

VIATOR

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES

Volume 3 (1972)

PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE CENTER FOR MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
BERKELEY, LOS ANGELES, LONDON 1972

"LIBER MARI DE ELEMENTIS"
THE WORK OF A HITHERTO UNKNOWN
SALERNITAN MASTER?

•

by Rodney M. Thomson

The second volume of Manuscript Cotton Galba E. IV in the British Museum, written in England shortly before 1200, has long been known to scholars interested in the introduction of Greek and Arabic science into western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In 1924 C. H. Haskins commented upon the first four items of its contents,¹ of which three are treatises on the elements, the fourth a work on climate. All are anonymous except one, entitled *Liber Marii de elementis*. The identity of this Marius has, however, remained hidden until now. From internal evidence Haskins proposed a southern Italian or Sicilian origin for this group of treatises, characterizing them as belonging "to the epoch when Aristotelian science was coming in through Arabic channels but had not yet been fully absorbed."² The traditional sources, Seneca, Macrobius, Boethius, the Latin poets and Plato's *Timaeus* are quoted, as well as the new translations of Aristotle's *Physics*, *De caelo* and *Topics*, and the pseudo-Aristotelian *De elementis*.³ More recently, R. C. Dales has studied and edited two of these works, both anonymous and dealing with the elements. One of them has proved to be a highly competent translation of the chapter *De elementis* from Nemesius's *De natura hominis*, a full version of which appears later in the manuscript in the well-known translation by Alfano of Salerno.⁴ The other treatise revealed features that led Dales to corroborate Haskins's suggestion of an Italian or Sicilian origin for it.⁵ As for the work on climate, this proves to be a trans-

¹ C. H. Haskins, *Studies in the History of Medieval Science* (Cambridge, Mass. 1924) 93-95.

² *Ibid.* 95.

³ *Ibid.* and R. C. Dales, "Anonymi de elementis; from a twelfth-century collection of scientific works in British Museum Cotton Galba E. IV," *Isis* 56 (1965) 174-189, esp. 175-179.

⁴ R. C. Dales, "An unnoticed translation of the chapter *De elementis* from Nemesius' *De natura hominis*," *Medievalia et humanistica* 17 (1966) 13-19.

⁵ Dales (n. 3 above).

lation of Hippocrates' *Liber de aere, aqua et regionibus*.⁶ B. Lawn, in his monograph on the Salernitan questions, has also reiterated Haskins's dicta, noting in addition that other items in the manuscript, such as Alfanus's translation of Nemesius, point to a connection with the school at Salerno.⁷ It is the purpose of this article to investigate further the date and provenance of the manuscript, and the origin of its contents, especially the *Liber Marii*. The results of this inquiry, it is hoped, will be found to have interesting implications for the history of Western science in the later twelfth century.

A full description of the manuscript is not available in print, and it will be convenient to give one here.⁸ It is a large vellum codex of 58 folios, measuring 382 by 290 millimeters, written in two excellent hands, contemporary and very similar.⁹ The first of these has provided the rubrics and colored initials throughout. This suggests that its copying must have been undertaken in one continuous operation, with little or no interval of time between the change of hands. Each separate item of contents opens with a fine painted initial, decorated with foliation exhibiting "Byzantine blossoms."¹⁰ The second scribe, who begins by imitating the first, appears to have been the younger man, as his script, when he ceases to imitate, is narrower, less rounded and more vertical in emphasis, nearer the "Gothic" style. In contrast to the first scribe, who uses the ampersand, he employs the Tironian *et* invariably. There is also a perceptible recurve in his signs of abbreviation by contraction which is lacking in those by the first scribe. These hands resemble the "thorny" script originally practiced in the scriptorium of Christ Church, Canterbury, but which spread to other Benedictine houses in south-eastern England during the twelfth century.¹¹ Could the manuscript be a product of the scriptorium at Bury Saint Edmunds abbey in Suffolk? Certainly it belonged to the library of that house by the later fourteenth century,

⁶ L. Thorndike and P. Kibre, *A Catalogue of Incipits of Mediaeval Scientific Writings in Latin*, rev. ed., Mediaeval Academy of America Publ. 29 (Cambridge, Mass. 1963) 1249 (henceforward cited as TKI).

⁷ B. Lawn, *The Salernitan Questions* (Oxford 1963) 66 (henceforward cited as LSQ). He also cites Constantine's translation of the pseudo-Galenic *De spermate*; but this is actually the genuinely Galenic *De semine*, just possibly translated by Constantine (TKI 1521).

⁸ The description in J. Planta, *A Catalogue of the MSS in the Cottonian Library deposited in the British Museum*, 2 vols. (London 1802) 2.359, is inadequate and erroneous, omitting, inter alia, two items of contents. That given by Miss E. Parker, in her Ph. D. thesis, *The Scriptorium at Bury St. Edmunds in the 12th Century* (University of London 1965) 323, concentrates exclusively on the palaeography and decoration.

⁹ Fols. 187-244 in the modern foliation, which numbers vols. 1 and 2 continuously. Miss Parker identifies only one hand.

¹⁰ Parker (n. 8 above).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, and T. A. M. Bishop, "Notes on Cambridge MSS 1," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 1 (1949-1953) 438.

and many of the books produced there in the twelfth century are written in "Christ Church" script.¹² However, its foliated initials do not resemble contemporary Bury work.¹³

Haskins dated the manuscript to circa 1200, and Dales more recently to the last quarter of the twelfth century, most probably circa 1190-1200, both on palaeographical grounds.¹⁴ Miss Parker, whose knowledge of the Bury scriptorium places her in a special position to judge, would date it anywhere in the second half of the twelfth century.¹⁵ However, one work originally contained in part of the manuscript now lost, is known to have been composed in 1161,¹⁶ and another item, also no longer extant, was written at about the same time.¹⁷ Since the contents of the lost portion are of a similar character to those which are extant, it is probable that they were executed by the same hands, or at least contemporaneously. If this were the case, 1161 would be the terminus a quo for the copying of the whole manuscript. Moreover, if it be agreed that Gerard of Cremona began his work as a translator in 1175,¹⁸ then this would be the terminus a quo for the extant portion, in which some of his translations are cited.¹⁹ Indeed, even if it is conceded that he may have begun translating a decade or so earlier, one has still to allow for the dissemination of his works, and for the study of them by those authors who figure in our manuscript, and in whose treatises they are employed. Finally, it will be suggested shortly that the *Liber Marii* can hardly have been written much before circa 1175. With some confidence, then, it may be affirmed that the manuscript was written in south-eastern England in the last quarter of the twelfth century.

By the late fourteenth century the book belonged to the Bury library, for at this time it received the library pressmark, ex libris, and table of contents, all inscribed by Henry of Kirkestede, a monk of that house who was *armarius* circa 1360-1380.²⁰ Kirkestede's inscription appears on the present

¹² Bishop (n. 11 above) and Parker (n. 8 above) 282-344, where upwards of a dozen Bury MSS of the twelfth century in hands of or resembling the "Christ Church" style are listed.

¹³ Parker 323.

¹⁴ Haskins (n. 1 above) 93 and n. 63; Dales (n. 3 above) 175.

¹⁵ Parker (n. 8 above).

¹⁶ Odo of Meung, *De virtutibus herbarum*. C. Singer, *From Magic to Science* (New York 1958 [repr. of 1928 ed.]) 188.

¹⁷ Platearius (?), *De Simplici medicina*. Singer 189.

¹⁸ A discussion of the propriety of this date is found in LSQ (n. 7 above) 61-62. In support of an earlier date, it is noteworthy that Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) makes use of some of Gerard's translations in her writings (Singer 235-236).

¹⁹ Gerard's version of the *Topics* is cited in the *Anonymi de elementis* (Haskins [n. 1 above] and Dales [n. 3 above] 175).

²⁰ *Liber monachorum sancti eadmundi in quo continentur libri xxviii. de medicina. de herbis pigme[illegible]ius*. Pressmark M. 21. On Kirkestede's dates and activities see

opening folio (187), which contains the beginning of the first anonymous treatise on the elements.²¹ The likelihood is, therefore, that this was always the first item in the manuscript. Kirkestede notes that the total contents amounted to twenty-four books. After the Dissolution the manuscript found its way into the library of Dr. John Dee, whose catalogue shows that it then contained twenty-six items, of which only the first nine now remain.²² Kirkestede's table of contents is almost totally obliterated, and in any case does not appear to have been very specific, so that no reason can be given for the variation of two books between his list and John Dee's. Probably Kirkestede has simply conflated some similar items. There is nothing in Dee's list which looks obviously added after Kirkestede's time, so that the contents as he gives them probably represent the original extent of what must have been a very large book. The extant portion is now bound after the fourteenth century Register of Henry of Eastry, prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, which forms Volume 1.

Here follows an annotated list of contents of Volume 2, together with the lost items listed in Dee's catalogue.

I. Extant items:

Fol. 187. The earlier part of an anonymous work on natural philosophy, dealing mainly with the four elements.²³ Ends imperfectly, due to loss of leaves. (Thorndike-Kibre Incipits [TKI] 1392; only MS.)

Fol. 190. *Liber Marii de elementis*. Beginning lacking, due to loss of leaves. Incipit: "[Natura] aque que est?" Explicit: "sit benedictus in secula seculorum Amen."

Fol. 200v. *De elementis*, a chapter from Nemesius's *De natura hominis*, in an anonymous translation.²⁴ (TKI 496; only MS.)

Fol. 201v. Hippocrates, *Liber de aere, aqua et regionibus*, given anonymously, in an unknown translation. (TKI 1249; many MSS, of which this is the earliest cited.)

Fol. 205. Nemesius, *De natura hominis*, translated by Alfano of Salerno. (TKI 3; this MS om., one other given.)

Fol. 214. Adelard of Bath, *Dialogus*. (TKI 304, prologue; 865, text. Kirkestede, *Catalogus* [Cambridge U. L. Add. MS 3470] 39 gives same incipit and explicit as MS minus prologue.)

R. H. Rouse, "Bostonus Buriensis and the author of the *Catalogus scriptorum ecclesiae*," *Speculum* 41 (1966) 471-499, esp. 480-494.

²¹ No medieval foliation or signatures. Miss Parker's collation shows that the present opening quire consists of only 6 folios, as against the 8 of quires 2-7, but this is due to the loss of the two innermost folios.

²² M. R. James, "List of MSS formerly owned by Dr John Dee," *Bibliographical Society Supplement* 1 (Oxford 1921) 29-30.

²³ Printed by Dales (n. 3 above).

²⁴ Printed by Dales (n. 4 above).

Fol. 228. *De phisionomia*; extracts from "Aristotle," "Loxus," "Palemon." (TKI 538; several MSS, one of the eleventh century.)

Fol. 233v. Galen, *De semine* in an early translation, ascribed in one fourteenth-century MS to Constantine the African. (TKI 1521; many MSS, of which this the earliest cited.)

Fol. 238v. Soranus, *Quaestiones medicinales*, ending imperfectly.²⁵ (TKI 860.)

II. Lost items:²⁶

'*Constantini liber de Herbis.*'

Dioscorides, *De herbis femineis*. (Kirkestede, *Catalogus* 59, without incipit and explicit. As he mentions illustrations, his source might well have been Bodl. MS 130, made at Bury, eleventh-twelfth century. TKI 182 etc.)

Oribasius, *De herbarum virtutibus*. (TKI 6 etc.)

Odo de Meung, *Versus de virtutibus herbarum*, or *Macer*. (Kirkestede, *Catalogus* 107, as *Macer*, *De viribus herbarum*; inc. as in TKI 610.)

Isidore, *Etymologiae*.²⁷ (Kirkestede, *Catalogus* 147; incipit as TKI 435, and also explicit of complete work; but see preceding note.)

Constantine the African, *Liber de gradibus*. (Kirkestede, *Catalogus* 56, no incipit or explicit; TKI 11.)

'*Euphonis experimenta.*'

'*Adamarii experimenta.*'

'*Joh. Melancholici experimenta.*'

'*Experimenta abbatis.*'

'*Experimenta Wiscardi.*'

'*Experimenta Picoli.*'²⁸

'*De urina mulieris.*' (Cf. TKI 116.)

A commentary on part of Hippocrates' *Epidimiarum*, entitled '*Expositio quintae incisionis epidimiarum Hippocratis.*'

'*Joh. Melancholici liber de substantia urinae.*'

Palladius, *De agricultura*. (Kirkestede, *Catalogus* 113; incipit as in TKI 1026, and also explicit of complete work.)

'*Liber de simplicibus medicina*'; Platearius?²⁹

²⁵ Edited from this MS by V. Rose, *Anecdota graeca et graecolatina*, 2 vols. (Berlin 1864-1870) 2.243-274.

²⁶ Titles in inverted commas are as given in Dee's catalogue.

²⁷ LSQ (n. 7 above) 6 notes that book 4 of the *Etymologiae*, entitled *De medicina*, is often found separately in early medieval medical collections. Probably, therefore, this was the case here.

²⁸ This and the previous item bear Norman names; Picot was the name of a Norfolk family, but such a local name would seem strange in a collection of essentially Continental works.

²⁹ LSQ 30.

Of the above twenty-six items, about a dozen have some connection with southern Italy or Salerno. At least three or four, the translations of Alfano and Constantine, are by Salernitan authors. The poem of Odo de Meung is based on works of Constantine,³⁰ and another five, the works of Nemesius, Soranus, Oribasius, Hippocrates, and Galen, were favorite texts of the medical school there.³¹ If the *Liber de simplicibus medicina* is the work by Platearius, then it too is Salernitan.³² Of the remaining items some are unidentified, and others were in common use all over twelfth-century Europe, so that they provide no clue as to the origin of the collection or collections from which the Cotton manuscript was copied. Its source was probably not a single manuscript; the Norman names of Picot and Wiscard strike a jarring note amidst so many works that bear the stamp of an Italian origin. Again, the presence in the same manuscript of one full and one partial translation of Nemesius may be explained by the use of two or more separate sources. Nonetheless a large part, if not all, of the contents of the Cotton manuscript shows some connection with Salerno. But what of the four treatises that Haskins localized to southern Italy? If one of these could be shown to be Salernitan, this would make it more probable that all four were written there. This in turn would constitute a stronger case, while not amounting to direct proof, that the ultimate origin of the whole collection, or a large part of it, was Salernitan. In fact, one of these treatises, the *Liber Marii*, was almost certainly by a Salernitan author, as will now be demonstrated. Marius's work occupies folios 190-200 of the Cotton manuscript. Its beginning is lost, and the fact that the preceding treatise ends imperfectly on the opposite verso suggests that the two innermost folios of this, the first quire of the manuscript, are missing. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that this quire at present numbers six folios, whereas the next five quires each have eight. At the same time Marius's work probably occupied no more than one side of one of the two missing folios, namely the original verso opposite the present opening folio of his treatise, folio 190. This is suggested by the following line of reasoning. At the head of each double page of the treatise, the scribe has written *Liber Marii* on the left-hand verso, and *Liber i* or *ii* on the opposite recto. The only exception is folio 190, which is inscribed, more fully, *Liber primus*. The greater importance assigned by the scribe to this leaf surely indicates that it is the remaining half of the original opening double page of the work. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility of a preceding prologue.

The *Liber* is a dialogue between Master and Pupil in two books, the first dealing with the four elements, the second with their compounds. The Master

³⁰ Singer (n. 16 above). 188.

³¹ LSQ 5, 18, and passim.

³² *Ibid.* 30.

states that he has already written a work *De proficuo humano*³³ and promises another on the five senses.³⁴ Now in his well-known biobibliographic *Catalogus scriptorum ecclesiae*, "Boston of Bury," almost certainly identical with the above-mentioned Henry of Kirkestede,³⁵ notes *Marius Salernitanus* as the author of a work *De proficuo humano*.³⁶ Kirkestede does not give the incipit and explicit of this work, as he does whenever possible, nor does he indicate in which English libraries it might be found. This suggests second-hand knowledge, but the work is not to be found in any of Kirkestede's known sources, in particular the *Registrum Anglie de libris doctorum sive auctorum*.³⁷ In fact his source was probably the Cotton manuscript itself, which may have supplied him with other items in the *Catalogus*.³⁸ The now-missing leaf of the *De elementis*, if still in situ in Kirkestede's time, might well have provided him with the *Salernitanus*; certainly we know from his inscriptions that he was familiar with the manuscript. It does not necessarily detract from this argument that the *De elementis* itself does not figure in the *Catalogus*. Kirkestede's great work was never finished, and he frequently omits mention of books and treatises known to have been in the Bury library in his time, even if he used them as source material.

An earlier source seems to vindicate Kirkestede's description of Marius as a Salernitan. This is the necrology of the *Liber confratrum* belonging to the church of San Matteo di Salerno.³⁹ In a fragmentary calendar which it contains there appears the obit of one *Marius medicus* who died on 29 January in some year before 1217,⁴⁰ a date that would well suit the author of our treatise who was also obviously a *medicus*. They must surely be the same man. The likelihood of this is increased by the recent discovery of unacknowledged quotations from the *De elementis* in a work of Urso of Ca-

³³ Fol. 200ra.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Rouse (n. 20 above) 471-480. The *Catalogus* is extant only in a seventeenth-century transcript, Cambridge University Library Add. MS 3470.

³⁶ *Catalogus* 107.

³⁷ A catalogue of standard authors, their works, and the English libraries where these might be found, drawn up by the Franciscans between ca. 1250 and 1306. It is extant in three MSS, of which I have examined microfilms of the two best, Cambridge, Peterhouse 169, and Oxford, Bodl. Tanner 163.

³⁸ See the list of contents of the MS above. There are five *Catalogus* items of which the Cotton MS might possibly have been the source, although this cannot be proven.

³⁹ C. A. Garufi, *Necrologio del Liber confratrum di S. Matteo di Salerno* (Rome 1922).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 214. The calendar fragment, in one early thirteenth-century hand, with many later additions, extends from January to June of an unnamed year. On the basis of palaeography and the ferial numbers, Garufi worked out this year as either 1206 or 1217 (211). It must be the latter, since included in it is the obit of the well-known physician Maurus, who died in 1214 (216, 357).

labria, the great Salernitan physician who died in 1225.⁴¹ From this we should expect Marius to be an older man than Urso, and this would fit in well with the pre-1217 date of *Marius medicus's* death. Given this evidence, the character of his treatise, evidently a handbook for students, and the fact that in it he assumes the role of *magister*, it seems likely that Marius was a Master in the medical school at Salerno.⁴²

Some attempt must now be made to date the composition of the *De elementis*. Firstly, the work can hardly have been written much before circa 1175, unless the author died at an exceptional age for a medieval man. The Urso quotations do not help much, since, with the possible exception of some fragments dated circa 1170, the earliest manuscripts of his works are dated circa 1200,⁴³ more or less contemporaneously with the Cotton Galba manuscript. Secondly, Marius had already written at least one other work before he came to compose the *De elementis* and had, as he testifies, traveled widely;⁴⁴ it is thus more likely to be the work of a mature than of a budding scholar. This in turn means that the transmission of the *De elementis* to England must have been relatively rapid, even if we give the Cotton manuscript its latest possible date of circa 1200. For the fact that it was written in England means, of course, that Marius's work had reached there already. It might be worth adding that the Cotton manuscript shows no sign of having been copied from a manuscript in Beneventan script, the script in which a Salernitan codex would have been written.⁴⁵ This may mean that it was copied from a northern European, perhaps yet another English manuscript; but this is to hazard too much.

Lawn has stated the Cotton manuscript to be the earliest piece of evidence for the presence of Salernitan-derived science in England, referring, of course, to the translations of Constantine and Alfanus contained in it.⁴⁶ At the same time, he does not doubt that such knowledge had begun to arrive at an earlier date,⁴⁷ and this has since been abundantly confirmed by the researches of

⁴¹ Kindly communicated to me by Dr. R. C. Dales, who is currently preparing an edition of Marius's work. For Urso's dates, see LSQ (n. 7 above) 31-33.

⁴² On the difference between *medicus*, any practicing physician, and *magister*, a teacher in the school at Salerno, see H. P. Bayon, "The Masters of Salerno and the origins of professional medical practice," *Science, Medicine and History; Essays in honour of Charles Singer*, ed. E. A. Underwood, 2 vols. (Oxford 1953) 1.203-219, esp. 207-210.

⁴³ LSQ 32 and n. 4.

⁴⁴ Fol. 199ra.

⁴⁵ Using the criteria listed by E. A. Lowe, *The Beneventan Script* (Oxford 1914) chap. 8.

⁴⁶ LSQ (n. 7 above) 66.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 58, 63. It was once thought—and sometimes still is—that the *Peri didaxeon*, a medical compilation drawing on the writings of the eleventh-century Salernitan physician Petrocillus, was written in Anglo-Saxon during the twelfth century (M. Löweneck, "Peri didaxeon; eine Sammlung von Rezepten in englischen Sprache aus dem 11-12 Jahrhundert nach einer HS des Britischen Museums," *Erlanger Beiträge zur englischen Philo-*

C. H. Talbot.⁴⁸ He notes Constantinian works at Westminster, Exeter, Battle, Bury, and Canterbury, a *Passionarius Galieni* at Norwich Priory, the *Experimenta archiepiscopi salernitani* (i.e. Alfano) at Westminster, and an *Antidotarium Nicholai* at Durham, all in the earlier twelfth century.⁴⁹ The Bury books, three copies of Constantine's *Pantegni*,⁵⁰ appear in the earlier part of a composite twelfth-century library catalogue from that house,⁵¹ dated by T. A. M. Bishop not long after circa 1150.⁵² One of them is almost certainly to be identified with an extant copy written in the Bury scriptorium circa 1150.⁵³ At some time during his reign (1177-1194) Abbot Bartholomew of Peterborough presented the abbey library with a *Practica Bartholomei "cum pluribus aliis rebus in uno volumine."*⁵⁴ Nor were such works found only in the more comprehensive libraries; at Lanercost Priory, about the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a collection of Salernitan translations was copied, including works of Hippocrates, Galen, Johannitius, Theophilus, and Philaretus.⁵⁵ Dr. Talbot also notes a recipe from Constantine's *Liber graduum* quoted by John of Tilbury, one of Becket's familia, in about 1174, and a passage from Copho's *De febribus* utilized by Peter of Blois about the following year.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, in every case the works referred to are those of Salernitan physicians who flourished well before circa 1170, after which date a new kind of writing, distinguished by a more theoretical and philosophical approach, and using Arabic and Aristotelian sources,

logie 12 [1896], who edited the work; for a more recent repetition of this view, see Singer [n. 16 above] 148). However, the opinion of N. R. Ker must be authoritative: that the work is in early Middle English, and that the MS (Brit. Mus. Harl. 6258) must be dated after ca. 1200 (*Catalogue of MSS containing Anglo-Saxon* [Oxford 1957] xix). Cf., moreover, the statement of C. H. Talbot, that "the *Peri didaxeon* . . . is merely a part translation of a Petrocillus text available to the Anglo-Saxons in the ninth century . . . [and] . . . has no connection with Salerno." (*Medicine in Medieval England* [London 1967] 45.) Lawn himself convincingly demonstrates that Adelard of Bath did not, as is sometimes stated, draw on Salernitan writings in his *De eodem et diverso* and *Quaestiones naturales* (LSQ 20-30).

⁴⁸ Talbot (n. 48 above).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 46-47.

⁵⁰ That is, his translation of the *Theorica* or first part of the *Al-Malaki* of Ali ben Abbas, fl. tenth century (Haskins [n. 1 above] 131-132).

⁵¹ Printed in M. R. James, *On the Abbey of St. Edmund at Bury 1: the Library*, Cambridge Antiquarian Soc. 8vo ser. 28 (1895) 23-32. See no. cxviii and previous unnumbered item.

⁵² T. A. M. Bishop, "Notes on Cambridge MSS 2," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 2, (1954-1958), 185.

⁵³ Cambridge, Trinity Coll. 906. Parker (n. 8 above) 316.

⁵⁴ Talbot (n. 48 above) 47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 46-47. This is the collection known later as the *articella* (42-43). Dr Talbot dates this MS tentatively to late in the twelfth century. Cf. N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* ed. 2 (London 1964) 108.

⁵⁶ Talbot 47.

began at Salerno.⁵⁷ There has hitherto been found no evidence for the presence in England of the works of these later twelfth-century Salernitan writers such as Urso and Maurus until the next century.⁵⁸ Alexander Neckham is the first Englishman known to have employed typically Salernitan *quaestiones physicales* based extensively on the works of Urso of Calabria, in his *De natura rerum*, circa 1215.⁵⁹ For actual English manuscripts of these later Salernitan works, Lawn is forced to draw on the mid-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁶⁰

It is in this respect that the Cotton manuscript is now shown to be of more interest than Lawn realized, since as well as the works of earlier Salernitan writers, it contains at least one later Salernitan treatise, possibly more, if we concede such an origin for the other three of Haskins's south Italian or Sicilian works. Certainly there is an inherent likelihood of a Salernitan provenance for the one identified as a translation from Nemesius, since his treatise was a standard text in the medical school there.⁶¹ Marius's own work is in some ways representative of the new approach in Salernitan science, in its dialogue form, its comprehensive, philosophical emphasis, and its acquaintance, yet to be fully clarified, with Arabic and Aristotelian writings. At the same time, the work exhibits an impressive concern with observed facts and deliberately constructed experiments as the basis for reasoning about natural phenomena. The sophisticated distinction is continually drawn between arguments conceived *visibiliter*, *rationaliter*, or *per experimentum*.⁶² In contrast, the medical interest of the work is marginal; its main emphasis is on chemistry. This might seem surprising in a treatise that we are trying to establish, in a brief compass, as typically Salernitan. A partial answer seems to be that Marius treated elsewhere of the more purely medical aspects of his study, in his *De proficuo humano*, and his work on the five senses, if it was ever completed. The *De elementis* may well represent only one facet of his interests.

The evidence of the Cotton manuscript is that this new type of Salernitan work was being transmitted to England from circa 1175 on, and soon after writing. It even seems permissible to conclude that, if a relatively obscure work like Marius's reached England so quickly, surely the same must have been true of the writings of his more important contemporaries, Urso and Maurus. Finally, the *De elementis*, inasmuch as it contains some typically Sa-

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 42-44.

⁵⁸ LSQ (n. 7 above) 65-67.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 63.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 67 esp. n. 3 for the earliest known English MS (Brit. Mus. Add. 25031) to contain later Salernitan works.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 18.

⁶² Fols. 192ra; 192v; 193vb; 196ra; 196vb, et al.

lernitan *quaestiones phisicales*,⁶³ seems to support Lawn's hypothesis that Alexander Neckham could have obtained his own knowledge of them in his native country.⁶⁴ More broadly, if it is agreed that Marius was, with a high degree of probability, a Salernitan Master, then the Cotton manuscript is evidence for a more rapid transmission of the new scientific learning across Europe than has hitherto been recognized.

⁶³ Cf. the *quaestiones* printed in LSQ 161-177, with those found in Marius, fol. 192vb; 199ra; 199va, *et al.*

⁶⁴ LSQ 64.

Department of History
University of Sydney
Sydney, New South Wales
Australia