

# **MARIA LACTANS AND THE THREE GOOD BROTHERS. THE GERMAN TRADITION OF THE CHARM AND ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT**

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This paper investigates a single motif embedded in the German version of the *Three Good Brothers Charm*: the oath on Mary's milk. The charm for wounds has a very rich manuscript tradition and an incredible number of different versions in several languages due to a (plausible) parallel oral tradition; however, although each manuscript seems to arrange the motif pattern in a different way, it is possible to trace a kind of recurring layout. The reiteration of Mary's milk in the different versions reveals a very old cultural tradition and a developing symbolic meaning of the Virgin in the Middle Ages.

**Key words:** *Maria lactans*, Dri guot bruoder, *Tres boni fratres*, Three good brothers charm, verbal charms, *Wundsegen*, swearing by the milk.

The German version of *Three Good Brothers* charm is preserved in 26 manuscripts, each one showing a more or less essential difference in their motif selection, in their specific elements and in their language. The oldest German manuscript version dates back to the 13th century (see the transcription of München BSB clm. 23374 below), whereas the most recent one was written in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Karlsruhe, *Badische Landesbibliothek*, cod. St. Blasien 49, f. 547r). The language of the 26 manuscript variants differs in lexical choice, in dialect forms and in phonological discrepancy because of the geographic scattering of the text over the whole German speaking area and the approximately four to five centuries involved.<sup>1</sup>

The charm is intended to cure any kind of wounds and can be divided into three main parts and many other sub-elements. Because of its rich motif-texture it has been defined as 'Sammelsegen' (Ebermann 1903, see also Ebermann 1916) and has been subject to a recent investigation on some key historical elements<sup>2</sup> (Olsan 2011). Another comprehensive study, which is still in progress and should be published in a few months, will provide the complete transcription and description of all the manuscripts containing the German version of the charm, the comparison to the other versions (Latin, Italian, Spanish, English,

Dutch and so on<sup>3</sup>), the analysis of the language and of every variant in the manuscripts and the selection and display of the motifs. As the title shows, this paper will instead enquiry on a particular element, starting from the analysis of the text and its German variations.

The oldest German version of the charms dates, as already has been said, back to the 13th century, although there have been differing assessments (Ol-san 2011: 55 gives a short summary of the problem). Here is a transcription of the text<sup>4</sup> from the original manuscript (description in Cianci 2004 133–135):

In dem namen des vaters und des sunus . und des hailigen gaistes . amen . Dri guot pruoder giengen ainen wech . da bechom in unser herre jhesus christus . und sprach wanne vart ir dri guot pruoder . Herre wir varn zainem perge . und suochen ain chruot . . des gewaltes . daz iz guot si . zaller slath wunden, si si geslagen oder gestochen . oder swa vun si si . do sprach . unser herre jhesus christus . chomet zuo mir, ir dri guot pruoder . und swert mir bi dem . cruce guoten . und bi der milch der maide sanct marien . daz irz enhelt . noch lon emphahet . und vart hinz zuo den mont olivet unde nemt ole . des olepoumes . und scaph wolle . und leget die . uber die wundin und sprechet also .

De iud longinus der unsern herren ihesum christum stach in die siten mit dem sper . daz en eitert nith . noch gewan hitze . noch enswar . noch enbluotet zevil . noch enfueilt . also tuo disiu wunde . diu enbluot nith zevil . noch engewane hitze . noch enswer . noch enharter . noch enfuel die ich gesent hab . In dem namen des vaters . und des suns . und des hailigen gaist . Amen . Sprich den segen dristunt und also manigen pater noster und tuo nith mer . wan als hie gescrieben si. (Bavarian, 13th c., my transcription from the manuscript Clm. 23374, f. 16v)

While looking for a powerful herb, which can heal every kind of wound, the three good brothers meet Jesus and have a short dialogue. Jesus advises them to give up their herb-seeking and sends them to the Mount of Olives, where they would find oil and wool needed to heal the wound together with the Longinus formula. Before telling this, Jesus has the brothers swear that they will not keep the remedy secret and that they will not earn any money for performing it.<sup>5</sup> The oath is sworn on the crucifix and on Mary's milk.

If we take a closer look at this last motif, which is omitted in some variants, we may wonder at the bare presence of an oath in this dialogue, since Christ has actually forbidden any kind of oath-making in the New Testament, but we may also acknowledge the central role of oaths among the Germanic people. As it will be shown below, most versions give directions to swear on the cross/

crucifixion and on Mary's milk, both powerful symbols. Although 'swearing on the cross' may still be intelligible, what about the milk?

When I first considered editing this text I was impressed by this very item, and I supposed it might have been a word error by the copyist, writing and translating '*intacte virginis*' as '*in lacte*' and then in German '*by der Milch der Frowe*'.

See the following Latin version:

Jurate mihi in crucifixi Christi et **intacte virginis** quod in abscondito  
eatis, neque mercedem accipiatis [...]

*Swear to me by the crucified Christ and by the untouched Virgin that  
you will not hide it, nor take money [...] (St. Florian, cod. XI 119, initial  
leaf, 13th century, see Schulz 2003: 68)*

and compare to the following one:

Iurate mihi per **passionis ihesu christi** et **per lac virginis maria** ut in  
absconditis non dicatis ut in mercedem in de non recipiatis [...]

*Swear to me by the passion of Jesus Christ and by the milk of Virgin  
Mary that you will not say it secretly, nor gain any money from it [...]  
(München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 18921, f. 47v, 14th century)*

What I held to be a scribal misunderstanding disclosed in fact some surprising cultural issues; the copyist was yet very well aware of the ancient tradition of an oath by the Virgin Mary's milk.

One of the first pieces of evidence of the milk of the Virgin associated with swearing and with a magical treatment against bleeding appears in a Latin charm, together with the other well-known Jordan motif:

†**Coniuro** te, Iohannes, per **lac sancte Marie**, sicut stetit flumen Iordanis,  
sic stagna sanguinem, de quocumque loco corporis exierit. †.

†*I conjure you, John, by the milk of Saint Mary, as the river Jordan  
stood, so may the blood rest, from whatever part of the body it comes.* †.

*(Bern, Rotulus di Moulin, lines 800–809, 12th century)*

However, not all the German versions of the Three Good Brothers charm contain the oath, in many cases Jesus tells the brothers only how to perform the remedy without asking them to swear, for instance in: Augsburg, cod. III.1. 2° 42, f. 97rb (15th c.), Heidelberg, cod. pal. germ. 264, f. 81v-82r (16th c.), Heidelberg, cod. pal. germ. 266, f. 128r (16th c.), Heidelberg, cod. pal. germ. 266, f. 128r (16th c.), Karlsruhe, cod. Pap. Germ. LXXXVII, f. 21r (17th c.), Karlsruhe, cod. St. Blasien 49, f. 547r (17th c.) and München, oct cod. Ms. 354, f. 75r (15th).

It may also be worth reminding ourselves that an oath must be sworn on something regarded as very important. A brief digression on historical matters concerning the beginning of a nursing mother cult may help explain the reason for the importance of the milk.

One of the earliest significant expressions of this theme comes from Egyptian religion, where Isis, Osiris's sister and wife, the Goddess of fertility and motherhood, is often illustrated sitting on her throne nursing her son Horus. In Egyptian 19th dynasty papyrus rolls containing charms and rituals, Isis's milk is often described as 'holy' or 'sacred' (Janowski/ Wilhelm 2008: 303–304). The first written source of the cult of Isis dates as far back as the 3rd millennium B.C. (2nd dynasty), while the first visual source belongs to the 17th century B.C. where Isis is already shown as a nursing mother (Langener 1996: 94). Horus was considered God, too, since Isis had been made pregnant by God. Afterwards, the Goddess breastfeeding the Pharao became an iconographic *topos* (Langener 1996: 92–93) and spread slowly over Mediterranean area. Due to the first contacts between the Romans and the Egyptians (2nd century B. C.) and later (1st century B. C.) to the Roman conquest of Egypt, there was a growing interest in pagan temples in the Roman Empire and some temples dedicated to Isis were built in Roman territories (Langener 1996: 97–98). It happened first in Italy, where the two cultures began to meet and to merge (see for example the oldest known image of a Madonna with the child at the Catacombs of St. Priscilla which dates from the 3rd century: Warner 1976: 192–193), and then in Egypt, where the Coptic Orthodox Church (established by Saint Mark in the middle of the 1st century) led to a slow transformation of older deities and temples into Christian churches. Very well-known examples are the Coptic *maria-isis lactans* images in Bauwit and in Saqqara of the 6th-7th century (Langener 1996: 148–161), as well as the 4th century wall paintings from the archaeological site Karanis (south Cairo, see Müller 1992: 158, [http://www.umich.edu/~kelseydb/Karanis/KM4.2990\\_isis.gif](http://www.umich.edu/~kelseydb/Karanis/KM4.2990_isis.gif)). The worship of Isis was so deeply rooted and her temples so widespread that in the first centuries of Christianity many attempts were made in order to ban the cult and to modify the temples. The devotion lived on till the 6th century (Langener 1996: 99) and reached almost all of the Roman Empire. Between the 2nd and the 4th century also the *Germania Romana* knew the Isis cult and many churches dedicated to Virgin Mary were built there on the basis of older Isis temples (Langener 1996: 97–119).

While in Medieval Christian visual art many images of nursing Mary appeared, as well as many legends of Mary's milk, the old Egyptian myth of Isis gradually vanished leaving *Maria Galaktotrophusa*, *Maria lactans* as the only very well known existing symbol (Langener 1996: 275–276). Paintings showing *Maria lactans* can be actually seen all over Europe: in Italy there are many

famous and some almost unknown images such as in *Chiesa rurale della Madonna del latte* in San Benedetto del Tronto (AP) or in *Cattedrale di Atri* (TE).<sup>6</sup>

Evidence of the importance of the emblematic power of the milk can of course be found also in the Bible (both Old and New Testament), for example *Exodus* 3,8 being a symbol of fertility, wellness and love, or in *Genesis* 49,12, being a sign of innocence. Special devotion was paid to Mary and to symbols like the 'land of milk and honey' by eastern Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land, who had a strong influence on Europeans through pilgrimage, trade and crusades during the Middle Ages (Rubin 2009: 169–173).

The idea and the vision of the nursing mother became slowly a symbol of protection and of redemption and developed later into the notion of a *unio mystica* rather independently from the New Testament.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Mary's milk is connected to Christ's blood. One of the first records of an ideal association of milk and blood is attested in the *Acts of Paul* (3, 5): when a soldier cut off Apostle Paul's head, milk spurted on his cloak, as symbol of Paul's innocence. This mental connection became stronger in the Middle Ages, as confirmed in later Christian imagery by the famous picture *Miracle of Lactation*, which shows Bernard of Clairvaux (11th-12th century) being nursed by the Virgin (Zierhut-Bösch 2008: 160–164). In another illustration of the 15th century Mary shows Christ the breast with which she nursed him and Christ shows God the wounds he received at the Crucifixion (*The Holy Kindred*, Köln, Wallraf-Richard Museum, see Heal 2007: 33–34). This very image was later on strongly condemned by Luther and the Protestant Reformation, who criticized pilgrimages, superstitions, relics, as well as the cult of the Saints and of Mary. However, although Luther attacked the relic's commerce and the cult of Mary he recognized the Virgin as the Mother of God, so post-Reformation Germany developed a special devotion towards Mary and the relationship between Christ and his human Mother became a central topic in Lutheran Germany.<sup>8</sup>

The relationship between milk and blood has been made possible by a simple concept, the Church community is fed by the sacred milk of Jesus' words and body as Jesus was fed by his Mother's milk. Indeed, Mary gave life to Jesus, Jesus created the church through his sacrifice on the cross, by offering his blood. In this way, Mary feeds the holy bread and nurses the Church (Langener 1996: 246–252, Walker Bynum 1982: 115, 121–122). Jesus hangs first from his mother's breast and later from the cross, so Mary's breast can be compared to the tree of life. Milk, blood and the cross are thus often combined together in Medieval imagery and of course in the Three Brothers Charm, too (see below).

In the first centuries of the Christian Era the idea of the sacred milk associated with the sacred blood has an increasing influence on people's imagination. The power of this symbol, as well as Christ's blood, and its supernatural strength

have been revealed by many ‘milk relics’ found or attempts to look for them in order to cure or to solve problems.

In the following German versions of the charm, blood, wounds and milk come together in the oath:

Er sprach: chniet nider auf ewer chnie vnd swert mir pei dem **plued** unseres hern und pei der **milch** unser fraun [...]

*He said: kneel down on your knees and swear to me by the **blood** of our Lord and by the **milk** of our Lady [...].* (Graz, cod. 1228 f. 81v, last page, 14th c.)

Er sprach gan uf dem berr ze monten oliveti und swerr uf den funf **wunden** unsir herre und der **milch** sante marien [...]

*He said: go to the mount of Mount of Olives and swear by the five **wounds** of our Lord and by the **milk** of Saint Mary [...].* (Heidelberg, cod. pal. germ. 214, f. 17vb, 14th c.)

However, in the following example, the five wounds of Jesus are combined with the *pure Virgin Mary* (‘reynen maghet marien’), without any hint to her milk:

bei der reynen maghet **marien**. by den uiff **wunden** unser heren [...]  
(Kassel, 4° ms med 10, f. 13r, 15th c.)

According to Christian belief, since Mary ascended to Heaven in her spirit *and* her body, there are no parts of the body left on earth, so the only relics of the Virgin are some drops of her milk, her shoe and some parts of her garments.<sup>9</sup> According to an old legend there are still milk-stains on a robe, due to breastfeeding (Rubin 2009: 61). The importance of the milk as a healing relic is also attested from the notices of stolen relics, as happened for example in 1698 in Michaelskirche at Lüneburg (North Germany), where a silver bottle containing the precious milk was stolen.<sup>10</sup> The trade in relics was highly developed in the Middle Ages, among the ‘best sellers’ there were parts of the Holy Cross and bottles containing Mary’s milk, the latter being considered a powerful healing device throughout the 15th century (Thorndike 1934 vol. IV: 328–329). After pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the relics belief spread all over Europe and Mary’s milk was really believed to perform miracles. As a matter of fact, in Bethlehem there is also the well-known *Milk Grotto*: an old legend says that here, while Mary was breastfeeding Jesus, some drops of her milk fell down on the stone floor and the whole cave turned white. As early as the 4th century women of all faiths started coming to the Grotto to pray and later many pilgrims came back to Europe with a liquid obtained from the soft limestone walls and sold it as precious Mary’s milk relics.<sup>11</sup> Today, the Grotto is still sought as pilgrim-

age spot by mothers who don't have enough milk in their breast or by women wishing to become pregnant.<sup>12</sup> Being herself a miracle (virginity, conception, assumption), the idea of Mary performing miracles became a classic motif in Medieval imagery and stories about miraculous healings were compiled. *De laudibus et miraculis Sanctae Mariae* by William of Malmesbury (12th c.) contains for example an account of how Fulbert of Chartres was cured by Mary's milk (Rubin 2009: 182–183). Alchemists of the 14th and 15th century also pretended to create an extraordinary potion named *lac virginis* which had many different uses (Thorndike 1934: III, 366–367).

Many attacks were made on the commerce in (fake) relics, a significant example of which are the sermons of S. Bernardino da Siena in the 15th century (Montesano 1999: 41–42), who also quotes an Italian version of the Three Good Brothers charm while criticizing its use.

The importance of Mary's milk as a relic throughout the Middle Ages is then very well attested by historical and textual sources: here in our charm Mary's milk is being used as a relic by which to swear an oath.

The value of swearing among Germanic people in their traditional oral culture is very well known; what is more, using relics as oath objects is a very old practice among Christian people. As a result, in Christianized Medieval Europe an oath taken on something powerful such as a relic is considered to be more persuasive and it acquired even more relevance during the Carolingian Age, as Charlemagne wanted to reinforce the links with Rome and the new spiritual foundations of his Empire (Geary 1994: 192).

Mary's milk as well as human or animal milk has also traditionally been used because of its healing and magical power, not only by means of it as therapeutic factor in ancient medicine, but as an 'ingredient' in medical charms too, for instance in a Coptic fragment of a papyrus of the 9th century to protect a mother (Langener 1996: 254–259, see also Bächtold-Stäubli: 268–283).

In German tradition Mary's milk is also used as an 'ingredient' of a charm for a surgical stitch; recalling it renders the operation painless:

Die **milch** vnsre frauwen, der reyner megde, ist gegangen in dem monde  
vnsres lieben herren Iesu Christi, als durchge die nalde die wange in dem  
namen vaters und des sones vnd des heylgin geystes.

*As the milk of Our Lady, the pure virgin, went to the mouth of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ so does the needle through the cheeks in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.* (Marburg, Hs. B. 20, f. 111r, beginning 15th c., see: Spamer CBS 134)

In the following variant, on the contrary, there is no hint of milk: the three brothers have to swear by God and by the Virgin:

so pwit ich ewch pay **got** und unsser **frawen** das ir den segen for niemand verhellend [...]

*So I order you by God and our Lady not to hide the charm from anybody [...], (Dresden, ms. M. 180, ff. 83v- 84r, 15th c.)*

as well as in the following examples:

nun knit nider fur **marya** und sprecht das ir welt den segen weder verhallen noch verstelen [...]

*kneel down now for Mary and say that you will not hide the charm nor sell it [...]; (München, oct cod. Ms. 354, f. 67v, 15th c.)*

do sprach unser lieber herre Jhesus Crist geet hin ir prueder all drei swert mir pey **sand Marien** und pey dem **heilgen Crist** das ir es vor niemancz helt und kain miet dar umb enpfacht [...]

*So spoke our beloved Lord Jesus Christ: go there, all you three brothers and swear by saint Mary and by holy Christ that you will not hide it from anybody and that you will not take reward from it [...]. (Wien cod. 2999, f. 279v, late 16th c.)*

Sometimes there is no remark on the milk, but there is a special mention of the mother:

Er sprach ich beswer iuech by der frien by miner **muoter marien** daz irs [...]

*He said: I conjure you by my mother, the free (blessed) Mary, that you [...]. (Wien, cod. 2817, f. 37r, 14th c.)*

The oath on the milk can be associated with the cross or the crucifixion as in:

Er sprach: get her vn swerit bi deme **crvce** vnsirs herren vn bi der **milche** vnsir frauwen, daz ir iz nit en helit noch keynen lon dar vmme in nemit.

*He said: come here and swear by the cross of our Lord and by the milk of our Lady, that you will not keep it secret nor take a reward for it; (Hamburg cod. 99 in scrin. p. 11, end 14th c.)*

Nu swert per **crucifixum**, Des vil guoten gotes sun, Unt bî der **milche** der frien, Sîner muoter sante Merien [...]

*Now swear by the crucifix of the best son of God and by the milk of his Mother, the free Saint Mary [...]. (London cod. Arundel 295, f. 117r, 13th c.)*

So swert [...] pey dem **chreuez** ge- ihesus christ und pey der minget **sand marien** ran [...]

*So swear [...] by the Cross of Jesus Christ and by the pure Saint Mary.*  
(München cgm. 430, ff. 59v-60r, 15th c.)

Swert mir ainen ait pey dem **crucifix** und pey der **Milch** der Meid.

*Swear to me an oath by the Cross and by the milk of the Virgin.* (München clm. 18921, f. 47v, 14th c.)

Chomet zuo mir, ir dri guot pruoder und swert mir bi dem **cruce** guoten und bi der **milch** der maide sanct marien [...]

*Come to me, you three good brothers and swear by the good cross and by the milk of the pure Saint Mary [...].* (München clm. 23374, f. 16v, 13th c.)

by der milten **Marien** und by dem fronen **crüz** unsers herren [...]

*by the virgin Mary and by the blessed Cross of our Lord* (Stuttgart cod. med. et phys. 4°. Nr. 29, f. 25r, 15th c.)

Compare those to the following Latin version:

venite post me et iurate mihi per **crucifixum** et per **lac** beate marie ut non in abscondito dicatis nec mercedem accipiatis

*Come with me and swear to me by the Crucifixion and by the milk of the blessed Mary that you will not pronounce it secretly nor make profit from it.* (München, clm. 19440, p. 282, 12–13th c.)

Crucifixion is associated with the Virgin without mention of the milk in the following Old Italian version:

Voi mi prometterete per la santa **crucifissione** e per la vergine **Maria**, che nascoso nol terrete e prezzo non ne torrete.

*Swear to me by the holy crucifixion and by the Virgin Mary, that you will not hide it, nor gain any money from it.* (Roma, Biblioteca Corsiniana, cod. B. 18 (147), 14th c.)

In other versions the word *spünne* or *spuni* is used which means ‘milk’, but also ‘breast’ (the noun is related to the MHG verb *spünnen* ‘to suck’):

Er sprach swert in got <in got> daz ir sein nicht lön emphahet vnd daz ir sein vnhölleich seit vnd pey dem **spünne** der müter sand Marien.

*He said: swear by God that you will not take a reward and that you will not keep it secret and by the breast milk of mother saint Mary.* (London, cod. Add. 28170, f. 113v, 15th c.)

Ich beschwer bi der hailigen **spuni** unser frowen un bŷ dem hailligen [empty space] unsers herren

*I swear by the sacred breast of our Lady and by the holy [-] of our Lord.*  
(Solothurn , ms. S 386, f. 85v, dated 1463–1466)

A special emphasis given to Mary’s breast, in relationship to Christ’s wounds, is shown in the following Latin version as well:

Coniuro te vulnus, per virtutem quinque **plagarum** domini nostri ihesu christi, et per virtutem **Mamillarum** beate Marie virginis

*I conjure you wound, by virtue of the five wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ and by virtue of the breast of the blessed Virgin Mary.* (London, Add. 33996, f. 138v, 15th c., Schulz 2003: 69)

The different versions show a recurrent relationship between Mary’s milk, blood, Jesus’ wounds and the Crucifixion – combined in different patterns. This is not only a feature of the *Three Brothers Charms*, but a crucial topic of the Middle Ages. Indeed, the main symbol of God’s love for humanity is the cross. In Christian visual imagery and the Crucifixion developed from shameful death into a symbol of love and redemption, a sacrifice meant to remove all barriers between God and humans so that it became the most sincere proof of God’s love. This love and care for human beings are also expressed by Mary’s lactation. In many *Maria lactans* images the Virgin shows her breast as she is nursing Christ, while Christ displays his wounds to the Father, both pleading for mercy for humankind.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Andreas Martin and the *Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde*, Dresden for giving me the opportunity to look up the precious collection Adolph Spamer *Corpus der deutschen Segen und Beschwörungsformeln*. The catalogue is not digitalized and can be consulted only there (Martin 1997).

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For further details on the manuscript tradition of this charm and of the Old High German charms, see Cianci 2007, Haseli 2011, Hellgart 1988, Hellgart 1997, Kade 1889, Stuart/ Walla 1987; for an analysis on the relationship between manuscript tradition and performance of the charms (literacy vs. oral tradition) see Acker 1998, Cianci 2008, Klein 2008, Olsan 1992, Schaefer 1992, Schnell 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Here is a small selection of studies and early transcriptions of the Three Good Brothers charm: Birlinger 1880, Denecke 1979, Dietrich 1867, Hälsig 1910, Hampp 1961, Hoffmann 1840, Köhler 1868, Kuhn 1864, Mone 1834, Morel Fatio 1879, Pfeiffer 1854, Pradel 1907, Schönbach 1875, Wagner 1862.

<sup>3</sup> On other versions of the charm, see: Latin: Köhler 1868, Köhler 1900, Ohrt 1927, Ohrt 1937, Leyser 1840, Czerny 1873, Italian: Amati 1968, Astori 2000, Baldelli 1956, Bronzini 1982, Giannini 1898, Novati 1910, English: Hunt 1990, Heinrich 1896, Priebsch 1894, Roper 2005, Olsan 2011, Dutch: Braekman 1997, Haver 1964, Schröder 1999.

<sup>4</sup> See also Holzmann 2001: 220 and Olsan 2011: 67.

<sup>5</sup> For further details on oil as a healing remedy, see Janowsky/ Schwemer 2010: 84–90; about the figure of Longinus see Dauven van Knippenberg 1990, Orsola 2008; on the oath, see Agamben 2008, Giordano 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Polia 2004: 361, for other famous paintings see also: Bonani/ Baldassarre Bonani 1995, <http://www.art-breastfeeding.com>.

<sup>7</sup> See Zierhut-Bösch 2008: 160–162 for further details.

<sup>8</sup> See Heal 2007: 53–109 for further details.

<sup>9</sup> For further details see Angenendt 1997: 217–225.

<sup>10</sup> For further information, see Bächtold-Stäubli: 249.

<sup>11</sup> See Sered 1986: 9–11 and Bagatti 1952: 245–247 for a detailed description of the cave, Barton 1904: 178 and Bagatti 1952: Tavola 54, fot. 116 for the devotional cakes made from the wall's dust.

<sup>12</sup> A small packet of milk powder can be bought for only one or two dollars, see: <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/israel/bethlehem-milk-grotto.htm>.

## THE GERMAN MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

1. Augsburg (D), *Universitätsbibliothek*, cod. III.1. 2° 42, f. 97rb (last quarter 15th c.);
2. Dresden (D), *Sächsische Landesbibliothek*, ms. M. 180, ff. 83v- 84r (15th c.);
3. Frankfurt am Main (D), *Staats-Universitätsbibliothek*, ms. Germ. quart. 17, f. 270ra (15th c.);
4. Graz (A), *Universitätsbibliothek*, cod. 1228, f. 81v (last) (14th c.);

5. Hamburg (D), *Staats-Universitätsbibliothek*, cod. 99 in scrin. p. 11 (13th-14th c.);
6. Heidelberg (D), *Universitätsbibliothek*, cod. pal. germ. 214, f. 17vb (14th c.);
7. Heidelberg (D), *Universitätsbibliothek*, cod. pal. germ. 264, f. 81v-82r (16th c.);
8. Heidelberg (D), *Universitätsbibliothek*, cod. pal. germ. 266, f. 128r (16th c.);
9. Heidelberg (D), *Universitätsbibliothek*, cod. pal. germ. 266, f. 129v (16th c.);
10. Karlsruhe (D), *Landesbibliothek*, Cod. Pap. Germ. LXXXVII, f. 21r (17th c.);
11. Karlsruhe (D), *Badische Landesbibliothek*, cod. St. Blasien 49, f. 547r (17th c.);
12. Kassel (D), *Universitätsbibliothek*, 4° ms med 10, f. 13r (15th c.);
13. London (GB), *British Library*, cod. Add. 28170, f. 113v (15th c.);
14. London (GB), *British Library*, cod. Arundel 295, f. 117r (13th c.);
15. München (D), *Universitätsbibliothek*, oct cod. Ms. 354, f 67v (15th c.);
16. München (D), *Universitätsbibliothek*, oct cod. Ms. 354, f 75r (15th c.);
17. München (D), *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, cgm. 430, ff. 59v-60r (15th c.);
18. München (D), *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, clm. 18921, f. 47v (14th c.);
19. München (D), *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, clm. 23374, f. 16v (13th c.);
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# **Incantatio**

An International Journal on  
Charms, Charmers and Charming

<http://www.folklore.ee/incantatio>

Print version

Issue 2

2012

ISNFR Committee on Charms, Charmers and  
Charming

**Incantatio**  
An International Journal on  
Charms, Charmers and Charming

**Issue 2**

General Editor: Mare Kõiva  
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Tartu 2012

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Supported by and affiliated to projects SF0030181s08 and EKKM09-159 of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in CECT).

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ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming

ISSN 2228-1355  
DOI 10.7592/Incantatio

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doi: 10.7592/Incantatio2012

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doi: 10.7592/Incantatio2012\_1\_Reports

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