The artistry of Bald's colophon: Latin verse in an Old English medical codex

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ABSTRACT

Bald's Leechbook, the most famous of the Old English medical collections, derives its name from a colophon in Latin hexameter verse that occurs on the final folio of the collection. Previous scholarly attention to the colophon has been nearly entirely directed at discerning the relationship of two named figures (*Bald* and *Cild*) and their role (if any) in the creation of *Bald's Leechbook*. Yet given the rarity of verse colophons in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and the unusual placement of this text at the end of a technical work in Old English, these verses also deserve study for their place within the larger genre of poetic colophons and framing texts from Anglo-Saxon England. This article examines for the first time the form of the colophon and its character as a work of Anglo-Latin verse as well as its relationship with the vernacular prefatory tradition associated with King Alfred.

London, British Library, Royal 12. D. XVII is the earliest codex of vernacular medical material extant from Anglo-Saxon England. The manuscript dates to the tenth century and is written in a single hand with rubricated title letters but no illustrations and little other decoration.[1] The codex contains three books of medical material in Old English. The first two books belong to a single collection known by the name *Bald's Leechbook*. The third book in the manuscript has long been recognized by scholars to be a separate piece. This work is widely known by the name *Leechbook III*, a title derived from the original edition of these texts, which printed all three books as part of a single collection.[2] However, the

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[1] Gneuss-Lapidge, *ASMss* 479. For a recent and thorough description of the manuscript, see C. B. Voth, 'An Analysis of the Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Manuscript London, British Library, Royal 12. D. XVII' (Unpubl. PhD dissertation, Cambridge Univ., 2015), pp. 23–38. A leaf of what appears to have been an earlier medical collection is preserved in Louvain, Université Catholique de Louvain, Fragmenta H. Omont 3 (Gneuss-Lapidge, *ASMss* 848, s. ix ex. or x in.). For a discussion of the possible relationship between these two collections, see Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 115–17; A. L. Meaney, 'Variant Versions of Old English Medical Remedies and the Compilation of Bald's *Leechbook*', *ASE* 13 (1984), 235–68, at 243–5.

[2] Cockayne, however, did recognize the third book as having a different (in his words, 'more monkish') character than the previous books. Both collections are found in *Leechdoms, Wortcunning,*

independent nature of these two collections can be seen in differences in organizational complexity, choices of content and dialectical character.[3] The originally separate identity of these collections is also testified to by a colophon occurring at the end of the second book of *Bald's Leechbook*:

> 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 falso.
> Cur quia nulla mihi tam cara est optima gaza.
> Quam cari libri quos Xristi gratia comit.[4]

As all three books and the colophon are written in a single continuous hand, it is unlikely that the colophon was original to this manuscript. Instead, it seems the scribe of the Royal manuscript was working from two exemplars and simply included the colophon found in the first exemplar before moving to the second.

Among the texts of the Old English medical corpus, *Bald's Leechbook* is known for its intricacy of organization.[5] Its two books are divided into chapters marked by Roman numerals and each book is headed by a table of contents. The contents of the two books are organized to follow the body in a head to foot organization, also known as *a capite ad calcem* – a structure not unusual in late antique and early medieval Latin medical collections. However, a further degree of complexity is present in *Bald's Leechbook*, as the two books appear to have been created to form a complementary unit, with the first book focusing on external ailments and the second on internal conditions. This collection is also noteworthy among the extant

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    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. T. O. Cockayne, 3 vols., RS (London, 1864–6) II.

[3] For discussion of the differences between *Bald's Leechbook* and *Leechbook III*, see E. Kesling, *Medical Texts in Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture* (Woodbridge, 2020), pp. 57–8. For the different dialectical character of the third book, see Voth, 'An Analysis,' pp. 46–7.

[4] London, British Library, Royal 12 D. XVII, f. 109r; *hund* emended in line 1 to *hunc*, following C. E. Wright, *Bald's Leechbook: British Museum Royal Manuscript 12 D. XVII, EEMF 5* (Copenhagen, 1955), p. 13; expansions and normalizations also follow 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 highest treasure is not more dear to me than those dear books which the grace of Christ adorns/brings together.' Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

[5] There are four complete collections of medical remedies extant in Old English: *Bald's Leechbook*, *Leechbook III*, the *Lacnunga* and the *Old English Pharmacopeia*. The first three of these collections can be seen as occurring in broadly the same tradition, each sharing some organizational features and containing remedies collected from a diverse array of Latin and native English sources. For more background on these collections, see Kesling, *Medical Texts*; M. L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (Cambridge, 1993). All four collections were edited in the 1860s by Oswald Cockayne as the part of the series *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*.

corpus of medical material in Old English for its incorporation of long sections containing careful and sustained discussion of certain ailments or bodily organs that have been translated from late antique medical sources. Although all the medical collections extant in Old English contain remedies translated from Latin sources, these sections in *Bald's Leechbook* are unusual for their length and complexity. I have suggested elsewhere that certain sections were likely completed specifically for this collection and perhaps by the compiler himself (or herself).[6] These passages supplement the practical cures of Pliny and Dioscorides (common to the general corpus of Old English medicine) to create a text that functions not only as a useful guide for doctors but also a type of encyclopaedia of medical learning.

The identity of the compiler(s) of this important work of vernacular medicine is unknown. It is uncertain whether the colophon was part of the work from the beginning or whether it was added at a later point in the transmission of the text. However, since the publication of the collection, there has been a tendency to relate the composition of the text with one of the two figures named in the colophon.[7] If this is the case, this collection is the only text of the Old English medical corpus to be associated with a named author. In the scholarship surrounding the collection, the title of author is most frequently given to Bald, whose name is prominently placed as the first word of the poem. Yet although Bald's name is given preeminence within the colophon, the nature of the relationship between the two figures is not clear. Is Bald meant to be the commissioner of the work and Cild the compiler? Or did Bald provide the exemplar text from which Cild made further copies? The verb used in the colophon (*conscribere*) does not answer these questions as it can mean to write in an authorial sense or to produce a copy; the prefix *con* was probably chosen primarily to alliterate with *cild* and *quem* earlier in the line rather than to qualify the meaning.[8] The names within the text are themselves unusual. Both *Bald* (or *Beald*) and *Cild* appear much more frequently as components in Anglo-Saxon names rather than as a name in themselves.[9] What is

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[6] Kesling, *Medical Texts*, pp. 28–30. I do not accept the theory originally proposed by Richard Nokes, who suggested that the voice of two separate writers can be discerned in the text: R. S. Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of Bald's *Leechbook*', *ASE* 33 (2003), 51–76. Nokes has since revised his position: R. S. Nokes, Review: Emily Kesling, *Medical Texts in Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture* (Woodbridge, 2020), *Speculum* 96 (2021), 521–2.

[7] See, for instance, Meaney, 'Variant Versions', 236; Voth, 'An Analysis', p. 26; D. Banham, 'Dun, Oxa, and Pliny the Great Physician: Attribution and Authority in Old English Medical Texts', *Social Hist. of Medicine* 24 (2011), 57–73, at 68; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 20–1.

[8] For a discussion of the use of alliteration by the author and the pronunciation of *cild* here, see below, pp. 97–8.

[9] PASE lists the colophon as the only instance of the name *Bald*; *Cild* occurs elsewhere only as the name of an eleventh-century moneyer: *bald*, *cild*, *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England*, http://www.pase.ac.uk. Cecily Clark suggests the possibility of shortening two-part names and Colman

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most likely is that two longer names were shortened to meet the metrical requirements of the hexameter verse of the colophon. No successful effort has ever been made to identify the figures mentioned, and the role (if any) of these figures in the creation of the text remains obscure.

Previous scholarly discussion of the colophon found in Royal 12. D. XVII has focused almost entirely on questions related to the identity of the figures mentioned and their role in the creation of the medical compilation. However, no analysis has been made of the form of the colophon or its literary qualities as a piece of Anglo-Latin verse. There has furthermore been very little exploration of the place of this text within the wider tradition of colophons in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. The following discussion will attempt to contribute towards a better understanding of the significance of this text within the genre of scribal colophons and within the corpus of Anglo-Latin poetry more generally, while at the same time considering possible literary influences on the author of this text, who may indeed have also been involved in the compilation of *Bald's Leechbook*.

When considered structurally, the six lines comprising the colophon fall naturally into two parts, with each part ending with an invocation of Christ. In Schiegg's proposed classification scheme for colophons, the first two lines form the 'assertive' part of the poem, as they provide information about the text (in this case, who was involved in its production).[10] The second part of the colophon, containing the injunction that no one steal the book Bald (or Cild?) has so carefully compiled, finds no parallels in colophons from the Anglo-Saxon period (although a similar command is found in the prose preface to the *Pastoral Care*).[11] This lack of parallels may simply be a result of the comparative rarity of colophons in early English texts, however, as commands regarding the safety or treatment of books are not unusual in Continental colophons.[12] This type of admonition would fall in the category of 'directives', which tell the reader to do something, or perhaps 'declaratives' which make something happen of themselves. The most common type of directives in colophons are requests for prayer for the scribe, but there are

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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. Richard M. Hogg (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 452–89; F. Colman, *The Grammar of Names in Anglo-Saxon England: the Linguistics of Culture of the Old English Onomasticon* (Oxford, 2014), p. 253.

[10] M. Schiegg, 'Scribes' Voices: the Relevance of Types of Early Medieval Colophons', *SN* 88 (2016), 129–247, at 139–45.

[11] My assessment of early English colophons is based on those colophons compiled and printed by R. Gameson in his *The Scribe Speaks? Colophons in Early English Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 2002). The most common request in these texts is for prayer for the scribe. For the prose preface to the *Pastoral Care*, see *Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. H. Sweet, 2 vols., RS (London, 1887–9) I.

[12] Gameson, *Colophons in Early English Manuscripts*, p. 11.

also examples that ask the reader to wash his hands or close the book after use.[13] Bald's colophon does not contain any overt threat of what may happen if a perfidious person *does* remove the book, but it is similar in sentiment to declarative 'book curses' found in many colophons.[14] The strength of the prohibition is emphasized through the repeated negatives (*nullus*, *nec*, *nulla*) in lines three, four and five. Further word patterning can be seen in the reoccurrence of *liber* (book) at the beginning, middle and end of the colophon (lines one, three and six).

Metrically, the colophon represents a competent example of hexameter verse. The metrical form appears to generally follow a tradition of Anglo-Latin verse inherited from Aldhelm, that is, one marked by the relatively infrequent use of dactyls in the first four feet of the line and the use of a fixed metrical patterning of spondee-spondee-dactyl-spondee for the final four feet (a pattern that occurs in every line of the colophon).[15] The verses are also characterized by extensive use of alliteration, which I have marked by underlining below:

> 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 falso.
> Cur quia nulla mihi tam cara est optima gaza.
> Quam cari libri quos Xristi gratia comit

As can be seen, alliteration on *c*, *h* and *n* is found throughout, with alliteration on *f* in line four. The poet's use of alliteration appears to be mainly aural rather than visual, as *v* and *f* alliterate in line four, and *g*, *q* and *x* appear chosen throughout to alliterate with *c*.[16] The aural nature of the alliteration in many places may make us curious about *cild*, which if read according to Old English pronunciation would not alliterate with *conscribere* in the same line. This may suggest that the poet appreciated

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[13] Schiegg, 'Scribes' Voices', pp. 141–2.

[14] Consider, for instance, the following colophon found in ninth-century psalter from St Gall (St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Sang. 22 (s. ix)): *Nemo me credat omnino furatum, sed feliciter hactenus fuissse reservatum. Non dubitet autem iram dei periculosius incurrere, si quis me praesumat a sancti Galli finibus spoliando auferre.* ('Let no one believe I was ever stolen, but that happily thus far I have been kept [here]. However, may he not doubt that he will incur the wrath of God most perilously, if anyone presumes to snatch me away by robbing from the confines of St Gall'); text taken from M. Drogin, *Anathema!: Medieval Scribes and the History of Book Curses* (Montclair, NJ, 1983), p. 103.

[15] For a discussion of these features of Aldhelm's style, see M. Lapidge, 'Aldhelm's Latin Poetry and Old English Verse', in his *Anglo-Latin Literature: 600–900* (London, 1996), pp. 247–69, at 252–5; A. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge, 1994), appendix 5.2. For the influence of Aldhelm's style on later Anglo-Saxon authors, see A. Orchard, 'After Aldhelm: the Teaching and Transmission of the Anglo-Latin Hexameters', *Jnl of Med. Latin* 2 (1992), 96–133.

[16] For discussion of different types of alliteration in Anglo-Latin verse, see Lapidge, 'Aldhelm's Latin Poetry', pp. 257–61; Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, pp. 43–54.

both the visual and aural effects of alliteration. Line four stands out as particularly artful. Departing from the alliteration on *c* and *q* found in every other line, this verse alternates *n* and *f* alliteration to create a negative thought-word-deed triad ('not by force, nor by stealth, nor by any false speech'). The line forms the centre of a small envelope pattern between the two appearances of the name of Christ.

The literary effect of the short poem is further amplified by the fact that several of its cadences echo other poetic works. *Famine falso* (line four) is used in poetic works by the influential Anglo-Latin poet Aldhelm and Milo of St Amand.[17] Although perhaps coincidental, it is interesting to note that the sole appearance of this cadence in Aldhelm's works occurs in close proximity to an item of medical vocabulary in the verse *De virginitate*. It is found in the section on St Narcissus, where three men offer (false) oaths of the honesty in their accusations against the saint:

> Tertius ast testis profert e pectore questus
> Et iuramenti nodosis vincla catenis
> Nititur imprudens verbis constringere falsis:
> 'Sic mea non tenebris nigrescant lumina furvis
> Glaucoma nec penitus lippos suffundat ocellos,
> Assertor verax si fingam *famina falsa*.'[18]

This declaration is suggestive for its inclusion of the unusually specific medical detail that the speaker will be struck by *glaucoma* (probably here meaning cataracts or other conditions resulting in cloudy vision); this term is not found in the prose *De virginitate* which only mentions blindness.[19] If the author of *Bald's Leechbook* was also responsible for writing the colophon, this particular passage may have stuck in his or her mind due to an interest in Greek-derived medical terminology.[20]

Beyond *famine falso*, *conscribere iussit* and very similar constructions also occur in a series of colophons associated with the abbey of St Amand. The closest match to the *Leechbook* verse is: 'Clauiger exiguus quondam Lotharius istum/ Librum, quem

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[17] Aldhelm, *De virginitate* (verse), *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. R. Ehwald, MGH *Auct. antiq.* 15 (Berlin, 1919), line 940. Milo of St Amand, *Vita S. Amandi*, ed. L. Traube, MGH *PLAC* 3 (Berlin, 1896), iv, line 199.

[18] 'Then the third man brought forth an accusation from his breast and unwisely he strove to bind together with lying words the links of his oath in intricate elaborations: "may cataracts thus not darken my sight with gloomy shadows nor inwardly fill my half-blinded eyes, unless I, a truthful witness, speak false utterances."' Aldhelm, *De virginitate* (verse), lines 935–40. Translation taken from M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, *Aldhelm: the Poetic Works* (Cambridge, 1985), *Carmen de Virginitate*, lines 935–40.

[19] Aldhelm, *De virginitate* (prose), p. 271.

[20] The use of the Greek term *glaucoma* is very unusual in poetry (occurring elsewhere in British sources only in the healing miracles of St Swithun, where it is modelled after Lantfred's prose): M. Lapidge, *The Cult of St Swithun* (Oxford, 2003), *Narratio Metrica De S. Swithuno*, line 1489; see also p. 228.

cernis, lector, conscribere iussit.'[21] Two other colophons associated with Lotharius contain the phrases *scribere iussit* and *scribere fecit*. These similarities reinforce the carefully constructed nature of the colophon found in Royal 12. D. XVII and its place within the wider genre of poetic scribal colophons. The correspondences to works originating in St Amand may also suggest that the author was drawing on models from the Continent in the creation of his colophon. This would make sense given the known importance of Carolingian manuscripts in the creation of certain Old English medical compilations, most notably the *Old English Herbarium*.[22]

The colophon can also be compared fruitfully to Anglo-Saxon examples. As on the Continent, the most typical form for scribal colophons in Anglo-Saxon England was prose. However, there are other instances of colophons written in Latin hexameters from Anglo-Saxon manuscripts including that found in the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*, an eleventh-century copy of Plautus' *Comoediae* and Aldred's tenth-century additions to the Lindisfarne Gospels.[23] The colophon found in the *Benedictional* records a scenario apparently very similar to that in the Royal manuscript, where a senior figure – here the bishop Æthelwold – commands an inferior (Godeman) to write the book using a comparable formula ('presentem biblum iussit perscribere presul').[24] In this instance, the finite verb has been moved earlier in the line and *presul* occupies the final foot; like *conscribere* in the Royal manuscript, the prefix *per* was probably chosen to alliterate with *presul* (and *presentem*, earlier in the line) rather than to indicate any particular details about the writing process. The colophon in the *Benedictional* is less closely linked stylistically to Bald's colophon than the examples from Amand, but it provides another instance of a codex being commissioned by one senior figure and executed by

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21 'The humble key-bearer Lotharius formerly ordered this book, which you, reader, behold, to be written/copied.' This colophon is found in a ninth-century St Amand collection of excerpts from the works of St Augustine (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 2109). This and the other colophons associated with Lotharius are to be found in 'Appendix ad Milonem', ed. L. Traube, MGH *PLAC* 3 (Berlin, 1896), p. 675.

22 For a discussion of the importance of the Benedictine monasticism and Carolingian exemplars for the creation of the *Old English Herbarium*, see Kesling, *Medical Texts*, pp. 147–50; M. A. D'Aronco, 'Le conoscenze mediche nell'Inghilterra Anglosassone: il ruolo del mondo Carolingio', *International Scandinavian and Medieval Studies in Memory of Gerd Wolfgang Weber*, ed. M. Dallapiazza, O. Hansen, P. Sorensen and Y. Bonnetain (Trieste, 2000), pp. 129–46.

23 Æthelwold's *Benedictional* is London, British Library, Add. 49598 (s. x²); the *Comoediae* is found in London, British Library, Royal 15. C. XI, part III (39) (s. xi/xii); the *Lindisfarne Gospels* is London, British Library, Cotton Nero D. iv (contents: s. vii ex; colophon: s. x 3/4). All three texts are mentioned in Gameson's collection of English colophons (nos 17, 39, 14).

24 For an edition of the entire poem, see M. Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature', in his *Anglo-Latin Literature: 900–1066* (London, 1993), pp. 105–150, at Appendix II.

another – in this case, most scholars agree that Æthelwold must have had direct oversight over the production of the *Benedictional*, an arrangement that could provide a possible model for understanding the interaction between Bald and Cild in our colophon.[25]

While it is somewhat unusual to have a colophon in a different language from the main text (which in this case is Old English), this also is not unprecedented in Anglo-Saxon texts. A useful comparison might be the Latin colophon found in a copy of the Old English Gospels.[26] Morton, in her recent analysis of late medieval Italian colophons, has argued that scribes may have chosen to write their colophons in Latin, even when copying a vernacular text, in order to stress their erudition and learning.[27] A similar motivation may have dictated the form of Bald's colophon, especially its appearance in verse, which exhibits the particular skill and learning of its author. It has been previously proposed that Bald and Cild may have been Anglo-Saxon physicians.[28] Debby Banham has suggested that the tendency to cite experts within the community rather than external authorities (such as Hippocrates or Galen) within the collection may indicate a close-knit group of physicians, known by name to each other and among whom medical texts may perhaps have circulated.[29] If Bald or Cild were indeed responsible for compiling the collection known as *Bald's Leechbook*, it is possible they could have been included in such a circle. However, I would suggest that if the compilers responsible for this collection were in any sense 'physicians', it seems likely that medicine was only one of their interests. Useful parallels might be seen in Carolingian intellectuals such as Walafrid Strabo and Grimoald of St Gall, both of whom were known to have owned and studied medical texts among their other scholarly interests.[30] Because of their technical nature, medical texts provided opportunities for the study of Greek vocabulary. The sections of *Bald's Leechbook* that do not occur in any other Old English collection and seem to have been translated expressly for that work include long passages taken from a specific set of late antique medical works, frequently characterized by their use of technical,

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[25] For a discussion of Æthelwold's possible role in the creation of this codex, see A. Prescott, 'The Text of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold', *Bishop Æthelwold: his Career and Influence*, ed. B.Yorke (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 119–47, at 47.

[26] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 140 (s. xi[1]) (Gameson no. 27).

[27] M. Moreton, 'Pious Voices: Nun-scribes and the Language of Colophons in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy', *Essays in Med. Stud.* 29 (2013), 43–73, at 60–2.

[28] See, for instance, Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 20–1.

[29] Banham, 'Authority and Attribution', esp. pp. 67–9. While classical authorities are hardly ever mentioned by name in *Bald's Leechbook*, two otherwise unknown Anglo-Saxon figures are named and given credit for instructing on medical matters.

[30] See F. E. Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall: the Ownership and Circulation of Medical Books in Medieval Europe, ca. 800–1200' (Unpubl. PhD dissertation, Duke Univ., 1999), pp. 92-9.

Greek-derived vocabulary.[31] Whoever translated these sections of text must have been well trained in Latin but also have had an interest and background in Greek terminology.[32] Given the generally competent handling of this extremely difficult material within the medical collection, such a person must have been highly educated, and I would suggest almost certainly capable of writing the moderately sophisticated example of hexameter verse found in the colophon.

As has been explored, a close reading of the colophon reveals its author to be a competent poet of Anglo-Latin verse, one clearly well-read in other Latin authors, including works by Aldhelm and possibly also Milo of St Amand's *Vita amandi* or other works frequently studied as models for verse. I would suggest that the creator of this colophon must have had a liberal arts education, of which medicine may have been a single aspect.[33] If this figure was involved in the creation of *Bald's Leechbook*, he or she was almost certainly a member of an important monastic institution with significant resources, including not only a selection of Latin medical texts, but likely also glossaries or other reference texts.

When considering *Bald's Leechbook* within the context of other Anglo-Saxon productions, it may also be useful to consider the colophon alongside the vernacular prefatory tradition and particularly those pieces found in the manuscripts associated with the period of Alfredian translation. The technical nature of *Bald's Leechbook*, and the fact that it has never been thought to be a translation by the king's own hand, has generally rendered it of only limited interest to scholars of Alfredian texts. However, the medical text contains an internal reference to the king (occurring in Chapter 64 of Book II) and the extant manuscript has a Winchester provenance, being copied in the same scriptorium as the Tollemache *Orosius* and the Parker Chronicle.[34] Most scholars have assumed the original

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[31] These sources include Latin translations of Alexander of Tralles' *Therapeutica* and the *Synopsis* and the *Euporistes* of Oribasius and the pseudo-Galenic *Liber tertius*. For an introduction to these texts and the translation techniques used in *Bald's Leechbook*, see Kesling, *Medical Texts*, pp. 18–20, 37–44.

[32] For a discussion of how Greek terminology is handled within the collection, see C. Doyle, 'Anglo-Saxon Medicine and Disease: a Semantic Approach' (Unpubl. PhD dissertation, Cambridge Univ., 2017). Doyle concludes in his abstract: 'linguistic study further demonstrates that the technical language of these texts was very well understood and closely studied in Anglo-Saxon England, the vernacular material not only providing excellent readings of abstruse Latin technical vocabulary, but also demonstrating a substantial knowledge of technical terms of Greek origin which survive in the Latin texts'.

[33] Although not included by Isidore among the liberal arts, medicine was sometimes considered to belong within the larger division of *phyisca*. Both Alcuin and Hrabanus Maurus held this view. For discussion, see Glaze, 'The Perforated Wall', pp. 84–9, 106; Kesling, *Medical Texts*, pp. 148–50.

[34] The scribe of the Royal manuscript also copied the text of the Old English version of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* found in London, British Library, Cotton Otho B. xi (Gneuss-Lapidge, *ASMss* 357, s. x med.) and was responsible for some entries in the Parker Chronicle. Another hand in a similar style is responsible for earlier entries in the Chronicle, the Tollemach Orosius and the Junius Psalter. For a discussion about the relation of these texts and their scribal traits, see Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 53–62; see also M. B. Parkes, 'The Paleography of the Parker Manuscript of the

collection was also compiled in Winchester during the lifetime of Alfred or immediately following. However, it seems likely the original compilation of the manuscript may in fact be somewhat earlier, as there is evidence of extensive scribal interaction following the original organization of the text and the compilation of the table of contents.[35] Christine Voth has recently argued for its origin in an Anglian centre, due primarily to dialectical features, and believes the remedies explicitly linked to Alfred to be a later interpolation.[36] Although it remains uncertain where the original manuscript was compiled, a version of the text must have been available in Winchester, where it was recopied with some degree of revision, almost certainly as part of a wider movement to copy texts in Old English.[37] This suggests that the medical collection was known, and likely consulted, in the tenth century when many of the earliest manuscripts containing works associated with the Alfredian 'project' were copied.

As is well known, the works broadly associated with the period of Alfredian translation are often accompanied by framing pieces.[38] These pieces differ widely from one another and it is difficult to define with precision what constitutes a 'preface' or an 'epilogue' in reference to these works; nevertheless there appears to have been a shared conviction in the importance of such pieces for guiding the reading of a translated text. It is noteworthy that verse prefaces (or epilogues) frequently accompany prose works in this tradition; this occurs, for instance, in some manuscript copies of the *Pastoral Care*, the *Boethius*, the *Soliloquies*, the *Old English Dialogues* and the Old English *Bede*. Prior to these translations, there are no extant examples from Anglo-Saxon England where verse prefaces are attached to prose works, although there are some examples from the Continent, especially in the works of Alcuin.[39]

Chronicle, Laws and Sedulius, and Historiography at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *ASE* 5 (1976), 149–71.

[35] For discussion, see Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 129–68.

[36] Voth, 'An Analysis', pp. 43–50, 158–9. For a Winchester origin, see Meaney, 'Variant Versions', p. 236; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 30; S. Hollis, 'The Social Milieu of *Bald's Leechbook*', *Avista Forum Jnl* 14 (2004), 11–16, at 12.

[37] I shall explore the relationship of Royal 12 D. XVII to the other vernacular manuscripts copied in Winchester by this group of scribes in 'The Winchester Scribes and Alfredian Prose in the Tenth Century', *Age of Alfred*, ed. A. Faulkner and F. Leneghan (Turnhout, forthcoming).

[38] The Old English translations of Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*, Augustine's *Soliloquia*, Gregory's *Regula pastoralis* and *Dialogi*, Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* and the Old English Laws all contain 'framing pieces' in Old English. Importantly, not all of these works were ever thought to be by Alfred's own hand and some are sometimes referred to as 'Alfrediana' (meaning texts that have been associated with the Alfredian programme at one point or which share important features with Alfredian works); for a general background to this topic, see N. G. Discenza and P. E. Szarmach, 'Introduction', *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. Discenza and Szarmach (Leiden, 2014), pp. 1–9, and D. Johnson, 'Alfredian Apocrypha: the Old English Dialogues and Bede', *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, pp. 368–95, at 382–95.

[39] M. Godden, 'Prologues and Epilogues in the Old English Pastoral Care, and their Carolingian Models', *JEGP* 110 (2011), 441–73, at 443.

Although not a true preface or epilogue, the colophon to *Bald's Leechbook* provides an additional example of a verse piece attached to a prose work of translation. Indeed, Earl has drawn attention to the similarity between these framing pieces (whether prefaces or epilogues) and scribal colophons.[40] In much the same way as colophons, these framing texts frequently relate details of how, why and by whom these texts were written (although the accuracy of these details is often in doubt).[41] Importantly, the colophon to *Bald's Leechbook* is not written in Old English, nor does it discuss or justify translation into the vernacular, as do some of these pieces. However, it does share several features with framing pieces in other Alfredian texts. Some of the closest parallels are with the verse preface to the Old English *Dialogues*.[42] The verse preface (which is similarly attached to a prose work) uses a verbal construction comparable to Bald's colophon to describe the writing of the book: 'me awritan het Wulfsige bisceop' ('the bishop Wulfsige commanded me to be written'), and, like the colophon, this preface involves two figures in the creation of the work: King Alfred, who it reports gave the book's exemplar (*bisen*) to be copied, and Wulfsige the bishop. Like other framing pieces associated with Alfredian texts, the verse preface to the *Dialogues* emphasizes the book as a spiritual treasure, a motif that is echoed in the last two lines of Bald's colophon: 'nulla mihi tam cara est optima gaza/ Quam cari libri quos Xristi gratia comit'. [43] The emphasis on the spiritual value of the book is perhaps somewhat unexpected in a medical text, which one might more obviously associate with practicality or usefulness, but could well have been seen as a standard trope for a framing piece or epilogue. These lines could be read as engaging somewhat playfully with this popular framework, as the verb *comere* can mean to *adorn* (the more obvious meaning in the context) but can also be translated as to *bring together* or *compile*, in which case it would refer to the composite nature of the collection it follows.

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[40] J. W. Earl, 'King Alfred's Talking Poems', *Pacific Coast Philol.* 24 (1989), 49–61, at 58.

[41] For instance, the prose preface of the Old English *Dialogues* (found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 322 (s. xi²)) states that King Alfred himself translated this work, but scholars do not regard this attribution as accurate (S. Irvine, 'The Alfredian Prefaces and Epilogues', *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. Discenza and Szarmach, pp. 143–70, at 147–9).

[42] For a full edition of this text and a translation, see Irvine, 'The Alfredian Prefaces', pp. 150–1. Text and translations from this passage are taken from this source. Comparison may also be made to the epilogue to the Old English version of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* found in CCCC 41. These ten lines of Old English verse are the third of three petitions occurring after the end of the main text of Bede's history. Robinson has argued that this poem exists within the genre of colophons, as the poem draws upon scribal colophon formulas in its description of the book being written by the scribe with 'both two hands' (*bam handum twam*) and asking support for the scribe: F. Robinson, 'Old English Literature in its Most Immediate Context', *Old English Literature in Context: Ten Essays*, ed. J. D. Niles (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 11–29, at 15.

[43] This can be seen, for instance, at the end of the preface where Alfred, the giver of the exemplar, is described as *se selesða sinces brytta* ('the best distributor of treasure'). For discussion of this theme in this passage, see Irvine, 'Prefaces', pp. 152–3.

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Another point of comparison is the use of the first person in these pieces. The preface to the *Dialogues* relies on first person pronouns as a structuring device, something frequently found in the vernacular prefaces.[44] Recurrently the referent of the *ic* is left somewhat ambiguous and can sometimes be assigned to the book itself (as is the case in this preface).[45] The first-person pronoun only appears once in the colophon to *Bald's Leechbook*. However, its placement is important: occurring at the end of the third line in the very centre of the poem. Beyond its centrality, the placement of the pronoun in the line may also have drawn the reader's attention, as two monosyllables (here, *a me*) only very rarely occur in the sixth foot of Anglo-Latin hexameters.[46] As in many of the vernacular prefaces, the speaker in these lines of the colophon is not clear. The *me* follows after the first-person verb *precor* in the second line but has no clear referent. It may be Cild, the writer of the book, or, more likely, Bald, the owner, but as both figures are referenced in the third person the speaker is left ambiguous, which bears some resemblance to the usage in the prefaces. Overall, these similarities provide some points of comparison with the vernacular tradition; one way to interpret this would be to suggest that the author of the colophon had familiarity with the prefaces frequently found in other vernacular texts. However, given the likely earlier date of the compilation, it is also possible that Latin verse colophons of this type acted as models for a slightly later vernacular tradition of framing pieces.

The colophon found on the last folio of *Bald's Leechbook* almost certainly predates the copy of the text found in Royal 12 D. XVII. However, whether it in fact goes back to the original compilation of the medical collection remains unproven. Nevertheless, the colophon itself is a sophisticated piece of verse; it suggests an author well read and trained in Latin literature and metre, and familiar with both Anglo-Saxon and Continental models of scribal colophons. Although the colophon itself does not reveal any medical knowledge, it seems possible that the author of this piece could also have been involved in the work of compilation and technical translation required in the creation of the medical text. Even without this identification, however, the colophon itself is notable as a carefully crafted piece of Latin verse attached to a vernacular prose composition, in this case a technical work of medical literature.

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[44] S. Irvine, *Uncertain Beginnings: the Prefatory Tradition in Old English*, H. M. Chadwick Memorial Lectures 27 (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 6–8. She notes this use of the first person in the verse preface to the *Pastoral Care*, the verse preface to the *Dialogues* and a verse preface to the *Consolation of Philosophy*.

[45] For discussion, see Earl, 'King Alfred's Talking Poems'.

[46] Lapidge, 'Aldhelm's Latin Poetry', p. 254.