrt* given above: *Deos wyrt þe man batracion ond oprum naman clufwyrt nemneð*. The fact the Latin herb names are retained suggests that the translator had no intention in this translation of subsuming or subverting the earlier Latin heritage of this text. Instead, the translation and the project it implies (involving collecting and compiling high-quality exemplars of numerous Latin texts) makes a claim to the relevance of English tradition and scholarship to the larger learned Latin tradition seen in these texts.

The *Old English Herbarium*: Changes in Content

Now that the major areas of syntactic and structural alterations in the *Old English Herbarium* have been addressed, I will consider the changes made to the actual content of the text. I will address the following: the replacement of specifically

⁵² Howald and Sigerist, 18; references to remedies in Howald and Sigerist are given by chapter. ‘[This herb] is called *poligonos* by the Greeks, others [call it] *aspaltion*, others *policarpon*, others *carcinetron*, others *echinopodion*, others *mirtopetalon*, Egyptians [call it] *zeclias*, others *thepin*, others *setempin*, the Magi (?) [call it] *gonos eroos*, others *onix mios*, the Romans *sanguinaria*, the Italians *proserpinaca*, others *statunaria*, others *serutum*, others *scorpinacem*.’ In the Latin tradition this information is given at the end of the remedy.

⁵³ *OEHL*, 19 (MS V). ‘This herb which one calls *proserpinaca* and by another name *unfortredde*’.

Mediterranean or eastern ingredients with more easily locatable native ingredients; the addition of ingredients or instructions in the Old English version wholly absent in the Latin; and finally those remedies apparently omitted by the Anglo-Saxon translator. These changes help to elucidate what could be identified as the particular proclivities of English medicine and what Anglo-Saxon translators may have found wanting or unhelpful in the available Latin material. There are many examples of these types of changes. For the sake of clarity and brevity, my method here, and elsewhere in this section, is to cite only the most interesting or common examples.

Among the most common changes in the actual content of the *Old English Herbarium* are instances where either specifically Mediterranean or eastern ingredients or overly precise ingredients are replaced with more easily accessible ones. This is of course not to suggest that none of the remedies in the text contain ingredients sourced from the East, as several remedies call for the use of pepper, for instance.⁵⁴ These commonly known spices and herbs are not replaced in the text; only when ingredients are overly specific (or assumedly difficult to locate) are they replaced in the translation. This can be seen, for example, in a remedy whose Latin rendering calls for *Amineo vino*. In the Old English version, this highly specific ingredient (*Amineo* refers to a particular region in Italy, no longer identifiable) is replaced with *ealdum wine*.⁵⁵ Another example of this type of change occurs in Chapter 17. The Latin version describes the herb as *nascitur gemellis montibus* ('grows in the twin hills').⁵⁶ This likely refers to a particular pair of mountains

⁵⁴ For general discussion of the portrayal of the Mediterranean region in the medical corpus, see D. Banham, 'Arestolobius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the bark that comes from Paradise: What did the Orient mean to the compilers of Old English medical collections?', in *Proceedings of the 38th International Congress on the History of Medicine*, ed. N. Sari *et al*, International Society for the History of Medicine (Ankara, 2005), pp. 459–468.

⁵⁵ *OEHL*, 1.10 (MS V). 'Old wine'. It is of course also possible that this change could reflect an error in the copying process.

⁵⁶ *OEHL*, 17 (MSS V and Vo).

located in central Italy, yet in the Old English the herb is simply described as *bið cenned on dunum* ('found on hills'). In both cases, the translation appears aimed at making these ingredients easier to source for an Anglo-Saxon audience.

There is also some simplification (and sometimes inconsistency) in the translator's handling of the various alcoholic beverages used in his source text. Both *mero* ('undiluted wine') and *mulsum* (either meaning 'sweetened wine' or 'mead') are often rendered more simply as *win* in the Old English version.⁵⁷ However, *beor* also appears as a translation of *mulsum* in a remedy from the *De herba vettonica liber* (treated as the first chapter in the *Old English Herbarium*).⁵⁸ Similarly, *aqua mulsa* ('honey water') in another remedy is also replaced with *niwe beor* ('new beer').⁵⁹ For the Anglo-Saxons, *beor* appears to have indicated a honey-sweetened fruit-based drink rather than the malt-based drink we now commonly refer to as 'beer',⁶⁰ so this would have been more similar to *mulsum* or *aqua mulsa* than the modern equivalent but probably was not exactly the beverage the source text intended. *Ealu* (a malted beverage probably somewhat similar to modern beer) is also added to some remedies in the Old English translation or listed as an alternative to wine.⁶¹ Although these remedies are being handled in different ways, the changes made appear to support practicality—whether through the simplification of overly precise requirements or the replacement of more difficult to locate ingredients with simpler ones.

⁵⁷ *OEH*, 2.7, *OEH*, 2.7 (MSS Vo and V). Cf. 30.5 where *vini meri optimi* ('the best undiluted wine') is translated as *on wine* ('in wine').

⁵⁸ *OEH*, 1.27 (MS V). In this instance, what is generally one remedy in the Latin version of the text has become two in the English

⁵⁹ *OEH*, 2.15 (MSS Vo and V)

⁶⁰ For a discussion of the meaning of *beor*, *ealu*, *win*, and *medu* in Anglo-Saxon England, see C. Fell, 'Old English *Beor*', *Leeds Studies in English* (1975) 8, 76–95.

⁶¹ *OEH*, 2.15, 36.3 (MSS Vo and V)

The Anglo-Saxon translator also appears to have found rose oil (L. *oleum rosacium*) to be an unnecessarily specific ingredient, because most often he simply rendered it as oil (OE *ele*).⁶² This does not seem to be the case of an unknown ingredient being switched for a known one, as rose oil (OE *gerosod ele*, or *rosen ele*) appears in a later recipe in the *Herbarium* as well as in two instances in *Bald's Leechbook*, and a recipe for making it is also found in the *Lacnunga*.⁶³ It seems instead that the translator of the *Herbarium*, although obviously aware of rose oil, thought that another oil would work just as well (and, indeed, getting a hold of any oil in Anglo-Saxon England may have been difficult).⁶⁴ A similar argument might be made about the wine since *merum* and *mulsum* are both fairly common Latin words with which he would likely have been acquainted. In replacing *merum* and *mulsum* with *win* or *beor*, and *oleum rosacium* with *ele*, the translator was making his text more versatile and better fitted for everyday use by employing ingredients that had the same function as in the Latin instructions but were perhaps easier to obtain in England.

A more significant type of deviation from the source text occurs where the translator omits whole Latin cures. In general, throughout the *Old English Herbarium* this practice is fairly rare; the vast majority of cures in the Latin recensions of the *Herbarium* are retained in the English version. Yet because of this generally inclusive tendency in the translation, the instances of individual remedies being omitted suggest that in each instance there is a particular reason for not including a remedy.⁶⁵ Sometimes the nature of the cures skipped appears to indicate

⁶² See for instance *OEH*, 12.5, 13.2, 19.2.

⁶³ *OEH*, 171.1; *BLB*, II 34, 38; *LAC*, vol. I, XX.

⁶⁴ D. Banham, *Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon England* (Stroud, 2004), p. 60.

⁶⁵ Of course, it is always possible that in any given instance the Latin exemplar was at fault. Because of this, I have excluded from my analysis any remedies apparently skipped in the Old English but

the translator's lack of confidence with a given Latin medical term. For instance, the Latin terms for jaundice (*aurigino*) and jaundiced (*auriginosus*) seem to have puzzled the translator. His general approach is to skip remedies involving this word and in a remedy where it occurs which he does include, he mistranslates it.⁶⁶ There might be a similar reason behind the omission of several other cures also containing obscure terminology, such as a cure for dislocation (*ad luxum*) and remedies involving an *encanthisma* ('medicinal bath').⁶⁷

Other types of rationale for omitting certain remedies are also in play. For instance, amongst the remedies omitted by the Anglo-Saxon translator there appears an unusually high proportion of cures related to women. Of 25 remedies omitted out of the first 100 chapters of the *Herbarium*, at least 4 pertain specifically to women.⁶⁸ This count far exceeds the normal proportion of remedies specifically related to women in the *Old English Herbarium*, whose first 100 chapters, divided into approximately 350 individual remedies, contain only 8 cures specifically related to women. The final chapters of the *OE Herbarium* are harder to systematically compare to their source text as many of them are taken from the *Curae Herbarium*, of which there is no modern edition. Yet when considering those entries from the *Ex herbis femininis*, this tendency becomes even clearer. Chapters 135, 136, 138, 139, are all missing either whole remedies or particular phrases related to female complaints.⁶⁹ The translator, then, appears to have had a proclivity for skipping remedies related to the female sex, although he by no means did so in every case.

also missing from any popular recension of the Latin text. For this information I have referred to Howald and Sigerist's critical edition of the Latin text.

⁶⁶ The remedy is omitted entirely in *OEH*, 1, 4, 75. It is mistranslated in 36.4 where the translator has rendered, *Ad auriginem* as *Wið sina togunge* ('for strained tendons').

⁶⁷ Cf. *OEH*, 32, 39 with Howald and Sigerist, 31, 38. The translator of the Old English text also skips a sentence featuring the word *encanthisma* in 41, cf. Howald and Sigerist, 40.

⁶⁸ Cf. *OEH*, 16, 82, 94, 39 with Howald and Sigerist, 15, 81, 93, 38.

⁶⁹ Cf. *OEH*, 135, 136, 138, 139 with H. F. Kästner, 'Pseudo-Dioscorides *De herbis femininis*', *Hermes*, xxxi (1896), pp. 578–635, xxxii (1897), p. 160, at ch. XXXII, LXIV, LXIX, LXX.

Several of the skipped entries are remedies related to abnormalities in the menstrual cycle or miscarriage. The appearance of these remedies in the Latin text is not unusual, as a significant portion of medieval gynaecological remedies in the Middle Ages dealt with menstrual disorders, and disruptions in menstrual cycle were seen to the cause of a whole variety of illnesses and conditions.⁷⁰ Alongside a remedy for miscarriage, the Old English also omits several emmenagogic remedies (an emmenagogue is a substance that brings on menstruation).⁷¹ John Riddle has argued that emmenagogues may have been frequently used in the ancient world and Middle Ages as abortifacients.⁷² If the translator of the *Herbarium* was aware of this, this might help explain why some of these types of remedies were omitted. However, more typically emmenagogic remedies would have been used in the Middle Ages to promote fertility in accordance with the belief that menstruation was part of the process of bodily purification necessary for conception.⁷³ Thus it is possible that the omission of a number of these remedies may simply relate to distaste for sex on the part of the translator, as he has also omitted a remedy for men who are not able to perform sexually and a remedy explicitly aimed at promoting female fertility.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, some of the women's remedies omitted lack any sexual element and might simply suggest the influence of a male monastic environment.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ M. Green, 'Flowers, Poisons and Men: Menstruation in Medieval Western Europe', in *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, ed. A. Shail and G. Howie (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 51–75, at 54–57.

⁷¹ These are the remedies omitted from chapters 84, 135, 136.

⁷² For the use of emmenagogues as abortifacients, see J. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion in the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (London, 1992), p. 27. However, see also M. Green, Review of Riddle, *Eve's Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West*, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 73 (1999), 308–311.

⁷³ Green, 'Flowers, Poisons and Men', p. 53. See also *The Trotula: An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine*, ed. and trans. M. Green (Philadelphia, 2002), p. 182; M. Green, 'Menstruation', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. M. Schaus (Abingdon, 2006), pp. 557–558.

⁷⁴ Cf. *OEHL* 16, 138 and Howald and Sigerist 15 and Kästner LXIX.

⁷⁵ Remedies related to purification of women, for when woman is struck silent, and other maladies are omitted.

This comparison of the *Old English Herbarium* with its Latin source texts has not been exhaustive; many aspects of this skilful translation could receive still greater attention. However, even without a comprehensive study, certain aspects regarding the translation seem self-evident. The translator himself was by all appearances respectful of his source text. Unlike some other works of translation into Old English, the *Herbarium* could hardly be considered a ‘transformation’.⁷⁶ Yet, though the translator tended to follow his Latin exemplars quite closely, he was not subservient to them and in some cases appears willing to practice the art of *emendatio* upon his text.⁷⁷ Through changes which were often small, such as the substitution of a rare ingredient for one more easily obtainable, but occasionally as significant as the omission of remedies he found unhelpful, the Anglo-Saxon translator subtly altered his text in ways which reveal the hand of a confident and learned translator. I would suggest that the final result of this translator’s work was a text that was reliable, and useful—and of a quality to match continental practice. The translated collection must have been valuable enough to its English readers that it is still preserved in four copies today, when so many other texts from the Anglo-Saxon period have been lost.

The *Old English Herbarium* as a Product of the Benedictine Reform

As we have seen in the previous discussion, the translation of the *Herbarium* is a skilful and careful one. Such a translation project would have required not only the availability of the several Latin treatises (perhaps even in multiple copies)⁷⁸ but

⁷⁶ For an interesting discussion of this term, see J. Bately, *The Literary Prose of King Alfred’s Reign: Translation or Transformation* (London, 1980), p. 21. See also Chapter 1, pp. 71–75.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the role of *emendatio* within the larger area of *grammatica* in the early Middle Ages, see Irvine, *The Making of Literary Culture*, pp. 74–76.

⁷⁸ This is commented upon by D’Aronco: *Chi ideò e/o eseguì la traduzione dovette aver a disposizione un notevole numero di testi, e forse anche edizioni differenti appartenenti a tradizioni*

probably also glossaries and possibly other reference texts. It seems nearly certain that this type of project would have been done at a major centre of learning. If this translation was made in the tenth century, as seems likely, there are probably only a handful of centres at which it could have been produced. As Lapidge has illustrated, the number of centres that achieved a high level of Latin scholarship was ‘surprisingly small’ in this period, to the extent that we can often trace which master taught whom.⁷⁹ Given this, Maria D’Aronco’s suggestion that the *Old English Herbarium* was most likely produced at Æthelwold’s school in Winchester deserves further consideration. This section will explore the evidence for locating the translation of the *Herbarium* at Winchester and discuss the implications of seeing this work as part of the Benedictine Reform movement.⁸⁰

Reading the *Old English Herbarium* as a product of the reform movement would make sense given the ultimately continental nature of the project. The treatises comprising the larger Herbarium Complex represented current medical practice on the continent at this time, and it is likely that the high quality exemplars used in the creation of the translation would have come from a continental (very possibly Carolingian) source.⁸¹ D’Aronco has emphasised the similarities between

diverse, almeno per quanto si può dedurre dalle testimonianze che ci sono pervenute. (‘Whoever conceived of and/or produced the translation must have had at his disposal a notable number of texts, and perhaps even different editions belonging to different [textual] traditions, at least in so far as it is possible to deduce from the testimonies that are preserved’): D’Aronco, ‘Le conoscenze mediche nell’Inghilterra anglosassone’, p. 144.

⁷⁹ Lapidge, ‘Schools, Learning and Literature in Tenth-Century England’, p. 3.

⁸⁰ For background on the ‘Benedictine Reform Movement’ in England, see J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 348–354; D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 1949), pp. 31–66; M. Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform* (Cambridge, 1999); J. Barrow, ‘English Cathedral Communities and Reform in the Late Tenth and Eleventh Centuries’, in *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093–1193*, ed. D. Rollason, M. Harvey, and M. Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 25–39; C. Cubitt, ‘The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England’, *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997), 77–94; P. Wormald, ‘Æthelwold and his Continental Counterparts: Contact, Comparison, Contrast’, in *Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, ed. B. Yorke (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 13–42.

⁸¹ Glaze lists Pseudo-Apuleius as among the medical authors popular in Carolingian catalogues, and the *Herbarium* shows up several times in her table of ‘Early Medieval Ownership of Medical Books Through the Twelfth Century’: Glaze, ‘The Perforated Wall’, p. 73 and Table 1.

the Old English translation of the *Herbarium* and a Latin version found in Montecassino Biblioteca della Badia MS 97 on both textual and iconographic grounds.⁸² The relationship between these manuscripts seems to indicate the role of Benedictine continental houses in the transmission of the treatises of the Herbarium Complex to England. It is likely that one of the main aims of this translation project was to bring England up to date with and in line with current continental practice.

This is of course in keeping with the generally continental outlook of the reform movement in England. There was a notable revival in the study and production of medical texts during the Carolingian period. This can be seen most clearly in the fact that more than half of the surviving medical manuscripts from the ninth to eleventh century were copied in the ninth century in Frankish and German monastic centres.⁸³ The renewal in interest in medicine likely also reflects the incorporation of medicine as part of the didactic programme of study within the monasteries in some cases. The importance of studying medicine was stressed by Alcuin, a central figure in the Carolingian *renovatio*, who saw it as belonging to the seven liberal arts (falling under the larger category of *physica*).⁸⁴ This view is also repeated in the writings of his student Hrabanus Maurus and in the anonymous *Arzneibuch* from Lorsch.⁸⁵ The idea that medicine should be a part of the study of any well-rounded scholar of the liberal arts almost certainly increased interest in the

⁸² The illustrations in the Montecassino manuscript are similar to those found in the Cotton version of the *Herbarium*, for instance the herbs generally share the same shape and number of leaves (although the Montecassino rendition is more simplified than that found in the Cotton manuscript). Additionally, both manuscripts contain the α tradition of the *Pseudo-Apuleius* Herbal, exceptionally paired with *Ex herbis femininis* and *Medicina de animalibus* of class B (whereas otherwise in the Latin tradition *Pseudo-Apuleius*- α is paired with *Curae herbarum* and *Medicina de animalibus*-A). See D’Aronco, ‘Le conoscenze mediche nell’Inghilterra anglosassone’, pp. 37–39; M. A. D’Aronco, ‘Gardens on Vellum: Plants and Herbs in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts’, in *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden*, ed. P. Dendle and A. Touwaide (Rochester, 2008), pp. 101–127, at 114–116.

⁸³ J. Contreni, ‘Masters and Medicine in Northern France During the Reign of Charles the Bald’, in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, ed. M. Gibson and J. Nelson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 262–282, at 269; Glaze, ‘The Perforated Wall’, pp. 70–71.

⁸⁴ Alcuin, *Didascalia III*, ‘Dialogus de rhetorica et virtutibus’, PL vol. 101, col. 947–948; cited in Glaze, ‘The Perforated Wall’, p. 85.

⁸⁵ Glaze, ‘The Perforated Wall’, pp. 84–89.

subject during the Carolingian period. However, Contreni has argued that this may have led to medicine largely being considered as a non-specialist subject.⁸⁶ Scholars such as Walafriid Strabo, Lupus of Ferrieres and Grimoald of St Gall all studied medical texts, but this was probably pursued at least partially because of literary interests in Greek words and concepts.⁸⁷ In all likelihood, the study of medicine at this time tended to combine both the literary and the practical, but in any case it was on the rise in during the Carolingian period.

Aside from literary interests, the ninth and tenth-century revival of medicine may also reflect the increased influence of Benedictine monasticism during this period. More so than any other monastic rule practised in the early Middle Ages, the *Benedictine Rule* emphasises care for the sick, a responsibility that is ultimately held by the abbot himself.⁸⁸ Chapter 36 of the *Rule* details what type of care is to be given to sick monks, who are, for instance, to be given a room apart and to be allowed to take baths and eat meat. The chapter begins with the reminder: *Infirmorum cura ante omnia et super omnia adhibenda est, ut sicut reuera Christo, ita eis seruiatur: quia ipse dixit: Infirmus fui et uisitastis me* and concludes: *curam autem maximam habeat abbas ne a cellarariis aut a seruatoribus neglegantur infirmi; et ipsum respicit, quidquid a discipulis delinquitur.*⁸⁹ The Benedictine aim of promoting health received further refinement from the sixth century monastic founder Cassiodorus,

⁸⁶ Contreni, 'Masters and Medicine', p. 268. Contreni records only one reference to a named 'medicus' from ninth-century French sources.

⁸⁷ Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 158–159: 'The peculiar nature of early medical literature, which combined intellectually challenging materials with practically useful guides and recipe collections, might in fact have contributed to the appeal of these anthologised medical books.'

⁸⁸ An extreme example of ideal this can be seen in Baldwin, the abbot of Bury St Edmunds in the late eleventh century. Abbot Baldwin was a skilled doctor, who had previously served as a physician to English kings. For a discussion of Baldwin's impact upon the study of medicine at Bury St Edmunds, see Banham, 'Medicine at Bury in the Time of Abbot Baldwin'.

⁸⁹ *Regula Benedicti*, ed. R. Hanslik, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 75 (Vienna, 1960), ch. XXXVI, pp. 95–96. 'The care of the sick must be provided before all and above all; they must be served like Christ, in fact, because he himself said: "I was sick and you visited me" [...] Let the abbot take the greatest care, lest the sick be neglected by the servants, and he similarly should look to see if anything has been forgotten by his followers.'

who stressed the importance of monasteries having a well-stocked medical library. He even gave specific instructions on which books to have (his list included the *Herbarium* of Dioscorides, which perhaps refers to the Pseudo-Dioscorides' *Liber medicinae ex herbis femininis*).⁹⁰ The significance of providing good care for the sick in Benedictine monasteries during the Carolingian period can be seen for instance in the elaborate provisions for the sick in the ninth-century monastic plan found in St Gall. The (apparently never actualised) monastery depicted in this plan designates over one-tenth of the total establishment towards buildings dedicated to the care of the sick.⁹¹ The location for which this plan was made has been the subject of some debate, but some scholars suggest it may well have been in England. It seems very likely that the increase of Benedictine houses in England during the reform period would have encouraged the impulse towards medical study and training in reformed houses.

It is possible that the emphasis on medical care in Benedictine practice may have encouraged a reform-minded Anglo-Saxon bishop or abbot to commission a work such as the *Herbarium*. One also wonders if the masculinising tendency of the translation might possibly reflect the desires of a (reformed?) monastic house. Although not every cure related to feminine disorders is omitted, the fact that a percentage are at least suggests that the translator saw his audience as principally masculine. A monastic setting may also help explain why remedies with a sexual element could have been seen as unnecessary. Certainly these elements could

⁹⁰ *Cassiodorus senatoris institutiones*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1937), bk. I, ch. 31, pp. 78–79; see also Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', p. 62. For the impact of Cassiodorus' recommendations in Carolingian libraries, see R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 194. It is also worth noting that Cassiodorus' *Institutes* exist in multiple manuscript copies from the Anglo-Saxon period (Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 296).

⁹¹ M. D'Aronco, 'The Benedictine Rule and the Care of the Sick: The Plan of St Gall and Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Medieval Hospital and Medical Practice*, ed. B. Bowers (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 235–251.

describe a number of monastic institutions in tenth-century England. Beyond Winchester, the other important scholarly centres of the reform (Canterbury under Dunstan or Worcester under Oswald) are candidates, as one assumes that such a centre would need to be well-connected to the continent, in order to be have access to the manuscripts necessary for such an elaborate project of translation.

The existing manuscript record suggests that Æthelwold's school at Winchester was the most productive scholarly centre of his time.⁹² We also know Winchester probably boasted an impressive medical library to allow for the creation a generation (or two) earlier of *Bald's Leechbook*.⁹³ There is evidence that some translations were being produced at Winchester under Æthelwold's supervision. The *Vita S. Aethelwoldi* records that *dulce namque erat ei adolescentes et iuuenes semper docere, et Latinos libros Anglice eis soluere*, and we can count the most prolific author of English prose, Ælfric, among his students.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Æthelwold himself translated the *Regula S. Benedicti* for Queen Ælfhryth. Unlike the verbose hermeneutic style popular in Latin composition in the tenth century, Æthelwold's translation appears to be driven by a desire for clarity and comprehensibility.⁹⁵ The most extensive study of the Old English *Regula S. Benedicti* has been done by Mechthild Gretsch, who describes Æthelwold's aim as being 'to write clear and fluent English prose', noting also that 'he keeps closely to the original as long as he can fulfil this purpose by means of a literal translation.'⁹⁶

⁹² Lapidge, 'Schools, Learning and Literature in Tenth-Century England', p. 39.

⁹³ It is possible that parts of *Bald's Leechbook* might have been formed from a Mercian original, as Voth has suggested. However, it seems very likely that the manuscript was at least revised and recopied in Winchester. For more details on this see Chapter 1, pp. 65–71.

⁹⁴ *The Life of St. Æthelwold*, ed. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991), pp. 46–49 'And indeed, it was always a sweet thing for him to teach the youths, changing Latin books into English for them'. See also H. Gneuss 'Origin of Standard Old English and Æthelwold's School at Winchester', *ASE* 1 (1972), 63–83.

⁹⁵ For more discussion of the hermeneutic style popular in the tenth century, see Chapter 3, p 175.

⁹⁶ M. Gretsch, 'Æthelwold's Translation of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti* and its Latin Exemplar', *ASE* 3 (1974), 125–151, at 148; Æthelwold's style is also discussed by D'Arconco in 'La traduzione in

As we have seen, these aims are shared by the translator of the *Herbarium*. This is not to suggest that the two works are in exactly same style or share an authorship, as they have some stylistic differences,⁹⁷ but it is perhaps not difficult to imagine them belonging to same school or tradition.

There is also some palaeographical evidence, which, although inconclusive, may point towards Winchester.⁹⁸ D’Aronco has shown conclusively that the manuscripts V, B, and H (the Cotton manuscript, the Bodleian Library manuscript, and the Hatton manuscript shared with the *Lacnunga*) all share numerous traits and must have been copied from a closely related illustrated exemplar(s).⁹⁹ B contains notations in the tremulous hand and was most likely copied at Worcester. V, the Cotton manuscript, on the other hand, shares numerous stylistic traits with London, BL, MS Cotton Tiberius B. v, part 1 (containing, among other texts, an illustrated copy of the *Wonders of the East*). The Tiberius manuscript is often considered a quintessential example of the illustrative style associated with the scriptorium of St Augustine’s Canterbury in the early eleventh century. The close similarity between these two pieces indicates that the Cotton copy of the *Herbarium* was also copied in Canterbury, but this manuscript contains other features associated with a Winchester style. This suggests that V was copied at Canterbury but that the exemplar may have been originally from Winchester. It is entirely possible, although not necessary, that

inglese antico della *Regula Sancti Benedicti*: Neologismi e prestiti nel lessico monastico’, *Filologia Germanica* 24 (1981), 105–146, at 128–132.

⁹⁷ As D’Aronco points out, Æthelwold frequently coins his own terminology in his translation of the *Regula S. Benedicti*, something that does not appear to happen in the *Old English Herbarium*. Also, Æthelwold has a tendency to render one Latin word into a pair of Old English words, something I have not observed in the translation of the *Herbarium*. For discussion of Æthelwold’s style in comparison to the *Herbarium*, see D’Aronco, ‘L’erbario anglosassone’, pp. 348–349. For more general discussions of Æthelwold’s style, see M. Lapidge, ‘Æthelwold as Scholar and Teacher’, in *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, pp. 89–118, esp. 101–102; Gretsch, ‘Æthelwold’s Translation of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*’, pp. 143–148; D. A. Bullough, ‘The Educational Tradition in England from Alfred to Ælfric: Teaching *utriusque linguae*’, in *La scuola nell’occidente latino dell’alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio sull’alto medioevo 19 (Spoleto, 1972), pp. 453–494, at 480–481.

⁹⁸ This argument is outlined by D’Aronco, ‘L’erbario anglosassone’, pp. 354–355; ‘The Transmission of Medical Knowledge’, pp. 45–46.

⁹⁹ D’Aronco, ‘The Transmission of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England’, pp. 41–45.

this could have been the original autograph (or a clean copy) produced in Winchester.

This series of connections between Winchester, Canterbury, Worcester reinforces the connections between the production of this translation and the Benedictine Reform movement in England. This translation clearly did not originate as a small-scale venture in an intellectual backwater, but instead should be treated as a skilful project that once completed became a necessary part of the libraries at the foremost scholarly centres in England at that time.

When Æthelwold initiated a new monastic foundation at Peterborough, he donated 21 books to the minster. Michael Lapidge has described these items as ‘a sort of start-up collection’ for the monastery, and among the varied lexicographical texts and hagiography it is also recorded that he gave them a *Medicinalis*.¹⁰⁰ It is unclear from this list if this medical text was in English or Latin, or indeed which text it might have been. However, it does suggest that a dependable medical text was something deemed essential by Æthelwold for an up-to-date monastic house. This is something that would have been in keeping with the practice of Benedictine monasticism on the continent at this time. The fact that this type of attitude was held by one of the leaders of the reform movement in England might help explain why the translation of the *Old English Herbarium* was undertaken at precisely this time. It might also provide a suggestion as to why this text is still preserved in four copies today, when so many other texts from the Anglo-Saxon period have been lost.

¹⁰⁰ M. Lapidge, ‘Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 33–89, IV. Bullough remarks that the list ‘is a mixed bag indeed, with some very odd features [...] Taken as a whole, however, it seems to offer the basis of a wide-ranging, even encyclopedic, although not very profound education to those who had already mastered the Latin language’ (‘The Educational Tradition in England’, p. 482).

Chapter 5: Medicine in Old English Literature and Doctrine

The previous chapters have introduced the four major Old English medical collections and have suggested contexts in which they can be usefully read and appreciated. The final part of this dissertation will attempt to contextualise these texts further by considering the place of medicine and medical practice in the broader literary culture of Anglo-Saxon England.

This chapter will begin by examining the role of doctors and medicine in a variety of different types of Christian writings from Anglo-Saxon England. This study will focus principally on the late Anglo-Saxon period, which encompasses the dates of the extant manuscript copies of the medical collections. I will argue that the doctor was generally treated as a figure worthy of respect, and that the consultation of medical professionals was considered appropriate and valuable for both the laity and those in religious orders. The place of medicine in Church practice and ideology is significant considering that it is likely that the majority of the four Old English medical collections discussed above were compiled in some type of monastic centre. Therefore, an understanding of the theological position of medical practice in Anglo-Saxon England is essential in order to inform our reading of the Old English medical collections.

However, although the practice of medicine was held in high regard, Ælfric suggests in his homilies that there is a division between *soða læcecræft* ('true medicine'), which is acceptable and beneficial, and other *unalyfedas tilungas*

(‘forbidden practices’).¹ The second half of the chapter will attempt to navigate this dividing line and consider in which circumstances medical practice might have been considered demonically driven. This exploration will touch on the broader topic of charms in the Old English medical collections. Although the label of ‘charm’ has been widely applied to a number of texts of the Old English medical corpus, definitions of the term vary widely. This chapter will attempt to untangle some of the threads of understanding related to this difficult term, and consider its applicability to the remedies found within medical collections. Finally, it will consider what relationship these remedies might have had with the *galdra* (‘charms’) prohibited by law and by the Church.

The Doctor in Literature: the Classical Background

In the twelfth century, St Bernard of Clairvaux notoriously discouraged his monks from seeking doctors or purchasing medicines, writing that this *religioni indecens est et contrarium puritati* (‘is unseemly for religion and contrary to purity of life’).² Although this outlook is sometimes taken as typical of patristic and medieval theologians,³ in fact, attitudes towards the appropriate use of medicine (perhaps unsurprisingly) varied considerably during the period. While traditionally scholarship has tried to paint the Church Fathers as uniformly suspicious of the medical arts, in the last two decades several scholars have argued that medicine was much more widely approved in the early Church than has generally been assumed.⁴

¹ Clemons, pp. 449–450. References from the second series will be cited from: Ælfric, *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: The Second Series. Text*, ed. M. Godden, EETS s.s. 5 (London, 1979). This will be referred to as Godden in the footnotes.

² Bernard of Clairvaux, *Lettres*, ed. H. Rochais and others (Paris, 1997), ep. 345.

³ See, for instance, L. Conrad, *The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 77.

⁴ See D. W. Amundsen, ‘Medicine and Faith in Early Christianity’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 56 (1982), 326–350; D. W. Amundsen, *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and*

Nevertheless, although some Church Fathers (such as Clement and Augustine) were generally approving of the practice of medicine, others held more restrictive views.

Origen for instance, distinguishes two classes of men:

Ἄλλὰ χρὴ τὴν θεραπείαν τῶν σωμάτων, εἰ μὲν ἀπλούστερον βούλοιτό τις ζῆν καὶ κοινότερον, ἐφόδῳ ἰατρικῇ θεραπεύειν, εἰ δὲ βέλτιον παρὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς, εὐσεβείᾳ τῇ εἰς τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸν καὶ ταῖς πρὸς ἐκεῖνον εὐχαΐς.⁵

Through the patristic and classical tradition the Anglo-Saxons would have thus inherited a variety of often conflicting views concerning the acceptability of medicine.

Although it would impossible to say there was a single, comprehensive theology of medicine in Anglo-Saxon England, against this diverse background of opinions, Anglo-Saxon authors generally defended the practice of medicine. Indeed, the idea that the use of medicine was in opposition to faith (or at least that its use was inappropriate to life in holy orders) does not appear to be at all characteristic of Anglo-Saxon attitudes. Instead Anglo-Saxon sources (whether poetic or practical) on the whole reflect widespread respect and appreciation for the practice of medicine. This may perhaps at least partially reflect the influence of Carolingian sources.⁶

In the early Anglo-Saxon period, Bede describes one of the most illustrious Anglo-Saxon saints being treated by a physician. In his description of Æthelthryth's death, Bede writes that a certain doctor, Cynifrid, was consulted about her illness and death: *sed certiori notitia medicus Cynifrid, qui et morienti illi et eleuatae de tumulo adfuit; qui referre erat solitus quod illa infirmata habuerit tumorem*

Medieval Worlds (London, 1996); G. B. Ferngren, *Medicine & Health Care in Early Christianity* (Baltimore, 2009).

⁵ Origen, *Contre Celse*, ed. Marcel Borret (Paris, 1969), vol. IV, 8.60. Translation quoted by H. Chadwick, *Contra Celsum* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 498. 'A man ought to use medical means to heal his body if he aims to live in the simple and ordinary way. If he wishes to live in a way superior to that of the multitude, he should do this by devotion to the supreme God and by praying to him.' Cf. Amundsen, 'Medicine and Faith in Early Christianity', p. 338.

⁶ See pp. 204–206.

*maximum sub maxilla.*⁷ The doctor then continues to provide further details about her death. Here, Bede treats Cynifrid with respect, relying on him as a person whose account was trustworthy and of particular value. Æthelthryth herself had received his medical care, and although in this case the medical treatment was unsuccessful (and probably also superfluous in light of the saint's prophetic vision of her death) there is no suggestion that the abbess was wrong in seeking professional medical attention.

This information must be considered in light of that fact that there is very little evidence concerning the historical reality of medical practice in Anglo-Saxon England.⁸ It is likely that the richest monastic houses would have had an infirmary and probably, by extension, an infirmerer of some sort, but it is difficult to know what sort of training these people would have received. It is even more difficult to discern how laypeople received medical aid.⁹ The survival of a large corpus of medical texts (both those in Old English and those in Latin) provides in itself some of the strongest evidence for the existence of some form of medical class in Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁰ Yet it is likely that most medical care in Anglo-Saxon England would have been carried out by practitioners with no knowledge of these types of

⁷ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, bk. 4.17. 'But with more certain knowledge, the doctor Cynifrid, who was present both during her death and during her exhumation, he used to say that when she was sick she had a great tumor under her jaw'.

⁸ For an overview of the information available, see A. Meaney, 'The Practice of Medicine about the Year 1000', *The Year 1000: Medical Practice at the End of the First Millennium*, ed. P. Horden and E. Savage-Smith, *Social History of Medicine* 13 (2000), 221–237; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 19–21.

⁹ In the Anglo-Saxon period, there is very little evidence for hospital sites (such as those used in the Anglo-Norman period and later). The types of medical treatment available to the poor is discussed by Julia Bolotina who concludes that the poor may have had very little recourse: J. Bolotina, 'Support for the Sick Poor in Anglo-Saxon England', *The Reading Medievalist: A Postgraduate Journal* 2 (2015), 4–28, at 8–9. The care for the laity in Anglo-Saxon England is also discussed in Julia Bolotina's unpublished PhD dissertation, but I have unfortunately been unable to access this: 'Church, Laity, and Anglo-Saxon Medicine', unpublished PhD dissertation (Cambridge, 2016).

¹⁰ Debby Banham has suggested that the lack of attributions to famous physicians in the Old English medical texts, and the inclusion of references to two apparently Anglo-Saxon practitioners (Oxa and Dun), may suggest some form of self-sufficient medical community literate in the vernacular: D. Banham, 'Dun, Oxa, and Pliny the Great Physician: Attribution and Authority in Old English Medical Texts', *Social History of Medicine* 24 (2011), 57–73.

texts. Despite the obscurity of the evidence concerning what it may have meant to be a medical practitioner at this time, it is clear that doctors were a part of the mental and literary landscape of the period.

It is noteworthy that the majority of references to doctors in the Old English poetic corpus refer to the Lord or occur in analogies related to priests.¹¹ In the *Lord's Prayer II*, God is not only the *heah casere* ('high emperor') but also a *halig læce* ('holy doctor'); in *Solomon and Saturn I*, he is *lamena [...] læce* ('doctor of the lame'); in *Judgment Day II*, he is *uplicum læce* ('heavenly doctor'). In most cases, the references to the Lord as a doctor are simply appellations made in passing, although sometimes the metaphor is more developed—for instance, salvation is sometimes described as *læcedom* ('medicine').¹² The art of medicine and its practitioners are also favoured metaphors for many aspects of the religious life in prose homiletic texts. In particular, the language of medicine and remedies is commonly used to convey the necessity of confession and repentance for sin.¹³ Daily sins do not grow better except through daily medicines (*læcedomas*), warns the anonymous author of *Vercelli XI*.¹⁴ Elsewhere, in Ælfric's writings on penitence, we read that prayers, belief, the giving of alms, and true love of God *gehælað and gelacniað ure synna, gif we ða læcedomas geornlice begað*.¹⁵ This metaphoric use of

¹¹ See Old English Corpus, 'læce' and 'læcedom'. See 'The Judgement Day II', *ASPR*, vol. VI, ll. 43, 65, 80; 'The Lord's Prayer II', *ASPR*, vol. VI, l. 58; 'Christ', *ASPR*, vol. III, l. 1571; 'Christ and Satan', *ASPR*, vol. I, l. 588; 'Solomon and Saturn I', *ASPR*, vol. VI, l. 77.

¹² See 'Christ and Satan', l. 588; 'Christ', l. 1571; 'Judgement day II' l. 80. See also 'Resignation' where the Lord sends 'bot' to the sick at heart; 'Resignation', *ASPR*, vol. III, ll. 108–112. This is likely inspired by the Latin tradition, as *salus* can mean 'health' or 'safety' as well as 'salvation'.

¹³ *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century from the Marquis of Lothian's Unique MS. A.D. 971*, ed. R. Morris, EETS o.s. 58, 63, 73 (London, 1880), p. 107; Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance*, p. 182; *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. D. Scragg, EETS o.s. 300 (Oxford, 1992), p. 222; Clemons, p. 448; Ælfric, *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church: The First Part, Containing the Sermones Catholici, Or Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. B. Thorpe (London, 1844), vol. II, p. 603 (Hereafter referred to as Thorpe in the footnotes).

¹⁴ *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, p. 222.

¹⁵ Thorpe, vol. II, p. 603. 'Heal and cure our sins, if we earnestly turn to those medicines'.

the language of physicians and remedies is also applied to God: *se soða læce* ('the true doctor').¹⁶

The portrayal of Christ as a physician in Anglo-Saxon texts draws upon a rich tradition. In the gospels, Jesus compares himself with a physician, saying: *non necesse habent sani medicum sed qui male habent non enim veni vocare iustos sed peccatores*.¹⁷ This metaphor was exploited in the patristic period, and the theme of *Christus medicus* was particularly pronounced in the works of St Augustine of Hippo.¹⁸ According to Augustine, the wisdom of God can act as both physician and medicine (*ipsa medicus, ipsa medicina*).¹⁹ And in some instances, he compares the suffering of Christ in the passion to a bitter medicine: *calix passionis amarus est, sed omnes morbos paenitus curat; calix passionis amarus est, sed prior eum bibit medicus, ne bibere dubitaret aegrotus*.²⁰

Another avid exploiter of various forms of medical metaphors was Gregory the Great. Gregory was a heavily influential figure in the Anglo-Saxon period, as is testified to by the many manuscript copies of his works in Anglo-Saxon libraries.²¹ His frequent use of medical metaphors can be clearly seen in the fact that, aside from works of Ælfric and the medical texts, the translations of Gregory's *Pastoral Care* and *Dialogues* contain the highest frequency of the words *læce* and *læcedom* in the

¹⁶ Clemoes, p. 448.

¹⁷ Mark 2:17 (cf. Mt. 9:12 and Lk. 5:31); text taken from R. Weber, *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (Stuttgart, 2007). 'They that are well have no need of a doctor, but those who are sick: truly, I came not to call the righteous but sinners'.

¹⁸ R. Arbesmann, 'The Concept of "Christus Medicus" in St. Augustine', *Traditio* 10 (1954), 1–28, at 2.

¹⁹ Augustine of Hippo, *De doctrina christiana*, ed. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: 1995), 1.14.13; cited in Arbesmann, 'The Concept of "Christus Medicus" in St. Augustine', p. 13.

²⁰ Augustine, *Miscellanea Agostiniana: Testi e Studi* (Roma, 1930–31), serm. 310; cited in Arbesmann, 'The Concept of "Christus Medicus" in St. Augustine', p. 15. 'The cup of the passion is bitter, but it completely cures every illness; the cup of the passion is bitter but the doctor drank it first, lest the diseased waver over drinking'.

²¹ See Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 'Catalogue of Classical and Patristic Authors and Works Composed before AD 700 and Known in Anglo-Saxon England', 'Gregory the Great'.

Old English corpus.²² In both Gregory's Latin text and in the Old English translation of the *Pastoral Care*, these words most frequently occur in passages emphasising the skill of doctors. This theme is introduced in the first chapter of the work where Gregory laments the lack of shame among ill-trained priests:

Nulla ars doceri praesumitur, nisi intenta prius meditatione discatur. Ab imperitis ergo pastorale magisterium qua temeritate suscipitur, quando ars est artium regimen animarum. Quis autem cogitationum uulnera occultiora esse nesciat uulneribus uiscerum? Et tamen saepe qui nequaquam spiritualia praecepta cognouerunt, cordis se medicos profiteri non metuunt, dum qui pigmentorum uim nesciunt, uideri medici carnis erubescunt.²³

Although Gregory clearly views the priest's role of being 'doctor' to the mind as the higher and more difficult art, physical doctors come off well in this exchange—they too practice a complex art, one requiring training and skill. The frequency of references throughout his prose suggest that Gregory saw the medical profession as the closest metaphor for careful practice in clerical life. In the *Pastoral Care*, Gregory is never critical of medical doctors, unless they are amiss in their practice in some way. Generally, the priest is urged to be as skillful and well trained in his art as the physical doctor and to learn from his approach, whether in sweetening the bitter draughts of medicine, or traversing the country to treat patients, or hiding the knife lest the patient fear to be cut.²⁴

²² This estimation is based on the Old English web corpus; *Dictionary of the Old English Web Corpus*, ed. A. diP. Healey, J. P. Wilkin, and X. Xiang, *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (Toronto, 2009), consulted at <<http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/>> (accessed March 7 2016).

²³ Gregory the Great, *Regula pastoralis*, ed. F. Rommel and R. W. Clement, Clavis no. 1712 (Turnhout, 1953), I ch. 1, ll. 1-6. 'No art is presumed to be taught, unless it is first learnt through attentive study. With what rashness is pastoral teaching undertaken by the inexperienced, when the governance of souls is the art of arts. Moreover, who cannot know that the wounds of the thoughts are more hidden than the wounds of the guts? And yet often those who know nothing at all of spiritual precepts do not fear to proclaim themselves to be doctors of the heart, when those who do not know the power of drugs blush to be seen to be doctors of the flesh.' See also Gregory the Great, *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. Henry Sweet, EETS o.s. 45, 50 (Oxford, 1871), ch. 1, p. 24.

²⁴ See *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ch. 9, p. 58; ch. 41, p. 302; ch. 26, p. 186.

The doctor-patient relationship was also used by the Church Fathers as a metaphor for priests and their flock; it is within this tradition that Anglo-Saxon penitentials employ the figure of the doctor as their favoured metaphor for the confessor. The analogy of the confessor as a ‘doctor of sins’ occurs in many places throughout the penitential handbooks extant from Anglo-Saxon England. However, it finds its most elaborate rendition in the *Old English Handbook* (also known as the *Pseudo-Egbert Confessional*):

Se læca þe sceal sare wunda wel gehælan. he mot habban gode sealfe to. Ne syndon nane swa yfele wunda swa sindon synwunda. forðam. þurh þa forwyrð se man ecan deaðe. buton he þurh andetnesse. & þurh geswicenesse. & þurh dædbote gehæled wurðe. þonne mot se læca beon. wis & wær. þe ða wunda hælan sceal. Ðurh gode lare man sceal ærest hi lacnian. & mid þam gedon. þæt man aspiwe þæt attor ut þæt him on innan bið. þæt is þæt he geclænsige hine silfne ærost. þurh andetnesse. Eal man sceal aspiwan synna. þurh gode lare. mid andetnesse. ealswa man unlibban deð ðurh godne drenc. Ne mæg æni læce wel lacnian. ær ðæt attor ute sy. ne æni man eac dædbote wel tæcan þam ðe andettan nele. ne æni man ne mæg synna buton andetnesse næ gebetan · þe ma þe se mæg. wel hal wurðan. þe unlibban gedruncen hæfð. buton he þæt attor swiðe aspiwe. Æfter andetnesse man mæg mid dædbote. godes mildheortnesse raðe gearnian. gif he mid innewardre heortan heofe. þæt bereowsað. þæt he þurh deofles scyfe ær gefremode to unrihte. On wisum scrifte bið eac swiðe forðgelang. wislic dædbot. ealswa on godum læce bið.²⁵

Although this description has an analogical purpose, the analogy is one that casts a positive light on trained physicians. It is the wise physician who is able to provide a good remedy for his patient and cure him of his wounds. Of course, the priest is

²⁵ A. Frantzen, ‘Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database’, consulted at <www.anglo-saxon.net/penance> (accessed June 23, 2014), CCC MS 201, f. 121. ‘If the doctor shall heal painful wounds well, he must have a good salve for that. Nor are there any wounds as evil as those that are the wounds of sin, because through these one will perish in eternal death, unless he is healed through confession and cessation [from sin] and through repentance. Then must the doctor be wise and on guard, if he will heal the wounds. They must first be treated with good teaching, and thus make the person vomit out the poison that is inside them—that is, that he cleanses himself first, through confession. All men must vomit up [their] sins through good teaching with confession as one does poison by a good drink. As no doctor may heal completely before the poison is out, neither may any person offer also penance to those who do not want to confess. Neither can any person heal his sins without confession, no more so than one can become well that has drunken poison without having vomited up the poison. After confession one may, through penance, quickly earn God’s mercy, if he with inward sorrow of the heart laments what he previously did unrighteously through the devil’s prompting. Wise penance is very much dependent on a wise confessor, just as [a good remedy] is on a good doctor’.

styled as the superior doctor, one who can heal the very worst type of disease: sin. However, in the case of physical ailment, the passage suggests a good remedy is *dependent upon* a good doctor.

The analogy of the priest (or confessor) as a type of doctor is clearly not a new one and it echoes Gregory and other patristic authors, as well as Irish sources.²⁶ However, this particular example is striking for the length and detail of its description. The procedures applied, the salve and in particular the emetic drink, are examples of real, contemporary medical remedies in use in Anglo-Saxon England. Recipes for salves and emetic solutions known as *spiwdrencas* are common in the Old English medical corpus. *Spiwdrencas* could be made in many different ways and were used for treating a variety of illnesses. The description in the penitential of the use a *spiwdrenc* to purge poison is very similar to the description in Book I of *Bald's Leechbook*: *gif þonne se seoca man þurh spiwedrenc aspiwð þone yfelan bitendan wætan on weg. þonne forstent se geohsa.*²⁷ Although the passage in the penitential is primarily concerned with conveying a spiritual message, the use of specialised medical language suggests that it was not an entirely theoretical and metaphorical whimsy. It might imply that the author had some familiarity with Anglo-Saxon medical practice, whether as patient or practitioner, and that, when thinking of a priest and his duties, the image that naturally arose was not only the traditional, symbolic vision of a faceless 'doctor', but of a flesh-and-blood Anglo-Saxon physician.

²⁶ Cf. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance*, pp. 30–31.

²⁷ T. O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England: Being a Collection of Documents, for the most Part Never before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in this Country before the Norman Conquest* (London, 1864), vol. II, 1.18. 'If then the sick man throws up the evil biting liquids with a emetic drink then the spasm goes away'. The passage containing this description has its source in Oribasius; this particular sentence, however, is not contained in the Latin source, cf. appendix 1–A.

Of course, in these works earthly doctors (OE *læca*) were acknowledged to exist in a firmly secondary role to the power of God and his saints. In homiletic texts, it is a common theme to stress the superiority of the spiritual powers of a saint over the earthly power of doctors. For instance, in cases where disease is a direct punishment from God, even the best doctor can avail nothing; an example of this can be seen when *godcundlice wracu* (divine vengeance) strikes Herod with a terrible and disgusting disease in Ælfric's homily on the 'Nativity of the Innocents'.²⁸ In the story of Herod and his disease (which has patristic roots), Ælfric stresses that although Herod consulted many doctors, none were of any use. There is no evidence that the *læce* held a preeminent role in Anglo-Saxon theological thought, and, as far as I am aware, there are no examples where doctors are portrayed as miracle workers. Nevertheless, the idea popular in some medieval and patristic contexts that seeking professional medical attention was somehow in opposition to piety and faith does not seem to have been common in Anglo-Saxon England. Instead, doctors appear as a class to be consulted and respected: the model of skilful training and rationally applied art.

The Doctor in Literature: Old English Poetry

The most complex and sustained treatment of medical themes in an Old English poetic text is found in *Judgment Day II*. This poem is an imaginative translation of Bede's *De die iudicii*.²⁹ Like its Latin source, the poem's didactic message is the

²⁸ Clemons, pp. 221–222. This is a common trope; also cf. Ælfric, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, ed. M. Godden (Oxford, 2000), pp. 44–45.

²⁹ For an introduction to the manuscript context and discussion of the Old English poem's treatment of its Latin source, see the introduction to G. D. Caie's edition, *The Old English Poem Judgement Day II: A Critical Edition with editions of De die iudicii and the Hatton 113 Homily Be Domes Dæge* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 1–45. See also G. D. Caie, 'Doomsday and Nature in the Old English Poem *Judgement Day II*', in *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Medieval England*, ed. M. Ogura (Frankfurt, 2014), pp. 93–104; J. Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity: The Adaptation of Latin Rhetoric in Old English Poetry* (Toronto, 2008), 'Chapter Four: A Dead End? *Judgement Day II*', pp. 71–88.

necessity of confession and repentance of sin in order to avoid the horrors of hell. This premise is explored partly through the use of the metaphor of the Lord, the *uplicum læce* who offers health and healing to the diseased.³⁰ This theme is particularly pronounced in the first part of the poem, beginning in line 42:

Ðis is an hæl earmre sawle
and þam sorgiendum selest hihta,
þæt he wunda her wope gecyðe
uplicum læce, se ana mæg
aglidene mod gode gehælan
and ræplingas recene onbindan³¹

This section plays on the double meaning of *hæl* as both ‘health’ and ‘salvation’. This word-play continues in lines 63–74, where we are first told that Lord will give *hæl* and *help* to those that confess to him and asks why *þæt þu ðe læce ne cyþst* (‘do you not tell the doctor’)? This idea of asking the Lord for healing is elaborated in 80–81: *Hwi ne bidst þu þe bebunga and plaster/ lifes læcedomes æt lifes frea?* (‘why do you not ask for baths and plaster, life’s medicine, from the Lord of life?’). The theme resurfaces again at the end of the poem when *adl* (‘sickness’) is included among the terrors of hell in line 229 and *gesyntum* (‘health’) among the fruits of heaven in line 249:

Eala, se bið gesælig and ofersælig
and on worulda woruld wihta gesæligost,
se þe mid gesyntum swylce cwyldas
and witu mæg wel forbugon³²

In these passages, holiness and health are closely intertwined and it is God, the highest doctor, who can provide both.

³⁰ Caie discusses the theme of Christ the Physician in these sections in his introduction, Caie, *The Old English Poem Judgement Day II*, pp. 70–71.

³¹ ‘Judgement Day II’, ll. 43–48. ‘This is healing for a wretched soul/ and the best hope for those sorrowing,/ that here he speaks with weeping of his wounds/ to the heavenly doctor, He who alone can/ heal the suffering spirit with goodness/ and the prisoners quickly unbind’.

³² ‘Judgment Day II’, ll. 247–250. ‘Oh! He will be blessed and exceedingly fortunate/ and in all worlds be the most blessed creature,/ he who with health such pestilences/ and punishments may well avoid’.

The only full version of *Judgment Day II* occurs in Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 201; this is the same manuscript that contains the *Old English Handbook* referenced above.³³ Graham Caie has pointed out this similarity in theme between the two works, yet the poems' description of *bepunga and plaster* in line 80 provides a contrast with the pragmatic description of medicine found in the penitential text.³⁴ Prescription of *bepunga*, a medicinal bath or lotion, occurs only seven times in the entire medical corpus (normally with the spelling *bepinge*); *plaster* is even more rare, occurring only twice in the corpus—both instances occurring in the *Old English Herbarium*.³⁵ The word *plaster* in *Judgment Day II* may be evoked by Bede's *placidae fomenta medelae* ('comfort of a soothing poultice') in its source text; it is possible that *plaster* might have been familiar to the author than foment but salve (*sealf*) would be a more typical rendering. The word *plaster* is not necessary for alliterative purposes in line 80, so it is difficult to know what would have encouraged the author of *Judgment Day II* to use this particular Latinate word; there is nothing in the source to suggest the use of the *bepinge*.

The other medical references within the poem similarly share no overlap with terminology associated with Old English medical collections. In my view this suggests that whoever wrote the poem was probably unfamiliar with the vernacular medical tradition and possibly relying on glossaries. Nevertheless, the poem's evocation of the doctor as a positive force, the knowledgeable and well-intentioned provider of medicine and wellness, is concordant with the other appearances of doctors and medicine across the Old English literary and homiletic corpus.

It is interesting that the majority of references to doctors and medicine (outside of the medical corpus) within the Old English corpus occur in a theological

³³ Ker no. 49; G&L no. 65.

³⁴ Caie, *The Old English Poem Judgment Day II*, pp. 19–21.

³⁵ *OEH*, 168.1, 169.1.

context. There are exceptions to this, most notably within the corpus of saints' lives and in texts such as *Maxims I* where real medical doctors are clearly indicated.³⁶ However, in most cases doctors are used metaphorically or for comparison with other positions. Even given the established patristic precedent (and in some cases source texts), this raises the question why medical doctors and physical medicine are so little discussed, especially given the large corpus of medical material preserved in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. It is possible that this is reflective of circumstances similar to Carolingian Francia, where medicine was typically studied by intellectuals and amateurs as part of a general course of study rather than by trained doctors.³⁷ In this case, few persons might have had the title of *læc*, even if they were practised in the art of medicine. However, in general the poetic record testifies to a positive perception of doctors and their role in society. The fact that the doctor is considered an apt metaphor for the Lord and the ordained probably helped to encourage a favourable view of medicine in intellectual circles. Drawing on this general background, the next part of the chapter will further examine the place of medicine and medical practice within Anglo-Saxon England, with an especial emphasis on the later Anglo-Saxon period.

Disease and Sin in Ælfric's Homilies

The following sections will consider the perspectives on medicine and healing found in the writings of Ælfric of Eynsham, a prolific author of, among other things, a voluminous corpus of homilies, saints' lives, and biblical commentaries both in Old

³⁶ See, for instance, Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints' Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, ed. W. Skeat, EETS o.s. 76, 82, 94 (London, 1966), 'Saint Basil', ll. 570–594; 'Saint Agatha', l. 134; 'Æthelthryth', ll. 61–93; *The Old English Life of Saint Pantaleon*, ll. 99–213; Krapp and Dobbie, *The Old English Exeter Book*, 'Maxims I', l. 45; 'Riddle 5' l. 10.

³⁷ Contreni, 'Masters and Medicine', p. 268. For further discussion of this, see Chapter 4, pp. 204–205.

English and in Latin.³⁸ Because of the volume of works available, scholars always run the risk of over-emphasising his ideas. However, although Ælfric's ideas should not be taken as representative for the entirety of Christian culture at his time, he was an exceedingly influential author and thinker.³⁹ His writings are unusually wide-ranging and provide valuable insights on many subjects—and, in this case, they offer some the most extended thoughts available on the topics of medicine and methods of healing.

Ælfric began his writing career in the late tenth century and continued writing into the first half the eleventh century. These dates probably put him slightly later than the translation of the *Herbarium* and the compilation of *Bald's Leechbook*. However, his dates are roughly concurrent with those suggested for the only extant manuscript of the *Lacnunga*.⁴⁰ As it is difficult to date the Anglo-Saxon medical collections (and more difficult still to date the origin of the individual entries found within), Ælfric's writings are probably somewhat later than many components of the original version of the *Lacnunga*, but were written at a time when the ideas in the collection were deemed significant enough to warrant reproduction.

The most thorough treatment of health and medicine in Ælfric's homilies comes in his sermon on the passion of St Bartholomew. This homily tells the story of Bartholomew, a missionary saint who leads the heathen Indians to Christ.⁴¹ When Bartholomew arrives, the Indian natives are used to worshipping an idol (*deofolgylde*) named Astaroð. This idol, or more aptly the demon dwelling within it,

³⁸ For more information, see J. Hill, 'Ælfric: His Life and Works', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. H. Magennis and M. Swan (Leiden, 2009), pp. 35–66.

³⁹ In his discussion of Ælfric scholarship, Hugh Magennis describes Ælfric as: 'the most prolific Old English writer. He is also the most wide-ranging writer, the one whose works survive in the most manuscripts, and the most influential in the post-Conquest period': H. Magennis, 'Ælfric Scholarship', in *A Companion to Ælfric* ed. H. Magennis and M. Swan (Leiden, 2009), pp. 5–34, at 7.

⁴⁰ Both the manuscript containing the *Lacnunga* and the language of the collection are normally dated to the late-tenth or early-eleventh century, see Chapter 3.

⁴¹ Clemoes, pp. 439–450.

was able to cure the inhabitants of their diseases. However, Ælfric is quick to point out that the diseases healed by the demon were the very diseases inflicted by it:

Nu deð se deofol mid his lotwrencum þæt ða earman men geuntrumiað; ond tiht hi þæt hi sceolon gelyfan on deofolgyldum. Þonne geswicð he þære gedrecednyse ond hæfð heora sawla on his anwealde þonne hi cweðað to þære deofollican anlicnyse þu eart min god.⁴²

This treatment of demonic healing is in keeping with Ælfric's declaration in the preface to his homiletic collection that the Antichrist normally weakens the healthy, but has the power to heal those diseases that he himself inflicts.⁴³

The *vita* concludes after Bartholomew binds several demons and converts the peoples of India to the true God. This story of Bartholomew is a fairly close rendering of the anonymous Latin *Passio Bartholomaei*. After the *passio* finishes, however, Ælfric uses the narrative as an opportunity to discuss illness and medicine more generally. This concluding part of the homily is not modelled directly after any classical source; instead it appears to represent Ælfric's own thoughts and draws loosely on a variety of sources including works by Gregory, Augustine, Caesarius, and the Bible.⁴⁴ In this section, Ælfric emphasises that although the figures in the story are afflicted with disease through the work of a demon, this is by no means the source of all disease. Christian men also often encounter physical maladies and these can occur for a variety of reasons: *hwilon for heora synnum. hwilon for fandunge; hwilon for godes wundrum. hwilon for gehealdsumnyse goddra drohtnunga; þæt hi þy eadmodran beon.*⁴⁵ He further elaborates on these categories by giving examples

⁴² Clemoes, pp. 442–443. 'Now the devil through his craftiness makes wretched men to become ill, and draws them in order that they should believe in idols. Then he withdraws their torment from them and has their souls in his power when they say to the devilish likeness, you are my God.'

⁴³ Clemoes, 'praefatio', p.175.

⁴⁴ Godden has assembled the known sources in his commentary to the text. These include: Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*; Augustine, *Sermones*; Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones*; Gregory the Great, *Moralia siue Expositio in Iob* (*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, p. 257; see also *Fontes, Ælfric, Catholic Homilies* 1.31).

⁴⁵ Clemoes, p. 448. 'Sometimes for their sins, sometimes as a trial, sometimes for the miracles of God, sometimes for the perseverance of good conduct in life, that they might be more humble'.

of each situation. During this discourse, it becomes evident that in many cases a man's sickness is not a sign of his sin but of his holiness. Ælfric reminds his readers of the scripture *þa ðe ic lufie ða ic ðreage ond beswinge* ('those whom I love, I discipline and thrash').⁴⁶ To illustrate this, he offers the example of St Paul whose affliction fostered his humility before God,⁴⁷ but we might also think of King Alfred who, in his portrayal by Asser, is plagued by recurring sickness yet serves as a model of godly devotion.⁴⁸

Reluctance to link disease directly to sin is not particular to Ælfric. It appears that this was in fact a common position in Anglo-Saxon society. For instance, Victoria Thompson argues that in Anglo-Saxon times leprosy was likely not linked to sinfulness or a spiritual uncleanness.⁴⁹ She offers two examples where leprous persons were found prominently buried in the churchyard, suggesting that they were seen as fully communicant within the Church. Likewise, there is no evidence that they were institutionalised; instead they probably continued to live as part of society.⁵⁰ These facts are consistent with the theory that leprosy, like other ailments, was seen as originating from a number of causes, of which punishment for sin was only a single possibility.

It is worth noting that, aside from simply recognising a number of possible causes for disease, Ælfric appears almost to stress the blessedness of it. This attitude undergirds an analogy offered by Ælfric, similar to that seen in the penitential handbook, where the Lord is compared to a medical practitioner:

⁴⁶ Clemoes, p. 448; cf. Heb. 12:6.

⁴⁷ Clemoes, p. 449.

⁴⁸ See D. Pratt, 'The Illnesses of King Alfred the Great', *ASE* 30 (2001), 39–90.

⁴⁹ V. Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 98.

⁵⁰ Thompson, *Dying and Death*, p. 98. This point is qualified, however, by Christina Lee who has suggested that by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, lepers (and other people with contagious diseases) were often buried away from the other part of the population, although still in common ground: C. Lee, 'Changing Faces: Leprosy in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C. Karkov and N. Howe (Tempe, 2006), pp. 59–81, at 67–69.

God is se soða læce, þe ðurh mislice swingla his folces synna gehæld. Nis se woruld-læce wælhreow, ðeah ðe he þone gewundodan mid bærnætte, oððe mid ceorfsexe gelacnige. Se læce cyrfð oððe bærnð, and se untruma hrymð, þeah-hwæðere ne miltsað he þæs oðres wanunge, forðan gif se læce geswicð his cræftes, þonne losað se forwundoda. Swa eac God gelacnað his gecorenra gyltas mid mislicum brocum; and þeah ðe hit hefigtyme sy ðam ðrowigendum, þeah-hwæðere wyle se goda Læce to ecere hælðe hine gelacnigan. Witodlice se ðe nane brocunge for ðisum life ne ðrowað, he færð to ðrowunge.⁵¹

The first part of the passage has its source in a sermon of St Augustine.⁵² Yet in its Augustinian context the metaphor has a quite different meaning. It occurs in a discussion of Matthew 17:21, in which Jesus declares that you must forgive your brother seventy times seven times. Augustine uses the analogy to warn that, while you must forgive your brother, you must still punish his sins, lest they grow worse and destroy him. In his version of the metaphor, Ælfric has changed the roles of the characters. In Ælfric's homily, now it is the Lord who is the *soða læce* ('true doctor'). However, in a startling inversion of the role of bodily doctors, Ælfric uses the analogy to underline why the Lord actually imparts physical illness in order to promote spiritual health.

⁵¹ Clemoes, p. 448. 'God is the true doctor, who through various scourges heals the sins of his people. Nor is the worldly doctor cruel, though he treats the wounded with burning or with the knife. The doctor cuts or burns and the patient wails, nevertheless he does not take pity on account of the lamentation, because if the doctor turns from his art, then he loses the wounded one. So also God heals his chosen ones' sins through various afflictions, and though it may be wearisome to the sufferer, nonetheless the good doctor will bring him to eternal health. Truly, he who suffers no miseries in this life goes to suffering [in the next]'. Interestingly, there are few references to surgical practices within the Old English medical corpus. However, Debby Banham and Christine Voth have showed that there is evidence for surgical practice in Anglo-Saxon England and have suggested that this type of treatment was considered 'too familiar to need writing down' and was instead learned by practical experience (Banham and Voth, 'The Diagnosis and Treatment of Wounds in the Old English Medical Collections', p. 173).

⁵² Augustine of Hippo, *Sancti Augustini Sermones Post Maurinos Reperti: Probatae Dumtaxat Auctoritatis*, PL 38 (Roma, 1930), Serm. 83, 518. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, 265. *Quid enim tam pium quam medicus ferens ferramentum? Plorat secandus, et secatur: plorat urendus, et uritur. Non est illa crudelitas; absit ut saevitia medici dicatur. Saevit in vulnus, ut homo sanetur: quia si vulnus palpetur, homo perditur* ('Who is more pious than the doctor who bears the knife? He who must be cut cries, and [yet] is cut: he who must be burned cries and [yet] is burned. That is not cruelty; it is far from seeming to be ferocity in the doctor. He is violent against the wound, so that the man may be healed—because if the wound is [just] caressed, the man is lost').

A different manifestation of this attitude might be present in other passages where Ælfric stresses the spiritual dimension of our healing in Christ, for instance, when he recounts the etymology of *Hælend*, an Old English designation for Jesus. *Hælend* means ‘healing’, Ælfric writes, a title that is appropriate *for ðan ðe he gehældð his folc fram heora synnum. and gelæc to ðam ecan earde heofenan rices.*⁵³ Elsewhere, when St Simeon calls Jesus by the title *Halwendan* (‘the healing one’), Ælfric relates *Se halwenda þe he embe spræc is ure hælend crist. se ðe com to gehælenne ure wunda. þæt sindon ure synna.*⁵⁴ Although he would admit both as possible, Ælfric is forceful in stressing that it is *spiritual* healing rather than *physical* healing we should expect from the Lord. This emphasis seems perhaps exaggerated when we consider that the majority of miracles worked by Christ and his apostles were the healing of physical ailments. One wonders if Ælfric himself perhaps suffered from chronic illness, which he would rather equate with God’s blessing than his judgment.

In any case, Ælfric’s view of sickness and healing is nuanced and complex. Disease can arise from many sources, and we should be careful not to be too hasty in equating sickness with sin. Ælfric’s broadminded perspective on disease ultimately helps support a favourable (or at least neutral position) towards the use of medical remedies.

The Place of Medicine in Ælfric’s Homilies

Following his discussion of the diverse purposes and causes of sickness, Ælfric uses the final part of his homily on St Bartholomew to caution against the use of

⁵³ Godden, p. 122. ‘Because [Jesus] heals his people from their sins, and leads them to the eternal place of the heavenly kingdom’.

⁵⁴ Godden, p. 253. ‘The healing one [or ‘saviour’] of which he spoke is our Lord Christ, who came to heal our wounds, that is, our sins’.

forbidden forms of medicine. He warns that the consequences will be dire for those who seek healing from illicit sources:

se cristena man þe on ænre þyssere gelicnysse bið gebrocod ond he þonne his hælðe secan wile æt unalyfedum tilungum oððe æt awyrigedum galdrum, oþþe æt ænigum wiccecræfte þonne bið he þam hæðenum mannum gelic þe ðam deofolgylde geofrodon for heora lichaman hælðe ond swa heora sawla amyrdon.⁵⁵

The intention in this passage is clear: good Christians are not to seek healing through the practice of witchcraft, and if they do, they will undoubtedly reap God's displeasure. However, the prohibitions are not specific, and leave aside questions about what exactly Ælfric considered to be 'forbidden practices' or 'accursed charms'.

Ælfric makes it clear that he is not talking about medicine generally. Ultimately the power of healing belongs to God, yet Ælfric defends the practice of medicine, drawing on biblical example: *we habbað hwæðere þa bysene on halgum bocum þæt mot se ðe wyle mid soþum læcecræfte his lichaman getemprian, swa swa dyde se witega isaias þe worhte þam cyninge ezechie cliðan to his dolge ond hine gelacnode.*⁵⁶ He follows this by paraphrasing a passage from Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* which outlines the difference between taking an herb as a medicine and using it as an amulet.⁵⁷ Ælfric then concludes the Augustinian precept with his own words:

ðeahhwæðere ne sceole we urne hiht on læcewyrstum besettan, ac on ðam ælmihtigum scyppende þe ðam wyrstum þone cræft forgeaf. Ne sceal nan man

⁵⁵ Clemoes, pp. 449–450. 'The Christian man, who suffers anything like this and then seeks health through forbidden practices, or through cursed *galdra*, or any witchcraft, then he is like the heathen men who offered to the idol for the healing of their bodies and so murdered their soul'.

⁵⁶ Clemoes, p. 450. 'We have, however, the model in holy books, that one might try to cure his body with true medicines, as did the prophet Isaiah who made for King Hezekiah a poultice for his wound, and cured him'.

⁵⁷ Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, bk II, ch. 29.

mid galdre wyrte besingan ac mid godes wordum hi gebletsian ond swa þicgan.⁵⁸

This passage has drawn some attention because of its references to *galdra* ('charms'), and the following sections will explore the question of *galdra* more closely. However, for the moment, it is useful to consider what it reveals about licit forms of medicine. Although Ælfric is clearly worried about forbidden and unchristian forms of healing, he defends the legitimate use of medicine and the power of medicinal herbs. Interestingly, Ælfric makes no explicit reference to doctors, though the word *læcecræft* (used in reference to Isaiah) suggests an educated medical procedure. Similarly, in his homily 'On Auguries', Ælfric adamantly opposes all forms of witchcraft and heathendom (*hæðengyld*) but makes provision for medicine: *læcedom is alyfed fram lichamena tyddernysse and halige gebedu mid godes bletsunge and ealla oðre tilunga syndon andsæte gode*.⁵⁹ This provision for the appropriate use of medicine is not found in his source and appears to be a personal addition by Ælfric.⁶⁰ The repeated emphasis on medicine in these passages as something valid—and, indeed, entirely separate from forbidden forms of healing—suggests again a monastic and ecclesiastical culture where doctors and the learned tradition of medicine were valued.

This perspective may perhaps owe something to the influence of Carolingian authors. As I discussed in Chapter 4, during the Carolingian period medicine became frequently recognised as belonging to the liberal arts and its practice was promoted

⁵⁸ Clemoes, p. 450. 'Yet we should not set our hope on medical herbs, but on the Almighty Lord, who gave the herbs their power. Nor should any person sing charms over herbs, but with God's words bless them and thus eat [them]'.

⁵⁹ *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, 'On Auguries', p. 378, ll. 213–215. 'Medical remedies are permitted for all infirmity of the body and holy prayers with God's blessings and all other practices are abominable to God'.

⁶⁰ A. Meaney, 'Ælfric's use of His Sources in His Homily on Auguries', *English Studies* 66 (1985), 477–495, at 493.

by Benedictine monasteries, in accordance with the Benedictine rule.⁶¹ Both of these factors contributed to the positive assessment of medicine as a godly and acceptable art. A strong defence of the orthodoxy of medicine is found in the anonymous *Lorscher Arzneibuch*, which cites numerous examples of the compatibility of medicine and faith from biblical and patristic authors.⁶² Like Ælfric's works, this collection also references the book of Isaiah. Alcuin and his student Hrabanus Maurus (the works of both of whom Ælfric knew) also laud the practice of medicine and the use of healing herbs in their works.⁶³ It is likely that this tradition was influential on Ælfric's positive view of medicine.

Yet although the practice of medicine is clearly defended in Ælfric's works, the fact that it is mentioned so frequently in the context of forbidden practices suggests that there was an inherent tension between these subjects. The potential for confusion between these two spheres clearly made Ælfric uneasy; it seems that he could hardly mention medicine without needing to warn against its false cousin. This suggests that in Anglo-Saxon England healing was not only the domain of trained physicians but that it competed with those who practiced doctrinally unacceptable forms of healing. The following section of this chapter will try to determine what types of practices Ælfric was envisioning when he spoke of forbidden practices and *wyrigedum galdrum* ('cursed charms'). And, finally, it will assess the place of the

⁶¹ M. A. D'Aronco, 'Le conoscenze mediche nell'Inghilterra anglosassone: Il ruolo del mondo carolingio', in *International Scandinavian and Medieval Studies in Memory of Gerd Wolfgang Weber*, ed. M. Dallapiazza, O. Hansen, P. Sorensen, and Y. Bonnetain (Trieste, 2000), pp. 129–146; G. Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls: A History of Hospitals* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 92–100; Chapter 4, p. 205.

⁶² U. Stoll, *Das 'Lorscher Arzneibuch': Ein medizinisches Kompendium des 8. Jahrhunderts: Text, Übersetzung and Fachglossar* (Stuttgart, 1992). See also Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 79–86.

⁶³ F. S. Paxton, 'Curing Bodies—Curing Souls: Hrabanus Maurus, Medical Education, and the Clergy in Ninth-Century Francia', *Journal of the History of Medicine* 50 (1995), pp. 230–252; Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 86–90. For Ælfric's sources, see *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici Project* (University of Oxford, 2002), consulted at <<http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>> (accessed August 10, 2016.)

Old English medical collections in relation to these two spheres of acceptable and unacceptable medicine.

***Drycræft* in Late Anglo-Saxon England**

This section will attempt to envisage what Ælfric and other late Anglo-Saxon authors meant when they used the terms *drycræft* and *galdra*. *Drycræft* is a difficult word to define precisely. It is normally translated by the modern term ‘magic’. Yet this term carries a different set of connotations from what it would have in the early Middle Ages. Anglo-Saxon intellectuals were likely to have followed Isidore of Seville in seeing all magic as operating ultimately through demonic power.⁶⁴ Yet in popular usage today the term ‘magic’ can be used to indicate not only the possibly demonic but also simply elements of the fantastic or the supernatural. In keeping with this, Meaney writes: ‘there does not seem to have been one comprehensive Old English word which expressed our [modern] idea of “magic” but many, for different aspects.’⁶⁵ Therefore, although many of the practices discussed in this chapter fall within the modern concept of ‘magic’, I have chosen to use the Old English term *drycræft* to prevent confusion between modern and medieval paradigms (although even with this choice there is still the possibility of confusing various Anglo-Saxon categories).

Similar problems arise around the use of the word ‘charm’. The Old English term *galdor* has almost universally been translated as ‘charm’ by scholars, yet

⁶⁴ *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, VIII.9; cf. R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 10–12. The term ‘magic’ itself is an old one, dating back at least to Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis historia*, where he describes the *vanitates magicae* (‘delusions of the magi’) as destroying the public faith in true medicine in his day: *Naturalis Historia*, xxvi, 9. However, in the Christianised context of the early Middle Ages, ‘magic’ lost this clear connection to the magi and instead carried an explicitly demonic connotation in the West.

⁶⁵ A. Meaney, ‘Magic’, in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge *et al.*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, 2014), p. 304.

definitions of charm vary from scholar to scholar.⁶⁶ In general, most of these definitions attempt to maintain a sense of objectivity, defining a charm by its inherent qualities rather than by its social or theological acceptability. According to many definitions most prayers would constitute charms (especially if spoken aloud). Employing this type of definition may be a reasonable choice, especially when the term is used for analysing and grouping remedies without particular emphasis on cultural context. However, as with the case of ‘magic’, this use of ‘charm’ seems quite different from the Anglo-Saxon understanding of the word *galdor*, especially as used by authors such as Ælfric for whom the term has an exclusively negative connotation. These scholarly definitions also differ from common modern usage in which ‘charm’ has the connotation of a practice existing outside the accepted realm of established religion.⁶⁷ As popularly understood, prayers and charms (in theory, if not always in practice) are in opposition to each other. These competing definitions of ‘charm’ allow for confusion in the reading of the Old English medical collections. In an attempt to minimise this, where I am discussing the doctrinal perspective on particular texts in Anglo-Saxon England, I will always use the term *galdor*, even if this term itself is not always straightforward and appears to have had different meanings in different contexts.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ For instance, Grendon distinguished between ‘incantations’ and ‘remedies depending for efficacy on the superstitious beliefs of the sufferers’ (Grendon, ‘The Anglo-Saxon Charms’, p. 110). Pettit defines charms slightly more narrowly as ‘incantations and amulets’ (*LAC*, vol. I, xxvii). Karen Jolly suggests the definition: ‘words and actions spoken or performed in a ritual manner with herbs’ (Jolly, ‘Anglo-Saxon Charms in the Context of a Christian World View’, p. 284). Leslie Arnovick has defined the charm as ‘a linguistic text representing the illocutionary and/or physical action of a ritual performance’ (Arnovick, *Written Reliquaries*, p. 28).

⁶⁷ The *OED* defines a ‘charm’ as ‘the chanting or recitation of a verse supposed to possess magic power or occult influence; incantation, enchantment; hence, any action, process, verse, sentence, word, or material thing credited with such properties; a magic spell; a talisman, etc.’ s. v. ‘Charm, n. 1’, *OED Online* (University of Oxford, 2016), consulted at <www.oed.com> (accessed June 23, 2016). See also *MED*, s.v. ‘charme (n.)’.

⁶⁸ Although the term *galdor* is always used with a negative connotation in Ælfric’s works, the term occasionally appears with an apparently neutral meaning in the medical texts. Several medical remedies refer to certain passages as a *galdor*, which are normally to be sung, for example: *sing þæt galdor on ælcra þara wyrta* (‘sing that *galdor* on each of the herbs’) (*LAC*, vol. I, XXVI). In this type

This section will explore the meaning of these two terms in the Old English corpus. The words themselves are not particularly revealing, and occur most frequently in general lists of forbidden practices rather than in descriptive passages. Yet by looking at them in the context of other less ambiguous practices it is possible to determine at least their general connotations. I will begin by looking at the occurrences of *drycræft* or *galdra* in the Anglo-Saxon penitentials, before expanding this discussion to Ælfric's homilies.

Penitentials are handbooks for priests; they include lists of potential offences, which are followed by the corresponding penance to be imposed by the priest. There are four major penitential collections written in Old English: the *Old English Handbook*, the *Old English Penitential* (also sometimes known as the *Penitential of Pseudo-Egbert*), the *Canons of Theodore*, and the *Scriftboc* (also sometimes known as the *Confessional of Pseudo-Egbert*).⁶⁹ Penitentials cover wide varieties of different types of offences, such as numerous sexual sins, sins against the clergy or

of medical usage *galdra* clearly do not exist in opposition to prayers. In *Bald's Leechbook*, one remedy directs the practitioner to *sing þriwa þæs halgan Sancte Iohannes gebed ond galdor* ('sing three times the prayer and charm of Saint John'). This direction is followed by a Latin prayer against poison and it seems that both *gebed* and *galdor* refer to this passage (*Leechdoms II*, XLV. 3). The same Latin passage is paralleled in *LAC* entry LXIV, where it is given context explicitly linking it with St John (*LAC*, vol. I, LXIV). In the entry in the *Lacnunga*, this passage is listed among several *gebedu* ('prayers'). This blurring between *gebed* and *galdor* can be seen elsewhere in the *Lacnunga* where essentially the same Irish-derived incantation is referred to as both *galdor* and *gebed* in two separate entries (cf. *LAC*, XXV, LXIII, LXXXIII). However, this neutral usage of *galdor* to mean prayer or verbal formula within the medical field is quite different from its usage elsewhere in the corpus of Old English. The DOE marks this distinction by creating a separate heading for its use in medical collections: DOE, s.v. 'galdor'. In a few other instances, *galdor* is used simply to mean song, yet by the far the most common usage of the word is to imply demonic (or at least illicit) actions. This meaning is present for instance when the *Old English Penitential* forbids the use of *galdra*: *ne wyrta gaderunge mid nanum galdre, buton mid Paternoster and mid Credo, oððe mid summon gebede þe to Gode belimpe* ('neither is gathering herbs [permitted] with any *galdor* but only with the Pater Noster and the Creed or with some prayer that belongs to God'): Frantzen, 'Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database', *Laud Misc.* 482, f. 9b.

⁶⁹ There is some confusion around the titles of these collections. Throughout, I will use the names given by Frantzen in his book and database. See Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance*, pp. 132–133; Frantzen, 'Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database', 'user guide'. It is difficult to date the penitentials precisely. The earliest collections are the *Canons of Theodore* and the *Scriftboc*. The *Old English Penitential* uses the *Scriftboc* as a source, and thus must post-date that collection. The *Old English Handbook* in turn relies on the *Old English Penitential* as a source. The *Scriftboc*, *Canons of Theodore*, and the *Old English Penitential* all likely date to sometime in the tenth century and the *Old English Handbook* to sometime in the eleventh (Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance*, pp. 134–141).

the sacraments, or acts of violence. The organisation of these penitential texts tends to be broadly topical, which allows the reader to see some relationship between various offences. This makes them useful tools for understanding what types of practices would have been associated with broad categories of error such as *drycraeft*. With this aim, I have compiled the passages from these sources related to *drycraeft* and listed them below. I have only included those references that are specific enough to mention particular activities; additionally, for clarity and space, I have listed only the transgressions and omitted the penance prescribed.⁷⁰

From the *Old English Penitential*:

Gif ænig man oðerne mid wiccecræfte fordo [...]. Gif hwa drife stacan on ænigne man [...]. Gif hwa wiccige ymbe æniges mannes lufe. & him on æte sylle. oððe on drenc. oððe on æniges cynnes galdor cræfte þæt heora lufe forþam þe mare beon sceole [...]. Gif hwa hlytas oððe hwatunga bega oððe his wæccan æt ænigum wylle hæbbe. oððe æt ænigre oðre ge sceafte butan æt godes cyrcean [...]. Wif beo þæs ylcan wyrðe gif heo tilað hire cilde mid ænigum wiccecræfte. oððe æt wega gelætan þurh eorðan tyhð. forþam hit is mycel hæðenscipe. Gif hwylc wif hire bearn mid drenc on hire sylfre fordo hire agenes willes. oððe mid ænigum þingum hit amyrrre [...].⁷¹

Gif hwylc man his ælmeſſan gehate oððe bringe to hwylcum wylle. oððe to stane. oððe to treowe. oððe to ænigum oðrum gesceaftum butan on godes naman to godes cyrcean [...] & þeah he geþriſtlæce þæt he æt swylcum stowum ete oððe drince. & nane lac ne bringe [...]. Niſ na soðlice nanum criſtenum men alyfed þæt he idela hwtunga bega[†] ſwa hæðene men doð þæt iſ þæt hi gelyfen on ſunnan & on monan & on ſteorraena ryne & ſecen tida hwatunga hiara þing to beginnene ne wyrta gade runga mid nanum galdre

⁷⁰ I have not listed passages from the *Old English Handbook* (the latest Penitential written in Old English) because it reproduces the passage given from the *Old English Penitential* with only minor deviations. A discussion of the Latin penitential sources of some of these passages is found in A. Meaney, ‘Old English Legal and Penitential Penalties for “Heathenism”’, in *Anglo-Saxons: Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, pp. 127–158, at 139–154. Meaney also discusses relevant passages from law codes in this article.

⁷¹ Frantzen, ‘Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database’, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 482, f. 15v–16v ‘If any one murders another with witchcraft [...]. If someone drives a stake into any person [...]. If someone enchants the love of any person and gives him [something] to eat or to drink, or with any *galdor cræft* of any kind that his love shall be greater [...]. If anyone cast lots (*hlytas*) or practice divination (*hwatunga*) or keeps watch at any well or at any other created thing other than at God’s church [...]. Let the same befall a woman if she cures her child with any *wiccecræfte* or drags [him or her] through the earth at a crossroads, because this is great heathendom. If some woman kills the child inside her with a drink by her own will, or by anything thing murders it [...]’.

[†] *Idela hwtunga bega* read according to Raith’s edition: *Die altenglische Version des Halitgar’schen Bussbuches*, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 13 (Hamburg, 1933), p. 30.

butan mid pater noster & mid credo. oððe mid sumon gebede þe gode belimpe [...].⁷²

From the *Canons of Theodore*:

Gyf hwylc wif wiccunga bega. & þa deofollican galdorsangas [...]. Ða wif ðe doð aworpennysse hyra bearna [...]. Gyf se leaweda man his agen cild ofþryce. & acwelle [...].⁷³

Seo ðe acwelleð hire cild butan fulluhte [...]. Ða ðe onsæcgeað deoflum & þam leasestum þingum [...]. Gyf hwylc wif seteð hire bearn ofer rof. oððe on ofen. for hwilcere untrymðe hælo [...]. Se ðe corn bærneð for lifigendra hælo ðær deade men beoð bebyrgde [...]. On canone hit cwið. se ðe halsunga. & galdorcreaftas. & swefnhrace behealdað. þa beoð on hæðenra manna gerime. And eac swylce þa þe oðre men on ðam drycraeft gebringað. gif hy on mynstre syn hy syn ut aworpene. gif hy on folce syn. betan fulre bote.⁷⁴

From the *Scriftboc*:

Gif wif drycraeft. & galdorcraeft. & unlibban wyrce. & swylc bega [...]. Gif heo mid hire unlibban man acwelleð [...]. Wif þæt ðe gæð in cyrcan ærðon heo clæne sy hire blode [...]. Wif seo ðe mencgð weres sæd in hire mete. & ðone þigeð. þæt be þam wæpnedmen sy beo ðe leofre [...]. Wif seo æwyrpe gedo hire geeacnunga in hire hrife. & cwelle [...].⁷⁵

Gif man medlices hwæthwegu deoflum onsægð [...]. Gif he myceles hwæt on secge deoflum [...]. Wif gif heo set hyre dohtor ofer hus. oððe on ofen. forðam þe heo wille feferadle men gehælan [...]. Swa hwylc man swa corn bærne in ðære stowe. þær man dead wære lifigendum mannum to hæle. & in his huse [...]. Swa hwylc man swa feondum gesenodne mete þigeð [...].⁷⁶

⁷² Frantzen, 'Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database', MS Laud Misc. 482, f. 9r–9v 'If any person vows or brings alms to any well or stone or tree or to any other created thing except in God's name to God's church ... though he dares to eat and drink at any place but does not bring any gift [...]. Nor is it allowed that any true Christian man practice vain things as heathen men do, that is that they believe in the sun and the moon, and motion of the stars, and seek time-auguries (*tida hwatunga*) [for when to] to begin their deeds, nor shall herbs be gathered with any *galdra*, only with the Pater Noster and with the Creed or some prayer that belongs to God [...].'

⁷³ Frantzen, 'Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database', Brussels, Bibl. MS Royale 8558–63, f. 148v–149r. 'If any woman goes about witchcraft and devilish *galdor*-songs [...] a woman who casts away (aborts) her child [...]. If a layman restrain his own child forcibly and kills it [...].'

⁷⁴ Frantzen, 'Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database', MS Royale 8558–8563, f. 152v–153r. 'She that kills her child before baptism [...]. Those who offer the smallest things to devils [...]. If any woman sets her child on the roof or in the oven to heal it from any sickness [...]. If one burns corn for the health of the living where dead men are buried [...]. In the canon it is written: he who practices auguries (halsunga) and *galdor*-crafts, and interpretations of dreams that is the calculations of heathen men. And likewise also those who lead other people into *drycraeft*, if they are in a minster let them be thrown out, if they are lay-persons atone with full penance.'

⁷⁵ Frantzen, 'Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database', Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121, f. 93v. 'If a woman goes about *drycraeft* and *galdor*-craft, and *unlibban* (poisoning) and such [...]. If she kill her child through *unlibban* [...]. A woman that enters in the church before she is clean of her blood [...]. A woman who mixes the seed of a man in her food and then eats it, in order that she be more loved by the man [...]. A woman who casts away her fetus in her womb and kills it [...].'

⁷⁶ Frantzen, 'Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database', MS Junius 121, f. 94r–v. 'If one offers some small thing to devils [...]. If he offers something large to devils [...]. If a woman sets her

One of the first things that can be noticed in these passages is the pronounced tendency to link women with the practice of *drycræft*: five of the six passages above mention women in the context of forbidden practices associated with *drycræft*. Some of the passages explicitly describe *drycræft* as a feminine art: in *Old English Penitential* it is women who practice healing *wiccecræfte*; in the *Canons of Theodore* it is women who use *wiccunga* ('witchcraft'), *halsunga* ('divination'), and devilish *galdorsangas*; in the *Scriftboc* it is women who practice *drycræft*, *galdorcræft*, *unlibban* ('making poisons'), and *hwatung* ('divination') and can kill others with these crafts. Furthermore, although not explicitly labelled as such, the conventionally female act of producing an abortion is the most frequently mentioned crime associated with *drycræft*.⁷⁷

There also appears to have been an unspoken connection between forbidden practices and women in Ælfric's writings. He clearly thought it was possible for either sex to engage in *drycræft*, as can be seen, for instance, in classical examples such as the Egyptian *dry-men* who strove against Moses.⁷⁸ However, in his discussion of forbidden medical practices in his homily 'On Auguries', Ælfric comments: *ne sceal se cristena befrinan þa fulan wiccan be his gesundfulnysse þeahðe heo secgan cunne sum ðincg þurh deofol*.⁷⁹ Earlier in the same homily he writes *ungeswenlica deofol [...] geswutelað þæra wiccan hwæt heo secge mannum þæt þa beon fordone þe ðæne dry-cræft secað*.⁸⁰ The use of the female pronoun rather than the neutral *man* in these clauses is noteworthy and suggests that when

daughter on top of the house, or in the oven, in order to heal her fever [...]. So also if anyone burns grains in the place where the dead are to for bringing health to living men and to the house [...]. Thus anyone who eats food that was given to devils [...].'

⁷⁷ This at least suggests that this was a particularly pressing concern in England at this time.

⁷⁸ *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, p. 372.

⁷⁹ *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, p. 372. 'Nor shall the Christian ask the foul witch concerning his health, though she might be able to tell him something by the devil'.

⁸⁰ *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, p. 372. 'The unseen devil [...] makes clear to the witch what she can say to men that they will be undone, those who seek *drycræft*'.

Ælfric considered healing magic as something actually being practiced in his own time, he envisioned a female practitioner. This tendency exhibited in the penitentials and in some passages by Ælfric does not appear to be unusual: Audrey Meaney has gathered a number of additional sources that suggest the active tendency in Anglo-Saxon culture to associate women (in particular) with witchcraft.⁸¹

The mention of female practitioners of *drycraeft* conforms to the larger emphasis on paganism/heathenism within these portions of the penitentials. Heathenism is mentioned by name in three of the passages cited above, and all of the rituals related to health or healing that are specifically forbidden appear to have their origins in popular practice; these include dragging a child through the dirt at crossroads, burning grains for health, and setting a child upon a roof to cure a fever. There is no indication that these were ever part of learned or ecclesiastical culture and instead appear to represent native Germanic tradition.⁸² As we have seen, the *Old English Penitential* also mentions *galdra* as a heathen practice and associates it with pagan forms of belief including worshipping the sun and the moon.

Ælfric himself explicitly links the use of *galdra* with heathenism. In his homily for St Bartholomew's day, Ælfric compares those who use *galdra* or *wiccecræft* in pursuit of health to *hæðenum mannum gelic þe ðam deofolgylde geofrodon for heora lichaman hælðe ond swa heora sawla amyrdon* ('heathen men, who offered to an idol for their bodies' health and so destroyed their souls').⁸³ In a similar vein, in 'On Auguries' he warns not to seek *galdras* for *se ðe þys deð se*

⁸¹ See A. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 255–259; Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic in Anglo-Saxon England'.

⁸² I refer those particularly interested in paganism in Anglo-Saxon England to the several articles written by Audrey Meaney on these subjects: A. Meaney, 'Ælfric and Idolatry', *Journal of Religious History* 13 (1984), 119–135; Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic in Anglo-Saxon England'; A. Meaney, "'And we forbeodað eornostlice ælcne hæðenscipe": Wulfstan and Late Anglo-Saxon and Norse "Heathenism"', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 461–500.

⁸³ Clemoes, pp. 449–450.

forlysd his cristen-dom ond bið þam hæðenum gelic (‘whoever does this forsakes his Christianity and is like the heathens’).⁸⁴ The noun *galdras* (sg. *galdere*) is unusual; it is otherwise only found in glosses for *aruspex* (‘diviner’) and *marsus* (a term derived from the name of a region in Italy associated with witchcraft);⁸⁵ presumably the connotation is one who uses *galdra*. This association between *drycræft* and heathendom is also clear in the works of Ælfric’s contemporary, Wulfstan. For example, the *Canons of Edgar*, a legal code authored by Wulfstan, reads:

And we lærað þæt preosta gehwile cristendom geornlice arære and ælcne hæpendom mid ealle adwæsce and forbeode wilweorþunga and licwiglunga and hwata and galdra and manweorðunga and þa gemearr, þe man driðð on mistlicum gewiglungum and on friðsplottum and on ellenum and eac on oðrum mistlicum treowum and on stanum and on manegum mistlicum gedwimerum, þe men on dreogað fela þæs, þe hi na ne scoldan.⁸⁶

Although it is still difficult to know exactly what some of these words meant, this extensive list gives an idea of the types of practices with which Wulfstan was most concerned, among them most notably worship at pagan sites, auguries, and *drycræft* practiced at places associated with paganism including trees and stones. For Wulfstan, these acts fall under the larger category of ‘heathen practices’. Similar practices are condemned elsewhere by Ælfric, who, like Wulfstan, condemns those who seek healing (or anything else) from holy wells, trees, or stones.⁸⁷ Ælfric used the *Old English Penitential* as a source in some of his homilies,⁸⁸ and repeats the

⁸⁴ Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*, ‘On Auguries’, ll. 78–80.

⁸⁵ *DOE*, s.v. ‘galdere, galdre’.

⁸⁶ Wulfstan, *Wulfstan’s Canons of Edgar*, ed. R. Fowler (London, 1972), p. 4; cf. Meaney, ‘Wulfstan and Late Anglo-Saxon and Norse “Heathenism”’, p. 477. ‘And we teach that priests should earnestly exalt Christianity, and extinguish entirely every heathen practice and forbid spring-worship, and necromancy, and divination, and *galdra*, and man-worship, and error that is practiced in many types of sorcery (*gewiglungum*) and in sanctuaries and at elder trees or other various trees and at stones and in many various fallacies, that people perform many of those which they should not’.

⁸⁷ Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*, p. 372. See further Clemons, p. 450.

⁸⁸ Meaney discusses Ælfric’s use of this source as well as a sermon by Caesarius of Arles. She stresses that Ælfric draws on these sources very freely, emphasising what he thought was significant, and ultimately creating his own independent piece: Meaney, ‘Ælfric’s Use of his Sources in his Homily on Auguries’, pp. 478, 491–493.

penitential's condemnation of eating at gravesites, taking love potions or abortifacients, and dragging one's child through the dirt at crossroads.⁸⁹

In some cases, the use of the words *hæbendom* or *hæbenscip* does not imply non-Christian belief or practice but can refer to a variety of behaviours. Both Meaney and Thompson have argued that Wulfstan's concept of *hæbenscip* is not static, but, depending upon context, could range in meaning from actual paganism to the conduct of misbehaving Christians, with an emphasis in particular on those actions associated with superstitious or unorthodox relationship to nature.⁹⁰ This second meaning seems clearly present in some of the passages discussed above. However, there is also the possibility that some of these prohibitions may have been linked to active pagan practice.

Ælfric and Wulfstan were living in a time of increased interaction with Scandinavian peoples. This was particularly true in the north, where, in the wake of the first wave of Viking attacks and the arrival of the Great Army in 865, large areas of land had come under Danish control and were settled by the (largely still un-Christianised) Scandinavians.⁹¹ However, by the reign of Æthelred the population in these areas had become to a large extent mixed. The ascension of the Danish leader Cnut to the English throne in 1016 brought with it new waves of settlers.⁹² Although Cnut himself is recorded as being, at least officially, a Christian, many of the settlers

⁸⁹ *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, pp. 374, 460, Ælfric's Pastoral Letter for Wulfsig in Ælfric, *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics*, p. 25; cf. Meaney in 'Ælfric and Idolatry', pp. 132–133; *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. E. Pope (London, 1967), EETS o.s. 259, 260, p. 796.

⁹⁰ Meaney, 'Wulfstan and Late Anglo-Saxon and Norse "Heathenism"', p. 471; Thompson, *Dying and Death*, p. 36.

⁹¹ L. Abrams, 'Conversion and Assimilation', in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. by D. M. Hadley and J. D. Richards (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 135–153, at 135.

⁹² J. Jesch, 'Scandinavians and "Cultural Paganism" in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. P. Cavill (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 55–68, at 57.

would not have been when they arrived.⁹³ The conversion of these settlers, in what later became the ‘Danelaw’, has traditionally been portrayed as rapid and thorough. However, Lesley Abrams has recently suggested that their conversion may not have been as immediate as previously imagined and that parts of the Danelaw may not have become Christian until the late tenth century.⁹⁴ This could well indicate that especially Wulfstan, whose episcopal see was in the North, may have encountered active heathen practice.⁹⁵ Prohibitions against paganism occur in the law code of ‘Edward and Guthrum’ (authored by Wulfstan):

Prologue:

1. Ðis is ærest, þæt hig gewædon, þæt hi ænne God lufian woldan ond ælcne hæþendom georne aworpen.
2. ond gif hwa Cristendom wyrde oððe hæþendom weorþige wordes oððe weorces, gylde swa wer swa wite swa lahslitte, be þam þe syo dæd sy.⁹⁶

The second injunction is noteworthy for its inclusion of the Scandinavian legal term *lahslit*, which indicates that it was directed towards Scandinavian settlers in the Danelaw.⁹⁷ This would at least suggest that ‘honouring heathendom by word or deed’ might have been meant literally, and not simply as a shorthand for any type of inappropriate behaviour.

Both Ælfric and Wulfstan make mention of Englishmen joining the Viking cause. Wulfstan gives the examples of serfs who *hlaforde ætleape and of cristendom*

⁹³ Jesch, ‘Scandinavians and “Cultural Paganism”’, pp. 57–58.

⁹⁴ L. Abrams, ‘The Conversion of the Danelaw’, in *Vikings and the Danelaw*, ed. J. Graham-Campbell, R. Hall, J. Jesch, and D. N. Parsons (Oxford, 2001), pp. 31–44, at p. 40.

⁹⁵ Meaney, ‘Wulfstan and Late Anglo-Saxon and Norse “Heathenism”’, pp. 467–468.

⁹⁶ *Councils and Synods with other Documents Relating to the English Church*, ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett, and C.N.L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981), vol. I, pp. 304–306; cf. Jesch, ‘Scandinavians and “Cultural Paganism”’, pp. 63–64. ‘1. This is first, that they said that they would love one God and would earnestly put aside every heathen practice. 2. And if anyone injures Christendom or venerates heathendom with words or deeds, [he must] pay *wergild* or a punishment or *lahslit*, according to the deed done.’ For the attribution of this law code to Wulfstan, see *Councils and Synods*, vol. I, p. 302.

⁹⁷ Jesch, ‘Scandinavians and “Cultural Paganism”’, p. 64. The term *lahslit* also occurs in injunctions against heathenism in the ‘Law of the Northumbrian Priests’, a code probably written by a successor of Wulfstan to the Archbishopric.

to *wicinge wurðe* ('abandon their lord and leave Christianity to become Vikings').⁹⁸

In his *Natale Quadraginta militum*, Ælfric also reflects on the possibility of apostasy to the Viking cause:

Swa fela manna gebugað mid ðam gecorenum, to Cristes geleafan on his Gelaðunge, þæt hy sume yfele eft ut abrecað, and hy on gedwyldum adreogað heora lif, swa swa þa Engliscan men doð þe to ðam Deniscum gebugað, and mearciað hy deofle to his mannrædene, and his weorc wyrcað, hym sylfum to forwyrde, and heora agene leode belæwað to deaðe.⁹⁹

This same anxiety about English defecting to the Danish cause can also be seen in the anonymous 'Letter to Brother Edward', presumed to have been written by Ælfric. The author berates his brother for having taken up the customs of *hæðenra manna* ('heathen people'), which apparently included dressing in the Danish fashion.¹⁰⁰ These references suggest that both Ælfric and Wulfstan were plagued by a degree of fear that some might be tempted away from English political and religious customs to embrace those of the new Scandinavian settlers. This fear of apostasy, or backsliding into prior pagan practices, may underlie some of prohibitions against heathenism in these texts. John Blair has suggested the influx of Scandinavian settlers might help explain the rise of prohibitions against worshipping stones, trees, and springs, which he contrasts with the earlier period where such observances appear to have been viewed as sufficiently integrated into Christianity

⁹⁸ *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. D. Bethurum (Oxford, 1957), xx (c), ll. 98–103, cited in M. Godden, 'Apocalypse and Invasion in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to E. G. Stanley*, ed. M. Godden, D. Gray, and T. Hoad (New York, 1994), pp. 130–162, at 148.

⁹⁹ *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, no. xiv, ll. 128–135, cited in Godden, 'Apocalypse and Invasion in Late Anglo-Saxon England', p. 139. 'So many men submit with the chosen to belief in Christ and in his Church, [then] some through evil again break away, and they offer their lives to error, as Englishmen do who submit to the Danes and submit themselves to pay homage to the devil, and perform his work. [In doing this] they destroy themselves and betray their own people to death.'

¹⁰⁰ M. Clayton, 'An Edition of Ælfric's Letter to Brother Edward', in *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. E. Treharne and S. Rosser (Temple, 2002), pp. 263–283, at 280–283; cf. S. Keynes, 'An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids of 1006–7 and 1009–12', *ASE* 37 (2007), 151–220.

(principally through assigning of such sites to local saints).¹⁰¹ Perhaps the paganism that worried these authors was Norse rather than traditionally Anglo-Saxon. In this case, it might not be a stretch to suggest that *drycraeft*, intimately connected with *hæthendom*, could have also in some cases referred to Norse practices.

Whether Ælfric and Wulfstan were primarily concerned about Norse paganism or residual folk practices in Christianised England, the emphasis in all these texts seems to be on suppressing public practices, rather than on condemning anything learned. This can be particularly seen in the repeated references to the worship of natural sites, and prohibitions against the bringing of offerings or eating and drinking there, as well as in the suggestion that *drycraeft* was seen as a traditionally feminine art. The penitential texts alongside the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan offer a fairly uniform picture and probably give a reliable indication of what *drycraeft* would have meant in the late Anglo-Saxon period.¹⁰² This ‘popular’ depiction of *drycraeft* can be contrasted with the learned type of ‘magic’ that was indeed a phenomenon in the Late Antique period and early Middle Ages. This is the variety that Peter Brown invokes when he describes sorcery as: ‘an occult skill to which anyone can resort’. He writes:

Late Roman sorcery was an “art”. It was an art consigned to great books. To possess or transcribe such books might jeopardise the owner, but their destruction was accepted as sufficient guarantee of the change of heart of the sorcerer.¹⁰³

Discussion of this type of forbidden learned practice is seemingly entirely absent in Old English descriptions of *drycraeft* and *galdra*. It is unlikely that a learned author such as Ælfric could have been completely unaware of this tradition, and it finds a

¹⁰¹ J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 481–482.

¹⁰² An exception might be the vague reference to heathen *ge-rim* (‘computation’) in the *Canons of Theodore*.

¹⁰³ P. Brown, ‘Sorcery, Demons, and the Rise Christianity: From Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages’, in *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London, 1972), pp. 119–146, at 139.

place in some of his source authors. However, this type of practice does not seem to have been his concern when it came to practically admonishing his readers.

The next section will turn to the question: if in theological and doctrinal contexts the term *galdra* repeatedly occurs in the context of heathen practice and residual paganism, what does this tell us about the contents of the Old English medical collections?

The Old English Medical Collections and the Question of *Galdra*

Scholars tend to use the word ‘charm’ when discussing the contents of the Old English medical collections. For his ‘Anglo-Saxon Charms’, Felix Grendon edited and translated 62 separate charms, and also included a reference to 87 additional charms not included in his edition. The other major collection and edition of charms in Old English is Gottfried Storms’ *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, which lists 86 charms as well as 16 ‘prayers used as charm formulas’ from Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁰⁴ A good proportion of the ‘charm’ texts used by both authors are taken from the Old English medical collections, although some come from other types of manuscripts.

The texts collected in these two editions look similar to many of the remedies already discussed in this dissertation. The remedies of the *Lacnunga*, in particular, are the most likely to be considered to be charms. The ‘charm’ texts of this collection roughly overlap with those remedies discussed in Chapter 3. The most prominent medical remedies occurring in charm-related discussions are the metrical charms in Old English. However, the ‘gibberish’ remedies with (sometimes illegible) words in exotic tongues such as Old Irish, Greek, and Hebrew are considered to be charms by both authors. Additionally, those remedies containing

¹⁰⁴ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. vi–ix.

ritualistic elements (such as the call for Latin prayers) are often considered to be Christian charms.

However, although many entries from the *Lacnunga* are often considered ‘magical’ by critics, it is worth noting that they look nothing like most of the practices explicitly condemned in the theology of late Anglo-Saxon England. As we have seen, those practices include: the worship of springs, wells, stones, or trees; building sanctuaries at these places; eating at these places; offering sacrifices to the devil; eating food sacrificed to devils; divination; murdering through witchcraft; using love potions; using abortifacients; poisoning; dragging one’s child through the earth; setting one’s child on a roof; cursing ones’ enemies; and burning grains for health. None of these practices occur in the Old English medical corpus.¹⁰⁵ The only possible exceptions to this are the prohibitions against gathering herbs using *galdra* or wearing amulets. However, in each case the prohibition is softened with the author suggesting that Christian prayers can be used when gathering herbs, and Christian relics can be used as amulets.¹⁰⁶

In fact, it is striking how little the medical texts resemble these forbidden activities. In the entire corpus of medical literature, we find not a single recipe for a love potion, abortifacients, poisons, or cursing enemies. It is also worth noting that in both Ælfric’s homilies and saints’ lives there is no mention of the possibly questionable Christian practices found in the *Lacnunga*, such as the use of the communion wafers or the use of holy water in several remedies.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, there is no mention of clerics or learned individuals as the purveyors of forbidden

¹⁰⁵ Certain remedies from the *Old English Herbarium* appear to emmenagogic in nature and could possibly have been used to produce abortions. However, it is more likely that these remedies would have been used to regulate the menstrual cycle and promote fertility (see Chapter 4, p. 201).

¹⁰⁶ For discussion of the Christianisation of amulets in Anglo-Saxon England, see Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 170–175.

¹⁰⁷ See for instance entries XXIX, XXXI, LXXXVI, CXI, CXXXII, CXXXV.

forms of medicine. Instead, these texts stress that it is *ill-learned* persons who both provide and desire illicit healing. As we have seen, the figures most often associated with forbidden forms of healing are not priests but women. Indeed, in her comparison of ‘On Auguries’ with its source material, Meaney finds that Ælfric chooses to emphasise the foolishness of those who seek medical aid from illicit healers, describing them scornfully as *ablende* (‘blinded’) and *stuntlice* (‘foolish’) men and *gewitlease* (‘witless’) women.¹⁰⁸

I would argue that the image being fostered in the penitentials (and echoed in the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan) is of lay healers engaged in popular superstitious practices and the ‘foolish’ folk that frequent them. This image is contrary to the generally learned traditions found within the Old English medical collections. A great part of the ‘charms’ found within the medical collections come from a literate textual tradition. Certainly, the *galdra* involving tongues other than Old English are products of an educated textual tradition and would only have been available to the smallest section of Anglo-Saxon society— most likely those in monastic orders or secular clerics. It is possible that some of the metrical cures in Old English derive from popular oral traditions. However, by the time the medical compilations were compiled and copied by scribes even these pieces had become textual artefacts.¹⁰⁹

Yet in all the passages related to *galdra* there is no hint that Ælfric is worried about learned error infecting his flock. In other passages in his homilies it is clear that he was concerned by the spread of heresies in England, including the reading of

¹⁰⁸ Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*, pp. 372, 374, cited in Meaney, ‘Ælfric’s use of His Sources in His Homily on Auguries’, p. 495.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Dendle argues that we can see this in progression happening in the various versions of the Old English cattle theft charms: ‘Textual Transmission of the Old English “Loss of Cattle” Charm’. For a more general discussion of oral elements in Latin charms, see Olsan, ‘Latin Charms of Medieval England’.

apocryphal texts, yet he never uses the term *galdra* or *drycraeft* in association with these dangers.¹¹⁰ It seems that when these late Anglo-Saxon authors envisioned the practice of *drycraeft* it was as something popular, rather than learned. It is probable then that when Ælfric and these other late Anglo-Saxon authors discuss *galdra* they are using the term in a different sense from how we find it used in the medical texts. If Ælfric was suspicious of exotic incantations or poetic pieces recorded in books, it is surprising that he fails to mention them even once.¹¹¹

The emphasis on *drycraeft* as a traditional rather than learned threat is found not only in Ælfric's writings but, as we have seen, also in other late Anglo-Saxon sources including Wulfstan's writings and the Old English penitential tradition. In none of these texts is there any mention of forbidden books, dangerous reading, written charms, or of religious rituals being used the way they are in some medical remedies. This seems to suggest that these types of practices were not their concern.

Medicine and Faith

This final chapter has explored the place of medicine in late Anglo-Saxon England. It is hoped that this discussion will help us understand more fully the place of medical texts within the religious and literary landscape. The sources surveyed and

¹¹⁰ Ælfric generally uses the words *gedwola* ('error') or *lease gesetnysse* ('false writings') to refer to what he considered either apocryphal works or heresy. For more on Ælfric's use of these terms, see F. Biggs, 'An Introduction and Overview of Recent Work', in *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. K. Powell and D. Scragg (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 18–21. See also T. Hall, 'Ælfric and the Epistle to the Laodicians', in *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 65–84.

¹¹¹ It is possible of course that this could be partly a question of audience. The intended audience of Ælfric's homilies has been a much-debated question. The fact that they are written in Old English vernacular indicates an ill-educated, non-Latin reading audience; the introduction to the first volume makes this explicit, where Ælfric writes that he has translated this text because *ungelærede menn* have so little access to books containing correct doctrine (Clemoes, p. 174). However, in the introduction to his more recent edition of the homilies, Godden suggests a more mixed audience: 'if the primary target audience was the laity and their ill-educated preachers, there is also much in the Catholic Homilies that reflects the specialist concerns of monks, the clergy and the more learned' (*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, p. xxvi). In this setting, counsel against dangerous reading, or improper learning, would not have seemed out of place.

the conclusions reached in this chapter are meant to be final but instead add to the continuing discussion about the place of medical practice within the doctrine and praxis of the Anglo-Saxon Church. Nevertheless, it seems valid to say that general attitude toward medicine was one of approbation and respect, as is testified both in poetry and didactic works. The *læce* was seen as a learned figure, employing an important art, and it is within this context that we should view the Anglo-Saxon medical compilations. There is no reason these texts should be considered, *de facto*, as fringe texts, surviving by chance and on the margin of orthodoxy. Instead they show a widespread appreciation for and cultivation of the medical art in Anglo-Saxon England.

Yet although it is clear that medicine was an accepted (even acclaimed) art, it shared a sometimes uncomfortable boundary with less theologically acceptable forms of healing. The second half of this chapter looked at these illicit practices, in an attempt to understand what terms like *drycræft* and *galdra* might have meant when used by Anglo-Saxon authors. The predominance of evidence suggests at least that the term *drycræft* (and by extension *galdra*) reflects a type of popular folk tradition, rather than any type of learned magical art. Although the medical texts are always brought into discussions about magic or charms in Anglo-Saxon England, there is remarkably little similarity between these texts and the actual practices associated with *drycræft* in Anglo-Saxon England.

Some scholars have observed a the shift in the ninth through eleventh centuries towards toleration within the Church of some previously condemned practices. Valerie Flint has argued that in the early medieval period members of the clergy knowingly tolerated (and even encouraged) some aspects of previously

forbidden magic as tool towards evangelisation and Christianisation.¹¹² Several aspects of Flint's thesis have been justly criticised;¹¹³ nevertheless, although the depth and meaning of this change have been debated, there is some level of general agreement that toleration for Christianised versions of pre-Christian rituals increased during this time, likely in part as a response to the accommodating missionary strategy outlined by Gregory the Great.¹¹⁴ Ælfric and Wulfstan appear to have shared this general tolerance, at least in tolerating more learned types of error which had sometimes subject to condemnation in the past.¹¹⁵

However, we can also observe in this period (in particular during the late tenth and eleventh centuries) an increased concern with popular and pagan practices. John Blair has suggested that this increased anxiety (which is manifest during the period not only in penitentials and homilies but also in law codes) was likely partially in response to the recent influx of pagan and recently pagan Danes in the North but may also reflect concerns over the imminent arrival of the anti-Christ, at which time there would be *mare [...] wracu ond gedrecednes þonne æfre ær wære ahwar on worulde*.¹¹⁶ This background helps us to contextualise the strong prohibitions against popular practice found in the sources from this period, although do not seem to contradict the broader changes discussed above where more learned

¹¹² Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*. Flint discusses this shift in regards to a variety of practices including astrology, incantations, and divination, amongst others.

¹¹³ For two important critiques of Flint's argument see: A. Murray, 'Missionaries and Magic in Dark-Age Europe', *Past and Present* 136 (1992), 186–205; R. Kieckhefer, 'The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic', *American Historical Review* 99 (1994), 813–836.

¹¹⁴ Kieckhefer, 'The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic', pp. 824–25; Murray, 'Missionaries and Magic in Dark-Age Europe', pp. 186–205, at 190–91; R. A. Markus, 'The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe (Book Review)', *English Historical Review* 107 (1992), 378–380, at 379. See also: *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, vol. I, ch. 23; R. A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith: Papers Read at the Seventh Summer Meeting and the Eighth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. G. Cuming (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 29–38.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, pp. 309–310.

¹¹⁶ *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, III, 11–12. 'more [...] suffering and tribulation than there was anywhere in the world ever before'. See also: Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 481–482; P. Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 451–460.

types of ‘magical’ practice were being (or had already been) incorporated within Christian practice.

Although Ælfric and Wulfstan are both frequently characterised as exceptionally strict on issues such as the use of charms or magic, their positive stance on medical treatment should also be emphasised.¹¹⁷ Although there could have been precedent for rejecting the practice of medicine, the use of medicinal herbs and prayers is fully accepted and approved of in Ælfric’s writings. Indeed, Ælfric’s multi-faceted approach towards both sickness and healing allowed for many alternatives when it came to both cause and cure of disease. Sickness could be a result of sin, but it also could be a sign of divine favour. All healing ultimately came from God, but it could come miraculously or through a doctor’s poultice. Even when it comes to forbidding certain types of healing, I would suggest that Ælfric’s position is not an extreme one. It is clear that he perceived popular paganism (or the remnants of paganism) as a problem during his time. Yet although Ælfric clearly condemned certain types of popular practices, there is substantially less evidence that he had the same concern about the learned medical practices of his day, even if these may seem unorthodox to some modern readers.

It seems probable that this tolerant view of medicine contributed to the unique flowering of vernacular medicine that occurred during the Anglo-Saxon period. The number and variety of vernacular medical collections extant from Anglo-Saxon England is unparalleled in Europe during the early Middle Ages, a fact that suggests that the formal study of medicine was held in high esteem. This may be particularly true within the monastic houses or cathedral sites where these various collections were most likely compiled and copied. For these monks and members of

¹¹⁷ For studies which emphasise this strictness, see: *LAC*, vol. I, xlvi–lii; Jolly, ‘On the Margins of Orthodoxy’, p. 147; Hollis and Wright, *Old English Prose of Secular Learning*, pp. 224–226; Thompson, *Dying and Death*, p. 37.

the clergy, the figure of Christ as the 'good physician' or the priest as the idealised 'doctor of souls' would be familiar concepts, not least through the writings of Gregory, often considered to be the father of the English Church. I suggest that it is against this background of deep appreciation and respect for medical practice that we should read the Old English medical texts.

Conclusions

This thesis has concerned itself with the Old English medical collections and their place as texts within the larger landscape of Anglo-Saxon literature. It has emphasised that these collections should be valued not only as a repository for elves, folklore, and metrical charms but also for their learned and textual nature. Although these collections can be seen as part of *Fachliteratur* due to their essentially functional character, they arose within literary contexts and have direct relevance to the study of literature during this period. The literary nature of these works has been explored through an examination of the translation strategies and organisational structures employed in these texts, as well as their incorporation of foreign or otherwise learned source materials. Overall, I suggest that the connection of these various collections to intellectual culture and monasticism has been underappreciated.

An underlying principle in this work has been the assumption that each of the extant collections of the medical corpus represents an individual and coherent work. Rather than treating these texts as part of a unified or homogenous corpus, this dissertation has applied the methodology of treating each text independently (and generally as the focus of its own chapter). It is only by virtue of this approach that many of the more interesting conclusions of this dissertation are visible.

By examining *Bald's Leechbook* against the wider corpus in Chapter 1, it became clear that certain features are distinctive to this work. In particular, the collection is unique in containing long passages with careful and sustained

discussion of certain organs and ailments which appear to be drawn from a particular set of Late Antique sources. As these passages are found in no other extant vernacular medical text it is likely that they were translated expressly for this collection. The inclusion of these passages can in turn tell us something about the compilation process as well as the purpose of this collection, which appears not only to have been meant to be functional but may also have had encyclopaedic and educational aims. The second half of this chapter considered the distinctive qualities of this collection within the larger context of the Alfredian translation programme of the ninth and tenth centuries. Although it is difficult to know the date and location of the compilation of the original collection, the extant manuscript was almost certainly copied in Winchester during this period, and it may have been for these encyclopaedic characteristics that this text was either compiled or recopied at this time.

My second chapter broadened its scope beyond Latin medical traditions and focused on the relationship of the apparently Germanic ailments of *ælfes*, *maran*, and *dweorg* with the Christian demonic in these collections. Although considerable scholarly attention has been paid to these phenomena, it has not previously been noticed that their appearance in individual texts differs, with the *Lacnunga* in particular diverging from the standard and offering a different depiction of these diseases than found in the other collections. The final part of the chapter focused on the use of liturgical material in remedies, with particular emphasis on those found in *Leechbook III*. It became clear as part of this analysis that although the elf-related remedies of the medical corpus closely resemble the remedies for demonically induced ailments, none of these conditions share similar symptoms with possession or appear to have required exorcism, even if these comparisons often occur in

scholarship surrounding these texts. However, taken together, these remedies (and in particular the testimony of the extraordinary remedy against *ælf-sogoba*) demonstrate how many types of ecclesiastical rituals could be creatively adapted for medical scenarios.

The collection known as the *Lacnunga* is introduced in Chapter 2 but is itself the focus of Chapter 3. This collection has been widely held to contain the most ‘superstitious’ and ‘magical’ material of the Old English medical texts. However, although this collection does contain a profusion of types of remedies less common in the other collections, an examination of these entries within their wider context suggests instead that they may demonstrate an interest on the part of the compiler in the alphabet, enumeration, and the power of words. The final part of this chapter examined parallels between the *Lacnunga* and the marginalia in CCC 41 and suggested that the two collections reflect the presence of a milieu characterised by an interest in Hiberno-Latin texts and early Insular conceptions of *grammatica*. These findings, combined with the conclusions of Chapter 2, indicate that the ‘popular’ or ‘Germanic’ character of the *Lacnunga* has been exaggerated in the scholarship of this collection.

My fourth chapter turned back again to revisit the use of Latin medical literature by Anglo-Saxon translators in its consideration of the *Old English Pharmacopeia*. Whereas the translations in *Bald’s Leechbook* (at least the long passages) appear to have had the aim of adding to the comprehensive and exhaustive nature of that collection, the translator of the *Old English Herbarium* appears to have had practicality and ease-of-use as his guiding principles. In contrast to the other medical texts discussed, the *Herbarium* stands out for its consistency of approach, as it is the only collection that appears to be the work of a single translator. This

chapter also explored the likely connection between this text and the tenth-century Benedictine Reform movement in England. I proposed that the place of medicine within the *Regula S. Benedicti* and its importance in monastic centres on the continent may well have encouraged the production of this new scholarly translation in the tenth century. Given the involved nature of this translation project, the fact that this text was commissioned at this time may suggest the importance of medicine and medical learning to leaders of the reform movement, such as Æthelwold.

Finally, after having considered each of the extant vernacular medical collections within their wider context, my final chapter examined the characterisation of medicine within broader Anglo-Saxon literary culture. Although the classical authors had differing opinions on the value and appropriateness of medicine (especially within a monastic setting), Anglo-Saxon sources portray a fundamentally positive view of medicine and doctors—a feeling apparently guided by the patristic vision of Christ the good physician. This chapter also explored the concept of *drycraeft* and forbidden forms of healing in Anglo-Saxon sources, concepts which often arise in the scholarship of the medical texts. Although the medical texts are often portrayed as liminal texts sitting on the outer limits of acceptability, prohibitions against *drycraeft* or *galdra* almost exclusively occur in the context of popular folk tradition (or possibly active heathen practice) and do not appear to include the learned and textual traditions found within the medical corpus. Finally, I suggested that it is probable that the tolerant view of medicine in monastic and literary circles in Anglo-Saxon England contributed to the flowering of vernacular medicine testified to in the Old English medical collections.

Enthusiasm for uncovering popular practices, paganism, and oral traditions in these texts has frequently left their learned and literary elements unexamined.

This is not to suggest that early belief systems or residual popular practice do not colour some of the remedies in these collections, but that many aspects of these texts can only be understood in the context of learned traditions. Yet, beyond simply reflecting learned or textual culture in a general sense, these collections frequently reflect the ideas and approaches that were influential when each was being compiled and copied. This thesis has examined a wide variety of these textual influences, which have included Late Antique medical compilations, popular on the continent since the Carolingian period; contemporary liturgical formulas and practices, such as those recorded in the *Leofric Missal*; Hiberno-Latin material, and likely the poetry and prose of the hermeneutic style popular in tenth-century England; and, finally, the ambitious translations of Latin texts into the vernacular undertaken as part of the Alfredian program in the ninth century and the Benedictine Reform movement of the tenth. Undoubtedly, there are other literary influences on these works not yet uncovered, which will be the fruit of future work on these collections. However, although the conclusions of this study are not exhaustive, they serve to suggest the learned and literary nature of these collections, and their significant place within the literary production of the Anglo-Saxon period.

It has been my hope that the work done in this thesis will build on the already strong foundation of scholarship on these collections laid by scholars such as Malcolm Cameron, Audrey Meaney, Maria D'Aronco, Debby Banham, Karen Jolly, and not least Oswald Cockayne. More specifically, I hope that my work will help bring more awareness of these collections within the field of Anglo-Saxon literary studies, where they have generally been neglected. The technical nature of these collections may make them appear less interesting to some scholars. However, even to those who have doubts over the worthiness of 'medicine' as literature, the

testimony of these collections as evidence to the development of literary culture in this period should not be ignored.

In creating our own genres, we must keep in mind the richness and complexity offered by medieval texts, which rarely fit squarely within modern categories. After all, the compilers of the Old English medical collections apparently had no qualms about including pieces of Old English verse alongside prose, prayers next to herbal remedies, Latin texts inside English remedies, and classical remedies alongside cures for *ælf*-ailments. Indeed, ultimately, it is the variety and complexity of the entries found within the medical collections that make them so far-reaching in their significance for the study of the period and such a valuable part of the larger corpus of Old English literature.

Appendix: Extended Quotations

A. *This appendix shows remedies from Bald's Leechbook in parallel with their Latin sources. Translations follow in the footnotes (these are my own although translations from Bald's Leechbook are made with reference to the translations in Cockayne's edition). Citations follow those used in the body of the text, except the passages from the Latin Alexander, which are taken from MS Angers 457. These were transcribed by David Langslow and very kindly sent to me in advance of his new published edition of the text. For details of his upcoming edition, see Langslow, The Latin Alexander, pp. x–xi.*

Bald's Leechbook II, Chapter 21

Old English

¹Her sint tacn aheardodre lifre ge on þam læppum ond healocum ond filmenum. Sio aheardung is on twa wisan gerad. Oþer biþ on fruman ær þon þe ænig oþer earfeþe on lifre become. oþeru æfter oþrum earfeþum þære lifre cymð. sio biþ butan sare.

Latin Source material

Liber tertius 43.1

^aIncipit curatio scleriae, ex qua incipit causa epatis. Nam ideo intelligitur et discernitur inter scleriam et scirrosin, quod **duritia a se incipiat et nulla fuit ante epatis causa[s]. Scirrosin autem, quamuis et ipsa duritia dicatur et <similia habeat et> nomina et signa, tamen inde agnoscitur atque discernitur ab scleria, quod ante scirrosin multae epatis causae fuerint. Nam scirrosin esse non potest, nisi fuerit phlegmone icoris aut dolor.** Ergo cum haec cognoueris, scleriae congrua auxilia sunt adhibenda.

¹ 'Here are the signs of a hardened liver either in the lobes or the crevices or the membranes. The hardening occurs in two manners: one is from the beginning before there is any other condition in the liver, the second comes after other pains of the liver; it is without soreness.'

^a 'Here begins the treatment of *scleria*, from which a condition of the liver arises. Indeed, for this reason it is known and distinguished between *scleria* and *scirrosin*, that **the hardening begins by itself and there has been no earlier condition of the liver. But *Scirrosin*, although it too is called hardness and it has both similar names and symptoms, nevertheless it is recognised and distinguished from *scleria* because there have been many conditions of the liver before *scirrosin*. For it cannot be *scirrosin*, if there has not been not inflammation of the liver or pain.** Therefore, when you have recognised this, suitable remedies for *scleria* should be employed.'

²ond þonne se man mete þigð þonne awyrpð he eft ond onwendeþ his hiw ond hæfð ungewealdene wambe ond þa micgean. ond þonne þu ðine handa setst ufan on þa lifre þonne beoð swa hefige swa stan ond ne biþ sar. gif þæt lange swa biþ þonne gehæfþ hit on unepelicne wæterbollan.

Liber tertius 48.1

^b Incipit <de> scirrosi id est duritia iecoris. Signa habent haec: Duritia est in iecore grandis, sine dolore. **Cum escam acceperint, eam reiciunt. Colorem immutant et uentrem non facilem habent <et> urinam similiter. Et cum manus imposueris super iecur, sentis quomodo lapidem sic esse, et non eis dolet, et si ista causa in longum tempus protrahi<tur>, hydropicum facit, qui hydropicus non curatur.**

³Ealle þa blawunge ond þa welmas þa þe beoþ gehwær geond þone lichoman. þa cumað of hatum blode ond weallendum. swa bið eac swilce on ðære lifre to ongitanne hwæper sio hæto ond sio ablawung sie on þære lifre selfre on þam filmenum. ond on þam þingum þe ymbutan þa lifre beoþ. ond hwæper hio sie on ðam liferbylum ond læppum þe on þam liferholum ond healcum þe on þam dælum bæm. þonne se læce þæt ongit þonne mæg he þone læcedom þe raðor findan.

Latin Alexander II. 57

^c**Q(uonia)m quidem omnes inflammationes de calido et feruido sanguine in toto corpore generantur sic etiam in epate ab omnibus fieri + sapientibus -+ dictum est. Quomodo autem oporteat agnoscere aut discernere seu in ipso epate contingat inflammatio siue in tunicis ipsius aut in aliquibus locis sit qui extrinsecus circumposita sunt considerari oportet.** Neque enim mox febris fit nisi aliqua inflammatio sit in epate. Iterum contemplari oportet et p(er)quirere seu circa (epa)tis patiatum quam nos gibbam dicimus siue sima quam nos concauam epatis partem dicimus aut pariter ambe partes inflammationem patiantur. Si

² ‘[...] and when the person eats food, then he throws it up again and he changes his colour and has lack of control over his stomach and urine, and when you set your hand over the liver it is as heavy as a stone and it is not sore, if it is like that for a long time, then it becomes a dropsy that is difficult to cure.’

^b ‘Here begins [the section] concerning *scirrosis*, which is hardening of the liver. The signs are these: great hardness in the liver, without pain. **When they have taken food, they throw it up. They change color and do not have an easy stomach, and likewise urine. And when you have placed hands over the liver, you feel it to be just like a rock, and it does not hurt them, and if that situation continues for a long time, it creates a dropsy, and this dropsy cannot be cured.**’

³ ‘All the inflammation and swellings that are anywhere throughout the body come from hot and boiling blood, so it is also to be understood of the liver whether the heat or swelling be on the liver itself, or on the membranes, or on the things which are around the liver, and whether they are on the bulges of the liver or on the lobes, or in the hollows or in the crevice or on both of those parts. When the doctor understands this, then he may more quickly find the treatment.’

^c ‘**Since, indeed, all inflammations in the whole body are generated from hot and boiling blood, so also it is said by all wise men to be thus also in the liver. How therefore one should know or learn whether the inflammation happens in the liver itself or in its membranes or if it is in other places which are externally located around it.** Neither is there fever soon, unless any sort of inflammation is in the liver. Again, it is necessary to understand and examine **whether it is felt around the liver, which we call a lump, or the *sima*, which we call the hollow part of the liver or if both parts equally endure the inflammation. Truly, if all these things are known or figured out, the cure is speeded up and aid is applied without impediment.**’

enim hec omnia cognoscuntur uel determinantur, curatio fit citata et sine aliquo impedimento adhibentur adiutoria.

⁴Þis synd þa tacn. gif sio ablawung sio hate biþ on þære lifre ofrum oððe bylum þonne biþ þær micel aþundenes ond fefer mid sweopunga⁺ omena ond stingende sar oþ þa wiþoban oð ða eaxle ond hwesta ond nearones breosta ond mare hefignes þonne sar ond þonne sio ablawung bið on þam filmenum ond on þam ædrum þe on ond ymb þa lifre beoð þonne biþ þæt sar sceapre þonne þæs welmes sar þe on þære lifre selfre beoð ond þu meahht be þon ongitan þæt sio adl biþ þære lifre læppum ond ofrum.

Latin Alexander II. 58

^dSigna si in cirta epatis flegmon fuerit, Si ergo in cirta magis quam alibi fiat. facilem autem habet cognitionem et maxime si in magnum uenerit tumorem tunc **etiam febres fiunt causodes cum uomitu colerum et sepius iodis et dolor usque ad iugulum uenit. et tussis mouetur. et coangustantur praecordia et grauatur amplius locus quam dolor consistat. Fit etiam et (εἰ γὰρ) in tunicis epatis flegmon uel in uenis que circa epatem sunt quibus acutissimi dolores plus quam in ipso epate fiunt. His etiam signis inflammatio epatis certa esse cognoscitur** et uisu uel tactu uel aliis supradictis signis. Quod si non grandem contigerit esse flegmonem sed paruam difficiliter cognoscetur. Neque enim mox febris fit nisi aliquo op(er)e p(rae)cio extendatur magnitudine. Neque enim oculis p(er)spicitur neque tactu manifestius poterit sciri sed est eius cognitio ex aliis signis. Si ergo

⁴ 'These are the signs, if the swelling, the heat, is either on the liver edges or the bulges, then there is great swelling and fever with inflammation from corrupt humours, and stinging soreness all the way to the collar-bone to the shoulder and cough and distress (tightness) of the chest, and more heaviness than soreness, then the swelling is on the membrane and on the veins which are on and around the liver, then that soreness is more sharp than the soreness of the inflammation which is on the liver itself, and you can understand by this that the illness is on the lobes and edges of the liver.'

⁺ Being read as *sweolunga* in keeping with Cockayne's edition.

^d 'Signs if there is inflammation in the *cyrta* of the liver. If therefore there is more in the *cyrta* than in other places, it is easy to recognise and especially if it comes with a big swelling, **the fevers become extreme fevers with vomiting of dark biles, and more often of violet colour, and the pain extends until the collar bone, and a cough is produced, the chest is constricted, and the area is weighed down more widely than the pain occupies. Also the inflammation happens in the membrane of the liver or in the veins which are around the liver, in which the pains become sharper than in the liver itself. With these signs, it is recognised that inflammation of the liver is certain:** by seeing or touching or the above-mentioned signs. It is more difficult to recognise if the inflamed swelling happens to be not big but small. Indeed, neither will there be fever soon, if it's not extended in size with any significant work, neither can it be seen by the eyes, nor can it be known more clearly by touch, but its knowledge is by other signs. Therefore if the infirm is seen by us breathing more strongly, and if he feels heaviness in that same part with pain we must know that there is some inflammation in or around the liver itself.'

p(er)spiciatur a nobis respirare fortius infirmus et grauitatem in ea sentiat parte cum dolore sciendum est inflammationem aliquantam in ipso aut circa ipsum esse epatem.

⁵Gif þonne sio lifre aheardung ond sio adl ond sio ablawung biþ on þære lifre healcum ond holocum gecenned þonne þinç þim sona on fruman þæt sio wæte swiþor niþor gewite þonne hio upstige. ond se mon geswogunga þrowað ond modes geswæþrunga. ne mæg him se lichoma batian ac he bið blac ond þynnne ond acolod ond forþon ætfilð him wæterbolla.

Latin Alexander II.59

^eSigna si in simma (σιμά) epatis inflammatio fuerit. **Si autem in simma epatis fuerit flegmon generatus. hoc modo cognoscetur. Mox enim in principio in inferioribus magis partibus uidetur esse tumor quam in superioribus. Angustias quoque cum defectione animi patitur nec corpus reficitur sed pallidus efficitur et extenuatur corpore infrigdato. Igitur et ydrops subsequitur.** Hoc enim modo in simma epatis inflammationem oportet discernere a cirta epatis.

⁵ 'If however the hardening of the liver and the sickness and the swelling are produced on the crevices and hollows of the liver, then it seems to him immediately from the beginning that the humour (liquid) goes downward rather than rising up, and the person suffers with fainting and failings of the mind; for him, the body may not heal but he is pale, and thin, and chilled, and therefore dropsy afflicts him.'

^e 'Signs if inflammation is in the bottom of the liver. If then inflammation is generated in the hollows (bottom) of the liver, this is how it is known: indeed, immediately from the beginning the swelling seems to be greater in the lower part rather than the upper part. Also, [the infirm] suffers constrictions with fainting, neither is the body nourished but it becomes pale, and it becomes thin as the body is chilled. Therefore, dropsy follows. For in this way one should distinguish inflammation in the *sima* of the liver from [one in] the *cyrta* of the liver.'

Old English

¹Hwonan se micla geoxa cume oþþe hu his mon tican scule. Se cymð of þam swiðe acolodan magan. oþþe of þam to swiðe ahatodan. oððe of to micelre fylle. oþþe of to micelre lærnesse. oððe of yfelum wætan. slitendum ond sceorfendum þone magan. gif þonne se seoca man þurh spiwedrenc aspiwð þone yfelan bitendan wætan on weg. þonne forstent se geohsa. spiwe þa deah þam monnum þe for fylle gihsa slihð oððe forþon þe hie INnan scyrfð ond eac se geohsa se þe of þæs yfelan wætan micelnysse cymð hæfð þearfe spiwdrinces. se wyrcð micelne fnoran eac ond se hine bet. Þonne se geohsa of þære idlan wambe cymð ond of þære gelæran ne bet þone se fnora. Gif se geohsa of cile cume þonne sceal mon mid wýrmendum þingum lacnian swile swa pipor is ond oþra wermenda wyrta oþþe rudan gegnide mon owin⁺ selle drincan. oþþe merces sæd mid wine oþþe eced selle drincan oððe mintan broð

Latin Source material

Oribasius V 43

^a**Singultus fit aut ex plenitudine, aut de evacuatione, vel inanitate, aut certe ex acros humores mordicationem in stomacho facta, sed mox vomuerit humores, requiescit singultus.** Multi etiam antidotum dia trion pipereon acceptum, si mox biberint vinum, singultum patiuntur. Similiter etiam et piper solus acceptus aliquibus facere solit; nam multis cum corruptus fuerit in ventre cibus, singultum patiuntur; aliqui etiam cum degelaberint, singultiunt. **Curatio: hii ergo qui ex plenitudinem aut mordicationem humorum singultiunt, sufficientem adjutorium per vomitum adjutorium invenitur. Nam si de frigidore efficitur, calefaciendus est; si autem ex plenitudinem humorum fit singultus, evacuandus est. Hoc autem et sternutamenta adhibita faciunt. Quod si de evacuatione aut inanitate fiat singultus, sanat si sternutatio ad**

¹ 'Where the great spasm comes from and how one ought to attend to it. It comes from a very cold stomach or from one that is very hot, or one that is overly full or one that is very empty, or from foul humours rending and cutting at the stomach. If then the sick man throws up the evil biting liquids with a emetic drink then the spasm goes away. Vomiting then is of use for those men who are attacked by spasm due to fullness, or also when it cuts at them within, and also the spasm which comes of the abundance of evil humours has need of an emetic drink that produces much sneezing and make him well. When the spasms come from a void(?) or empty stomach sneezing will not cure it. If the hiccup comes from chill, then one must treat it with warming things, such as pepper, or other warming herbs or one can give *rudan* rubbed in wine to drink or give to drink *merces* seed with wine or vinegar or *mintan* broth or *morán* or *cymen* or *gingifer*, sometimes separately prepared like this, sometimes give the plants put together in the juice to drink.'

⁺ Being read as *on win*, as in Cockayne's edition.

^a '**Spasm arises from fullness, or from emptying or emptiness, or certainly from sharp humours, biting produced in the stomach, but as soon as he vomits the humours, the spasm will cease.** Many people also suffer from spasm, if they immediately drink wine having taken the antidote of three peppers. Likewise, too, even pepper eaten on its own usually creates spasm in some people. For many when food is corrupted in their stomach suffer spasm; some, even when they are thawed out, spasm. **Remedy: therefore, for those who spasm from excessive fullness or corrosion by humours, help through vomiting has been found to be sufficient aid. If it is caused by cold, let him [the patient] be warmed, but if the spasm comes from an excess of humours, [he] must be emptied. They do this too when sternutatory remedies have been offered. Because if the spasm comes from emptiness or emptying, a sternutatory is administered: *ruta* with wine, or *nitrum* in sweetened wine, or *apium*, or carrot, or *cyminu*, or *gingiver*, or *calaminthes*, or Celtic nard.'**

opþe moran. oððe cymenes opþe
gingifran hwilum anlepig swa gerenode.
hwilum þa wyrta togædere gedon on þæt
wos selle drincan.

bibendum ruta cum vino, aut nitrum in
mulsa, **aut apii semen, aut daucu, aut**
cyminu, aut gingiver, aut calaminthes,
aut nardu Celtices.

B. This appendix shows the correspondences between some remedies found in MS Cambridge Corpus Christi College 41 and MS Harley 585. The remedies found in the two manuscripts are presented in parallel, with translations following in footnotes. For the remedies from the *Lacnunga* I have supplied the translations found in Pettit's edition; the translations of CCCC 41 are my own. In the second entry, I have put the parts paralleled in the two remedies in bold for clarity.

CCCC 41Harley 585Marginalia p. 206Entry CXLIX

¹Þis man sceal cweðon ðonne his ceapa hwilcne man forstolenne. Cwyð ær he ænig oþer word cweðe:

^aÞonne þe mon ærest secge þæt þin ceap sy losod, þonne cweð þu ærest ær þu elles hwæt cweþe:

‘Bathlem hattæ seo burh ðe Crist on geboren wes.
Seo is gemærsod ofer ealne middangeard;
Swa ðeos dæd wyrþe for mannum mære,
per crucem Cristi.’

‘Bæðleem hatte seo buruh þe Crist on acænned wæs.
Seo is gemærsad geond ealne middangeard;
Swa þyos dæd for monnum mære gewurþe,
Burh þa haligan Cristes rode. Amen.’

ond gebide þe þonne þriwa east and cweð þriwa: ‘+ Cristi ab oriente reducat’; ond in west ond cweð: ‘Crux Cristi ab occidente reducat’; ond in suð ond cweð: ‘Crux Cristi a meridie reducant’; ond in norð ond cweð:

Gibide þe þonne þriwa east ond cweþ þonne þriwa: ‘Crux Cristi ab oriente reducað’; gebide þe þonne þriwa west ond cweð þonne þriwa: ‘Crux Cristi ab occidente reducat’; gebide þe þonne þriwa

¹ Text borrowed from Pettit's edition in *Lacnunga*, vol. II, CXLIX (translation mine).
‘This one shall say when his cattle have been stolen by anyone. Before he says any other word, let him say:

“The city is called Bethlehem where Christ was born.
She is celebrated throughout the whole earth;
As this deed may become famous among men,
through the cross of Christ.”

and pray then three times to the east and say three times “May the cross of Christ bring [them] back from the east”; and in the west and say “May the cross of Christ bring [them] back from the west” and in the south and say: “May the cross of Christ bring [them] back from the south”, and in north and say: “the cross of Christ has been hidden, and was found; the Jews hung Christ, they did to him the worst of deeds, that they could not conceal, so may this deed never be concealed, through the cross of Christ”.

^a *Lacnunga*, vol. I, CXLIX. ‘As soon as someone tells you that your cattle are lost, then before you say anything else say:

“The city is called Bethlehem in which Christ was born.
It is glorified throughout the whole world;
So may this deed become notorious in the sight of men,
Through the holy Cross of Christ. Amen”.

Pray then thrice eastwards and then say thrice: “May the Cross of Christ bring (them) back from the east”; pray then thrice westwards and then say thrice: “May the Cross of Christ bring (them) back from the west”; pray then thrice southwards and say thrice: “May the Cross of Christ bring (them) back from the south”; pray then thrice northwards and say thrice: “May the Cross of Christ bring (them) back from the north; the Cross of Christ was lost and is found; the Jews hung Christ, did the worst of deeds, hid that which they could not fully conceal; so may this deed not be concealed by any means, through the holy Cross of Christ. Amen.”

‘Crux Cristi abscondita sunt & inventa est; Iudeas Crist ahengon, gedidon him dæda þa wyrstan, hælon þæt hi forhelan ne mihton; swa næfre ðeos dæd forholen ne wyrðe; per cruce[m] Cristi’.

suð ond cweþ þriwa: ‘Crux Cristi ab austro reducat’; gebide þonne þriwa norð ond cweð / þriwa: ‘Crux Cristi ab aquilone reducað; Crux Cristi abscondita est et inuenta est; Iudeas Crist ahengon, dydon dæda þa wyrrestan, hælon þæt hy forhelan ne mihtan; swa þeos dæd nænige þinga f[lo]rholen ne wurþe, þurh þa haligan Cristes rode. Amen.’

Marginalia p. 272

²Wið ealra feonda grimnessum. Dextera domini fecit uirtutem; dextera domini exaltauit me; non moriar, sed uiuam & narrabo opera domini. Dextera glorificata est in uirtute; dextera manus tua confringit inimicos & per multitudinem magestatis tue contreuisti aduersarios meos, misisti iram tuam & comedit eos. Sic per uerba ueritatis amedatio, sic eris immundissime spiritus, flectus⁺ oculorum tibi gehenna ignis. **Cedite a capite, a capillis, a labiis, a lingua, a collo, a pectoribus, ab uniuersis conpaginibus membrorum eius, ut non habeant potestatem diabolus ab homine isto .N. de capite, de capillis. nec nocendi, nec tangendi, nec dormiendi, nec tangendi, nec insurgendi, nec in meridiano, nec in uisu, nec in risu, nec in fulgendo, ll**

Entry LXIII (excerpt)

^bDomine, sancte Pater, omnipotens eterne Deus per inpositionem manum mearum refugiat inimicus diabolus **a capillis, a capite, ab oculis, a naribus, a labis, a linguis, a sublinguis, a collo, a pectore, a pedibus, a calcaneis, ab uniuersis confaginibus membrorum eis, ut non habeat potestatem diabolus, nec loquendi, nec tacendi, nec dormiendi, nec resurgendi, nec in die, nec in nocte, nec in tangendo, nec in somno, nec in gressu, nec in uisu, nec in risu, nec in legendo; sed in nomine Domini Ihesu Cristi, qui nos suo sancto sanguine redemit, qui cum Patre uiuit et regnat Deus in secula seculorum. Amen.**

² Grant, *The Loricis and the Missal*, pp. 15–16, expansions mine. ‘Against the cruelty of all enemies, the right hand of Lord created strength, the right hand of the Lord elevated me, I shall not die but live and tell of the works of the Lord. The right hand was glorified for its valour, your right hand scatters enemies, and through multiplicity of your majesty you tread on my enemies, you sent your anger and it devoured them. And so, through the words of truth *amedatio* [?], thus you will be most filthy spirit, for you [will be] the crying of the eyes [and] the fires of Gehenna. **Leave from the head, from the hair, from the lips, from the tongue, from the neck, from the chest, from the whole structure of his members, that the devil should not have power over this man .N., from the head, from the hair, [power] neither in suffering, nor in touching, nor in sleeping, nor in touching, nor in rising, nor at midday, nor in sight, nor in laughing, nor in gleaming. ll** [?] escape! But in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and Holy Spirit lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit for all the centuries of centuries.’

⁺ Being read as ‘fletus’ in my translation.

^b *Lacnunga*, vol. I, LXIII ‘Lord, holy Father, omnipotent (and) eternal God, by the application of my hands may the Enemy, the Devil, flee **from the hair, from the head, from the eyes, from the nose, from the lips, from the tongue, from the epiglottis, from the neck, from the breast, from the feet, from the heels, from the whole framework of his members, so that the Devil may have no power [over him], neither in speaking, nor in keeping quiet, nor in sleeping, nor in rising, nor by day, nor by night, nor in touching, nor in rest, nor in going, nor in sight, nor in laughter, nor in reading;** but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who redeemed us by his holy blood, who lives and reigns with the Father, God for the centuries of the centuries. Amen.’

effuie. Sed in nomine domini nostri ihesu Christi, qui cum patre & spiritu sancto uiuis & regnas in unitate spiritu sancti per omnia secula seculorum.

Marginalia p. 326

³Wip sarum eagam.

Domine sancte pater omnipotens aeterne deus sana oculos hominis istius N. sicut sanasti oculos filii Tobit et multorum cecorum, manus aridorum, pes claudorum, sanitas egrorum, resurrectio mortuorum, felicitas martirum et omnium sanctorum. Oro domine ut erigas et inluminas oculos famuli tui. N. in quacumque ualitudine constraictum⁺ medellis celestibus sanare digneris; tribue famulo tuo. N., ut armis iustitie munitur diabolo resistat et regnum consequatur æternum. Per.

Entry CL

^cDomine, sancte Pater, omnipotens aeterne Deus, sana oculos hominis istius N. sicut sanasti oculos filii Tobit et multorum cecorum quos [...]; Domine, tu es oculos caecorum, manus aridorum, pes claudorum, sanitas egrorum, resurrectio mortuorum, felicitas martyrum / et omnium sanctorum; oro, Domine, ut eregas et inlumnas oculos famuli tui N.; in quacumque ualitudine constitutum medelis celestibus sanare digneris, tribuere famulo tuo N., ut armis iustitiae munitus diabolo resistat et regnum consequatur aeternum; per.

³ Text borrowed from Pettit's edition in *Lacnunga*, vol. II, CL (translation mine). 'For sore eyes. Holy Lord, all-powerful Father, eternal God, heal the eyes of this man .N. just as you healed the eyes of the son of Tobit and many blind persons, hands of the crippled, feet of the lame, health for the sick, resurrection of the dead, joy of the martyrs and all the saints. I pray, O Lord, that you will raise and illumine the eyes of your servant. N. in whatever condition of health you may deem it worthy to heal him through your celestial blessings, grant that your servant. N. may resist the devil, defended with the arms of justice, and follow [you] to the eternal kingdom. Through'

⁺ *constraictum* being read as *constitutum*, as in Pettit's edition.

^c *Lacnunga*, vol. I, CL 'Lord, holy Father, omnipotent (and) eternal God, heal the eyes of this man, .N., just as you healed the eyes of the son of Tobit and of many blind men who [...]; Lord, you are the eye of the blind, the hand of the crippled, the foot of the lame, the health of the sick, the resurrection of the dead, the joy of the martyrs and of all the saints; I pray, Lord, that you raise up and illumine the eyes of your servant .N.; may you deign to heal him with celestial remedies in whatever state of health he may be, to grant it to your servant, .N., that, fortified with the arms of justice, he may resist the devil and reach the eternal kingdom; through.'

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