

Texts and Documents

SOME NOTES ON ANGLO-SAXON MEDICINE

by

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IT is just one hundred years since the Rev. Oswald Cockayne published for the Rolls Series his first volume of *Leechdoms, Wort-Cunning and Starcraft of Early England*, a collection of texts written in Anglo-Saxon illustrating the medical and scientific knowledge possessed by our forefathers. Forty years had to pass by before any notable study was made of this material, and then J. F. Payne in his Fitz-Patrick lectures on *English Medicine in Anglo-Saxon Times* had to deplore the fact that 'the apathy of the medical profession with regard to such subjects remains undisturbed'. Judging by the work that has been done on them in the sixty years since Payne made this remark, it must be admitted that Cockayne's great services to medical history have never been properly appreciated and the material he accumulated has never been properly assessed. It is true that both the late Charles Singer and his pupil Wilfrid Boser published books dealing with some of the documents provided by Cockayne, but their attention has been focused more on the folk-lore and magic contained in the relatively unimportant *Lacnunga* than on the purely medical texts. The result has been to emphasize the superstitious element that occurs in these writings and to give the general impression that Anglo-Saxon medicine was nothing but a hotchpotch of incantations, charms, magic and old wives' recipes. Singer certainly pointed out (relying on Cockayne's annotations) that certain portions of the text of the *Leechdoms* went back to Greek and Latin sources, but he was inclined for the most part to dismiss this phenomenon as the outcome of 'scribal accident' and in some cases of 'monastic stupidity'. Even Beccaria is inclined to see in the Anglo-Saxon material only what is empirical and superficial, 'in every case much inferior' to what was produced on the Continent.

The time seems ripe, therefore, to give some of these texts a more rational appraisal and to examine them a little more closely.

The earliest of the Anglo-Saxon texts is the *Leech Book of Bald*,¹ so called because of the colophon which occurs at the end of the first part: 'Bald is the owner of this book, which he ordered Cild to write down' etc. The allusions to King Alfred in the text point to the early tenth century as the date of the composition of the manuscript; but as it is a beautifully finished copy of some book that already existed in Anglo-Saxon, we may confidently assume that its exemplar belonged to an earlier date. If, further, we take into consideration the references in various parts of the book to 'Latin writers', we can infer that the underlying Latin text from which the Anglo-Saxon translation was made belonged to the ninth century.

The latest in date of the Anglo-Saxon medical texts is the *Peri Didaxeon*, which belongs, probably, to the twelfth century. According to Payne it is 'very different in character and origin from the rest' and represents the introduction into England of Salernitan medicine. It has been shown by Max Löweneck² to be an abstract, or part translation, of a Latin treatise attributed to Petrocillus or Petronius, a Salernitan

* Wellcome Historical Medical Museum and Library.

writer who lived in the eleventh century. There are also some indications that the *Peri Didaxeon* is indebted in part to another writer of the same Salernitan school, Gariopontus, who wrote before the middle of the eleventh century. So in these two texts, the Leech Book of Bald and the *Peri Didaxeon*, we have the two extremes of Anglo-Saxon medicine both in date and in content. There is a difference in date of at least two centuries and there is a difference in content, such that, according to Payne, 'the Salernitan book has a clear superiority over the Anglo-Saxon'.

I now propose to put this judgement to the test, particularly as the accepted view among all medical historians is that the emergence of Salerno and Salernitan medicine brought a new and rational element into the hitherto debased practice of the West. I hope to show that the texts used and published by the earliest Salernitan writers of the eleventh century were known and read in Anglo-Saxon England almost two centuries before.

Let us take as our first example the text quoted by Payne on pp. 50-1 of his lectures. As Payne does not give the complete text, we will transcribe it all for the sake of comparison, especially as he says 'it could hardly have been merely translated from any old book'.

Cockayne, Leech Book, II, xlvi, 257-61

These leechdoms shall be done for sore of side, and these are the tokens of the disease, like unto the tokens of lung disease, and the tokens of liver pain. The men are afflicted with very strong fevers, and mickle sore on both sides. At whiles the sore striketh upon the ribs, at whiles the sore is over all the side; at whiles it cometh up on the collar bones, and again, after a little, the sore greeteth either the shoulders or the lower belly, and they cough frequently, at whiles they hreak up blood, they suffer a constant wakefulness, the tongue is dry, they cannot lie on the left side if the sore is on the right side, nor again can they lie on the right if the sore is on the left; they feel that their viscera by their weight shifts place, and fall upon the side on which they lie.

There is also cold through all their fingers, and powerlessness of their knees, their eyes are red, and red is their hue, and their discharge is foamy, their mie is turned yellow, and the digestion of the inwards is little, and hard the pulsation of the veins, the breathing is sorelike, the face twitched, and there is a dewy wetting of the breast, as if it sweated, a delirium of the mind; a spasmodic action, and roughness of the throat, sounding chiefly from within, whistleth from the part on which the sore is. . . .

If these tokens continue long, then is the disease dangerous, and one can do nothing for the man. Notwithstanding, ask the man

Gariopontus, Passionarius, II, lxiv^a

Pleuretici communia signa habent cum hepaticis et peripneumoniacis.

Sed pleuretici febris exagitantur acerrimis, et intolerabili dolore lateris dextri vel sinistri; qui nascitur in costis mollibus vel super costas novissimas. Aliquoties lateris dolor perveniens ad jugulum percutit, post scapulas et humeros. Iliam etiam dolere tenentur.

Tussiuunt assidue leviter et minutatim. Sanguinem excreant vel humorem rufum. Vigiliis patiuntur,

in latere dextro

jacere non possunt

Gariopontus, II, lxv

Obfrigescant manus et plante,

gene rubescunt, oculi sanguinei fiunt, venter conturbatur, arrectando irritantur, assidue meiuunt, sed paulatim subalbido colore, respirant et sudant,

delirant aliquoties in loco ipso sonus quasi stridor auditur

Ibid., lxiv

Et hoc si diutius tenuerint, incurabile periculum incurrunt. Primum quere ab eis qui patiuntur,

who endureth this, whether he ever were stricken or stabbed in the side, or whether he long before had a fall, or got a breakage; if it were that, then will he be easier to cure.

If it come of cold or inward evil humour, it is so much harder to cure. If further the man have been before troubled with soreness in the liver, or in the lungs, and the side pain cometh thence, then is it very dangerous; if it has been ere that on the milt, then it is easier to cure. Further, if the man have been before wounded in the lung, and thence cometh the side pain, then is that very dangerous. If it have been formerly in the spleen, then the sore cometh on the left side, yea those tokens have heavy mischief; ask him whether the milt be sore, or whether he hath neck disease. So thou mayest understand that sore of the side cometh from evil humour and is very mischievous. If his anal discharge be stopped, or if he may not mic, the wamb must be cleansed by an always easy application of a wort drink through a horn or pipe. There is danger also when the sick mans expectoration or hreak is of many a hue and complexion.

By these tokens thou mayest understand in what case the man is curable, in what case he is not.

si aliquando percussi fuerint in ipso latere, vel ante plurimos dies ceciderint et contuderint. Quod si fit, facilius curantur. Si fuerit quidem ex frigore hec passio, aut ex rheumatismo, difficiliius curantur. Precedente vero hepatis dolore vel pulmonis, si pleuresis venerit magnum periculum infertur. Quibus autem cum dolore splenis latus sinistrum doluerit, ipsi quoque grave periculum habent. Quod si synanchem ante passi fuer-

int, scias dolorem lateris ex rheumatismo contigisse et non minimum

periculum habere. Item si ventris constrictio fuerit, urina nulla aut ipso latere solo sentitur dolor, aut mutatio fiat excretionum in diversos colores, signa mortalia sunt.

His indiciis cognoscuntur morituri, et cum periculo et sine periculo sanandi.

It will be seen from this example that the Anglo-Saxon text, copied down in the tenth century from an earlier exemplar, is a word-for-word translation of the Gariopontus material compiled in the eleventh. Furthermore, it is itself a compilation, for it runs together into one continuous passage, two separate pieces of Gariopontus. What is more, exactly the same text, excepting the middle section above, is found in Petrocillus, chapter 96, printed in vol. iv of De Renzi's *Collectio Salernitana*.

Here, then, we have positive proof that the material available to the earliest writers of the Salernitan school was already in use in England at a considerably earlier date. Moreover, as we see from the fuller treatment in the Anglo-Saxon, the leeches of the day understood what they were talking about and injected something of their own experience into the text.

Having thus set the stage, we will now examine the rest of the Anglo-Saxon Leech Book methodically. It is almost impossible at this juncture to sort out the various remedies which occur (though I hope to deal with them on another occasion) and therefore we will confine ourselves to the main informative sections where comparison is easier and more striking.

Leech Book, II, iii, 181-3

Of swelling and sore of the maw:
if the man have the strength to bear it, let him blood; after that, smear with oil on which the worts, which we ere named, have been

Gariopontus, II, xlv

Phlegmon, idest tumor [stomachi] . . . Si virtus non deest prius phlebotomentur. Tunc oleo in quo infusum est mellilotum, absynthium, mastiche, castoreum et decoctum stomachum

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sodden; after that smear with hot honey, and sprinkle over with dust of mastic and aloes and somewhat of pepper; then over lay this with a linen cloth or with ewes wool, and give him wormwood in warm water, poured off the wormwood two nights previously, and then administer a pepper drink; and then one shall at morning and evening rub smartly and squeeze the mans hands and feet with dry hands, and if it be good weather let him at undern by Gods grace go out somewhat for a while; if it be not fair weather, let him walk about within his house.

Ibid., iv, 183

Give the sick salt meats, and hares and boars flesh, roots of rue, and cresses, and sheer wine, and easily digested meats and applications drawing out the hard swelling and baths; work moist smearings, of oil and wormwood, and of mastic and wine; bathe him, then smear him with that, then overlay with ewes wool, and swathe up;

Ibid., v, 183-5

one shall in the morning squeeze hard the mans feet and hands, and one shall bid him cry or sing very loud, and one shall exhort him after his nights fast, and provoke him to spew; and in the morning smear him, etc.

In this example we see that the Anglo-Saxon translator has made two chapters out of one besides adding a phrase, perhaps a misunderstanding, which occurs nowhere in his source. The same treatment, almost in the same words, is found in Petrocellus. cap. 72.

Leech Book, II, vi, 185

. . . give him after his nights fast wormwood and beebread, put into sharp wine; give it him at night fasting, and after that salt meats with sweetened vinegar, and prepared mustard, and radish to eat, and make him eat all the meats and drinks which have a hot and sharp quality; and beware he suffer not indigestion and let him after the nights fast lap up honey.

The same text is in Petrocellus, cap. 80, though not verbally exact.

fomentabis: aut melle calido iniunges, et sparges super pulverem mastiches et aloes piperis
. . . et lane succide floccos fascias . . . aut lineos . . . aut absynthium ponticum in aqua infusum, ut color aque mutetur: jejuno bibere dabis electuarium diatrion pipereum.

Quibus siccis pedes et manus fricentur mane: quandoque si aer est calidum, foris,

sin minus, domi deambulent.

Ibid., xxviii

Salsa ad manducandum post vomitum danda sunt. De volatilibus perdecies, et similia. De quadrupedibus leporem, capreolos, apros manducant, et radices sint in escis eorum: et ruta . . . vinum album et lene bibant, et escam accipiant que ad digestionem pertinet. Malagma . . . stomacho imponendum est . . . Si autem dolor stomachi fuerit, fomentabis illum diutissime oleo tali, storiacis optime, absynthii pontici, . . . mastiches in linteo liga . . .

Ibid.

Mane manus et pedes fricandi sunt.

Vomitus jejunis provocandus est

Gariopontus, II, xxxiv

dabis eis jejunis bibere absynthium ponticum in vino coctum, et postea salsum cum aceto et dulcore, et sinapi temperatum cum eruca et raphani radices . . . et omnia que calidam virtutem et austeram habent. Cavendum est ne indigestionem patiantur. Vinum autem calefactum jejuni bibant.

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Leech Book, II, vii, 187

take honey and vinegar mingled together, and pepper beaten up, give in the morning a spoon full of it to the man after his nights fast, let him employ sharp drinks and meats; and at the bath let him rub and smear himself with mustard. Give him also after his nights fast this; take vinegar mingled somewhat of glad-den, and of long pepper ten corns or clusters, and mustard; mingle all together and triturate; give him after a nights fasting one spoon measure. Then consider thou, notwithstanding that all the aforementioned leechdoms and the after written ones, shall not be done at one too long season, but must have space and rest between them, whilom two days, whilom three; and when one lets him blood on a vein, on those days let none other leechdom be done to him, except about five days later or more. . . These are tokens of a deadened maw: what he taketh, that melteth or digests not, but the meat swallowed oppresseth the maw, and it sendeth out the half digested food through the wamb.

Leech Book, II, ix, 189

For an inward wound of the maw; take goats milk when it is milked, administer to be drunk . . . till they spew.

Ibid., xvi, 195

it is beneficial for him that he should eat bread in cold water or vinegar, and eggs very hard boiled or roasted.

Ibid.

And the thick coagulated and the viscid humours of the maw, and the chilled humours and the intractable thick viscid foulness, thou shalt warm and thin with the aforementioned leechdoms. Work then for the sick man a wort

Gariopontus, II, xlix

Oximel detur cum pipere trito, et mane jejunos coclear i. acrimoniis omnibus utantur.

Stomachus sinapizetur in balneo. Postea apophlegmatizetur sic: Aceti squillitici, piperis longi grana decem, sinapi triti commistorum coclear .i. dabis ieiunis

Memineris autem in omnibus causis stomachi in uno tempore

omnia adjuatoria adhibenda non esse; sed per intervalla biduo vel triduo; non solum in die phlebotomii alia adjuatoria non accipiant; verumetiam post dies quinque pluresve expectant.

Paralisis stomachi est cum esca recepta stomachum gravat, et non digeritur: sed incocta per ventrem emittitur.

Gariopontus, II, xlviij

Perielcosis, idest vulnus in stomacho. . . . Lac caprinum statim mulctum ieiunus bibat usque ad vomitum.

Ibid., xx

. . . accipiat, et cibos dessicativos, idest panem in pusca frigida, et pultes et ova assata sumant.

Ibid., xxxi

Et si nimium phlegma inducis in stomacho, idest in ore ventris congestum, huius medicaminis dabis coclearia. iii. in aqua calida, quod conficitur sic.

drink of the rind of the root of fennel, and let it be very tender and such that it may weigh six ounces, and one sextarius of vinegar till it be well sodden, then wring the worts off the vinegar, then add to the vinegar a pound of clean honey, then seethe these together till it be as thick as honey . . . give three spoon measures with water.

De radice feniculi cortice molli, uncias sex, yris illyrice. i. hyssopi similiter uti in aceto lib. i. pridie infusa lento igne coques donec media pars aceti consumatur. Tunc adiuncta libra. i. mellis iterum coques donec aceto consumpto ad mellis spissitudinem veniat.

If it is thought that too many of these passages deal merely with remedies and that therefore they must have been common to a great number of texts, it must be borne in mind that the Leech Book, like most of the medical treatises of the time, was meant to be a practical manual. Omissions of descriptive passages do not necessarily imply that they were not available to the copyist or that the Anglo-Saxons had no interest in them. The following passages show the exact contrary.

Leech Book, II, xvii, 199

Of the six things which work the liver pain: first swelling, that is puffing up of the liver; the second is the bursting of the swelling; the third is the wound of the liver; the fourth is a burning heat with sensitiveness and with a sore swelling; the fifth is a hardening of the maw with sensitiveness and swelling; the sixth is a hardening of the liver without sensitiveness and without soreness

Thou mayest thus understand swelling or puffing up of the liver; on the right side is under the nesh rib first the swelling of the liver observed, and the man there first feeleth heaviness and sore, and from that place the sore riseth over all the side as far as the collar bone, and as far as the right shoulder, and the mans mic is blood red, as if it were bloody; loss of appetite is incident to him, and his hue is pale and he is somewhat feverish, and he suffereth remarkable chill, and quaketh as doth a man in lent addle; his meat will not keep down . . . and he may not touch the sore with his hand. . .

Ibid., xviii, 201

For swelling or puffing up of the liver; if the outgoing lodge, the man must first be let blood on a vein, on the left side, then work him a bathing thus, and a salve of oil, and rue, and of dill, and of marche seed, as much as may seem good to thee; seethe all with oil, and then bathe with nesh wool for a long

Gariopontus, II, lii

In hepate quam multe sunt passiones acute, et veteres periculose; scilicet . . . phlegmon, scliosis, scleria, apostema, siresis elcosis.

Petrocellus, cap. 88. Epar habet causas sex, hoc est apostema in jecore, flegmon, idest fervor vel dolor epatis, sirexis, idest ruptio apostematis in jecore, elcosis, idest vulneratio jecoris. . . .

Ibid., liii

Phlegmon epatis, idest tumor, et calor inteligitur tactu manus sub hypocondriis, et gravedinem in ea partem sentiunt

et dolor per totum illud latus ascendit usque ad jugulum et humerum.

Urine quas faciunt quasi sanguinee apparent; fastidio tenentur, color pallidus,

febris levis, et assiduum frigus non deest; ita ut tremor desinat, typum patiuntur, escam non continent.

Ibid.

Mox a principio phlebotomentur ex parte sinistra, et expletis diebus phlebotomii, ruta, et anetum, et semen apii, et cuiuslibet papaveris coquenda sunt in oleo, et lanis mollibus in eodem infusis latus ipsum vaporabis: lanisque suprapositis fasciabis, et post triduum cataplasma ex

time on the right side, and then overlay with wool and swathe up fast for about three nights; work him again on onlying salve, and lay barley groats soused with wine, and then sodden, and this all triturated with vinegar and with honey, and sodden again, lay on the thickest cloth or on a skin swathe up therewith so warm, and bind upon the sore, and at whiles draw with glass or horn, as with cupping glass. If the secretion lodge, draw it out with wort drinks work such of wormwood and of herdwort, and of seed of rue, add enough of strained honey; give the man a spoon measure after his nightly fast.

This same passage, though not in the exact words used here, occurs also in Petrocellus, cap. 90. It will be noticed that in order to produce this first passage the Anglo-Saxon has called upon two separate chapters of the Gariopontus text and seemingly borrowed from Petrocellus at the same time. Furthermore, the phrase, 'if the outgoing lodge' at the beginning of chapter xviii of the Leech Book has got misplaced, and has been repeated, where it belongs, at the end. Here, as in other places, 'wort drinks' refer not to medicine taken by the mouth, but to enemas, a fact not mentioned by Bonser and others. Another point to be noticed is, that once more, a passage from another chapter has intruded itself into the wrong place. At the end of chapter xvii of the Leech Book the last five lines belong to another page, as we shall see immediately.

Leech Book, II, xix, 201-3

He who is wounded in the liver, if he be not sooner cured, then arriveth at the disorder in which a man speweth purulent matter. If the man swollen in the liver, or the bloated one, abideth so swollen until the five and twentieth day, so as that the swelling bursteth not, then beginneth the liver to harden . . . when the wound is bursten out, then the outrunning through the wamb is as it were bloody water . . . and when thou settest thine hand upon the liver, then the man feeleth very much soreness, and the man is very tender, and from this disorder there cometh full oft a dropsy.

For a swollen sore: at the starting one shall cure with onlayings and salves; the salve shall be of barley groats sodden in ley, and of culvers sharn wrought with honey, and then let one lay the salve on a hot cloth or on a skin, or on paper, beswathe with that, the swelling soon becometh nesh and bursteth within.

let the man drink mulsum, that is dulcet

ordei farina, polenta et dactylis
in vino coctis, et malis macianis, et caricis et
capparis radicibus tritis melle et aceto una
coctis cum plagella calida imponis

et subinde
ventosa et malagma diaspermaton imponenda
sunt. Et si ventrem strictum habent cum
clystere provocabis. Item ex hoc antidoto
ieiunis coclear. i. ut electuarium dabis. absyn-
thium ponticum, centauream, rutam agres-
tem . . . cum melle despumato quod sufficit.

Gariopontus, II, lix

Apostema jecoris intelligitur ex tumore ipsius
quia manu tangi non suffert: dolor crudelis
est, somnus deest. Quod dum se eruperit,
quasi saniem meiunt; vel per ventrem eadem
egerunt . . . Quod si mox non curantur,
epicum facit: et post viginti quinque dies,
si apostema non eruperit sclirosin facit.

[cap. lv. in longum tempus protracta insana-
bilem hydropem facit.]

Cura: in initio pollines ordei, caricas in
lixivio coctas,

stercus columbinum, mellis quod sufficit, cum
calida plagella imponis:

ut continuo malaxet, et
intus rumpat
cui dabis mulsam quotidie bibendam, et lac

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drinks, every day, and goats milk sodden, and water on which good worts have been sodden.

caprinum utiliter datum . . . mox ut mulgetur, et aquam ei bibere dabis, in qua carice decocte sunt.

The reader will see that the opening phrase of Gariopontus, 'Apostema . . . somnus deest' has been transferred by the Anglo-Saxon compiler from chapter xix of the Leech Book to the end of chapter xvii. This can only mean, surely, that the copy on which he was working either lacked titles to the chapters or had become transposed through faulty grouping of material. In any case, it suggests that the translation was made on an exemplar which had already become corrupt or confused through having passed through several hands. This can only mean that it was a good deal older than the translation.

Again, in this passage we notice the transposition of ideas by the translator and one misunderstanding, 'milk sodden' for 'lac . . . mox ut mulgetur'; on the other hand, he covers 'calida plagella' by three alternatives, 'a hot cloth', or 'skin' or 'paper'.

Leech Book, II, xx, 203-5

Leechdoms for the abscess of the liver, when the purulent swelling bursteth; take goats milk so warm, newly milked, give the man that to drink. Form also into a potion an adder, wrought so as leeches ken how to work it, and when the sick will drink anything, let them drink nothing but water previously sodden with worts, on wormwood and on other such onlayings as we before wrote of. But one shall previously bathe and wash the places with warm squirtings and with hot water, and on the water let there be sodden bunches of laurel berries and herdwort, that is, earth gall, and wormwood; with these do thou long previously foment the sore places, and make the reek smoke them. If further the wound of the liver be very ratteny, so much that the man hreaketh the ratten from his mouth, let him work himself a mulled drink

Gariopontus, II, lxiii

Elcosis est vulneratio iecoris postquam se apostema ruperit. [Sumes] caprinum etiam lac mox mulctum,

et antidotum diacignen, aut mithridatum ad magnitudinem fabe majoris solutam cum vino . . . et bibant quando voluerint solum aquam decoctionis absynthii et centauree et polygonii.

Inde spongiis calidissimis ex aqua calida elixature absynthii,

baccarum lauri,
centauree et polygonii

loca doloris diutissime vaporabis, et sic epithema istud impones, Si vero vulneratio ipsa plus sordens, per os saniem miserit, cum mulsa antidotum superscriptum dabis.

It would be interesting to discover what moved the Anglo-Saxon translator to give 'potion of an adder' as his version of *antidotum diacignen aut Mithridatum* (described in Galen, Kuhn's edition, xiv, 152) unless he had in mind some kind of medicine against the poison of an adder: his version of 'vaporabis' is also interesting. In this passage he has correctly interpreted 'lac mox mulctum', and so adds further reason for thinking that his earlier misunderstanding was due to some corruption in his exemplar.

Leech Book, II, xxi, 205

. . . the second cometh after other mischiefs: it is without sore, and when the man taketh meat, then he casteth up again, and changeth his hue, and hath not under control his wamb and his mie; and when thou settest thy hand

Gariopontus, II, lv

Sclirosis, idest duritia, fit in jecore, grandis sine dolore et sine sensu. Intelligitur autem sic. Escam acceptam rejiciunt: ventrem et urinam non facilem habent. Manus super jecur imposita quasi lapidem sentit

from above upon the liver, then is it heavy as a stone and is not sore. if that continues long so, then it involves a not easily cured dropsy.

et non dolet:
ex quo causa in longum tempus protracta, insanabilem hydropem facit.

The introductory remarks to this passage which the translator knits quite smoothly and easily into his remarks comes from a completely different chapter in Gariopontus; furthermore he has one or two phrases of his own which do not occur in the Salernitan text.

Here are the tokens of a hardened liver whether on the lobes or hulks, or the films. The hardening occurs in two ways: the one is in the outset before any other mischief cometh upon the liver; the second cometh after other mischiefs of the liver.

Gariopontus, II, lviii

Scleria est hepatis duritia scliosis, sed differunt, quia scleria a se incipit nulla causa hepatis precedente. Sclerosin vero . . . cause alie ipsius antecedunt

The rest of this chapter does not appear to have, as far as I am aware, any comparable text in Gariopontus, unless the section at the bottom of page 205 ('These are the tokens . . .') is taken from cap. lii of the *Passionarius*.

Leech Book, II, xxii, 207-11

For the sensitive hardness of the liver it is to be bathed with hot water, on which worts have been sodden, wormwood and roots of wild maythe, a wort hight fenugreek, and earth gall; when they are all sodden, then bathe the sore places for a long time with copious water fomentations; leave it so for three days; then work a salve wrought of wheaten groats or of a brewit of wormwood, and of wine, and of abrotanum, and of cummin and of bunches of laurel berries; and thereto as much honey as thou needest; give the man that for three days; on other three set on him a cupping horn or glass, draw out that Thou shalt treat the sick better if thou settest rue in oil, green or dry wormwood, and gum mastic; with all that bathe him, also lay it upon him; let it be for a whole day, and also for many days these things are to be done and to the men must be given diuretic drinks; give thou him every day to drink the wort parsley, and dill and seed of marche or its roots with honey; if he hath no fever eke that with wine. After that other wort drinks are proper,

Gariopontus, II, lviii

De scleria: Cura:
Spongiis maioribus ex aqua calida decoctionis absynthii, et radice malve agrestis, vel hortensis, et fenugreci, et rute agrestis, et centauree loca diutissime vaporabis; et post hec cataplasma adhibendum est

per triduum; recipies pollines tritici, sisami, et absynthii pontici, baccas lauri, cyminum et abrotanum et dactylos et caricas per unan diem infundis in vino, et teris; deinde pulverem terendorum admisceas et mellis quantum sufficit. Et alio diatrilo ventosas imponis: ut melius curetur

ex olio calido fove in quo ruta, et absinthium ponticum, viride vel aridum et radix capparidis et mastiche cocta sunt; et lanas supra imponis. Quibus malagma diaspermaton utiliter imponis, ut non auferatur per totum diem. Hec pluribus diebus adhibeantur. Quibus potiones diuretiche ex aqua in qua petroselinum et anetum . . . semen apii aut ipsorum radices cocte sunt; cum melle quotidie dande sunt bibere. Si febris non fuerit, addes etiam his et vinum. Post hec dabis antidotum diacolloquintidis, quod sic conficis.

when the swelling is become an abscess and bursteth and is becoming more free from soreness, and is passing downwards through the wamb, and the man pisseth ratten, reckoneth then he may be whole, then must be given him principally diuretic drinks, in order that all the mischief through the wamb and through the mie may be done away, lest the man should take to spewing ratten through the mouth: and let him withhold himself somewhat from the bath and green apples. If however the swelling and the ratten mounteth up to that degree that it seem to thee that a man may cut into it and let it out, then work him a salve first of culvers sharn and the like of that, and previously bathe the places with sousings, with the water and with the worts which are wrote of before.

When thou understandest that the swelling is growing nesh and mild, then touch thou it with a cutting iron, and cut in a little, and cleverly, even that the blood may come out, lest an evil pouch descend in thither. Do not let too much blood at one time, lest the sick man become too languid or die: but when thou dost prick or cut it, then have for thyself a linen cloth ready that therewith thou mayest soon bind up the cut; and when thou wilt again let more, draw the cloth off, let it run by a little at a time till it gets dry; and when the wound is clean, then enlarge it that the thirl may not be too narrow; but do thou every day syringe through it with a tube, and wash it out by those means; after that lay thereon what may cleanse the wound. If it turn very impure, cleanse it with honey and draw it again together.

Syresis est eruptio apostematis . . . et dolor quiescit . . . et cum syresis apostematis descendit per ventrem, et urinam albam egerunt. Urina enim inficitur ex ipso, et credunt se iam esse sanos . . . Quibus diuretica maxime danda sunt, ut per ventrem et urinam omnis illa calamitas egeratur . . . Si per os non per ventrem pus proiecerint empici erunt . . . A balneis abstinendi sunt, et ab omnibus pomis et recente. Quod si apostema sursum ad cutem ascenderit, ut intelligas ferro esse findendum, foces locum primum calidissimis spongiis et aqua decoctionis centauree . . . et stercore columbino impones. . . .

Inde cum bene videris molle apostema, ferro eius inferiorem partem tange;

et non semel totum evacuari permittes, ne nimia infusione laxetur patiens, et vite periculum sustineat; sed ellynchio sic sustines, ut per eum fiat purgatio et epiro claudatur

Vulnere igitur bene et diligenter purgato, aperies illud non angusto foramine et quotidie ex mulsa lavetur cum sisario;

idest superimpones medicamina mollia . . . donec mundetur: si vulnus sordidum fuerit, mel medicamini addis.

In this chapter we see once more that the Anglo-Saxon translator has slipped quite insensibly from one subject to another and has joined together into one continuous whole the contents of two separate chapters of Gariopontus. The same remarks made previously about the condition of his exemplar must be applied here again. The title to the section dealing with *Scleria* must have been missing from his source.

But there is another point to be noticed also. Towards the end of the passage there are several phrases in the Anglo-Saxon which have no corresponding words in the Latin text. This is because the compiler has drawn on a different source, namely Petrocellus, cap. 95. The particular sentences are these:

. . . sed cum aperueris, permittite modicum exire, et paratum habebis *ex lintheolo* factum velut epirum quod illi incias et claudas, et cum eum effundere volueris, subduces epirum quod ibi misisti, sed non multum effundat, ut faciat periculum, sed paulatim purgetur.

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It is also clear that the subsequent passage 'and when the wound is clean . . .', though it agrees with the text of Gariopontus, is much closer to the words of Petrocellus, which run like this:

Et cum bene purgatum fuerit vulnus, aperies eum leviter, ut non sit angustum foramen, et cotidie ex mulsa pisanon *vesice clistere* vulnus lavabis, et superimpones mollia medicamina. . . .

This shows, I think, that the translator of the Leech Book had a complete grasp of his materials and knew exactly what details to group together in order to give his readers an accurate account of the treatment to be administered. He was not slavishly attached to one text or one source for his own material.

To illustrate this point a little more clearly we shall examine the chapter in the Leech Book dealing with the spleen. We shall only take the first part, because the later sections of it are obviously excerpted from some source (Cockayne says Philagrius as preserved in Alexander of Tralles) different from both Gariopontus and Petrocellus. The opening words appear to be a translation of the title of the chapter, 'Of milt wark . . . cure' and resume the contents of the proposed chapter. But comparison of the text itself with this title shows that several more subjects are covered than are mentioned. In fact, this title only covers the first fourteen lines. After that the material is taken from a different chapter of Gariopontus and then progresses into the texts derived from Alexander.

Leech Book, II, xxxvi, 243

The men are meagre and uncomfortable, pale of aspect, though ere this they were fat, and still are constitutionally disposed that way; and the wamb is not under control, and scarcely can it be that the mie is healthy, but rather it will be swartish and greenish and blacker than it is right to be and the breathing is very hard drawn

If the disease is too longsome, then it turneth to dropsy, one may not cure it. the tongue is uncontrolled and unsmooth, and the wounds which are upon the body are not easy to cure, and they are on the left side afflicted with ache, and in the joining of the shoulders betwixt the shoulder blades, there is mickle ache, and in the turning about of the bones of the neck; they have also brawny feet, their knees fail them.

Gariopontus, III, i

Sunt etiam mesti vultu prope omnes splenetici et macilenti. Nam procedente tempore etiam si naturaliter sunt pingues extenuantur . . . et venter ipsorum difficilior fit. Urine non sane, atque naturali videntur colore, sed aut nigre aut viriditate quadam subpallide . . . et si ambulaverint aut cucurrerint anhelitum non sufferunt . . .

et si causa fuerit in longum tempus protracta hydropem facit vix curabilem.
*Nam hi asperam linguam sentiunt . . .
^bvulneratio corporis nascitur et maxime curari non possunt
^c. . . pars splenis usque ad sinistrum unguem et precordia ipsa usque ad jugulum dolent, ex vicinitate aliud latus dolet, . . .

incipit ante omnia difficultas pedum

The sentences marked *a* and *b* in the Latin text appear much earlier in the chapter of Gariopontus than they do in the Leech Book, whilst the sentence marked *c* is taken from the middle section of a different chapter in Gariopontus, II, ii.

This, together with the fact that the rest of the Leech Book chapter is derived from other sources and deals with different matters, shows that the translator was not merely

following one text blindly, but excerpting at will, and blending the elements according to his own knowledge and experience.

It may perhaps be objected that all the examples chosen so far are taken from the second book of the Leechdoms, and that the first book is of an entirely different character. This is not so, as the following chapter will make evident. The same sources were available to the compiler of the first book as were available to the second, though they may not have been used to the same extent. Take this passage, for example:

Leech Book, I, iv, 4, 47

Again for that, a manifold token and a leechdom for the neck ratten or jowl swelling or weasand.

The disease is of two kinds; the one is in the jowl, and when one openeth the mouth it is both swollen and is red about the uvula; and the man can not easily breathe, but will be smothered; he can not also swallow aught nor speak well, nor hath he voice; this disorder, however, is not dangerous.

Another sort is when there is a swelling in the throat and purulence, he may not speak aught, and the swelling is both on the neck and on the tongue; the man can not breathe nor turn his neck nor lean forward his head so that he may see his navel; and except one attend to him somewhat speedily, in about three days he will be deceased.

The rest of this chapter can also be paralleled in Gariopontus and Petrocellus. I forbear to give longer extracts lest the reader should suffer unnecessary tedium.

With these texts before our eyes, I think it should be fairly obvious that the claim for the superiority of Salernitan medicine over that of the Anglo-Saxons can no longer be sustained. It is evident that the same texts were available to both schools and that they both used them. What is more, the available evidence points to their employment in Anglo-Saxon England at least two centuries before the date usually assigned to their introduction into this country.

Let us now see if we can carry this line of investigation one step further. It is an acknowledged fact that the *Passionarius* of Gariopontus is merely a compilation, probably drawn up in the eleventh century from three main authors. These are Aurelius, the abbreviator of Caelius Aurelianus, Theodorus Priscianus, and the so-called Aesculapius. The combination of Aurelius and Aesculapius was found in many texts from the ninth century onwards and of these a number survive. It would be easy to assume that the Anglo-Saxon text is based on some such manuscript containing the Aurelius + Aesculapius complex. But this is not quite so. If one examines the *Passionarius* of Gariopontus carefully, one notices that most of the chapters have

Gariopontus, I, xxi

Synanchicorum cause due sunt, quas sic intelligis. Una est que in faucibus nascitur, que facile apparet . . . Tumor magnus et rubeus ore aperto apparet. Anhelare, inglutire, loqui bene non possunt: prefocationis causa quam patiuntur que etiam periculosa non est

Ibid., xxii

Altera synanchis est, que in gula uascitur; eius signa sunt hec. Tumor in gula et collo nascitur; pene non loquuntur vel anhelitum reddunt: cervicem torquere, ut umbilicum sibi videant, inclinare non possunt . . . cui si non continua medicina succurreris, tertia die prefocatione occidit.

reduplications. For instance, chapter iv of Book I treats of Scotoma. It is immediately followed by another on the same subject. Though they both contain the same basic information, there are some differences and comparison of the texts shows that they are derived from different sources. Compare, for instance, the opening sentences on the cures in these two chapters:

Passionarius c. iv. Cum ceciderint, relevandi sunt odoribus herbarum . . . ad nares applicatarum. Trahes etiam auriculas vel capillos ipsorum: clamas eos nomine, fricando pectus et stomachum et continens caput.

Passionarius c. v. Curantur autem accessionis tempore quando subito cadunt; mentum fricari oportet; aures, nares, labia et circa frontem capillos evellere, et fomentare faciem.

We know that this latter chapter is taken from Aesculapius. And it can be shown that in a great number of instances where the reduplicating chapters occur, the reduplicating material is derived from one of the three sources already mentioned, namely Aurelius, Aesculapius and Theodorus Priscianus. What is the source of the other material? In the case of Scotoma, just mentioned, the text is identical with that attributed to Petrocellus, Book II, cap. i, printed by De Renzi, *Collectio Salernitana*, IV, 287, whilst the Gariopontus text on epilepsy, spread over two chapters, is also identical with material from Petrocellus and Aesculapius.

It has not been possible for me at this stage to compare the whole of the Gariopontus text with the material ascribed to Petrocellus, but a provisional estimate would show that the following chapters of Gariopontus are identical with, or substantially agree with the text of Petrocellus. These are:

Gariopontus, Bk. I, caps. 1, 4, 6.

Gariopontus, Bk. II, caps. 1, 2, 6, 10, 13, 24, 26, 28, 33, 42, 46, 51, 52, 53, 55, 58, 61, 63, 64.

Gariopontus, Bk. III, caps. 1, 5, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 29, 30, 40, 41, 45, 51, 54, 58, 68, 69.

Gariopontus, Bk. V, caps. 1, 17.

It will be seen that a considerable portion of these two so-called Salernitan writers is common to them both. We know that Gariopontus is supposed to have made his compilation some time in the eleventh century. But what of Petrocellus?

The answer is that the so-called Petrocellus text already existed as a separate work in the ninth century. In its earliest form it had no title whatsoever, certainly no attribution to Petrocellus. The name of Petrocellus appears only in a late manuscript from which De Renzi printed his text. There is, therefore, no foundation at all for linking it with a writer of Salerno. Indeed, the oldest manuscript of the text, far from having any relationship with Salerno, is known to have been at one time in the possession of the monastery of Echternach in modern Luxembourg, which was founded by St. Willibrord, the Anglo-Saxon missionary. Besides this manuscript there are some fragments of the same text which survive in Germany and which may have had their source in one of the Anglo-Saxon foundations there. But the best and most complete text of the Petrocellus material is to be found in the British Museum, where an eleventh-century German manuscript, Sloane 2839, gives not only the text printed by De Renzi but also the second part, of which he listed only the chapter headings and two complete chapters. The obvious inference from this is that the Petrocellus text was not uncommon in Anglo-Saxon circles. It might be going too far at this stage to suggest that the Petrocellus text may have been an Anglo-Saxon compilation, but there is no denying that the Leech Book of Bald was based partly on it and is the earliest witness, apart from the Echternach manuscript, to its existence.

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Not only does this evidence destroy the myth of Salernitan medicine having been far and away ahead of Anglo-Saxon medical practice and theory, but it shows, contrary to all previously held views, that England was, in the ninth and tenth centuries, in no way inferior to its continental neighbours in the assimilation of classical medicine.⁴

NOTES

1. *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England*, collected and edited by the Rev. Thomas Oswald Cockayne, with a new introduction by Charles Singer, The Holland Press, London, 1961. The Leech Book of Bald is contained in vol. II.
2. *Peri didaxeon, eine Sammlung von Rezepten in englischer Sprache*, herausgegeben von Max Löweneck, Erlangen, 1896.
3. *Passionarius Galeni*, Lugduni, 1526. I am aware that there are manuscripts of this text earlier than the eleventh century, but this does not affect the fundamental argument of this paper.
4. Owing to the non-arrival of micro-films ordered many months ago, some other points of vital importance have had to be omitted, but I hope to deal with them on another occasion.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF THOMAS LAYCOCK, Chiefly written when he was a medical student 1833–5

by

SIR ZACHARY COPE

THOMAS LAYCOCK was one of the pioneers of modern neurology. He was born at Wetherby in Yorkshire in 1812, was educated at Woodhouse Grove Academy (Wesleyan) and became an articled pupil of Mr. Spence, a medical practitioner at Bedale, a small town in Yorkshire, where he remained till 1833. He then went to study at University College which had recently been founded. At that time University College Hospital had not yet been built but there was a Dispensary at which out-patients were seen by members of the medical staff of the College. Laycock kept a diary, fairly regularly during the years 1833–5, but gradually the entries became less frequent and few entries occur up to 1857 when they cease. By the courtesy of Mr. T. J. L. Stirling Boyd, grandson of Dr. Laycock, I am able to give some extracts from this diary which throw considerable light upon the early years of University College Medical School and in general upon the life of a medical student at that time.

September 25. 1833. I entered the Highflyer coach this evening for London. I had £48 in my pocket, a light heart, firm step and cheering though uncertain prospects, and above all I trust I had a deep feeling of my dependence upon God, for life and health and all things. I had the good fortune to travel inside till five o'clock next morning when the entrance of another passenger obliged me to turn out; as I had my ride to London given me by my uncle Cattle I did so very willingly.