Incantatio
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Charms, Charmers and Charming

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CONCORD AND CO-OPERATION DESPITE CONFLICTS AND CATASTROPHES

In early autumn 2023, the Finnish organizing team for the 2024 Conference of the ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers, and Charming sat down and started to plan the upcoming event. Our first task was to find an inspiring theme that would gather charm scholars in Helsinki. The global COVID-19 pandemic had not happened too long ago, different wars and armed conflicts were affecting many people's lives around the world, and the revolution of artificial intelligence as well as alarming news concerning the global environment and climate change cast shadows on the future. Hence came the name of our conference, "Conflicts and Catastrophes", as an honest and straightforward way of expressing the issues that were on our minds.

The conference was held in June 2024 in Helsinki, Finland. We got a lot of excellent and interesting paper submissions, and the conference ended up comprising 21 papers. During the three days of the event, invited scholars considered conflicts, catastrophes, and charms in multiple ways: charms in relation to technology, politics, environment, diseases and healing, malefic spirits, interpersonal relationships, and social conflicts. Despite its ominous name, the conference was a success, and the scholarly input was considerably high.

As organizers, we were extremely happy to be able to use the Great Hall of the Finnish Literature Society as the conference venue. Many Finnish folklorists and other charms scholars have cooperated with the Society and especially studied the archive materials deposited to the house. We were so lucky that the Society's representatives offered the international conference participants a tour to these tremendous archives, which comprise, for instance, thousands of Kalevala-metric incantation poems, as well as narratives and recollections about sages, witches, and cunning men in 19th-century Finland, Karelia, and Ingria.

We had the privilege of organizing a reception at the beautiful book gallery Laterna Magica, whose atmosphere exhales history, mysteries and magic—not least because of the bedrock cellar floor that was formed during the last Ice Age 11 thousand years ago. In addition, we got the chance to enjoy a warm summer evening at sea, as the conference dinner was held on a ferry cruising around Helsinki archipelago. On the last day of the conference, PhD Karolina Kouvola hosted a walking tour to seek the restless spirits that have been told to inhabit various places in the Helsinki city center. The stories we heard during the tour made the warm summer evening feel chilly at times. Luckily (or unluckily?), no ghosts were actually seen during the walk.

We discussed the possibility of publishing a thematic issue of *Incantatio* focusing on the papers presented in Helsinki already during the conference. If the name "Conflicts and Catastrophes" was not a bad omen for the actual event, let us say that its meanings have become clearer during the publication process—although we were fortunate enough to be spared actual conflicts. Therefore, this issue does not comprise only articles based on papers presented in Helsinki, but you can find a few additional publications.

Haralampos Passalis' article "Production and reproduction of words of power in our modern digital era. The case study of the healing prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus" is based on the paper presented in Helsinki. Through an analysis of the often marginalized figure of Saint Jude Thaddeus in contemporary Greece, Passalis examines the significant question of dichotomies between prayer and charm, official and unofficial, thus laying also groundwork for potential comparative study scenarios.

Eleonora Cianci's article "Against wind and storm: A medieval German charm" was also presented in Helsinki. Cianci discusses the crucial question of vernacular practices in relationship with institutional texts. By analyzing a medieval German weather charm, she shows the negotiations between vernacular ritual speech and institutionalized Christian practices.

Stephen Miller's article "'6 or 7 note books full of charms' – The Sophia Morrison collection of Manx folk charms" is a great addition to this thematic issue. Miller presents a corpus of seventy charms recorded by folklorist Sophia Morrison (1859–1917) in both Manx and English during the turn of century. Also attached is an appendix including a letter by Morris and discussing the Manx charm types.

Nicholas M. Wolf writes about an Irish charm and nineteenth-century folklore collections of J. J. Lyons. Lyons was a Philadelphia-based Irish

speaker, who recorded a charm against the evil eye from an Irish-born woman before the turn of the century. Wolf connects the work of Lyons to the Gaelic Revival movement and shows how the collector can be approached as a 'proto-folklorist', who recorded also the names and background information of his informants.

In his article, Frog introduces the concepts of *languaging* and *irruption* and examines their relevance to charm studies. Building a case-study around an eleventh-century Latin text of fever healing, he shows how the concepts with their background in linguistics can be adapted to the study of genre and register in folklore studies.

In 2023 and 2024, the academic publishing house Indrik released two collections of charms:

Charms from Archival Sources (18th Century – First Third of the 20th Century), *Vol. 1*, compiled by Tatiana A. Agapkina (2023); *Vol. 2*, compiled by Alexandra B. Ippolitova and Andrey L. Toporkov (2024). A review of the two volumes is presented by Mare Kõiva.

Finally, the reader can enjoy Monica Bercovici-Ratoiu's conference report of the ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming Conference "Syncretic Elements in the Process of Charming", held 24–26 September in Bucharest, Romania. Yet another interesting and successful event!

The editors navigated between catastrophes—more than conflicts—and managed to cooperate to offer the readers of *Incantatio* a special issue. We wish you pleasant and inspiring moments with the articles presented here, and hope you will find charms against all conflicts and catastrophes that may occur to you.

Tuukka Karlsson, Siria Kohonen, Aleksi Moine and Ilona Tuomi

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PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION OF WORDS OF POWER IN THE MODERN DIGITAL ERA: THE CASE OF THE HEALING PRAYER TO SAINT JUDE THADDEUS

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Abstract: Jude Thaddeus is associated with a sacred yet enigmatic figure, a saint and Apostle of Jesus Christ, who is venerated as "the patron saint of impossible or hopeless causes." Due to the shared name with Judas Iscariot, the Apostle who betrayed Christ, Jude Thaddeus has often been overlooked or marginalized in the Christian tradition. The restitution of his veneration is closely linked, on the one hand, to a religious legend that distinguishes him from Judas Iscariot, and on the other, to a widely circulated prayer characterized by a structured form and embedded within a specific ritual context. From the perspective of charm studies, it constitutes a particularly interesting case, offering scholars not only the opportunity to examine the interconnection between "words of power" and belief narratives, but also to observe how well-known recurrent patterns related to taxonomies and distinctions such as charm vs. prayer, official vs. unofficial, accepted vs. unaccepted are produced and reproduced in the modern digital era. The paper traces the dissemination and veneration of the prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus, drawing on oral and digital testimonies from its performers in contemporary Greece. At the same time, it lays the groundwork for a potential cross-cultural comparative study, as variants of the same text and similar performative contexts are attested today in many Christian countries around the world.

Keywords: Saint Jude Thaddeus, prayer, magic, belief narratives, words of power, charm, digital transmission, modern religiosity, popular/lived religion, New Age.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of global interconnectedness and digital communication has profoundly reshaped the ways in which "words of power"[1], often referred to as charms, are circulated, adapted, and integrated into diverse contexts of belief and practice. A telling example is the prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus, which, although rooted in Roman Catholic devotional tradition, has long transcended its original setting to become a widely disseminated ritual text. Its trajectory — from a localized invocation of divine assistance in desperate or hopeless circumstances to a globally recognized expression of faith — illustrates the transformative potential of ritual words in a fluid and interconnected world. The cross-cultural diffusion of this prayer reopens classic anthropological questions concerning the construction and negotiation of boundaries between magic and religion, prayer and charm, and official and unofficial devotion, inviting a renewed examination of these taxonomies within today's expanded communicative environment.

Particularly compelling is the prayer's reception and adaptation within the Greek Orthodox context, a domain that traditionally draws clear theological and liturgical boundaries with its Catholic origins. Nonetheless, the incorporation of this Western devotional text into Orthodox practice highlights the ability of sacred texts to traverse confessional lines, responding to shared spiritual needs and illustrating the fluidity of religious expression. Building on this observation, the paper examines the ways in which the prayer acquires new functions and forms of authorization as it is adapted to different media and devotional environments. In doing so, it highlights both the trajectory of the prayer within Greek Orthodoxy and the broader mechanisms through which "words of power" are continually reinterpreted and legitimized in an interconnected and digitally shaped religious world.

The research on which this article is based draws on a combination of oral testimonies, digital sources, and printed devotional material. Oral accounts from individuals who engage with the prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus were gathered through informal interviews and personal communication.[2] In parallel, digital materials were examined across platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Greek Orthodox devotional websites, with attention to personal narratives, perceived efficacy, circulation patterns, and the place of the prayer in the wider public dialogue — both official and informal (Appendix C). Furthermore, printed materials including booklets, photocopied sheets, and devotional cards

were collected, enabling a comparative analysis of textual variants and the ritual instructions that accompany them.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: HISTORICAL ROOTS AND GLOBAL EXPANSION

The veneration of St. Jude Thaddeus, popularly known as St. Jude, has traversed centuries and continents, evolving from a relatively obscure devotion into a nearly global religious phenomenon.[3] While the modern revival of devotion is often traced to early 20th-century America, its roots and subsequent expansion reflect a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and devotional factors that span Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa.[4] Central to this devotion is the prayer to St. Jude, a widely circulated text that appeals to the saint's intercession in moments of despair and crisis. This prayer has become a key ritual component of his veneration, connecting personal religious practice to broader patterns of religious culture.

During the Middle Ages in Europe, the veneration of St. Jude Thaddeus was actively encouraged by St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Bridget of Sweden. According to St. Bridget's visions, Christ himself urged her to seek Jude's intercession, emphasizing the Apostle's unique role as a helper in times of need.[5] However, this early devotion began to wane in subsequent centuries, largely due to the confusion between St. Jude and Jude Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ, a misunderstanding that cast a long-lasting shadow over his devotional legacy.[6] Despite an earlier decline, devotion to St. Jude Thaddeus was revived in the early 20th century. This revival occurred mainly in Catholic countries, where he is honored as a relative of Jesus, one of the Twelve Apostles, and the author of the Epistle of Jude in the New Testament.[7] His feast day is celebrated on October 28. He is typically depicted with a flame above his head, symbolizing his presence at Pentecost, holding either a club, a medallion, or a cloth bearing the image of Christ.[8] This iconographic motif is rooted in the early Christian legend according to which Jude brought to King Abgar of Edessa[9] the *Mandylion*, a cloth miraculously imprinted with the face of Jesus, through which the king was cured of a severe illness.[10]

The contemporary prominence of St. Jude's veneration can be traced to the early decades of the twentieth century, when the Claretian Missionaries[11] first introduced his veneration in Santiago, Chile.[12] The devotional center they established there quickly attracted increasing

attention and soon became a focal point of popular piety. From this initial base, the devotion expanded throughout Latin America, inspiring the emergence of additional shrines and new expressions of communal religious practice. The movement gained even greater visibility in 1929 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Chicago[13], situated in a working-class, predominantly immigrant neighborhood deeply affected by the Great Depression. Under Claretian leadership, the parish became a fertile ground for spiritual renewal and communal solidarity (Orsi 1998: 1–39).[14] Building on this early success, as well as on their later achievements in the United States, the Claretians continued to expand their missionary outreach globally, playing a key role in promoting the devotion to St. Jude across diverse cultural contexts. In Mexico, the Claretians began promoting the saint's veneration, and their efforts culminated in the remodeling of the Temple of San Hipólito in Mexico City.[15] In the Philippines, devotion to the saint flourished at the National Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus in Manila, where students and laypeople regularly seek his help.[16] In this setting, the prayer acquired new layers of meaning, often closely tied to personal aspirations, while its digital dissemination — through social media — amplified its circulation.

The saint's image as an intercessor for those facing desperation or crisis has proven effective in transcending national and cultural boundaries, serving as a unifying religious text across diverse linguistic and cultural traditions. Indicative of the spread of his veneration, and consequently of the prayer associated with him, is the fact that the prayer has been translated, with some minor modifications, into many European languages.[17] The extensive spread of St. Jude's veneration cannot be attributed solely to missionary outreach. More fundamentally, it reflects the saint's capacity to address widely shared human experiences of crisis and need. His identity as the patron saint of hopeless causes positions him as a symbol of enduring hope in situations marked by suffering and uncertainty.

THE ENIGMATIC APOSTLE: AMBIGUITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF DEVOTION TO ST. JUDE THADDEUS IN THE GREEK POPULAR ORTHODOX RELIGION

St. Jude is an enigmatic figure in the Orthodox Church, as his identification with a specific person remains unclear and ambiguous. In the New Testament, besides Jude Iscariot, two other saints bear the name

Jude: Jude, the brother of Jesus, and Jude Thaddeus or Lebbaeus, one of the Twelve Apostles (Bairaktaris 2019: 9).[18] While in Catholicism these two figures are often identified as the same individual,[19] the official Orthodox tradition distinguishes them, assigning them different feast days and genealogies. Jude, the brother of Jesus (Ιούδας ο Αδελφόθεος), is traditionally held to be one of Joseph's children from a previous marriage. To this figure is attributed the Epistle of Jude, written against false teachers infiltrating the Christian community (Bairaktaris 2019: 13–20).[20] His feast is celebrated on June 19 according to the Orthodox liturgical calendar[21] and iconographic depictions often show him holding this epistle.

Jude Thaddeus, the Apostle, is described in Orthodox tradition as a devout Jew who encountered the teachings of Jesus during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. According to hagiographical accounts, he first asked to be baptized by John the Baptist and subsequently became one of Christ's twelve Apostles. In Mark (3:16), he is listed as Thaddeus or Lebbaeus, while Luke (6:16) and Acts (1:13) refer to him as Jude of James. In the Gospel of John, during the Last Supper, he is further clarified as "Jude, not Iscariot" (John 14:22–23).[22] His feast is celebrated on August 21.[23]

Even though they represent two distinct figures, in popular religious practice the differentiation between them is often blurred. A telling sign of this blurring is that in certain churches both saints are commemorated on both feast days, or one saint is celebrated on the other's date, in a reversal of the official attribution of these feasts in the Orthodox calendar.[24] This merging of identities is also evident in the iconographic depictions, where both saints are shown holding the epistle (originally attributed, according to official Orthodox teaching, to Jude, the brother of Christ).[25] This is not accidental: in the context of popular religion, the specific historical identity of the saint becomes less significant. Both figures are perceived as members of Christ's sacred circle, and the name "Jude," despite its negative associations with Jude Iscariot, is reinterpreted as a channel of spiritual power and mediation. This reclamation goes beyond symbolic restoration; it plays a vital role in lived religion.[26]

As devotion to Saint Jude grows, so does a body of narratives aimed at restoring his dignity and clearly distinguishing him from Jude Iscariot. Among these is an orally transmitted religious legend in which the saint expresses sorrow over having been forgotten:

> "Saint Jude, Thaddeus, the brother of Christ, went to Christ and said to him: My Lord, no one is baptized in my name, no

> one invokes my name, no one prays to me, there is no church and no monastery dedicated to me, no service is held for me, no one speaks of me, because my name is associated with the name of Jude Iscariot. Christ listened to Jude Thaddeus and, moved, said to the saint that from now on whoever honors him and invokes his name may have the grace to achieve the resolution of his request, no matter how difficult this request may be."[27]

This legend articulates a theology of restitution, wherein Christ restores the dignity and power associated with Jude's name, while also affirming the saint's mediatory role. By attributing the promise of grace directly to Christ's affirmation, the legend further explains and legitimizes the efficacy of prayer.[28]

The emergence and early dissemination of the prayer in Greece can be traced to the early 2000s, when E. Kotsiometis, a physician and associate professor at the University of Athens, published a booklet in March 2003 titled Απόστολος του Χριστού. Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος, ο Θεάδελφος Μαθητής του Κυρίου μας. Ο Βίος, η Παράκλησις και οι Χαιρετισμοί του [= Apostle of Christ. Saint Jude Thaddeus, the Brother and Disciple of Our Lord. His Life, Supplicatory Canon and Salutations] (Figure 1). As the title indicates, the booklet included not only the prayer itself but also a short biography of the saint, as well as the Supplicatory Canon (Παράκλησις) and the Salutations (Χαιρετισμοί) to St. Jude, which were composed by the author. It is worth noting that three years later, in 2006, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece approved the Supplicatory Canon.[29]

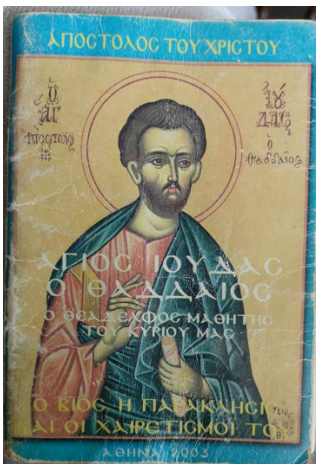

Figure 1. Cover of the first booklet on St. Jude Thaddeus published in Greece (2003). Photograph by Haralampos Passalis, 2025.

Although the prayer has never received official approval from the Church of Greece, it has circulated outside formal ecclesiastical circles and has experienced a steadily growing dissemination. Indicative of the expanding veneration of St. Jude Thaddeus and the growing recourse to the prayer is the foundation of the first church dedicated to him in Lavrio, which began as a chapel in 2000 and was officially inaugurated in 2015. Several other churches and chapels have since been dedicated to him, mainly in Attica (Lavrio, Menidi–Acharnes, Heliopolis), but also in various other parts of Greece and Cyprus.[30] In some cases, chapels are dedicated to St. Jude together with another saint, such as Saint Ephraim (in Menidi–Acharnes and Cyprus) or Saint Phanourios (in Paros), further embedding him within the Orthodox system of sacred mediation.

STRUCTURE AND PERFORMATIVE CONTEXT OF THE GREEK PRAYER TO ST. JUDE THADDEUS

The Greek prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus constitutes a compelling example of a contemporary ritual text, simultaneously anchored in traditional Christian modes of supplication and dynamically shaped by modern media and evolving patterns of devotional expression. Although recent in appearance, its structural composition, ritual logic, and mode of performance places it firmly within the broader continuum of "words of power" in modern religious practice. Its textual history, morphological design, and performative setting reveal how sacred texts function as a resource for hope in times of distress, especially when other channels of intervention are perceived as ineffective.

The Greek version of the prayer is a translation of the English text,[31] albeit with specific modifications. The original English text was adapted to fit the Greek cultural and ecclesiastical context, particularly within the framework of the Orthodox Church. A comparative examination of the text reveals several modifications: the reference to St. Simon in the English text is omitted in the Greek translation, while references aligned with the theological vocabulary and devotional patterns of Orthodoxy were added (see Appendix A). This reflects a deliberate effort to integrate the prayer into the Orthodox ecclesiastical framework. The modifications aim not only to ensure theological consistency but also to cultivate a sense of spiritual familiarity for the Orthodox faithful engaging with it.

Although several versions of the prayer circulate in Greece today, they all stem from a single textual prototype. Its first printed appearance (A) dates to March 2003, in the booklet on Saint Jude Thaddeus, as previously mentioned (Kotsiometis 2003). From this prototype (A), several variants emerged:[32]

> B (Church of St. Isidoron, Lycabettus)[33]: A slightly modified version that incorporates a reference to the Holy Cross, while remaining structurally identical to Version A.
>
> C (Digital versions)[34]: Found online, these contain the base text (A) with additional frame elements.

Structurally, the prayer takes the form of a framed supplication, a familiar pattern in Christian ritual language. Its key components include the following:

> Introductory Frame (in C): invocation to Jesus Christ for mercy, often accompanied by the Jesus Prayer ("Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ [...]"), recited optionally multiple times.
>
> Main Supplication: a) invocation: Address to St. Jude Thaddeus as Apostle and "brother of the Lord," b) petition: Expression of crisis and plea for intervention, c) votive promise: The speaker promises to spread the saint's name or perform acts of gratitude in return.
>
> Reinforcement layers: invocation of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, the Holy Cross, the Virgin Mary, and St. Jude Thaddeus, supplemented with the Lord's Prayer and excerpts from the Salutations to the Virgin Mary.
>
> Concluding Frame (in C): Repetition of the initial invocation to Jesus Christ, creating a rhetorical and devotional closure.

All variants instruct the performer to repeat the text for nine consecutive days, a structure drawn from the Catholic novena tradition.[35] The ritual instructions in A explain:

> "This prayer is to be said when we encounter problems or when there seems to be no help and things almost despaired of. The nine-day prayers must be recited seven times per day. Prayers are answered on the ninth day or earlier and have never yet

failed. You will receive the grace you ask for, however unrealizable it may seem"[36]

TRANSMISSION AND DIFFUSION OF THE PRAYER TO ST. JUDE THADDEUS IN GREECE

The prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus is transmitted and disseminated in Greece through both printed and digital audiovisual media, reflecting a dynamic interplay between traditional devotional forms and contemporary communication technologies. Its distribution mirrors the growth of the saint's veneration in the country, especially since the early 2000s.

a) Printed forms. The prayer first appeared in printed form in Greece in 2003 (Variant A), as already noted. A similar version of the booklet began to circulate in subsequent years, reproducing the same texts but omitting any identifying publication information (e.g., author, publisher, date, or place) (ΣΒΠΘ). In addition to bound booklets, photocopied versions and printed cards[37] of the prayer are widely circulated. These usually contain only the prayer text, performance instructions, testimonies of its miraculous power, and contact details of the person distributing it. In all cases, the structure of the text and the ritual framework remain consistent.

According to oral testimonies, printed prayer materials circulate not only within ecclesiastical settings, such as monasteries, often through the initiative of nuns or confessors, but also in secular everyday spaces such as workplaces, professional environments, hair salons, hospitals, and private homes. The largest proportion of those who make use of the prayer consists of women, typically over the age of forty, who have often undergone a critical or transformative life experience, such as a serious illness. Nonetheless, the presence of men is by no means rare.

b) Digital platforms: social media, websites, and audiovisual testimonies. The prayer is also widely disseminated through digital means, including websites, social media, and video-sharing platforms. A simple search for "Thaddeus prayer" in Greek yields hundreds of results, revealing its widespread presence on Greek Orthodox websites and online forums. These websites range from officially affiliated ecclesiastical pages to more informal, unofficial devotional platforms, and often allow for PDF downloads of the prayer for personal use.[38]

Since around 2017–18, hundreds of videos have been uploaded online, some of which exceed one million views. These videos typically feature the recitation of the prayer (often by clergy) and testimonies of

its miraculous effectiveness.[39] Content related to the prayer has also appeared on Facebook, Instagram, and even TikTok, with users sharing personal experiences and encouraging others to pray to the saint.[40]

The perceived miraculous efficacy of the prayer is affirmed by numerous testimonies, both online and circulating orally. These testimonies cover a wide range of personal needs and experiences: healing from serious illnesses, protection from danger, obtaining employment, financial relief, passing exams, success in relationships and fertility (e.g., marriage or conception). Such testimonials, frequently found in the comment sections of YouTube videos or prayer websites, function as publicly shared expressions of gratitude for perceived miracles.

Public expressions of gratitude often take the form of votive offerings (*tamata*), commonly metallic plaques embossed with symbolic imagery (e.g., eyes, limbs, babies, houses, etc.).[41] These are placed before icons or shrines dedicated to the saint. A notable example can be seen in the Church of Panagia Eleftherotria in Kifisia (Attica), where an icon of St. Jude has been adorned with a silver halo (Figure 2) and later with silver representations of the saint's hands (Figure 3). These votive offerings function as visible, material confirmations of the saint's intervention and the efficacy of the prayer.

Figure 2. The icon's halo is covered with silver revetment. Church of Panagia Eleftherotria, Kifisia (Attica). Photo by Haralampos Passalis, 2025.

Figure 3. Later addition of silver revetment on the hands of the icon of St. Jude Thaddeus. Photo by Haralampos Passalis, 2025.

The diffusion of the prayer parallels the expansion of the saint's veneration. The prayer is not only a medium of communication with the divine but also the fulfillment of a spiritual promise or vow. Such vows demonstrate how prayer is intertwined with the logic of reciprocity that underlies many forms of popular religious practice.[42] The act of praying is both a petition and a promise, an invocation of grace and a commitment to promote the saint's name. The restoration of his veneration, therefore, cannot be separated from the expanding circulation of this prayer, which is now shared not only in booklets and churches but increasingly through digital platforms. In this way, the continuous spread of the prayer in modern Greece functions as both an indicator and a confirmation of the saint's miraculous charisma and enduring relevance in contemporary Orthodox devotional culture.

BOUNDARIES OF ACCEPTABILITY: PRAYER VS CHARM, RELIGION VS MAGIC, AND ECCLESIASTICAL REACTION

The widespread dissemination of the prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus in Greece has triggered a notable wave of ecclesiastical concern, largely centered on its perceived alignment or misalignment with Orthodox doctrine and liturgical norms. Reactions from clergy and theological commentators, documented in published articles, social media, and oral testimonies, reveal deep-rooted anxieties over the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate religious practices. These reactions reproduce normative distinctions rooted in historically charged binaries

such as magic vs. religion, charm vs. prayer, Orthodox vs. heterodox, and ultimately, official vs. unofficial ritual practice.[43]

Institutional critiques often highlight the prayer's foreign origin and non-Orthodox features. In a widely circulated article dated September 7, 2022, the author denounces the prayer as an imported innovation from American Catholic circles:

> "From distant Chicago in the USA, it appears that we have finally imported the notorious or, according to many experts of the Orthodox liturgical tradition, infamous nine-day prayer dedicated to Saint Jude Thaddeus, which has recently taken on extraordinary proportions in our country."[44]

The prayer's adoption in Orthodox contexts is perceived as a distortion: "Someone borrowed it from the heretics, translated it into the modern Greek language and gave it Orthodox citizenship!"[45] Such reactions foreground concerns not only about content but also about ecclesial boundaries and devotional legitimacy.

In parallel, the prayer has also been interpreted through the lens of New Age syncretism, which Orthodox commentators often treat as a theological and ideological threat. The revival of Jude Thaddeus as a powerful intercessor is read by some as a symptom of alternative spiritualities that conflate early Christianity, hidden knowledge, and mystical revelation:

> "In the end, it seems that the New Age is trying to confuse us with Jude and the brothers of the Lord (with all the reverence we owe to Jude Thaddeus and the Apostle James) who in some way represent a lost faith or a forgotten Church that must be revived in our days in order to return to the so-called roots of Christianity. A little secret gospel, a little Da Vinci Code, a little of everything [...]."[46]

The reference here to New Age tropes and esoteric revivalism links the prayer to broader cultural phenomena that threaten Orthodox theological coherence. Moreover, institutional suspicion intensifies when the prayer is promoted through charismatic sanctuaries and non-traditional figures, such as healers and lay distributors—who appear to bypass canonical authority:

> "This surge is due to the excessive promotion it receives from the 'miraculous' chapel of the Holy Isidoros church in Lycabet-

> tos, as well as through a specific website that has practically assumed a 'contractual' role in showcasing miracles and miraculous events [...]."[47]

In religious contexts, the legitimacy of practices such as petition, invocation, and intercession derives from their authorization by clerical institutions, which exercise a monopoly over the means of salvation (Bourdieu 1994: 109; 1991: 12). This institutional control generates a persistent tension at the core of the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, as well as between officially sanctioned religious practices and those relegated to the realm of magic or sorcery, frequently conceptualized as subordinate or inverted expressions of religion.

In addition to these concerns, another recurring point of criticism centers on its performative and functional resemblance to magical practice. The prayer's fixed format, repeated seven times daily for nine consecutive days with a promise of guaranteed success, is seen as introducing a procedural logic that departs from conventional Orthodox devotional norms.[48] As it is formulated in one critique:

> "It is as if I am coercing God to act: a) absolutely, b) on any issue, and c) whenever I want."[49]
>
> "It is a fallacy. A prayer without elements of Orthodox origin, instead with Catholic elements. The fact of a guaranteed result in a certain period of time refers at best to anthropocentric secularism or, at worst, to white magic."[50]

This aligns with a broader discomfort with devotional practices that frame prayer as a means to control divine action, thus blurring the line between supplication and magical coercion. These assessments align with a historically entrenched Orthodox position that views formulaic, result-oriented rituals as superstitious or even spiritually dangerous.

In response to such criticisms, the anonymous author of a later published booklet that includes a reprint of the prayer (ΣΒΠΘ) seeks to mitigate this tension. He addresses concerns regarding the use of "magical" numbers and the seemingly coercive structure of the prayer, writing:

> "The number seven is a sacred number and the Church Fathers, such as Saint Chrysostom, consider it the number of the fullness of God. It is no coincidence that the Bible mentions the number seven many times, e.g. seven days of creation. [...] The number nine mentioned symbolizes the nine orders of the Heavenly

> Angelic Powers [...] and that is why we want to symbolically honor them [...] Therefore, the purpose of the prayer mentioned above is not quantitative but symbolic. What is important is that the person prays with humility, faith and with his heart".[51]

The use of numbers is thus reinterpreted through patristic and liturgical tradition as a symbolic act and spiritual discipline aimed at fostering concentration, humility, and faith. According to the anonymous author of this booklet, what truly matters is not the quantity but the quality of prayer performed "with humility, faith, and heartfelt sincerity." This represents a strategy of legitimizing what may be perceived as marginal or borderline devotional expressions by transforming potentially magical elements into symbolically meaningful and theologically acceptable spiritual tools.

Testimonies, also shared on digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok, position the prayer not as a charm or magical instrument, but as a source of profound spiritual encounter. One especially vivid account from TikTok illustrates this divergence:

> "I have also had an experience with Saint Jude Thaddeus. Some years ago, I was given a prayer. I recited it every day, until people told me it was a lie, and so I burned the prayer. Yet, in my sleep, I began to recite the prayer of St. Jude Thaddeus by heart, and suddenly I found myself holding his head, burnt and scarred, as he shouted to me, 'No! I'm not a lie.'" [52]

This dream-vision, anchored in emotional intensity and personal revelation, reflects an experiential mode of religious validation that, in the context of lived religion[53], operates independently of doctrinal approval. An additional oral testimony, aligned with these accounts, describes a devotee who reported perceiving the figure of Saint Jude Thaddeus on the wall while reciting the prayer and subsequently capturing it with her mobile phone camera (Figure 4).[54] The prayer's authenticity, in this experiential register, is thus confirmed not through theological conformity but through lived intimacy with the divine. [55]

Figure 4. Light formation described by the informant as the figure of Saint Jude Thaddeus during her recitation of the prayer. Photo by Synthia Metaxatou, 2020.

Rather than resolving the controversy, these testimonies further complicate the issue by foregrounding the classificatory ambiguity of the St. Jude prayer. Is it a charm, a heterodox ritual, or a legitimate prayer adapted to modern needs? To label it as "magic" is not a neutral analytical act but a disciplinary intervention that asserts institutional jurisdiction over acceptable forms of religiosity. In contrast, practitioners defend the prayer's legitimacy by appealing to its affective force, its practical efficacy, and its role in sustaining spiritual resilience.[56] Particularly in moments of crisis—illness, unemployment, anxiety—the prayer provides a rhythmic, embodied tool for hope and transformation. It becomes, in effect, an "affective technology": a ritual practice through which individuals seek not merely solutions but a sense of divine nearness.[57]

At its core, the debate over the St. Jude prayer is not solely about textual content or devotional propriety; it concerns the very grounds upon which spiritual authority is claimed, challenged, and reconfigured in the contemporary religious system. The prayer has emerged as a contested node in broader negotiations between charismatic innovation and institutional order, between vernacular piety and liturgical orthodoxy. It reveals a devotional system where globalization, digital mediation, and theological pluralism intersect, and where boundaries between prayer and charm are continually negotiated and contested.

CONCLUSIONS

The case of the prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus reveals how ritual words, or "words of power", remain a vibrant and transformative force in contemporary religious life, not despite modernity and technological progress but because of them. Its wide circulation across media platforms, from printed booklets, photocopies, and prayer cards to YouTube videos, Instagram posts, and TikTok testimonies, exemplifies how sacred texts adapt to evolving communication technologies. In Greece, the integration of this prayer into Orthodox devotional practice, despite its origins in Catholic tradition, attests to both its emotional resonance and perceived efficacy. Whether framed as a prayer, a charm, or something in between, its performative structure enables the faithful to articulate desperation, seek intercession, and reaffirm their faith in moments of crisis.

Simultaneously, the ecclesiastical controversy surrounding the prayer reflects broader tensions over spiritual authority, religious boundaries, and the categorization of ritual practice. The distinctions between "legitimate" prayer and "magical" charm, or between Orthodox and heterodox expressions of faith, are not merely descriptive but also deeply political. As this study shows, such taxonomies are actively negotiated, resisted, or reimagined by practitioners, who often appeal to affective experiences, personal testimony, and miraculous outcomes as alternative modes of religious validation.

Ultimately, the prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus serves as a lens through which to explore the hybrid, transnational, and media-mediated nature of contemporary "words of power". Its growing popularity within the Greek Orthodox context highlights the fluidity of devotional forms and the persistent need for ritual speech that addresses existential vulnerability. By tracing the prayer's diffusion within contemporary Greek religiosity and examining its adaptation across multiple media platforms, this study demonstrates the enduring role of "words of power" as mediating agents between the human and the divine in a world increasingly shaped by pluralism and digital interconnectedness. At the same time, it lays the groundwork for broader comparative and cross-cultural investigation, as textual variations and analogous performative contexts continue to emerge across diverse Christian traditions worldwide.

NOTES

[1] For terminological discussions, see Passalis 2011: 34–37; 2016: 257–60. In this study, the term "words of power" is used as defined by Borsje (2008: 134).

[2] Interviews were conducted with approximately fifty participants residing in Athens and Thessaloniki, the two largest urban centers in contemporary Greece. Fieldwork took place between 2022 and 2024. The informants represented a wide range of social backgrounds, with a high proportion holding advanced academic qualifications. Women constituted approximately 70 percent of participants, and ages ranged from 40 to 80 years. Acknowledgments are due to all those whose contributions were essential to this study.

[3] The full trajectory of the transmission, dissemination, and expansion of this devotion requires specialized inquiry. In this paper, the discussion is limited to outlining the broader framework through which the prayer and the saint's veneration entered the religious life of the Greek Orthodox faithful.

[4] Tasoulas 2013: 8. One noteworthy indication of this diffusion is that the prayer has been translated into many European languages; see note 17.

[5] See Appendix C: 14a.

[6] See Appendix C: 14b.

[7] See Appendix C: 1a, 15. See also note 19.

[8] For typical Catholic depictions of the saint, see Appendix C: 3. See also note 7.

[9] The Hellenistic-era name of the city now known as Urfa in southeastern Turkey.

[10] For this tradition and its authenticity, see also Tasoulas 2003: 29–38 and Lekkos 2003: 32–40.

[11] The Claretians are a Catholic religious congregation for men, founded in 1849 by Fr. Antonio María Claret. Based in Rome, they serve as missionaries in over 70 countries. See Appendix C: 5.

[12] See Appendix C: 23.

[13] It is worth mentioning here that several institutions have adopted Saint Jude as their patron saint, including the Chicago Police Department, the Brazilian soccer team Clube de Regatas do Flamengo, and various hospitals—most notably St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee (Appendix C: 1a).

[14] According to Orsi (1996), this devotion particularly resonated with Catholic women, who often turned to St. Jude during personal and family crises such as illness, poverty, and war. Women wrote thousands of thank-you letters to the saint, which were frequently published or displayed in churches. See also Appendix C: 14c.

[15] See Appendix C: 8.

[16] See Appendix C: 13.

[17]Translations in the following European languages are provided as indicative examples: Italian (Appendix C: 4), Russian (Appendix C: 6), Spanish (Appendix C: 7), French (Appendix C: 16), Romanian (Appendix C: 18), Finnish (Appendix C: 19), Bulgarian (Appendix C: 21).

[18] According to Bairaktaris (2019, 9), seven figures bearing the name Jude are mentioned in the New Testament, the most prominent being Jude Iscariot, Jude Thaddeus, and Jude the brother of the Lord.

[19] See Appendix C: 15. The identification of Jude Thaddeus with a specific historical figure in both Western and Eastern Christian traditions is a subject of specialized research and lies beyond the scope of the present study.

[20] For biographical information, see Bairaktaris 2019: 7–13. See also Lekkos 2003: 11– 18.

[21] ΜΣΟΕ 1997: 244–45; Lekkos 2003: 18.

[22] For a detailed presentation of the saint's biography, see Tasoulas 2003: 13–48. See also Lekkos 2003: 7–10; ΜΣΟΕ 1996: 359–60.

[23] ΜΣΟΕ 1996: 359-60; Lekkos 2003: 7.

[24] Appendix C: 9a.

[25] In most iconographic depictions, Saint Jude Thaddeus bears the title of Apostle, which reflects the most widespread representation of the saint in Greek Orthodox iconography. For common iconographic depictions of the Saint, see Appendix C: 22.

[26] The term "lived religion" is used in contemporary religious studies to denote the ways individuals engage with religious belief and practice in their everyday lives (Orsi 1997: 7; 2002: xxix). This concept moves beyond the notion of "popular religion," which often implies a distinction between everyday religious practices and forms of "official" or "normative" religion, and permits a more holistic approach to religious phenomena (Orsi 2002: xxxii). For a discussion of the development and application of the term in the analysis of contemporary religious experience, see Knibbe and Kupari 2020: 157–76.

[27] Oral testimony recorded in the area of Attica. This religious legend appears to have its origin in printed sources; see Kotsiometis 2003 ("Αντί προλόγου" [= Instead of a Prologue], unpaginated).

[28] On the etiological function of myths in relation to "words of power" explaining their origin and legitimizing their effectiveness, see Nadel 1968: 191; Passalis 2019: 375–76; and Eliade 1963: 24–28.

[29] See Appendix C: 20.

[30] See Appendix C: 9b, 12, 24.

[31] See Appendix A, where the English original (App. C: 2) of the Greek translated prayer is provided.

[32] See Appendix B, which includes the Greek text together with its English translation. Italics indicate the variants found in version B, while the text placed in parentheses corresponds to additions introduced in the digital version (D).

[33] According to the oral testimony of the priest serving the chapel, "the saint appeared to him in a dream and revealed the prayer." This variant circulates on printed cards distributed by the chapel.

[34] Appendix C: 9b, 25.

[35] The *novena* (from Latin *novem*, "nine") is a devotional practice in Christianity—especially prominent in Roman Catholicism—involving prayer or acts of devotion over nine consecutive days; see Appendix C: 1b.

[36] Kotsiometis 2003: 5. My translation.

[37] A printed version of the prayer is also available from the Holy Monastery at Saint Paraskevi (Women's Monastery) in Domiros–Rodolivos, Serres; see Appendix C: 11.

[38] See Appendix C: 25.

[39] See Appendix C: 26a.

[40] A general survey of Greek social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram) confirms the wide diffusion of the saint's veneration and the frequent testimonies attributed to the prayer's miraculous efficacy.

[41] Votive offerings (*τάματα*) constitute a long-standing devotional practice in Greece, extending from antiquity to the present. These include metallic plaques placed beneath icons, as well as silver or gold revetments covering parts of an icon—often all but the face—as expressions of gratitude for the fulfillment of a vow. For discussions of the practice, see Antzoulatou-Retsila 1984: 15–19; Kenna 1985: 345–368; Pouchner 2024.

[42] An additional indication of the spread of his veneration is the preparation of a special votive pie (*πίτα*, i.e., a ritual sweet cake) dedicated to the saint, known as Thaddaiopita, analogous to the widely popular Phanouropita (pie for Saint Phanourios). See Appendix C: 26b.

[43] For negative reactions to the use of the prayer within official ecclesiastical circles, see the following digital sources: Appendix C: 9d, 10, 20, 26c.

[44] See Appendix C: 20a. My translation.

[45] See Appendix C: 20b. My translation.

[46] See Appendix C: 17. My translation.

[47] See Appendix C:20a. My translation

[48] See Appendix C: 9d.

[49] See Appendix C: 17. My translation. On the distinction between prayer and charm, see Skorupski 1976, 131, who describes this as a model of "prescriptive compulsion." According to this framework, the charm functions as an instrument of power designed to achieve a specific outcome, whereas prayer constitutes a request and an end in itself. See also Sebeok and Ingemann 1956, 301; Webster 1952, 111–12; Thomas 1971, 41; Passalis 2016, 231–237.

[50] See Appendix C: 17. My translation.

[51] ΣΒΠΘ: 14–16. My translation.

[52] Appendix C: 9b.

[53] For the notion of "lived religion", see note 26.

[54] Oral testimony communicated to me during the data-collection phase of this study. The informant (female, S.M.) residing in the area of Kifissia (Attica), regularly visits the Church of Panagia Eleftherotria, where an icon of Saint Jude Thaddeus (Figure 2, 3) is venerated. The photograph is published here with her kind permission.

[55] Cf. the following comments under a video (Appendix C: 26c) where the speaking priest urges the faithful not to use the prayer, claiming that it constitutes white magic: "We must listen to those who declare they have been saved through this prayer — and they are many!"; "I have seen only good come from this prayer to this great Saint. [...] Let's not demonize everything that seems unfamiliar to us. Nor can we dismiss the many miracles that occur through this prayer"; "How can anyone call a prayer

to Saint Jude Thaddeus white magic? So much negativity about a prayer […] Just because it supposedly originates from the Catholic Church? So, what, everything from the Catholic Church is automatically worthless, without discernment? Are all Catholics bound for hell?" My translation.

[56] Cf. Tambiah 1990: 82–83: "The now puzzling duality of magic will disappear only when we succeed in embedding magic in a more ample theory of human life in which the path of ritual is seen as an indispensable mode for man anywhere and everywhere of relating to and participating in the life of the world". See also Frankfurter 2002: 160. For the history of the terms "magic" and "religion", see Bremmer 2002a: 1–11; 2002b: 267–271. For an analytical discussion about the same terms and categorization in traditional society, see Passalis 2011: 34–37.

[57] On the psychotherapeutic effectiveness of symbolic ritual systems, their ability to alleviate anxiety and individual distress, as well as their function as a mechanism of coordination in situations of tension (homeostatic control), see Harris 1968: 423– 24, 438. Thus, the recourse to symbolic acts is transformed from a process of "semiotic fallacy" into an act of "semiotic therapy" (Nöth 1990: 190–191). See also Douglas 1979: xix. For the reduction of anxiety and distress, see Shirley-Romney 1962 and Felson-Gmelch 1979: 589.

APPENDIX A – ENGLISH TEXT OF THE PRAYER TO SAINT JUDE THADDEUS WITH NOTES ON MODIFICATIONS IN THE GREEK TRANSLATION

English version (Appendix C:2)	Modifications/additions in the Greek text (see also Appendix B)
*[*1]	[*1]: (Addition) introductory formula: Invocation to Jesus Christ and a request to help and have mercy on the performer → invoking Jesus Christ and asking for His mercy through the mediation of Jude Thaddeus.
*Most holy Apostle, Saint Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the Church[*2] honors you as member of the saint community with Saint Simon, Apostle, on October 28[*3] and invokes you universally, as the patron of hopeless cases, of things almost despaired of. Pray for us, we are[*4] so helpless and alone. Make use, we implore you, of that particular privilege given to you by God to bring visible and speedy help where help is almost despaired of.*	Repetition of *Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, ελέησον με* [= Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me]. [*2]: *the Orthodox Church throughout the world* [*3]: The reference to Saint Simon and the date of his commemoration is missing. [*4]: Instead of *"for us, we are",* the Greek text reads *"for me, I am".*

Come to our assistance in our necessities, creative work, tribulations and sufferings, particularly (here make your request), so that we may be better able to know, love and serve God with you and with all of God's people forever in accordance with God's Divine Will.[*5]	*[*5]: so that I may receive the consolation and help of the Holy Trinity in all my needs, tribulations, and sufferings - (here make your request) - and so that I may be able to praise Jesus Christ with you and with all Orthodox Christians*
We promise you, Oh blessed Saint Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favor, to honor you as our special and powerful patron, and to gratefully encourage devotion to you, as favored servant to Jesus.	
May the most blessed heart of Jesus be adored as the Priest ordained Sacramental Presence in the Eucharist, and be received by the faithful Body of Christ throughout the world and through the Holy Spirit bring God's creation, including us undeserving servants, to perfection in God's Name. Amen.	
May the most sacred heart of Jesus be praised and glorified with the Father and Holy Spirit as One God in Holy Trinity, now and forever. Amen.	[*6]: The Greek text begins with a blessing of the Holy Trinity, followed by a blessing of Jesus Christ. It then includes repeated blessings of the Name of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Jude Thaddeus. See Appendix B.
Blessed be the immaculate heart of Mary, Mother of God, assumed into heaven, anticipating our bodily resurrection, and eternally glorified in Body and Soul with Her Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.[*6]	
Our Father [...]	
[*7]	[*7]: The Greek text continues with an excerpt from a well-known Greek hymn to the Theotokos and concludes with a repetition of the introductory formula.

APPENDIX B – GREEK PRAYER TEXT WITH VARIANTS (A, B, C) AND PARALLEL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The main text (in regular font) represents variant A. Italics indicate additions or modifications found in variant B, while text in parentheses represents additions from the digital variant (variant C).

Greek text	**Translation in English**
(Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, Υιέ του Θεού, διά της μεσιτείας του Αγίου και ενδόξου σου Αποστόλου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου, ελέησον με τον αμαρτωλό. Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, ελέησόν με τον αμαρτωλό.) Αγιότατε Απόστολε, Άγιε Ιούδα Θαδδαίε, πιστέ υπηρέτη και φίλε του Ιησού, η Ορθοδοξία σ' όλον τον κόσμο σε τιμά και σε επικαλείται ως Προστάτη των απελπισμένων υποθέσεων, αυτών για τις οποίες έχει χαθεί κάθε ελπίδα. Προσευχήσου για μένα. Είμαι τόσο απελπισμένος/η και μόνος/η. Σε ικετεύω, κάνε χρήση αυτής της ιδιαίτερης χάρης που σου έχει δοθεί, να φέρνεις ορατή και γρήγορη βοήθεια όπου δεν υπάρχει καμία σχεδόν ελπίδα βοηθείας. Βοήθησέ με τούτη την ώρα της ανάγκης, για να μπορέσω να λάβω την παρηγοριά και την βοήθεια της Αγίας Τριάδος, σ' όλες μου τις ανάγκες, δοκιμασίες, και βάσανα – (εδώ εκφράζετε το αίτημά σας) – και να μπορώ, σε κάθε στιγμή της ζωής μου, να σε ευγνωμονώ και να υμνώ τον Χριστό μαζί με σένα και με όλους τους Ορθόδοξους Χριστιανούς. Υπόσχομαι, ω ευλογημένε Άγιε Ιούδα Θαδδαίε, να ενθυμούμαι πάντοτε αυτή τη μεγάλη Χάρη, να σε τιμώ πάντοτε, ιδιαίτερα ως τον πιο δυνατό προστάτη μου, και με ευγνωμοσύνη να ενθαρρύνω την ευλάβεια προς εσένα. ΑΜΗΝ. Είθε το όνομα της Αγίας Τριάδος να λατρεύεται και να υμνείται απ' όλους τους Ορθόδοξους Χριστιανούς, στους αιώνες των αιώνων. ΑΜΗΝ. Είθε το όνομα του Κυρίου ημών Ιησού Χριστού, να υμνείται και να δοξάζεται τώρα και παντοτινά. ΑΜΗΝ. Άγιε Ιούδα Θαδδαίε, δεήσου για μας και άκουσε τις προσευχές μας. ΑΜΗΝ.	(Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the intercession of your holy and glorious Apostle Jude Thaddeus, have mercy on me, a sinner. Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.) Most holy Apostle, Saint Jude Thaddeus, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the Orthodox Church throughout the world honors you and invokes you as the patron of hopeless causes, those for which all hope has been lost. Pray for me. I am so desperate and alone. I implore you to make use of this special grace which has been given to you, to bring visible and swift help where there is almost no hope of help. Help me in this hour of need, so that I can receive the consolation and help of the Holy Trinity, in all my needs, tribulations and sufferings – (here make your request) – and so that in every moment of my life, I may be able to praise and express my gratitude to Jesus Christ with you and with all Orthodox Christians. I promise, O blessed Saint Jude Thaddeus, to be ever mindful of this great favor, to honor you as our special and powerful patron, and to gratefully encourage reverence for you. AMEN. May the name of the Holy Trinity be venerated and praised by all Orthodox Christians, forever and ever. AMEN. May the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ be praised and glorified now and forever. AMEN. Saint Jude Thaddeus, pray for us and hear our prayers. AMEN.

Ας είναι ευλογημένο το όνομα του Ιησού Χριστού. Ας είναι ευλογημένο το όνομα του Τιμίου και Ζωοποιού Σταυρού. Ας είναι ευλογημένο το όνομα της Υπεραγίας και Αειπαρθένου Μαρίας. Ας είναι ευλογημένος ο Άγιος Ιούδας ο Θαδδαίος σ' όλον τον κόσμο και σ' όλους τους αιώνες. ΑΜΗΝ. Πάτερ ημών [...]. ΑΜΗΝ. Χαίρε Μαρία Κεχαριτωμένη, ο Κύριος μετά Σου. Ευλογημένη συ εν γυναιξί και ευλογημένος ο καρπός της κοιλίας σου, ο Ιησούς. Υπεραγία Θεοτόκε πρέσβευε υπέρ ημών των αμαρτωλών νυν και αεί και την ώρα του θανάτου ημών. (Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, Υιέ του Θεού δια της μεσιτείας του Αγίου και ενδόξου σου Αποστόλου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου, ελέησον με τον αμαρτωλό.) Απολυτίκιο: "Ήχος α΄. Τον τάφον σου Σωτήρ."	May the name of Jesus Christ be blessed. May the name of the Holy and Life-giving Cross be blessed. May the name of the Most Holy and ever Virgin Mary be blessed. May Saint Jude Thaddeus be blessed throughout the world and in all ages. AMEN. Our Father in heaven [...]. AMEN. Rejoice, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, pray for us, the sinners, now and at the hour of our death. (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the intercession of your holy and glorious Apostle Jude Thaddeus, have mercy on me, a sinner.) Apolytikion: "Tone 1. Your tomb, O Savior."

APPENDIX C – ONLINE SOURCES AND WEB REFERENCES

(Numbered / alphabetical by website name; last accessed 11/29/2025)

1. Catholic Online:
a) "St. Jude Thaddaeus," https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=127
b) "Novena," https://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=8568
2. Catholic-saints: https://www.catholic-saints.info/catholic-prayers/prayer-to-saint-jude-thaddeus.htm
3. CatholicSaintMedals: "St. Jude," https://catholicsaintmedals.com/saints/st-jude/
4. ChurchPop: "Preghiera a San Giuda Taddeo," https://it.churchpop.com/preghiera-a-san-giuda-taddeo-per-i-casi-disperati-e-senza-speranza/
5. Claretians: https://www.claret.org/claretians/
6. Claret.ru: "Молитва святому Иуде Фаддею," https://claret.ru/liturgy/sm_lit_taddeus.htm
7. Devocionario: "Oración a San Judas Tadeo," https://www.devocionario.com/santos/judas_1.html
8. El Pais: "Mexicans rush to see the relics of Saint Jude, the 'most miraculous' saint", https://english.elpais.com/international/2024-08-15/mexicans-rush-to-see-the-relics-of-saint-jude-the-most-miraculous-saint.html
9. Ekklisia Online:

a) "Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος: Όλες οι Εκκλησίες του Αγίου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου" [= Saint Jude Thaddeus: All the Churches of Saint Jude Thaddeus], https://www.ekklisiaonline.gr/ekklisiaonline/agios-ioudas-thaddeos-oles-i-ekklisies-tou-agiou-iouda-tou-thaddeou

b) "Προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα το Θαδδαίο" [= Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus], https://www.ekklisiaonline.gr/proseyxes/prosefchi-ston-agio-iouda-to-thaddeo/

c) "Ο Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος μας βλέπει όλους" [= Saint Jude Thaddeus watches over everyone], (Video, TikTok), https://www.tiktok.com/@ekklisiaonline/video/7136889553180232965

d) "Προσευχή Ιούδα Θαδδαίου – ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Σχεδιασμένη παγίδα πιστών" [= Prayer to Jude Thaddeus – WARNING: A crafted deception targeting the faithful], https://www.ekklisiaonline.gr/nea/prosefchi-iouda-thaddeou-prosochi-schediasmeni-pagida-piston/

10. Iera Mitropolis Neas Smirnis:
"Ο άγιος Ιούδας ο Θαδδαίος και η προέλευση της δήθεν θαυματουργικής προσευχής" [= Saint Jude Thaddeus and the Origin of the So-Called 'Miraculous' Prayer], Holy Church of St. Nicholas of Alimos, https://www.sostis.gr/blog/item/2971-o-agios-ioudas
11. im-agparaskevis: https://www.im-agparaskevis.gr/product/proseychi-ston-agio-ioyda-ton-thaddaio/
12. Mystagogy Resource Center: "15 Orthodox Shrines Dedicated to the Holy Apostle Jude Thaddeus," https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2019/08/15-shrines-dedicated-to-holy-apostle.html
13. National Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus: https://www.stjudemanila.com
14. National Shrine of St. Jude:
a) "History of St. Bridget of Sweden," https://shrineofstjude.org/learn/saints/st-bridget-of-sweden/
b) "Patron of Hope and Difficult Causes," by Father John M. Lozano, CMF, https://shrineofstjude.org/saint-jude-thaddeus-lozano/
c) "History of the Shrine," https://shrineofstjude.org/the-shrine/history-of-the-shrine/
15. New Advent: "Epistle of St. Jude," https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08542b.htm
16. Neuvaine.ca: "Neuvaine à Saint Jude", https://neuvaine.ca/
17. Orthros:
"Προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα τον Θαδδαίο ή έντεχνα σχεδιασμένη παγίδα πιστών μετά κεκαλυμμένης μαγείας;" [= Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus or a skillfully designed trap involving concealed magic?], bit.ly/4rAOA6X
18. Ortodox.md: "Rugăciune către Sfântul Apostol Iuda Tadeu," https://ortodox.md/rugaciune-catre-sfantul-apostol-iuda-tadeu-pentru-situatii-disperate
19. Ort.fi: "Pyhä apostoli Juudas Taddeus," https://ort.fi/synaksario/pyha-apostoli-juudas-taddeus-herran-veli/
20. Orthodoxia:
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21. Pravoslavieto: "Свети апостол Юда, брат Господен," https://www.pravoslavieto.com/life/06.19_sv_ap_Juda_brat_Gospoden.htm
22. Saint: "Saint Jude Thaddeus," https://www.saint.gr/827/saint.aspx
23. Santuario Nacional de San Judas Tadeo Santiago, Chile:

https://web.archive.org/web/20131012050426/http://www.sanjudas.cl/paginas/santuario.html

24. Vima Orthodoxias: "Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος: Όλες οι Εκκλησίες του Αγίου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου" [= St. Jude Thaddeus: The Six Churches and Chapels in Attica], https://www.vimaorthodoxias.gr/nea/agios-ioudas-thaddaios-oi-exi-ekklisies-tou-stin-attiki/
25. Xristianos: "Προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα το Θαδδαίο" [= Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus], https://xristianos.gr/proseuxi-ston-agio-iouda-ton-thaddeo/
26. YouTube videos:

a) "Θαύματα του Αγίου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου, Αποστόλου του Χριστού. Ομιλία του π. Δημήτρη, ιερέα των Αγίων Ισιδώρων Λυκαβηττού" [= Miracles of Saint Jude Thaddeus, Apostle of Christ: A Sermon by Fr. Dimitrios, Priest of the Saints Isidore of Lycabettus], https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWGAxF-Q3Jo

b) "Θαδδαιοπίτα και η προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα Θαδδαίο" [= The Thaddeus Pie and the Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus], https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5PdZD9h-3I

c) "Η προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα τον Θαδδαίο" [= The Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus], https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY0pBQR8ZRE

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AGAINST WIND AND STORM: A MEDIEVAL GERMAN CHARM

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Abstract: This article presents a fifteenth-century German weather charm preserved in Munich, BSB Clm 26693. Entitled *Contra auram et tempestatem*, the text is a vernacular adjuration intended to avert wind and storm. Drawing on John 18:3–6, the charm transforms Christ's verbal power ("I am he") into an operative formula for calming the elements. By comparing related Latin and German materials, the study situates *Contra auram et tempestatem* at the intersection of ecclesiastical benediction and vernacular ritual speech, showing how medieval practitioners negotiated orthodoxy, efficacy, and linguistic adaptation within the broader continuum of Christian apotropaic tradition.

Keywords Medieval German charms, Contra auram et tempestatem, ste weter ste, John 18: 3–6, Clm 26693

INTRODUCTION: RITUAL SPEECH AND THE CONTROL OF WEATHER

Contra auram et tempestatem is a fifteenth-century German charm to be performed to prevent hostile atmospheric forces. Throughout history, people have sought to influence, or at least predict, meteorological events to safeguard agricultural production and community survival. Antiquity offers abundant evidence of deities, rituals, amulets, and charms intended to protect humans, livestock, and crops from natural disasters. Comparable protective medieval formulas directed against meteorological or environmental perils, such as hail, and other natural calamities, are discussed in a broader Germanic perspective by Chiara Benati (2017), who situates such textual charms within the general category of apo-

tropaic and defensive rituals. The association of divine or demonic agency with thunder and lightning persisted across both pre-Christian and Christian traditions. Thunder-gods were gradually replaced by Christian saints endowed with meteorological power, ensuring a degree of continuity in ritual responses to atmospheric threats. Indeed, attempts to influence the weather positively and to protect the harvest through ritual acts did not disappear with Christianisation; on the contrary, they were reinforced by the authority of the Scriptures, in which the Creator is said to give rain and fertile soil, but also to bring biblical flood (*diluvium*), droughts, and famines. This theological premise furnished the framework upon which many medieval protection charms were composed and transmitted. (Lohmann 1960: 112–115). Gerrit J. Schenk (2010: 50–65) has further illuminated the complex interpretative models through which natural calamities were perceived in medieval Europe. Natural disasters were understood simultaneously as divine punishment (*Iudicium Dei*) and as manifestations of demonic agency, prompting both theological reflection and ritual reaction. Within this framework, apotropaic practices, such as bell-ringing, blessings, written charms, and processions, functioned as communal strategies to restore cosmic order. Schenk emphasises the Church's ambivalence: while condemning *maleficium* and magical weather-making, it authorised liturgical exorcisms such as the *Preces ad repellandam tempestatem*, thus integrating elements of older magical traditions into Christian ritual (*Rituale Romanum*, Titulus IX).[1] However, according to Adolf Franz, patristic and scholastic writers consistently interpreted meteorological events as expressions of divine order rather than chaos. He cites Thomas Aquinas's teaching that disturbances of the air, winds, and lightning occurred by divine permission, reaffirming the idea that weather phenomena were morally and theologically intelligible (Franz 1909 II: 27). This perspective situates medieval weather charms within a theology of natural obedience rather than in what contemporary ecclesiastical discourse classified as *superstitio*—practices deemed theologically improper or unauthorised: ritual speech aimed to restore creation's ordained harmony rather than to defy it.[2]

The charm examined here is a fifteenth-century Bavarian text written in Early New High German and intended to avert an approaching storm. This study aims to reassess *Contra auram et tempestatem* as a case study for understanding how fifteenth-century German charms negotiate the relationship between liturgical tradition, vernacular ritual practice, and textual adaptation. More specifically, this analysis addresses three interrelated questions: (1) how this charm integrates

Latin and German within a single performative structure, and what this bilingual texture reveals about late-medieval devotional culture; (2) how its adjurative syntax, *historiola*, and ritual directives align with or diverge from earlier German and Latin charm traditions; (3) what the final *probatum est* clause contributes to our understanding of the reception, validation, and practical use of charms in monastic contexts. By foregrounding these aspects, the study aims to clarify the charm's position within the *continuum* that links ecclesiastical benedictions, vernacular magic, and the lived experience of protective ritual.

Although embedded in a learned Christian milieu and interlaced with liturgical cues, it is neither a blessing nor a prayer in the narrow sense, but an apotropaic verbal remedy, an 'incantation' in the technical sense of the German *Segenforschung*.[3] Franz traces how ecclesiastical authorities oscillated between condemnation and toleration of weather rituals, distinguishing between harmful superstition and pious invocation. From Agobard of Lyon to Burchard of Worms, such texts reveal an effort to correct misuse while preserving legitimate protective practice. This nuanced stance explains why charms and blessings "against storm and hail" persisted in clerical milieus: they were not heretical survivals but adapted expressions of orthodox prayer (Franz 1909 II: 29–33).

It is hardly surprising that Christian liturgy also offered ritual responses to the human desire for control over the weather. Both the Old and the New Testament depict God as the source of disasters that could be averted or mitigated by the faithful through the positive power of prayer and blessing. The Gospels themselves describe Christ's control over the elements, for instance, in Mt. 8, 24–26:

> *24 et ecce motus magnus factus est in mari, ita ut navicula operiretur fluctibus: ipse vero dormiebat. 25 Et accesserunt ad eum discipuli ejus, et suscitaverunt eum, dicentes: Domine, salva nos: perimus. 26 Et dicit eis Jesus: Quid timidi estis, modicae fidei? Tunc surgens imperavit ventis, et mari, et facta est tranquillitas magna.*
>
> 24 A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a dead calm.

And in Mt. 14, 30–32:

> *30 Videns vero ventum validum, timuit: et cum coepisset mergi, clamavit dicens: Domine, salvum me fac. 31 Et continuo Jesus extendens manum, apprehendit eum: et ait illi: Modicae fidei, quare dubitasti? 32 Et cum ascendissent in naviculam, cessavit ventus.*
>
> 30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

The Gospel episodes above present Christ's authority over the elements in strictly theological terms, without mentioning demonic intervention. In medieval interpretation, however, these biblical narratives were read alongside patristic and scholastic teachings that located demons in the *aer*, the unstable middle region of the cosmos. As a result, storms were widely believed to be caused or manipulated by demons; consequently, the same means used against demonic forces—such as the Cross, prayers, and holy water—were also deployed in fighting bad weather.

TEXT, TRANSLATION AND ANALYSIS OF *CONTRA AURAM ET TEMPESTATEM*

Contra auram et tempestatem survives as a unique manuscript witness (*codex unicus*), yet its structure and motifs reveal affinities with three well-established charm traditions: the blood-staunching formulas (Latin and German), the *adiuro te* exorcisms, and the dialogic *historiolae* in which episodes from Christ's life are re-enacted to achieve immediate protective effect. Despite these connections, the text has received almost no scholarly attention, apart from Anton Schönbach's provisional transcript published in 1893. The present study builds upon a previous preliminary discussion and edition of the text (Cianci 2011).

The charm is written on the inner back flyleaf of Munich, *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, Clm 26693, a large-format paper miscellany (c. 350 × 210 mm) originating from the Augustinian convent at Regensburg and dated 1463. The catalogue description in Halm and Meyer (1969: 203–204) is minimal; direct examination confirms its provenance, large format, and mixed Latin-German content.[4]

The manuscript consists of 395 leaves, with discontinuous foliation and several missing quires. The same principal hand is responsible for most of the contents. The pastedown leaf carrying the charm is glued directly to the wooden board and contains only this text, copied at the top of the outer column.

A contemporary table of contents on f. 2r, supplemented by a later index on the front flyleaf, lists a range of theological, canonical, and pastoral texts in Latin. Among them are works by Nicolaus of Dinkelsbühl (1360–1433), Anselm (*Elucidarius*), Thomas Aquinas (*Casus missae*; *Summa fidei*), the provincial synodal statutes of Salzburg (1419), and a collection of *Sermones per annum* with extensive marginal additions. Later folios include German annotations and two schematic drawings (ff. 344r-v). The charm, identified in the index as *Contra auram et tempestatem,* is copied in the same late Gothic cursive used throughout much of the manuscript, although here, like other German *marginalia*, the scribal *ductus* (i.e. the characteristic movement and direction of the writing hand) appears less disciplined. Indeed, abbreviations occur frequently, particularly in Latin words, while the graphemic and orthographic habits correspond to mid-fifteenth-century documentary south-eastern German hand with features approaching a later medieval *Bastarda* (Cianci 2011: 262–264).

1	**Contra Auram et Tempestatem**	**Against wind and storm**
2	Ste weter, ste,	Stand still, storm, stop,
3	als dy Juden stönden da sy unsern lieben Herren wolten viechenn.	as when the Jews stopped when they wanted to persecute our beloved Lord.
4	Zu den sprach Ihesus: “Wen suecht ir? ”- “Wir suechen Jhesu*m* Nazarenu*m*”. Do sprach Jhesus: “Ich pins”.	To them, Jesus spoke: “Whom are you seeking?”.”We are looking for Jesus of Nazareth”. “Then Jesus said: “I am he”.
5	Do fielen sy nider zurügkch.	So they fell down backwards.
6	Also peut ich dir [w]eter	So I command you, storm,
7	in d*er* krafft dyser wardt, dy Ihesus selbert gered hat,	by the power of this word that Jesus Himself pronounced,
8	das du zurugk valst und dy zesträst und cherst an dÿ end und stat, da du chainem menschen schaden pringen magst.	that you fall back and scatter and return til the end and to a place where you cannot cause harm to anybody.
9	Das peut ich dir.	This I order you.
10	In dem nam*en* ‹des› Vaters, ‹des› Sunus und des heyligen Geist. Amen.	In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
11	Dic trinies. P*ost* hoc q*uin*que P*ater* Nos*ter* et q*uin*que Ave Maria.	Say it three times, and afterwards (say) five Pater Noster and five Ave Maria.
12	Probatus est p*er* d*omin*um Frideric*um* q*uia* cessit aura.	Approved by Lord Fridericus because the storm ceased.

Line 1. *Contra auram et tempestatem*: the two Latin nouns are not synonymous but complementary. *Aura*, originally meaning "breath" or "breeze", in medieval Latin often signifies the movement of air as a spiritual or demonic medium. In fact, *aura* in late medieval ritual vocabulary meant a rising atmospheric disturbance. Scriptural usage relates *aura* with divine presence, yet the same word can also denote invisible atmospheric forces believed to be stirred by demons (Franz 1909 II: 89–90). *Tempestas*, by contrast, designates the manifest storm, encompassing wind, rain, thunder, and hail, and frequently carries the theological connotation of divine punishment (Schenk 2010: 52–54). The pairing, therefore, expresses a desire to convey both the unseen "airly" agitation and its visible, destructive consequence. In medieval natural philosophy, the *aer* was regarded as an unstable and mediating element, a liminal sphere where the forces of fire and water contended.[5] As Franz observes, this cosmological conception provided the theoretical basis for liturgical and magical practices aiming at restoring balance within the elements (Franz 1909 II: 19–22). In the German text, however, this duality is collapsed into a single term, *weter*[6] (ENHG *wëter, wëder*, *beter*, OHG *uuetar*), used for any meteorological disturbance, from wind and rain to tempest or hail. As Monica Blöcker observes, popular *Wetterzauber* did not differentiate between specific atmospheric causes: "das Wetter" was addressed as a single hostile power, sometimes personified or demonic (Blöcker 1981: 128–131). The vernacular simplification probably mirrors this worldview. For the charm's performer, naming *weter* unified both the physical and spiritual dimensions of the threat. Theologically, this reflects what Schenk (2010: 50–65) calls the "dual model" of medieval meteorology, in which the *aer* is the dwelling place of demons and the source of *tempestates*. The German term thus fuses *aura* and *tempestas* into one operative category, embodying the pragmatic aim of the charm: to command and neutralise the totality of hostile weather through the performative power of the word.

Line 2. *Ste weter, ste:* this charm employs two distinct sets of performative actions. The initial set revolves around the imperative "stop, stand still", ENHG *stande (stân, stên), stuont, gestanden* (svb) "stand still, stop", wherein the performer directly commands the storm to cease its activity. Many formulas directly address the evil as conscious forces to be commanded, and this linguistic personification confirms that this charm participates in the same adjurative idiom of speech-as-control over the elements (Franz 1909 II: 75–76, 80–81, 84–85, 93–94, 100–101). This methodology also bears resemblance to older German charms, par-

ticularly evident in the *Blutsegen* tradition, where analogous directives are issued to halt blood flow. Such formulations commonly intersect with the *Flum Jordan* motif:

> **Strassburger Blood charm, 11th c.**
>
> *to uerstont taz plŏt. uerstande tiz plŏt, stant plŏt, stant plŏt fasto.*
>
> As the blood stopped, cease you, blood, stop blood, stop fast.
>
> [Cianci 2004: 129–132]

> **Bern, Burgerbibliothek, cod. 803 (Moulins rolle): 678–681, *Ad sanguinem stagnandum,* 12th c.**
>
> *Sanguis iste nec currat, ita tu sanguis sta, sicut flumen Iordanis stetit.*
>
> Let this blood not flow, thus you, blood, stop, just as the River Jordan stood still.
>
> [Cianci 2004: 258]

> **Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, CA 8° 062b, f. 8r, *Ad restringendum sanguinem,* 12th c.**
>
> *Stant bluot, stant bluot, stant hir inne, duorc des heiligen Cristes willen.*
>
> Stop, blood, stop here inside, through Jesus's holy will.
>
> [Cianci 2004: 113]

> **Bamberg, Stadtbibliothek, Msc. Med. 6, f. 139rb (13th c.)**
>
> *So verstant du bluod sose Iordanis aha verstunt.*
>
> Thus, you, blood, stop, just as the River Jordan stood still.
>
> [Cianci 2004: 112–132].

Line 3. *Als dy Juden stönden da sy unsern lieben Herren wolten viechenn*: the verb *viechenn* is here intended as *vêhen* (wvb) "hate, attack, persecute", instead of Anton Schönbach reading as *vâhen, vân* (vb) "catch, capture, arrest" (Schönbach 1893: 45–46).

Lines 3–5. *Als dy Juden stönden da sy unsern lieben Herren wolten viechenn. Zu den sprach Ihesus: "Wen suecht ir? "- "Wir suechen Jhesum Nazarenum". Do sprach Jhesus: "Ich pins". Do fielen sy nider zurügkch*. As expected, the verbs in the *historiola* appear in the past tense, a typical feature of medieval charms whose narrative frames often derive from Gospel or hagiographic episodes. The dialogue between Jesus and the

Jews reproduces almost verbatim a dialogue from the *Gospel of John*, set immediately before Christ's arrest.

> *3. Iudas ergo, cum accepisset cohortem et a pontificibus et pharisaeis ministros, venit illuc cum lanternis et facibus et armis. 4. Iesus itaque sciens omnia, quae ventura erant super eum, processit et dicit eis: "Quem quaeritis?" 5. Responderunt ei: "Iesum Nazarenum". Dicit eis: "Ego sum!" Stabat autem et Iudas, qui tradebat eum, cum ipsis. 6. Ut ergo dixit eis: "Ego sum!", abierunt retrorsum et ceciderunt in terram.*
>
> [Vulgata, John 18, 3–6]

> 3. So, Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. 4. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" 5. "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) 6. When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

The passage describes Judas Iscariot leading a company of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus. Their presence, whether Roman troops or temple guards, highlights the official character of the action. The declaration used by Jesus, "I am he", causes the group to draw back and fall to the ground (ENHG *vallen, viel, gefallen (vb) + nider + ze rücke* "fall, fall down"), affirming His authority and fulfilling His earlier statement that He would lay down His life of His own accord (John 10:18).

Lines 6–9. *Also peut ich dir weter in der krafft dyser wardt, dy Ihesus selbert gered hat, das du zurugk valst und dy zesträst und cherst an dÿ end und stat, da du chainem menschen schaden pringen magst. Das peut ich dir*: as already noted in line 2 (*Ste weter, ste*), this charm employs two distinct sets of performative actions. The second modality of this charm thus employs the imperative of "order," directed toward the malevolent force. In this section, one expects verbs in the imperative or optative mood, revealing the direct voice of the performer. In fact, the verbs are typically in the first person and addressed to the "patient" or to the evil being confronted, in this case, the storm. The initial expression in line 2 creates a coherent bridge from the first command through the narrative frame and into lines 6-9, where the order

is repeated: *"So, I order you, storm"* (ENHG *biten* (vb) "order, request, command") *that you fall back and scatter* (ENHG *zerströuwen* (vb) "dissolve, destroy") *and turn away* (ENHG *keren an* (vb) "turn around, go away") *to a place where you can cause harm to no living being.* The command is strengthened by the formula in line 7, *"by the power of this word that Jesus Himself pronounced"* (ENHG *kraft* "power"), where the performer explicitly grounds the efficacy of his words in Christ's own authority. This culminates in line 9 with the emphatic statement "*I order you this*". Comparable verbal structures appear in Old High German charms against worms:

> **Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. nov. acq. lat. 229, ff. 9v–10r, *Contra uermem edentem*, 12th c.**
>
> *Ih gebiude dir, wurm.*
>
> I order you, worm.
>
> [Cianci 2004: 88–90]

> **Innsbruck, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. med. 652, ff. 77v– 78r, *Quem vermis mordet*, 12th c.**
>
> *Wurm ich gebiute dir bi Gotes worten et Sancti Iob.*
>
> Worm, I order you, by God's words and by Saint Job.
>
> [Cianci 2004: 103–105]

Lines 10–11. *In dem namen des Vaters, des Sunus und des heyligen Geist. Amen. Dic trinies. Post hoc quinque Pater Noster et quinque Ave Maria*: these lines introduce several paratextual elements. Although the text does not indicate bodily movement or other proxemic actions, it may have been accompanied by the gesture of the sign of the Cross. The sign of the Cross was regarded as the most powerful defence against both visible and invisible dangers, in fact, as Franz pointed out, priests raised the Cross toward the clouds while pronouncing the *Wettersegen*, imitating saints who confronted thunderclouds with the crucifix. The Trinitarian formula provides the liturgical intonation shared by ecclesiastical and vernacular rites. Its presence underscores the charm's orthodoxy: the adjuration operates *in nomine Trinitatis*, the exact phrase that anchors formal benedictions *ad repellendam tempestatem* (Franz II: 51–52, 74–77, 93–94). Moreover, this invocation is expressed in German, a significant detail, as in older German charms all invocations, prayers, and instructions are usually rendered in Latin.

The second paratextual feature concerns repetition: the formula (or perhaps only the invocation) is to be spoken three times. Repetition, threefold for completeness, fivefold for the wounds of Christ, unites mechanical iteration with penitential prayer. The closing Latin prescriptions serve as practical instructions for performing the charm, reinforcing its ritual framework rather than addressing the audience. The paratextual instruction reflects the devotional framework and situates the charm within the late-medieval practical devotion rather than in a magical register (Franz II: 53–55, 76, 79, 85, 95–96).

Line 12. *Probatus est per dominum Fridericum quia cessit aura*: this closing remark is not unusual in later texts of the fifteenth century, yet it has no clear precedent in earlier German charms. It can be read as a form of *feedback* on the charm's effectiveness: an annotation intended for the performer rather than a formula meant to be spoken. In this sense, it adds a meta-textual dimension that addresses what may be called the *third stage* (after the production and the transmission), in the life of the handwritten text: its reception. In certain charms, such marginal or closing notes record either the expected outcome or an undesirable one. Statements directed to the practitioner may also be viewed as perlocutionary acts, concerned with the consequences of performing the charm. Some confirm the success of the remedy, while others function as admonitions or explicit *caveats*. Indeed, deviation from the prescribed wording or ritual procedure was often believed to nullify its efficacy (Cianci 2024: 34–37).

Comparable examples occur in older medieval German charms:

> **Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. nov. acq. lat. 229, f. 9v, *Contra caducum morbum*, 12th c.**
>
> *Et mox videbis infirmum surgere sanum.*
>
> And soon you will see the sick rise up healthy.
>
> [Cianci 2024b: 44]

> **Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. nov. acq. lat. 356, f. 69v, *Ad uermen, qui in caballo est*, 12th c.**
>
> *Qui caballus ad currentem aquam non bibat, nec in ulla aqua balneatur nec ullus dorso eius insideat, sed liber ab omni onere pascatur, donec omnis uermis moriatur.*
>
> *(...) Qui canem hoc medicamine iuuerit, deinceps non poterit ulli animali subuenire.*

> The horse should not drink from running water, nor bathe in any water, nor carry any burden on its back, but it is allowed to graze freely until all worms die.
>
> (...) Whoever aids a dog with this remedy will no longer be able to help any animal thereafter.
>
> [Cianci 2024b: 46]

> **München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 23374, f. 16v, *Dri guot prouder*, 13th c.**
>
> *tuo nith mer, wan als hie gescriben si.*
>
> Do not repeat what is written here anymore.
>
> [Cianci 2024b: 43]

The *probatum est* formula, common in recipe and benediction manuscripts, records empirical validation (Franz II: 100–101). Its inclusion demonstrates that the charm was performed and observed to be effective, converting textual tradition into lived ritual practice.

The linguistic texture of *Contra auram et tempestatem* reflects a long-established pattern in the transmission of German verbal charms, in which Latin and the vernacular operate side by side within the same ritual unit. Manuscript evidence from the tenth century onward consistently shows Latin used for titles, rubrics, and liturgical cues—*Ad sanguinem stagnandum*, *Contra vermem*, *Dic hoc ter*, *Post hoc quinque Pater Noster*—while operative sections, adjurative commands, and *historiolae* tend to shift into German. This bilingual configuration, already outlined by Franz and Ohrt, is strongly characteristic of the devotional-medical miscellanies that transmit many of the German *Segenssprüche*.

The present charm fits squarely into this tradition, and its linguistic structure resonates with observations I have developed in two earlier studies explicitly devoted to this issue. In *Tipologie e funzioni del titolo negli incantesimi tedeschi medievali* (Cianci 2024a), I examined the persistent use of Latin titles in German charms and argued that rubric language performs classificatory and legitimising functions even when the operative text is vernacular. In a complementary study, *Direttive per la corretta esecuzione degli incantesimi tedeschi medievali* (Cianci 2024b), I analysed the coexistence of Latin prescriptive formulas with German performative speech, showing how bilingual composition is not incidental but embedded in the ritual logic of these texts.

By the fifteenth century, this interaction between the two languages had evolved further. Latin retained its authority in scriptural quotations

and ritual instructions, yet vernacularisation increasingly affected core invocations. The German Trinitarian formula in Clm 26693, *In dem namen des Vaters, des Sunus und des heyligen Geist*, parallels developments visible in other *Segen*, where Gospel readings remain Latin, but the protective blessing itself is commonly expressed in German. *Contra auram et tempestatem* thus embodies a mature phase of this bilingual tradition, in which linguistic choice conveys both hierarchical authority and practical immediacy.

A comparable dynamic governs the closing formula *Probatus est per dominum Fridericum quia cessit aura*. Such semi-formulaic repertoire was widely attested in late-medieval medical manuscripts indicating that experiential confirmation could be linked to named practitioners or witnesses. In this respect, the mention of *dominus Fridericus* in Clm 26693 aligns with known patterns rather than diverging from them. Such clauses serve a dual function: they assert the charm's efficacy and simultaneously root it within the lived devotional environment of the community that transmitted it. Their presence highlights the charm's proximity to late-medieval *experimenta* and benedictional collections, where linguistic hybridity and claims of practical success coexist within a shared textual environment.

CONCLUSION: THE POWER OF RESTORING ORDER

Contra auram et tempestatem thus appears as a vernacular condensation of the canonical weather blessing, aligning the spoken command *Ste weter* with Christ's own authoritative word in John 18:6. Its theological background, syntax, and ritual logic all conform to the *continuum* from a long theological and ritual evolution, from early *Benedictiones ad fulgura* to the fifteenth-century *Wettersegen*[7] (Franz II: 49–104). It combines the *historiola* of Christ's arrest with the adjurative syntax of charms, showing the permeability between learned liturgy and popular performance.

The analysis conducted here has shown that *Contra auram et tempestatem* stands at a productive intersection between learned liturgical models and vernacular adjuration. The charm's bilingual composition, its reliance on the Johannine *historiola*, and its use of performative imperatives reveal a carefully calibrated structure that adapts authoritative Christian speech to the pragmatic needs of weather protection. Examined through the lens of its research questions, the charm illustrates how fifteenth-century practitioners managed the coexistence of Latin

ritual heritage and an increasingly vernacular devotional environment. Moreover, the closing validation *Probatus est per dominum Fridericum* highlights the social afterlife of such texts: a stage in which efficacy becomes a matter not only of formula but of recorded experience and communal trust. In this sense, the *Contra auram et tempestatem* is more than a peripheral survival of weather magic, but a witness to the ongoing medieval conviction that the divine word, when uttered in faith, could restore order to creation.

NOTES

[1] Medieval *ordo* books distinguish between preventive and emergency rites against storms. For example, the aforementioned *Preces ad repellandam tempestatem* was accompanied by Psalm 147 and liturgical petitions, and it affirmed divine sovereignty over the elements (see *Rituale Romanum* IX). The ordinary rite opened with the Gospel of St John or an invocation to all the saints, while the so-called "emergency rite" was usually associated with the ringing of bells, which, accompanied by the inscription *"A fulgure et tempestate libera nos, Domine"*, were believed to disperse demonic forces through sound. These gestures, these liturgical and popular actions intended to avert storm damage, far from magical, were seen as concrete extensions of the Church's intercessory power. Such rites exemplify the same performative logic that underlies vernacular adjurations like *Contra auram et tempestatem*: a spoken act meant to re-establish cosmic and moral order through words of command and blessing (Franz 1909 II: 37–40, HwdA 9: 508, Weger and Hölzl 2007: 49–51).

[2] It was also widely believed that specific individuals could negatively influence the weather, a conviction reflected in many legal prohibitions and inquisitorial proceedings. The figure of the *tempestarius* reappears in early medieval sources as one accused of conjuring storms, while later manuals such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* promoted by Pope Innocent VIII (1432–1492) intensified this accusation by equating weather manipulation with demonic witchcraft. The resulting persecution culminated in increasingly severe penalties for alleged witches, accused above all of raising hail or storms (Weger-Hölzl 2007: 44–47). As Monica Blöcker has shown, medieval *Wetterzauber* was not primarily maleficent but apotropaic: rather than causing harm, it sought to avert damage from hail or tempest. Her analysis of early medieval sources demonstrates how ecclesiastical prohibitions, such as those against the *tempestarii*, the "storm-makers" condemned in penitentials and Carolingian capitularies, coexisted with popular protective rites. The same tension between dogmatic prohibition and popular resilience continued well into the later Middle Ages. (Blöcker 1981: 128–131).

[3] In German folklore and liturgical culture, scholars distinguish *Wettersegen* "weather blessing" from *Wetterzauber* "weather magic", though the boundaries between the two remain fluid. Moreover, amuletic *Wettersegen*, plaques containing relics and spiral inscriptions, represent a form of popular devotional syncretism and were widespread especially in rural Bavaria and the Alpine regions (Brauneck 1979; Kürzeder 2005; Kürzeder and Schulz 1998).

[4] A more detailed analysis of its content and script is provided in Cianci 2011: 259–264.

[5] Franz notes that the medieval imagination perceived the *aer caliginosus* "dark air" as the locus of atmospheric disturbance, a notion that shaped both learned meteorology and the composition of protective blessings (Franz 1909 II: 24).

[6] In the manuscript there is also the Bavarian variant: *beter* (More details on palaeographic and linguistic features of this charm can be found in Cianci 2011: 269–270).

[7] Franz records the growing ecclesiastical reaction against exuberant or superstitious weather formulas, culminating in the simplified ritual models of Würzburg (1482), Augsburg (1487), and Passau (1490), which retained only Gospel readings and a few prayers. Despite bans from both Church and state, vernacular *Wettersegen* continued to circulate in Bavaria into the early seventeenth century (Franz 1909 II: 63–66).

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BIO

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THE SOPHIA MORRISON COLLECTION OF MANX FOLK CHARMS

Stephen Miller

Abstract: Sophia Morrison (1859–1917) was the leading light of the Manx Language Revival in the Isle of Man in the 1900s and Secretary of the Manx Language Society (founded 1899). Folklorist, folk song collector, and pioneer of recording with the phonograph, she also had a deep interest in folk medicine and amongst her surviving personal papers as part of that research are some seventy charms recorded by her both in Manx (24) and English (46). This corpus adds to an earlier collection of thirteen charms gathered by Dr John Clague (1842–1908) and published in *Incantatio* 2 (2002). This by no means exhausts the Manx material and we still await publication of a charm catalogue in full for the Isle of Man.

Keywords: Charm Collecting; Early Twentieth Century; English; Isle of Man; Manx Gaelic; Sophia Morrison (1859–1917).

In an undated letter Sophia Morrison wrote to Karl Roeder, a German national resident in Manchester and fellow folklorist, that "[d]uring this last month, I have collected 6 or 7 note books full of Charms & herbal remedies […]."[1] As to how on at least one occasion this material was collected she recounts elsewhere that:

> I was amused this past September [1903] at the way which I was given [interlined received] a charm without weakening its effect to the giver. Whilst blaberry[2] picking I met on South Barrule, a family pulling ling, for winter firing. Manks is the man's chengey ny mayrey (mother tongue), and so delighted was he to speak it some, that I ventured to ask him if he had any charms.[3]

She continues:

> He at once said "yes" and gave one me. But to avoid losing any of its virtue, he asked for my note book, put it on top of the cart wheel, and wrote it in there, for writing it does not count! This

> is what he wrote down—"As God said unto Moses, as thy river shall be as my river, and thy water as my water and thy blood as my blood. Why won't my blood stop also thy blood [full name] In the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Ghost."[4]

This is copied from a letter, as one sent to Roeder similarly mentions this incident, where Morrison is seeking from him the Manx name for *Potentilla tormentilla* (septfoil as it is commonly known): "Last week, a man pulling ling, with a hook on S. Barrule told me that its Manx name was 'Cammelt-y-muc' […]," adding, "but no other Manx speaking person to whom I have shown a specimen knows it by this name [….]."[5]

Morrison's collecting of folk medicine was carried out (and seemingly over) in the early 1900s, as she mentioned when sending some or all of this material to Roeder in 1906: "I send you my notes on Charms & Charmers, Manx Dye Plants & Herbal Remedies. I collected them about four years ago & have added nothing to them since. I have always intended to work them up, but from lack of time have not done so."[6] Fortunately these notes, with some bearing annotations by Roeder, were returned to her and so were not lost along with the bulk of Roeder's own personal papers. Morrison was aware that he was planning a publication on Manx folk medicine:

> It seems a pity that so much information as you have should be lost. I will therefore with pleasure cooperate with you in the matter. […] I should be glad to know how you intend to arrange the material—I include the plan of arrangement which I had intended to follow. Is your idea at all the same?

She also added, "I should also be very much interested to see your list of Manx plant names now that I am sending you mine"—an example here of the notion of *quid pro quo* between collectors. Roeder never came round to publishing anything further on the Island after the appearance of his collected columns from the *Isle of Man Examiner* in 1904, published as *Manx Notes and Queries*.

The nineteenth century in the Island had seen population decline with emigration overseas to American and Australia. Towards the end of that century there was a decline in the lead mining industry at Laxey and Foxdale, while the ending of the spring Irish mackerel fishing led to the fishing fleets of the port towns of Peel and Port St Mary losing their economic dominance. Only Douglas on the east coast, now the capital, was thriving due to its development as a Victorian seaside resort for the working class of the Lancashire cotton mill towns. Manx

Gaelic had lost its position as a community language to English. Native speakers were now elderly and with little generational transmission of the language.

"If we had not Miss Morrison at the wheel, I am afraid our ship would have foundered long ago. I only hope that she may be long spared to carry on her labour of love."[7] That ship was the Manx Language Revival and Sophia Morrison (1859–1917) was indeed its captain. The Manx Language Society had been founded in 1899, with a mission to revive the language and to shore up a separate Manx identity. The first Pan-Celtic Congress was held in Dublin in 1901, the Isle of Man not being alone in that wave of enthusiasm for all things Celtic which manifested itself in the closing decade of the nineteenth century and led to the Pan-Celtic movement in those countries that saw themselves so.

Morrison was variously folklorist, folksong collector, pioneer of recording with the phonograph, Secretary of the Manx Language Society, editor of *Mannin*, and founder of the Peel Language Class amongst other activities. She organised Manx Concerts on Old Christmas Day in Peel and reintroduced the *Oie'l Voirrey* into Patrick parish church. The Peel Players took their inspiration from her enthusiasm and their performances of plays by Christopher Shimmin created a Manx theatre where she even took to the stage with them.

Karl Roeder (1848–1911) on the other hand was cut from very different cloth. His letters to Morrison show him to be a difficult character to deal with and of all the figures involved with the Revival she was the only one he seemed to have time for though even there he took a self-assumed mentoring role with her. Nevertheless, as a folklorist he was able to build close relationships with individuals in the Island, especially Edward Faragher, a fisherman of Cregneash who collected for him, as well as Alfred Hudson of Ballafesson. He still remains an unknown figure and there is still much to be learnt of him.

"I include the plan of arrangement which I had intended to follow," Morrison wrote to Roeder. Neither she nor Roeder as mentioned ever published on folk medicine but this plan is amongst her personal papers now in the Manx National Heritage Library. Plainly titled "Arrangement of Article" there is more than sufficient material for her to have authored a book on the topic (as an article it would have most likely been intended for the *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Antiquarian and Natural History Society*). As seen, Morrison was not collecting only charms but also plant names and much wider than that as can be seen when her papers are worked through—basically, the whole gamut of Manx plant

lore. Her papers were deposited in the then Manx Museum Library in the 1950s (now the Manx National Heritage Library—MNHL), and the state of her papers is a familiar one, they having clearly seen loss in large part, despite being kept in family hands. Nevertheless, they have the undoubted virtue of survival.

The catalogue following is drawn from nine of her manuscripts amongst her personal papers now in the MNHL. Collected by Morrison were verbal charms dealing with, in the main, physical conditions and complaints—removing birthmarks, stopping blood from cuts and wounds especially, a common hazard with work on the land, curing cancers, relieving skin complaints such as erysipelas (popularly knowns as St Antony's Fire) and ringworm, curing lumbago and rheumatism, dealing with numbness in the feet, the effects of a scald, the affliction of styes, and riding oneself of warts. Charms were recorded both in Manx and English, though ones for stopping blood are in English only. Those in Manx were collected for cancer, erysipelas (St Antony's Fire), lumbago (or rheumatism), numbness, scalds, styes, and warts. Besides those dealing with medical issues, she also had gathered charms for the foretelling of a future husband and to allow the seeing of a sweetheart; and, finally, one for renouncing God and giving oneself over to the Devil.

NOTES

[1] Copy letter (fragment) from Sophia Morrison to Karl Roeder, undated, MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 5.

[2] Blaberries are better known of as bilberries or whortleberries.

[3] [Envelope labelled "Folk Medicine."] Loose sheets pinned together, no cover page or title and text now incomplete, unpaginated, undated [1903 or after], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 6.

[4] [Envelope labelled "Folk Medicine."] Loose sheets pinned together, no cover page or title and text now incomplete, unpaginated, undated [1903 or after], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 6.

[5] Draft letter (fragment) from Sophia Morrison to [Karl Roeder], [September/October 1903], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 4.

[6] Copy letter from Sophia Morrison to Karl Roeder, undated [April? 1906], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 4, Letter copy book (1904–07).

[7] Letter from J.J. Kneen to William Cubbon, 9 November 1915, MNHL, MS 09495, William Cubbon Papers, Box labelled "WC: Correspondence."

*

MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 6

[Envelope labelled] "Anglo-Manx Dialect"

1 "Satires by Manxmen on their fellows | & neighbours" (undated).
[Envelope labelled] "Folk Medicine"
2 Notebook missing cover, paginated only on side 1 as page 2 with heading "Folk Doctors and their Cures," undated [1903 or later].
3 Disbound page spread from a School Exercise Book, paginated on side 1 as page 2 with heading "Charms & Charmers," and on side 3 as page 23, undated.

[Envelope labelled] "Manx Plant Names Lore"

4 "Manx Plant [Name] Lore." School Exercise Book, missing cover, paginated (inconsistently) by Morrison, undated.
5 "On Manx Folk-Medicine." Loose sheets fastened together with brass pin along with notebook now only in part, unpaginated and undated.
6 Loose sheets pinned together, no cover page or title and text now incomplete, unpaginated, undated [1903 or after].
7 Disbound notebook, paginated by Morrison on right-hand pages only, missing 1 and starts now on 3, undated.

Loose Items
8 *Antient Cymric Medicine and Lecture Memoranda, British Medical Association Meeting Swansea, 1903* [blank pages used as notebook by Morrison].
9 "Manx Folk Lore | Collected by self 1903" [Notebook].

*

MANX VERBAL FOLK CHARMS
COLLECTED BY SOPHIA MORRISON

EDITING CONVENTIONS

The text of the charms appear here diplomatically. As regards the appearance of [ ] they are as in the original and do not represent editorial intervention where { } are used instead. Editorial remarks are in italic

type. Quote marks used by Morrison are not always consistent and often the closing ones are omitted by her.

1

"Satires by Manxmen on their fellows | & neighbours" (undated).

TO STOP BLOOD

1 Before the flood when water was wood, Jesus stood, and firmly stood. I pray thee stop this blood of [full name], in the name of the Father, Son, & Holy Ghost.

2 Jesus was born in Bethlehem, baptised in the river Jordan. As the water stood the child spoke. I pray thee stop this blood of [full name] in the name of Father Son, & Holy Ghost

3 In thy name I mean by thy power to stop this vein of [full name & age] In Father, Son, & Holy Ghost by thy power I stop this vein.

FOR ERYSIPELAS (OR, ST ANTHONY'S FIRE)

4 Magh ass shoh, rose bwoirrin as rosa fyrryn! x M'ees eh shoh dy phovar Chreest Mac Yee, Dy row ee ny scughey gys crink s' yrjey As myr yn Keayn mooar lhieeney as traie. x M'ees eh shoh = My vees eh shoh or, my she shoh (I have not seen this contraction in print)

FOR LUMBAGO, OR RHEUMATISM

5 Ta mee skeaylley yn ghuin shoh ayns ennym yn Ayr as y Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo. My she guir ayns ennym yn Chiarn, ta mee skealley eh ass yn eill, ass ny fehyn, as ass ny craueyn."

FOR A SCALD

6 Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as a Shynd Noo, gow yn scoldey shoh [*one word erased unreadable*] ersooyl

FOR A STYE

7 Obtain a brass-headed pin from the person who has the stye, rub the head of the pin round the stye nine times from left to right counting in Manx as follows "lheunican nane, lheunican jias, Then reverse the rubbing & counting.

8 This charm seems to be an Eng version of the last—"Obtain a yellow headed pin, with it make 13 crosses on the stye saying "from one to two, from two to three, etc; then count back again to "from one to none at all." Then the Trinity follows with a further cross for each name."

TO REMOVE WARTS

9 Fahney veg, gab garragh, gow raad as ny trooid dy bragh y arragh

2

Notebook missing cover, paginated only on side 1 as page 2 with heading "Folk Doctors and their Cures," undated [1903 or later].

TO REMOVE A BIRTHMARK

10 Place a dead hand on the mark. This was tried near to Peel last winter & cured a baby with an ugly birthmark. When the dead hand is used for a charm, it must also be said to be done in the name of the Trinity.

TO STOP BLOOD

11 'As God said unto Moses, as thy river shall be as my river, & thy water as my water, & thy blood as my blood. Why wont my blood stop also thy blood [full name]. In the name of the Father, of the Son, & the Holy Ghost.'

12 When the water was the word, Jesus stood & firmly stood. I command the blood of [man's | woman's full name] to stop in the name of the Father Son & Holy Ghost. (corrupted version) correct further on

13 In Thy Name I mean, & by thy power to stop the vein of [full name & age] In Father, Son, & Holy Ghost by Thy power I stop this vein.

14 Before the flood, when water was wood, Jesus stood & firmly stood. I pray Thee stop this blood of [name] in the name of the Father, Son & Holy Ghost

15 Jesus was born in Bethlehem, baptized in the River Jordan. As the water stood the child spoke, "I pray thee stop this blood [of [name]] in the name of Father, Son & Holy Ghost.

FOR CANCER

16 For internal cancer a decoction of hemlock, "emloge" is much used. "Emloye,' the common hemloch, is believed to cure ~~to~~ all who are [less] sound in body & to be poisonous to those who are well.

"Oh! Emloge ec, O! Emloge ee/eech = cure) When I am well you make me sick When I am sick you make me well Oh! emloge ec, O! emloge ee."

FOR ERYSIPELAS (OR, ST ANTHONY'S FIRE)

17 Magh ass shoh, rose bwoirrin as rose fyrryn; My vees eh shoh dty phooar Chreest Mac Yee, dy row ee ny seughey gys crink s' yrjey as myr yn keayn mooar lheiney as traie.

"Charm for erysipelas, literal translation of Manx above"

Cut of this, she erysipelas, ~~s~~he erysipelas. May be this by thy power Christ, Son of God, [that] might it be shifted to the highest hills, & like the deep sea ebbing & flowing.

TO REMOVE WARTS

18 Fahney veg, gob garragh, gow raad as ny trooid dy bragh y arragh [= Little wart, crooked mouth go away & never come anymore]

FOR A SCALD

19 Place your hand on the scald, & then remove it saying, "I do this praying it wont blister,' then blow on the scald once after each of the following names, as you say them, "In the name of the Father, & of the Son, & Holy Ghost. {*Scored through with annotation in left margin* corrupted version = "Then came two angels out of the North, the one brought fire, & the other brought frost, Go out fire (blow on scald) & come in frost (blow again) & heal the scald of [name], (blow). In the name etc;}

20 There was three angels came from the North one to serve fire & one to serve frost, one to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Out fire, enter frost, in the name of our Saviour Christ The Lord [keep blowing on the scald when you say this charm but don't blow when you say 'out fire']

TO REMOVE A STYE

21 Obtain a brass pin from the person who has the stye, rub the head of the pin roud the stye 9 times, form left to right couting as you do like this nane lheunican, jees lheunican up to nuy lheunican, then

reverse the rubbing & counting & say 'Ayns enmyn yn Ayr, as y Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo.' English version Obtain a yellow headed pin. With it make 9 crosses over the stye saying "from 1 to 2, from 2 to 3, form 3 to 4 etc, then count back again 'from 9 to 8, from 8 to 7 etc, to 1 to none [at all]." Then a cross over & above for each name in the following sentence 'In the name of Father, Son, & Holy Ghost. [Given as "English version."

22 A funeral is one of the requisites of this charm. Take a straw out of the bed, ~~round~~[ub] it round the stye, then run after the funeral & throw the straw at the coffin saying "take my stye away with your own," (this is believed to be now obsolete, though it has been used here within the last 20 years).

3

Disbound page spread from a School Exercise Book, paginated on side 1 as page 2 with heading "Charms & Charmers," and on side 3 as page 23, undated.

FOR WITCHCRAFT

23 "You must go church on a Sunday that then is sacrament. Pretend to eat the holy bread, but carry it home with you. At night go to a river [*interlined* ~~stand~~] where there is [*two characters overwritten*]a bridge, undress & stand in the water under the bridge, then throw the bread away & say "so I cast away God." Then dip under the water & say, "as I wash clean in this water, so do I clean myself from all works of God & his church & give myself to the Devil."

4

"Manx Plant [Name] Lore." School Exercise Book, missing cover, paginated (inconsistently) by Morrison, undated.

TO FORETELL A FUTURE HUSBAND [USING ASH-LEAVES]

24 Even Ash-leaf That is the same number of fonds—leaves on each side. Girls search for one on the tree & put it in their breasts as a charm repeating this rhyme: "Even ash I do thee pluck And in my bosom I thee put The first young man that I do meet I'll cross his name & that

will be it." (The meaning is that she'll cross (mark) his name, as it will be the name of her future husband)

25 Another way of foretelling futurity with the "even ash" is to count the pinnates alphabetically. whichever letter they end~~ed~~ upon was the initial letter of one's future husband's Christian name.

TO FORETELL A FUTURE HUSBAND [USING YARROW LEAVES]

26 The yarrow is cut too with some Charm rhyme "Yarrow, yarrow, I cut thee yarrow Tell me tell me before to morrow Who my sweetheart is to be."

27 "Yarrow, yarrow thee [and] I do pluck This time tomorrow tell me who my true love will be"

TO REMOVE WARTS

28 The way to cure a wart [stye] o[*overwritten* i]n the eylid is to point[*bar not completed but intended*] a goose berry thorn through a ring at it nine times saying "Lheunican beg gow royd As trooid thie ny arragh"—(Little stye go away & come back no more) the ninth thorn is thrown over the left shoulder

5

"On Manx Folk-Medicine." Loose sheets fastened together with brass pin along with notebook now only in part, unpaginated and undated.

FOR CANCER

29 For internal use a decoction of emloge "hemlock" is much used. Emloye, "the common hemlock," is believed to cure all who are unsound in body & to be poisonous to those who are well 'O! Emloge eeck, o! emloge eeck, When I am well you make me sick, When I am sick you make me well, O! Emloge eeck, o! emloge eeck.

6

Loose sheets pinned together, no cover page or title and text now incomplete, unpaginated, undated [1903 or after].

TO STOP BLOOD

30 I was amused this past September (1903) ~~in~~ [*interlined* at] the way which I was given {*interlined* received} a charm without weakening its effect to the giver. {*interlined* Whilst blaberry picking} I met on South Barrule, a ~~woman~~ {*interlined* family} pulling ling, for winter firing. Manks is the man's chengey ny mayrey, {*interlined* mother tongue} & so delighted was he {*interlined* to} speak it {*interlined* some}, that I ventured to ask him if he had any charms. He at once said 'yes' & gave it {one *intended to replace* it} to me. But to avoid losing any of its virtue ~~himself~~, he asked for my note book, placed {put *intended to replace* placed} it on top of the cart wheel, & wrote it in there, for writing it ~~seems~~ does not count. !{*amended from* .} This is what he wrote down—'As God said unto Moses, as thy river shall be as my river, & thy water as my water & thy blood as my blood. Why wont my blood stop also thy blood [full name] In the name of the Father, of the Son, & the Holy Ghost.

31 Before the flood, when water was wood Jesus stood & firmly stood. I pray Thee stop this blood of [name] In the name of the Father, Son & Holy Ghost.

32 Jesus was born in Bethlehem, baptized in the river Jordan. As the water stood the child spoke I pray Thee stop this blood of [name] in the name of Father, Son & Holy Ghost

33 In Thy name I mean, & by Thy power to stop the the vein of [name & age] In Father Son & Holy Ghost by Thy power I stop this vein.

FOR ERYSIPELAS (OR, ST ANTHONY'S FIRE)

34 Magh ass shoh, rose bwoirrin as rose fyrnyn M'ees eh shoh dy phooar Chreest Mac Yee, dy row ec ny scughey gys crink s'yrgey as myr yn Keayn mooar lhieeney as traie = "Out of this she erysipelas & he erysipelas! If it be thy will by the power of Christ the Son of God, may it be shifted to hills the highest, or as the deep sea ebbing & flowing.

FOR A SCALD

35 There was three angels came from the North one to serve fire, & one to serve frost, & one to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Out fire, enter frost, In the name of our Saviour Christ the Lord, (Blow on the scald when saying this charm, but not when 'fire' is said].

36 The hand is to be placed lightly on the scald, then removed, saying "I do this praying it wont blister In the name of the Fa-

ther, & of the Son, & Holy Ghost." Blow once on the scald after each name in the Trinity

37 Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as a Spyrrd Noo, gow yn scoldey shoh erysool = In the name of Father Son & Holy Ghost take this scald away. If not too painful place your hand on scald whilst saying this, removing it three times where the names of the Trinity are said to blow out

FOR A STYE

38 Obtain a brass headed pin from the person who has the stye, rub the head of the pin round the stye 9 times, from left to right, counting in Manx like this lheumican nane, lheumican jees, etc, up to lheumican nuy. Then reverse the rubbing & counting & say "Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo."

39 English version. Obtain a yellow headed pin, with it make 13 crosses over the stye saying from 1 to 2 from 2 to 3, from 3 to 4 etc, then count back again from 13 to 12, from 12 to 11, etc to 'from 1 to none to all.' Then the Trinity follows with further crosses for each name.

40 A funeral is one of the requisites of this charm. Take a straw out of the bed, rub it round the stye then run after a funeral, & throw the straw at the coffin saying "Take my stye away with your own." This charm I think is now obsolete, but the informant told me she had used it about 40 years ago.

41 Point through a ring nine gooseberry thorns, pulled off the bush, at the offending stye, then throw each one over the left shoulder. Do this for nine successive mornings, & at the end of the nine days the stye will be gone. It is said that this cure is equally efficacious for warts, if accompanied with a simple charm in Manx. The informant knew the charm at one time, but now could only remember that it was some words ringing the changes on a ring & a wart = "fainney as fahney.'

42 The way to cure a wart [sty] in the eyelid is to point a gooseberry thorn through a ring at it nine times saying "Lheumican beg gow rody As trooid thie ny arragh." (Little stye go away & come back no more) the ninth thorn is thrown over the left shoulder

TO REMOVE WARTS

43 You must tell nothing to anybody about what you intend to do, but when the people are in church on Sunday, get a snail & stick it on a thorn bush. Go to the ush every morning, & take the snail & rub it over the warts, when doing this it must be said to be done in the name of the Trinity. When the snail is dead the warts are gone.

44 Fahney veg, gob garragh gow raad as ny trooid dy bragh y arragh = Little wart, crooked mouth, & never come ever the more.

45 Place a dead hand on the mark. This was tried near to Peel last winter & cured a baby with an ugly birthmark. Warts may also, it is said, he cured by contact with the dead. When the dead hand is used as a charm, it must be done in the name of the Trinity.

7

Disbound notebook, paginated by Morrison on right-hand pages only, missing 1 and starts now on 3, undated.

FOR A BIRTHMARK

46 Place a dead hand on the mark. A man's hand for a girl, a woman's for a boy. Say it is done in the name of the Trinity.

TO STOP BLOOD

47 Before the flood when water was wood, Jesus stood and firmly stood. I pray thee stop this blood of [full name] In the name of the Father, Son & H.g.

48 Jesus was born in Bethelem, baptized in the river Jordan, as the water stood the child spoke I pray thee stop this blood of [full name] in the name of Father, Son & Holy Ghost.

49 In thy name I mean, & by thy power to stop this vein of [full name & age]. In Father, Son & H. G. by thy power I stop this vein.

FOR ERYSIPELAS (OR, ST ANTHONY'S FIRE)

50 Magh ass show rose bwoirrin as rose fyryn. M'ess* eh shoh dy phooar Chreest Mac Yee dy row ec ny scughey gys crink s'yrjey as mar yn cheapen molar lhieeney as traie. * My vees

51 [Charm—the butter is divided into three [*repeated* three] times. Whilst doing this the Charmer says that it is divided into three in the name of the Trinity for [full name] ill with S. Anthony's fire, & he prays that the butter may have virtue to heal by the power of the Trinity.

FOR LUMBAGO, RHEUMATISM ETC.

52 Ta mee skeaylley yn ghuin shoh ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo. My she grin ayns ennym yn Chiarn, ta mee skealley eh ass yn eill, ass ny fehyn, as ass ny crauenyn

FOR NUMBNESS IN THE FEET

53 Numbness or 'sleep' in feet "Ping, ping, trash, cur yn cadley jiargan ass my chass" Kelly's Dict, (heard today in Peel = Bing, Bing, wass {cur yn collan jiargan ass my chass.} cadley-jiargan = the prickling sensation in a limb known as "pins and needles" [preceded by the article yn]. Known here as Collan bing, or jiargan; also cadley keirn.

FOR RINGWORM

54 Ringworm red, ringworm ~~white~~ [red], do not spring do not spread. (This must be said three times while rubbing round the ringworm sunrise).

FOR A SCALD

55 There were three angels came from the North, one to serve fire, one to serve frost, one to serve our Lord Christ. Out fire, enter frost, In the name [of] our Saviour Christ the Lord. (Blow on the scald when saying this charm, but not when "out fire" is said.

56 Place the hand lightly on the scald, then remove it saying "I do this praying it wont blister. In the name of the Father etc Blow on the scald after each name in the Trinity

57 Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as y Spyrrd Noo, how yn scoldey shoh ersooyl, (If not too painful the hand must be placed on the scald whilst saying this charm removing it three times to blow on the scald when the names of the Trinity are said].

FOR A STYE

58 Obtain a brass headed pin from the person who has the stye, rub the head of the pin round the stye nine times from left to right, counting in Manx as follows "lheumican nane, lheumican jees, etc. up to lheumican nuy. Then reverse the rubbing & counting.

59 This charm seems to be an English version of the last. Obtain a yellow headed pin with it make thirteen crosses over the stye saying

"from one to two, from two to three etc; then count back again. "From 13 to 12 etc; to 'from one to none at all." Then the Trinity follows with a further cross for each name

60 A funeral was one of the requisites of the following charm. Take a straw out of the bed, rub it round the stye, then run after a funeral throw the straw at the coffin & say "Take my stye away with your own."

TO REMOVE WARTS

61 "You must' tell nothing to nobody about what you are going' to do, but when the people are in church on Sunday, get a snap, rub it over the warts & then stick it on a snail, rub it over the warts. When doing this it must be said to be done in the name of the Trinity.[F. S. & H.S.] When the snail is dead the warts are gone."

62 Fahney veg gob garragh, now raad as ny biooid dy brags y arragh.

TO SEE ONE'S SWEETHEART

63 To see one's sweetheart—say the Lord's Prayer backwards three times. "I knew a girl that did this once—Mary Lewin—& she saw her sweetheart right enough, but she was plagued for long enough after it, for as soon as it was afther sunset, no matter when she would [be] stones and clods of turf & sticks would be flung at her & no one could find out who did it.

8

Antient Cymric Medicine and Lecture Memoranda, British Medical Association Meeting Swansea, 1903 [blank pages used as notebook by Morrison].

TO STOP BLOOD

64 When the water was the wood. Jesus stood & firmly stood. I command the blood of [man's | woman's full name] to stop, in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & Holy Ghost.

FOR A SCALD

65 Place your hand on Scald then remove it & blow on the scald & say "I do this praying it wont blister," In the name of the Father, Sons & Holy Ghost. {*entered on line under Father* … (blow) (blow)}

FOR A STYE

66 Obtain a pin from the person who has the stye. With it make thirteen crosses over stye, saying "Nane (1) er y lheunican, Jees (2) er y etc; up to 13. Then a cross for each name in the following sentence—In the name of the Father, & of the Son, & Holy Ghost.

9

"Manx Folk Lore | Collected by self 1903" [Notebook].

TO STOP BLOOD

67 "When the water was the word, Jesus stood & firmly stood. I command the blood of [man's | woman's full name] to stop in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Ghost."

FOR A SCALD

68 Place your hand on the scald, then remove it saying "I do this praying it wont blister." Then blow on the scald after each of the following names. "In the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Ghost."

FOR A STYE

69 Obtain a [brass headed] pin from the person who has the stye. With it make thirteen crosses over the stye, saying 'Nane (1) er y lheurnican, jees (2) er y lheunican," etc up to thirteen. Then a cross over & above for each name in the following sentence "Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as yn Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo."

TO REMOVE WARTS

70 (Very powerful) "You must tell nothing to nobody about what you are going to do, but when the people are in church of a Sunday, get hold

of a snail & stitch it on a thorn bush. Go your ways every morning to the bush, take the snail & rub it over your warts. You say when you do this, that you do it in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & H.G. As the snail slowly dies on the thorn, so will the warts at you go away, & when the snail is dead, there wont be a wart left."

*

INDEX

Lumbago (or Rheumatism), [5], [52].
Numbness, [53].
Scald, [6], [37], [57].
Stye, [7], [21], [41], [42], [58], [66], [69].
Warts, [9], [18], [28], [43], [62].

*

I wish to thank the editors of *Incanatatio* and the peer reviewers who were kind enough to point out in the absence of a desired commentary some pointers to charm-types for which I am grateful: #2, #15, #32, and #48 is "Flum Jordan"; #20, #35, and #55, "Out Fire in Frost"; and #24, "Even, even ash."

*

APPENDIX

SOPHIA MORRISON WRITES TO ALEXANDER CARMICHAEL (1910)

Sept 1

Dear Dr Carmichael

I am myself very much interested in Charms & have collected a good deal of material on the subject. The belief in Charms is still as deeply rooted as ever in the minds of ~~the~~ [*interlined* Manx] people—nearly every household in Peel can give you a story of a cure by a charm, & many persons have the power of stopping blood at a distance. 1 man has 3 C.[1] for s. b,[2] The 1st stops the flow instantly, the 2nd, in about 3 or 4 m.[3] the 3rd in 6 or 7. He seldom uses the 1st, as he finds that it is apt to do harm by such a sudden stoppage, the 3rd is the 1 he generally uses. We know nothing whatever about moles—so have no Charms for that special affliction. It is believed that all charms to stop blood can be used successfully without the Charmer seeing the patient—I have heard of one Charmer who requires to take hold some article of clothing belonging to the patient—a handker.[4] for instance—but this may be regarded as exceptional. An

> important factor in M. Ch.[5] is the insistence on the full name of the patient, & it must be given as at baptism, otherwise the charm will be of no good. Whether used alone or with a herbal remedy the virtue of a Charm may be destroyed in four ways.
>
> I have myself collected many Charms & can testify to their use at the present day. Some require contact of the hand dead or alive, others (stys) are most efficacious by contact with metal, others again, as scalds, by the breath. It is a most interesting subject.
>
> Yours etc | S.M.

Notes: [1] *Charms* [2] *stopping blood* [3] *minutes* [4] *handkerchief* [5] *Manx Charms*
Source: Copy letter of Sophia Morrison to [Alexander] Carmichael, 1 September [1910], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 4, Letter Copybook (1908–13). I am grateful to Dr Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart of the Carmichael Watson Project at the University of Edinburgh for confirming that the recipient of the letter was indeed Alexander Carmichael.

*

BIO

Mag. Stephen Miller. External Lecturer, Department of German, University of Vienna.Research interests: folklore and folk song collecting in the Isle of Man especially the Gill Brothers; the Pan Celtic Revial; Mona Douglas. Other interests include the Scottish folklorists W.G. Black and the Rev. Walter Gregor, and the history and development of the Folk-Lore Society of London.

https://doi.org/10.7592/Incantatio2025_13_Wolf

AN IRISH CHARM AMONG THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FOLKLORE COLLECTINGS OF J. J. LYONS

Nicholas M. Wolf

Abstract: Newspapers, along with other periodical forms of media, played an important role in the distribution of folklore collected in the nineteenth century. One such publication within the Irish and Irish American context that contributed to this periodical-based interest in disseminating folklore was the Brooklyn newspaper *An Gaodhal*, among the earliest newspapers produced predominantly in the Irish language. Included in its contributors was the Philadelphia-based Irish speaker J. J. Lyons, who published over a hundred songs, prayers, and other folk collectings that he acquired through talking to Irish informants in the United States. These efforts include a charm for the Evil Eye contributed to an 1890 issue of *An Gaodhal*. This and other instances of published folklore collecting are significant in that the format of nineteenth-century newspapers, with their emphasis on identifying informants to demonstrate authenticity and accuracy of the contribution, contributed to a growing ethnographic and professionalized approach to folklore that would subsequently dominate the field.

Keywords: Newspapers, Irish folklore, Irish language, Evil Eye charm

A revealing example of the continued popularity of charms among nineteenth-century communities can be found in the earliest newspaper to feature a significant portion of its content in the Irish language, the Brooklyn-based *An Gaodhal*.[1] Founded in 1881 by a Galway-born immigrant to the United States, Mícheál Ó Lócháin (1836–99), the newspaper presented political updates, current events, and material for learning how to read the Irish language, as well as reader-contributed songs, folk tales, and poetry meant to draw its Irish American readers into a broader Irish-language culture that its editor believed need bolstering amid the declining numbers of speakers of the language in the second half of the nineteenth century. The newspaper was very

much a contributor to the unfolding Gaelic Revival, a movement built on the financial and literary contributions of the Irish on both sides of the Atlantic with an aim of de-Anglicizing Irish culture and drawing more heavily on its Gaelic past (O'Leary 1994; McMahon 2008). A monthly publication set at a subscription rate of less than a dollar, *An Gaodhal*'s subscriber lists contain names from hundreds of men and women around the United States who took an interest in reading and circulating the newspaper as an expression of their affinity for the Irish language and for a publication that overtly celebrated the country's history and culture.

Although *An Gaodhal* lasted nearly two decades under the editorship of Ó Lócháin, its monthly format and inclusion of English-language content as well as items in Irish means that it represented only a small corpus within the larger context of publishing in the United States in the late nineteenth century. The total extent of its initial run in the nineteenth century was less than 2,500 pages. And yet, tellingly, even within this small window onto the Irish-speaking community a charm text makes its appearance, demonstrating the prevalence of charms in popular culture in this time period. In this case the charm in question is a protective incantation against the evil eye, collected by a Philadelphia-based Irish speaker named J. J. Lyons. Lyons reported that he had taken down the charm, which he described as a "prayer to be said by a person supposed to be overlooked, or as they say, a bad eye made of," from a Mrs. Mulhearn of Clonghaneely, County Donegal. It was titled "Ortha n-aghaidh Droch-Amharc" (A Charm against the Evil Eye):

> Ortha chuir Mac Dé air each [*sic*] neach
> Paidir na bhfeart air a dhá ghlún,
> Sileadh fola as a chneadha
> A Mhic gan locht, is maith do rún
>
> 'Nuair a chonairc Muire a Mac fhéin
> Air a' chroith le n-a dhá súil,
> Shil sí trí spreasa fola
> Agus í fá h-ucht ann Righ na n-dúl
>
> A shúil údaigh, a rinne mo lot,
> A bhain díom mo dhreach 's mo shnuadh,
> Guidhim-se Muire 'agus Mac
> Agus Righ na bh-flaithis a toghbháil uaim

[A charm that the Son of God placed on every person
An almighty *pater* to say on two knees
A dripping of blood from his wound
Son without fault, your mystery is great
When Mary saw her own Son
On the cross with her own eyes
She shed three showers of blood
While at the lap of the Lord of Creation
Oh Evil Eye that made my injury
That took from me my appearance and my complexion
I pray to Mary and her Son
And the Lord of the Heavens to take it from me][2]

No further information about the charm is given, though it evidently drew notice: Douglas Hyde reprinted the charm in his two-volume *Abhráin Diadha Chúige Connacht* (The Religious Songs of Connacht; 1906), in which he noted that the Irish-language revivalist Eoghan Ó Gramhnaigh (1863–99) had found the same charm on the Aran Islands; Hyde erroneously reported that Lyons had learned the charm from a man (Hyde 1972: 2:55–57).

A larger importance can be ascribed to the appearance of this charm and to the folklore-collecting efforts of Lyons more broadly in this particularly newspaper format, however. While the charm reaffirms that even a relatively brief corpus of folklore collectings as that presented in *An Gaodhal* surfaced this genre of folk practice, it is the growing use of newspapers as a medium—effectively used by Lyons as well as his contemporaries—that is most significant. With their emphasis on accurate capture of folk beliefs and decision (in line with newspaper practice in general) to present attribution for the informants, the contributions of Lyons and others in Ireland contributed to a wider use of newspapers in other national and linguistic contexts to present folklore in this particular print format. This in turn helped shape the evolution of folklore study as a science.

J. J. LYONS AND THE ORIGINS OF FOLKLORE STUDY IN IRELAND

There is frustratingly little information known about Lyons, and while Cloghaneely (in Irish, Cloich Chionnaola) is well-known as a place with

strong Irish-language connections, to date the Mrs. Mulhearn referenced by Lyons cannot be traced. Lyons appears not to have mentioned Mulhearn as a source in his other contributions to the newspaper, and further searching will be needed to see if she appears in any other contemporary archival documents or newspapers. Cloghaneely, located in the far northwest of Ireland, was the birthplace of the famous Micí Mac Gabhann (1865–1948), the memoirist whose Irish-language account of his time in mining in the Alaskan Klondike is a compelling account of nineteenth-century global migration (Breathnach and Ní Mhurchú "Mac Gabhann"; Mac Gowan 2003). In the twentieth century Cloghaneely became known as the site of Coláiste Uladh, one of the many Irish-language colleges founded to train teachers and enthusiasts for the language and yet another feature of the Gaelic Revival of the time (Ó Ceallaigh 2017; McCafferty 2025). It therefore makes sense that Lyons would encounter an individual in the United States with strong knowledge of Irish-language folklore whose origins had been Cloghaneely.

As for Lyons himself, what can be said is that he was a prolific collector with strong interest in the subject of folklore. His contributions appear more than one hundred times over the course of the seventeen-year run of *An Gaodhal* 1881 to 1894, with Lyons's first mention appearing in 1884. To that we can add nearly fifty contributions between 1888 and 1894 to another Irish American newspaper, the *Irish-American*, to which Lyons sent songs, poems, and prose for inclusion in its "Gaelic Department" column (Knight 2021: 316–423). Large numbers of his contributions also show up in the Irish-based newspaper *Tuam News*, whose publisher John Glynne corresponded with Lyons regularly. Deirdre Ní Chonghaile has tracked down some additional biographical information. Lyons was from Glenamaddy (Gleann na Madadh), County Galway, birth date unknown, and had spent time at a school run by Luke Comer, a known Irish-language scholar. The region was also known for the influence of the Irish-language advocate Archbishop John MacHale, whose opposition to the English-language curriculum of the state's National Schools must have prompted at least some of Lyons's enthusiasm for the language (Ní Chonghaile 2015:198–201). Moving to Philadelphia at some point by the early 1880s, Lyons became active in the city's Philo-Celtic Society, and his name appears among those making addresses to its meetings in Irish.

Lyons was one of a handful of Irish-born individuals based in Philadelphia and the eastern Pennsylvania area who became active in seeking songs, stories, and prayers from Irish immigrants in the surrounding

area, including most notably the Rev. Daniel J. Murphy (1858–1935), whose manuscripts (now at the University of Galway) contain thousands of collected items (Ní Chonghaile 2015:205). Lyons's efforts earned him a strong reputation among his colleagues. Hyde extolled his accuracy, writing that

> Mr. Lyons has laid all the Irish scholars of the world under debt and obligation to him for the songs and poems and other things which he has written down punctually and exactly from the mouth of our poor people whom he met in America, without altering or doctoring anything, but giving them exactly as he heard them. (Hyde 1972: 1:389)

Ó Lócháin, whose newspaper was the beneficiary of so many of Lyons's contributions, praised him in similar terms:

> Mr. Lyons deserves great credit for his unceasing exertions in preserving the old songs and literature of his native land. We have many so-called Irishmen, but when we of the present generation shall be numbered with our fore-fathers, the impartial historian will record from the columns of *An Gaodhal* the names of those who are really and earnestly laboring in the cause of Irish nationality."[3]

Coming from two such active participants in the Gaelic Revival movement of this period, this praise is notable.

While the approach used by Lyons was not the same as modern frameworks based on methodical collecting of folklore with extensive documentation of informants and context, he stands out for his time period given the carefulness of his approach. In many ways, he can be considered a proto-folklorist of the type that could be found in this era in Ireland and elsewhere, and which include noted contemporaries such as Hyde and the Americans Jeremiah and Alma Curtin, who produced well-regarded collections of Irish folk material at the time. Several aspects of Lyons's work stand out. First, because he was operating out of the United States, where he had easier access to Irish immigrants coming from diverse regions within Ireland, his collecting encompasses a wider geographic swath of the home country than contemporaries who sought folk material from targeted locations. Operating out of Philadelphia, he visited Irish who had been born in counties Clare, Derry, Donegal, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Tipperary, and Tyrone. Not only did this ensure a greater variety of tales, but it also bridged what

was often a divide within Irish-language revival circles of the time, the differences in dialects of the Irish language between north, south, and west locations. His catholicity in collecting extended to genres of folk material as well. His biggest interest appears to have been songs, which predominate in the material submitted to *An Gaodhal* and to the *Irish American*, but not exclusively. Indeed, even in this interest in song, Lyons stands apart from many of his contemporaries like the Curtins, who were often focused on extended-length tales. Lyons on the other hand contributed poems and tales, as well as more ephemeral items such as prayers and, of course, the charm reproduced above.

Hyde's observation about Lyons's care in recording folklore accurately can be supplemented by another key feature of his work, which is his efforts to record the name and background information of his informants. A far cry from the anonymously presented folk tales, often worked up to evoke a literary aesthetic, so typical of his nineteenth-century folklorist predecessors, Lyons reliably added informant names and locational origins for his material with the exception, as he states in one instance, of a respondent who "does not wish to see her name in print."[4] The relative modernity of Lyons's approach is all the more noteworthy if we consider his earliest antecedents as well as his immediate precursors of mid-nineteenth-century Ireland. Interest in collecting and publishing vernacular oral culture of a Celtic type could be said to start with the Ossianic interests of James Macpherson, whose publications—later subject to controversy over their authenticity—drew on the shared Scottish Gaelic and Irish Ulster epic Fenian-cycle traditions (O'Halloran 1989:74). Perhaps more impactful as a step in the evolution of Irish proto-folklorists, as Angela Bourke has shown in an overview of the creation of the folklore field in Ireland, was Thomas Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, published in 1825 in the wake of the influence of the Grimm brothers (Bourke 2009:144).

Whereas MacPherson's Ossianic publication had been concerned with finding a kind of Celtic epic poetry in the vein of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, Crofton Croker's presentation was literary but with an early nineteenth-century novelistic turn, concerned with uncovering residual "superstitions" of the peasantry and presenting them in tidy readable forms. The means by which Crofton Croker obtained the tales and his informants, of course, were obscured, and he favored long-form tales over the short oral accounts that might have been more prevalent. Elements of this literary approach to folklore continued in Ireland at mid-

century. William Wilde's *Irish Popular Superstitions* (1852), explicitly stated the need for that book to uncover popular tales, especially those related to fairies, that could serve as inspirational material in the way that English vernacular tales had inspired Shakespeare (Wilde 1973:v). Wilde, a doctor, did however expand the type of material included so that his publication presented herbal cures, ceremonial practices, and most importantly, charms. His work and that of his wife, Lady Wilde, also known as Speranza, in her *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* (1887) together clearly represented development toward a more comprehensive survey of beliefs rather than simply cherry-picking items most likely to sound like what could be found in contemporary literary works.

Still, as Bourke has noted, the pre-1880s generation shared a common view of their work as uncovering vestiges of a primitive culture in Ireland, and often exhibited a tendency to use manuscript sources as well as oral informants in their publications. Like their amateur antiquary compatriots who followed suit in scouring bogs and fields for Bronze Age artifacts, the Wildes felt that they were recording the distinct features of a lost culture that could also, if shaped and redeployed, provide a foundation for a new modern Irish nation (Bourke 2009:144–45). This folk content, as Lady Wilde referred to it, was "the mythology, or the fantastic creed of the Irish respecting the invisible world—strange and mystical superstitions, brought thousands of years ago from their Aryan home, but which still, even in the present time, affect all the modes of thinking and acting in the daily life of the people" (Wilde 1887:1:vi). This mid-century ideology gave way slowly, starting in the 1880s, when those like Hyde and the Curtins turned to exclusively oral sources to explain the foundations of the songs, poems, tales, and charms that they found when traveling among the people they sought to document. Tellingly, this new cohort was interested in conducting this work as far as possible in the Irish language, bringing greater accuracy in capturing folk material in its original form. Hyde, who had learned Irish when growing up on his father's estate in Roscommon, provided both Irish originals and English translations of the items he found. The Curtins, who were Americans, relied on local Irish speakers like Patrick Ferriter, who later went on in the twentieth century to become an active folklore and manuscript collector in his own right (Bourke 2009:159).

This interest in accuracy, proximity to the original informants, and transparency in source material all bring Lyons into alignment with this late nineteenth-century generation of proto-folklorists. But one

last notable aspect of Lyons's work also linked him to Hyde and the Curtins, and this was the use of newspapers and periodicals as a publishing outlet. The Curtins, for instance, published their material in the New York *Sun*, a newspaper that had even contributed financially to their trip to the west of Ireland in 1891–93 (Bourke 2009:158). Hyde's *Religious Songs of Connacht* originally appeared in the *New Ireland Review* in serialized form between 1985 and 1905, and he had been publishing in places like the *Weekly Freeman* and the *Dublin University Review* since 1885 (Daly 1972:ix). This contrasted with the practices of their predecessors, who often preferred to publish their material in book volumes, in keeping with the literary feel that they were driving for in their presentation of the folklore.

NEWSPAPERS AND FOLKLORE

The impact of newspapers and periodicals on folklore itself and in its collecting and presentation has been the topic of some scholarly investigation, but in evaluating this history such studies have appeared only intermittently across various national and linguistic contexts. There are a number of studies, for example, that have argued for what could be called the folkloristic aspects of regular newspaper content—in short, the ways in which newspaper served as a medium for expressing folklore directly (Dorson 1965; Flanagan 1958; Valk 2012). In these cases, moralistic stories, local accounts, and other narratives purporting to be a part of the fabric of the newspaper share elements such as motifs with the larger body of worldwide folklore.

More salient, however, are scholarly studies of early contributors to newspapers (as well as periodicals) who, starting in the first decades of the nineteenth century, submitted for publication folklore that was consciously identified as folklore. These contributors, in other words, saw themselves as documenting folklore encountered in the field. The place of periodicals and newspapers in the fledgling science of folklore was strong and immediate, certainly in the English-language context— tellingly, it was in a contribution to the *Athenaeum* periodical in 1846 that the term "folklore," as is well known, was coined by William John Thoms (Markey 2006:21). Studies on the English-language contexts of Britain and the United States show that newspapers and periodical were in fact very popular as a destination for collected folklore in the nineteenth century, especially in terms of local publications, with contributors especially eager to represent content faithfully based on

what had been found out in the field. Amateur linguists, local historians, dialectologists, and antiquarians were especially active in this endeavor, building an often-overlooked corpus that was nevertheless far more scientific and systematic in comparison to what was being produced by the proto-folklorists active at the time (Ashton 1997; Carey 1968; Dorson 1949; Miller 2011; Tebutt 1969; Upton 1982).

That nineteenth-century newspapers helped mold the discipline and practice of folklore collecting, and would therefore play their part in the Irish folklore and charms identified by Lyons, Hyde, and others, makes sense on further reflection. Contemporaries would have been very aware of the large and immediate audience provided by a newspaper readership, bolstering their decision to use newspapers as a vehicle to present such material. Newspapers also imparted a sense of prestige and importance to their content. Contributors to Irish American newspapers such as Lyons, especially those publishing in Irish, were engaged in an endeavor to build the respectability of Irish culture and the Irish language in the eyes of the general public. This made contributing and publishing folklore in that venue attractive, since those newspapers placed an emphasis on the antiquity and authenticity of its Irish-language content, playing up the esteemed nature of an aspect of national identity that its contributors sought to build.

The newspaper as a format in turn put its stamp on the approach used in presenting folklore. Just as a letter to the editor acquired strength of argument through the inclusion of the author's identity, the decision by Lyons and others to include the names of informants added an air of accuracy and legitimacy to the transcription of folk content; it also pointed toward providing context and deanonymization of sources in anticipation of the more ethnographically minded scholars of the twentieth century. Local informants, too, would have been excited in most cases to see their names as attributions in the newspaper (the exception mentioned by Lyons above notwithstanding), further encouraging the transparency of the folklore presented in newspapers in a way not appropriate to a venue like the novelistic and literary creations of Crofton Croker or the Wildes. Finally, the more limited space available for folk contributions in a newspaper favored shorter pieces. Lyons and other contributors to *An Gaodhal* were on occasion afforded multiple columns, but a partial single column afforded for folk content was much more typical of many of these brief contributions. Again, this shorter-form approach contrasted with the extended epic tales favored by the full-book formats of the great nineteenth-century

collections—Crofton Croker, for example, dedicated an entire chapter of approximately ten pages to each of his collected pieces—likely encouraging briefer and perhaps more representative folkloristic content to appear in the newspapers. Charms such as the one presented by Lyons in the July 1890 issue, with their relative brevity, would have also fallen nicely into this category, benefitting from the short format of newspapers and periodicals.

And yet newspapers and periodicals also had a downside in that they plucked charms and other folklore material from their natural context, positioning them as a specimens for study rather than as integrated parts of the fabric of nineteenth-century culture. An example from Hyde's presentation of charms can illustrate this. "Charms," Hyde wrote, "are common enough, and there is on some of them the trace of paganism, and there are in some of them words in which there is now no sense. Some of the people themselves scoffed at them, but in spite of that they have come down to us to the present day." As evidence of this half-serious view of charms, Hyde presents a "mock tooth-ache charm" that he had heard, and which presented humorous twists on well-worn motifs in the *super petram* type:

> A charm which Seumas sent to Diarmuid
> A charm with requesting, without asking,
> The pain that is in your front-tooth,
> To be in the furthest-back tooth in your gum! (Hyde 1972: 2:61)

Skepticism of charms presented in nineteenth-century Irish-language manuscripts was not unknown, of course, but when presented in a mass-readership medium such as a newspaper, it would have reinforced the sense of "otherness" perceived in the world of charming in the contemporary world of Lyons and Hyde.

Indeed, the treatment of charms elsewhere in *An Gaodhal* indicates an antiquarian interest as much as a proto-ethnographic one. Two other mentions of charms can be found in this twenty-year run: a reference to the medieval charms contained in St. Gall MS 1395 and first edited by Johann Kaspar Zuess, and an anticipatory notice that the forthcoming *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* of 1892 will include Gaelic-language charms.[5] In both cases the interest is purely scholarly, with the reference to the St. Gall charm occurring in a reprint of Eugene O'Curry's lectures to the Catholic University in Dublin on early Irish history, and the reference to the *Transactions* in a list of academic

publication notices culled from the Irish-based newspaper *Irisleabhar na Gaeilge*. These references show interest in charms on the part of the newspaper's readers, but in a tenuous, indirect, and static fashion in comparison to the Lyons contribution.

CONCLUSION

The voluminous contributions of Lyons deserved the attention they received from his contemporaries, preserving as they did a slice of Irish folk culture that had been transplanted to the United States but being nevertheless broadly representative of the beliefs and practices of the country in the second half of the nineteenth century. More information about Lyons will likely be gleaned in coming years as his contributions to other newspapers come to light, and further archival investigations turn up information about his origins in Galway. Other aspects of his collecting, such as the disproportionately large number of female informants that he relied on (at least in *An Goadhal*) and his work in Philadelphia on behalf of Irish-language classes are among the aspects of his career beyond his charm-collecting that deserve notice in future appraisals of his work. For now, his annotation of sources and origins of his informants suffice to demonstrate his place in the history of Irish folklore study.

But attention should be directed to Lyons's choice of venue for presenting his folk material as much as his own prolificacy. Newspapers had grown significantly, owing to mass production and growing mass literacy, as a presence in the everyday life of the nineteenth century, and the choice to present folk material through this medium widened its audience even as the format of that form of communication placed its stamp on the contributions by Lyons and his contemporaries. The tendency to present attributions for newspaper content encouraged collectors to provide the names of sources, as did a growing emphasis by the late nineteenth century on the accurate—and thus "authentic"—recording of folk content directly from informants. Lyons was not alone in this approach, as the original periodical formats of the folk collections of his fellow enthusiasts Douglas Hyde and the Curtins suggest. In this sense for all of the uniqueness of *An Gaodhal* as an early entrant of the Irish-language publishing of the Gaelic Revival, it was very much representative of other trends in folklore presentation and newspaper developments of the time.

NOTES

[1] Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the annual meetings of the Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming in Helsinki in 2024 and at Bucharest in 2025. The author is grateful for the comments and feedback provided at these two venues in shaping its direction and for the suggestions made in the editorial process by its anonymous readers.

[2] *An Gaodhal*, July 1890, 980. Translation by author. In line 1 Hyde presents *gach* rather than *each* although the latter is the word presented in the newspaper version. In this context *gach* makes more sense: "every person." In line 9, second word, the newspaper has clearly printed *fhúil*, mistakenly supplying an F when a lenited S makes sense: *súil*, eye, rather than *fuil*, blood. Hyde also presumes the word to be *súil*.

[3] *An Gaodhal*, July 1889, 876.

[4] *An Gaodhal*, June 1890, 960.

[5] *An Gaodhal*, Dec. 1889, 844, and May 1892, 284. On the St. Gall (or Sankt Gallen) charms, see Tuomi 2019: 54–56.

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BIO

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LANGUAGING AND IRRUPTIONS IN A MEDIEVAL LATIN CHARM: A CASE STUDY ON POETICS, 'WEIRDNESS', AND SENSE IN NON-SENSE

Frog

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Abstract: This paper introduces the concept of *languaging* and explores its relevance to charm research through the case of a little-studied eleventh-century Latin text for healing fever. The concept of languaging was developed in linguistics for the analysis of people's use of multiple languages in interaction. Here, the concept is adapted to the study of folklore registers and genres. *Irruption* is introduced as a complementary concept to describe a distinct phenomenon in languaging. The text of the case study is approached as representing a metadiscursive genre that verbally communicates how to perform a ritual. The verbal components of this performance include two Old Germanic words as well as words from Greek and Hebrew, and an irruption of an etymologically opaque stretch of text or *voces mysticae*. A close look at the *voces mysticae* reveals contrasts in the semantics or associations of its constituents, which suggests syntax and that this part of the text was somehow interpreted or interpretable to users.

Keywords: charm, ritual, register, medieval, languaging, irruption

> Spells are composed in special languages, the language of the gods and spirits or the language of magic. Two striking examples of this kind of rite are the Malaysian use of *bhàsahantu* (spirit language) and the Angekok language of the Eskimoes. [….] Magicians used Sanskrit in the India of the Prakrits, Egyptian and Hebrew in the Greek world, Greek in Latin-speaking countries and Latin with us. All over the world people value archaisms and strange and incomprehensible terms.
>
> — Marcel Mauss (1902 [2001]: 71)

Medieval healing texts present innumerable examples of written or oral utterances that involve juxtaposing or mixing languages, *voces mysticae*,[1] archaisms, or otherwise 'weird' language. The transpositions of words, phrases, or whole texts of different languages in magic and ritual is so widespread that it tends to be taken for granted. Particular cases easily become viewed as socio-historically specific manifestations of a characteristic feature of ritual language more generally (e.g. Du Bois 1986). The present discussion situates this phenomenon in a broader context of how people may draw on a diversity of linguistic resources in both specific situations and in established social practices.

Combining and manipulating different varieties of linguistic resources is here framed through the concept of *languaging*. Languaging has been on the rise in social linguistics to advance beyond imaginations of languages as ideal and mutually exclusive systems. Alongside languaging, I employ the concepts of *register* to refer to varieties language or other semiotic resources, and *genre* for categories of the products of expression. The term *irruption* is introduced to refer to salient transpositions of languages or language varieties, in order to distinguish these from transpositions that may be more etymological than noticeable for users and observers. Together, these form a terminological toolkit for addressing the operation of language both at the general level of practices and in particular cases. A significant portion of the following is devoted to introducing languaging in relation to these other concepts and their applicability to folklore, and especially to charms. The paper culminates in an illustrative case study of a little-studied Latin text from an Old High German language area dated to the eleventh century on healing fever. The text is contained in the quarto manuscript, shelfmark Clm 18956 (Teg. 956), held in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, and it is of particular interest because, despite the semantic opacity of its *voces mysticae*, the respective text sequence is potentially organized through syntax.

BACKGROUND

The use of multiple languages and *voces mysticae* has been in discussion since the disciplines of philology and folklore studies took shape across the nineteenth century. Medieval verbal charms became linked to different disciplines according to their cultural context and national scholarship. The background provided here is focused on research con-

cerned with Old Germanic languages and charms in Old Germanic language areas.

Charm research on Germanic traditions generally took shape as an offshoot of philology.[2] Until the paradigm shift linked to postmodernism, documented oral traditions were approached as equivalent to variant copies of medieval manuscripts reflecting a reconstructable ideal text, and charm research customarily included written sources back to the earliest medieval documents. The research took shape in the ideological environment of National Romanticism, which was predominantly concerned with reconstructing the linguistic and cultural heritage of siloed ethno-linguistic groups. When considering charms or many other genres of folklore, it is crucial to bear in mind that the documentation of the traditions across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were widely shaped by ideologies of language as emblematic of culture and of a 'nation', in the etymological sense of a people of shared natal origin (see Vermeulen 2008). These ideologies made language a primary determinant on what individual collectors recorded, and then how the notebooks of early collectors became visible as source material when they passed through the prism of archives' indexing principles. The issue is exemplified by Finland's two, separate institutions with their two, separate archives, each representing one of Finland's two national languages. The Finnish Literature Society has perhaps the world's largest collection of folklore from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and it has been on the same block as the Swedish Literature Society in Finland for decades, yet there is still no way to search their corpora for people who may have contributed to both folklore collections. As a consequence, the respective oral genres tend to seem (mostly) monolingual. This is relevant in the present context because, especially in the medieval corpora, juxtapositions of Latin and a local vernacular or Latin and *voces mysticae* are widespread. In post-medieval folklore collection, charmers might know verbal charms in several languages (e.g. Vaitkevičienė 2008: 17–18, 71), holding charms as tools for doing certain things irrespective of the language that constitutes their form. Nevertheless, the construction of corpora may considerably exaggerate the impression of charming practices being segregated by language.

These ways of thinking about languages and how they relate to culture or people can be viewed as *language ideologies* – i.e. ideologies of what languages are and how they relate to social identities, nations, each other, or other things in the world.[3] These ideologies made it important in research to sort out alternations between languages,

particularly during the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century when the reconstruction of the *Urform* ['original form'] of a tradition-as-text was a primary concern. The Enlightenment-era language ideology that valorized language as ideally characterized by communicability, exemplified by the work of John Locke (1632–1704), has recently received attention for its role in structuring power relations in society (Briggs 2024). However, this same ideology led to the deconstruction of the incommunicability of *voces mysticae* as 'corrupted' words or phrases from other languages, like interpreting *hocus pocus* as a corruption of *hoc est corpus* ['this is the body'] (Tillotson 1694 [1742]: 237, *s.v.* 'hocus-pocus'). During the nineteenth century, the fetishism that took shape around reconstruction produced a paradigm for approaching *voces mysticae* as etymological puzzles, sometimes involving interpretational acrobatics to unravel a historically underlying phrase.[4] This idea operated alongside viewing some *voces mysticae* as "a mere mass of jingling nonsense" (Storms 1948: 5) and others as secret names or language (e.g. Güntert 1921: ch.4). Although "one editor's gibberish was often another person's language" (Arnovick 2006: 32), the dominant approach was to sort languages within a text and either reconstruct the *Urform* for each stretch of text or dismiss it as gibberish,[5] reducing it to an articulation of superstition without relevance to reconstructions.

Especially in medieval charm research, the approaches to languages seem to have remained relatively stable until the second half of the twentieth century. Germanic philological approaches generally remained divorced from fieldwork-based research across that whole time. In the wake of postmodernism, a cross-disciplinary paradigm shift steered focus from continuity-centered diachronic reconstruction to variation in synchronic contexts. The changes in this shift included: the remarkable boom in the reception of Oral-Formulaic Theory (following Lord 1960; see Frog & Lamb 2021); the rise of New Philology, attending to manuscripts and their texts in context rather than marginalized as source data for reconstruction (e.g. Speer 1979); the social turn in medieval studies, which reframed medieval healing text corpora as "the 'technology' of sorcery in the ancient world" (Brown 1970: 18) situated in relation to social contexts and relations (e.g. Douglas 1970); and the turn in folklore research from traditions as idealized text-objects to situated performance (e.g. Ben Amos & Goldstein 1975). These shifts reconfigured the relations between disciplines, which produced a divide between folklore research and philology. This cascade of impacts broke down the dominance of reconstructive approaches as well as

cross-cultural comparative approaches. It brought to light methodological problems of earlier research, especially with rising source-critical standards, while the earlier research questions no longer aligned with trending interests. (See further Frog 2013; 2021c; Frog & Ahola 2021). With these changes, the etymological acrobatics surrounding *voces mysticae* went into decline, and attention to the alternation of languages in healing texts also seems to have decreased. However, the transformative impacts seem not to have produced prominent new trajectories in the discussion of what is here called languaging in verbal charms, although the social turn, for instance, led knowledge of, or access to, language to be interpretable as structuring the relations between social positions (cf. Tambiah 1973 [1985]: 26–27).

The turn to situated meanings and meaning-production that gained momentum in the 1980s and reached a watershed around 1990 was partly linked to, but mostly followed by, a gradual renewal of interest in cross-cultural comparativism. This development was accompanied by the more rapid rise of interdisciplinarity.[6] The turn to meanings stepped back from the idea of communicability in the sense of language as expressing clear and unambiguous propositional meanings. This was especially significant for *voces mysticae* and jumbled phrases of other languages observed in Old Germanic charms and ritual texts. For example, Karen Louise Jolly called for the language used in charms to be considered from an emic perspective:

> The early Middle Ages probably did not have a concept of 'meaningless words' (just words a given individual did not understand). Late antique and medieval attitudes toward words and meaning were thus significantly different from our own, in that understanding the language was not considered absolutely necessary to the efficacy of the word. (Jolly 1996: 117.)

Similarly, John Miles Foley approached *voces mysticae* in Old English texts as a semiotic phenomenon, describing them as "embody[ing] a semantically unencumbered species of coding" that can "stand for a complex and richly nuanced traditional idea under the aegis of the performance event" (1995: 114). Later, Leslie K. Arnovick's application of pragmatics in the study of Old English charms advanced approaches to such utterances as "[s]emantically empty, lacking propositions," yet they "nevertheless invite us to infer their contents and illocutionary force" (2006: 34). This approach offers a perspective on the meaningfulness of utterances even where the constituent words remain obscure.

Arnovick thus interprets such incantations as directives: "They order, direct, command, and adjure" (2006: 35). Perhaps more significantly, Arnovick found that such language occurs in exactly one third of her sources, demonstrating its integrated position in the Old English corpus.[7]

International research on charms and ritual speech has increased and diversified, especially since the beginning of the present century.[8] It is not the aim here to offer a comprehensive survey, even only of Old Germanic charms and those from Old Germanic language areas. However, the rise in interest in the language of charms and ritual speech mentioned above is echoed in sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological research (e.g. Du Bois 1986; Keane 1997), as well as in charm research more generally (e.g. Versnel 2002; Schulz 2003: ch.3; Hayden 2022). Nevertheless, the attention in recent decades remains fragmented, with different features of language use coming into focus rather than bringing into focus the phenomenon of the diversity and combinations of linguistic resources in such texts here approached as languaging.

WHAT IS LANGUAGING?

The term *languaging* refers to language use as an activity of using linguistic resources. Although this might seem rather banal, the shift in focus to language use has provided a way of (to some degree) bypassing the dominant academic imagination of languages. Languages are commonly envisioned as ideal and exclusive systems constituted of a lexicon and a grammar, often conceived as being freely combined for the production of utterances. This view has deep historical roots, whereas languaging has gained ground as an alternative only relatively recently. The value of the concept comes into better focus when situated in relation to other terms and approaches, and also in relation to its history.

Multilingualism and language mixing was discussed already from the nineteenth century, but generally remained discussed in terms of siloed ideal languages (e.g. Nilep 2021: 1–3). The emblematic formalization of the model of language as constituted of an idealized lexicon, grammar, and phonology, approached in isolation from other languages, is that of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916 [1967]), who was working when National Romanticism was in full swing in Europe. At that time, scholars were naturalized to conceiving language as emblematic of culture and of a 'nation' *qua* both ethnicity and race (see also Vermeulen 2008). This

was also the era of discipline formation, when a discipline was imagined as a 'science' distinguished by its particular research object with the aim of uncovering the 'laws' by which that object was governed, for which formal classificatory typologies and comparison were essential tools (e.g. Graff 2015; Griffiths 2017). Saussure was thus not theorizing language as a phenomenon *an sich*, but as the research object of linguistics as a discipline. He recognized a distinction between language as an ideal system – *langue* [literally 'language'] – and its actual use by people – *parole* [literally 'speech']. He considered *langue* and *parole* so different that they had to be assigned to different disciplines, and he chose to make the ideal, rule-governed system – *langue* – the research object of linguistics (1916 [1967]: 36–39).

Saussure's choice did not occur in a vacuum. It was a preference that followed from the fetishization of etymologies and the reconstruction of historical relationships between languages, which, with its discovery of 'laws' governing language change, provided a model for the ostensibly objective, scientific study of human culture (see also Csapo 2004: ch. 2). Philology became concerned with the historical reconstruction of ideal 'original' texts through the empirically grounded comparative analysis of variants (following Lachmann 1830 [1876]). During Saussure's time, this philological model provided the foundation for establishing folklore studies as a discipline, explicitly characterized by a corresponding reconstruction-oriented paradigm (formalized in Krohn 1918; 1926). However, the methodology was centrally developed around the variation of the text-scripts of documented folklore in terms of formal elements and the 'laws' governing how they varied in combination – i.e. a *langue* of folklore, commensurate to a lexicon and grammar constitutive of folklore texts (Krohn 1926; see also Frog 2021c). This approach assumed the complete 'text' as the primary unit of tradition, to which Vladimir Propp's 'morphology' was a response (1928 [1958]). Propp's morphology advanced to a higher order of abstraction that might be described as a construction grammar of a genre. In the same year that Propp's 'morphology' was published, Milman Parry's dissertations (1928a; 1928b;) established the foundations of what would become known internationally as Oral-Formulaic Theory (OFT). OFT focused on prefabricated linguistic units and their systemic operation for the production of metrically well-formed lines-as-text at the rate of performance (see also Lord 1960; Frog & Lamb 2022). Although V. N. Vološinov (1929 [1973]) and others in the so-called 'Bakhtin-Circle' (on which see e.g. Wehrle 1978: xii) began theorizing *parole* at that time in Soviet scholarship, these approaches

did not penetrate discussions in the West. In that context, Saussure's choice of centering the discipline of linguistics on *langue* rather than *parole* is natural and intuitive, reifying trends in contemporary ways of looking at language and other forms of expression in the West.

Formally-oriented paradigms dominated Western scholarship into the second half of the twentieth century, until a cross-disciplinary paradigm shift transferred research concern to variation in social contexts. This turn took shape gradually in the post-War environment. It precipitated, for example, the performance-oriented turn in folklore research (e.g. Bauman 1975 [1984]; Ben Amos & Goldstein 1975), the so-called 'new philology' in manuscript studies (e.g. Speer 1979), and gave birth to a new field of discourse studies (e.g. Foucault 1969). In linguistics, it yielded the emergence of the so-called 'ethnography of speaking' (Hymes 1962; see also Rothenberg & Tedlock 1970), research on variations of language linked to roles and recurrent social situations, variously addressed as *codes* (e.g. Bernstein 1971) or *registers* (e.g. Halliday 1978), and associated switching, shifting, or mixing these (e.g. Blom & Gumperz 1972; Ervin-Tripp 1972). The theories of language that had begun developing in the so-called 'Bakhtin Circle' (Vološinov 1929 [1973]) entered into these discussions through translation. Mikhail Bakhtin's neologism *разноречие* ['diverse language-ness'] (1934–1935 [1981]) was used to describe language varieties in literature for the analysis of their denotational and connotational meanings (Sturtzsreetharan 2021). The concept had already been adapted into Western literary discussions by Julia Kristeva as *intertextuality* (1969 [1980]). However, *разноречие* was translated into English on analogy to C. A. Ferguson's use of *diglossia* to describe a contrasted pair of high and low speech registers (1959). The result is a neo-Greekism *heteroglossia* (Holquist 1981: xix), which led it to also be used to refer to a plurality of language varieties more generally. Although *codes*, *registers*, and *heteroglossia* may all today be used to approach communication and performance in multilingual environments, they designate phenomena distinct from what is here addressed as *languaging*.

The concepts of code and register were similar from the outset and today may converge. The term *code* was initially used to view alternative language varieties through the analogy of mutually incompatible codes used in electronic systems (Nilep 2021: 3–4). However, it became equated with social codes of conduct, which also allowed a code to include non-verbal aspects of behaviour (Bernstein 1972). The social construct-

edness of codes was emphasized (*loc.cit.*) and the term was also used to refer to complementary languages from an early stage (e.g. Blom & Gumperz 1972: 411). An important trajectory of discussion concerned the alternation between codes, leading *code-switching* and *code-mixing* to become commonplace terms (Nilep 2021) – terms which reciprocally reinforce imagining codes as distinguished by polarized contrasts (cf. Gal & Irvine 2019). The term *register* gained ground as an alternative in Systemic-Functional Linguistics to explore correlations between particular social factors as determinants on particular linguistic factors in variations in language (Halliday 1978). In this type of approach, registers were viewed in terms of linguistic repertoires within a single language while differences between registers could be more fluid than was implied for codes. Although register may still be used for social varieties within a language, the term was taken up and theoretically developed in linguistic anthropology to study full semiotic repertoires linked to social roles and recurrent situations (e.g. Agha 2004; 2007). In multilingual environments, alternative languages could then be viewed as registers. The term *heteroglossia* was used with similar interests in language varieties. However, it originated with literary works as a point of departure. Although the term has been lifted from this context to refer to social situations of multilingualism (Sturtzsreetharan 2021), heteroglossia often remains tethered to Bakhtinian concepts that situate language varieties and particular utterances inside textual worlds – i.e. within networks of relations between written texts rather than in socially situated meaning production. The examples mentioned here are intended to be representative rather than exhaustive. A point of particular relevance is that these concepts and the approaches from which they originate are founded on distinguishing alternative ways of expressing the same thing (e.g. Silverstein 2010: 430), whether labelling them individually (code, register) or their plurality (heteroglossia). In addition, research attention tends to focus on how the use of the distinguished alternatives is bound up with their associated meaningfulness or meaning-production, in contrast (and response) to the formal emphasis of earlier research that sought to model languages and so on in isolation.

The term *languaging* seems to appear first in philosophical discussions of the relationship between language and knowledge or understanding. Already in 1939, John R. Bross and George J. Bowdery assert that "[t]o view language only as a calculus is clearly inadequate, because it does not take into account the process of languag-

ing" (1939: 106), which they conceive as "the using of language as an instrument" (1939: 107). They argue that languaging both shapes language and what language is used to express, communicate, or discuss, making it fundamental to knowing (1939: 110–111). A few decades later, apparently unaware of previous uses, the philosopher Emmanuel G. Mesthene used *languaging*, "[i]f the word existed" (1964: 2), for the activity of formulation through language "as an integral part of […] knowing" (1964: 59). This trajectory of development includes, for example, the Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, who conceive of languaging as the behavioural coordination of knowing with realities that languaging simultaneously constructs and brings forth as meaningful (1992 [1987]: 234–235). This conception of languaging connects with psycholinguistic approaches to language in both meaning-making and worlding (see García & Wei 2014: 10–11). From this perspective, the use of verbal art to construct and actualize unseen realities (Frog 2017: 599– 611) is a form of languaging.

Around the time that Mesthene was writing, *languaging* begins entering the discourse of education as a general term for language in action or use (e.g. Feany 1965: 63). During the 1970s, languaging became used to discuss acts of speaking, writing, and reading, and began to be extended across other types of signification.[9] This conceptualization of languaging seems to be the stem from which approaches in social linguistics centrally grew, when they were linked to models of language acquisition. Saussurian ideal systems were reconceived, situating language as existing among people in society (e.g. Becker 1991). This turn to the use of linguistic resources as behviour, action, and meaning-making resonated strongly with research concerned with societal contexts and social environments characterized by linguistic diversity, sometimes addressed through derivative terms like *polylanguaging* and *translanguaging* (e.g. Jørgensen et al. 2011; García & Wei 2014). The entrenched paradigm of imagining languages as exclusive systems has marginalized their uses in combination as peripheral, anomalous, or non-ideal even in multilingual societies (Lüpke 2025). An approach through languaging opens into rethinking how languages are conceived (Watson 2019), with the potential to circumvent or neutralize such biases and bring the dynamics of the linguistic activity into primary focus. Unlike terms and approaches above, attention to those dynamics is not dominated by segregating linguistic resources among essentialized categories, nor is it centrally concerned with meaning-making. Consequently, it allows, for instance, ambiguity regarding how language users regard

the resources they manipulate, and whether they recognize them as stemming from different languages at all. The difference in emphasis makes languaging a very flexible tool.

To date, languaging is centrally used heuristically and remains undertheorized. Consequently, it easily becomes defined in relation to disciplinary concerns. Thus, although a distinction between languages may only be a social construct (e.g. Blom & Gumperz 1972: 411), the lively use of the concept to approach dynamics of multilingualism have led it to be defined as involving two or more languages in societal contexts and social environments characterized by linguistic diversity (see also Lüpke 2025). Such a definition is well fitted to studies of quotidian discourse especially in the context of current concerns about language diversity, sustainability, rights, and social justice. However, the mixing of different languages as a phenomenon in social interaction is much less relevant to folklore research. This is especially true in the study of practices characterized by regular text-type genres, such as verbal charms. Such charms tend to be coherent textual entities that are tethered to situations of ritual practice rather than broad repertoires of communicative resources that people draw on and may creatively utilize according to different situations of interpersonal interaction. In folklore research, an approach to the mixing and adaptation of linguistic resources is more relevant for exploring the internal dynamics of genres and registers, where it may have regular forms and operate in tandem with otherwise archaic vocabulary, word forms, and morphology. However, demarcating the threshold of languaging at involving two or more languages (however defined) becomes arbitrary for this material. The same phenomenon may occur for different dialects and registers, and seems to extent to the production of new words without recourse to other language varieties, or the adaptation of formulae from the register of one system of verbal art into another. Whereas current research is primarily concerned with languaging as an emergent phenomenon in contemporary language use, historically durable registers of verbal art can be extremely interesting sites for languaging in both diachronic and synchronic perspective.

I accept the mixing of different languages as an emblematic form of languaging, but I find it problematic to define languaging through such mixing because language is problematic to define according to ostensibly objective criteria. I do not consider the historical durability of languages and long-term-perspectives on language history incompatible with a view of languages as social constructions. I here consider language

to be a metasemiotic entity characterized by a lexicon, grammar, and phonology, of which the features or constituents become recognized as iconic or emblematic of that language as opposed to another or others. In contrast, I approach dialects and registers as distinguished as language varieties within a language – i.e. as social variations of a superordinate language from which are conceived as varying by features of lexicon, grammar, phonology, and prosody.[10] Nevertheless, the boundaries between language and register or dialect may vary between etic and emic perspectives or between individuals in a society. Defining languaging through the mixing of such categories is complicated by the potential for people to produce new words through resources within a register, like neologisms such as the word *languaging* once was in academic writing. This level of languaging connects back to the work on the entanglement of languaging and knowing, which becomes particularly interesting in genres that actualize social or supernatural realities through verbalization. Building from these considerations, I define languaging as *the exercise of agency through language, which appears most salient when involving creative agency of aesthetics or imagination or the selection and potential combination of linguistic resources of different backgrounds*. This definition covers both the drawing on diverse linguistic resources and also worlding as a dimension of languaging.

REGISTER, GENRE, AND IRRUPTIONS

I have elsewhere discussed in detail my approach to register in oral traditions (2015), which I only briefly mention here. I employ *register* to refer to a variety of language or other semiotic resources that forms a distinctive category among a society or group. A register may remain largely unconscious and embedded in social practice, or it may be reflexively recognized and even publicly discussed as indexing one or more practices, social situations, social identities, or other emblematic usage. (See further Frog 2015.)

I employ a practice-centered approach to *genre* as a category of text-type products. I consider *a text* as any organized and delimited arrangement of signs, whether linguistic or non-linguistic. Approaches to genre rooted in literature are often conceived in terms of the correlation of two features, like form and content, which is insufficient for a practice-centered approach. I approach genre through a four-aspect model of: (1) form; (2) content or enactment; (3) practice; and (4) functions. The aspect of form often includes one or more registers as its semiotic reper-

toire, noting that genre and register do not necessarily have a one-to-one correlation. A genre's formal conventions may operate at the level of language or other mediating sign system as in, for instance, traditions of ostensibly spontaneous situational verse. In this case, the genre may be saliently recognized through the primary register or registers of communication. Conversely, the primary register of communication may be an incidental mediator (if also a lens) while the genre's repertoire of formal resources and their conventions of use operate at the level of linguistically or otherwise mediated signs, like images, motifs, and the principles for their organization. Belief legend narratives[11] are of this type, which may be told in prose, song, or enacted as drama. In many cases, a genre's formal conventions operate at the level of both mediating and mediated signs combined, as in oral ballads, epics, and other traditions of narrating in verse. This sets my approach apart from many literary approaches that conceive genre through conceptions of text rooted in print consumer culture and its affordances as a combination of form as a linguistic surface and content as what is mediated by language. I group content and enactment as commensurate counterparts in practice, related to whether the genre is primarily oriented to mediate, for example, knowledge (including narratives) or to some sort of role-taking and/or actualizing an experience. Enactment can be observed, for example, in games or performances of ritual poetry that orchestrate unseen agents, forces, and events, where what occurs may extend considerably beyond the propositional meanings of words, and where words are often only one part of a performed sign repertoire, if words are part of the performance register at all. Content and enactment combine in many genres, as in charms with *historiolae*. Practice is crucial to the consideration of many folklore genres, because what is formally the same verbal text-product may be transposed between performance genres or interpreted as of a different genre in relation to other factors of performance. Functions are not significant here but refers to the position of the tradition in the broader tradition ecology, both in terms of a sort of distribution of labour, and also potentially relationships between genres, for instance in their relative authority or supernatural agency. (See further Frog 2016a.)

Both register and genre are calibratable concepts: they can be adjusted to the scope and sensitivity of the particular investigation. In the present case, medieval sources are often merely text-scripts, which tends to limit evidence to linguistic registers and verbal genres. The text-script may collapse the multimediality of embodied performance

to those features that are directly accommodated by the affordances of the writing technology, as was commonplace. Although this erases all other features for us today, we should not underestimate that the verbal component could be received as iconic of that more complex whole, as is found for Finno-Karelian ritual incantations in the nineteenth and twentieth century (Frog 2019: 220, 247). In this case, the additional features may have simply been considered invisible and implicit in the use of the text-script, to be reconstituted in a reading-based performance (see also Coleman 1996; Frog 2022b). In other cases, the medieval source represents a medium-bound written genre. Medieval texts like the one addressed below are particularly interesting in this regard. Although they are commonly referred to as 'charms', they represent a genre of metadiscourse in which a potentially complex ritual is represented. A healing text may present the text-script of one or more verbal charms along with instructions for the manner of recitation, writing, or inscription, as well as acts to accompany it. A single healing text may include instructions for the performance of several, discreet verbal texts, whether these are fully transcribed or the instructions assume the reader's prior knowledge, such as simply naming a prayer to be recited.

Irruption here refers to a transposition of limited duration of one language, register, or genre into another, from a single word, grammatical structure, or linguistically mediated sign to an extended stretch of discourse. The term is adapted from discussions of narrative discourse. Merrill Kaplan (2011) has used *irruption* as a tool for analyzing, for example, accounts of 'paganism' transposed into Christian contexts and elements identified with the past transposed into the present. Bringing these elements into focus as irruptive discourse, rather than focusing only on their formal dimensions or connotative semantics, draws attention to how such transpositions participate in the negotiation of the respective categories of culture – in Kaplan's case: 'pagan' versus 'Christian' – the relationships of those categories to one another, and their relationships to social identities in the present. Here, *irruption* is calibrated to language, whereas Kaplan uses it for what I would describe as images and motifs as linguistically mediated signs in mythic discourse (Frog 2021b). Her usage can be more generally described as salient transpositions of elements linked to one broad cultural domain into another. The concept can also be applied to visual media,[12] and also to material culture.[13] In language, *irruption* is a term for a particular type of what may otherwise be described as code switching or code mixing, whether strategic or accidental, characterized by limited duration.

The term can be applied to elements of language, or to elements of register or genre that are often discussed through what Julia Kristeva initially called *intertextuality* (1969 [1980]: 36–63) and later relabelled *transposition* (1974 [1984]: 59–60). Bringing irruptions into focus supports considering the social construction and negotiation of different categories of expression and their relations.

In the flow of discourse, much languaging may be largely or wholly invisible to participants. For example, academic writing in English is littered with Latin words and expressions: although relevant abbreviations might be opaque and idiomatic for many users in the present century, *id est* (*i.e.*) or *et alii* / *aliae* (*et al.*) remain commonly recognized as non-English (cf. *et cetera*). Similarly, linguistic anthropologists often use emic terms from the groups they study in their academic publications with the aim of holding closer to the vernacular categories. Fields surrounding particular cultures may naturalize repertoires of emic vocabulary to discussion, so that their use is normative to those in the field although the words themselves are regularly presented in italic font as a salient indicator that they are linguistically other.[14] Such a mixing of vocabulary can be similarly naturalized in slang, and my own experience of very small, localized speech communities is that the use of particular non-English vocabulary in English can become naturalized to the degree that the use of the English words is what becomes marked, for instance as translation to accommodate an outsider. *Irruption* is distinguished by some level of disruptive quality or markedness. Of course, rather than either being marked or not, the markedness or disruption may be on a spectrum of degree. Especially in a medieval or ancient text, evaluating it may be conjectural. Nevertheless, cases that are ambiguous do not undermine the term's value where the contrasts are salient.

LANGUAGING WITHIN REGISTERS AND GENRES OF FOLKLORE

Languaging within folklore registers, genres, and oral-poetic systems has received little attention as a phenomenon *an sich*. A brief introduction to some of its relevant types is offered here, with comments on certain factors that may either drive or constrain it. This introduction is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to offer an orientation for considering languaging in charms and in the metadiscursive genre represented by the text examined below.

Oral-poetic systems are characterized by the organization of language into 'lines' by subordinating syntax and prosody to other organizing principles, such as parallelism, alliteration, rhyme, and/or meter (Fabb 2015; Frog 2021a). The respective registers evolve in symbiosis with the poetic system's organizing principles (Foley 1996). In other words, the organizing principles drive the development and maintenance of resources to meet the requirements of the poetic form, while the poetic form evolves between general language change and the language of its register(s), as well as the social practices of use within a broader poetic ecology (Frog 2024).

Canonical parallelism requires repetition with lexical variation (Fox 1977; 1988). In many traditions the vocabulary of parallel expressions includes words from other languages, such as Spanish in Cho'rti' Mayan (Hull 2017), Malay in Bandanese (Kaartinen 2017), and Chinese in Zhuang (Holm 2017). Canonical parallelism may be the only regular poetic organizing principle: when no additional principle drives variation in the vocabulary, lexical and phrasal pairs become regular formulae that express a coherent unit of meaning across lines, like Rotenese *inak* ['woman'] and *fetok* ['girl'] becoming a formula *inak* / / *fetok* ['female person'] (Fox 2022). When canonical parallelism is used in combination with organizing principles like meter or alliteration, the demands for equivalence vocabulary are increased. For example, Karelian lament combines semantic parallelism with alliteration, which multiplies the equivalence vocabulary needed for common semantic categories in order to vary the wording of lines according to the required pattern of alliteration. The use of Russian words in Karelian lament is linked to the combined requirements of parallelism and alliteration (Stepanova 2017). Within the respective register, the assimilated vocabulary is naturalized no less than Latin and other languages in academic writing practices. However, naturalizing the use of vocabulary from one language or another becomes generalizable for the production of new lexical and phraseological pairs or equivalence vocabulary. Moreover, languaging may itself become a textural or aesthetic feature of the verbal art rather than filling formal needs only. For example, Spanish loans are incorporated into the verbal art of a number of Mayan languages, and the loans may constitute both members of a formulaic pair in Cho'rti' Mayan rather than only forming complementary counterparts to vernacular words (Hull 2017: 296).

Different dialects are also used for equivalence vocabulary in canonical parallelism, although assimilating individual dialectal words may be

difficult to distinguish from the enduring maintenance of earlier shared vocabulary only preserved in the verbal art (Fox 2014: 374–379). Alternative dialectal forms of the same word may also alternate in metered poetry according to the alternative number of syllables or morae these contain (Foley 1996: 25–37). Conversely, semantically opaque vocabulary blurs with the production of pseudo-words. For instance, Peter Metcalf finds parallelism in Berawan ritual poetry to contain many canonical pairs in which the second element reduplicates the meaning-bearing word with variation of its onset, ending, or vowel (1989: 40–44). Finno-Karelian Kalevala-metric poetry exhibits a similar practice, although filling a metrical need of completing an eight-syllable line by accompanying an initial four-syllable word with a counterpart that has been described as onomatopoetic (Tarkka 2013: 154–156). This second word or pseudo-word is a poetic counterpart that differs by one or a few phonemes usually only in the stressed (initial) syllable. The result may be a pseudo-word, but the phonological variation in this register 'gravitates' to make the word stem converge with a recognizable lexeme, as visible in oral variation, which occasionally results in semantic incongruities such as the line variant *hyöryläinen, vyöryläinen* (*SKVR* VI_1 3653.2) ['hustle-one, landslide-one']. The generated word participates in a broader textural feature of this poetry whereby words are morphologically expanded to meet the needs of the syllable-counting meter. This morphological dimension of the meter can itself be viewed as languaging: it gets applied to vocabulary that may or may not otherwise be used in the register, adapting it to meet the combined needs of semantic parallelism, alliteration, and meter. (Frog 2022d: 88–94.)

Not all oral poetries are equally open to drawing on different languages, which must be considered in the light of broader language ideologies. For example, Old Germanic languages and their oral poetries were generally resistant to the assimilation of vocabulary marked as 'other'. The poetries nevertheless required poetic equivalence vocabulary to meet the needs of alliteration, which was often accommodated by the semantic flex of vernacular vocabulary that would be used somewhat differently in quotidian speech (Roper 2012). These poetries also developed a nominal circumlocution system of kennings or kenning-like constructions, such as calling 'gold' 'fire of water' (Fidjestøl 1997). The metrical requirement of alliteration drives lexical variation in these constructions, which develop exceptional complexity in the Old Norse *dróttkvætt* meter owing to its inclination to syllabic rhythms with combined requirements of both rhyme and alliteration (Clunies Ross

et al. 2012; Frog 2024). In this poetry, a kenning like 'fire of water' will only exceptionally be found in the same verbal form in more than one example (*Lexicon Poeticum* 2016–present). Individual examples of a 'fire of water' kenning are organic to the register, yet the formation of kennings for new referents, like 'bear of the wall-cave' to say 'mouse' (*ibid.*), may also be viewed as languaging. If one calibrates languaging more narrowly, this might seem more rhetorical or aesthetic. However, the generation of new circumlocutions in Karelian lament, like 'headless horse' for 'automobile', complicates dismissing such creativity when the lament register was conceived as the language of the dead, for whom the language of the living was no longer understandable (Stepanova 2015).

Whereas these forms of languaging operate at the level of words and phrases, many genres incorporate forms of languaging that may also manifest as irruptions. For example, medieval Icelandic sagas commonly incorporated the quotation of Old Norse poetry either as the direct speech of a character or to authenticate information presented in the prose (Harris 1997). The medieval manuscripts were written out as continuous text like prose today, yet the transition from aesthetically unmarked prose to metered alliterative verse was salient, and probably still more pronounced in public reading (cf. Quinn 1997). Although many narrative forms embed direct speech, the speech may be subordinated to the formal conventions of the primary genre, as often occurs in oral epics where any character's speech must be in the same meter as the surrounding narrative. The direct speech might itself represent a genre practiced in the society, but primarily at the level of metadiscourse rather than at the formal level of verbal art (Stepanova & Frog 2019; see also Tarkka 2013). Such metadiscursive representations may also be systematically varied with other motivations. For example, narrative discourse may systematically represent verbal charms or incantations differently than in ritual practice. Whereas ritual uses can be approached as a form of languaging entailing supernatural efficacy, narrative traditions in the same society may regularly avoid supernaturally empowered speech. The para-charms or para-incantations that may be recited in their place are treated as having supernatural efficacy only within the narrative world, not being used for supernatural effect outside of it. Conversely, the speech connected with a culturally other ritual specialist in the prose narration of a legend tradition may be presented as irruptions of the vernacular poetic form. (Frog 2022e.) Irruptions are widely found in a variety of folklore genres, but these are most often of other registers, genres, or a counterpart shaped by

the host discourse. Different languages may also be embedded, as in a metadiscursive genre of instruction about a ritual practice in which texts of different languages should be performed. They may also be embedded in narratives, for example in legends and anecdotes about language contacts, which may include imaginal languages attributed to supernatural beings,[15] but irruptions of different languages in narration seem less common.

VERBAL CHARMS AND LANGUAGING

Medieval verbal charms are ritual technologies that were being mediated through writing, whether the charm itself was conceived as an oral utterance or performed through a writing technology. The written medium situates the charms in a textual culture that had spread in conjunction with the Christian religion and its infrastructures. The western Church maintained Latin as the language of religion and as a transcultural *lingua franca* of both religious and secular authorities. Registers of Latin associated with the Christian religion also had infusions of Greek and Hebrew, both of which, as well as Aramaic, had strong associations with the history of the religion. Esoteric interests also brought in elements of Arabic. The learned discourse recognized a language of the angels (e.g. Storms 1948: 274–275), of which words, names, and whole texts could be circulated; within a medieval Christian worldview, the language of angels was presumably valorized above all human languages. Whereas these languages and various registers and genres associated with them circulated through the western Christian world, vernacular human languages tended to have more limited reach and their roles varied by milieu. Different vernaculars are present in medieval corpora of charms and metadiscursive texts presenting rituals, but their distribution generally seem to reflect historical language contacts among vernaculars. Nevertheless, when spoken verbal charms in one language appear in a written text of another, it is often unclear whether their passage into and out of writing and back again was by people who understood the respective texts. Thus, Old Irish and Old Norse verbal charms in the Old English corpus blur with *voces mysticae* to the point that it is not clear whether the writer or copyist even recognized what, if any, language they represent. Moreover, languaging irruptions extend to scripts: several written verbal charms appear to have been conceived as requiring a particular script, such as Greek, reflecting not just a language ideology, but a media ideology

(Gershon 2010). This practice results in the Old English corpus containing curious *characteres magici*, such as the runic or pseudo-runic text "ᛗMMRMÞ· Nᛋ·ÞTX ᛗMRFᛇNᛋ ·ÞTX" (Storms 1948: 271).

Voces mysticae is a very fuzzy category. H. S. Versnel considers *voces mysticae* ("*magicae*") to constitute:

> 'open-ended' performative utterances. Normally, performative enunciations are expressions that are equivalent to action: the verb itself is the accomplishment of the action which it signifies. Since the *voces* have *no communicable* meaning, however, they cannot denote one explicit – and consequently restricted – course of action, but give voice to a choice of imaginable (or perhaps rather *un*imaginable) avenues towards the desired effect. (Versnel 2002: 147)

The category is fuzzy because it may only be a researcher's presumption that the words "have *no communicable* meaning" (Versnel 2002: 147). Of course, *voces mysticae* themselves may be interpreted as supernaturally empowered articulations to which any propositional meanings are incidental to their performativity, such as *hocus pocus*. However, such a view is not exclusive of interpreting them as words of another language. This is reflected in the metadiscourse on such charms in *Harry Potter*, where para-charms like *expelliarmus* are recognizable as Latin (or at least as pseudo-Latin) even for someone with only a very superficial familiarity with the language. The alterity of the words, or what Bronisław Malinowski described as a "coefficient of weirdness" (1936), is sometimes viewed as inherently linked to the power of the utterances. Jolly is likely correct that people in the "Middle Ages probably did not have a concept of 'meaningless words' (just words a given individual did not understand)" (1996: 117). Of course, an utterance can be received and learned as a charm without any recognition of a particular language affiliation, much as children learn and reproduce the *expelliarmus* paracharm without reflection on the etymology or semantics of the word, conceiving it only as a verbal instrument that has supernatural effect, if only in the respective narrative world (Wray 2008: ch.16). Semantic opacity and identification with a language are not at odds *per se*, and could vary considerably by individual. However, it warrants bearing in mind that the medieval texts were not the instruments of illiterate peasants; they were the purview of the literate – presumably the clergy and the social or economic elites. In the Germanic world, this would normally indicate a knowledge of Latin and a naturalization to the

media ideologies of written text production. Consequently, the written words are more likely identified with a particular language. Moreover, the value conferred on the knowledge of what is written and learned discourses of exegesis and interpretation make it probable that users of these texts would be interested in the meanings or significance of the words *as language* – i.e. in understanding the words that were opaque to the uneducated.

Today, *voces mysticae* tend to be viewed as utterances like *expelliarmus* – i.e. they are, as in Versnel's description above, performative utterances without propositional meaning. The circulation of these texts among the educated members of society seems to be related to a different tendency in the Middle Ages and found through the Christian world that semantically opaque orthographic strings were often interpreted as the names of supernatural agents. Versnel points out that, already in antiquity, charm traditions underwent a development that foreign or unrecognizable words became interpreted as names of gods and demons, which were then mixed in with names characteristically used in charms, and also chained into strings of names (2002: 114–115). This interpretive paradigm then sometimes fed back into the names used in charms. For instance, in one example of a Seven Sisters charm, the seven are named as *klkb*, *rfstklkb*, *fbgblkb*, *sxbfpgllkb*, *frkcb*, *kxlkcb*, and *kgncb* (Ohrt 1925: 38), each a string of consonants that appears as 'foreign' within its Latin context, perhaps intended to reference Hebrew or Arabic. Although the charm type clearly circulated widely, Ferdinand Ohrt highlighted that the names appear vary comprehensively between sources (*loc.cit*). Versnel points out that names in charms often not only "replace each other in the course of time, but that they are and remain interchangeable," a trait that "appears to be perhaps one of the most characteristic, albeit hardly noticed, features of magical charms" (2002: 118). Versnel is referring mainly to actors in *historiolae* and individual actors in particular invocations rather than sequences that tend to be viewed today as *voces mysticae*, of which the names in Seven Sisters charms might be considered on the border. Within a language ideology where names are considered as powerful instruments, the performativity of semantically opaque text sequences were interpretable through that lens, a lens that could reciprocally shape the *voces mysticae* when the interpretation became a factor in variation. Versnel observes that "[e]specially names ending on -el and -oth abound, which clearly go back to Hebrew / Jewish models" (2002: 114). This dimension of languaging may also be behind the regular ending in *-kb* / *-(k)cb* in

the names in the Seven Sisters charm above, even if the imagination of linguistic identification is uncertain.

Arnovick shows that considerable variation was by no means limited to names and is equally found in extended text sequences that were likely considered to represent other languages (2006: ch.2). In those cases, the dynamics of languaging are much less clear. Text ideologies of modernity are dominated by an imagination of text identity as residing at the level of the organized arrangement of linguistic signs. In other words, a text is most emblematically a series of particular words in a fixed sequence, although text identity is also recognized as at the level of linguistically mediated signs or informational content, such as in the case of telling a story or an anecdote. This ideology of text identity does not usually map well onto other milieux, as I have discussed in the case of Finno-Karelian incantations: the metadiscourse surrounding Finno-Karelian incantations emphasizes their text identity at a verbal level as crucial for their efficacy, while the actual variation in the oral tradition and the ritual technology's ability to adapt to particular situations require a very flexible model of text identity (Frog 2019). Moreover, traditions that are centrally oral and assimilate the use of writing technology may treat written text-scripts as equivalent to the wording of a particular person rather than an ideal and absolute transcript for everyone else. Consequently, reading-based or (reading-centered) performances may diverge considerably from what is written without a sense of compromising the text's identity and performative potential (Frog 2022b; Reichl 2022). The intuition that sequences of *voces mysticae* in medieval manuscripts would have been exactly reproduced as a fixed series of words or phonemes may be grossly inaccurate, anachronistically imposing the dominant text ideology of modernity, rooted in consumer print culture. The variation observed by Arnovick might be attributed at least in part to a movement of ritual texts between written media, individual memory, and perhaps oral transmission. Nevertheless, some of these clearly point to conceiving the text sequences as utterances of language, within which the variation rather than an ideal degree of fixity suggests that the words were somehow interpreted as constituting meaningful utterances.

In medieval European charms, *voces mysticae* and the texts sequences on their periphery present distinct sites of languaging. On the one hand, different sequences were potentially interpretable in different ways, subjecting them to the text ideology of the particular lens of interpretation. The text sequence might simply be received as supernaturally

empowered without identifying it with a particular language or any interpretation; it might be considered a list of names of agents with a capacity to help or harm; or it might be understood as one or more meaningful utterances in a particular language, from Hebrew or Old Irish to the language of angels. Whatever the case, the sequences appear to have been open to variation, and that variation was conditioned by the text ideologies through which the sequence was viewed, whether this resulted in Hebrew-like names or the string of names in *-kb / (k) cb* above, or perhaps a more fluid re-articulation in the language with which the stretch of text was identified.

THE TEXT IN CLM 18956

The quarto manuscript Clm 18956 (Teg. 956) in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich contains a little-studied text that presents a healing ritual, most often referred to as a 'fever charm'. In the eleventh century, according to the conventional dating, the text was added to the empty space on folio 77v, filling it down to the lower margin. Although written in Latin, it contains two apparently Old High German words, both of which are *hapax legomena*. The word *ridun* appears as a noun within a Latin sentence, where it is interpreted as an Old High German word for 'shivering, shaking', perhaps 'convulsing', designating an illness or symptom (Vogt 1903: 95; cf. Köbler 2014: *s.vv.* 'rīdo', 'rīdōn*'). The word *leodrune* ['song-rune, sorceress'] appears in what is commonly interpreted as a list of names of fever demons. The diphthong *eo* rather than *io* suggests it entered writing already in the eighth century or earlier (Vogt 1903: 95). This word is also the only example of an usage of Old High German *runa* ['rune'] as an agentive noun. There is nothing unusual about a medieval verbal charm including obscure words and phrases that may (or may not) be identifiable with other languages. In this case, however, the opening of the text sequence in which *leodrune* appears is paralleled in a charm in an Old English leechbook. This opens the question of whether *leodrune* is a centuries-old Old High German word or is a borrowing of the contemporary word in Old English, although the question requires too much space to be explored here.

The first mentions of this text in print seem to be in 1878. In the *Catalogus codicum Latinorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis*, Carolus Halm, Frigericus Keinz, Gulielmus Meyer and Georgius Thomas (1878 [1969]: 225) list the contents of Clm 18956, where they describe the text as a "benedictio contra frigus vel ridun" ['benediction against

fever or *ridun*']. In the same year, Elias Steinmeyer published the text with minimal comment, stating that W. Meyar had drawn his attention to it (1878: 247). Richard Wünsch published a new transcription of the text a few decades later (1903: 92) with an analytical discussion. To my knowledge, a century passed before the complete text was published again, in a book by Monika Schulz (2003: 109).

The text added to Clm 18956 is not a verbal charm *per se*. Although it opens with what appears to be the script of a ritual text, it soon shifts into metadiscursive instructions that explain what is to be uttered and the actions that should accompany this. The shift to metadiscourse follows the naming of the *Peter noster* – a text that 'everyone knows' – as to be performed at that point. Naming a Chrsitian prayer to be performed rather than writing it out in full is of course not unusual and saved valuable space. From this point on in the text, anything to be spoken is only quoted in full where it differs from texts already introduced.

The following diplomatic transcription has been made anew from the manuscript. Where Steinmeyer and Schulz read "fructıferı. i.", Wünsch and I read "fructferi. ⁊", with the Tironian sign for 'and', which is the predominant sign for 'and' used through the text. The string of *voces mysticae* or words in an uncertain language are left untranslated and instead placed in italic font, and the sign for 'and' in this sequence is represented by ampersands because it is unclear whether it should be expanded with Latin *et* or Old High German *ende*.

> In nomıne *dominomi* fuge ab +ea eo .N. beronıce. bırınıce. | turlur. leodrune. & malıfragra. & gahel. ⁊ gaıl. | tıgloıt. tılılot. depetonge. Ego su*m* alfa. & .ω. | ınıtıu*m* ⁊ fınıſ dıcıt do*minomi*. am*en*. Tunc canta *pater nost*er. | & dıc ınfine. ſed lıberet te amalo .N. h*aben*ſ vırgulam lıgnı fructıferı. ⁊ abſcıde partuculum ei*us* dıcenſ. | S*anctu*ſ benedıct*us* tollat ate .N. hoc frıguſ. S*ecun*da uıce | canta. In nomıne d*omi*nı cu*m* p*re*dıctıſ uerbulıs. ⁊ do*minomi* | oratıone. abſcıdenſ parte*m* uırgulę ut pri*us* fecıſtı. | dıcenſ. S*anctu*s uıtuſ. tollat t*ibi* hunc rıdun. Tertıo fac | ſımı*liter*. ⁊ dıc*en*s S*anctu* galluſ totu*m* frıguſ ate .N. tollat. | Ad ultımu*m* ıllaſ treſ partıculaſ lıgnı ſepelı. ⁊ canta | ınter*ım* om*ni*a quę sup*er*ı*us* cantaſtı. Caut*us* ſıſ du*m* t*ibi* nun | tıatur q*uod* frıguſ *patitur* alıqu*ı*ſ. ne ſtanſ s*ed* sedenſ ſis.
>
> In the name of the Lord, flee from +her him, [from] N. *beronice. birinice. turlur. leodrune. & malifragra. & gahel. & gail. tigloit. tililot. depetonge*. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, says the Lord. Amen. Then sing The Lord's Prayer (*Pater noster*) and at the end say, 'but deliver you from evil, N.'. Have a branch

of a fruit-bearing tree and cut off a bit. Say, 'Saint Benedict take away from you, N., this fever'. Say 'In the name of the Lord' a second time with the aforesaid words and The Lord's Prayer (Oratio Dominica), cutting off part of the branch as you did before, saying 'Saint Vitus take from you this *ridun*'. Do the same a third time and say, 'Saint Gallus all the fever from you, N., take'. At the end bury these three pieces of wood and sing during that time all those songs that you sang above. You should be careful when you are told that someone is sharing a fever. You should not stand but sit.

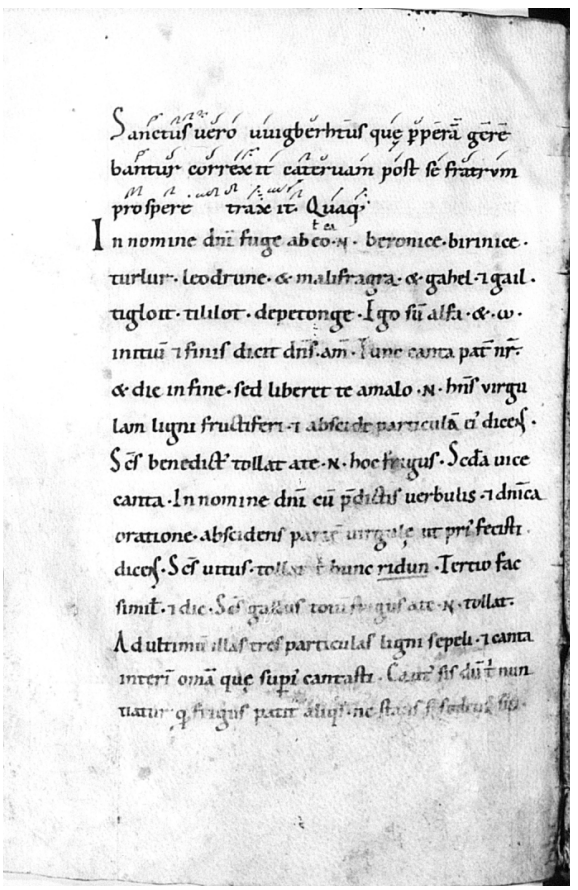

Figure 1. Image of Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18956, fol. 77v.

THE ORGANIZATION OF VERBAL SEQUENCES

The ritual includes a series of verbal texts conceived as discreet units. The collection of utterances form a group that should then be repeated with indicated differences. The structuring of the verbal components of the ritual is presented below, numbering the constitutive verbal texts for discussion. However, it is unclear how *beronice* and the obscure words that follow should be viewed. This sequence is followed directly by Christ's words known from Revelation 22:13 ("I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end"). This quotation was undoubtedly recognized as a text sequence distinct from what preceded it no less than the *Pater noster* (Matthew 6: 9–13; a shorter version in Luke 11: 2–4). Thus, the question has been whether the stretch of obscure text is a similarly distinct unit or a continuation of what precedes it.

The dominant view, as discussed below, has been that the sequence *beronice … depetonge* is a series of names of fever demons to be exorcized through the ritual. In this interpretation, syntactically, they continue the preceding clause as a vocative address, naming those who should flee. This interpretation has been considered problematic because the first 'demon' named is *beronice*, which is transparently recognizable as the name of Saint Veronica. A proposal that *beronice* and perhaps the words immediately following it are *voces magicae* with a positive value offers a compromise to reading the word as the name of a saint. However, the latter interpretation interrupts the syntax that would connect the subsequent words to the preceding clause as names of the demons addressed. In this case, the clause preceding *beronice* would seem to be a complete utterance followed by a second utterance beginning with *voces magicae* or an invocation of Veronica. That the obscure sequence was viewed as a coherent and distinct stretch of text finds some support in the punctuation of the sequence, which differs from both what precedes and what follows, placing a punctus after each word that is not a conjunction. Whether the text was added to Clm 18956 from personal knowledge or copied from an earlier manuscript, medieval punctuation commonly marked prosodic structure to facilitate reading (Scholes & Willis 1990), and the difference in punctuation is an indicator that this sequence was perceived as some sort of irruption.

The structure of the verbal components of the ritual is presented in Table 1. These components appear to form a sequence of texts with discreet identities, here labelled Texts 1–5. The possibility that the

mysterious sequence was a vocative address continuing the preceding sentence cannot be excluded, but its opacity and the difference in punctuation support a view that it is somehow distinct, while labelling it as Text 2 provides a practical means of referring to it in subsequent discussion. The obscurity of Text 2 and the seemingly positive valence of *beronice* creates the additional possibility that the words are the opening of the of the following quotation of Christ. However, insofar as *beronice* is likely an invocation of Veronica or otherwise related to Veronica, it seems unlikely to also be attributed to Christ in a first-person utterance of a recognizable biblical text. This quotation is therefore identified as Text 3. The *Pater noster* is distinguished from Text 3 through the metapragmatic label that refers to the prayer as a discreet text, with a note on how its final words should be varied, here identified as Text 4. Text 4 is followed by instructions for an act to be performed in the ritual, which supports viewing the subsequent jussive invocation of the saint to be conceived as yet another discreet text rather than a continuation of the *Pater noster*.

The instruction to repeat the sequence again indicates Text 1 through its opening prepositional phrase *cum predictis verbulis* ['with the aforesaid words'] followed by a punctus before mentioning the *Pater noster*. The remainder of Text 1, *fuge ab eo* ['flee from him'], is shorter than *cum predictis verbulis* and would have taken less space. It is therefore reasonable to infer that *cum predictis verbulis* minimally includes Texts 1 and 2. That Text 3 would not be specified is unsurprising: although it is transparently recognized as discreet unit as the speech of Christ, it lacks an established metadiscursivel label like *Pater noster* or *Oratio dominica,* used to refer to Text 4. In addition, Texts 1–3 begin with 'In the name of the Lord' and conclude with 'Amen', in the manner of a prayer. The invocation of Text 1 is clearly distinct from the quotation of Christ's words in Text 3, so the grouping does not resolve whether the irruption of Text 2 was considered part of one or the other. Nevertheless, the three constituents may have been conceived as forming a composite whole. The instructions thus most probably indicate that Texts 1–4 should be repeated. They then specify the variation for Text 5 in two of these repetitions, followed by a third instruction for repetition that is ambiguous regarding whether it should include a variant of Text 5. In Table 1, the series of repetitions with variations are presented as Text Sequences A–D.

Table 1. The structuring of the verbal components of the ritual in Clm 18956.

Text Sequence A
Text 1. Invocation ("In the name of the Lord") and command (banishment formula)
Text 2. Mysterious thirteen-word text sequence (in italic in the translation)
Text 3. Quotation of Christ followed by "Amen"
Text 4. *Pater noster*, varying the pronoun of its final line and adding the patient's name
Text 5a. Command (Saint Benedict)

Text Sequence B
Repeat Text 1–4
Text 5b. Command (Saint Vitus)

Text Sequence C
Repeat "the same"
Text 5c. Command (Saint Gallus)

Text Sequence D
Repeat "all [those songs] above"

RIDUN AND PARALLELISM

It is easy to infer that the repetition of Texts 1–4 in Text Sequences A–D was characterized by an ideal of non-variation – i.e. that the text would be recited 'the same' (however that was understood) in each iteration. The opening words of Text 1 are a crystallized formula, while Christ's words of Text 3 and *The Lord's Prayer* have a text identity that predicts verbatim repetition. Of course, traditions characterized by an inclination to non-variation may nevertheless exhibit variation in repetition, such as shortening in a series of utterances when these are repeated several times (Frog 2016b: 89–9). In addition, the quotation of Revelation 22:13 in Text 3 presents only two of the Vulgate's three parallel units (*Ego sum alpha et omega,* [*primus et novissimus,*] *principium et finis*). This may have been performed with all three units in practice, or expanding Text 3 to three units in repetitions if the memory of the more ideal form of the quotation was triggered during the course of performance.[16] Nevertheless, the formula in Text 1 and then Texts 3 and 4 can be assumed to have ideal forms and should be invariant in performance, which makes the variation in Text 4 marked. Following Texts 1–4, the variation between Texts 5a, 5b, and 5c appears consciously marked:

Sanctus Benedictus tollat a te .N. hoc frigus.
Sanctus Vitus tollat tibi hunc *ridun.*
Sanctus Gallus totum frigus a te .N. tollat.

Saint Benedict take away from you, N., this fever.
Saint Vitus take from you this *ridun.*
Saint Gallus all the fever from you, N., take.

The variation across these three phrases is more visible in a diagraph analysis, laying them out on a grid that places semantically corresponding or contrasting elements in columns and indicating any difference in order with arrows (Du Bois 2014):

	Saint X	take away	from you	NAME	the/all fever	.
5a.	Sanctus Benedictus	tollat	a te	.N.	hoc frigus	.
5b.	Sanctus Vitus	tollat	tibi		hunc ridun	.
5c.	Sanctus Gallus	→ tollat	a te	.N.	← totum frigus	.

Only the verb, the epithet 'Saint', and the second person pronoun are used in all three expressions. The pronoun varies morphologically while the position of the verb varies in word order. Viewed as a series, the order of syntagms in 5b reproduces that of 5a while varying its phraseology and omitting (though perhaps accidentally) the name of the patient; 5c then varies the order of syntagms of 5a and 5b but restores the phraseology of 5a in contrast with 5b. Besides the name of the saint,[17] the only other lexical difference between 5a and 5c is the exchange of the pronoun *hoc* for *totum* ['all'], which may be interpreted as a climax of the progression. If the first of the three varied from the following two, the variation would look like the recall of a preferred phrasing during the course of writing (cf. Frog 2022c: 196–200). The same might be argued if the first two were regular and the third varied or even if the three exhibited a stadial progression of variation. Instead, 5b and 5c each appear to vary from 5a in contrasting ways, and each varies from it by two syntagms in addition to the name of the saint. Particularly as this utterance regularly follows the verbatim recital of Texts 3 and 4, the variation appears to be an intentional device of parallelism rather than repetition.

Leaving aside Text 2 for now, the appearance of Old High German *ridun* in 5b appears to constitute an irruption of the vernacular in otherwise uniformly Latin texts. Languaging occurs elsewhere in these

texts in the form of vocabulary historically rooted in other languages (*alpha*, *omega*, *amen*), but these have been naturalized to registers of Latin Christian discourse. In contrast, *ridun*'s appearance would likely have seemed marked. Rather than an odd 'slip' or semantically weighted code-switching, the use of *ridun* appears motivated by a desire for lexical variation in parallelism (which does not exclude semantic relevance).[18] Semantic parallelism does not generally appear as a significant structuring principle of Latin charm discourse, and I am not aware of other examples of mixing vernacular vocabulary for lexical variation in a Latin parallel sequence. There is no reason think that *ridun* was conventionally paired in parallelism with *frigus* as in the examples of languaging in parallelism above. Parallelism was a significant feature of the Old Germanic charm tradition, often found in its conjurations, though not being a regular structuring principle of whole texts (Tolley 2021: 331–342). Old Germanic charms do not draw on vocabulary from Latin or other languages for such parallelism, so there is also no reason to think that the *frigus* / /*ridun* pairing stems from a Germanic tradition. However, if the device of parallelism in this ritual was associated with Germanic charming, its rootedness in Germanic poetics could have led to summoning the word *ridun* rather than a Latin word or phrase to produce the parallelism.

Since a conventional use of the *frigus* / /*ridun* pairing is improbable for a broader tradition in either Latin or an Old Germanic language, its appearance here was most likely unique to the charm, even if *ridun* was being reproduced within the Latin in speech and writing in the text's or ritual's transmission. The word points to an unusual dimension of languaging in the text that allows the inclusion of the vernacular commingled with the non-vernacular languages of religion. Contextually, the irruption can be transparently identified with the use of parallelism, although the structuring principle does not itself account for the use of a presumably local vernacular word. However, the possible connection with parallelism in Germanic verbal charms offers the possibility that an organizing principle of the utterances had associations with the vernacular charming tradition that produced linguistic interference. Although this explanation cannot advance beyond a conjectural hypothesis, it would offer a satisfying explanation for the otherwise anomalous appearance of an Old Germanic word in a Latin sentence. Whatever the case, this use of the word *ridun* situates the writing of the charm in a milieu where the Old Germanic vernacular was spoken.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE LANGUAGE IN TEXT 2

The text on Clm 18956, fol. 77v, has not received much analytical attention in the roughly 150 years since it was published in 1878. This is somewhat surprising because Text 2 has perplexed researchers, and "leodrune" has been considered an Old High German word that ties into a broader etymological discussion. "Leodrune" is identified with a set of vocabulary in which Proto-Germanic **rūnō* ['rune'] forms the second part of a compound. Thus, it is linked to the long and vibrant discussion of 'runes' and is particularly identified with the set of compounds used to designate a sorceress or female supernatural agent (see e.g. Willson 2019). This etymological discussion is too complex to delve into here, but it is relevant to mention because "leodrune" has been lifted from Text 2 and generally accepted as an Old High German word *leodrune* for etymological analysis without resolving the riddles of its context in the sequence:

> beronice. birinice. turlur. leodrune. & malifragra. & gahel. & gail. tigloit. tililot. depetonge.

Steinmeyer commented on Text 2 briefly in a footnote: "Die im anfang genannten namen *beronice* usw. sind mir bis auf *leodrune* unverständlich" (1878: 247) ['The names *beronice* and so on mentioned at the beginning up to *leodrune* are not understandable to me']. His comment includes a citation that leads the reader to Ludwig Ettmüller's dictionary of Old English, where *leodrun, -e* is defined as an *incantatio vulgaris* (1851: 173) ['vernacular incantation']. Steinmeyer thus seems to interpret *beronice, birinice*, and *turlur* as names for agents, and he identifies *leodrune* with a Germanic word, but as a verbal charm rather than as an agent of illness. His note is so brief that it is unclear whether or not he recognized *beronice* as 'Veronica', or, if he did make that connection, whether he rejected that interpretation as contextually problematic.

Wünsch (1903: 91–95) offers the most developed discussion of Text 2 to date. He proposed that it is a vocative series of the ten names of fever demons to be exorcized through the ritual. On the one hand, this interpretation is in line with the tendency to interpret foreign or unrecognizable words in charms as names of supernatural actors (Versnel 2002: 114–115). On the other hand, this interpretation works syntactically as a continuation of Text 1 by naming those who should flee. Wünsch acknowledged that *Beronice* is the name of Saint Veronica, although he could not account for how a saint's name came to be mixed

in with demon names. However, he saw its combination with *birinice* as a commonplace play with sounds in magic formulae, commensurate to *hocus-pocus* (1903: 94; on this poetic device in charms, see also Versnel 2002: 130–135). Wünsch saw *Beronice* as stemming from Greek and identified *malifragra* as Latin, although his interpretation of the latter was more intuitive than analytical. He considered *malifragra* reminiscent of *malum* and *flagrare* and suggested a sense of 'burning evil' (1903: 94). However, *mali* would be a genitive singular of neuter *malum* or masculine *malus* ['bad, wicked, evil'] (unless it is interpreted as an affix for compound formation), and *fragra* might intuitively be associated with the verb *fragro* ['to emit a smell'], giving a sense of 'stinker of the wicked one' or something similar.

Wünsch identified *ridun* and *leodrune* as Germanic words in the Latin text and explicated them. He links *ridun* to shaking as a connection to Saint Vitus, and he comments that *leodrune* exhibits an incongruity that *-eo-* rather than *-io-* in the first component of the compound would be a form from the eighth century while the final *-e* in the second component would be much younger (1903: 95). Wünsch's comments are expanded by (or perhaps originated in dialogue with) Friedrich Vogt (1903: 95–96), in an appendix to Wünsch's article. Vogt also discussed the appearance of *-eo-* rather than *-io-* as suggesting that the text had first been written down in the eighth century, although he equivocates over this, poring over the spelling in detail. More recently, Edith Marold has pointed out that *-eo-* would be consistent with an Old Frankish dialect (p.c., 23 November 2023). In this case, the assumption was that the words are from the better attested Germanic language, while an origin from Old Frankish would allow that the word was written much closer to the time of the containing manuscript. Vogt compares *leodrune* to *haliurunnae*, used for sorceresses in Jordanes' history, and its Old English counterpart *hellerune*, glossing *pythonissa* ['seeress', 'sorceress'], and concludes that *leodrune* in this charm was also a word for sorceress (*loc. cit.*). In medieval Christian discourse, words for 'sorceress, witch' often blur with words for other types of hostile and dangerous female supernatural agents. Vogt's interpretation of *leodrune* is thus semantically fitted to Wünsch's interpretation of Text 2 as names of fever demons. This interpretation later rose to dominance through the work of Heinrich Wesche, who is commonly cited in discussions of *leodrune*, and whose interest was in Old Germanic vocabulary rather than in charms (1940: 50–51).

Wünsch also commented on the remaining words. He stated that he saw no connection between any of them and either Classical or 'Oriental' languages, "trotzdem einige formeln einen völlig hebräische klang haben" (1903: 94) ['despite some formulae having a fully Hebrew ring']. This remark connects with Versnel's observation that names ending *-el* and *-oth* are linked to Hebrew or Jewish models (2002: 114). Thus, *gahel* and perhaps *gail* resonate with *Michael*, *Gabriel*, and similar names. On this background, *tililot* and perhaps *tigloit* resonate with names like *Sabaoth* (a name of God), where the final *-t* rather than *-th* may reflect phonological interference from the names' circulation in an Old High German or similar language area. In this light, it is noteworthy that *beronice* and *berinice* have a feminine name ending resembling Greek *-η* (*Φερονίκη*) rather than Latin *-a*, while *leodrune* has the same ending although as a contemporary Old Germanic feminine, and thus linguistically other from Latin, like those in *-el*/*-il* and *-ot(h)*/*-oit(h)*. Final *-e* is also in *depotange*, however it might be interpreted, which makes *malifragra* stand out as the only one of the ten words that would seem to be Latin. The context presents the alternative explanation that *malifragra* also indexed linguistic otherness, and that *-agra* is a pseudo-Greek ending used in naming supernatural actors.[19] Although if read with fluency in Latin, *malifragra* could easily sound like 'stinker of the wicked one' or something similar as a designation for a female agent, the ending *-agra* may belong to the repertoire of word endings used to index otherness from Latin.

Ferdinand Ohrt was sceptical about Wünsch's interpretation for precisely the point that Wünsch considered inexplicable. Ohrt's comment on the name Veronica opening Text 2 is in the context of his discussion of name variation in examples of a Seven Sisters charm, which is characterized by listing seven names of female agents of fever or illness to be expelled (1925: 38–40). Ohrt considered it improbable that 'Veronica' would open a list of demon names (1925: 40n. 4). His concern is rooted in an observation that lacked an analytical articulation at the time. Although names in charms may replace each other in transmission (Versnel 2002: 118), more commonly engaged names become regularly identified with particular supernatural actors, who become characterized through their alignment with or opposition to human societies (Frog 2021d: 23–26). Consequently, the name of the Virgin Mary may alternate with other names in verbal charms, but that variation can be predicted to regularly fill positions aligned with human society rather than opposed to it. Cases may occur in which the

Virgin Mary is named as an agent of illness or harm, positioning her as the adversary of the healer in the charm (e.g. Mastrangelo 2023: 66, 71, 75.n.8). However, such a case immediately raises the question of *why* this has occurred, whether it is simply an accident of someone saying the wrong name or there are complexities of religious history in its background (Frog 2021d: 30–33). Ohrt proposed instead that Veronica's name and perhaps some of the words that follow it were simply *voces mysticae*, infused with positive power (1925: 40n. 4). Revising the interpretation of the opening words of Text 2 interrupts the syntax of Wesche's vocative series and raises the question of how naming the positive agent Saint Veronica relates to naming apparently negative agents like *malifragra*, or how *voces mysticae* with a positive semantic prosody relate to those which seem to have a negative prosody.

The predominant trend has been to read the sequence as a vocative address as a continuation of the preceding clause. Schulz notes Ohrt's scepticism, but she does not take an explicit stance toward it. A list of names to expel fever suggests a Seven Sisters charm, yet the list in Text 2 is of ten names or words along with conjunctions. Schulz connects with Wünsch's suggestion that *Beronice birinice* should be read as a *hocus-pocus* type unit. She observes that, if *gahel & gail* and *tigloit tililot* are also each read as a single unit, the list is of seven rather than ten demons, and this would align the text with a Seven Sisters charm (2003: 109n. 423). A challenge to this interpretation is that *gahel* and *gail* are separated by a conjunction: the construction appears inconsistent with the proposal, suggesting instead that these were interpreted as separate names in the series. Of course, 'and' could have been introduced into the charm at some point in the course of the transmission of the written text, but this requires the introduction of a variation that disrupts the principle of there being seven names. Schulz's observation offers a way to explain why the text presents ten names where seven are predicted, but it does not seem accurate to how the names or words were understood in the preserved text, nor does it explain why three of seven names would 'originally' have been reduplicated in this way.

A. A. Barb brought the three opening words of Text 2 into comparison with a corresponding series of words in the Old English *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* ['against elf-sickness'] (1948: 42n. 4). Barb's concern was accounting for the appearance of Veronica's name outside of the expected domain of her agency linked to blood charms in Old English. This led to an idea that her name had shifted into a *vox mystica* of positive valence like that proposed by Ohrt (Storms 1948: 56). The Old English comparanda add

a dimension to Ohrt's concern and the question of a combination of a naming of Saint Veronica followed by potential names of fever demons.

OLD ENGLISH COMPARANDA

Among the instructions of *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* is the direction (given in Old English) to write out the following text, characterized by a variety of languaging:

> Scriptum est rex regum et dominus dominantium. byrnice. beronice. lurlure. iehe. aius. aius. aius. Sanctus. Sanctus. Sanctus. Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Amen. Alleluiah. (Storms 1948: 226–227)
>
> In the Scriptures is written: king of kings and lord of lords. *byrnice. beronice. lurlure. iehe. aius. aius. aius.* Holy. Holy. Holy. The Lord God, Sabaoth. Amen. Hallelujah.

G. Storms considers *byrnice*, *beronice* likely to reflect the name of Saint Veronica, although he also feels that "her very name became a word of power" (Storms 1948: 56). He considers *aius* likely to reflect Greek *ἅγιος* ['sacred, holy'], while he is more sceptical of a proposal that *iehe* reflects the letters I A O as a name of Yahweh; he knows no explanation for *lurlure* (1948: 233). Although words like *amen* may not be saliently perceived as belonging to one language or another, the three-fold repetition of Greek-based *aius* is followed immediately by the semantically equivalent three-fold repetition of Latin *sanctus* in interlingual semantic parallelism. These threefold repetitions are the opening words of the hymn called the *Sanctus* as it is known in each language. Although this presents the possibility that it is intended as a prompt for the performance of the whole hymn, like naming the *Pater noster* (cf. Quinn 1997), the punctuation between the words seems to speak against each set of three words being a title-like unit of utterance. That the words are given in both languages consecutively nevertheless makes parallelism salient, whether intended only between the written words or between two texts the words are intended to signify metonymically.

This charm of *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* and Text 2 exhibit several noteworthy parallels:

> Neither is a blood charm – i.e. the customary context in which Veronica is named

> Both pair *beronice* with a counterpart constituted of the same consonants and a different but similar stressed vowel and a variation or elision of the second vowel: *birinice* / *byrnice*
>
> The paired names are followed by a semantically opaque word with rhyme-repetition of the first syllable and differing only by the onset consonant and presence or absence of a final vowel *turlur* / *lurlure*
>
> *Beronice* and its phonically similar counterpart introduce a change in punctuation that contrasts with preceding and following clauses or phrases (noting the contrast in the *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* charm both with the two noun phrases in the preceding sentence and with the series of three designations for the Christian God following it)

The word in phonic parallelism and the following *C-urlur-(e)* word are too idiosyncratic to spontaneously occur independently as a three-word sequence. Although neither is used in a blood-charm context, the charms are intended for different media (speech, writing) and they seem to have contextually different positions in the charms. Text 2 situates these words between a banishment command and what appear to be designations of malevolent beings, whereas the *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* charm situates the same sequence amid what seem to be invocations of the Christian God. The variation points to the three-word sequence being handled as some sort of a formula, and that the formula was adapted across contexts.

Karl Farrugia (p.c., 24 November 2023) observes that phonically counterpart names are found elsewhere in medieval Latin mystical texts, such as the *Liber Iuratus Honorii*.[20] However, Text 2 exhibits six of ten words or names as having phonically connected counterparts. The ratio of those with such counterparts to those without is thus 3:2, whereas the highest ratio I noticed in the *Liber Iuratus Honorii* was around 1:3. Indeed, Versnel discusses the use and poetic production of phonically similar vocabulary in ancient and medieval charms (2002: 130–135), but it is noteworthy that he does not connect this with names, despite the tendency for *voces mysticae* to be interpreted as names. In contrast, this device with names is commonplace in Old Germanic poetries (Matyushina 2011; Frog 2022d: 86–87). For example, in the first strophe of the list of names of *dvergar* ['dwarfs'] in the Old Norse *Vǫluspá*, this is found for ten of the sixteen names or a ratio of 5:3.[21] Although that density gradually drops to below 1:1 across the six strophes of the list in *Vǫluspá*, the

organization and production of phonically counterpart names was an integrated feature of the Old Germanic poetic system as it was not in medieval Latin.

An additional, if less clear variant is found in the Old English *Wiþ lenctenadle* ['against (some sort of) fever']. The complexity of the instructions is similar to those in Clm 18956, fol. 77v. Relevant for comparison is a Latin text that appears intended to be spoken:

> In nomine domini sit benedictum. Beronica Beronicen. et habet in vestimento et in femore suo. scriptum rex regum et dominus dominantium.
>
> (Storms 1948: 270)

> In the name of the Lord, be blessed. *Beronica*, *Beronicen*, and on his garment and on his thigh [s/he] has written king of kings and lord of lords.
>
> (Adapted from Storms 1948: 271)

The instructions continue with another prayer of *In nomine domini sit benedictum* ['In the name of the Lord, be blessed'], followed by an obscure sequence of runes, and then state that three words in Greek letters must be written and placed on the patient's(?) right breast: *Hammanyel*. *Bronice*. *Noyertayeg*.

The use of phonic parallelism is distinct from direct repetition, which can also be found with Veronica's name, for instance in a blood charm (Ernst 2011: 145). Like the text of Clm 18956, 77v, *Wiþ lenctenadle* is meant to heal a fever illness. Within a complex series of distinct short texts, the name of Veronica again appears accompanied by a phonically near-identical counterpart, although this time variation is limited to the last syllable. If lack of the *-e-* is not a writing error in the Greek letters that must be written, a third form of the name, *bronice*, appears near the conclusion of the ritual alongside the biblical name *Emanuel* and a third string of letters that was presumably also interpreted as a name. If this is correct, it would support the interpretation of *Beronica Beronicen* as parallel names for the same agent, in line with the suggestion of Wünsch for Clm 18956's Text 2 (1903: 94; also Schulz 2003: 109n. 423).

The name *Beronica* and its counterpart are here immediately followed by a quotation of the Vulgate Revelation [3 Ioannis] 19:16. The combination of this quotation with the naming pair brings into focus the *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* charm's *Scriptum est rex regum et dominus dominantium* ['In the Scripture is written king of kings and lord of lords'],

revealing it to be a paraphrase of the same biblical passage. The biblical passage's relevance may have been included for its associations with an angel of the apocalypse as an adversary of (fever) demons combatted with the charm. Alternately, the legend of Veronica centers on her touching the garment of Jesus and being healed of excessive blood flow (e.g. Mark 5: 25–34). In addition, the instructions of *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* are to make a written text amulet, which may constitute an additional dimension of referentiality.

The co-occurrence *beronice*, a phonic parallel, and the quotation of Revelation 19:16 points to a connection between *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* and *Wiþ lenctenadle*. That the reduplication of *beoncice* in *Wiþ lenctenadle* is not based on the same principle as in *Wiþ ælfsogoþan* and Clm 18956, fol. 77v's Text 2 makes it seem most likely that the relationship is not bound to the copying of written texts. The difference is thus probably linked to writing from personal knowledge and memory at some point in the text's transmission. It may therefore reflect the oral circulation of the knowledge presented. The combination of elements supports the identification of *Beronica Beronicen* as a variation of the *beronice* formula, although it does not include a counterpart of *turlur*/*lurlure*.[22]

The Old English examples clearly group more tightly together than with the text of Clm 18956, and a total of three examples is an extremely limited basis on which to make any generalizations. However, acknowledging that any observations are necessarily dependent on the representativeness of that data, all three texts situate the formula as belonging to non-Germanic-language charms: it appears to have belonged to Christian discourse in Latin, comparable to words like *alpha*, *omega*, *amen*, *aius*, and so on. It also seems to be linked to fever-type illnesses rather than to blood-stopping, with which Veronica is commonly associated. The Old English examples suggest that Veronica or the *voces mysticae* have a positive valence, linked to support for the performer or patient. The formula exhibits formal variation: in *Wiþ lenctenadle*, it appears truncated and the phonic parallelism has a different basis than in the other examples; in *Wiþ ælfsogoþan*, *byrnice* precedes *beronice* and might be interpreted as an epithet. On this backdrop, the difference between *turlur* and *lurlur-* seems more likely related to these variations than to be a scribal error of 'l' for 't' or vice versa. If it is not accidental that the non-truncated examples regularly punctuate between the words of the formula and the words that follow in a stretch of text, this would show a strong connection to writing.

This connection could reflect that the healing knowledge in question was predominantly circulated through written copies. However, the variation in the evidence suggests a much more fluid movement of the knowledge from writing to people and back again, which may have occurred as scribal performances directly in the copying process. The latter possibility would reflect writing out what one knows in the place of what is found in a written exemplar, whether as a conscious intervention or owing to a confidence in one's own knowledge superseding the more time-consuming process of reading phrases, clauses, or sentences from the exemplar and writing them out more exactly. Finally, the positive valence of the formula in Old English, the recognizability of *beronice* as the name of Saint Veronica, and the probability that the formula circulated as an instrument in the healing of fever-type illnesses all underscore Ohrt's concern that Veronica's name seems unlikely to be the first in a list of fever-demon names.

POETICS

The evidence of poetic principles motivating the irruption (or apparent irruption) of *ridun* in a Latin text raises the question of the potential role of poetics in structuring Text 2. The operation of poetic principles is immediately apparent in the density of adjacent paired words that have identical onsets and endings producing phonic parallelism:

beronice	*birinice*
gahel	*gail*
tigliot	*tililot*

Turlur/lurlure may also be mentioned here as similarly structured, whether it is read as a reduplication of syllables within a word or as two words that have been read as one owing to spacing and punctuation in the manuscript.

When the question of poetics is brought into focus, the punctuation of the passages can also be viewed in that light, since medieval punctuation was commonly used as an aid for prosody in reading rather than marking syntactic structures as today (Scholes & Willis 1990). It was common for poetry in vernacular languages to be written out as continuous text like prose, in which case punctuation could be used at the level of line groups, lines, or metrical feet (e.g. O'Keeffe 1990; Doane 1994; see also Frog forthcoming). The punctuation of Text 2 thus appears to indicate a difference in the rhythm of this text from what precedes and

follows it. This shift in rhythm at the level of punctuation may thus be a marker of an irruption within the charm. The same type of shift is observed through the punctuation in *Wiþ ælfsogoþan*, where it seems to reflect an irruption of a word-based rhythm that exhibits a clear parallel structure in its three-fold repetitions of *aius* and *sanctus*, while *byrnice* and *beronice* also saliently form a phonically parallel pair. This makes it reasonable to consider whether *lurlure* and *iehe*, occurring between these, were organized with these in a poetically structured way:

byrnice.	beronice.	lurlure.	iehe.
aius.	aius.	aius.	
Sanctus.	Sanctus.	Sanctus.	
byrnice.	*beronice.*	*lurlure.*	*iehe.*
ἅγιος.	*ἅγιος.*	*ἅγιος.*	
Holy.	Holy.	Holy.	

The three-part structure makes it interesting to consider whether *iehe* was, by some at least, interpreted as representing I A O for the name Yahweh, or intended to be pronounced with such a three-part structure:

byrnice.	beronice.	lurlure.
i-	-e-	-he.
aius.	aius.	aius.
Sanctus.	Sanctus.	Sanctus.
byrnice.	*beronice.*	*lurlure.*
Y-	-ah-	-weh.
ἅγιος.	*ἅγιος.*	*ἅγιος.*
Holy.	Holy.	Holy.

The possibility is purely conjectural: there is no indication in the writing of the text that *iehe* should be pronounced differently than any other word. Speculations about I A O as an 'original' form that 'evolved' (to take a more neutral term than 'corrupted') in oral, aural, and/or written transmission could create a narrative about how I A O became *iehe*. However, such speculations could offer no grounds for thinking that I A O was the earlier form beyond an assumption that *iehe* must have been, from the perspective of modernity's dominant text ideology, a meaningful unit suited to the context. Nevertheless, the example is

good to think with because poetic structuring principles have received little consideration in the study of such texts. Here, if *i-e-he* was pronounced as three units rather than one, the sequence would have had a quatrain-type structure of four lines of three units each. The salient semantic parallelism in the final two lines would be anticipated already in the rhythms of the preceding two lines, raising the question of whether *byrnice*, *beronice*, *lurlure* is also in parallelism with 'holy, holy, holy', for instance as three names of supernatural agents, followed by a three-element name of god.

Bringing poetics into focus draws attention to the first group of lexical items exhibiting masculine rhyme in *-e* and those that follow in *-us*. Following this line of interpretation, final vowel on *lurlure*, in contrast to *turlur* in of Clm 18956, could be motivated by the interpretation as a name, making it rhyme with *byrnice* and *beronice* on analogy and thereby phonically reinforcing their belongingness to a group, as in the names of the Seven Sisters charm rhyming in *-kb* / *-(k)cb* above. Of course, if *iehe* was not to be pronounced as three units, the four elements *byrnice*, *beronice*, *lurlure*, and *iehe* remain linked by masculine rhyme, in contrast to the three-fold repetitions that follow. Because the phonic connection between *byrnice* and *beronice* leads them to be received as parts of a parallel group, more closely connected to each other than to what follows, *lurlure* and *iehe* may have been considered as forming a counterpart line to them commensurate to the two lines that follow:

byrnice.	beronice.	
lurlure.	iehe.	
aius.	aius.	aius.
Sanctus.	Sanctus.	Sanctus.
byrnice.	beronice.	
lurlure.	iehe.	
ἅγιος.	*ἅγιος.*	*ἅγιος.*
Holy.	Holy.	Holy.

Although the organization of the elements remains unclear, this sequence is intended to be spoken, which would make an associated rhythm salient. The discussion above suggests that *byrnice*, *beronice* and its counterpart *beronice*, *berinice* in Text 2 are rooted in a tradition of Old Germanic verbal art. In combination with the salient parallel-

ism in the sequence, this supports the probability that the languaging of this sequence, intended for oral performance, was understood as having some sort of structurally organized (i.e. poetic) rhythm. In this respect, the verbal charm may be contrasted with many other mystical and ritual medieval texts that were rooted mostly or entirely in writing culture, like those in the *Liber Iuratus Honorii*. Such texts in writing culture also employ *voces mysticae*, parallelism, and repetition, yet they seem to assume recital directly from the written medium rather than formulating utterances into rhythms for oral recital, – some sort of 'lines' – or arranging lists of names or obscure words in ways that facilitate remembering them. Accordingly, it remains useful to consider the rhythms of this charm even if it remains uncertain how *lurlure*, *iehe* fits into them.

In Clm 18956's Text 2, the punctuation suggests that the orthographic words were generally correlated with units of utterance. The exception is the conjunction 'and': whether it was intended to be uttered in Latin or Germanic, the conjunction was treated as part of the same utterance as the following word. In Old Germanic verse, conjunctions could be written without a space before the following word, although I am not aware of any examples of a conjunction being written as appended to the preceding but not the following word, despite some modern interpretations of the relationship of meter to rhythm.[23] The placement of the conjunctions relative to punctuation in Text 2 would be consistent with this.

In this case, the units of utterance exhibit three pairs linked through phonic parallelism, each with words of two to three syllables, while the fifth and tenth obscure words each have a four-syllable rhythm. Also, the endings of the four-syllable words, in the light of the parallel words between them, are phonically similar enough to produce resonance between them, reinforcing a sense of relation (i.e. *-agCV* and *-aCgV*, in which the consonants are a liquid and a nasal: *-agra* and *-ange*). Thus, there is an opening phonic pair followed by *turlur leodrune* and the first longer word, and then two phonic pairs and the second longer word. A rhythmic structure thus becomes apparent that also brings into focus the asymmetry of *turlur leodrune*:

beronice birinice turlur leodrune
et malifragra
et gahel et gail tigloit tililot
depotange

Although *turlur* and *leodrune* are not phonically parallel *per se*, they are connected by consonance on /r/ and /l/. The form *turlur* rather than a form **lurlur* commensurate with what is found in the Old English text may warrant comment here. In *leodrune*, /l/ and /r/ are the onsets of stressed syllables that would be capable of carrying Germanic alliteration rather than merely resonating with sounds in other positions in a co-occurring word. It seems doubtful that the same would be true of *-lur* in *turlur*, whereas **lurlur* would have made the pair alliterate according to Old Germanic poetics. Conversely *turlur* would create a connection with the alliteration of its structural counterpart, or *leodrune* would have, if *tigloit* and *tililot* had stress on the second or final syllable. In either case, the whole sequence is dense with consonance.

The difficulty of evaluating metrical and rhythmic principles behind this sequence of words is a lack of frames of reference. Consequently, it is difficult to assess whether a potential rhythmic or metrical structure would reflect the creativity of a writer or copyist, of a medieval reader, or only of a researcher. Nevertheless, the prominent use of phonic parallelism illustrates that poetic principles were operating, and the organization of utterances with parallelism was also apparent in the discussion of *ridun* above. The three sets of phonically parallel terms and syllabic equivalence of the fifth and tenth words suggest some sort of rhythmic structuring of the sequence in two parallel series of three units. Put simply: poetic principles seem to organize the sequence, even though these are not very clear, and thus Text 2 may be an irruption of poetic form, even if that form is not marked as Germanic.

TURLUR, LURLURE, SYNTAX, AND SENSE

Ohrt's concern that 'Veronica' would not open a list of demon names (1925: 40n. 4) concerns the stance-taking toward the Christian society that is commonly attributed to the respective supernatural agents (Frog 2021d: 25–26). Within the dominant ontology of medieval Christianity, Veronica was a venerated and benevolent supernatural agent aligned with Christians and their societies. Whatever the precise sense of *malifragra*, the element *mali-* is saliently identifiable with *malus* ['bad, wicked, evil'], which is defined through opposition to the human, Christian society, with which Veronica is aligned. Simply put: Veronica and *malifragra* are fundamentally opposed, and thus something must by occurring syntactically in Text 2 that gives meaning to naming them together. Any considerations of that significance must remain conjec-

tural, yet in a case where obscure foreign words or *voces mysticae* form an extended utterance, it is reasonable to consider that the people who wrote, perhaps copied, and also used such utterances also considered them meaningful and may have interpreted them as complex. Simply classing the words as *voces mysticae* without acknowledging the potential for interpretations dismisses and marginalizes what may have been an important dimension of engagements with this stretch of text by users.

When approaching Text 2, *beronice* is here assumed to be recognizable as the name of the positive and supernaturally supporting agent Veronica. In the light of the discussion of poetics above, *birinice* seems likely to belong syntactically with *beronice*, whether *birinice* would be interpreted as a second agent, alternative name of Veronica, or an epithet. *Turlur* is obscure. Before continuing, it is necessary to consider the semantics of leodrune, which would presumably be interpretable in a Germanic language area, in more detail.

Leodrune may be interpreted with other Old Germanic compounds for some sort of sorceress, referred to as threatening or hazardous in Christian discourse already in the sixth century (Jordanes, *Getica* XXIV.121). Such compounds are well attested in Old English as referring to monstrous and threatening female supernatural beings (DOE, *s.vv.* 'burh-rūne, burh-rūnan', 'hago-rūn, heah-rūn', 'hell-rūne, helle-rūne', 'hell-rūn', 'hell-rȳnig'). However, an Old English word *leodrune* [literally 'song-rune' or 'tribe-rune'] is also attested and has been interpreted as an agentive noun meaning 'witch, wise woman' (BT, *s.v.* 'leōd-rūne'), but it is found only in a single healing text where it is used in parallel with *ælfsiden* ['elf-sorcery'], and thus seems to refer to 'song-sorcery' rather than to the performer (Page 1964: 20–21). Moreover, a variant form of the Old English word, *leoðorune*, appears in poetry with a positive significance, meaning 'sung mythic knowledge', 'sung Christian mysteries', or perhaps 'sung (secret) council' (*Elene* 522b; see Hall 2007: 124 and works there cited). Although it seems more probable that *leodrune* originates from a more recent Old Frankish dialect than from a very early dialect of Old High German, the appearance of the roughly contemporary formula in Old English raises the question of whether the charm formula spread to the continent from the Old English language area. The textual form of *leodrune* is identical to its Old English counterpart, which leaves it an open question whether this word would have referred to a dangerous female supernatural agent or potentially positive 'song-sorcery'.

When considering the potential syntax of Text 2, the question of word order is crucial. If the word order is interpreted as SOV as in Latin, then *beronice* and *berinice* and perhaps *turlur* are the grammatical subject, *leodrune & malifragra & gahel & gail* and perhaps *tigloit* and *tililot* are the grammatical object, and *depotange* would be the verb. If the word order is conceived as SVO, as in continental Germanic at the time, *beronice birinice* would be the grammatical subject and *turlur* as a (presumably imperative) verb: 'Veronica$_1$, Veronica$_2$, VERB *leodrune* and *malifragra* and *gahel* and *gail*….'. The conjunction 'and' suggests that *leodrune* and *malifragra* belong to a single category that Veronica acts against, and thus *leodrune* is a word for 'witch' or other hostile female supernatural agent rather than referring to songs or knowledge that Veronica is invoked to use against *malifragra* and other things. Following this interpretation, Clm 18956's Text 2, may be read as following *beronice birinice turlur* with a "Seven Sisters" series of demon names:

SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECT
Beronice		
birinice	turlur	leodrune
		& malifragra
		& gahel
		& gail
		tigloit
		tililot
		depetonge

Syntactically, the final three words of Text 2 are not linked in the series by conjunctions, which might indicate that they do not belong to the same series of syntactically parallel words. If these words were interpreted as a second clause expressing a parallel action or repeating the expression of action through parallelism, the syntax would probably be interpreted as repeating with elision of the verb as, for example:

SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECT
Beronice		
birinice	turlur	leodrune
		& malifragra
		& gahel
		& gail
tigloit		
tililot		depetonge

However, if the name in *-el* indexes an angelic being analogous to *Gabriel* and *Michael*, then the first five obscure words are interpretable as one syntactic unit, while the second five are a parallel unit, in which *gahel* and *gail* would be parallel to *beronice* and *berinice*, *tigloit* is parallel to *turlur*, and *tililot* and *depotange* are parallel to *leodrune* and *malifragra* (unless the parallelism allows elision of the verb, in which case *tigloit* could also name an agent of harm). This would account for why the lexeme in *-ot(h)*, forming a pseudo-Hebrew name, does not come first – i.e. because *tigloit* is not conceived as a counterpart to *tililot* as a name, but rather as a verb, as:

	SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECT
	Beronice		
	birinice	turlur	leodrune
			& malifragra
&	gahel		
&	gail		
		tigloit	tililot
			depetonge

This interpretation matches syntactic units with poetic structure, but does not account for the absence of the conjunction before *depotange*, unless the omission of the conjunction is a chiastic structure echoing its absence between *beronice* and *berinice*. Whichever interpretation is preferred, rather than Text 2 being identified with any particular lexico-grammatical system, it may simply be saliently perceived as 'other' in ways that point in the direction of vocabulary associated with Christian religious language and associated supernatural agents and agency. Opening this extended sequence with 'Veronica' and continuing it with negative agents seems more likely than not to have been interpreted as involving syntax more complex than a simple list of names. Although the words may be etymologically opaque, they were interpretable as formulations with semantic sense no less than Greek and Hebrew. However, unlike individual words and names, like *alpha*, *omega*, *Emanuel*, and so on, which may have been recognized as foreign in etymology but more or less integrated into the register of charms, the *beronice* formula seems most likely to have remained an "'open-ended' performative utterance" (Versnel 2002: 147) that was marked as an irruption as a move into a different language for a stretch of text. Transpositions of languages in charms and Malinowski's "coef-

ficient of weirdness" (1936) have long been recognized. The point here is that linguistic alterity and weirdness do not exclude a "presumption of semioticity" (Lotman 1990: 128) that leads to sense-making of the strange through poetic organization and syntax. Consequently, the stretch of text distinguished here as Text 2 could be interpreted as meaningful while the meaning of words like *turlur* either remained obscure or were potentially learned with an interpretation, while being distinctive to that stretch of text and the language it represented.

CONCLUSIONS

The concepts of languaging and irruption have been introduced above in order to approach how languages are used in medieval charms, focusing on the case of the healing text added to Clm 18956, fol. 77v. The concept of languaging offers the advantage of avoiding implicit polarizations of differences between vocabulary and phraseology according to their etymological identification with particular languages as exclusive and inherently contrasted lexico-grammatical systems. Languaging offers an approach to vocabulary rooted in Greek, Hebrew, and potentially also other languages with an integrated position in Christian Latin-language charms. Rather than being necessarily marked as words from different lexico-grammatical systems, words that index different languages may be wholly integrated into the respective register (see also Foley 1996: 25– 37). Emblematic features associated with the words or names may also be used in the generation of new vocabulary, which may be considered Greek-like or Hebrew-like on the etymological basis of the particular features, yet were integrated into the register of Latin charms. The concept of irruption offers a complementary tool for discussing those features that emerge as marked by difference, whether they are formally driven, like the use of *ridun* for lexical variation in parallelism, or a complex open-ended performative utterance like Text 2. Text 2 is then used to illustrate the potential for such open-ended utterances to be syntactically complex, even if the referents or propositional semantics of individual words cannot be accessed by researchers today. Text 2 has a high "coefficient of weirdness" (Malinowski 1936), yet the preceding discussion shows how a semantic analysis of its elements can advance to a syntactic analysis to reveal the complexity of what may initially seem like 'nonsense' in the charm.

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NOTES

[1] Although *vox magica* ['magical utterance'] is more widely used in discussions of medieval charms today, following from a discussion with Karl Farrugia, I use *vox mystica* ['mystical utterance'], which was more in use at the beginning of the nineteenth century. *Vox mystica* avoids characterizing such words, names, and phrases as 'magical', which is not always accurate for many ritual contexts.

[2] Folklore was not initially distinguished as a concept, which took shape differently in different national scholarships (on which, see Frog 2022a).

[3] For an accessible introduction to the concept of language ideologies and its background, see Kroskrity 2001.

[4] E.g. G. Storms reviews many such interpretations in his edition of Old English healing texts (1948).

[5] Although I appreciate Leslie K. Arnovick's (2006) elevation of 'gibberish' as a term for analysis, her use references the derogatory connotations characteristic of earlier twentieth-century scholars' evaluative perspective, which I prefer to avoid.

[6] In Germanic philology, the push to interdisciplinarity seems to have reached a watershed around or just after 2000, where it most commonly took the form of disciplinary transposition – i.e. when a specialist takes theoretical and analytical frameworks, approaches, concepts, research questions, or primary source material from another discipline and applies it to the source materials that they customarily study.

[7] Arnovick's corpus is constituted of 463 Old English texts of which she identifies 111 as containing a verbal charm or incantation, and 37 of these as containing 'gibberish'.

[8] This development was stimulated and supported by the formation of the Charms, Charmers, and Charming (ChaChaCha) Committee of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR). The ChaChaCha has had meetings almost every year since 2003 as well as symposia within the ISFNR congresses, producing numerous volumes and establishing this journal, of which the first number appeared in 2011.

[9] Cf. *The Journal of Visual Verbal Languaging*, est. 1981; renamed *The Journal of Visual Literacy* in 1989.

[10] This approach does not exclude, for example, scripts or social identities being considered emblematic for a language, nor does it exclude gesture, facial expressions, kinesthetics, haptics, and so on as integrated in language as signifying behaviour.

[11] Following the work of John Laudun (2021), I find it problematic to define belief legends as narrative, which is not representative of a significant portion of texts identified with the category in archives, nor of many examples recorded in oral discourse.

[12] In Helsinki, for example, the tunnel from the metro station in Kaisaniemi to the university campus has an irregular surface that gives a cave-like impression and was for decades painted with petroglyph-type ornaments; in one place along the tunnel, in the same general style, was the figure of a man talking on a mobile phone transposed among these images often associated with the Stone Age in Finland. Whatever one's opinion about the aesthetics of this juxtaposition, it appeared as a salient irruption amid the image repertoire otherwise characterized by 'ancientness'.

[13] For example, the transposition of one burial type into a cemetery characterized by another (e.g. Wessman et al. 2024) can be approached as an irruption.

[14] In research on Late-Iron-Age and medieval Scandinavia, for example, this is found for a distinctive type of sorcery (*seiðr*), ritual specialists (e.g. *vǫlva*), and sometimes the expression for non-Christian religion (*forn síðr*), terms for poetic meters (or more properly poetic forms: e.g. *ljóðaháttr*) and poetic language (e.g. *heiti*), and so on. Many researchers extend practices to uses of the vernacular word rather than the established English loan (e.g. *berserkr* versus berserk) and the spellings of proper nouns without marking linguistic otherness through italic font (e.g. Óðinn versus Odin, Valhǫll versus Valhalla).

[15] In Finnish and Karelian legends, the speech attributed to supernatural beings may be opaque, use alternative nouns (comparable to circumlocutions in laments, above), or use an incongruous register (Jauhiainen 1998: types D1701, D1831, [D1841], H191, M22, M86).

[16] On this process of remembering during the course of performance, see Frog 2022c: 196–200.

[17] On the relevance of these saints to the charm, see Schulz (2000: 354n.1201); on the possibility of semantic play behind the choice of names, see Wünsch (1903: 93).

[18] Wünsch proposes a direct connection between this word's semantics of trembling or shaking and the invocation of Saint Vitus (1903: 95), although the semantics do not account for why an Old Germanic rather than a Latin word is used.

[19] In the Greek magical papyri: *Akeobasagra*, *Ezagra*, *Obazagra*, *Orborazagra*, *Oreobazagra*, *Phorphorbarzagra*, *Zagra* (Betz 1986: 30, 32, 77, 90, 99, 148, 164, 237, 246, 256, 273, 299, 308).

[20] Paging through the *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, I observe examples like:

– *Raphael, Caphael* (Hedegard 2002: 118 [*Cafhael*], 120, 121, 124, 140; *Raphael* appears alone in the same list on 120, 121, 124, 140)

– *Nassar, Naas(s)a* (Hedegard 2002: 118, 128, 132 [four examples], 133 [two examples]; in the same list as *Nassar, Cynassa* on 118, 128; the latter pair alone on 134 [three examples], 135 [five examples], 138)

– *Libarre, Libares* (Hedegard 2002: 132)

– *Michael, Miel* (Hedegard 2002: 120, 121, [with ⁊ between them], 124; *Mychael, Myel* on 118, 140; appearing with *Michael, Samyel* in the same list on 120, 121, 124, 140)

– *Guth, Maguth, Gutrhyn* (Hedegard 2002: 117, 128, 134 [three examples], 135 [three examples], 138)

[21] Without considering manuscript variants and simply quoting a common edition: *Nýi oc Niði, Norðri oc Suðri, / Austri oc Vestri, Alþiófr, Dvalinn, / Bívǫrr, Bávǫrr, Bǫmburr, Nóri, / Án oc Ánarr, Ái, Mioðvitnir*; if *Nýi* : *Niði* are not counted, the ratio drops to 1:1; if, instead, *Bǫmburr* is considered phonically linked to the preceding pair (*bVC(C)Vrr*), the ratio rises to 11:7.

[22] When reading the text that precedes the one including the *beronice* formula, the obscure words *tiecon leleloth* (see Storms 1948: 270) struck me as having a potential resonance with *turlur*/*lurlure*, but the initial *t-* is only found in *turlur*, whereas the repetition of *-l-* is only in *lurlure*, and there is no counterpart to the *-ur-* rhyme.

[23] I have discussed this for an Old High German charm (Frog forthcoming), but I have observed it more generally in Old Norse eddic poetry.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AW = Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch (online). https://awb.saw-leipzig.de/?sigle=AWB&lemid=A00001

BT = Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online. https://bosworthtoller.com/

DOE = The Dictionary of Old English (online). https://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/

SKVR = *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* I–XV. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1908–1997. Digital edition available at: http://skvr.fi/.

MANUSCRIPTS

Clm 18956. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18956 (Teg. 956).

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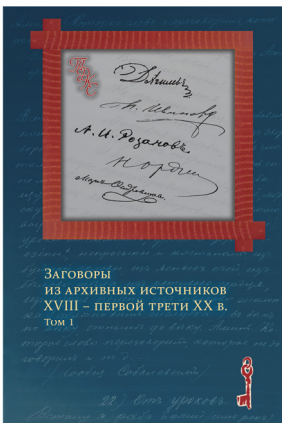
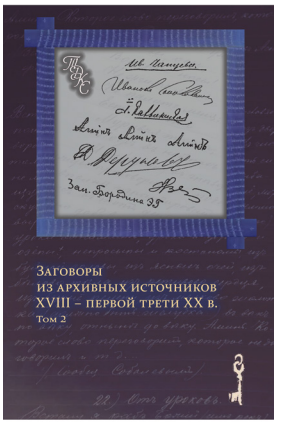
THE LONGUE DURÉE AND CLOSE READING

In 2023 and 2024, the academic publishing house *Indrik* released two significant collections of charms:





> Charms from Archival Sources (18th Century – First Third of the 20th Century), Moscow: Indrik. *Vol. 1*, compiled by Tatiana A. Agapkina, 2023; *Vol. 2*, compiled by Alexandra B. Ippolitova and Andrey L. Toporkov, 2024.

This two-volume publication contains approximately 860 texts preserved in the archives of the Russian Geographical Society and the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Most manuscripts date to the second half of the nineteenth century, although earlier and later sources are also represented. The scholarly apparatus includes introductory articles to both sections, contextual notes for individual manuscripts, commentaries, a functional index of charms, an index of proper names (including place names), and a bibliography. The second volume of the edition publishes more than 500 texts from 30 sources preserved in five archives located in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Saratov: the Manuscript Department of the Russian State Library; the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art; the Folklore Archive and Manuscript Department of the Institute of Russian Literature (*Pushkin House*), Russian Academy of Sciences; the St. Petersburg branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences; and the Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts of the V. A. Artisevich Zonal Scientific Library at Saratov National Research State University named after N. G. Chernyshevsky.

The volumes continue a series of publications devoted to the magical folklore of East Slavic peoples, initiated more than twenty years ago by Indrik Publishers within the framework of *Traditional Spiritual Culture of the Slavs*, subseries *Text Publications*. Previous volumes include:

> *Forbidden Reading in Russia of the 17th–18th Centuries* (eds. A. L. Toporkov, A. A. Turilov. Moscow, 2002);
>
> *Polesian Charms (Recorded in the 1970s–1990s)* (comp., text preparation and notes by T. A. Agapkina, E. E. Levkievskaya, A. L. Toporkov. Moscow, 2003);
>
> *Russian Charms from Manuscript Sources of the 17th – First Half of the 19th Century* (comp., text preparation, articles and commentary by A. L. Toporkov. Moscow, 2010).

In the first volume we found slightly fewer than 400 Ukrainian ones. Although only five Ukrainian manuscripts are represented, two of them are extensive. Geographically, the published materials include Russian charms from the different provinces of European part of Russia, from the multiethnic areas, and the Don Cossack Region. Chronologically, the collection spans from the late eighteenth century to 1915, with the majority of manuscripts dating from the mid- to late nineteenth century.

From a genre perspective, the materials in this volume comprise charms in the traditional sense, non-canonical prayers, fragments of canonical prayers and psalms, as well as a certain number of incantations and magical formulas. The book includes both handwritten collections of charms and prayers and compilations assembled by individual collectors. Since the primary aim of the edition was to publish charms—that is, texts of verbal magic—many manuscripts appear only in part, as fragments.

The introductory sections provide an overview of expeditions conducted in the early twentieth century and during the socially and politically complex 1930s, as well as information about individual collectors—their origins, professions, and other relevant biographical details.

Particular emphasis is placed on the commentaries, which characterize the collections and summarize the motifs found in the charms and their structural sequence. They identify, for example, the presence of a closing formula where applicable, indicate prior publications of the text, reference biblical motifs, and specify editions in which a given motif has been discussed in greater detail. The references are linked to the scholarly tradition associated with the study of charms and mythol-

ogy, including works by researchers emerging from the Nikita Tolstoy school (S. Tolstaya, E. Levkievskaya, L. Vinogradova, T. Agapkina among others).

I present here two examples of commentary added to the texts, illustrating the depth of work undertaken on each individual text to highlight all its distinctive details, and draw attention to the similarities in other publications. It also highlights the textological changes introduced by earlier editors of the texts.

Charm against bleeding in cases of cuts and lacerations (Agapkina 2023:28)

> 1. By the sea, beneath an oak, there is a tomb; upon it a maiden sews and charms the wound (VZMFU[1]: 27–28, B1);
>
> 2. It is not [name] who charms, but Christ with the Mother of God and the apostles (legitimizing formula) (VLZ: 235 ff.);
>
> 3. Formula of negation of illness: *The duck has no milk (therefore, the wound has no blood)* (VLZ: 190–192);
>
> 4. Closing formula (*a lock in the sea, a key in the mouth*) (VLZ: 242–244);
>
> 5. Let the wound be strengthened and the blood cease to flow (VZMFU: 24, A1). Published in: Maikov, No. 142. Possibly, Maikov replaced *men', mnya* with *kamen', kamnya*.
> *Seventy apostles* – followers of Jesus Christ, chosen in addition to the twelve apostles and preaching His teaching (Luke 10:1–2).

Charm against bleeding (Agapkina 2023:28)

> 1. Someone walked across the Jordan;
>
> 2. Let the blood not drip (cf. references to the Jordan in charms against bleeding: VZMFU: 26, A7); on this motif see: VLZ: 339–344; Agapkina, Toporkov 2007.

Textological aspects and the editorial approach is clearly defined: the aim was to make the texts accessible to a wider readership, using contemporary standard orthography as the basis, while preserving distinctive features. *We did not set ourselves specific paleographic or linguistic tasks and sought to make the book accessible to the non-specialist reader. Orthography and punctuation have been partially adapted to modern norms. Capital letters are used largely according to*

contemporary rules.[--], etc. Language has been corrected as sparingly as possible, in accordance with the conventions of many philological academic traditions.

The commentaries already indicate that earlier collections have undergone textological analysis. It is important to note the special role played by several organizations and individuals during the centuries. The Russian Geographical Society (Royal Society), The Department Ethnography of the Russian Geographical Society, founded in 1845, had the program for collection ethnographic information from different corners of Russian empire (1848), later the program dedicated folk superstitions and beliefs South Russia (1866). Invaluable information on the religion, customs, and folklore of Siberian indigenous peoples was provided by political opponents, many of whom later became prominent scholars, such as W. Bogoraz, a leading researcher of Chukchi culture and language, but also Russain travelers and geographers.

For years the existence of the Russian Geographical Society there are also made descriptions of the Archive ethnographic handwriting data. The most detailed became description of Dmitri Zelenin, who published inventories materials from provinces European Russia and published in three-volumes from 36 provinces – from Arkhangelsk to Saratov. Dmitry Konstantinovich Zelenin (1878–1956) was a linguist and ethnographer, born in an Udmurt village near Sarapul, where his father was a parish clerk. He attended the Vyatka seminary and the Dorpat (Tartu) University. Dmitiri Zelenin payed attention on individual side of folk belief, especially close and interesting to him were family and calendar rites, apotropaic rituals, mythological ideas about trees, birds, legends, nature, ecology, living space.

Charms are also found in chronicles, including Finnic thunder charms recorded in runes. In addition, charms appear in birch-bark books that were widespread in the Novgorod region, although most of these books served primarily as everyday business records and contracts. They demonstrate how people communicated in the earliest Russian writing in the city of Great Novgorod in northwestern Russia.

European societies, where writing and history have occupied a prominent position for centuries through the centuries, desperately need the help of historians to investigate the past beyond the immediate memory of the people the ethnographers and folklorists can question in their present fieldwork, for instance, through interviews. The longue durée then offers the possibility to make some hypotheses on the past of some contemporary cultural practices.

The consolidation of sources has made it possible to systematize archival materials and present the genre-diverse texts they contain. This provides an excellent basis for studying individual charm types, their symbolism, language, and other features, as well as for applying close reading techniques. Through the consolidation, analysis, and publication of materials, A. Toporkov and T. Agapkina have established a foundation that enables the resolution of complex problems and opens new perspectives for examining charms both as texts and as performances.

NOTES

[1] VZMFU – ВЗМФУ – Восточнославянские заговоры: Материалы к функциональному указателю сюжетов и мотивов. Аннотированная библиогра фия / авторы-составители Т.А. Агапкина, А.Л. Топорков (*East Slavic Charms: Materials for a Functional Index of Plots and Motifs. Annotated Bibliography,* compiled by T. A. Agapkina and A. L. Toporkov). Moscow, 2014. https://www.academia.edu/9334877/1;

VLZ – ВЛЗ – Агапкина Т.А. Восточнославянские лечебные заговоры в сравнительном освещении: Сюжетика и образ мира (Agapkina, T. A. *East Slavic Healing Charms in Comparative Perspective: Plot Structure and Worldview).* Moscow, 2010. https:// www. academia.edu/27006701/

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ISFNR COMMITTEE ON CHARMS, CHARMERS AND CHARMING CONFERENCE "SYNCRETIC ELEMENTS IN THE PROCESS OF CHARMING", BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, SEPTEMBER 24TH–26TH, 2025

Held in Bucharest between 24 and 26 September 2025, the conference "Syncretic Elements in the Process of Charming" convened scholars from over a dozen countries to explore the constitutive elements in the construction of charms and the performative processes of charming. Organized by the ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming, as the 17th conference, in collaboration with the "Constantin Brăiloiu" Institute of Ethnography and Folklore and the "Iorgu Iordan – Alexandru Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics, the event invited researchers to "investigate the syncretic features of charms, as they manifest both in the actual processes of charming and in their reflections as documents preserved in archives" (call for papers), across three days of panels chaired by prominent scholars such as Mare Kõiva, Jonathan Roper, and others.

The conference opened with Emanuela Timotin's introductory paper on Romanian linguistic contributions to charm studies, setting the stage for the discussions on Romania's long-standing engagement with charm scholarship. Daniela Răuțu, Oana Niculescu, and Carmen Radu's presentation discussed the charms identified among the documents from the Phonographic Archive of the Romanian Language (AFLR), founded in 1958 within the Centre for Phonetic and Dialectal Research in Bucharest, which has become part of the Institute of Linguistics. Mihaela Nubert-Cheţan's study investigated recordings of incantations from southern Romania, performed by young girls, focusing on the formal structure, rhythmic articulation, and musicalized chanting. In the second part of the session, Anca Maria Vrăjitoriu examined the meaning of plants as ritual props in Romanian charms. Based on fieldwork conducted between 1987 and 2019, Kira Sadoja's paper examined the use of magical objects in East Slavic healing rituals in the Ukrainian Carpathians, performed by folk healers (*znakhari*) alongside incantations.

Over the following two days, participants explored the structure of charms and particularities of charming within distant cultural traditions. Papers examined the composite nature of charming in rural North India, as it manifests in three domains – oral performance, material scenography, and scribal culture – (Nidhi Matur), the structure, symbolism, and linguistic characteristics of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian magic formulae, which have been recorded since the 17th century (Andrey Toporkov), the Belarusian manuscript tradition of charms as an intermediary form between oral and written culture (Tatiana Valodzina), and the historical sources that reference and describe charms within the territory of modern Latvia, noting their use and performance not only by Latvians but also by members of other cultural and linguistic groups (Aigars Lielbardis). The Armenian corpus received particular attention, with Davit Ghazaryan analyzing amulet scrolls with a focus on a scroll written in Bulgaria in 1752, consisting of 46 prayers, and discovered in the National Archives of Romania.

Davor Nikolić's presentation discussed how the textual complexity of charms (multi-layered intratextual and intertextual connections) has been approached in the most relevant scholarly work. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Lithuania and among the Lithuanian community from Belarus, as well as archival and published folklore sources, Daiva Vaitkevičienė's paper explored the symbolic, material, and functional roles of water in Lithuanian verbal charm practices, focusing on their syncretic nature and ritual dynamics.

Beyond the textual and musical investigation, the conference also enjoyed the analysis of audiovisual materials through the screening of the film *Pusul cinstelor*, from the Multimedia Folkloric Archives of the "Constantin Brăiloiu" Institute of Ethnography and Folklore. The document-film, presented by Sabina Ispas, was made in Hunedoara, Romania, in 1978, and subsequently updated with color sequences in 1997, and it presents the performing of a healing charm. Florența Popescu Simion presented a project of the same institution – *Sânzienele, Drăgaica – manifestări și practici în context național și european* (*Sânzienele, Drăgaica* – manifestations and practices in the national and European context). Contributions from Victoria Arakelova, Yaich Aisha, and Sandrine Bessis expanded the geographic scope to the South Caspian Contact Zone (Yezidis and Talishis), Late Medieval England, and the South Pacific, exploring the use of protective or veterinary charms as a means of safeguarding livestock, or as revealers of social status, and tracing historical charms within the Geomyth of Kuwae, Vanuatu.

During the first session of the third day, Laura Jiga Iliescu presented her work on the Mother of God's figure, in her capacity as an active character of the narrative plot in Romanian charms, emphasizing that the very nature of her involvement in the reparatory process is meaningful regarding the manner she is assumed, especially by woman, as their mistress and model. Mare Kõiva discussed archival texts and fieldwork materials, comparing Estonian (Finno-Ugric) data with each other and with data from Slavic and various European peoples, in order to address one of the parallels between Estonian and Baltic Finnic ethnic groups in the field of traditional word magic – the beliefs and practices of healing people and animals from a distance by means of charms and prayers. Luka Šešo's presentation focused on manuscript records of folk culture from late 19th and early 20th century Croatia, that describe magical practices and charms, arguing that the Croatian material proves more fluid boundaries compared to Julio Caro Baroja's four models of religious/magical efficacy, with clear distinctions between religion and magic. Using sociolinguistic interpretation, textual and rhetorical analysis, and cultural hermeneutics in an attempt to distinguish between innovative and traditional discursive strategies and staging practices, Cristian Gaşpar's presentation explored an imprecatory text produced, disseminated, and recorded in 2022 in Lugoj, Romania.

One of the final day's sessions brought attention to prominent figures as charm collectors like John James Lyons, a Philadelphia-based scholar born in Ireland, collector of oral prayers, folklore, and charms, among the members of the Irish immigrants living in Pennsylvania (Nicholas Wolf), and Otto Räsänen, school-teacher and award-winning folklore collector from Tuusniemi, Finland (Ilona Tuomi), or Vladimir Dodig Trokut, artist and co-founder of the Anti-Museum from Zagreb, Croatia, where numerous items used for diagnosing and treating illnesses from the mid-19th century to the present day can be found (Suzana Marjanić). Within the same session, Maria Troshchilo, presented a handwritten notebook with a collection of verbal charms, discovered in 2024 during field research conducted under the auspices of the "Propp Center" NGO in the Pinezhsky district of Arkhangelsk Russian region.

Based on materials from the electronic archive Russian Everyday Life, collected in northern Russia since the 1980s, Liubov Golubeva and Sofia Kupriyanova explored the performers, scenography, and props involved in the ritual of the physical and symbolic inclusion of the newborn into the family and the structure of ancestral relationships. Also based on field research, Tünde Komáromi's paper investigated the

complex materiality of the agents of charming/bewitchment in the Arieș river valley from Transylvania, Romania, with a special focus on their syncretic nature and the problematic demarcation of the magical from the religious, comparing the results of the research with earlier ethnographic studies on magic and the witch trials from in the same region.

Danilo Trbojević and Mladen Stajić's presentation, based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in rural communities across Serbia, explored how traditional ways of interpreting reality through a magical perspective persist and adapt within contemporary village life, while Inna Veselova's closing paper explored the magical use of technologies, objects, genres, and media that preserved the archaic forms symbolically called *plus quam perfectum*.

During the conference, the participants had the opportunity to visit the archives of the two organizing institutes. The Bucharest meeting thus reaffirmed the ISFNR Committee's crucial role in shaping an integrated field of charm studies.

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