

Incantatio

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Charms, Charmers and Charming

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Charms Symposium, The 16th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, “*Folk Narrative in the Modern: Unity and Diversity*” (June 25–30, 2013, Vilnius, Lithuania) (Emanuela Timotin)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third issue of *Incantatio*! At its core are the articles, mostly based on and developed from papers, delivered at the Charms Symposium of the 16th ISFNR congress, which took place in Vilnius, Lithuania in June 25th–30th 2013. Both the symposium and the whole congress were vibrant and productive academic events, and the articles reflect this active spirit. The issue also contains a review of a fresh new book on verbal magic, and a report from the above-mentioned charms symposium.

Incantatio is aimed to “be a lively forum for charms studies from a wide variety of traditions and scholarly approaches”, as the editors of the first issue aptly put it. Keeping in mind this goal, the selection of the articles for this issue was not an easy one to make. The focus is on case studies, reflecting various specific problems, but also touching on broader set of research questions and approaches. The focus is also on authors and themes, which have not been published here before. Surely, they contribute actively and significantly to the study of charms. As some of the articles present initial stages of intriguing research projects, they also create potential for further development.

Here I would like to thank to all authors. Their work and efforts shaped *Incantatio* 3 as a serious scholarly piece and as a fascinatingly broad view on verbal magic.

The process of putting together this issue of *Incantatio* was also a challenging and precious journey for me as a guest editor. Despite all difficulties, it was all worth it. I am especially thankful to Jonathan Roper, for all his kind advice, help and patience. Without them, my editing mission would have been rather impossible. However, when relying on such great collegial atmosphere, being an editor is an enchanted experience.

Svetlana Tsonkova, *guest editor*

EX ECCLESIA: SALVIFIC POWER BEYOND SACRED SPACE IN ANGLO-SAXON CHARMS

Ciaran Arthur

Many of the Anglo-Saxon charms identify locations for their performance and function. Previous scholarship has used locations as evidence of continuous pre-Christian practices and this argument has impacted on how the charms are perceived. As a result, the role of the church building as one of the charms' identified locations has not yet been properly highlighted. Rather than focusing on the potential pre-Christian associations with certain sites in the charms, it is more enlightening to look at how other locations orientate around the church building. In this article I will explore how charms use liturgical and public spaces to signify their function during the late Anglo-Saxon period. After outlining the main scholarly views of Anglo-Saxon locations that have had an impact on charm studies, my analysis will make a comparative case study of two charms against elf-sickness to open readings of the corpus of Anglo-Saxon charms. This approach reveals interesting information about the Anglo-Saxons' interaction with their landscape in the tenth and eleventh centuries and helps us to redefine the religious nature of these rituals.

Key words: Anglo-Saxon, sacred space, locations, landscape, charms, ritual, paganism, liturgy.

The Anglo-Saxon charms are various recorded rituals dating to the tenth and eleventh centuries. During this time efforts were made to promote religious devotion, renew learning and improve the religious and secular institutions in England. Jonathan Roper says that charms “could be defined as traditional verbal forms intended by their effect on supernature to bring about change in the world in which we live” (Roper 2003a: 8). Through their performative verbal features and their range of subjects, the charms provided a useful instrument for lay edification and they attempted to bring about change in a range of different circumstances through spiritual means. The very function of these charms was to promote Christian power in the wider community by transporting it from the church to the wider world. This was most effectively done by the charms' use of sacred words that incorporate and apply liturgical power to everyday circumstances. These words of power effected change in the material world beyond the church simultaneous to their recital.¹

In this article I discuss how a significant number of the charms use locations to transmit Christian power to the wider community. John Hirsh has recently commented that “the extent to which charms could reach out to ritual needs to be explored further” (Hirsh 2012: 145). Locations provide one major approach through which we may understand the charms as a response to the community’s ritual needs. I first discuss the criteria for identifying a ‘location’ in these texts and briefly outline how designated sites become the charms’ threshold of ritual power. I then address how locations have been interpreted in other Old English studies and used as evidence of a surviving Anglo-Saxon paganism. This argument has impacted on interpretations of the charms and presented them as evidence of continuous pagan rituals with Christian substitutions. The charms show that different landmarks obtained spiritual significance by their orientation around the church building and they acquired efficacy from liturgical power. This evidence provides much more enlightening views of how the charms served the needs of English communities in the late Anglo-Saxon period than current preconceived ideas of paganism in these rituals. Following this, I provide an overview of the scholarly attention given to the Christian significance of locations in charms in a number of isolated examples. Finally, I take two different case studies from the corpus of Anglo-Saxon charms that demonstrate how liturgical and public spaces are used to transfer Christian power from the church building. By comparing how different charms use locations in similar ways to represent spiritual power, a broader perspective of the Anglo-Saxon landscape is gained and new interpretations of the charms corpus are opened. An understanding of where the church building features among other sites adds to our understanding of how sacred space was viewed in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

‘LOCATIONS’ AND THEIR FUNCTION

In Godfrid Storms’ corpus of eighty-six Anglo-Saxon charms, I have identified twenty-eight that explicitly name certain locations in the vernacular. Other charms name locations in Latin and some use both languages to signify certain sites. As the locations that are named in Latin ultimately derive from continental sources, I will focus on the appearances of locations in the vernacular as these reflect an effort to adapt rituals from their sources to the contemporary Anglo-Saxon environment. Identifying performative ‘locations’ in Anglo-Saxon charms can pose problems as it is sometimes difficult to distinguish a proper location from a non-specific area. Roper states that nearly all of the English charms name general sites except for Biblical locations:

the micronarratives we find in charms are usually located in a landscape, these places, unless they are Biblical locations such as the River Jordan, the Mount of Olives, Bethlehem or Jerusalem, tend to be referred in general terms, such as ‘the bridge’, or ‘a road’, or ‘the wood’ (Roper 2006: 72).

Two charms against theft (Storms 1948: 206–8) identify the town of Bethlehem for its associated spiritual power but these charms were obviously not intended to be performed there. The invocation of Bethlehem reflects “the Biblical, and specifically New Testament, character of the landscape and personnel of English narrative charms” (Roper 2006: 68). These charms effectively map Biblical locations onto the Anglo-Saxon landscape, thus investing sites with spiritual power. I have included these places, or “settlement names” in the vernacular (Roper 2006: 68), under the criteria for a location as they are still identifiable sites that have some bearing on the charms’ power beyond the church.

The other identifiable sites are liturgical, domestic and public locations that are mostly found in a charm’s performative instructions (see Appendix). To the modern reader these locations appear ‘in general terms’, to use Roper’s phrase, but the sites of performance would have been identifiable to the Anglo-Saxon performer and community. I have therefore included the sites of houses, gardens, streams, graves and fields in my criteria. On the other hand, when the phrases ‘the earth’ or ‘over your shoulder’ or ‘on the ground’ are used, the site of performance is not restricted to a particular place. The locations I discuss are therefore defined as areas of specific sites and landmarks known to the performer and community in which the charm utilises spiritual power, or by which it gains power through referencing a Biblical place.

Edina Bozóky discusses the significance of some such locations as thresholds of power:

As places of *passage*, one finds in the Latin formulae locations such as ‘before the gate’ of the town; ‘on the bridge’, ‘on the threshold’, and most obviously, ‘on the road’, mentioned explicitly or not, but essential in the incantations with an *encounter* motif (Bozóky 1992: 90).

One example of an Anglo-Saxon text that demonstrates an encounter through locations is the *Epistola Salvatoris*. This text is an apocryphal letter from Christ to Abgar, contained in London, British Library, Royal 2 A. xx. The *Epistola* has strong connections to some charms as it functions as “a literal shield against harm... [from] a belief in the magical efficacy of the repetition of sacred words” (Cain 2009: 186). This particular text demonstrates the use of a number of different locations to signify the dissemination of spiritual power:

Siue in domu tua siue in ciuitate tua siue in omni loco nemo inimicorum tuorum dominabitur et insidias diabuli ne timeas et carmina inimicorum tuorum destruuntur... ab omni periculo liberaueris, siue in mare siue in terra siue in die siue in nocte siue in locis obscuris. Si quis hanc epistolam secum habuerit secures ambulet in pace. Amen.

whether in your home or in your city or in any place, none of your enemies will have dominion, and you need not fear the treacheries of the devil and the curses of your enemies will be broken... you will be free from all dangers, whether on sea or on land, whether in day or in night, or in strange places, whoever has this letter with him will go about safely in peace. Amen (Cain 2009: 176–7, emphasis mine).

Given that the above passage was added to the *Epistola* by an Anglo-Saxon scribe, it demonstrates the same use of geographical space for spiritual significance as many of the charms. Texts like these served to protect the subject in places beyond the church by their written and spoken words of power. The efficacy of this ritual protection is increased when sites are named to signify where the text's power is most effective beyond sacred space. This spiritual encounter motif is also found in the vernacular formulae of the charms. The locations they name are nearly always in direct relation to the church, whether to the church building itself or to objects and words from the liturgy. The locations beyond the church building become 'places of passage' because they are the sites where communal disorder is overcome by Christian power. The charms' use of locations demonstrates their dependence upon Christian power when they are performed beyond the church building. The locations that they identify completely contrast with current views of the Anglo-Saxons' spiritual landscape. I will now outline how Anglo-Saxon sites have been presented by scholars and how their views have influenced our understanding of the charms' religious nature.

THE RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF A LOCATION

A prevailing view of the religious implications of Anglo-Saxon sites has directly impacted on charm studies. This viewpoint holds that certain locations testify to *continuous* pagan worship among the Anglo-Saxons. Others have held that these sites reveal only the *origins* of pre-Christian religious practices and that they do not necessarily indicate the survival of pagan worship. Unfortunately, only the first of these viewpoints has significantly influenced interpretations of the charms. The charms have therefore been presented as examples of a con-

tinuous Anglo-Saxon paganism that uses the landscape for worship and their locations have been highlighted as evidence of this. The presence and the role of the church have not been acknowledged in such discussions.

William Chaney attempted to remove all evidence of Christianity in the landscape to emphasise the existence of continuous pagan worship in a number of Old English texts:

the Roman road has been so broad and so well marked with recorded militaria that we may have missed the growth-ridden Germanic by-paths which were actually trod by the tribes in England... As the gods – Woden or others – were metamorphosed into giants, barrows were named for them, evidence for which dates from Saxon times... One need not go so far, however, to see more heathenism lurking behind the manuscripts and artefacts than is visible to the twentieth century eye (Chaney 1960: 197, 202, 217).

Scholars like Chaney frequently drew upon evidence from place-names to support their view that pagan worship continued in later Anglo-Saxon England (see Gelling 1962 and Cavill 1999: 21–2). Audrey Meaney countered this view of continuous non-Christian worship by stating that any remnants of Anglo-Saxon paganism would have been “half-memories” by the eighth century and extremely unlikely by the tenth and eleventh centuries (Meaney 1966: 109). More recently, Michael Bintley and Michael Shapland have criticised the “pseudo-scholarship and fanciful mythologizing about druids, wizards, green men, and the like” that have grown out of Anglo-Saxon landscape studies (Bintley and Shapland 2013: 2). Shapland also points out that the presence of Roman Christian buildings in the Anglo-Saxon landscape has been emphasised “at the expense of existing British and Irish Christian practice” (Shapland 2013: 28). Despite these helpful counter-arguments, viewpoints like Chaney’s continue to impact on charm studies. In his discussion of the demonological landscapes of two Christian battle poems, *Solomon and Saturn I and II*, Peter Dendle also holds that the poems were written in the same spirit as the account of Ragnarökr in Old Norse mythology:

It is not certain the Anglo-Saxons would have had this particular Germanic myth in mind... nonetheless, this is unquestionably the spirit in which the text is to be approached... [with its] unashamedly literal and folkloric affirmation of the devil as a natural menace, driving cows mad and wandering through the countryside (Dendle 1999: 287, 291).

Locations from Christian battle poems are even used as evidence of Christianised folklore that has simply substituted a surviving Germanic paganism. More

recently, Paola Tornaghi discusses the religious nature of charms according to their surrounding world:

Whoever the practitioner is, he/she is never named. In none of the analysed charms, indeed, the figure of the wizard, the exorcist, the magician or the witch is never mentioned... Certain personal qualities would have transformed a person into a magician. Those who wished to act as magicians were likely to possess some psychic powers... The pagans had a strong belief in their ability to communicate with their deities; they also believed that their words could have a direct effect on their surrounding world. Anglo-Saxon charms prove that Christianity could not hold back the pagans' faith in their magical powers and attest to the enduring quality of a deep-seated belief in magic (Tornaghi 2010: 443, 464).

Tornaghi's portrayal of these Anglo-Saxon rituals has serious implications about the literary historian's approach to the past and their responsibility in presenting correct evidence. The impact of Chaney's arguments is very much evident in Tornaghi's work as she removes all traces of the charms' Christian content. The 'surrounding world' of the pagan users of Anglo-Saxon charms is promoted at the expense of the texts' explicit Christian elements and their use in the church building. These views of the spirituality of the Anglo-Saxon landscape continue to influence our understanding of locations in charms.

The scholars who advocate this view of a surviving paganism in the landscape turn to accounts by Bede and Ælfric to support their arguments. Pope Gregory's letter to Abbot Mellitus, from the turn of the seventh century and recounted in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, makes specific mention of places with inherent spiritual potency:

Tell Augustine that he should by no means destroy the temples of the gods but rather the idols within those temples. Let him, after he has purified them with holy water, place altars and relics of the saints in them... seeing that their places of worship are not destroyed, the people will banish error from their hearts and come to places familiar and dear to them in acknowledgement and worship of the true God... Let them therefore, on the day of the dedication of their churches, or on the feast of the martyrs whose relics are preserved in them, build themselves huts around their one-time temples and celebrate the occasion with religious feasting (Colgrave and Mynors 1993: I, 30).

This letter indicates that specific locations of non-Christian worship were established before the arrival of Christian missionaries in England. Another document frequently quoted is from Ælfric's sermon *On Auguries* that claims:

Sume men synd swa ablende þæt hi bringað heora lac to eorðfæstum stane and eac to treowum and to wylspringum swa swa wiccan tæcað and nellað under-standan hu stuntlice hi doð oððe hu se deada stan oððe þæt dumbe treow him mæge gehelpan oððe hæle forgifan þone hi syfe ne astyriað of ðære stowe næfre.

Some men are so blinded, that they bring their offerings to an earth-fast stone, and eke to trees, and to well-springs, even as witches teach, and will not understand how foolishly they act, or how the dead stone or the dumb tree can help them, or give them health, when they themselves never stir from the place (Skeat 1966: 372–5).²

Although these accounts indicate a survival of pre-Christian practices, there are problems with taking this information at face value. Bede recorded Gregory's letter concerning the Anglo-Saxon conversion over a hundred years after the letter was written. Rather than providing evidence of sites where paganism was continually practised in England, Gregory's letter confirms the central position of the church building as early as the sixth and seventh centuries. Ælfric's account, on the other hand, is contemporary with the surviving Anglo-Saxon charms. He takes issue with associating spiritual power with specific sites and their healing properties and he condemns such rituals as abominations unless they contain the cross, the Paternoster and the "holy house of God" (see Thorpe 1844: 475–7). Ælfric's description makes it clear that people who went to certain landmarks for healing power did not actively do so for pagan worship as they evidently did not know the theological nature of the power they sought ("ablende", "stuntlice"). Ælfric is saying that traditional healing practices should be formed by the liturgy of the Church so that the power of Christianity is affirmed in daily life. Indeed, there are no Anglo-Saxon laws that prohibit these healing rituals, provided they did not invoke a non-Christian power (see Crawford 1963: 107). Ælfric probably even endorsed the use of healing rituals as long as they complied with ecclesiastical agendas of the late Anglo-Saxon period. The places associated with healing were to become sites of public and private Christian ritual. The charms provide examples of this movement rather than a continued, conscious paganism.

This view of continuous pagan worship in the landscape has influenced interpretations of the religious nature of the charms. Felix Grendon argued that the ecclesiastical authorities "assaulted beliefs but respected customs", customs which were also still held by native clergy (Grendon 1909: 143). He argued that the sites of performance became Christianised but retained the same pre-Christian features, for example "when a saint replaced the elfin genius as patron of a stream or well" (Grendon 1909: 144). Bruce Rosenberg likewise

developed the same ideas in his account of the *Æcerbot* charm. He connected wooden objects with the spiritual potency of trees and held that the field became the central location of a pagan ritual (Rosenberg 1966: 429, 434). Thomas Hill recently attempted to broaden the scope of how scholars view this so-called ‘paganism’ in a study of the *Journey Charm*. He claims that a wider perspective may open through discussions of cultural practices instead of reconstructing a living, non-Christian religion:

if by ‘paganism’ one simply means those aspects of the culture and literature of the Anglo-Saxon peoples which were to one degree or another significantly influenced by pre-Christian religious tradition and practice, then the scope of what we may define as Anglo-Saxon paganism is much broader (Hill 2012: 146).

It is entirely plausible that the supernatural agency attributed to locations in the charms originates from pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon culture. However, the view that such spiritual practices at these landmarks continued as later “cultural paganism” (Hill 2012: 146) or “ill-defined animism” (Cavill 1999: 21) has been promoted to the point where the clear relationships between these sites and the church have been neglected.

Of the twenty-eight texts that identify locations in the corpus of charms, there are three that name a site but do not mention the church nor any other object or signifier associated with the church (nos. 1, 3 and 4 in Appendix). These three charms could be thought of as examples of ritual practices that have escaped Christian influence and that associate locations with non-Christian spiritual power. One (Appendix no. 1) uses locations to settle bees at the performer’s home and away from a wood. Another (Appendix no. 3) uses locations in its sacred words to command hostile forces to move to a hill or mountain. The third (Appendix no. 4) simply identifies a stream and a house as sites for performance. Although these charms do not mention any Christian concepts or liturgical objects, it is not the case that the locations they identify have a non-Christian significance or reflect any ‘cultural paganism’. Due to the absence of any explicit spiritual reference, the religious nature of these texts is enigmatic. We can, however, see that the locations are used for different degrees of separation and correlation. There is evident separation between personal property and a wood (in no. 1) and between a settlement and a mountain (in no. 3). These locations are used to mark off the Anglo-Saxon community from other environments to which hostile forces are expelled. The stream and the house (in no. 4) are used to connect the community to a river that signifies sustenance and vitalisation, if not baptism and spiritual regeneration. We cannot force readings of the charms’ religious nature onto these texts but their emphasis on separation and

correlation is useful when considering the Anglo-Saxons' identification with different areas of the landscape.

As there are only three charms of twenty-eight which do not explicitly connect locations with Christian power, it is evidently more beneficial to discuss how the majority of identified locations are used to portray sacred space in the Anglo-Saxon landscape during the tenth and eleventh centuries:

A historical explanation of the meaning of... charms that places their origins, and thus their meanings, in pre-Christian religion does not, however, explain the context in which charms were recorded, nor their meaning in those contexts, especially since these explanations rely on assumptions rather than on attested manuscript or ethnographic evidence (Gay 2004: 40).

The evidence of the charms does not explicitly demonstrate that spiritual power is to be found *in* locations other than the church. They gain spiritual significance because of their relationship to the church building and its associated liturgical elements. This observation has been neglected because of the attempt to identify pagan sites. Rather than the inherent pagan spiritual force contained in wells, woods and stones, the charms show that it was the church building that dominated the spiritual landscape.

STUDIES OF CHRISTIAN LOCATIONS IN CHARMS

There have been a limited number of different discussions about the Christian significance of locations in the charms. However, very few of these have highlighted the role of the church in the landscape. Karen Jolly has suggested that charms were composed to infiltrate the "level of village and home" in the centuries after the Christian missions (Jolly 1996: 44–5). She also argues that the charms aided in substituting previous "animistic worship" with local cults of saints (Jolly 1996: 67). In her discussion of the archaeological evidence of churches, Jolly briefly highlights the significance of the church building "as a permanent part of the rural landscape" (Jolly 1996: 67). She does not, however, discuss the church's presence in relation to other locations identified in charms. Edina Bozóky has also discussed the symbolism of sites in medieval narrative charms as places of "transition from illness to healing" (Bozóky 2013: 105), and her examples of such locations include heaven and earth, mountains and rivers and Biblical locations. However, Bozóky's analysis focuses only on Latin charms with healing narratives and she does not discuss the significance of the church in relation to these locations.

There have been a small number of interpretations of spiritual sites in individual charms. The *Journey Charm* (Storms 1948: 216–19) is a text that uses a number of locations to seek and obtain divine protection on a journey (see Appendix no. 13). Heather Stuart has argued that the locations identified in this charm – such as a protective circle, the “wega Serafhin” (‘Seraph of the paths’, 30), “wereþum” (‘to/from the shores’, 35) and “circinde wæter” (‘encircling water/sea’, 36) – all refer to the spiritual life (Stuart 1981: 266–7, 272–3). Marion Amies developed this idea by focusing exclusively on the significance of the locations *wereþum* and *wega Serafhin*, and by proposing that these two locations reveal an eschatological message for the Christian (Amies 1983: 452–5, 456–8). The locations of the *Journey Charm* have only been discussed in reference to this text and the interpretations of their usage have not been extended to other charms from the corpus. Indeed, the relation of these locations to the church has not been explored and this would provide interesting readings of the practical function of this charm beyond the church building.

The theft charms (Storms 1948: 202–17) are a group of texts that have received much attention and their locations have been commented upon for different reasons (see Appendix nos. 8–12). Thomas Hill argued that the use of four directions in two theft charms signifies the cosmological cross, thus making the ritual the spiritual locus of divine power (Hill 1978: 490). Stephanie Hollis resituated the theft charms in their manuscript contexts, claiming that this approach exposes their role in a pastoralia programme (Hollis 1997: 161). She further claims that these rituals were performed by the laity according to the locations that they use and their apparent lack of liturgical content (Hollis 1997: 154–5). This view is strongly disputed by Tracey-Anne Cooper who uses the theft charms’ manuscript contexts to argue for their episcopal performance. Cooper proposes that two different manuscripts containing a theft-rite reflect a bishop’s performance of legal power in the community (Cooper 2010). Although comparisons have been made between different theft charms, the readings of their locations have not been applied to the performative sites of other charms. Once more the significance of the church as a landmark influencing the charms’ performance has not been highlighted.

Two further charms that have received attention for the spiritual significance of their locations both concern agricultural problems. *Wip Ymbe* (Storms 1948: 132–41) is a charm for a swarm of bees and two of its commentators have highlighted the locations it names (see Appendix no. 1). Austin Fife was the first to discuss the Christian nature of this charm, claiming that its second half is predominantly concerned with the church, although this is not actually an identified site (Fife 1964: 158). Fife argues that the ritual centres around the church building as the “wuda” (‘wood’, 9) marks a perimeter around a

cultivated monastery and the “eþeles” (‘homeland’, 11) refers to the welfare of the bee-keeper and the monastic community (Fife 1964: 154, 157). More recently, Lori Ann Garner and Kayla Miller have made a comparison of this charm with modern bee-keeping practices, concluding that the ritual was an effective declaration of property ownership expressed through locations (Garner and Miller 2011: 370–2). The locations named in the bee charm reflect similar public performances of property ownership as the theft charms. However, as is the case with the other discussions of sites in individual charms, *Wib Ymbe* has only been discussed in isolation and the significance of its locations has not been applied to the Anglo-Saxon charms as a whole.³

The *Æcerbot* (Storms 1948: 172–87) is the only other charm that has received attention for the Christian significance of its locations. John Niles comes closest to acknowledging the central role of the church building in the charms as this ritual for reviving crops contains an extensive number of different sites for performance (see Appendix no. 5). Niles observes that although most of the prescribed actions and words are to be carried out in the field, the church is constantly attended throughout the course of the ritual and it directly impacts on the performance outside of the church building:

The rite would have been so dramatic a visual and auditory experience, from sunup to sundown, with the processions from the fields to the church and from the church to the fields, with the singing of the masses and the chanting of the prayers, that the attention of an entire community would have been riveted on the act of opening the fields (Niles 1980: 56).

This is the best description of the centrality of the church building in the landscape of the charms. Once more, the locations of this charm are discussed in isolation and this dominant feature of the charms as whole remains to be considered.

The charms are dependent on Christian signifiers, prayers and liturgical objects for their power but they are nearly always prescribed for performance outside of the church building, beyond sacred space and the locus of Christian ritual. When the church building is mentioned it has central significance as the charm’s source of power. Roper calls charms a “type of code-communication, with the particular means of encoding information that they deploy” (Roper 2003b: 22). The charms use locations to signify where spiritual information is encoded (the church) and to whence it is deployed (beyond the church). The encoded power of the charms brought Christian power into everyday life and deployed it according to specific circumstances. It has been argued by Linda Voigts (1979), Maria Amalia D’Aronco (1988), Stanley Rubin (1989) and Robert Nokes (2004) that ritual remedies were most likely produced and performed

in a monastic setting. However, the monastery is never actually identified in any of the texts. By returning to the actual content of the charms, we see how the Anglo-Saxons viewed sacred space and extended it to other locations. The religious implications of key sites in the landscape and a revision of how these locations have been viewed by scholars are of paramount importance in understanding this function of the Anglo-Saxon charms. This approach dismantles preconceptions of a continuous paganism in late Anglo-Saxon England and redefines the charms as Christian rituals that transferred liturgical power to the wider community.

The two texts I will now compare as case studies belong to a sub-group of Anglo-Saxon charms that address elf-related sickness. This group has been expertly analysed by Alaric Hall who argues that the elf-diseases they counter are caused by internal pains and claims that the charms construct a social reality rather than reflect an objective belief-system based on supernatural locations:

My guiding assumption is that within Anglo-Saxon world-views, *ælf*e were a ‘social reality’. They were not an objective reality, like houses and trees, which can be readily perceived in the physical world and, insofar as anything can be, objectively proven to exist... I argue for subtler reconstructions of the relationship between Anglo-Saxons and their world, to which the concept of the supernatural is central and powerful (Hall 2007: 9, 12).

In full agreement with Hall, my analysis of these elf-charms re-situates their spiritual worldview according to the locations that they name. Instead of providing evidence of supernatural agency in specific landmarks from whence elves attacked humans, these case studies reflect the subtle relationships between the Anglo-Saxons’ views of the causes of illness with one central, spiritual landmark: the church. The case studies demonstrate how a significant number of charms use liturgical and public locations to disseminate spiritual power into the Anglo-Saxon landscape with constant reference to the church building.

WIP ÆLFADLE

The first text I wish to consider is a charm against elf-sickness from London, BL, Royal 12 D xvii (Storms 1948: 222–32). It is a lengthy text, spanning four folios of Book III of *Bald’s Leechbook* (123v–25r) and it provides a series of alternative rituals against elf-disease. Hall has suggested that this series of alternative rituals reflects the Anglo-Saxons’ different perspectives of elf-disease: “*ælf*e were not seen as the only possible source of such ailments. Rather, it was

recognised that they were one possibility, requiring distinct cures” (Hall 2005: 205). Karen Jolly claims that this section of the manuscript is organised according to “spiritual and mental ills” (Jolly 1996: 156–7). The entire entry mainly consists of vernacular performative instructions though passages of sacred words in ecclesiastical Latin are also required. Although Jolly states that this part of the manuscript “contains more borrowings from liturgical sources” than the other sections (Jolly 2005: 231), she maintains that these rituals against elf-disease contain “elements of Germanic pre-Christian lore” that “undoubtedly predate Christianity but are nonetheless infused with Christian ritual” (Jolly 1996: 160–1). The performative instructions contain an abundance of liturgical prayers, such as litanies, the Creed and the Paternoster, and they also prescribe specific Masses, such as *Omnibus Sanctis*, *Contra Tribulationem* and *Pro Infirmis* (5–6). These Christian elements are not simply additions to pre-Christian ritual nor are they a combination of the two; they form the very foundations of the entire manuscript entry. The locations mentioned in this charm also highlight the central position of the church in the spiritual landscape.

The first ritual in the *Wip Ælfadle* charm does not explicitly mention any location but the requirement of Masses and the liturgical objects of “gehalgodes Cristes mæles ragu and stor” (“a hallowed crucifix and incense”, 2) imply that visiting the church building was required. The second alternative ritual uses similar liturgical prayers and it prescribes a series of movements between two locations:

Gang on þunres æfen, þonne sunne sie on setle sie, þær þu wite elenan standan... Læt stician þær on, gang þe aweg. Gang eft to þonne dæg and niht furþum scade. On þam ilcan uhte gang ærest to ciricean, and þe gesena and Gode þe bebeod... Adelf þa wyrt, læt stician þæt seax þær on. Gang eft swa þu rapost mæge to ciricean, and lege under weofod mid þam seaxe. Læt licgan oþ þæt sunne uppe sie (Storms 1948: 15–16, 18–21, 26–8).

Go on Thursday evening when the sun is setting to where you know helanium (elenan) stands... leave it [a knife] sticking therein and go away. Go again, when day and night first divide (dawn); at that same dawn, go first to church, and cross yourself and offer yourself to God... Dig up the plant; leave the knife sticking in it. Go again as quick as you can to church, and lay it under the altar with the knife. Let it lie until the sun is up (Jolly 1996: 160–1).

This passage makes it clear that the church plays a central role in this ritual. The times of day it prescribes (“þunres æfen”, “þonne dæg and niht furþum scade”, “oþ þæt sunne uppe sie”) and the action of sticking a knife into a plant

have been seen as evidence of pre-Christian worship (see Jolly 1996: 161). Charles Singer also advocated the view that elf charms were a reflection of the Anglo-Saxons' view of their landscape:

This theory of disease we shall, for brevity, speak of as the *doctrine of elf-shot*. The Anglo-Saxon tribes placed these malicious elves everywhere, but especially in the wild uncultivated wastes where they loved to shoot at the passer-by (Singer 1919–20: 357).

Despite the fact that the elf charms do not identify these 'uncultivated wastes', it has long been held that these texts evoke a wild landscape fraught with supernatural danger. The apparent spiritual potency of the plants and herbs that they name has also been used to support the idea of pre-Christian practices, thus associating public spaces where the plants are known to grow with native religion:

There are some associations between these natural features and worship of heathen gods... charms have strings of 'magical' gobbledegook, meaningless syllables, bits of Latin, instructions on ritual actions such as culling herbs at dawn, crossing rivers and keeping silent – anything to enhance the air of mystery and lend authority to the charmer (Cavill 1999: 21, 25).

This view is disputed by M. L. Cameron (1988) and Audrey Meaney (1992), who argue that the potency of plants was seen from a medical perspective rather than from a spiritual one. The association of natural locations with pre-Christian religion does not take into account other sites in the landscape and this charm demonstrates how such modern views of herbal potency have been imposed upon the Anglo-Saxon charms.⁴ Given that liturgical prayers accompany its prescriptions for performance at certain times of the day and precede the stabbing of the plant, any potential pre-Christian elements are firmly redefined within the charm. The overriding feature of this text is the clear importance placed on the movement between the two locations of 'where elenan stands' and the church building.

The performer is required to constantly move between the two sites as they transfer the power gained from the offering in the church to the plant through liturgical prayer. Towards the end of the ritual this is made explicit in the physical transfer of the plant with the knife still stuck in it ("lege under weofod mid pam seaxe", 27–8). The site signifies the public space in which the ritual takes place and this public location is transported to the church building. Indeed, the need for speed ("rapost", 27) in the transferral emphasises the importance of obtaining spiritual power from the church. The two locations are synthesised

into one as the plant and knife remain under the altar and in the very heart of the church building. The patient can only receive the treatment against elf-disease after the ritual's sites are combined into one location of divine power. This power is called upon at the beginning of the ritual by visiting the church, it is transferred from there to public space with the recital of liturgical prayers, it becomes the centre of the entire ritual as another site is physically moved to the church, and finally it is disseminated from the altar to the patient.

The third alternative ritual for elf-sickness also highlights the importance of the church building. It opens with an instruction to "lege under weofod þas wyrte, læt gesingan ofer VIII mæssan" ("lay these herbs under the altar, have nine Masses sung over them", 36–7) and thus immediately situates the ritual inside the church building. No other location is identified in the text and the hallowed herbs are transferred from this site to the patient. Liturgical objects such as holy water ("haliges wæteres", 39–40) and incense ("stor", 41) are required for the treatment beyond the church and a reverent sign of the cross ("georne þone man gesena", 44) accompanies the procedure. Thomas Hill has noted that the marking of the cross on the body of the Christian created a site of religious power:

the Cross is perceived as a centre which defines the spatial dimensions of the world... The larger implications of the use of the theme of the cosmological Cross in this context, however, concern what one might call the sacralization of space (Hill 1978: 488, 490).

The liturgical objects and the signing of the cross signify liturgical power beyond the church building and emphasise the transference of power to public space. In a similar way to the previous ritual, this prescription also places significant emphasis on the location of the church as the source of the ritual's power.

The final alternative ritual for elf-sickness in the manuscript entry does not explicitly identify any location yet the church is once more the centre of the action. It opens with different ways of diagnosing the sickness according to whether the patient is a male or female. Sacred words are then prescribed after the symptoms of the illness have been outlined. The first section of words is to be written on an unspecified object and composed in Latin so that the language of the Church is used in a ritual setting beyond the church building. These Latin words quote Scripture ("rex regnum et dominus dominantium", 63), the Mass ("Sanctus. Sanctus. Sanctus. dominus deus Sabooth", 65) and invoke Saint Veronica ("beronice", 64). There is no instruction stating what is yet to be done with this writing and the second section of sacred words immediately follows. These words are to be sung in Latin and they are very similar to exorcism formulae found in eleventh-century benedictionals and pontificals, such as

the *Benedictional of Robert* (see Wilson 1903: 117), as they include the laying on of hands (“per inpositionem”, 68–9) and the expulsion of illness (“expelle a famulo tuo N”, 69). The same formula is also found in a later section of sacred words that are also to be sung and here the illness is identified as a demonic force: “per inpositionem... expelle diabolum a famulo tuo N” (84–6).⁵ The exorcism formulae are a consistent feature of charms against elves (see Hall 2005: 201) and these charms reveal an effort to disseminate liturgical practices to the wider community rather than providing evidence of pre-Christian rituals.

The inscription of words from Scripture and the Mass and the singing of the liturgical rite of exorcism in ecclesiastical language dominate this alternative ritual for elf-sickness: “it was appropriate to increase the liturgical content in a remedy which was already substantially based on Christian ritual” (Hall 2005: 201). The position of the church building reflects the fundamental Christian nature of the ritual. The entire entry for *Wip Ælfadle* in *Bald’s Leechbook* reflects serious and elaborate responses to an illness that could only be countered by the most powerful Christian rituals: “[the] liturgical elements, and their complexity attests to the potential seriousness of *ælfād*” (Hall 2007: 105). When one considers the role of the church building and the use of liturgical prayers and objects beyond the church, it becomes very clear that the seemingly pre-Christian origins of *Wip Ælfadle* are an entirely modern reading of the charm as there is “no further evidence for the nature of *ælfæ*, or for what clinical conditions *ælfād* might denote” (Hall 2007: 105). To an Anglo-Saxon performer and audience, it was the church that dominated the spiritual landscape of the charm whether it was physically attended or whether its liturgical expressions were extended beyond the building.

SE HALGA DRÆNC

The second charm I wish to consider also demonstrates a dependence upon the location of the church. This text is from another famous healing book from the eleventh-century manuscript London, BL Harley 585 (fols. 137v–38r) and prescribes a drink against elves (*ælfside*) and all other temptations (Storms 1948: 232–35).⁶ The section of the manuscript in which this charm occurs “associates the *ælf*-ailments here with diabolical harm... [and] nocturnal assaults by supernatural beings” (Hall 2007: 105). The ritual opens with the writing of Latin words on the liturgical object of a paten. These words contain abbreviated passages from the gospels of *John* 1: 1 (“In principio erat verbum”, 3) and *Matthew* 4: 23–5 (“circumibat Jesus totam Galileam docens usque et secuti sunt eum turbae multae”, 4–5) and the incipits of Psalm 54 (“Deus in nomine

tuō”, 6), Psalm 67 (“Deus misereatur nobis”, 7) and Psalm 70 (“Domine deus in adiutorium”, 8). The first location is identified following a list of ingredients including a “sester fulne gehalgodes wines” (jug full of consecrated wine). The location is a stream or river and the charm requires that a pure person must take water from this site: “hat unmælnē mon gefeccean swigende ongean streame healfne sester yrnendes wæteres” (11–12). The river may be viewed as the site where the “ælfside” (1) originated, as Singer and Cavill argued, but it is more likely that the river represents constant change with its “yrnendes wæteres” (12). This is a feature of other Anglo-Saxon charms and the running water of a stream is explicitly connected to change in a charm against miscarriage:

Ponne heo to þan broce ga þonne ne beseo heo, no ne eft þonne heo þanan go, and þonne ga heo in oþer hus oþer heo ut ofeode, and þær gebyrge metes.

When she goes to the stream she must not look round, nor again when she goes away from there, and let her go into another house than the one from which she started, and there take food (Storms 1948: 199, l. 28–30).

The stream represents change and symbolises an internal transformation in the individual. Other Anglo-Saxon charms that use the *Flum Jordan* motif signify a spiritual change in a subject by invoking the site of Christ’s baptism in the River Jordan. Indeed, the motif is used in blood-staunching charms as an “identification of the flowing blood with the flowing waters of the river” (Olsan 2004: 75). Given that the water of the river in *Se Halga Drænc* is to be mixed with consecrated wine, the river is associated with Christ’s blood. Its water is to be later transferred to the church, further suggesting that the location symbolises baptismal revitalisation and connects different sacraments of the Church.

After the water is obtained, the herbs are placed into it and the Latin writing on the paten is washed into the water before the consecrated wine is added to the drink. The water is sanctified by the words of the gospels and psalms and the Precious Blood, thus demonstrating how the site of the river becomes a site of liturgical power. The combination of the water with the Eucharist and Scripture is highly significant and there occurs a very similar infusion as was seen with the rituals of *Wip Ælfadle*. The location is symbolically transferred and synthesised with the two principle components of the Mass; the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The transferral is then completed by the instruction “Ber þon to ciricean” (16). The elaborate ritual for preparing the holy drink reaches its climax in the church building. Three Masses are then sung over the drink, two of which are the same as those prescribed in *Wip Ælfadle* and the other for the Blessed Virgin Mary: “læt singan mæssan ofer ane *Omnibus*, oþre *Contra Tribulatione*,

briddan *Santam Marian*" (16–17). The Masses effectively complete the fusion of the two locations of "yrnendes wæteres" and the "ciricean" so that the location of the river is successfully transferred to the liturgical setting of the church. The liturgy is first brought to the public, symbolic location before this space is transferred to the church. After the Masses are sung, a series of liturgical prayers are prescribed. Five incipits are listed from the Asperges of the Mass ("Miserere mei deus", 19), Psalms 54, 67 and 70 (as before) and Psalm 86 ("Inclina domine", 23) that are all to be sung. The Creed, Gloria, litanies and Paternoster follow these psalms before the final blessing over the drink, in the form of the doxology "In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti sit benedictum" (26–7). The drink is then to be given to the patient to counter the *ælfside* and all other evils.

The two locations mentioned in this charm reflect similar uses of public and liturgical space as is seen in *Wip Ælfadle*. The synthesis of public space with religious setting highlights how the Anglo-Saxons focused the charms around the church building. It was the centre of the ritual action and when performances were carried out beyond its grounds, the church was very much present in the use of liturgical objects, sacred words and the Eucharist itself. Rather than providing evidence of the pre-Christian spiritual potency found in public spaces, such as where certain herbs grew or performance at a river, these two case studies demonstrate that any spiritual power associated with a location in the charms is firmly grounded in the Christian landscape.

CONCLUSION

The locations identified in Anglo-Saxon charms reflect the function of these extra-ecclesial rituals. They transmitted Christian power from its focal site and from the liturgy into the wider world for the benefit of the individual and community. The other sites that are identified are not of greater supernatural significance than the church building, as has often been argued. They may have symbolic significance, such as the river's connection to baptism, but there is no explicit evidence of the isolated spiritual nature of these sites. They only obtain religious significance through their constant affiliation with the liturgy and their orientation around the central location of the church building. The needs of the community conditioned the charms and their fundamental purpose was to answer those needs with liturgical power:

the history of medieval medicine, insofar as it is the history of healing, should look not only to the writings of doctors and diagnosticians, or even

chroniclers and hagiographers, but also to those of the mostly anonymous men and women who contributed to the liturgy and ritual of the church (Paxton 1992: 99).

The Anglo-Saxon charms intended to make liturgical power available to every Christian and their sacred words decoded such power beyond the sacred space of the church. The two case studies that I have discussed provide examples of how locations in the charms revolve around the church building. Even when the church is not explicitly identified, the function of charms in decoding information is dependent upon the site of the church and it reflects how the Anglo-Saxons viewed their environment. The way in which locations are used in the charms supports the view that they actually developed from the liturgy during the late Anglo-Saxon period and presented ritualised, Christian solutions to daily problems. Rather than providing evidence of a continued paganism, the locations of charms reveal an effort to infuse other spaces with liturgical power beyond the church building. With this evidence from the charms, scholarship can move forward in understanding the spirituality of the Anglo-Saxon landscape and move away from the restrictive attempts to uncover pre-Christian religious practices through locations.

APPENDIX: APPEARANCES OF LOCATIONS IN THE VERNACULAR

* = Biblical locations not for charms' performance.

† = No words of power, cannot be held to be a 'charm'.

	Title	Locations	Appears where?	Storms No.
1	Wið Ymbe	'to wuda', 'eþeles'	Sacred words	1
2	Wiþ Færstice	'þone hlæw'	Sacred words	2
3	Wiþ Wennum	'þan nihgan berhge'	Sacred words	4
4	Wiþ Blæce	'yrnende wæter', 'to huse'	Instructions	6
5	Æcerbot	'on feower healfa þæs landes', 'to circean', 'to ðan weofode', 'þas wæstmas'	Both	8
6	Nigon Wyrta Galdor	'on hus', 'ea rinnende', 'weoda', 'sæs'	Sacred words	9

7	Wip Misbyrde	'birgenne', 'to hyre halforde on reste', 'to cyrican', 'þn weofode', 'yrnendum wætere', 'þan broce', 'in oþer hus'	Instructions	10
8	Wip Deofpe	'on feower healfe þæs huses and æne on middan'	Instructions	11A
9	Wip Deofpe	'on feower healfa þæs huses and æne on middan'	Instructions	11B
*10	Wip Deofpe	'Bethlem hattæ seo burh'	Sacred words	13
*11	Wip Deofpe	'Bæðleem hatte seo buruh'	Sacred words	14
12	Wip Deofpe	'ham', 'foldan', 'husa'	Sacred words	15
13	Sið Galdor	'wind wereþum', 'wega Serafhin'	Sacred words	16
14	Wip Ælfadle	'þær þu wite elenan standan', 'to ciricean', 'under weofod', 'þæt hus geond'	Instructions	17
15	Se Halga Drænc	'streame', 'yrnendes wæteres', 'to ciricean'	Instructions	18
†16	Wip Ælfcynne	'under weofod'	Instructions	20
†17	Wip Wennum	'to wylle þe riht east yrne'	Instructions	21
†18	Wip Swina	'on fald', 'on þan dore'	Instructions	24
19	Wip Deofle	'þær inne þær se seoca man inne sie'	Instructions	28
20	Wip Leodrunan	'under weofod'	Instructions	32
21	Wip Lenctenadle	'ne ga he in' (i.e. inside the house)	Instructions	33
*22	Gewrit of Heofonum	'on uppan Sanctus Petrus weofud on Rome', 'on cyrcean', 'þinum reste'	Instructions	34
*23	Wip Utsihte	'to Rome'	Instructions	35
24	Yrfe to Bote	'[berene] on þa flore' (Storms interprets the floor of the barn)	Instructions	50
25	Wip Oman	'on middan huses flore'	Instructions	66
26	Wip Hors Oman	'yrnendum wætere', 'stream'	Instructions	67
*27	Wip Nædran Bite	'of neorxna wonge'	Instructions	81
28	Columcille Circul	'on middam þam ymbhagan'	Instructions	85

NOTES

- ¹ For a discussion of how the *Æcerbot* charm served this purpose, see Arthur 2013.
- ² On the proper translation of ‘wiccan’ see Crawford 1963.
- ³ It is also worth noting that this is one of the three charms that do not make any explicit reference to the church or the liturgy.
- ⁴ W. Horn (1973), Linda Voigts (1979), G. Noll (1982) and Maria D’Aronco (1988) have highlighted the likelihood of such herbs being grown in monastic gardens, suggesting that public spaces containing herbs with spiritual potency were in fact monastic sites.
- ⁵ For a discussion of this Latin formula and its relation to elf-sickness, see Hall 2005: 204–5.
- ⁶ For a discussion of the etymology of *ælfside*, see Hall 2007: 119–22.

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IRISH SCRIBAL CULTURE AS A PURVEYOR OF CHARM TEXTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Nicholas Wolf

Irish-language scribal culture demonstrated a significant interest in charms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in part because of the more localized and intimate audience for such texts. Yet when folklorists later made note of the provenance of charms they collected from these scribal sources, they often failed to convey information about how charms came to be copied down and how charms fit into the larger intellectual context of their users. In fact, collectors preferred to highlight the oral aspects of folk practices, as in the example of Douglas Hyde's massive collection of popular religious material, *Abhráin Diadha Chúige Connacht* (1906). It is argued here that the scribal context surrounding eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish charm exemplars deserves closer investigation so that the textual practices that surrounded the propagation of charms can be restored to their place alongside the words of the charms themselves.

Key words: bilingualism, Brían Ó Fearrachaile, childbirth charms, Douglas Hyde, Irish language, scribes, toothache charms.

While modern scholarship on charming has made clear that the practice straddled both written and oral worlds, collectors of such material in Ireland during the nascent phase of folklore as a discipline were significantly less inclined to highlight the existence of charms in textual form. Even one of the most forward-looking of these early folklorists, Douglas Hyde (1860–1949), exemplified this hesitancy at times. The founder of the Gaelic League (the organization that first made truly significant ground in the revitalization of the Irish language) and later the first president of Ireland, Hyde produced writings that, to the modern eye, conform more closely to today's ethnographic methods than the romantically-tinged antiquarianism of the nineteenth century. Consider Hyde's *Abhráin Diadha Chúige Connacht*, or *The Religious Songs of Connacht*, an extensive bilingual collection of religious material published in 1906 that includes several dozen charms he had collected from the west of Ireland. Although aimed

at a broader audience interested in the life of the west, it was also strikingly academic in tone. Hyde made clear identifications of the persons from whom he had obtained the songs, prayers, hymns, and charms, along with the location and occasionally the date where the items had been found. Rather than silence the Irish language in which he had encountered much of the folk material in order to satisfy Anglophone readers, Hyde presented the entire publication in both languages so that English translations could be compared side by side with Irish originals. Finally, Hyde was knowledgeable about broader religious and national context, prompting him to draw comparisons between the Irish prayers and those of other (usually European) cultures in a way that anticipated the great transnational folklore motif indices of the mid-twentieth century.

Yet when it came to ethnographic observations and analysis of the practice of charming (or of song, devotion, etc.), Hyde's descriptions became sparse or non-existent, revealing his simultaneous roots in the academic world of the nineteenth century. His approach to the presentation of the charms exhibited limitations akin to those of contemporary collectors of the Irish *caointe* (funeral laments, or keens) as described by the scholar Seán Ó Coileáin (1988: 104–108) in his nuanced observation of the way edited publications of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries severed these laments from the context of their delivery by keening women. The results, Ó Coileáin notes, hid the extemporaneous – although thematically and syntactically highly controlled – nature of keening behind a veneer of an authoritative, single-version text. In *Abhráin Diadha Chúige Connacht*, Hyde engaged in a similar process, albeit in reverse: a genre that was often rooted in a set text (in this case, charms collected in the manuscripts of Ireland's Irish-language scribal culture) were extracted from those manuscripts and set alongside other collected material whose oral provenance received strong emphasis. Moreover, although he did not conceal instances in which charms had been found in manuscripts, Hyde was much more likely to play up the orality of the material he had collated in general, noting that “few, indeed, of these things have ever been put upon paper until now” and stressing the existence of charms taken down “from the mouth” (Hyde 1972 [1906]: 1:ix, 2:55). This effectively obscured the manner in which the scribes who produced these manuscripts acquired, used, and distributed the charms that Hyde later published.

None of this is to take away from the importance of Hyde's work as a source for modern researchers. His willingness to suspend narrow definitional boundaries so that a work ostensibly on folk religious customs could include charms at all is itself a notable achievement. Rather, the central point to be made here is that the scribal context surrounding eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish charm exemplars deserves closer investigation, so that the textual prac-

tices that surrounded the propagation of charms can be restored to their place alongside the words of the charms themselves. The preliminary examination below of those charms that appeared in Irish-language scribal culture of this period concentrates on three aspects: scribal attitudes toward charms and in particular their relationship to broader religious and medical practices; the intellectual interaction between scribes and the charm texts they copied; and, finally, the impact on charms of what was in fact, the highly bilingual world in which scribes operated.

Charms represented a small portion of the overall output of approximately 4,000 manuscripts produced by Ireland's hundreds of Irish-language scribes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but they were not unknown. No precise count of the number of charms in the Irish-language manuscripts has yet been completed, a process made difficult by the possibility that early cataloguers of Irish manuscripts (*e.g.*, Grady, et al. 1925–53; Abbott and Gwynn 1921) may have overlooked some charms with particularly close affinities with religious prayers. But a conservative count of at least 100 charms can be identified from the material that has been both fully catalogued and indexed (de Brún and Herbert 1986; de Brún 1967; Dillon, et al. 1969; Ó Fiannachta 1978–80; Walsh and Ó Fiannachta 1943–80; O'Rahilly, et al. 1926–70). The scribes who copied these charms were generally from modest, although highly literate, backgrounds in which common occupations included farmer, primary school teacher, tutor, farm laborer, animal herd, stone cutter, tailor, weaver, hosteller, peddler, and shipwright (Ní Shéaghda 1990:569–74). Another common scribal occupation, that of priest, does not appear to be represented among those interested in charms, although there is evidence of sympathy of some members of the early nineteenth-century Irish clergy toward their use (Wolf 2010:133–34). Among the figures who have been identified as taking an interest in charms were the scribes Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin (1766–1837), an intermittent teacher and the most prolific and wide-ranging participants in the Irish literary world of the time, and his son, Seosamh (1817–1880), who was initially a national school teacher but went on to become a member of the Royal Irish Academy. Another notable school teacher-scribe, Peadar Ó Gealacháin (1792–1860), left behind charm texts as well.

Within this scribal world, texts were circulated and recopied that contained a diverse array of genres, secular and religious, and both literary and non-literary. These included medieval adventure tales, formal hero cycles, aristocratic praise poems of the classical Irish period, medical texts, apocryphal histories, saints' lives (of both continental and Irish origin), devotional poetry, and the later political poems of original composition of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This was a literary culture at once conservative, given its preference

for re-copying older favored pieces, and at the same time inventive, changeable, and distinctly modern in its interaction with politics, evolving understandings of national identity, and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century print culture (Ní Úrdail 2000: 204–206; Buttimer 1993:588–603; McQuillan 2004:183–229). The result, as L.M. Cullen has described it, was a corpus of texts constituting the most “remarkable evidence . . . in Europe of the intellectual, social and political recesses of an important and influential layer of society – essentially a middling group – in the rural world” (Cullen 1988:52; see also Ó Donnachadha 1994).

With this public sphere constituted by the exchange and discussion of Irish-language texts necessarily smaller and more intimate, the contents of these manuscripts could more directly reflect the interests of the scribes and their local context. As a minority language set side by side with a wider English-speaking world well represented in print publications, and with declining numbers of Irish speakers during this same period, the producers of Irish-speaking material did not need to ensure that their writings reached a wide – especially a national or international – range of readers. Instead, their work targeted a more localized set of readers consisting of patrons (often themselves of a relatively similar social background to the scribe), fellow scribes, family members, and neighbors, encouraging a subset of scribes with an interest in charms to devote themselves to preserving the incantations in written form. The persistence of the circulation of charms by manuscript contrasted with the predominant trends in the print world and among other languages. As T.M. Smallwood has noted, the serious presentation of charms in print form in a language like English declined noticeably during the early modern period (Smallwood 2004:19–22). Charms did not disappear entirely: counter-examples of interest in charms in English-language print can be found in the texts of the educated classes in, for instance, the seventeenth century (Roper 2005:101). But as a serious subject for discussion, charms experienced a shift in which general-readership publications had, by the nineteenth century, begun to see them as unusual vestiges of popular healing practices. This was as true in sectors of English-language print culture in Ireland as elsewhere, as in this excerpt from an 1825 edition of *The Belfast Magazine and Literary Journal* describing life along the banks of Lough Neagh:

There is a particular charm by which some people in Fervagh pretend to cure the erysipelas. They repeat some words in an inaudible tone, and drive a horse shoe nail, or as they term it ‘stab,’ into the stake to which cows are fastened when in the ‘byre,’ and the cure is completed! (P., “Lough Neagh,” 1825: 494)

Offered under the label “superstitions” (492) and represented as “remnants of the olden time,” (494) such words indicated a clear distancing between the anonymous author and the techniques of folk healing.

By contrast, scribes accorded charms a different status in their texts. Evidence from the way in which scribes integrated them into the running order of their manuscripts suggests that the healing practice were seen as part of a continuum of medical and religious prescriptions for improving health, as well as a constituent part of a broader culture of Irish-language written forms. A single-purpose charm reliquary has not been identified to date; instead, charm exemplars were copied by their owners onto the same pages as poems, prose texts, jottings, and short notes without marking them out as distinct from their surrounding context. Of course, the composite nature of many of the surviving texts, which were often split apart and stitched back together, in many cases with manuscripts of completely different provenances, makes for difficulties in discerning any particular patterns in the way scribes inserted charms at certain points in their writings. But instances in which charms were included among contrasting genres even on a single page helps confirm the finding that scribes considered the practice to be an unmarked feature of their surrounding culture.

An illustration of this tendency can be seen in the manuscripts left by the scribe Brían Ó Fearraghail, born in 1715 in the barony of Athlone and active in the surrounding areas of Counties Roscommon and Galway where he made a living as a cowherd (O’Rahilly, et al. 1926–70: fascicle II, 154). Although active in a region – Connacht – where scribal culture was in a weaker state by this period, Ó Fearraghail could count among his patrons one of the most visible Catholic public intellectuals of the eighteenth century, Charles O’Conor of Belanagare (1710–1791). One of his manuscripts, Royal Irish Academy (hereafter, RIA) Ms 23 O 35, written between the dates of 1772 and 1778, is typical of many other texts of this time. Its contents roamed from religious verse spanning the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries to hagiography, orthodox Catholic litanies, devotional prose, and secular verse such as Seán Ó Conaill’s *Tuireamh na hÉireann*, composed around the year 1657. The entire manuscript, now 372 pages in total, thus reads like a composite miscellany of anything of interest that the scribe (or his patron) wanted to see written down. This included a half-dozen charms that drew Hyde to the manuscript, then in the possession of his close friend Dr. Thomas Bodkin Costello (1864–1956), over a century later when he reproduced them in *Abhráin Diadha Chúige Connacht* (2:385–391). But although Hyde took an interest in the marginalia accompanying Ó Fearraghaile’s charm, he did not name the scribe or provide an indication of the wider textual surroundings provided by the full original manuscript.

A closer look at RIA Ms 23 O 35, however, hints at the status of charming and the integration of the practice into broader religious and secular textual culture. Identified as *orthaí* by Ó Fearrachaile, the charms were placed directly alongside secular prose material, common prayers, and verse on a single page, separated only by a horizontal line. An example of Ó Fearrachaile's approach can be found on the recto of page 195, where two toothache charms (the second of the **Super Petram** type) and a third for farsy follow immediately after a short note describing three early converts to Christianity in Ireland and verses for calculating the Epact. This integration of medical and religious material continues on the verso (p. 196), in which further charms for backache, another for farsy, and a third entitled "Orrta [sic] ar an Ruádh – the Rose" were copied next to an herbal cure for animals and a set of directions for determining whether an ill person will die. Transcriptions of all but the last of these can be found in Hyde's *Abhráin Diadha Chúige Connacht*, while the rose charm, a cure for erysipelas (referred to as "the rose" by Irish speakers; see Dinneen 1996: s.v. *ruaidhe*) consisted of the following to be recited in Irish, accompanied by instructions in English:

Orrta ar an Ruádh – *The Rose*

Ruadh ruaidhe, galar nimhneach atmhur cruaidh, Brighidh agus Brían, solladh Padruig agus Muire mhor, Rígh na Ríoghthe agus Iosa Criosd dá dhíbhheirt dhiot, amen.

[Charm for the Rose

Red rose, poisonous sickness, hard swelling, Bridget and Brian, Profit of Patrick and great Mary, King of the Kings and Jesus Christ to banish it from you, Amen.]

To Repeat this Oration 3 Times over the person infected, with the Sign of ye Cross as often as you repeat it, then get a little Butter & repeat over the Butter as aforesaid; and so close, that yr breath may come on it, and give the person Indisposed to Chaft [sic] himself therewith

Preceded and succeeded by a variety of content other than charms, the resulting effect is one in which the scribe, whatever his interest in producing the manuscript overall (antiquarian or otherwise), saw charms as a fully integrated part of a wider world of medicinal and religious knowledge being recorded in the text.

A second notable feature that characterizes the scribal recording of charms – and which is especially indicated by the two annotations that occur in the margins of Ó Fearrachaile's manuscript – is the contingent means by which the charms were collected and preserved in the first place. The survival of marginalia commenting on the origin of a charm or their effectiveness serves as a reminder that, alongside the emphasis on diachronic dissemination (rightfully)

placed by scholars on the copying and recopying of scribal texts over decades and centuries – the same can be said by charms scholars for charm transmission over the *longue durée* as well – the sharing of charms also necessarily entailed a distinctly synchronic event when one practitioner made the decision to pass along his or her knowledge to another. Again, the Ó Fearraighaile manuscripts are somewhat rich with regard to this type of contextual evidence. For example, following a charm to cure the bite of a mad dog recorded on the recto of page 117 of RIA Ms 23 E 7, written circa 1781, Ó Fearraighaile wrote “Per Jas. Gyraghty 1781,” very possibly the Seamus Mag Oireachtaigh who copied what is now British Library Ms Egerton 178 in 1782 from material found in RIA Ms 23 O 35 (O’Rahilly, et al. 1926–70: fascicle II, 133, 154). This suggests an ongoing exchange of charm texts between the two, but one in which the transmission occurred more or less spontaneously, enabling Ó Fearraighaile to simply slip the charm text into his manuscript at the point where he had last left off transcribing the previous item – in this case, a prose tract on religious doctrine. Marginalia in this manuscript also reveals the occasional dialogue over efficacy of charms that took place, as in the comments written either by Ó Fearraighaile or, more likely, by a later owner of the text, alongside a charm to transform the gender of a newborn child. Annotated with the words “it’s hard to believe that oration” (RIA Ms 23 E 7:199), this comment reveals a concern on the part of the manuscript owner about the quality of the curated charm collection and an eagerness to warn against those cures that might prove to be ineffective.

A final characteristic of the Irish scribal charms was their insistence on preserving the original language in which the charm was intended to be recited. Charm researchers have long been aware of the sanctity of the spoken (or written) words of the charm, which cannot be arbitrary in the view of their users lest they lose their efficacy. At the same time, international charm motifs would not be possible without some sort of willingness for texts and oral utterances to jump languages and make the translational transition to a new target language. Because scribal culture in Ireland by the end of the eighteenth century was more or less fully bilingual, a fact reflected in the content of their manuscripts which were generally in Irish but included English material as well, the question of how charms were treated linguistically by the Irish scribes holds considerable interest.

As it turns out, both English and Irish were employed in copying the charms texts – but only up to a point. Brían Ó Fearraighail, for instance, mixed both English- and Irish-language titles for his charms, and would add English instructions for how to use them. But the text of the charm itself – that is, the words to be spoken – were not only in Irish, but in a scribal hand that assumed the reader was fully literate in the language and not just able to work out pho-

netic spellings of the language based on English literacy, as was often the case of texts in this period. Instances of translations of charms into one language or the other have, thus far, proven rare, with one of the few examples consisting of British Library Ms Egerton 155, written around the year 1790 by the Meath or Cavan scribe Fearghal Ó Raghallaigh (see item #17, folio 61b). The fact that the charm Ó Raghallaigh translated was an iteration of the **Super Petram** type revolving around the historiola of Peter suffering a toothache, a charm with particularly wide international coverage, may have had a role to play in this exception. By contrast, Ó Raghallaigh did not translate into English an accompanying charm for healing eyes that involved a micro-narrative centering on Mary and Columbcille – that is, a charm with a distinctly Irish content that would have had a much more limited international circulation.

As charm researchers know well, such detailed charm texts from earlier centuries can be frustratingly rare. Nevertheless, it can be hoped that future attempts to fully identify and catalogue Irish charms of the eighteenth and nineteenth century will turn up further evidence of the text and context in which practitioners disseminated them. Such efforts will need to consider closely the linguistic and literary features of that material with an eye to untangling the contextual culture of scribal activity that sustained them. Reconnecting the charms included in Hyde's *Abhráin Diadha Chúige Connacht* with their scribal context is one way this can be achieved – several of the manuscripts from which he took his charms survive in the archives and could easily be traced to fill out our understandings of those texts. Finally, any such research into this area will require close examination of the use of charms in analogous scribal cultures outside of Ireland, a comparative question always in need of attention even where charms are not the central research topic.

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THE SLAVIC AND GERMAN VERSIONS OF THE SECOND MERSEBURG CHARM

Tatiana Agapkina, Vladimir Karpov, Andrey Toporkov

This paper considers the dissemination of the versions of the Second Merseburg Charm among the Slavs. The authors combine the structural-semiotic method, which allows them to describe the text structure and the inner logic of its variations, with the historical-geographical method, which helps in understanding texts and their historical transformations and geographical transferences.

Key words: the Second Merseburg Charm, Belorussian and Ukrainian charms, text structure, areal dissemination, formula, theonym

In 1842, Jacob Grimm presented an amazing finding to the scientific community, that of two Old High German charms from a manuscript of the 10th Century,¹ now generally known as the *Merseburg charms* (*Merseburger Zaubersprüche*) (Grimm 1842). For more than one and a half century an enormous amount of research work has been done, but many puzzles connected with both texts remain unsolved.² Since one of the notable traits of the Second Merseburg charm (hereafter MC2) is the presence of pagan theonyms (a quite rare phenomenon even in the Old High German period), the question arises of whether this can be taken as undeniable evidence of the text's pagan origins or had the Old Germanic theonyms lost their direct connection with the mythological heritage as they were recorded in written form? The text below itself being a classic example of Old German pagan poetry, its translation or interpretation of certain lexemes cannot be clearly explained once for all:

Phol ende Uuodan uuorun zi holza
 du uuart demo Balderes uolon sin uuoz birenkit
 thu biguol en Sinthgunt, Sunna era suister
 thu biguol en Friia, Uolla era suister
 thu biguol en Uuodan , so he uuola conda
 sose benrenki, sose bluotrenki, sose lidirenki,
 ben zi bena, bluot zi bluoda,
 lid zi geliden, sose gelimida sin

*Phol and Wodan rode into the woods,
There Balder's foal sprained its foot.
It was charmed by Sinthgunt, her sister Sunna;
It was charmed by Frija, her sister Volla;
It was charmed by Wodan, as he well knew how:
Bone-sprain, like blood-sprain,
Like limb-sprain:
Bone to bone; blood to blood;
Limb to limb as they were glued.*

No other medical charms contains so many characters, going back genetically to the Old German pantheon. While most of the Old High German charms contain the names of Christian Saints, Old German pagan theonyms are rarely found in the later texts. Phonetic and graphical analysis of Old German words (first of all the following pagan theonyms) accounts for both the occurrence of the Christian Saints' names in the later versions of the MC2 and the areal distribution of the texts. The presence of Low German elements suggests the text comes from North German area, even though it was been recorded in writing at the East Franconian monastery in Fulda, or at the monastery of Merseburg in Thuringia.

The closeness of both monasteries to the Low German territory resulted in the mixed character of the charm dialect: there were some attempts of copyists to substitute the Old Germanic consonants *p* and *th*, partially affected by the High German Sound Shift, for *ph* and *d*. The extant versions of the MC2³ are written in Low German or in the standard German language, while South German versions do not exist. The texts did indeed spread to the south, but this happened when supra-regional forms of German language were developing actively.

The Low German forms of the words could have resulted in pseudo-etymological explanations of the initially pagan vocabulary. The theonym P(h)ol in the beginning of the MC2 kept the non-shifted initial sound *p* instead of the Old High German affricate:⁴ *puhl*, *paul*, *pohl*. In that case it could be identified with homonymous Low German forms of the Saint Paul's name. Saint Paul occurs most often in the Low German versions of the MC2 in the same role as the Old German P(h)ol: he goes riding with a companion, sees the horse sprain its foot, but he is not involved in healing the horse, for example:

St. Peter und St. Paul gingen auf einen hohen Berg / St. Peters Pferd
vertrat einen Fuß, / da steigt St. Peter selber ab und zog dem Pferde den
Fuß und sprach: Fleisch zu Fleische, / Blut zu Blute, / Sehen zu Sehen.
/ du sollst nicht kellen, du sollst nicht schwellen⁵

St. Peter and St. Paul went to a high mountain / St. Peter's horse sprained its foot / Then St. Peter got off his horse, grabbed its leg and said: flesh to flash / blood to blood / sinew to sinew / You should not hurt, you should not swell.

The question of the influence of the MC2 on the dissemination of its variants among the Slavs remains without an answer. Most linguists hold to the theory of typological affinity of the Indo-European charm traditions, drawing on the structural and topical similarity of the texts. But in our opinion the **territorial closeness of the Baltic, Slavic and German ethnic groups** played a more important role and certainly could have found its reflection in the local folklore. It is noteworthy that the manuscript with both Merseburg charms came to the monastery from Fulda with the Catholic mission for converting pagans to Christianity. It is difficult to say why two Old German pagan charms were included in the collection of the Christian texts and how the missionaries were going to use them. We could state the following: the area of distribution of the variants of the Second Merseburg charm was Eastern and North-East Germany, in close vicinity to the Slavs and the German settlements in the West Slav territories; that the dialect of the charm versions was Low German here, while in other regions of Germany variants were recorded in written form by the means of standard German. The following example taken from a West German book of the sixteenth century shows how the copyist substituted the voiceless plosive *k* for the South German affricate *k(c)h*:

Der h. Mann St. Simeon
Soll gen Rom reiten oder gan,
Da trat sein Folen uf ein Stein
Und verrenkt ein Bein.
Bein zu Bein, Blut zu Blut,
Ader zu Ader, fleisch zu Fleisch,
So rheim khomm sie zusammen
In unsers Herrn Jesu Christi Namen.
Also rheim du aus Mutterleib khommen bist⁶

*St. Simeon went riding or on foot to Rome
and his foal stumbled over a stone
and sprained its foot
foot to foot, blood to blood,
vein to vein, flesh to flesh
in the name of the Lord Jesus
be the same as when you came out of the womb.*

The structural analysis of the versions of the MC2 gave complete versions and texts with different combinations of three parts.⁷ The complete versions vary in character sets and their number. Usually St. Peter and St. Paul go somewhere in horse riding, St. Peter's horse sprain its foot, the hurt is healed by St. Peter, casting the spell. In other versions Jesus Christ goes riding a donkey and it is Holy Virgin Mary who heals the hurt:

Unser Herr Jesus ritt über einen Stein,
ben Eselin, hat zerbrochen sein Bein,
da kam die Maria gegangen,
sie sprach:
Knoche zu Knochen
von Knochen zu Knoche
Lende zu Lende,
bis du wieder zu rechte werdest. (i.N.)⁸

*Our Lord Jesus rode
a donkey, that stumbled over a stone and hurt its leg
then came the Virgin Mary,
and she said:
bone to bone,
from bone to bone
loin to loin,
until you are well.*

The incomplete versions lost the third formula, it was substituted for the information about healing the horse by St. Peter or Jesus Christ:

Peter un Paulus chengen över den Brauch,
Peter sin Pertken verklikt sik den Faut,
Do kam user Här van Engelland,
De Petrus sin Pertken kureiern kann⁹.
*Peter and Paul were going across a field,
Peter's horse sprained its foot,
then came Our Lord from the Angels' Land,
He was able to heal St. Peter's horse.*

However some versions only containing the third formula are found in Low German:

Von Leder tau Leder – von sehn tau sehn –
Von glit tau glit – Von fleß tau fleß –
Von Blut tau Blut – Von Mest tau Mest –
Von Mutter Maria geboren vaß¹⁰

*From leather to leather – from sinew to sinew –
from limb to limb – from flesh to flesh –
from blood to blood – from knife to knife –
was born of the Virgin Mary.*

THE SLAVIC DISTRIBUTION OF MC2

In 1903 Oscar Eberman analyzed basic versions of MC2 in the Germanic languages. Later, in 1914, he was followed by Reidar Christiansen who summarized Finnish and Scandinavian versions of the MC2 in his dedicated monograph. In Christiansen's book we can find, amongst others, a short chapter devoted to East Slavic variants of MC2. It should be noted that this is entirely based on the work written by the Russian-Finnish philologist V. Mansikka (1909), and mainly covers Christian reminiscences in the Belorussian versions of the MC2. Unfortunately, Slavic parallels to the MC2 still remain unknown to Western scholars.

Nevertheless, the first work devoted to the MC2 appeared in Russia as early as in 1849. Since then it has become a rather popular subject, which has been analyzed from different points of view (e.g. comparative analysis). Several works concerning East Slavic and Polish versions of the MC2, as well as the charm's functioning on the border between Belarus, Poland and Lithuania, have appeared recently. In this report we shall focus on this recent research.

Texts of the MC2 type are spread unevenly amongst Slavic ethnic groups. They are known among Western Slavs – in Poland, Czech and in practically all Belorussian regions. Most of the Belorussian material comes from the Homel province. The Ukrainian versions of the MC2 were mostly recorded along the Dnieper's right bank (Pravoberezhie), in the central regions and in Polesye. The MC2 type was recorded sporadically in some other areas where Ukrainians live, for example Kuban. Several texts of the MC2 type were found in the south, where the Don Cossacks live. Besides, in the Russian North (in Obonezhie and Vologda province) and in the Upper Volga region (in Kostroma and Yaroslavl provinces) the researchers found a modified version of the MC2: here the charm focuses on stopping bleeding, but not on the dislocation treatment. They still have a "bone to bone, tendon to tendon" part, but they gained a new historiola: usually, a young girl sits on the stone, treating a wound. The MC2 is almost unknown among Southern Slavs (in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia), but it is rather widely spread in Slovenia, where it has German origins. The charm was once recorded in Serbian Banat, but this does not change the overall picture.

Thus we can come to the conclusion that the texts of the MC2 type are widely spread in Belarus and in Ukrainian Polesye, which borders with Belorussian Polesye. They are also familiar to Western Slavs and Slovenians, but practically unknown for Balkan Slavs, Russians and for the most part of Ukraine. This geographical coverage drives us to the conclusion that the MC2 type is not the common heritage of the Slavic nations. Even if we admit that the MC2 type (or at least the formula ‘bone to bone, tendon to tendon, joint to joint’) can be traced back to the Indo-European era, it is evidently a quite late innovation among the Slavs.

In 1909 V. Mansikka suggested that the MC2 type came to Slavs from the Central Europe, probably from Germanic ethnic groups (Mansikka 1909: 249–259). Modern Russian scholars agree with this point of view emphasizing the idea that West-Slavic traditions acted as a mediator between German and East-Slavic traditions (Agapkina 2002:247; Zavyalova 2006: 206). According to them, the MC2 came to Poles, Czechs and Slovenians directly from the German tradition, the Belorussians received it from Poland. Probably, the modified type of the MC2 came to Russian North from the Karelian-Finnish tradition, where this type of text is found widely.

On the basis of Christiansen’s material we drew up the following table which reveals the first recordings and the MC2 versions among Germanic and Finnish ethnic groups (unfortunately we do not have the relevant data about Lithuanian, Latvian, Hungarian and Romanian versions). Evidently, Christiansen’s data reflecting the 1914 situation are not up-to-date and we could have made them more accurate, but here we are not interested in absolute numbers. What is important is the correlation between them.

Table 1. Texts of the MC2 type in German and Finno-Ugric languages (by Christiansen 1914).

	Total number	The earliest recordings and publications
German	25 ¹¹	X c., XIV c., XVI c.
English	11	XVI c., 1834
Dutch	14	1873
Norwegian	38	1682, 1685
Swedish from Sweden	35	1750, 1817
Swedish from Finland	20	1907, 1911
West-Finnish	83	1658, 1852
East-Finnish	284	1789, 1813
Estonian	133 ¹²	1884, 1887

We tried to make the similar table for the Slavic world. Surely, it reflects more recent data, which explains the differences from Christiansen's book. Though some figures may be made more exact later, we are confident that the general idea and the ratio are correct.

Table 2. Texts of the MC2 type in Slavic languages

	Total number	The earliest recordings and publications
Polish	16	1544, 1547
Czech	3	1613, 1745
Slovenian	3	1923(?)
Serbian (from Banat)	1	1911
Belorussian	104	1891
Ukrainian	13	1892
Southern-Russian	6	1987
Northern and the Volga region Russian	11 (modified)	2nd quarter of the 17th c.; 1660

This table shows that the MC2 versions were recorded among some Slavic nations (i.e. Poles, Czechs and Russians) no later than in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which is much later than in Germany, but rather close in time to the situation in England, Norway and Western Finland.

The second conclusion from the table is much stranger: the overwhelming majority of the texts of the MC2 type were recorded not in Germany, where these texts presumably originated, but in places where they appeared much later through the mediation of other ethnic traditions: in Belarus, where it came from Poland, and in Finland, where it came from Sweden. (As for Estonia, the MC2 could appear via different routes. This question deserves its own dedicated research). The number of texts of the MC2 type, which are recorded in Belarus, Finland and Estonia, is much more than the number of these texts in Germany. The same situation is observed in Poland and Sweden, which played the role of both donors and mediators.

We have two explanations of this phenomenon:

1) The MC2 type was not just transferred to new ethnic traditions, but became their organic feature and put down its roots there. Then it got closer to the other types of charms and other genres of folklore, was modified and gave birth to many new texts.

2) In the second half of the nineteenth century, folklorists began collecting the charms, at that time magical traditions were actively used by the Belorus-

sians, Finns and Estonians, therefore they managed to find so many texts. We can see a different situation in Germany and Scandinavia, where the magical folklore was not a widespread tradition in the nineteenth century.

BELORUSSIAN AND POLESYAN CHARMS FOR DISLOCATION AND INJURY

As we have already mentioned, the majority of texts of the MC2 type in the Slavic world were recorded in Belarus and in the area of Belorussian and Ukrainian Polesye. It is important for us that Belarus was the chief area where the MC2 type actively functioned. The Belorussian texts of the MC2 type are not only large in number, but also highly variable in structure and content. Almost every text represents a new variant. Obviously, such instability and variety of texts is typical only of oral tradition.

In the end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's, we participated in the so-called Polesyan ethnolinguistic expeditions. Our aim was to systematically research Polesye (the area, which is located in the basin of the Pripyat River and unites boundary regions between Ukraine and Belarus). Later we published the book, *Charms from Polesye*, which was based on the results of our research and included approximately 1100 charms.

The Belorussian charms tradition has an exclusively oral character. Hand-written charms are almost unknown there which is why the majority of texts are written down from oral speech and have the feel of oral functioning. In Belarus there were neither medieval recordings nor recordings in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, but the charm tradition exists there till nowadays. Large collections of charms were gathered in Belarus in the past decades and were recently published. Modern collections of charms, combined with E.R. Romanov's extensive collection (1891), allow us to examine the charm repertoire of Belorussians very carefully in terms of its dynamics over the last 100 years – from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first.

The following table (Table 3) provides information about the most important editions of Belorussian charms and texts included in them.

The fourth table contains the data about the number of Belorussian and Polesyan charms from dislocation and injury. It is clearly seen that the number of these texts is great, though their number decreased with time if compared with the total number of charms.

Table 3. The most important editions of charms from Belarus and Polesye.

	The time of the fixation	The place of the fixation	The total number of charms
E.R. Romanov's collection (1891)	1880s	Belarus	396
Замовы (1992)	1975 – 1989 (+ republications)	Belarus	1351
Поліські замовляння (1995)	1990–1992	Belorussian and Ukrainian Polesye	183
Таямніцы (1997)	1980s – the beginning of 1990s	Homel region (Belarus)	715
Polessian Charms (2003)	1973 – 1991	Belorussian and Ukrainian Polesye	1092
Полацкі этнаграфічны зборнік (2006)	1996 – 2006	Polotski region, Vitebsk province	229
The total number of charms:			3963

Table 4. The number of charms for dislocation and injury in Belarus and Polesye.

	The total number of charms	The number of charms for dislocation and injury	The correlation between charms for dislocation and injury and the total number of charms
E.R. Romanov's collection (1891)	396	66	16.7 % ¹³
Замовы (1992)	1351 ¹⁴	81	6.0%
Поліські замовляння (1995)	183	17	9.3%
Таямніцы (1997)	715	46	6.4%
Polessian Charms (2003)	1092	40	3.7%
Полацкі этнаграфічны зборнік (2006)	229	20	6.2%
The total number of charms:	3963	270	6.8%

Looking at this table, we can come to the conclusion that charms for dislocation and injury form a large and considerable group of Belorussian and Polesyan charms. It should be noted that the presence of such a group should not be taken

for granted. For example, charms specifically for sprains are not to be found in the Northern Russian charms corpora. As this kind of functional group is present in Polish and German traditions, we can assume that it was formed in Belarus under Western influence.

In E. R. Romanov's book, the total number of sprain and injury charms is 16,7%. This figure is considerably lower in subsequent collections: from 3,7% to 9,3%. This fact can hardly be incidental. Probably, general changes in the charm tradition can explain it. During this period the number of narrative charms becomes lower in comparison to conjurations and counting down charms. Similarly, the number of monofunctional charms becomes less in comparison to the number of 'universal' charms, which can be adapted to treat many different illnesses. Thus the texts of MC2 type were continuously eliminated from the folklore tradition.

Table 5 contains data about the number of charms from dislocation and injury, the number of texts of MC2 type and number of full texts of MC2 type, which include all the 3 formulas (see below the structural analysis of the MC2 type)

Table 5. The number of texts of the MC2 type in Belarus and Polesye.

	The number of injury and sprain charms	The number of texts of the MC2 type (with 2 formulas)	The number of texts of the MC2 type (with 3 formulas)
E.R. Romanov's collection (1891)	66	43	3 (104, 105, 152)
Замовы (1992)	54 ¹⁵	18	1 (565)
Поліські замовляння (1995)	17	5	1 (7)
Таямніцы (1997)	46	15	4 (179, 204, 209, 211)
Polesyan Charms (2003)	40	10	1 (380)
Полацкі этнаграфічны зборнік (2006)	20	11	1 (118)
Totals:	243	102	11

On the basis of this table we may conclude, that:

1) the number of texts of the MC2 type in the Romanov's collection is about two-thirds and in the collections of 1990–2000 it is much lower – between a quarter and a half. This can be explained by the same processes of elimination of narrative and monofunctional charms that we described above;

2) the number of texts, which keep the full set of three formulas, is not large – about 10% of the total number of texts of the MC2 type.

THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF MC2 SLAVIC VERSIONS

It is well known that there are three formulas in the MC2 type, which follow one another in a recorded order. The structure of the MC2 texts was described by Agapkina using the example of Belorussian tradition. There are complete versions (or ‘first level’ versions) and incomplete versions (or ‘second level’ versions).

Complete versions include three formulas. Their invariant can be described in the following way:

1. First level versions (a + b + c)

A – “while somebody (male protagonist) was riding a horse, the horse sprained its foot”;

B – “sacral protagonists (male/female) are charming the illness”;

C – “let the bone stick to bone, tendon to tendon, blood to blood” (the motif of body integrity and recovery).

Example:

Первым разом, Гасподним часом, Господу Богу памалюся, Святой Прэчистой пакланюся. (a) Ехаў Сус Христос чэрэз залаты мост, аслятко ступило, ножку звихнуло. (b) Стоить Сус Христос, плачэ, ридзе, иде Прэчиста Мати: – Сын мой возлюбленный, шо ты плачэш, ридзеш? – Ехаў чэрэз залаты мост, и аслятко ступило, ножку звихнуло. – (c) Не плачь, сынко, не ридай, я так ей пастановила, як его мать парадилла, косточку з косточкой складала, жилу з жилой точила, кровь з кровью перэливала... Господи Божэ поможы, а я захватила, Бога попросила (ПЗ, № 380, гомел.).

At first time, at God's hour I'll pray to God, I'll bow to the Virgin. (a) Jesus Christ rode across the golden bridge. His donkey made a step and sprained its foot. (b) Jesus Christ is standing and crying. The Virgin comes up to him and says: – Oh, my beloved son. Why are you crying? – I was riding across the golden bridge. And my donkey has sprained its foot. (c) Do not cry, my son, I made it like it was at birth. I put his bone to bone, tendon to tendon, blood to blood. Help me, God, I asked God for help.

2. Second level versions (a + c), (a + b), (b + c)

We can mark out three variants among the second level versions of MC2 type. They are formed by different combinations of the three formulas: (a + c), (a + b), (b + c).

2.1. (a + c).

Example:

Ездзвив святы́й Юра по чыстому полю на сивым коні. (а) Конік яго спотыкнуўся, суставка зьвихнулася. (с) Суставка с суставкой, сьйдзися, і цела с целом зросцися, кров іс кровью збяжися (Романов 1891:75, № 131; Могилев.).

St. George rode his horse in a field. (a) The horse stumbled and sprained its tendon. (c) Tendon with tendon, body with body, blood with blood.

2.2. (a + b):

Example:

(а) Хрыстос ехав з нябёс, на буланом коні, на Сіянскую гору. Конь споткнуўся, сустав с суставом соткнуўся, і звих мінуўся. (b) Маті Прачыстая по Сіянскай горе ходіла, траву зрывала, жылы кровью налівала, рабу Божаму помочи давала (Романов, № 112, Гомел.).

(a) Jesus Christ rode from heaven to Mount Sinai. His dun horse stumbled, one joint crashed against another and a dislocation happened. (b) The Virgin was walking on the Mount Sinai, picked up the grass, filled the tendons with blood, helped God's slave.

2.3 (b + c):

Example:

(b) Шла Пречыста Маті полем, сядзіць яслятка на дароге, плаче. «Чего ты, яслятка, плачешь?» – «Бегла я железными стоўпамі, ножку зломало». – «Не плач, яслятко, я твою ножку сцелю, (с) кров з кровью зальцеца, костка с косткою зросцеце» (ПЗ 2003:228, № 382, Чернобыл. р-н Киев. обл.).

(b) The Virgin is walking through the field. The donkey is sitting near the road and crying. "Why are you crying, donkey?" – "I was running along iron poles and broke my leg". – "Do not cry, donkey, I'll couple your leg, (c) blood with blood, bone with bone".

In Belorussian texts we can rarely meet with full variants possessing all three formulas. What we find generally lacks the harmony, fullness and logical order of the MC2. And the majority of Belorussian charms of this type have lost the *second* formula. This means that the story about a sacral personage, who rode a horse, is immediately followed by the incantation formula similar to 'bone to bone, tendon to tendon' or 'the horse stood up, his dislocation was recovered'.

There is also another variant: the protagonist is driving the horse and the next moment this hero cures the dislocation. We see that there is only one protagonist in the text and only one formula which includes three events: riding a horse, the treating process and pronouncing the incantation formula.

The dialogue between the victim and the healer, which is so typical of Polish charms of this type, is practically absent in Belorussian texts.

The general tendency is the following: the range of Belorussian texts of the MC2 type becomes narrower; they break up into separate complete syntactic periods, which can be combined differently or even drop out altogether. The lack of sense and the loss of logical connections are partly compensated by formal resources: rhymes appear in texts, sometimes the charm turns into the verse similar to counting-out rhyme. Here is an example:

Шол Господзь по широкой дорози,
по вяликих ляхах,
по зялёных лугах,
косточки-суставки собирав,
рабу от зъвиху помочи давав (Romanov 1891:74, No. 127).

*God was walking along the wide road,
Through large woods,
Through green fields,
He put bones and joints together
And helped the servant of God (so-and-so).*

In this example the text was transformed so much, that it is difficult to recognize the MC2 type in it. There is neither a horse, nor a rider, nor his movements; the horse does not stumble. And only the phrase 'bones and joints' was left from the formula of body integrity recovering.

CONCLUSIONS

As the performance of treating charms is usually connected with certain ritual, it is expedient to consider charm borrowing not to be a migration of separate plots, but a part of a general process of interaction and mutual enrichment of different cultures. During this process of interaction the text is translated into the other language and 'puts down roots' into a new tradition – the same thing happens with the whole fragment of foreign culture. In this process, bearers of different ethnic-cultural traditions master new knowledge and skill: the knowledge of some sacral texts and the skill to defeat some illness.

In this report we tried to outline such a method of charms research, which may lead us to some results in the case of scholars' international cooperation. Though sometimes we do not have enough data for complex research of charms, this aim is worth aspiring to it.

Nowadays it's not enough just to state that the texts of the MC2 type are known among Belorussians, Poles or any other nation. It is much more important to describe the region of one or another text or even to place it on the map, to restore the history of the text over time, to discover the structural features of the text and its basic variants. The ultimate aim of such a research can be the description of text's history in the European cultural space during several centuries or even a millennium. If we want to do this job on a European scale, it is necessary to do it in every European country individually at first.

Nowadays it is necessary for us to switch from gathering charms and studying them in separate ethnic traditions to researching them in wide geographical bounds. I think that the most productive way is that of philological systematization of texts on the basis of separation of different functional groups and plots types with the following description of their history and geography of expansion. We may combine the structural-semiotic method, which allows us to describe the texts structure and the inner logic of its variations, and the historical-geographical method, which helps us to research texts in their historical transformations and geographical transferences.

The goal is not only to count the maximum amount of texts in each language, but to elaborate common and mutually accepted methods and the number of questions, which must be asked for one or another tradition. Only in that case the following transfer from studying separate ethnic traditions to understanding of the European tradition as a whole may be possible.

NOTES

¹ Arguments in favour of an earlier oral version dating of the MC2 include Bauschke (1993, 548), Dieck (1986, 115), and Kartschoke (1990, 120).

² For background, text and comments, see Beck (2003).

³ By 1914, Christiansen had collected about 25 versions of the MC2. We found eight previously unpublished texts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the Richard Wossidlo Archive in Rostock (Germany) and also two more versions in the ethnographic magazines (see *References*); we present texts with a reference to the Richard Wossidlo Archive (WA), code number, and place and year of recording.

⁴ Paleographic analysis of the MC2 reveals that the copyist wrote the grapheme *h* over the vowel *o* following the capital letter *P*; this revision of the text can be explained by the irregularity of consonant shift, the spelling rules have not yet having been formed.

⁵ WA, C VII/06, Boitzenburg, 1636.

⁶ *Zeitschrift des Vereins für rheinische und westfälische Volkskunde*, VII.Jahrgang, 1910: 147, (Sponheim, 1575).

- ⁷ On the text structure, see Düwel (1998: 551) and Schumacher (2000: 213).
- ⁸ WA, C VII/03, Schwerin, 1930.
- ⁹ *Zeitschrift des Vereins für rheinische und westfälische Volkskunde*, 1. Jahrgang, 1904: 216.,
- ¹⁰ WA, C VII/06, Güstrow, 1860.
- ¹¹ See note 3 for more information about the ten texts we found.
- ¹² According to J. Roper, there are only 286 Estonian versions of the MC2 known to date; the earliest version is from an investigative report of the eighteenth century (Roper 2009: 177–178).
- ¹³ Hereinafter the numbers are rounded to the 0,1th %.
- ¹⁴ Some texts in *Замовы* have been taken by the editor from the E.R. Romanov's book, so we counted these texts twice, in both the first and the second row of this table. We should not have taken the charms from the E. R. Romanov's book published in *Замовы*, but the general number of texts in *Замовы* would have been much less then. We suppose that this discrepancy does not change the general trend in the data.
- ¹⁵ In that case we have not taken into account 27 of 81 charms from dislocation, borrowed from the E. R. Romanov's book. They were already presented in the previous row of the table.

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PARCHMENT, PRAXIS AND PERFORMANCE OF CHARMS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL IRELAND

Ilona Tuomi

St. Gall MS 1395, a collection of fragments from various periods, includes a page of Irish origin and apparently ninth-century date, containing four healing charms known as the St. Gall Incantations, each followed by instructions concerning its ritual performance. A close study of this single vellum folio examining the characteristics of the text, scribal practices and the cultural setting in which the document was compiled, provides a basis for theorizing about Old Irish magical practices and their multidimensional performative context. By highlighting the investigation of the liaison between the words of the charm and the associated ritual, an attempt will be made to elucidate how the textual register of the manuscript translated into physical performance. Accordingly, questions of mise-en-page performance and the manuscript as a material amulet are addressed in order to understand the written environment of magical language as well as the practices of charming in early medieval Ireland.

Key words: Christian tradition, healing charms, manuscripts, medieval Irish charms, performative context, pre-Christian tradition, power of words, ritual performance, sound patterns, St. Gall Incantations, textual amulets

INTRODUCTION

As the famous philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein has said, “The meaning of words lies in their use” (Wittgenstein 1953: 80; 109 – quoted in Tambiah 1968: 207); this paper constitutes a study of the use of words on the one hand, and of their meaning on the other. The use of words becomes even more important in the magical system, and as the social anthropologist Stanley Tambiah has noted: “... if the ethnographer questions his informants ‘Why is this ritual effective?’ the reply takes the form of a formally expressed belief that the power is in the ‘words’ even though the words only become effective if uttered in a very special context of other action,” (Tambiah 1968: 176).¹ It has also been said that “any given remedy is complete only in performance” (Garner 2004: 30).² The performance gains, in the words of Tambiah, “its realism by clothing a metaphorical procedure in the operational or manipulative mode of practical action” (1968: 194). Hence, the magical rituals, a complex of words and deeds, of concepts and

actions, as well as the interconnections of the latter, will be the topic of this article.³ The discussion will seek to show how a 9th century collection of charms known as the St. Gall Incantations, written in Old Irish, “ingeniously conjoins the expressive and metaphorical properties of language with the operational and empirical properties of technical activity” (Tambiah 1968: 202).

It is, without a doubt, a challenge to try to understand the mentalities, or modes of rationality, of people who are separated from the present day by twelve hundred years. It is possible, however, to study the individual pieces of evidence which the manuscript provides. It is possible to study the distinct style, content, purpose and function of the source in order to reveal as much of its internal logic as possible (Gurevich 1989: 36; 221). The text, which combines verse and prose, also includes instructions for a wide range of performative elements, including the acts of speaking, writing and, possibly, singing. As Karen Jolly has stated: “Ritual actions can be read as ‘texts’ with just as much meaning as printed words” (Jolly 1996: 23). It is hence possible to try and “unravel the logic and technique of the rite,” (Tambiah 1968: 190). It is possible to study the role of *materia medica*, the medical substances used in the healing process. The appearance of the texts on the page, principles of compilation, and the manuscript itself can also be studied. This method of moving back and forth between text and context, and standing back from the individual pieces of evidence that one can study, allows the forming of a more general picture of the early medieval practices of charming (see Jolly 1996: 5; 34).

The charms used for healing purposes that are the object of this study can be found on a single leaf of Insular vellum.⁴ The manuscript, today forming a part of the composite volume 1395 put together by the librarian Ildefons von Arx in 1822, has been preserved in the library of St. Gall in Switzerland. Because the leaf’s recto bears a portrait of Saint Matthew, it has been suggested that the leaf would have originally been a page from a pocket Gospel book (see for example Carey 2000: 3). The charms, four in total, are written on the verso of the leaf, each of them followed by directions for its use. There have been opposing opinions as to whether the work is of two or three different scribes.⁵ The manuscript, written in Insular majuscule, has been dated to the ninth century, although the eighth and the tenth centuries have also been suggested.⁶

It will be well to give brief attention to the pioneering work that has already been done and that makes possible ongoing research in the present day. The above mentioned librarian, Ildefons von Arx, noted that the script and language of the leaf were Irish, and sent a copy of the text to Paris, London and Oxford to be translated – apparently without a result. The text was later, in 1834, sent to the Board of Reports in London by Bishop Greith, the sub-librarian of the Monastery Library of St. Gall. There was plenty of interest in the manuscript

during the 19th century: The four charms were edited first by Johann Kaspar Zeuss in 1853 in his *Grammatica Celtica*, followed by the editions of Ferdinand Keller (1860), Heinrich Zimmer (1881), Ernst Windisch (1890) and finally by that of Whitley Stokes and John Strachan in 1903. There have been numerous translations of the individual charms; most recently, one can mention the contribution *Magical Texts in Early Medieval Ireland* by John Carey (2000: 98–117) as well as the 2009 effort by Bernard Mees in his *Celtic Curses* (pp.173–178).

I will begin by introducing of the charms one by one; and by investigating not only their content, but also some of their typical formulaic structures and compositional devices. Attention will be paid to the “implicative weight” of the charms, which connects these words to a wider context whose power they evoke (Foley 1991:7; Olsan 1992: 118; Passalis 2012: 7). After beginning with a consideration of the charms’ content, as well as what I would like to call ‘the linguistics of magic’, the discussion is expanded by studying “the grammar of the non-verbal acts that go with them” (Tambiah 1968: 184) – in other words, the accompanying rituals. This way, moving between particular texts and their larger context, it is hoped that some of the specific features found in the St. Gall Incantations will be illustrated in the process; the charms will be used as a case study of an aspect of charming traditions in Early Medieval Ireland (see Jolly 1996: 4). To conclude, a few thoughts will be advanced about the manuscript as a physical object, as well as its possible function as a textual amulet.

CHARM 1 – “BY THE HOLY WORDS THAT CHRIST SPOKE FROM HIS CROSS, REMOVE FROM ME THE THORN”

Ni artu ní nim
ni domnu ní muir
Ar nóibbríathraib ro-labrastar Crist
assa chr[oich]
Díuscart dím a ndelg
delg díuscoilt
crú ceiti
méim méinni
Benaim béim n-and
dod-athsceinn,
tod-scenn,
tod-aig.
Rogarg fiss Goibnen.
Aird Goibnenn,

re n-aird Goibnenn
Ceingeth ass.

Fo-certar ind epaid-se i n-im nad tet i n-uisce 7 fu-slegar de imma
ndelg immecuáirt 7 ni tét fora n-airrinde nach fora n-álath 7 mani bé a
n-delg and du toéth ind ala fiacail airthir a chinn.

*Nothing is higher than heaven,
nothing is deeper than the sea.
By the holy words that Crist spoke
from his cross:
Remove from me the thorn,
a thorn which wounds.*

*** *****

**** *****

*I strike a blow on it
which makes it spring out,
which makes it spring forward,
which drives it out.
Very harsh Goibniu's wisdom!
The point of Goibniu,
before the point of Goibniu,
Let it step out of him!*

*This charm is put in butter which does not go into water, and from
it is smeared all around the thorn, and it does not go on the point or the
wound, and if the thorn be not there, one of the two teeth in front of his
head will fall out.⁷*

The first charm in the collection is a narrative healing charm for a thorn (or some other sharp, pointed object).⁸ The charm follows the bipartite structure generally found within the genre: power is first built up, then it is discharged. As Jonathan Roper has pointed out, “in the first half of a charm, supernatural personalities tend to be named or addressed, and often a little story is featured which touches on issues in some ways analogous to the plight of the person to be cured... In the second half of a charm, the power is discharged, the analogy is cashed in, the magic is worked, often in a highly formulaic language” (Roper 2003b: 51).⁹

The charm begins with the opening formula, “Nothing is higher than heaven, nothing is deeper than the sea”, followed by a *historiola*. This term is used to designate a short narrative, describing (often apocryphal) episodes of the lives of Jesus and the saints, frequently encountering or conducting a dialogue with one another.¹⁰ The *historiola*, “By the holy words that Christ has spoken from

his cross: Remove the thorn from me the thorn, a thorn which wounds”, is a micro-narrative that, although brief, has space enough to name the character and his location, to describe the illness, and to suggest how it was overcome.¹¹ Historiolae work with the principle of *similia similibus*, thus establishing an analogy “between mythic time and present circumstances,” (Frankfurter 1995: 465). David Frankfurter has furthermore stated that historiolae provide a link “between a human dimension where actions are open-ended and a mythic dimension where actions are completed and tensions have been resolved” (1995: 464). Frankfurter continues: “The historiola invariably includes some specific links with the immediate ritual context in which it is uttered.... The effect is, therefore, a collapsing of boundaries between the human situation and the mythical dimension; the historiola is effective not by analogy or precedent but by becoming dynamically real within the ritual context,” (1995: 469–470).¹² In general, “by uttering the same vital invocation as the character in the story, the practitioner or client taps into the power of the entire story” (Frankfurter 1995: 462). In the case of the charm under study, the practitioner thus taps into the power of Christ on the cross and connects the two events: thorns and nails that pierced Christ’s skin and the thorn that has pierced the patient’s skin.

After magical power has been built up and called up by the invocation and the historiola, it is time to release it. Here one finds the words that actually make the magic happen: “crú ceiti, méim méinni”. The meaning of these lines is unclear, even if there are number of other spells within the Irish tradition that are directed against *crú*, a word meaning something like blood and gore.¹³ Sometimes the meaning either becomes corrupt or gets lost in the course of the intercultural and diachronic transit of words through time, space and history (Passalis 2012: 10). On the other hand, it is at times the case with charms that they include words that were never meant to be understood, but rather the contrary. As Roper (2003a: 9–10) has pointed out, “syllables with a high degree of semantic redundancy... may still be significant: not semantically, but as a significant sound”.

According to Roper, the transition to the release of magical power is sometimes marked by “a change of verbal tense, often by one of mood, and by the use of more closely repetitive and formulaic language” (2003a: 23). Generally, “if the tone is imperative, it involves commands and adjurations addressed to the offending object” (Roper 2003b: 53). This is clearly visible in the charm, which reads: “I strike a blow on it (namely, a thorn) which makes it spring out, which makes it spring forward, which drives it out”. These are obviously descriptions with imperative force: the charmer releases all the power he gathered before and describes how the offending object will leave the body.

The final important feature in a charm is the manner of its conclusion. At times, as in the present case, charms are concluded with a ratification. Quoting Roper again, one can claim that “the final formula simultaneously works magic and ratifies that magic (and ratifies the other magic formulae which have gone before it)” (Roper 2003a: 26–27). As is known, there are numerous charms that have either “Amen” or even a prayer as their ratification, but here the ratification is clearly non-Christian, underlining the power and harshness of wisdom belonging to Goibniu, the divine smith of the Tuatha Dé Danann. There is a link between smiths and magic in several cultures, and early medieval Ireland is no exception.¹⁴ Blacksmiths are furthermore classed together with women and druids as practitioners of harmful magic in the famous Irish prayer known as ‘Saint Patrick’s Breastplate’.¹⁵

Following the actual words of the charm against a thorn, attention must be paid to what Alain Renoir might call “an empirical context within the text proper” (Renoir 1988: 18 – quoted in Nelson 1990: 20), namely the ritual performance of the first charm.¹⁶ As noted by Tambiah (1968: 202): “[language] enjoys the power to invoke images and comparisons, refer to time past and future and relate events which cannot be represented in action. Non-verbal action on the other hand excels in what words cannot easily do – it can codify analogically by imitation of real events, reproduces technical acts and express multiple implications simultaneously. Words excel in expressive enlargement, physical actions in realistic presentation”. From the context, the “realistic presentation” of “physical actions” remains unclear. It is undecided, whether the purpose is to place the physical charm, written on something (perhaps another parchment), into the butter; or to perform the charm over butter, in other words to make ‘enchanted butter’, or perhaps both.¹⁷ The reason for this ambiguity lies in the fact that both words used here, *epaid* and *fo-ceird*, have multiple meanings. The word for a charm, *epaid*, can mean both an incantation or an amulet, and the verb, *fo-ceird*, means both ‘places, puts’ and also ‘casts’.¹⁸

According to Tambiah, the mediating substances, into which spells are uttered, convey the attribute to the final recipient. In his view, “the logic guiding the selection of these articles is not some mysterious magical force that inheres in them; they are selected on the basis of their spatio-temporal characters” (Tambiah 1968: 193–194). During the Old Irish period, milk and butter were among the most common ingredients in medicines (Cameron 1993: 8), but what is meant by “butter which does not go into water”? Fergus Kelly has, in his book *Early Irish Farming*, described the production of butter as follows: “The first stage in the production of butter is to keep a quantity of cream for a week or so in a cool place. The cream must be then churned until it separates into butter and buttermilk. The lumps of butter are strained off, washed, and pressed into

butter-pats” (Kelly 2000: 325–326).¹⁹ Therefore, in order to remove buttermilk from the butter grains one needs to wash butter and then ‘work’ the grains by pressing and kneading them together. It is likely that this is what is meant by our instruction. Similar examples of using unwashed butter in magical contexts can be found in the Anglo-Saxon tradition.²⁰ It seems that the idea behind this is that the ingredients had to be unadulterated and pure.²¹ It could be argued that by rubbing the unadulterated butter around the thorn the user of the charm is thus making a formal enclosure, ritually purifying the wound with this pure substance, enabling everything inside the enclosure to heal.

The final point to make relating to the first charm in the collection from St. Gall concerns what charm scholars describe as the evaluation of the charm. The purpose of the evaluation is to describe the expected result intended with the conjuration (Alonso-Almeida 2008: 20). It is clear that the charm is thought to be highly powerful, since the author of the instructions informs his readers that if one uses the charm without there being a thorn involved, something sharp, in this case the front tooth of the conjurer, will fall out!

CHARM 2 – “I SAVE MYSELF FROM THIS DISEASE OF THE URINE”

Ar galar fúail
Dum·esurc-sa din [MS dian] galar fúail-se
dun·esairc éu ét
dun·esarcat eúin énlaiti admai ibdach.
Fo-certar inso do grés i maigin hi tabair th’úal.
PreCHNYTϕCAH⊙MNYBVC KNAATYONIBVS Finit.

*Against a disease of urine
I save myself from this disease of the urine,
a cattle-goad saves us,
skillful bird-flocks of witches save us.*²²

This is always put in the place in which you make your urine.

In contrast to the other St. Gall Incantations, the second charm, non-Christian in its references, has a clear title, realized by a nominal group, and introduced by a preposition ‘ar’ – against: “Ar galar fúail” “against disease of urine”.²³ In general, the titles of charms serve two distinct purposes: firstly, they indicate the beginning of the text and secondly, they state what the charm is for. The St. Gall manuscript only contains four charms, but in bigger collections the titles, especially if written as marginal notes, serve as a visual help in locating

the charm (Alonso-Almeida 2008: 22; Olsan 2004: 59–62). The *desideratum* of the charm is stated already in the first line where the charmer speaks the conjuration: “I save myself from this disease of the urine”. Perhaps due to the shortness of the charm, there is quite a lot of repetition found in the lines – for example, all of the lines begin with the same verb, ‘to save’. The principle at work behind this feature might be the notion that repeating an idea or a word enhances its efficacy (Roper 2003a: 20, Skemer 2006: 92). Indeed, Roper declares how “[i]n fact, repetition, whether of sounds, words, or syntactic units is perhaps the key characteristic of verbal charms” (2003a: 20).

It is questionable whether the next line of the manuscript belongs to the charm against urinary disease or whether it is a charm on its own.²⁴ It would seem, however, that it should be read as a part of the charm.²⁵ The line is a mixture of Greek and Latin, the sacred languages of the Christian tradition. It reads:

“PreCHNYTϕCAHοMNYBVC: ~KNAATYONIBVS: ~Finit:~” (Presinitphsan omnybus knaatyonibus). This seems to be a Latin version of Matthew 28:19, incorporating one or two words or garbled Greek.²⁶ The passage in question runs as follows: “Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes baptizantes eos in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti” (Vulgate) and “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (King James Version).

As noted by John Carey, it is not “likely to be a coincidence that a line based on Matthew is written on the back of a portrait of Matthew; or that the allusion to ‘preaching to all nations’ is written on a piece of vellum which was part of the ninth-century Irish intellectual diaspora” (Carey 2000: 6). The use of classical languages and code-switching in medieval medical writing has been described by Päivi Pahta as follows: “Some Latin prefabricated utterances ... can... be seen as part of the special language of contemporary medical practice. Like in prayers, the function of the code is to enhance the power and efficacy of the words... A related group of switches contains instances in Latin, sometimes combined with transliterated Greek or Hebrew, in religious charms for medical purposes,” (Pahta 2004: 88 – quoted in Alonso-Almeida 2008: 28). It is noteworthy that the passage, which draws upon different languages, also already refers to different languages in itself, as the resurrected Jesus Christ instructed his disciples to spread his teachings to all nations of the world, thus by implication speaking all the different languages of the world.

The instruction for using the charm against the urinary disease reads as follows: “This is always put in the place in which you make your urine”. As is the case in the first charm, the verb *fo-ceird* poses a problem in interpretation. Is the charm supposed to be recited in the place where one makes one’s urine,

or is it the physical charm that is meant to be placed there? Was the charm intended to be recited while copying the signs to a separate parchment, or while placing the parchment?²⁷ It could be that the line with the quasi-Greek words, the quotation from the scripture, was supposed to be reproduced and then put in its place while reciting the actual charm. Whichever the case may be, Stanley Tambiah (1968: 190) has argued that “spells were uttered close to them [objects] so that they became charged; these objects in turn transferred their virtue to the final recipient of the magic”. This is probably what is happening with the second charm in the St. Gall manuscript, which apparently exorcises a *place*, in order to prevent or cure a urinary disease.

CHARM 3 – “THIS IS SUNG EVERY DAY ABOUT YOUR HEAD AGAINST HEADACHE”

Caput Christi
Oculus Isaiae
Frons nassium Nôe
Labia lingua Salomonis
Collum Temathei
Mens Beniamín
Pectus Pauli
[I] Unctus Iohannis
Fides Abrache
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Cánir an-i-siu cach dia im du chenn ar chenn galar iarna gabáil do-bir da sale it bais 7 da-bir im du da are 7 fort chulatha 7 cani du pater fo thrí la se 7 do-bir cros dit saíliu for ochtar do chinn 7 do-gní a tóirand-sa dano · U · fort chiunn.

The head of Christ
the eye of Isaiah
the bridge of the nose of Noah
the lips and tongue of Solomon
the neck of Timothy
the mind of Benjamin
the chest of Paul
the joint of John
the faith of Abraham
Holy, Holy, Holy

Lord God Sabaoth.

This is sung every day about your head against headache. After singing it you put two spittings [i.e. you spit twice] into your palm, and you put it around your two temples and on the back of your head, and you sing your Pater (Noster) three times thereat, and you put a cross of your saliva on the top of your head, and then you make this sign, U, on your head.

The third charm of the St. Gall Incantations, written in Latin with an Old Irish instruction, is thoroughly Christian in its enumeration and arranged following the traditional a capite ad calcem, “head-to-foot” order of remedies (Cameron 1993: 36).²⁸ Interestingly, the ailment to be cured with this charm that invokes the “the virtues inherent in different parts of the bodies of various patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, together with Christ himself” (Carey 2000: 3–4), only becomes clear from the instruction that follows the spell. This informs the reader that the spell is a charm against headache – perhaps that is the reason why it begins with the line “Caput Christi”, “Head of Christ”. The third charm is the only one of the present collection that has parallels elsewhere: the same charm is found in three other manuscripts, the time range of which extends over nine centuries.²⁹

The source of power in the text resides in its implicative weight. The characters named in the charm derive from the Christian textual tradition, and are all to be found in the Bible. What is more problematic is the background for their association with various physical attributes. Where is a text referring to the neck of Timothy? As Lea Olsan has noted, “biblical figures depicted in charms often have no scriptural sources (canonical or apocryphal), although a biblical narrative may supply a cue or kernel, sometimes a model” (Olsan 1992: 129). Olsan has also made use of John Foley’s concept of ‘traditional referentiality’, which also seems operative here, for the one line evokes “a context that is enormously larger and more echoic than the text or work itself” (Foley 1991:7, quoted in Olsan 1992: 118).³⁰ Thus, the conjurer hypostasizes his units of power as he utters the names of the sacred figures (see also Nelson 1990: 29). Simultaneously, he invokes the larger Christian tradition: The holy instances of the sacred characters in the Bible, the tradition of the church, the Christ himself are all behind the power of the third charm.³¹

This model of listing sacred characters or naming body parts in a litany is known from another genre, called the ‘lorica’ or ‘breastplate’.³² Loricæ are adopted from St. Paul’s expression concerning the spiritual armour (Ephesians, vi., 11–17 and I Thessalonians v., 8). According to Pierre-Yves Lambert (2010, 629), “*loricæ* are prayers characteristic of Medieval Celtic cultures that exhibit several features very close to ancient magical charms”. He lists three features

most salient in the *loricae* as: 1, an enumeration of the powers invoked; 2. an enumeration of the body-parts to be protected; and 3. an enumeration of the dangers, enemies or obstacles to be avoided or overcome (Lambert 2010, 629). Perhaps the most known example is the Lorica of St. Patrick already mentioned, where protection is asked against various things (ranging from black laws of heathenry and false laws of heretics to spells of women, smiths and druids), from various Christian agents. The idea is similar here: various different agents are invoked together with Christ himself.

The complaint being dealt with the charm is evidently a chronic headache, since the instruction of the charm informs us that it is to be performed *every day* – perhaps not only to recover from a headache, but in order to prevent it.³³ Here again there is ambiguity concerning the verb: *canaid* can mean that the charm was supposed to be sung, recited, chanted, or uttered. All that is certain is that the holy names from the Bible were meant to be enunciated out loud. Saliva is commonly employed in magic throughout the world, and examples of such usage could be cited at length. Here, the saliva is used in combination with a massage.³⁴ While putting the saliva around the temples and around the back of one's head, one is to sing or recite the Pater Noster or 'Our Father' three times. Three is a number that is used extensively in magical rituals; here, in the context of a Christian charm, it could also refer to the Trinity – Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.³⁵ Repetition is often seen as a means for enhancing efficacy (Skemer 2006: 92). On the other hand, from a purely functional point of view, it could be argued that the Pater Noster here serves primarily as a unit of time and implies the duration of application.³⁶ E.E. Evans-Pritchard noted that "Magic is seldom asked to produce a result by itself, but is associated with empirical action that does in fact produce it" (1937: 476–477), and one could easily imagine that a massage around the temples during which the Latin prayer is said three times would work in order to cure or prevent a headache.

At the end of the instruction one is told to make two signs: First, a sign of a cross on the top of one's head and then a more mysterious sign U on one's head. Since the charm as well the instruction so far have been thoroughly Christian, it seems more than likely that by making a cross on one's head the instruction is telling the patient to bless him or herself with the best known religious symbol of Christianity. Another possibility, which should be taken into account, is that the sign U is an abbreviation for the Latin numeral five, and thus the instruction would tell the patient to make, not one, but five signs of the cross on one's head.³⁷ This tradition of a circle of crosses seems to have been a widely acknowledged insular tradition; examples vary from drawn crosses in manuscripts to erected stone crosses and descriptions of rituals involving a circle of four crosses with the fifth one in the middle of the circle.³⁸ This type

of apotropaic protection would make sense in the context. Karen Louise Jolly (2006: 71) has noted that “[...] marking four sides with crosses is a popular method of sanctifying space for the purpose of providing health and protection”.

CHARM 4 – “I SMITE HIS SICKNESS, I CONQUER WOUNDS”

Tessurc marbbú,
ar díring,
ar gothsring,
ar att díchinn,
ar fuilib híairn,
ar ul loscas tene,
ar ub hithes cú.
Rop a chrú [MS: cuhrú] crinas,
teora cnoe crete,
teora féthi fichte.
Benim a galar,
ar fiuch fuili,
guil fuil.
Nirub att rée,
rop slán forsá·te
Ad·muinur in slánicid fo·racab Dián
Cecht lia muntir corop slán ani forsá·te.

Fo·certar inso do grés it bois láin di uisciu oc indlut 7 da·bir it béulu
7 im·bir in da mér ata nessam do lutain it bélaib cehtar áí á leth.

*I save the sick to death,
against *****,
against *****,
against the tumour of the headless (snake?)
against wounds of iron,
against ** which fire burns,
against ** which a dog eats.³⁹
May it be his blood which withers,
three nuts which decay,
three sinews which weave.
I smite his sickness,
I conquer wounds,
blood of lamentation.
May it not be an enduring tumour,*

*may that whereon it goes be whole.
I invoke the remedy which Dian Cécht
left with his household,
so that whereon it goes may be whole.*

*This is always placed in your palm full of water at washing, and you
put it in your mouth, and you move/put the two fingers that are nearest
to the little finger in your mouth, each of them apart/one at each side.*

The fourth and final charm in the collection from St. Gall, written in a different hand to the first three charms, comprises a lengthy conjuration followed by a ratification invoking the remedy of Dian Cécht, the healer for the Tuatha Dé Danann. This charm could be said to belong to a class of non-Christian charms known as *I-form charms*. According to Roper “this class of charms features opening lines with declarative sentences..., in which the charmer’s ‘I’ is explicitly present” (2005: 132). In this charm there are four different cases of the I-form, and it does indeed begin with one: “Tessurc marbbíu”, “I save the sick to death”. Henni Ilomäki, who has studied charms in which the reciter of the charm is present at a verbal level, argues that the speaker is what she calls “the ritual I”. Ilomäki argues further that as such, the verses of the charm “are drawn from a collective paradigm and may be adapted intuitively for use in acute situations. The material available to a reciter comes from a controlled repertoire and there is a good deal of uniformity in the form the expressions take,” (Ilomäki 2004: 55).

This could also be the case with our fourth charm. The I-forms of the charm find strikingly close parallels in other charms within the Irish tradition, where the sickness and wounds are being smitten.⁴⁰ The fourth charm also includes a list of injuries towards which it is directed. In this list we find, what Carey has translated as “(from) the tumour of the headless snake, (from) wounds of iron, (from) a beard which the fire burns, (from) an ‘ub’ which a hound eats”. There are multiple places where the translation is not clear, but it is still, however, possible to find parallels in other Old Irish charms, where a snake, a hound and a fire are all conjured against.⁴¹

It is possible to see the line invoking Dian Cécht’s remedy as a conclusion or a ratification to the charm. It can also be, simultaneously, a historiola. A historiola does not need to refer to Christian tradition, as was the case in the first charm, but can also allude to non-Christian beliefs. As was noted about the first charm, “the historiola not only changes a particular element of the environment, it transforms the entire environment into a mythic situation” (Frankfurter 1995: 467). According to Frankfurter, “the use of indigenous names and motifs simply indicates their continuing availability and authority,” (1995:

476) and "... it is this 'traditional' factor, the historiola's recognizability, which establishes the historiola's performative value and power," (1995: 473). Dian Cécht was the healer of the already mentioned divine race, the Tuatha Dé Danann. He killed his own son Miach, also a healer, out of professional envy. Healing herbs grew from his grave and they were organised by Dian Cécht's daughter. Dian Cécht, however, mixed the herbs and hence it was said that no human can know the healing qualities of all herbs without the assistance of the Holy Spirit.⁴² Is there perhaps a reference to this story here? Another detail worth pointing out here is the fact, as John Carey has noted, that *slániccid* can mean not just 'remedy', but also 'saviour', *saluator* as well as *salua*. He has further wondered whether the *slániccid* here is the curative herb, or Miach, or possibly both? Also, is Miach, "the young healer whose death brings wellbeing to mankind, a 'saviour' implicitly homologized with Christ?" (Carey 2000: 4).

In the instruction for the fourth charm one faces the familiar problem with the verb: Does the instruction tell one to put the charm, written on something, in one's palm full of water at washing, or is one supposed to recite the charm over the palm, or perhaps both?⁴³ What is interesting about the last instruction is that it is written by a different hand to that which wrote the charm itself. John Carey has pointed out that this clearly shows "collaboration and shared knowledge" – one scribe knew the charm, whereas the other one knew the tradition behind the ritual performance, "this is *always* put in your palm full of water at washing" (Carey 2000, 6). In the words of Marcel Mauss: "Magical ideas are a category of collective thought" (Mauss 1902: 3).

THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS – MANUSCRIPT AS A MAGICAL AMULET?

Having studied the two different dimensions of the manuscript, the words of the charms *per se* and the ritual performance implied in them, it will be suitable to touch on a third dimension in the manuscript which requires that the words and the rituals are considered *in situ* and the manuscript is studied as a physical object. The idea that the manuscript from St. Gall served the purpose of a textual amulet was first suggested by John Carey. Carey writes: "Either the entire Gospel-book travelled to the Continent, or the leaf only. In either case, the charms could have been written on the leaf either before or after its removal from the book. Any of these scenarios has interesting implications: for it must have been the case either that the a book (or a page) containing invocations of pagan deities formed a part of the baggage of an Irish ecclesiastic travelling

abroad, or that one or more Irish-speakers residing abroad added the invocations at some point after the page's arrival," (Carey 2000: 5).

According to Don. C. Skemer, the author of a thorough study on textual amulets in the Middle Ages, the church, through its literate clergy, played a central role in the transmission of textual amulets and related ritual practices from late antiquity to the Early Middle Ages. The production of amulets containing Christian and pre-Christian traditions began from the areas which today consist of Italy, Spain and Southern France, gradually moving to predominantly Celtic and Germanic regions (Skemer 2006: 40). Skemer argues that blank space in margins and on final leaves of monastic manuscripts offered "a convenient place for monastic dabblers in magic" to write down brief texts that could serve as future exemplars for verbal charms and textual amulets (2006: 77).⁴⁴ According to Skemer, "the selection of writing materials was probably a matter of convenience not affecting efficacy". In his opinion, the clerical producers of textual amulets would have preferred parchment slips or blank pages cut out of sacred books, since this would have enhanced the efficacy of the written word. He writes that these products would have enjoyed "the status of sacralized objects, perhaps needing no additional ecclesiastical blessing" (2006: 128–129). Understandably, "the need for writing material could also lead to abuse. Monastic manuscripts were sometimes mutilated for small blank pieces of parchment" (Skemer 2006: 129).

We do not know whether the charms were written down as an aide-mémoire for personal or communal reference for future verbal use, or whether the charms were turned into a textual amulet by being written down on a piece of parchment with an image of a saint on the other side. It is also possible that the manuscript from St. Gall was written to serve as an exemplar for the creation of other amulets. (Skemer 2006: 83; 124).⁴⁵ It is clear from studies done on textual amulets that they were not just worn physically without ever being read, seen, or otherwise used. According to Skemer, especially in "the late Middle Ages, textual amulets could also be read, performed, displayed, visualized, and used interactively," (2006: 127). He also states that sometimes "the composite texts might look like folk compilations thrown together with little planning. But amulet producers who knew the efficacy of each textual element could assemble disparate elements to create multipurpose self-help devices" (Skemer 2006: 124). According to Skemer, "the textual amulets were the successful union of content, form, and function" (Skemer 2006: 126).

Where did the clergy get the content for their amulets, the charms they were writing down? In Skemer's opinion, they would not only copy charms from exemplars, but "also draw on personal memory (however imperfect) in the form of a mental notebook of apotropaic texts, which might have been read in written

sources, learned by rote, or heard from clerics, family, and friends” (Skemer 2006: 83). These charms were then given physical permanence in the form of writing, a means which functioned to ‘lock in’ the power of the uttered words for ongoing effect (Frankfurter 1995: 463– 464 and Skemer 2006: 133).⁴⁶ Lea Olsan has however, very aptly, pointed out that these kinds of “uses of writing in connection with charms do not signify that charms should be understood as if generated primarily as written texts. Rather, writing as a technology was very early adapted to the rituals and tradition of curative magic” (Olsan 1992: 123).

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

“This has been a paper”, as John Miles Foley has put it, “about *word-power*, that is, about how words engage contexts and mediate communication”. It has also been a paper, again quoting Foley, “about the enabling event – *performance* – and the enabling referent – *tradition* – that give meaning to word-power,” (Foley 1992: 278). It has thus been possible to observe, not only the logic and mechanism of magical performance in the early medieval period, but also the enabling tradition of these rites. Attention was paid to the *materia medica*, as well as to the manuscript as a physical object. Word-power was studied and while there was no space here to go over each of our four charms in very great detail, this preliminary study of their structural elements has shown that all four charms under study share certain features such as traditional, formulaic language, and that they possess analogues with the wider charming tradition. It was also noticeable how traditional, native healing and Christian faith merge with one another in the St. Gall Incantations.

It is possible that the St. Gall Incantations were copied from earlier manuscripts without any expectation that they would be performed. It is also possible that the St. Gall manuscript would have served as a textual amulet or as an exemplar for future amulets. It is equally possible that the charms were recorded to make them accessible for use, “with the explicit intention that they might be put into practice” (Olsan 1999: 407). This practice offers the reader a planned performance – a combination of words and rituals. From the linguistic aspect, future investigations on the Irish charms could include the role of contextual factors in the structure of language and whether the genre itself to which a text belongs, in this case charms, potentially dictates a variety of grammatical choices. Another interesting line of inquiry would be the possibility of a typology in Old Irish charms – whether there is such a thing as charm-types within the Irish tradition and whether these types are constricted within the linguistic and cultural borders of this tradition. Finally, it would be appropri-

ate to conclude by quoting the French sociologist Marcel Mauss, who stated in 1902, while writing on his general theory on magic, that “We shall pass from observing the mechanism of the rite to the study of the milieu of these rites, since it is only in the milieu, where magical rites occur, that we can find the *raison d’être* of those practices performed by individual magicians”.⁴⁷

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The article forms a part of a work in progress; therefore all the remarks presented remain tentative rather than conclusive. The topic will be discussed more fully in my forthcoming dissertation concerning charms and their ritual performance in early medieval Ireland in general and the St. Gall Incantations in particular. It is to be hoped that the article and especially the charms published as a part of it, will be beneficial, not only for scholars in Celtic studies, but for a larger, interdisciplinary, academic audience.

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NOTES

¹ See also Olsan 1999: 401–402: The efficacy of a charm “depends on formulaic language and the rightness (or felicitousness) of the performance situation”.

² See also Olsan 1992: 123: “Furthermore, charms, in fact, live only in performance. Whether the performance is written or oral, it is conceived as an efficacious action and often operates in combination with physical rituals involving face-to-face human interactions characteristic of oral societies.”

- ³ See Tambiah 1968: 175; 184.
- ⁴ The leaf has been digitized, and the excellent reproduction of the manuscript can be found in <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/>, an e-codices service provided by the Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland.
- ⁵ E.A. Lowe (1956: 42 §988) and Ferdinand Keller (1860: 302–303) have suggested that the manuscript contains the writing of two scribes, while Ernst Windisch (1890: 90–91) as well as Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (1903: xxvii) have argued for the participation of three individual scribes.
- ⁶ J.K. Zeuss (1871: 949–950) wrote that the manuscript originated in the 8th century, Lowe and Carey both argue for a ninth century origin, while Stokes and Strachan were of the opinion that it could be either. J.H. Todd (in Reeves and Keller 1860: 303) writes: “... they [the charms] are evidently very ancient, probably as old as the tenth century”.
- ⁷ For previous editions of all of the charms (both transcriptions and translations), see the references in the ‘Introduction’.
- ⁸ DIL (*Dictionary of the Irish Language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials*) gives the following: thorn; pin; brooch; leaf-; shaped; brooch; brooch; peg; spike; nail; pointed; implement; nail; Crucifixion. Jacqueline Borsje has pointed out that the use of thorns in destructive supernatural arts makes one aware of the possibility that the spells “may not only have been used against ‘thorns’ immediately harming body parts but also against thorns used in such destructive supernatural rituals, performed from a distance.” Borsje 2013a, 19.
- ⁹ As Roper has pointed out: “This is itself reminiscent of our contemporary health service with its bipartite mode of operation: first diagnosis, then referral to treatment” (Roper 1998: 67).
- ¹⁰ See for example Frankfurter 1995.
- ¹¹ According to Roper historiolas can sometimes be less than a sentence in length. He writes: “Sometimes the historiola is so short that it is debatable whether the charm is a narrative one, or a non-narrative one with a bare narrative allusion sufficient enough to allow the presentation of an analogy...” (Roper 2003a: 23). The historiola of the charm in the St. Gall manuscript brings to mind two other types of charm, **Neque doluit neque tumuit** and **Tres boni fratres**. The key comparison in the first type, **Neque doluit neque tumuit**, is between the incorrupt wounds of Christ (made by nails and thorns), and the wounds of the patient at hand. In the **Tres boni fratres**, the historiola describes how Jesus instructs three good brethren to heal wounds by applying oil to them while reciting a charm. The similarity in all these charms is the historiola mentioning Jesus and the wounds and the attempt to apply the principle of that narrative to heal the patient. See Roper 2004: 133; and 2005: 113–15; 127–130. A modern version from the Irish tradition with the same theme: “The briar that spreads, the thorn that grows, the sharp spike that pierced the brow of Christ, give you power to draw this thorn from the flesh, or let it perish inside; in the name of the Trinity. Amen” (Wilde 1919: 11).
- ¹² Haralampos Passalis has studied the same borderline of narrative text and performative present. He writes: “The blurring of the borderline between the narrative text

and the performative present becomes even more conspicuous in cases where technical instructions proposed by the mythic sacred person come along with an embedded charm, as well as in cases where the embedded charm constitutes the very kernel of the proposed healing. This embedded charm appearing in the form of a simile or command or even in the form of another narrative, depending on the narrative type, not only enables and graphically enhances both the bi-directional relationship and the consonance of the performative past with the actual present, but also promotes the merging of the narrative and the performative/actual healer. Although the charm is delivered or imparted by the mythic narrative healer and is rooted in the mythic past, it is also embedded both organically and functionally in the performative present, but also in reverse order, that is, although it is performed in the present, it is embedded in the narrative mythic past. At the same time it not only enables the mythic sacred person to appear in the present time of the performative act via the correlative association with the healer, but it also allows the healer to enter the mythic narrative structure thus enhancing the validity and prestige of the healing process.” (Passalis 2011a: 45–46).

¹³ For other charms against gore (*crú*) see Stowe Missal 2 (*nip crú cruach*; Stokes & Strachan 1903, 249, 250); and Leabar Breacc *éle* (*nip crú*). See also Borsje 2013c: 200.

¹⁴ Several examples of the connection between smiths and magic can be found in Mircea Eliade’s *The Forge and the Crucible* (1979, originally published in French as *Forgerons et alchimistes* in 1956).

¹⁵ See for example Carey 2000: 5. For more on Goibniu and the Tuatha Dé Danann, see Koch, *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia*, 830; 1693–1696 and Mac Cana 1983: 34–35; 54–71.

¹⁶ See also Alonso-Almeida (2008: 24): “The function of the P[reparation] stage can be any of the following three: (i) to show how to perform a ritualistic action, (ii) to describe how a remedy must be elaborated, or (iii) to give the ingredients needed to produce a remedy”. Also: “The writer shows his expertise in giving directions to achieve a ritualistic remedy to cure a disease; by doing so, he positions himself in a higher rank with respect to reader, who must follow the steps to succeed in the preparation,” (Alonso-Almeida 2008: 33).

¹⁷ See also Borsje 2014, in print.

¹⁸ In the example found in the Dictionary of the Irish Language, the preposition used with the verb *fo-ceird* in the context of casting a spell is ‘fo’ – casting a spell *over* something (e.g. when a woman called Garbdalb casts a spell over men in a poem about a place called Duma Selga, it is frased as *rolá bricht forru*, “cast a spell over them” [see Gwynn 1906, *The Metrical Dindsenchas*, vol. 3, p. 388]). So, perhaps here, where the preposition is ‘i’, usually, when used with dative, denoting place *where*, or used with accusative, denoting *whither*, the purpose is actually to place the charm in(to) butter.

¹⁹ See also M. Ó Sé, ‘Old Irish Buttermaking’.

²⁰ “Against flying poison and every poisonous swelling: on a Friday churn butter that has been milked from a cow of one colour or a hind, and do not let it be mixed with water; sing a litany over it nine times, and an Our Father nine times, and this incantation nine times,” (Pettit 2001, II: 22–3, n. 29).

- ²¹ Another interesting parallel to the idea of using unadulterated ingredients comes from the later Irish tradition (15th–16th century) from a ‘Tres boni fatres’-charm, similarly against a thorn. In it the instruction reads: ‘Put that into oil and wool of a wether which has not before been shorn, and place it about the wound, and every wound against which it is put will become free from soreness except peritoneum or chest’ (Best 1952: 30). The charm in the St. Gall collection uses butter that has not been washed, whereas the other charm uses wool which has not been shorn before.
- ²² David Stifter has presented a very different interpretation of the reading of the charm. He emends the lines as follows: “I save myself from this disease of the urine/ how *éu* saves *ét*/ how birds save flocks of birds/ Skillfull spell-worker!” Stifter presented his translation in a paper “New Readings in the Stowe Missal”, given in Los Angeles.
- ²³ It could be pointed out that the charm is not the only Early Irish spell against a urinary disease. Another charm with the same title, although with a different orthography (*argalar fuel*) is contained in the Stowe Missal, a manuscript written around the year 800. The contents of the two charms, however, bear no resemblance to each other.
- ²⁴ David Stifter, for example, comments on *five* charms (A–E) in the St. Gall manuscript. Stifter, paper ‘New Readings in the Stowe Missal’, given in Los Angeles.
- ²⁵ The first three charms, written by the same hand, all begin with a decorated capital letter, thus clearly showing the beginning of the charm. This line does not have a decorated capital letter, and arguably therefore it should be read as a part of the second charm.
- ²⁶ This was first suggested by J. K. Zeuss, who translated this passage into Latin in his *Grammatica Celtica* as “praedicient omnibus nationibus” (Zeuss 1856: 950). This was later accepted also by Stokes and Strachan in their treatment of the charms (Stokes and Strachan 1905, 248). Interestingly, this garbled version of the Greek verb is completely different from what one finds in the Greek original: $\mu \alpha \theta \eta \tau \epsilon \upsilon \sigma \alpha \tau \epsilon$. However, even if the Greek text is sketchy and inaccurate, the scribe evidently knew more than just the mere alphabet: the first bit of the text contains a correct third plural aorist ending *-san* (Carey 2000: 5–6).
- ²⁷ The already mentioned charm in the Stowe Missal, also against urinary disease, reads in one of its lines: “put your urine in a place”. What exactly is the place referred to here is arguable. Stifter has suggested ‘latrine’, and it would definitely suit the context. The difference in the charms is that the one in the manuscript from St. Gall apparently exorcises a *place*, in order to prevent or cure a urinary disease.
- ²⁸ Cameron 1993: 36. See also Hughes (1970: 52), according to whom the British and Irish doctors, as well as churchmen, must have been aware of this method of arranging the body parts.
- ²⁹ The charm is also present in MSS Harley 2965 and Additional 30512 from the British Library, London as well as in MS 1336 from Trinity College, Dublin. The time range for all these manuscripts reaches over nine centuries: MSs Harley 2965, also called as ‘The Book of Nunnaminster’ is dated to the 8th or the 9th century, Trinity MS 1336 to the 15th and 16th centuries, and the Additional 30512 to the 16th century, with this specific passage with the charm having been added in the 17th century. The comparison of the manuscripts provides help in translating the line “unctus Johannis”. As it is presented in the manuscript from St. Gall, the translation should be ‘oil

of John'. This would not be completely fanciful, since not all the lines refer to body parts, for example the completing "fides Abrache" (the faith of Abraham). *Unctum*, oil, is, however, originally a neuter noun, whereas the manuscript presents it as a masculine, *unctus*. There is another possibility for the translation: In the 8th century Book of Nunnaminster the line reads as "iunctus Iohannis". 'iunctus' means 'joint' and would semantically suit the text from St. Gall. It is also easy to see, how a scribe would miss the letter 'i' while copying the charm, since the preceding word 'Pauli' ends with it and the next two letters consist entirely of minims; *Pauli iunctus* could thus be thought of as PAUL | | | | CTUS. Stokes & Strachan (1903: 248) in fact make this emendation; as does Mees (2009: 174). See also Lambert 2010: 629–648 in general for listing body parts in *loricae* and litanies, as well as Hughes 1970: 48–61 for some very useful examples. For the Book of Nunnaminster, see *An ancient manuscript of the eight or ninth century: formerly belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*. Ed. by Walter de Gray Birch, 1889.

³⁰ See also Passalis 2012.

³¹ Pierre Bourdieu has stated "authority comes to language from outside" and it is through the involvement or participation in the "authority of the institution" that invests words with their 'performative' power (Bourdieu 1994: 109, quoted in Kapaló 2011: 94).

³² For more about loricas, see for example Lambert 2010: 629–648; Herren 1987; and Gougaud 1911–12.

³³ Cf. Olsan 2003: 355 and 358. According to Olsan (2003:358), in the four collections she studied from the late Medieval period, most of the problems for which charms were prescribed, were chronically remitting or episodic conditions "whose recurrence a sufferer would want to take steps to prevent".

³⁴ Borsje has argued that at least two people are involved in the healing ritual: the singer of the *Caput Christi*-text and the patient who is addressed with 'you' and who performs the rest of the ritual (Borsje 2014, in print). The involvement of two people cannot obviously be ruled out, but the charm works just as well with only one person: the person who first sings the text and then executes the rest of the ritual. It is common for the charms to address the reader in the 2nd singular form, especially when instructing on the preparation and application of the charm. See also Alonso-Almeida (2008: 28): "The [...] element strongly associated with this stage [application] relates to the use of personal pronouns. These are *thu* in subject, thematic position, and *it/hym* in object, rheme position."

³⁵ See for example Kieckhefer 1989: 70.

³⁶ About time-keeping and ancient charms, see for example Cameron 1993: 38–39. See also Alonso-Almeida 2008: 22.

³⁷ See Gaidoz 1890: 225–227 and Sims-Williams 1990: 301.

³⁸ See, for example, Sims-Williams 1990:293; McEntire 2002: 397 and Jolly 2006: 71.

- ³⁹ Many of the words present here are only attested in this composition, and therefore the meaning of some of the lines remains unknown.
- ⁴⁰ Where the charm in the St. Gall manuscript says “Benaim a galar, ar-fiuoh fuili” “I smite his sickness, I conquer wounds”, the Old Irish spell in Leabhar Breac, a medieval Irish manuscript containing mainly religious material (RIA MS 23 P 16 or 1230), says “benaim galar, benaim crecht”, “I smite sickness, I smite wounding”.
- ⁴¹ Again the parallel comes from Leabhar Breac, where the charm goes: “its poison in a snake, its rabies in a hound, its flame in bronze” (“a neim hi naithir, a chontan hi coin, a daig hi n-umae”). Both charms also clearly invoke non-Christian agents, in the St. Gall charm the line goes as follows: “Ad-muinur in slánicid fo-r-acab Dian Ceath lia muntir”, “I invoke the remedy which Dian Ceath left with his household”. In LB the line goes: “Ad-muiniur teora ingena Flithais”, “I invoke the three daughter of Flidais”. The two charms have clearly some mutual resemblance, both in varied repetition, as well as structural repetition, which includes the repetition of whole line-groups (See Roper 2003a: 20). This structural repetition can also be observed in two other Irish spells, the first one found in the Stowe Missal, where the line goes “Admuiniur epscop nibar iccas”, “I invoke the bishop Ibar who heals” (Stokes and Strachan 1903: 250). The second set of invocations is from a text known as Fer Fio’s Cry, in which one finds three separate invocations to non-Christian agents, again using the verb form ad-muiniur: “I invoke the seven daughters of the sea” (“Admuiniur secht n-ingena trethan”), “I invoke my silver warrior” (“Admuiniur m’argetnġa”) and finally, “I invoke Senach of seven ages” (“Admuiniur Senach secht aimserach”), (Carey 1998: 136–138). All these charms seem to belong to the same formula family and it could be postulated that the lines were drawn from a collective paradigm. Lea Olsan has written of how “the structure of charms supported recollection in memory” (2004: 60).
- ⁴² For more about Dian Ceath, see Koch 2006: 586 and Mac Cana 1983: 23; 32; 58; 61.
- ⁴³ Here, as elsewhere in the collection, it is possible to find parallels from other charms. An instruction in the collection of medieval Irish charms by Carney & Carney, published in 1960 (p. 148), refer to saying a charm with a sip of water in one’s mouth.
- ⁴⁴ According to Skemer, “clerically produced textual amulets could take many physical forms in the early Middle Ages”. Certain sacred books in codex format were used amuletically to protect and cure. He also notes how the “boundaries between textual amulets, sacred books, and holy relics could be quite fluid, and at times the three could be one and the same thing” (Skemer 2006: 77). Possibly the most famous Irish example of this is the *Cathach* of St. Columcille of Iona (also called the Psalter of Columba), generally translated as ‘the battler’. The relic was used to bring spring rains and bountiful harvest as well as to secure victories in battles. For more on the *Cathach*, see Koch 2006: 351–352. Similarly, see the Book of Durrow used as a healing charm in Conell Mageoghahan, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. Denis Murphy (1896: 96).
- ⁴⁵ According to Skemer it is possible that the incantations were used in ritual practices such as inscribing apotropaic formulas on digestible substances, and “washing sacred text in water in order to produce a liquid water therapy” (Skemer 2006: 2), cf. the instruction of the fourth charm in the manuscript from St. Gall.
- ⁴⁶ Also opposite views exist; for example Katrin Rupp, having studied the Old English charms, has argued that the process of writing down the charm, bringing it to parchment, weakens its protective or healing power. She claims that charms are most ef-

fective when performed and lose some of their original spell when transformed from “spoken words to voiceless signs” (Rupp 2008: 256–257).

⁴⁷ Mauss 1902 (2009): 12.

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CHARMS IN SLOVENIAN CULTURE

Saša Babič

Nowadays, there only remains a small fraction of charms that used to exist in Slovenia. Charms seem to have become a little known relic of Slovenian culture. Despite this, some healing charms have been preserved and even published in research works by Ivan Grafenauer and Milan Dolenc. The most widely known charms in Slovenia include charms for snakebite, sprain, toothache, cramp, fever, and red rash. In those charms there are obvious German influences, though some charms still show Slavic roots. Charms are a genre that has not been studied by the Slovenian researchers as intensively as other traditional genres, like narratives. We will introduce the main charm types and their characteristics in the Slovenian culture.

Keywords: oral charms, ritual, context, Slovenian charms

The interest in collecting and researching charms and charm-ritual appeared in the nineteenth century. Even though it was hard to get texts and descriptions of the ritual, it was still a time, when the Slovenian area was full of such information. Therefore, most of the material we can work on was collected at the end of nineteenth and beginning of 20th century. Nowadays there are only a few people that know how to charm; today, eastern philosophies seem to be more popular in alternative medicine.

Charms as a magic ritual and text with magical power were highly prohibited in Slovenia through the history; therefore the practice was a secret even though it was quite common in past centuries. People practiced charms on everyday basis – to protect their health or harvest, as a protection from evil forces and to cure themselves.

Charms were persecuted in churches, when preachers tried to convince the listeners not to use such healing for problems, and in some newspaper articles (*Ljubljanski glas II* (1883), *Ljubljanski glas III* (1884)). They preached especially against believing in spells and evil eye. Perhaps that is also a reason, why “only” healing charms (for people and livestock), charms against spells/evil-eye (for people and livestock) and charms for weather problems are preserved in Slovenia; there are no love charms in archives, for example we know of some rituals, like when a girl would rub a piece of bread on her chest and

gave it to her chosen man to eat; that was the way to make that man fall in love with her; but there are no love-charm words that are known in Slovenian area). The charms that still remain are related to health and protection, and are preserved mainly in remote areas, especially if these areas were harder to get to. The main reason is that help could not come as quickly as in towns, for example, a doctor could never get in high mountains quickly. Medical doctors were also very expensive, so people tried to help themselves or they tried to get help from close by. Even today we have proverbs that show us the prior perception of medicine: *If one goes to the hospital, he goes there to die / To the hospital one goes to die (V bolnico greš umret); Health is an expensive merchandise (Zdravje je drago blago).*

The oldest charm found on Slovenian area is charm against tooth ache. It was written in Latin in codex of Gregorius Magnus "Liber moralium" (from Stična) in 12th century. It was written down by the Cistercian monk Bernard:

B,s,e,a,c,d,e,l,m,l,n,n,u,n,s,i,i,i. In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. Sancus Petrus dum sederat supra petram marmoream, misit manum ad caput et Dolores dentium contristabatur. Veni Jesus et ait: quarecontristeris Petre? Air: venit vermis migraneus, ut exas et recedes et ultra famulum Dei enim ledas. Amen. (Dolenc 1999: 90)

B,s,e,a,c,d,e,l,m,l,n,n,u,n,s,i,i,i. In the name of God the Father and the Son and the Holy. Spirit. Amen. When St. Peter sat down on the marble rock, he his head with his hands and was sad because of toothache. He came to Jesus and said, 'Why are you sad, Peter?' Peter answered: 'There came crawling worm and ruined my teeth.' And Jesus said: 'I charm you, crawling worm, to go away and not bother anymore the servant of God.' Amen.

Those kinds of charms were popular in southern and western German lands. The letters at the beginning are relict from magical alphabets. The function of such an alphabet was to create mystic meaning and to awake faith into the magic function of every letter. The charm has a typical form with historiola, which tells how, when the charm was for the first time, it was really successful. Then follows the text from the charm; the one, which should work in any case. This charm is supposed to be one of the most popular charms by the content in the Middle Ages and later (Dolenc 1999: 70).

Slovenian charms will be presented at the three different levels at which folklore actualizes according to Dundes (1965): texture, context, and text. We only make use of these three levels for the purpose of study; we have to acknowledge that in practice these three levels are inseparably interwoven in the ritual. The only purpose in dividing them is to show all the functions that charms have and at the end the esthetic function that exists in charm-ritual.

TEXTURE

Texture was rarely written down; many facts are missing, especially about the speaking of the charm. It is obvious that texture was a part of the charm ritual that was passed on from generation to generation directly in communication between teacher and student. It was prescribed how the charm was to be said: how loudly or quietly it should be told, if there had to be any pathos in the speech, some were supposed to be told really quiet, whispering or mumbling, and some were allowed to be spoken out loud. Charms that were spoken loudly were mostly against minor diseases or problems, which were healed by family members (grandmothers, mothers, aunts, etc.), such as eye sores, styes, etc. Whispering or saying the charm secretly was typical for charms against major diseases or problems, the healer's words were suggestive to the patient and gave him/her hope for getting better. All the charms were said slowly – so that the force (good or bad) could receive the message (Orožen 2009: 270). There were also proscriptions as to how to use mimicry or body movement: for example, “sowing” stye or making knots on the rope in the charm to treat sprain.

Repetition has had a big role in charms – not only words but also repeating of moves, prayers and the repeating of the whole ritual. These kinds of repetitions are constructing rhythm and at the same time fixedness of the structure. Repetition gives greater importance to the words and gestures, e.g. putting seven or nine little coals in the water.

CONTEXT

Context in charm ritual is divided into four parts: the first part is the reason for the charm ritual: disease or weather inconvenience. If we do not have this part of the context, then there is no charm ritual. It also dictates which charm and ritual to use (the possibility of choosing charm was in reality rather small – it was already fixed which charm to use against certain disease/inconvenience).

The second part of the context is ritual: what are the location (crossroads etc.), time (by moonlight, sunrise, sunset, the day in the week, midnight, solstice etc.), objects (coal, bread etc.) etc. that are used in the charm ritual. The third part of the ritual-context is the person who came to the healer. He/she had to believe in his/her magical powers and in the power of the word. The belief in the strength of word and magical powers of the healer had to be very strong. If there was no trust and belief in the magic of words and in special powers of the healer, the ritual could not be done.

The fourth part of the ritual is the healers. Whether an ordinary person would be able to heal the illness themselves, or whether they would have to call on a healer, depended on the seriousness of the illness. For example, eyesore or warts could be charmed by the grandmother, mother or even by the person himself, but for charming snakebite, it was necessary to call the healer. Healers were members of the community: healers or magicians (Dolenc 1999: 28) and they were mostly older people. Healers of people were mostly women; men were healing livestock diseases and more difficult diseases, for which the effect was better with a more “masculine, stronger word” (Matičeto 1948: 29). Healers did not have any formal medical education, their healing was based on belief in the magic of words and their magical powers; they also relied on the power of trust and power of suggestion. Healers knew charms mostly by heart, especially illiterate healers, who could not use written charms. Though there are some charms preserved in written form with a secret alphabet, which could be read only by the healer; secret alphabets consist of numbers, punctuation marks and some letters (Makarovič 2008: 89). Healers were usually very knowledgeable in herbs and their healing effects, so besides healing with words they usually also prescribed herbal tea, tinctures that helped in the healing process etc.

It was believed, that the healer possessed a gift of power of healing with words (with the help of the tongue – the organ) and with gestures (fingers) (Vel'mezova 2004: 64–65), and this gift was inherited in the family. Charms were usually passed on before stopping the practice or even right before death. At the moment of passing charms to the student, there were some fixed rules and terms that had to be respected: age, gender, family relation etc. It was also important how old was the teacher – the charm could work only if it was passed on by an older person than the student was. That means it was treated as a natural passing on from older generation to the younger. Gender was also very important: a man passed the charm over to a man or a woman to a woman; in the Slovenian area charming was a mostly feminine activity (Radenković 1996: 16). In some examples the charms could not be passed on with a spoken word, they were passed on in written form (in so called “black books”, as *Duhovna bramba* and *Kolomonov žegen*, healing writings or handwritten healing books).

Passing over the text had to be really strict: charm worked only if it was an exact copy of the “original”, it had to be the same from one generation to the next. Healing remained as a great secret inside the family (especially in times of inquisition – sadly there is data that in some places in Slovenia the inquisition was still alive in nineteenth century) (Dolenc 1999: 29, 30).

TEXT

Text is the words of the charm. Some charms have many variants of the same text (e.g. charms against snake-bite, spell/evil-eye, stye etc.); those charms were widespread over this area. There are some dialect versions and changes of the basic rhythm, but as a whole they present one text. We can also find charms with only one known text, without any variants. Those texts are usually preserved in written form (in healing books) and we have no data about usage – context and texture (e.g. charms against plaque, leprosy). It is obvious that these texts were rarely used, as those diseases were harder or even impossible to cure.

Ivan Grafenauer (1937) differentiated between two types of the charm-text structure: one-part and two-part structures. The first type consists only of an incantation: it is persecuting the bad force or disease; it is the older type of charm. A two-part structure consists of a *historiola* and the incantation, i.e. persecuting the bad force or disease. The *historiola* usually consists of a Bible story with some changes (added dialogue or other details).

The texts and some descriptions of the ritual of most frequent Slovenian charms are printed in the work of Milan Dolenc (1999). Those charms are mostly against the most frequent diseases and inconveniences, nevertheless we also find very rare charms in that book. The most frequent charms were against: snakebite (99), curse/evil eye (51), eye-diseases/stye (47), gangrene/infected wound (45), rheumatism and other joint and muscles illnesses (45), erysipelas (32), burn (29), warts (21), tooth ache (16), crow/goitre (16), distortion (16), cataract (15), bone spavin (14), tuberculosis/inflammation of lymph nodes (14), agnail (13), swelling (12), and charms against all diseases (12).

We will present three examples of Slovenian charms (against snakebite, curse/evil eye and the group of charms against stye, warts and goiter) with variations and texture and context information where possible.

CHARMS AGAINST SNAKEBITE

Snakebite charms, mostly against viper or adder bite, were the most popular charms in Slovenia. This tells us that this area is full of snakes; two species are dangerous to people (the viper and the adder). Farmers were in danger especially in the fields or in the woods. There are approximately 100 charm texts in Dolenc's collection of charms. Among these texts there are over 40 different types of charms against snakebite; some of these texts are actually a prayer in the role of the charm, but most of them are actual charms.

There were many rules to these charms. Healers of asp bite had their own curse, that of St. Martin, who has been thought to heal snakebite (Dolenc 1999:

152). The snake that bit a person should not be older than the healer; otherwise poison would come into the healer's body. Also, the bitten person had to stay serious (he/she was prohibited to smile). The charm was processed directly to the bite or on the bread, also speck (i.e. fat meat) and on stones. Many charms against snake bite were copied from *Kolomonov žegen*. The most common charm against snake bite is about St. Šempas in which the Holy Mother asks Šempas to heal the bitten man, but those do not contain Šempas's prayer, that is why at the end there is the healer's prayer or charm. The oldest charm against snake-bite by its structure is:

Evo sčudeža!!	<i>Behold a miracle!</i>
So oni koj verovali,	<i>They believed immediately</i>
Jime moje zaterali:	<i>They said my name:</i>
Če je vruga govoril,	<i>If he talked to the devil,</i>
Bude nove jezike pahudil,	<i>He will walk over new languages</i>
Če je vruga ...	<i>If there is hell ...,</i>
Ako budo otrov pili,	<i>if they will drink poison,</i>
Neče škodovati njim;	<i>it wo not harm them;</i>
Na bolezne ruke	<i>To who ill hands</i>
Kladati ti čejo,	<i>they will put,</i>
Izlečiti njih budo.	<i>they will heal them.</i>

(Dolenc 1999: 170)

The informant did not know all meanings of the words; she has just remembered them by heart as she has heard them (Dolenc 1999: 170).

The oldest written charm in Slovenian area is a charm against snakebite *Ta veči pana*; it appeared in 1641 in a German calendar almanac:

Stoi ena slata Gora,
 Na gori stoy ena sueta Zerku,
 V zerkui Lessi Gospud Sueti Jobst,
 Knemu je pershla Luba Diuiza Maria,
 Ti lesshis inui trdu spish.
 Vstani Gori inui pomagaj N. N.
 Od tega hudiga Zerua Kazeuiedi ne,
 De bode taku sdrau,
 Koker ie od suiga ozheta inui matere royen
 Nato zerno semlo patu Synu Nebu in nomine
 Patris et filij et Setus S. Amen.
 (Dolenc 1999: 158)

*There is Golden Mountain
On the mountain there is a holy church
St. Job lies in that church
The Virgin Mary comes to him,
You are lying and sleeping tight.
Wake up and help to N.N.
From this horrible worm
So he becomes so healthy
As he was born from his father and mother
Then the black soil and this bright sky in nomine
Patris et filij et Spiritus S. Amen.*

Another charm from the seventeenth century runs:

Stoji, stoji, silna skala,	<i>There stands, there stands, a powerful rock</i>
Na ti skali leži Irmbas,	<i>On this rock lies Irmbas,</i>
Mati božja pride k njemu:	<i>Mother of God comes to him:</i>
‘Stani gori ti Irmbas,	<i>‘Stand up Irmbas,</i>
Pomagaj temu človeku,	<i>Help this man</i>
Če je vgrizen al popaden	<i>If he is bitten or attacked</i>
Od tega črva podzemeljskega’	<i>from this worm of underground.’</i>

(Dolenc 1999: 158)

There is also a version of this charm in which there is an interesting example of threefold repetition:

Tam, tam, tam, stoji, stoji, stoji, ta siuna skala, tam gori leshi, leshi, leshi svet Schembaminus, pershlaie, pershlaie, pershlaie, mati boshe, Marie Devize de, de, de, ta potsemelski zheru tebi N. nemre shkodovat. 5 ozhenasheu, 5 zheshena mari, potem 3 krishe en mau kruha dai snest (Dolenc in 1999: 161).

There, there, there, stands, stands, stands, this powerful rock, up there lies, lies, lies Saint Schembaminus, she came, she came, she came, the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary that, that, that, this underground worm could not do thee N. any harm. 5 Lord’s Prayers, 5 Hail Maries, then cross oneself three times and eat some bread.

This charm is supposed to be mumbled three times, one after another – it should not be heard by anyone else.

The example of one-part charm is countering the poison by means of the bread right back to the snake. It is obvious that poison is understood as a living

and hearing being in this charm, poison is a curse ghost that can be frightened and exiled. The written version consists also the description of the ritual:

O strup! Jes tebe zarotim da pojdi na ti kruh ino skus ta kruh imash jiti v to kazho v imenu Boga očeta ... Duha + no v imeni svetiga shent Jansha. (Sdaj pa tri barti noter v ta kruh pihni, potem pa rezi: Jest tebi zapovem v imeni Boga Ozheta + ino Sina + ino svetiga Duha + da to meni nasaj pernesesh, kir si vsel N.N. ino spet to dej! Pomagaj Bog Ozha ... Duh +) (Dolenc 1999: 161)

O poison! I command you to go to this bread and through this bread you have to go into this snake in the name of God the Father ... Holy Ghost + and in the name of Saint John (now blow three times onto the bread, then say: I command you in the name of God + and Son + and Holy Ghost + that you bring back what you took from N.N. and give it back! Help [me], God the Father ... Ghost +)

Another one-part charm supplies information on all venomous snakes. It also has a gender aspect, as it is persecutes both evil forces both female and male:

Zagovarjam te,
Da ti nimaš nič opraviti pri tem človeku,
Bodi si gad ali gadinja, kača ali kačon,
Viper ali vipera, modras ali modrasica.
Zelenc ali zelenka in da imaš
Ta tvoj strup vzeti od tega človeka.
(Dolenc 1999: 167)

*I tell you,
That you do not have anything to do with this man,
Be you viper or viperess, serpent or snake,
viper or viperess, horned viper or horned viperess,
Male green snake or female green snake and you have to take your
venom from this man.*

There is also a dialogue charm between St. Peter and an adder:

Kaj sta Bog jin sv. Petar govorla
Ko sta po svet hodila
Modras:
Peter kaj ti govoriš
Jest jimam 51 strupenih žil
Kamor pičim ali kamor kane moj strup
More vse mrtvo bit.
Peter:

Jest imam 71 mazil kar pomažem vse obstane
Modras ti moraš krepat
Dostavek
3 perste vznamenje prič posavt na tla blizu kače.

*What did God and St. Peter talk about
When they were walking around the world*

Horned viper:

*Peter what are you saying
I have 51 venomous veins
Where I sting or where my venom drips,
Everything must die.*

Peter:

*I have 71 ointments; all that I anoint is kept
Horned viper, you have to die.*

Tag

3 fingers put by the witnesses on the ground near the snake.

Jizgovor in Pan zastrup

Dans N. je kačji gada dan

Jest kersen in birmen N.

Tebi zapovem jin Prepovem

Deti moraš to bolečino jin srbečino proč vzet

Tako hitro kakor zakonska žena za svojim Možam gre

Ti men pomagaj svet Šempas +++

Za tem besedilom je treba izmoliti 5 očenašev: Uimen Boga Očeta in Edinega Sina in Svetega Duha ter trikrat dihniti na kruh bil strupeni kraj. (Dolenc 1999: 170)

Charm against poison:

Today N. is the viper snake day

I, that baptized and confirmed N.,

command thee to take away

this pain and itch

As fast as the lawfully wedded wife follows her husband.

Help me Saint Šempas + + +

After this text there should be prayers: 5 Lord's Prayers: In the name of God the Father and the only Son and the Holy Spirit, and three times blow on the bread this was a toxic place.

There are many other charms against snake bite, where the charmer addresses also Jesus, Saint Trinity, St. Urh [Ulrich], St. Margaret etc. There are no

counting-down charms and all charms persecute venom (i.e. evil spirit) or they forbid the snake from harming a person. Charms with *historiola* have dialogue details or they have the structure of a dialogue.

Snakebite was a very dangerous and serious threat for a person or animal, so it was healed only by a healer, never by person her/himself or by a grandmother. It was also possible to heal the bitten person via a messenger: the healer conducted a ritual on the person who had come to tell about the accident, which was considered to help the bitten person.

CHARMS AGAINST CURSE/EVIL EYE

There are around fifty different texts against curse/evil eye in Dolenc's collection. A person could be cursed by a word or the evil eye, the consequence most of the time was an illness: headaches, stomach-ache, vomiting, or a generally bad condition; children might have rheumy eyes, have belly cramps, faint, or cry. It was mostly elderly women who treated diseases considered to have been caused by such curses. In order prevent getting a curse, some people wore amulets (Dolenc 1999: 98).

Healing a curse or the evil eye could also be done by adult women within the family (mother, grandmother, aunt). The most well-known rite to heal curses was the ritual three "little live charcoals" (burning charcoals). It was performed by mothers or grandmothers. Burning charcoals were thrown into clean fresh cold water. Then the mother cleaned the child's face with that water. The child also drank some of the water (Dolenc 1999: 92).

Another method to heal curses was to count down them down. As there were usually nine curses, they were counted down from nine. There are many versions of this kind of charm all over the Slovenian area.

Drugi ludi pravijo, da jih je 9

Jaz pa pravim, da jih je kar 8

Drugi ludi pravijo, da jih je 8

Jaz pa pravim, da jih je kar 7 ...

In tako naprej, da se pride do ene in potem se reče: drugi ludi pravijo, da je kar eden, jaz pravim, da ni nobeden. (Dolenc 1999: 102)

Other people say there is 9

I say there is 8

Other people say there is 8

I say there is 7 ...

And so on, till one gets to one and then one must say: other people say there is one, I say there is none.

The example of charm against curse from Pliberg (Carinthia) has a dialogue structure, in which the Holy Mother forbids the spell from harming a person:

Hudi urak pride Marija proti

Marija reče: Kam ti greš?

Urak reče: Grem k tisti hiši bom vse čreva zmešal in kosti zdrobil.

Marija reče: Ti nemaš hodat tisti hiši da bi vse čreva zmešal in kosti zdrobil. Idi v skalovje da ne boš nobene škode naredu, da nobena ptica ne odleti in noben zgon ne bo cute. Pomagaj bog ... (Dolenc 1999: 100).

The horrible Curse comes to Mary

Mary says: Where are you going?

The Curse says: I'm going to that house; I'll mix all the guts and crush bones.

Mary says: You are not allowed to go to that house to mix guts and to crush bones. Go to the rocks, where you can do no harm, where no bird flies, where you can hear no church bells. So help me God ...

Then one should wash one's hands with water from the stream over which the dead people are carried, then another hand, then one leg, but not the other leg! Wave the skirt three times, spit three times to one side, and shower with blessed water from Three Holy Kings.

The curse was also countered with directly attacking words; this one-part charm also shows the perception of the evil eye as something alive, but also as something that the healer would be strong enough to defeat, by mentioning the holy persons:

Ti hudi urak, al si prišu od lufti al od teh žlehtnih ljudi, ti hočeš temu človeku škodovati, jidi beg (trikrat ponoviti), jaz te preganjam. Pregarja te Bog Oče, preganja te Bog Sin, preganja te Bog svet Duh. (Dolenc 1999: 101)

You horrible curse, did you come from air or from evil people, do you want to harm this person, go back (repeat three times), I chase you. God the Father is chasing you, God the Son is chasing you, God the Holy Spirit is chasing you.

EYE-DISEASES/EYESORE/STYE (47); WARTS (21); CROW/GOITRE (16)

The third group of charms are those which were performed by the sick person her- or himself (or by female relatives). Charms in this group were characteristically used primarily by women.

(1) Stye

The charm against stye is in the form of a dialogue form between a (grand) mother and the person with stye:

The one with the stye asks: what are you doing?, the other answers: I'm mowing the stye and she slashes with a little knife in her hand in front of the eye or she holds it, as she would hold sickle. Everything is repeated three times. This charm is still widely known (Dolenc 1999: 63).

(2) Warts and crow

These charms are connected to the concept of the waxing moon: warts and crow were reduced by a waxing moon. Charms that use the moon and its cycles are supposed to have old Slavic roots (Radenković 1996). Crow was especially frequent in the Carinthian area because of lack of iodine in the soil. Girls with crow were mocked by village boys, so they tried to put it away, first with creams then with charms. People associated crow with the moon: as the moon started to appear and wax, the girl squeezed her crow and said: *What I see grows, what I squeeze disappears (Kar vid'm raste, kar muškam sahne)* (Dolenc 1999: 74).

Warts were also an inconvenience which people tried to heal with association with the moon. In Semič (south Slovenia) a method of treatment ran thus: When you see a new moon, look at it and take soil from the ground, anything that gets into your hand, pull it three times by the wart, look at sky and say three times: *Moon you gave it, moon, you take it. (Mesec, si dau, mesec, vzemi!)* Then spit over your shoulder and go (Dolenc 1999: 115).

CONCLUSION

Charms played an important role traditionally in health care in Slovenian area, even though their use was persecuted and prohibited. Healing with charms was a means by which people tried to help themselves healthy, to get better or even to survive, especially poorer inhabitants which could not afford a medical doctor. Every community has had its own healer, who was a neighbour, a fellow villager or lived in a nearby village. For minor diseases and problems, people tried to help themselves with charm-rituals that could do by themselves (some

weather inconveniences, stye, warts etc.), but for major problems they had to call in the healer. Healers were not just “magicians”, persons with magic abilities; healers were legal members of community who also knew herbs, hygienic rules and have helped also with for example births, dressing wounds etc. This knowledge and magical ability to heal (and in many cases also to predict the future) was given by family relation – it was passed on from one generation to another, when older healer stopped with his/her activity (exp. from mother to the daughter).

The power of the word and belief in the magic powers of the healers was definitely the most important aspect in the ritual of charming. If there were no faith, the charm would not work. That is why the essential element in the healing ritual was the patient: with his/her disease or a problem and with his/her faith. When they were charming animals this role was taken by the caretaker of the animal: the caretaker noticed the disease and called the healer or even performed the ritual by him/herself. Most important is that the caretaker believed in the magical powers all the time.

Our discussion has shown that there is, in addition to very important magic-religious structure and functions, a very obvious aesthetic structure and function to the ritual. “In every human act, especially in magical ceremonies, that are supposed to bring storm clouds, heal or deflect the floods, is a great need of a man to cope with nature, nevertheless the most prevailing motif in all of them is religious (the opposite is black magic rituals) ritual to compel unavoidable faith this motif is even more obvious...” (Campbell 2007: 430). We must also emphasize the aesthetic structure and functions, which helps give those texts religiosity and festivity. The aesthetic structure of charms is not only in stylistic elements: such as rhythm and rhyme, repetitions, ellipsis, hyperbole, metonymy, and metaphor. The aesthetic structure can be found also in the whole ritual and in faith in magic powers of the word. Charms are probably one of the last structures, where words have such strong suggestive function. Uncommonness, eeriness, festivity, hope and faith were key to understanding charms and their context. Aesthetic structure creates aesthetic function that is hidden but on the other hand one of the most important elements in the ritual: if there were no festivity in words and moves, there would be no healing effect.

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ST. PETER'S ROUTES IN LATVIA: THE CASE OF SUPER PETRAM CHARM-TYPE

Toms Kencis

St. Peter is the most frequently encountered Christian saint in Latvian verbal charms. Among the latter are charms against various illnesses and aches, household and protective charms, charms against thieves and other. The popularity of St. Peter in vernacular healing practices might be related to his special role in biblical narrative and medieval Christian legends. Latvian variations of the widespread **Super petram** toothache charm represent a particular version of this charm-type that can be tracked back to fifteenth century Germany. As such it features several semantic elements common with other Latvian toothache charms. Although there are only three recorded Latvian “*Super petram*” charms, this research contributes to long term investigation of presence of classical charm-types in Latvian-speaking region.

Key words: healing, Latvia, oak, St. Peter, Super petram, toothaches, verbal charms, Baltic, encounter charms

Petrus sedebat super petram – Peter was sitting on the stone – is the Latin opening line that gave the name to one of the classical narrative charms, i.e. **Super petram**. The Latin word-play of Peter and stone is not found in other languages, but is found in the oldest recorded version of this toothache charm from the tenth century. St. Peter played a special role in the medieval narrative economy – both in the high realm of theology and lower strata of legends and other genres that surrounded medical charms at that time. The Dominican archbishop of Genoa Jacobus de Voragine in his enormously popular compilation of saints' lives *The Golden legend* (ca. 1260) provides a summary of St. Peter's image, which, undoubtedly, was further cultivated by the book that was second only to Bible as the most read text of late Middle Ages (de Voragine 1995: xiii). According to de Voragine, Peter had three names: firstly, *Simon Bar-Jona* (cf. Matt. 16:17). Simon was interpreted as 'obedient', or as 'accepting of sadness'; Bar-Jona as a son of dove because his whole intention was to serve God in simplicity. He was also known as *Cephas* (cf. John 1:42), which is interpreted as 'head' or 'rock', or 'speaking forcefully'. 'Head', because he was the chief among the Church's prelates; 'rock', because of his endurance in his passion; 'speaking

forcefully', by reason of his constant preaching. Thirdly, he was called *Petrus*, which is Peter, which is interpreted as recognizing or taking off ones shoes, or unbinding. He unbound us by removing the bonds of sin, which he did with the keys he received from the Lord (de Voragine 1995: 360; cf. Matt. 16:19). Peter the apostle stood out among and above other apostles. This would be shown well enough by the phrase "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church" (Matt. 16:18), yet equally impressive are also accounts of his deeds and the miracles he performed. He walked over the water to the Lord (cf. Matt. 14:19), who chose him to be present at his transfiguration, found the coin of the tribute in fish's mouth (cf. Matt. 17:27), he accepted the charge of feeding Christ's sheep (cf. Jn. 21:17), he converted 3000 men by his preaching on the day of the Pentecost, he foretold death, he raised several deceased persons, he cured hundreds with the shadow of his body (cf. Acts 5:15), was jailed several times and set free by an angel (de Voragine 1995: 340–341). It would be surprising if a person with such accomplishments did not also appear in the healing charms of Christian tradition, and indeed, it is not only **Super petram** charm featuring Peter the Apostle, but also multiple other magical texts in Western (Ohrt 1934/35: 1540–1543) and Orthodox tradition (Klyaus 1997: 49; Agapkina 2010: 483; Ohrt 1938: 887 etc.), as well as in the Latvian corpus of charms.

The historiola of **Super petram** toothache charm usually begins with St. Peter sitting on the stone, in some variations – at the gates of Jerusalem or 'at the bridge'. Then Jesus comes and asks why Peter is so sad. Peter refers to toothaches and Christ replies with commanding him to do something like following him or rinsing his mouth, and the toothaches vanish. Jonathan Roper, referring to Claude Lecouteux, informs that this charm has been found in France, Denmark, Germany, England and in the Slavic languages (Roper 2005: 124). The oldest preserved record, as mentioned above, dates back to the tenth century. However, it is rather fragmentary. The oldest complete charm texts date back to the eleventh century. One of them, found in England, runs:

Christus super marmoreum sedebat petrus tristes ante eum stabat manum ad maxillum tenebat et interogebat eum dominus dicens: quare tristis es petre? Respondit Petrus et dixit: domine dentes me dolent. Et dominus dixit: adiuro te migranea uel gutta maligna per patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum [...] (Roper 2005: 122)

Records from the twelfth century, also in Latin, preserve the opening line that gave the name to this charm type:

*Petrus sedebat **Super petram**, et manus suas tenebat ad maxillas suas, et dixit Ihesus: Petre, quid tristis sedes? Domine, vermes (..) in me; fac mihi benedictionem...* (Ohrt 1938: 878)

For the current research on Latvian charms the most relevant of oldest recorded texts turns out to be German version from the fifteenth century:

S. Petrus stund unter einem Eichen-Bush, da begegnet ihm unser liebe Herr Jesus Christus ... Peter, warum bist du so traurig? ... Die Zähne wollen mir im Mund verfaulen... Peter, geh hin in den Grund, nimm Wasser in den Mund und spei es wieder aus inden Grund (Ohrt 1938: 878)

There are three distinctive differences from the above cited Latin versions. Firstly – the location. Peter is no longer sitting (on a stone, marble stone, at the gates), he is standing. Moreover, he is standing in a particular place, i.e. under the oak-bush; the latter might as well as be an oak tree with many acorns. Secondly, there is the command. While in other variation Jesus blesses Peter or commands him to follow (as also in Matt. 4:18–20), here the healing conjuration runs “get on the ground, take water in your mouth, and spit it back to the ground”. The third distinctive feature of this text is the rhyme, formed in the same command by *Grund-Mund-Grund*. As such it might be German-specific mnemonic device as well as ‘a decoration’ to enhance the magical effect.

ST. PETER IN LATVIAN CHARMS

In general, the corpus of around 55 thousand Latvian charms stored at the Archives of Latvian Folklore in Riga can be roughly divided into three sections: (1) palindromes, (2) charms with recognizable traits of Orthodox or Western Christianity, including also internationally widespread types (**Flum Jordan**, **Three roses**, **Bone to bone**, etc.), and (3) charms without such traits, featuring remnants of pre-Christian times or parallel developments of vernacular religion. Besides Jesus and Mary, Christian charms feature also other apostles and various saints. Kārlis Straubergs provides a detailed overview of charms featuring St. Peter¹ (1939: 363), unfortunately without indicating numbers of particular charms recorded. Still, St. Peter is the most frequently mentioned among all disciples of Christ in Latvian charms. Either as Peter (Lat.: *Pēteris*) or Simon (Lat.: *Sīmanis*), he is encountered in all kinds of charms, from the most general magic texts to healing charms for a particular ailment.

There are protective charms for good luck in general and for a good catch of fish in particular, the latter referring to Peter as a fisherman (cf. Matt. 4:18–19 and Luke 5:6). Similarly, there are healing charms for general purposes

(referring to Luke 8:44), as well as for particular problems, like toothaches in **Super petram** variations. Peter together with Jesus and/or other apostles are mentioned in charms against boils, snakes and erysipelas. Peter's miraculous escape from prison (Acts 12:8) finds its place in charms for household animals. Charms that feature St. Peter together with St. John, commonly refer to Acts (3:1–6). These help with pain, toothaches, internal problems, burn, bleeding wounds, and boils etc., and enhance water with magic properties that make it into a medicine. Peter and John together are encountered in a version of **Bone to bone** charm for broken bones. Some charms, for example, words to cure Saint Anthony's fire, mention, besides Peter and John, also Moses and the Virgin Mary. There are also other combinations with Paul and Andrew, both in healing charms and incantations for love. Peter alone is mentioned in charms against wolves, and a separate cluster of charms refers to Peter's binding power and the keys of the Heavenly kingdom (Matt. 16:19). Peter's keys can lock mouths of mad dogs, wolves or other wild animals; they can also lock away witches, wizards and the evil eye. Peter's binding powers are especially effective against thieves: both in the short formula 'Peter, bind' and also in longer historiolas, which promise at their conclusions that the thieves:

will be held, their hands will be restrained, their comprehension will be taken away, he will become creep until he will count all stones in the earth and all stars in the sky, all raindrops, all snowing snow, all leaves and smallest roots as far he can see (...) (Straubergs 1939: 366).

Interestingly, Peter's powers can be summoned also to put a lock on drinking and the playing of cards. In this case, verbal charming is supplemented with putting few drops of alcohol left in the glass by a drunkard into a new padlock and then hiding the padlock. Binding power can also be used in a reverse – to unbind curses and spells set by other person.

THREE CASES OF SUPER PETRAM

Both Peter's presence in Latvian charms in general and popularity of other international charm types would also suggest a rich array of **Super petram** variations. However, there is surprising lack of this type, at least in charms against toothache. As a matter of fact, in the Archives of Latvian Folklore only three records can be found. Of the total number of Latvian charms, only about 1% are against toothaches, or 560 texts. From those 560 only three are of the **Super petram** type. Of those three, one is recorded in the German language, and two in Latvian. Two are recorded in northern Latvia, the other in the

central-western area. All three are almost identical, suggesting dissemination from the same foreign variation. However, contextual data does not allow tracing any common root of the charm, leaving each record as a case study of its own, a unique story of the transmission of charm from the living tradition to archival shelves.

The German example, which comes from the Brengulī district near Valmiera in Northern Latvia, is the most interesting one for it can be immediately compared with the previously provided fifteenth century variation recorded from German sources.

Gegen Zahnschmerzen.

Wen Petri stand unter der Eiche, wo fillen viele Eicheln. Dan trug unser Her Jesu Kristu weshalb bist du so traurig. Dan Petri antwortet: Ich trauere wegen die Zahnschmerzen. Dann Jesu Kristu sahgt, gehezu Teiche und schpille den Mund mit dem Wasser den ich will dier wirklich helfen. +++ Amen Amen Amen – 1341, 19883²

Judging from multiple spelling errors, it seems that the original owner of the text either was not German native-speaker or belonged to a class lacking a complete education. The least likely but still possible explanation would be that it was noted down by someone not that familiar with German, transcribing it by hearing. However, it seems that the text was not taken down by freelance co-worker of Archives from the programme of ‘unemployed intelligentsia’,³ Oļģerts Bērziņš (1905–?), who submitted it to the Archives on 5th June 1935, because most of his manuscript, consisting of close to 20 thousand entries, was handwritten, but in a block of 46 charms in German – typewritten on separate pages. In a rather unusual way, this part of the manuscript lacks any remarks about its sources. Although a very productive contributor in several fields⁴, Bērziņš seems to have been a somewhat dubious character⁵, whose interest in folklore was fuelled by direct and quantity-related financial gain directly dependent on the amount of folklore he contributed (Vīksna 2013).

The text of the charm itself, comparing with Ohrt’s version, stands out with two interesting semantic mutations: first, the oak-bush is explained as an oak with multiple acorns. Second, the command at the end has lost its rhyme, but has retained its meaning. Moreover, it has been somewhat extended – from just taking the water from the ground to taking the water from the pond.

A little more informative contextual data surround the following Latvian version:

Pehteri stahweja apaksch Ozola kruma tad prasi jo luhzdu mihļa Kungs Jehzus Kristus uz Pehteri kapehc essi tu tik bedigs Pehteris ad bildeja kapehc es nebuschu behdigs buht tee zobi grib man eeksch mutu sap

tad sacīja muhsu Kungs Jehzus Kristus uz Pehteri Peteri pee eij pee ta diķiti un ņemi uhdeni eeksch Muti un skalo to atkal tur atpakaļ +++ Amen (1108, 370)

Peter stood under the oak-bush and then asked, please, our dear Lord Jesus Christ to Peter: why are you so sad? Peter answered: why would I not be sad? The teeth in my mouth are aching. Then said our Lord Jesus Christ to Peter: Peter, go to that pond and take some water into [your] mouth, and rinse it out again back there. +++ Amen

The old orthography and lack of punctuation marks suggest that the text was written down no later than World War I. To be sure, it was submitted by Richards Akmentiņš, pupil of 3rd b grade at *Valsts Jelgavas skolotāju institūts* (Teachers' State Institute of Jelgava) on the 25th of November 1930, but a note indicates that the charmer's notebook was owned by 86 years old Reinis Dāwis from Smiltene district, also in northern Latvia, and close to the the place where the German text came from. The whole notebook was submitted, featuring single handwriting and, untypically, lacking notes on lucky/unlucky days or any economic or practical advice. The several dozen charms it contains represent a rather typical selection of such notebooks: three charms against toothaches, four against thieves and fire, some for childbirth, and then various healing charms for pain, Saint Anthony's fire, headache, earache, etc.

The third text was part of a collection submitted by pupils of teacher M. Kārklīņš at *Tukuma valsts ģimnāzija* (The State Gymnasium of Tukums) in Central-Western Latvia on 21st of May 1930. It also lacks any context, and the text is rather similar to the other two, but written using a more contemporary Latvian Orthography:

Pēters stāvēja apakš ozola krūma. Tad prasīja mūsu miļais Kungs Jēzus Kristus uz Pēteri: Kāpēc tu esi tik bēdīgs. Pēteris atbildēja: Kāpēc es nebūšu but bēdīgs. Tie zobi grib man iekš muti sapūt. Tad sacīja mūsu Kungs Jēzus Kristus uz Peteri: Pieej pie tā diķa un ņem ūdeni iekšā un skalo turpat atpakaļ +++ Amen. (1108, 370a)

Peter stood under the oak-bush. Then asked our dear Lord Jesus Christ to Peter: Why are you so sad? Peter answered: Why should I not be sad? Those teeth in my mouth want to rot. Then said our Lord Jesus Christ to Peter: Go to that pond and take water, and rinse it back just there +++ Amen.

Notable here is grammatical use of colons and capital letters starting direct speech. Overall, orthography of this text is somehow mixed, partially representing spoken language, partially written, but this might merely be a result of imprecision in transcription. As in the other Latvian text, the place designation

is an oak-bush, and it differs from both previous examples only by the statement that “teeth in my mouth want to rot”, i.e. it replaces aching by rotting. However, the healing part is the same. Lack of context does not allow us to make firm conclusions regarding the practical use of texts. Most likely all three texts were acquired from real charmers or their descendants, because there seems to be a lack of any published examples of this charm which might have been copied by schoolchildren submitting these entries.

INTRA- AND EXTRA-CORPUS COMPARATIVE CONCLUSION

The well-nigh identical content of all three charms described above might suggest the common source for this charm’s dissemination in Latvia. Two distinctive elements – the oak bush (or oak with many acorns) and the rinsing of mouth with water from the ground (or pond) – point toward the version also found in fifteenth century Germany. The same features also mark differences from the **Super petram** charm sub-types recorded in other countries. This version is also plausible due to territory of Latvia having been a part of the German cultural area for several hundred years. Unfortunately, the late recording of charms and the lack of contextual data does not allow precise reconstruction of the exact path of transmission. It might have been via some religious order, operating in Latvia in the late Middle Ages, or just as likely by clerical circles in later times or by means of Baltic German manor households that were focal points of cultural exchange. The probability of the last hypothesis is increased to some extent by the absence of this charm-type within the set of toothache charms in the neighbouring Lithuanian tradition (see Vaitkevičienė 2008). While common cultural contacts via Catholic institutions and agents were shared by the inhabitants of contemporary Latvia and Lithuania until the coming of Protestantism, the later cultural histories of both countries and corresponding routes of cultural exchange differed. Lithuanian toothache charms feature St. Apollonia and the Virgin Mary, characteristic of Catholic countries, but all three versions of **Super petram** in Latvia were recorded in Lutheran parishes. It is more likely that this charm would be shared by Latvians and Northern neighbours Estonians – via common Baltic German representatives of learned elite. However, Jonathan Roper does not mention it as being a popular narrative charm in Estonia either (Roper 2009: 177). The transmission from Western Slavic regions, bordering provinces inhabited by Latvian-speakers and in many cases being also a source of the migration of charms, here is unlikely. Tatiana Agapkina (2010: 482–4) specifies that the Western Slavic versions of **Super petram**, recorded from twelfth century Latin manuscripts as well as

from apocryphal prayers dating from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, represent the sub-type of this charm featuring Peter sitting on a marble stone (see Western European parallels at Roper 2005), in which a worm indicated as a cause of toothaches, and the exorcism of this worm by Jesus Christ is a solution to problem. One of the earliest examples runs:

Sanctus Petrus dum sederet supra petrem marmoream, misit manum ad caput et dolore dentium contristabatur. Venit Iesus et ait: quare contristaris Petre? Ait: venit vermis migraneus et devoravit dentes meos. Et ait Iesus: Adjuro te, vermis migranea, ut exeas et rcedas et ultra famulum Dei enim non ledas. Amen. (Agapkina 2010: 483)⁶

There are some Latvian charms involving worm as a cause of toothaches, but these do not have any other features in common with the **Super petram** charm-type. Similarly, there are Latvian toothache charms that involve rinsing the mouth out with water, but this is the only similarity with cases described above. At the end of the day, worms as a cause of toothaches, and rinsing as a part of the healing process, are most likely universal notions. Also the third distinctive feature of the analysed sub-type – the oak – has parallels with other Latvian healing practices. Firstly, there are multiple records of Latvian beliefs that an aching tooth must be picked with a splinter from a thunderstruck tree. The Latvian rural landscape frequently features oaks growing in the middle of broad fields; thus it is the tree most often struck by thunder during storms. Two records of Latvian beliefs mention a thunderstruck oak tree particularly, for example:

36174. Ja zobs sāp, tad to vajaga izbakstīt ar pērkona saspertu ozola drumstalu, tad zobu sāpes pāriet. M. Ābele, *Valka* (Šmits 1941: 2188).

If a tooth aches, it must be picked with a splinter of thunderstricken oak tree, then the pain ceases.

In conclusion, I would like to express hope that, despite poor representation of this charm-type with its mere three records in the Archives of Latvian Folklore, this study will contribute to comparative diachronic research of magical practices in Europe, at least to that part of this research concerning well-documented and popular charms with many national variations. Even if a study such as this might be regarded as somewhat antiquarian by scholars demanding a more contextual/performance-related analysis, it can still tell us a lot about cultural exchange, textual transmission, and local systems of beliefs. Consequently, this is unfinished research, revealing some patterns of transmission and change that waits to be verified by further comparative research of other national traditions, and leading up to mapping of the magical layer in European culture, as

far as it can be done with the limited resources of archival materials and the scarce remains of living practices. At the same time, by focusing on semantic elements of magic texts, the current study is also intended to form a part of broader research of the semantic economy of a single culture, demonstrating how signifiers function within the corpus of one genre and how they are related to general belief ecosystem.

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NOTES

- ¹ The following paragraph is based solely on Strauberg's texts, after comparing it against archival materials.
- ² The first number refers to a manuscript in Archives of Latvian Folklore, the second number to an entry within a manuscript.
- ³ The programme was established by Latvian government during the economic recession of the 1930s, giving an opportunity to earn some income, usually near the minimum wage, to the educated unemployed. Participants of the programme were affiliated with various institutions of culture and education, for example, museums.
- ⁴ In folkloristics, it is mostly collection of folksongs and jokes.
- ⁵ Bērziņš worked both for Archives of Latvian Folklore and Museum of War, both headed by Kārlis Straubergs, with whom he had a somewhat close relationship (as far as it can be inferred from an exchange of letters). Some discrepancies appear in documentation and account books related to his work; similarly, some folksongs of his collection cast doubt on field practices and the collector's ethics. His status at Archives of Latvian Folklore changed several times during the interwar period, representing positions of freelance co-worker, reserve employee and the like. It persists also during the war – Bērziņš works at Archives as an archivist of second degree (wage 225 roubles) during the Soviet occupation in 1940–41, and archivist (wage 95 German Reichsmarks) during following German occupation, until going into exile to Sweden in 1944 together with Straubergs and Alfrēds Kvēle. The latter, accompanying Bērziņš on some projects and trips in late 1930, had also made some suspicious contributions to collection of Latvian folklore, going as far as most likely inventing informants from some distant districts of Latvia (Vīksna 2013)
- ⁶ Quoted from Grafenauer 1937: 281.

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“THIS CHILD HERE WON’T SHED TEARS OF DREADFUL FRIGHT, ’CAUSE HE’S NOT CAUGHT BY DEVIL’S MIGHT” CHANGE AND STABILITY OF CHARMS AGAINST FRIGHT ILLNESS: A HUNGARIAN PERSPECTIVE

Judit Kis-Halas

This article presents the initial stages and the planned further developments of a research on Hungarian curative charms against fright illness. Based on a rich and interesting database of healing and curative folk beliefs, rituals and texts, the research aims at exploring the charms and the charming rituals from the perspective of medical anthropology. The analysis is focused on the phenomenon of fright-illness (*ijedtség*) and its verbal magical treatment, on the basis of emic perceptions. While this research will develop and progress, the current article gives a general introduction to the Hungarian terminology on fright-illness in comparison to similar culture-bound syndromes in Central Europe, and also introduces the most prominent of the charms, in Hungarian with English translation.

Key words: fright-illness, popular medicine, culture-bound syndromes, curative charms, charming practices, healing ritual, Central Europe, Hungary.

INTRODUCTION: THE FRIGHT-ILLNESS

In their 1984 monograph on the Mexican folk illness called *susto*, i.e. fright, Rubel, O’Neill and Collado-Ardón make a clear distinction between disease, illness and sickness in order to point at the different approaches of allopathic medicine and cultural anthropology in terms of health issues (Rubel, O’Neill, Collado-Ardón 1984: 245). In the authors’ interpretation ‘disease’ designates the etic perspective of the medical register, as it considers pathological processes and objective indications of changing health status. By the application of the term ‘illness’, however, the focus is shifted to the individual’s, that is the victim’s, perceptions and descriptions of discomfort. According to an earlier study by Arthur Rubel illness is not only a medical but a cultural and social phenomenon as well, since it means a complex of “syndromes from which their

culture provides an aetiology, a diagnosis, preventive measures, and regimens of healing” (Rubel 1964: 268). Finally, the notion ‘sickness’ refers to the social group’s acknowledgements and responses to one of its member getting ill. In this respect both latter categories represent the emic perspective of health concerns within a social group, what is more, they even shed light on the relationships between health understandings and values, beliefs and social norms of the given culture.

It is obvious that fright is not a single culture-bound condition, on the contrary, similar syndromes have been reported of and described among several cultural groups throughout the world, such as Latin America (Costa Rica, Haiti, the Dominican Commonwealth, Peru), the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Iran, and, last but not least Europe. However, in her more recent essay on *sésisma* (fright-illness) in Dominica, Marsha Quinlan stresses that variegated interpretations of the syndromes have been created by various cultural and social environments (Quinlan 2010). In this respect she refers to the glossary of culturally specific illness expressions compiled by Simons and Hughes (1986), which is based on the comparable aetiology and symptoms of the illnesses. They consider fright as a separate taxon, which incorporates ‘diagnostic entities’ (Simons 2001) from various cultures, however, these are all common in blaming the illness on a traumatic experience of shock. Accordingly, fright-illness (emic, individual) or fright-sickness (emic, group) is an ethnomedical category that describes certain psychiatric syndromes of persistent distress.

The detailed title of the present paper indicates that I have also adopted the distinctive approach by medical anthropology, and call fright an illness or sickness, because I do intent to produce a later analysis of the phenomenon on the bases of emic perceptions. From this point, I will refer to fright-illness or fright-sickness simply by fright, which is equivalent to the most widespread Hungarian term ‘*ijedtség*’. Nevertheless, so far medical anthropological description of the syndrome has been incomplete due to several factors.

The present analysis is based on a 959-item corpus on the healing methods of fright-illness in the Folk-Belief Archive (FBA) of the Ethnographical Institute of the Hungarian Academy Sciences. The Archive consists of publications and yet unpublished collections of folk belief from the Hungarian-speaking areas in the Carpathian Basin between the late 1870s and 2005. It is currently being processed digitally and arranged into indexes of belief motifs and catalogues of belief narratives by a research team lead by Professor Éva Pócs, and deposited at the Department of European Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of Pécs University (Hungary). In the archive belief narratives are arranged into various thematic groups, and fright illness, along with the evil eye, are the two

major sub-groups of supernatural illnesses. Due to the extreme heterogeneity of my data in terms of length, narrative genres, quality (which is mostly determined by the collector's attitude), the present study cannot aim a complex medical-anthropological introduction of fright-illness in Hungary. The scarcity of contemporary, empirically collected data is insufficient to grasp the entire range of the various understandings, interpretations and even explanatory models along with the social context from a synchronic perspective. However, the broad timespan of 125 years, also the extremely detailed coverage of the entire Carpathian Basin proved to be particularly suitable for a typological examination of healing methods including verbal magic, and studying fright-illness from geographical, comparative and historical (diachronic) perspectives.

TERMINOLOGY AND SEMANTIC FIELDS

Drawing from the chart of the emic terminology (Table 1) it is obvious that *ijedtség* and its dialectal variants far exceed those, which refer to epilepsy and other related psychiatric syndromes. Nevertheless, it is hard to decide, whether this outstanding terminological homogeneity is due the uniform questionnaires used by the three nationwide surveys to collect various data on folk life during

Table 1. Hungarian (emic) terminology.

Hungarian (emic)	English equivalent ('literal')	Number of Cases
<i>ijedtség / ijedés / ihedség / jettség; félés</i>	fright; fear	938
<i>frász</i>	epilepsy / cramps (from the German 'fraisen')	4
<i>nehézség</i>	epilepsy ('heavy weight')	4
<i>hideglelés</i>	chills	4
<i>rossz betegség</i>	epilepsy ('bad illness')	2
<i>rossz lapulás</i>	fright ('bad cower')	2
<i>nyavalya / ~törés</i>	epilepsy / epileptic seizure ('malaise' / 'grinded by malaise')	2
<i>szívbjaj</i>	fright ('heart disease')	1
<i>epilepszia</i>	epilepsy	1
<i>meg van verődve</i>	evil eye ('beaten')	1

the 1960s and 1970s in Hungary and in Hungarian speaking areas in the Carpathian Basin. These included enquiries about the most common folk-illnesses, thus informants often reported about fright, too. Despite the unifying effect of the questionnaires, we may draw some conclusions. In the first instance, a slight interrelation of the semantic fields of fright, epilepsy and the evil eye is observed as these concepts are occasionally reversed in emic context. Secondly, Hungarian emic terminology for fright suggests that these syndromes are sometimes associated to disorders of the human heart. It is worth noting that in contemporary colloquial use the most common expressions of getting frightened or shocked still evolve this tendency: fright is *szívdobogás* (= 'heartbeat'), the one who is shocked *szívdobogást kap* (=one's heart is beating faster), or *megáll a szívverése* (his / her heart stops beating). It suggests that fright-illness is located in the human heart in certain emic interpretations.

HEALING METHODS AND PRACTICES

On the basis of statistical overview it is apparent that the 40 main thematic groups encompass the entire range of all possible healing methods in folk medicine (Table 2). The great variety of healing practices reflects that fright must have been, and it still is, one of the most widespread folk-illnesses in the past 150 years. Despite the relative heterogeneity some remarkable trends of healing fright-illness can be established. It is striking that out of the 155 different curing methods, those, where water (or other liquid substance) is applied are dominant. The shocked person is either given a drink of cold water, or his / her face is washed, or sometimes he / she is sprinkled with it. Among the various baths we find a few with herbs, such as thyme (*Thymus genus*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), elderberry flowers (*Sambucus nigra flos*), spurge (*Euphorbia genus*), and betony (*Betonica officinalis*). Baths containing nine solid components (e.g. nine pieces of iron, nine chips of wood, nine different kinds of plants), or the blends of nine springs (wells) were also common. However, the most widespread of "watery" curing methods is a particular divinatory-healing practice, the so-called *lekanomantia* (that is divination by lead) or *ceromantia* (that is divination by wax), which has ancient roots. During the process molten lead / tin / wax is spilled into a bowl of cold water. The shapes of the solidified metal or wax pieces reveal the circumstances of the shocking event and / or the features of the very person who is possible to put the blame of causing fright. A less common version of the previous method operates with egg-white instead of metal or wax. In this case, the figures created by the egg-white mixing with water convey the required information.¹ There is another procedure, which

follows a somewhat similar logic: three / seven / nine pieces of ember (that is hot charcoal) are casted one by one into a glass or small bowl of water. Before dropping each piece, a list of potential fright-causing agents (human, animal, object, occasion) is enumerated by the healing person. After whichever name the piece of ember sinks, that one is in charge for the shock. It is worth noting, that the same diagnostic procedure has been recently, and in remote areas it still is, the most common way to diagnose and heal the evil eye all over in Central and Southern Europe, along with the entire Circum-Mediterranean and the Middle East, as is pointed out by Éva Pócs (Pócs 2004: 419–422). It makes clear that the overlap between fright and the evil eye syndromes appears not only at the semantic level but in terms of their healing practices as well. Although here I do not intent to discuss the whole range of healing methods in detail, there are two aspects I would like to highlight. Besides a universal wet-dry / life-death opposition considered by Dundes and later by Pócs (Dundes 1981: 257–312, Pócs 2004: 423), I would also relate the dominance of “wet” or “watery” practices to the ancient Greek humoral pathology by Hippocrates.² In my opinion, the humoral system still belongs to one of the most relevant approaches in causation even in contemporary in folk medicine.³ Secondly, the role of water in curing fright can be interpreted on a more general, symbolic level, which implies the universal purificatory aspect of water. There are several cases, when the healing ritual, which involves washing and drinking accompanied by the repetition of long incantations, resembles to the Christian baptismal ceremonies.⁴ This fact implies two further emic explanations of fright-illness, namely soul-loss, and possession. The former has already been propounded by Wikan (1989) while the latter was suggested by Komáromi (2001).

Table 2. Healing methods (main thematic categories) in Hungarian and English.

Hungarian	English
ón / ólom / viasz / tojásfehérje öntés	casting tin / lead / wax
rostaforgatás	turning the sieve
víz itatása	water to drink
fürdő, lemosás	Bathing
meghintés vízzel	sprinkling with water
szenes víz készítés	casting ember (evil eye)
füstölés	smoking
vízmérés	measuring water
vörös színű folyadék itatása	drinking red liquid
vizelethajtás	using a diuretic agent

emberi koponya alkalmazása	using a human skull
állati szervek alkalmazása	applying animal organs
egyéb külső gyógymódok	other external methods
vissza-ijesztés	counter-shocking
beteg főzése	cooking the patient
lakóház tartozékainak használata	using parts of the dwelling (roof, etc.)
vér tisztítását szolgáló eljárások	methods of purifying the patient's blood
beteg szájába tett tárgy	object held in the mouth
etetés	food / feeding
beteg átbújtatása	ducking the patient under something
beteg be- / letakarása	covering the patient
amulett	amulets
beteg ruhadarabjainak használata	using the patient's robes
szómagia (kizárólag)	verbal magic (exclusive)
betegség átvitele (állatra, növényre)	transferring the illness to an animal / plant
beteg megnyugtatósa	calming the patient
ijedtség "kihordása"	"carrying fright out"
köpés	spitting
mérés	measuring
szentelmények használata	consecrated paraphernalia
földre fevés	lying on the ground
lenyalás	licking
letörlés	wiping
beteg körbejárása	walking around the patient
keresztvetés	making the sign of the cross

Table 3. Healing with water.

Healing with water	Number of cases
Casting wax / lead / egg white into water	443
Casting ember / charcoal into water	71
(Cold) water to drink	59
Red coloured drink	6
Bath	43
Measuring water	3
Sprinkling with water	3

Table 4. *Healing with verbal magic.*

Healing with verbal magic	Number of cases
Church benediction / exorcism (Roman Catholic or Orthodox)	7
Shouting fright out	1
Patient named by a stranger	1
Unknown charm / prayer	7
Canonised / church prayer	22
Charming	9

3. THE ROLE OF VERBAL MAGIC IN THE HEALING PROCEDURE

The fifty pieces of data about the exclusive use of charming in the healing process suggest that the role of verbal magic is crucial, either the application of canonised church prayers or the use of incantations is concerned. (The most prominent examples are included in Appendix 2.) In 41 cases, that is 82% of the total amount of data, prayers of the former group are mentioned, including the most common Catholic and Protestant prayers, such as The Lords' Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, The Apostles' Creed and the Angelus. It is remarkable that several informants emphasise the intentionally improper way of uttering the canonized texts during the healing process. It is not uncommon that the closing 'Amen' is omitted, or the prayer is said backwards. The collectors' field-notes and comments are usually silent about the reasons for this practice, except for a single case. It has been recorded among Hungarian settlers from Moldova (now Romania) in 1960, by Vilmos Diószegi, the Hungarian folklorist and ethnologist. Here the informant refers to the curate's opinion about the importance of distinguishing between proper (that is Christian) and superstitious ways of praying and acting in general: "The curate said that it was allowed to cast lead, but we should not pray neither cross ourselves meanwhile." Lábnik (Vladnic, Bacau County, Moldova), Romania, (Diószegi 1960: 84–92.) Of course, this attitude has entirely changed when a legitimate religious figure, namely a Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox priest, carries out a healing ritual, very often in the form of church benediction, as revealed by the 7 cases in the database.⁵

Out of the 9 data, which provide us the more or less full texts of verbal magical activity, we learn of 6 more or less complete incantations (Appendix A/1–3; 5–7.) and an apotropaic curse-formula (Appendix A/4). There is one case, when a mother wants to get rid of the fright-illness by carrying her sick baby to nine

houses in the village, and telling there the people that her “child is suffering from heavy illness” (Menyhe, Nyitra County, Mechenice, Slovakia, FBA 645). Finally, a narrative tells that the frightened baby is held above a well while the mother is counting backwards from nine to one (Putnok, Heves county, FBA 764). Curative methods applying water are reflected in the charm texts, too, for either evolving the motif of drinking (holy water or even Christ’s blood) (see Appendix A/2, 3, 5), or in the use of incantations that usually belong to the “evil eye text-repertoire” (see Appendix A/6).

The overlap between the evil eye and fright is indicated by the shared use of *Encountering the evil B – The baby Jesus has been injured by the evil eye, and then he is healed* charm-type⁶ (see Appendix A/1) on the one hand. On the other hand, further associations between the two phenomena can be detected, when an updated version of a particular historiola, which characterizes mostly the evil eye charms, turns up in charm texts against fright. It recalls Mary healing the baby Jesus with the assistance of a saint (usually Saint John the Baptist), who brings water (see Appendix A/3).

Charming as part of a complex healing and divining ritual, namely casting wax or lead, is far more common than the exclusive use of verbal magic. Drawing on the entire 443 pieces of data, we may conclude that this particular diagnostic procedure accompanied by charming is the healing method par excellence for fright-illness.⁷ Nevertheless, the general lack of charm texts in the collections is remarkable. It must be due to the collectors’ attitude, since most of them report only of the act of charming within the healing ritual, and they neglect to specify the prayer or incantation. Furthermore, the relative small amount of recorded charm texts may reflect the widespread belief that the charm would completely lose its magical power by revealing it in public.

The archive includes altogether 24 data regarding lead / tin / wax pouring rituals where the texts of charms were also recorded. Most of the epic charms (6 examples) belong to the various categories of the *Encountering the evil*-type, either with Jesus, the Virgin Mary, Saint Peter, Saint Margaret of Antioch or the sick person as main protagonists. They meet three white woman (Appendix B/14), three Jewish maidens (Appendix B/3), Satan (Appendix B/11), dragons (Appendix B/5), a huge serpent (Appendix B/6). These charm texts and a further two cases, when even the informants call the particular charm as “the prayer used for healing the evil eye” reflects again the intersection of the two complexes, namely of that of fright-illness and the evil eye.⁸ However, considering all the 24 charms, none of them could be assigned to fright exclusively, as a characteristic charm-type applied in the healing process of this particular illness. In my opinion it suggests, that fright-illness, as a separate taxon of psychiatric syndromes could have appeared only recently, that is in

the past 150 years. It is a relatively young phenomenon in contrast to the evil eye, where healing methods involve a rich variety of specific charms, which I consider as a definitive proof of temporal priority.

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

Although the first step by establishing the database has already been taken, the present paper is still rudimentary. For the time being data-evaluation has enabled a general introduction of the phenomenon (fright-illness), a somewhat more detailed description of verbal magic applied during the healing ritual, and, finally, the careful formulation of some hypotheses that assign the directions of future research.

APPENDIX: CHARMS IN THE HEALING PRACTICE OF FRIGHT-ILLNESS (HUNGARIAN TEXTS WITH THEIR RAW ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS)

APPENDIX A. Exclusive use of prayers / charms

1. Szamosbecs (Szatmár County; North Eastern Hungary), collected by Pál Debreceni for the Hungarian Folk-Belief Topography, FBA 507

The woman [the healer] laid her hands upon the child's head, or upon her / his bonnet [if the child was not present], and this way she recited the secret prayer. The charm could be repeated even two or three times. It was forbidden to disclose the prayer to strangers, since it [the prayer] would lose its power. Yet, I have managed to learn one of these prayers.

Elindula asszonyunk Mária Jeruzsálem kertjébe,
vivé a kis Jézuskát az ölében.

Elő találának három apró szentek.

Ölelék, csókolják, a miféle vízben.

*Our Lady Mary started off to the Garden of Jerusalem
carrying baby Jesus in her lap.*

They met three of the Innocents,

They were hugging and kissing him all over, in whatever water.

2. Tiszapalkonya (Borsod County North Hungary), collected by Géza Csorba for the Hungarian Folk-Belief Topography, FBA 544

The following prayer is recited three times [that is nine times during the entire healing procedure], along with The Lord's Prayer.

Uram és Istenem, segíts engem az én munkámban,
igaz az Isten szava, igaz az ő mondása, annak kell bételjesedni.
Ébredj (nevén szólítja a gyermeket),
vegyél szentlelket, igyál vért, maradj meg az igaz hitben,
mint a Jézus Krisztus megmaradt a magas keresztfán. Ámen.

*My Lord and God, support me in my work,
God's word is true, his saying is true, and that should come true.
Wake up [the child is called by her / his name], take the Holy Spirit,
drink blood and keep the true faith,
like Christ kept [hanging] on the high cross. Amen.*

3. Mezőkeresztes (Borsod County, North Hungary) – FBA 544

[...] the following prayer had to be said while laying a hand upon the child's heart.

Uram Jézus Krisztusom
Egy (X) nevű nő, Néked szól
Igyál szentelt vizet, maradj meg az igaz hitben,
mint Krisztus urunk is megmaradt a keresztfán az igazaknak haláláért.

Jeruzsálem kapuja, kijöve rajta asszonyunk szép szűz Mária
karján a kised Jézussal,
egyet lépett, kettőt lépett,
a harmadik lépésben megijedt,
szívében, szíve gyökerében, ezer tetemében,
jer jer Keresztelő szent János, kapd az arany csészét
öntsd a Jordán vizébe, melyből az ijedtség kimenjen,
mint az Atya Ur / Isten is megparancsolta.

*My Lord Jesus Christ,
A woman called X is calling You,
Drink holy water, remain in the true faith,
like Our Lord Christ remained on the cross for the death of the True.
Our Beautiful Lady Virgin Mary stepped out the gate of Jerusalem
holding baby Jesus in her arms.
She stepped one, she stepped two.
In her third step she got frightened
in her heart, in the root of her heart, in her thousand particles.
Come, come Saint John the Baptist, grab a golden cup,*

*pour it out into the Jordan, let the fright go out of it
as the Father Lord God commanded.*

*Then The Lord's Prayer should be said three times without any 'Amen'.
Closing prayer: "Christ my Lord, come to me, come to help your mortal
daughter." This prayer should be told three times on three subsequent
evenings after the child fell asleep.*

4. Bodajk (Fejér County, Central Transdanubian Area, Hungary) collected by Béla Temesvári for the Hungarian Folk-Belief Topography, FBA 747

*Távozz innen gonosz lélek, hadd legyen tiszta!
Get away from here evil spirit, let her / him be pure!*

5. Abádszalók (Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County, Central Eastern Hungary)

*Kilencszer ráimádkozni:
Uram Jézus Krisztus, szánd meg ezt a Rozit,
Kelj fel Rozi, állj az Úr elébe.
Igyál szent vizet, maradj meg az igaz hitbe,
mint Jézus Krisztus megmaradt a keresztfán.
Ámen.*

*Pray it nine times:
Jesus, my Lord, pity this Rosie.
Wake up Rosie, and stand in front of the Lord.
Drink holy water, and keep the true faith,
as Jesus Christ kept himself on the cross.
Amen.*

6. Andrásfalva, Bukovina (now Mănești, Romania) (settlers, now living in Kakasd, Tolna County, Southern Transdanubian Area, Hungary), collected by Sándor Bosnyák, FBA 844 (Bosnyák 1984).

*Ptü, kék szem,
ptü, fekete szem,
ptü, zód szem,
szem megverte,
szü megszerette.
Szentlélek Úristen vigasztalja meg!
Ptü [=spitting] blue eye
Ptü black eye
Ptü green eye,
Beaten by eye,*

*Loved by heart,
Be comforted by the Holy Spirit God!*

7. Csanádpalota (Csanád County, South Eastern Hungary) collected by Kálmán Asztalos P. for the Hungarian Folk-Belief Topography, FBA 963

Ilyen gyerek nem fél, nem sír,
mert evvel az ördög sem bír.
Légy hát erős, csontos, velős,
Ne félj a csúf állatoktól, se tűztől, se a pokoltól.
*This child here won't shed tears of dreadful fright,
'cause he's not caught by Devil's might.
Be strong, with bones and marrow,
do not be afraid of ugly animals, neither fire, nor Hell.*

APPENDIX B. Divination by casting lead / wax accompanied by charm

1. Iregszemcse (Tolna County, Southern Transdanubian Area, Hungary) collected by Benjámín Székely for the Hungarian Folk-Belief Topography, FBA 465

The child is mentioned by his / her first name.

Uram és Istenem segéld meg a Jézusom érdeméért.
Kezdetben Ige vala és az Ige Istennél vala és az Ige Isten vala.
Eképpen Zsuzsinak szívéen igen nagy félelem és rettegés van,
de az ezen nem maradhat,
mert Krisztus parancsolatjával,
Szent Péter és Szent Pál a te erős parancsolatodból mondom,
édes jó Istenem, úgy legyen.

*My Lord and God, help her / him for the merits of my Jesus!
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the
Word was God.**

*There is great fear and dread upon Suzie's heart
but they must not remain there!
I tell this along with Christ's command,
along with Saint Peter's and Saint Paul's strong commands!
Let it be, my good God.*

*It is said three times. Then the following prayer is told while laying a
hand upon the [patient's] heart:*

Uram Jézusom vidd el a félelem és rettegés tengerét (Zsuzsiról),
add vissza erejét és egészségét,

Szentháromság nagy Isten
könyörülj rajta Jézus Krisztus nagy nevébe. Amen.
*Jesus my Lord, carry the sea of fright and dread away from Suzie,
Give her strength and health back,
Great God Holy Trinity
have mercy on her,
in the great name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

2. Szatmárcseke (Szatmár County, North Eastern Hungary) collected by Pál Szalay for the Hungarian Folk-Belief Topography, FBA 655

Elindula asszonyunk szép szűz Máriával [sic!],
ím ő édesanyjával a jeruzsálemi [...]
Kézbe véve Jézust ölelték, csókolták,
Vivék az Jordán vizéhez,
ott megmossák őt,
öntik azt a piros márványkőre,
és mondá (a gyermek nevét)
Úgy használjon neki ez a ráolvasás,
mint a Jézusnak a Jordán vizében való megmosása.
Férfi látta süvegében,
asszony kontyában,
leány pártájában,
szem látta,
szívből szerette.
Uram Jézus, könyörülj rajtuk.
*Our Beautiful Lady Virgin Mary,
set off to the Jerusalem [...]
They handed over Jesus,
hugged him, kissed him.
He was taken to the river Jordan.
They washed him there,
and poured it [e.g. the water] upon a red marble stone, (here she says
the child's name)
Let this charm help him / her,
like Jesus was helped by being washed in the water of the Jordan.
A man in his hat looked at him / her,
A woman in her bun [looked at him / her],
A maiden in her headdress [looked at him / her],
the eye looked at him / her*

the heart loved him / her.

My Lord Christ, mercy us!

This text is uttered in a low voice. It must not be prayed out loud otherwise it would not be useful.

3. Tápé (Csongrád County, South Eastern Hungary), collected by Zoltán Polner, FBA 814 (Polner 2002: 111).

Uram Isten, segíts meg!

Felült Jézus a márványkőre.

Arra ment három zsidó lány.

Az egyik azt mondja: Olyan fényes, mint a holdvilág.

A másik azt mondja: Úgy tündöklök, mint a fényes nap.

A harmadik azt mondja: Úgy ragyog, mint a ragyogó csillag.

Urunk Jézus megigézte a három zsidó lányt. [sic! K-HJ.]

Elment Szűzanyánk a Jordán vizére,

Vizet vitt.

Megfüröszttötte az ő szentséges szent fiát.

Kőre öntötte, nem használt.

Mégegyszer elment Szűzanyánk Mária.

Másodszor fekete kőre öntötte.

Fekete lett a föld, ahogy leitta Urunk Jézus igéző vizét.

Úgy igya le ennek a kicsinek is

Az igéző vizét az én imádságom által.

Ember verte, kalap alá,

Lány verte párta alá. (814)

Three Jewish maidens came there.

One of them says 'He is shining like the moonlight.'

The other one says 'He is blazing like the bright sun.'

The third one says 'He is glittering like a shiny star.'

Our Lord Jesus cast the evil eye on the three Jewish maidens. [sic! K-HJ.]

Our Virgin Mother went to the River Jordan.

She brought some water.

She bathed his holy son.

She poured it out upon a stone, it did not help.

Our Virgin Mother Mary went once again.

A second time she poured it on a black stone.

The soil turned black as it absorbed the evil eye water of Our Lord Jesus.

May it do the same with the evil eye water of this little one here due to my prayer.

A man beat him / her [= cast the evil eye on him], let it return under a hat,

A maiden beat him / her, let it return under a headpiece.

God My Lord help me!

Jesus set upon the marble stone.

4. Istensegíts, Bukovina (Țibeni, Romania), (recorded from a settler living in Halásztelek, Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County, Central Hungary), collected by Sándor Bosnyák, BNA 836 (Bosnyák 1984: 38.)

Tin should be cast at the time of the new moon, and on the three subsequent new moons, and tin should be melted nine times on each occasion. It should be cast into the water nine times, and nine prayers should be said.

Kék szem
zöld szem,
fekete szem
megnezte,
szí megszerette.
Szentlélek Úristen,
Hozd vissza a lelket beléje!

*Blue eye,
green eye,
black eye
looked at him / her
heart loved him / her,
Holy Spirit God
bring the soul back into him / her!*

5. Gajcsána, Moldova (Găiceana, Romania), (recorded from a settler living in Egyházaskozár, Baranya County, Southern Transdanubian Area, Hungary), collected by Vilmos Diószegi, FBA 878 (Diószegi 1960: 82.)

While casting tin a cross is made upon the water by the spoon [in which the tin is carried]: 'In the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.' While she is melting tin she is praying Our Lord's Prayer and Ave Maria along with the following words:

Elindult a beteg az útra,
Megtalálkozott a sárkánnyal.
A sárkány a színt elvette,

Ő nagyon megrettent.
Ő – kiabált – hová?
Akkor boldogságos szűz Máriát felkérte,
Hova is menjek?
Én ezzel az ólomval
Megolvasztlak és megsütlek,
A sollóval megszurkállak
S úgy elmenjél tizenhét országon keresztül,
Hol kutyaugatást nem hallasz,
Hol kakasszót nem hallasz,
Úgy eltávozzál.
Maradjon meg tisztán,
Mint Jézus Krisztus
Ki szülte szűz Mária,
Megmaradjon tisztán,
Mint Jézus Krisztus született Szűz Máriától.

*The sick person started up the road,
and met the dragon.*

The dragon took the blush away from his / her face.

He / she got scared.

He / she cried out 'where?'

Then he / she asked the Blessed Virgin Mary: 'Where should I go?'

With this lead

I am melting and burning you,

I am pricking you with a sickle,

Go across seventeen countries,

where the dogs barking is not heard,

the cocks crowing is not heard,

get out of here!

Let him / her be pure

Like Jesus Christ

Born by the Virgin Mary.

6. Gajcsána, Moldova (Găiceana, Romania) (recorded from a settler woman living in Egyházaskozár, Baranya County, Southern Transdanubian Area, Hungary; she learned it from a Romanian woman), FBA 878 (Diószegi 1960: 82–83).

Hétfőn reggel felkelt Kati,
Elindult egy úton,

Egy gyalog úton,
Megtalálkozott
Egy nagy kígyóval.
Fejét elbolondította,
Arcát megsárgította.
Rokojtott nagy szájával
Nem hallta meg senki
Csak a szűz Mária
Hallotta az égből.
Meghallta az ég alján,
Leereszkedett
Jobb kezivel elvette Katit,
Jobb kezivel felvitte az égbe.
Számka,
Szemmel verés,
Számka betegség,
Számka álmából,
Számka apámtól,
Számka anyámtól,
Számka lótól,
Számka kutyától,
Számka farkastól,
Számka
Kilencvenkilenc féle számka,
számka menj ki a fejéből,
számka menj ki a májából,
számka menj ki a veséjéből,
Én a szájamval babonázom,
A nyelvemmel elfújom,
Én a tűzzel elégetlek,
Sallóval megszúrlak.
Elmensz oda,
Ahol a fekete kutya nem ugat,
Ahol a fekete kakas nem szól,
Ott élj,
Vissza se gondolj,
Ott maradj tisztán,
Világosan,
Mint szűz Mária hagyta
A tiszta ezüstöt.

*Katie woke up on Monday,
she started off a road,
she started off a path,
she met a great big snake,
it disturbed her head,
it turned her face yellow,
it screamed at her with its huge mouth,
no one heard that
but the Virgin Mary up in the skies,
she descended from the edge of the skies,
and with her right hand she grabbed Kati,
and with her right hand she took her up to the skies.
Fright ['samca' is the Romanian term for fright-illness]
Evil eye,
fright illness,
fright in a dream,
fright of my father,
fright of my mother,
fright of a dog,
fright of a horse,
fright of a wolf,
fright.
Ninety nine kinds of fright,
get out of her head,
get out of her liver,
get out of her kidney.
I am charming it by my mouth,
I am blowing it away by my tongue.
I am burning you with fire,
I am pricking you with a sickle.
Go [there] where the black dog does not bark,
where the black cock does not crow,
and live there!
Do not even remember,
Stay pure
stay bright
like shiny silver
cleaned by the Virgin Mary.*

7. Szőlősgyula, Ugocsa County (Дюла / Diula, Ukraine) collected by Gyula Nagy, Ethnological Archives of the Museum of Ethnography 2643, BNA 973

Pohárba vizet öntenek és háromszor számolnak: 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Közben tojást törnek, és a beteg feje fölött vízbe eresztik. Megitatják a tojásos vízből, majd az ereszt “csepegőjébe” öntik.

They pour water into a glass and count three times from nine to one. Meanwhile an egg is broken, and poured into a glass of water held above the sick person's head. The patient is given a drink of the water-egg mixture and the rest of it is poured at the “eavesdrip”.

8. Porcsalma (Szatmár County, North Eastern Hungary), by an unknown collector for the Hungarian Folk Belief Topography FBA 974 (EP).

Ne félj, ne rettegj,
Jézus Krisztus sem rettegett a kereszt alatt.
*Don't be scared, don't get frightened,
as Jesus Christ was not scared under the cross.*

9. Galgamácsa (Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County, Central Hungary), collected by Julis Dudás, Ethnological Archives of the Museum of Ethnography 1574, FBA 975

Az ólomöntéssel foglalkozó gyógyítóasszony egy tányér vízbe öntötte a forró ólmot, amire előzőleg két szál seprúcirkot tett keresztbe. Háromszor imádkozott rá, miközben háromszor öntött.

Istenem, Atyám
uram Jézus Krisztuskám,
boldogságos Szűz Mária
adjatok szerencsés órát kezdeni,
szerencsésebbet végezni,
ennek, aki meg van szentelve, Bözsinek
jó hasznára lenni.
Nem csinálom ezt a magam erejéből,
hanem az uram Jézus Krisztusom segítségével,
kihajtom ennek, aki meg van szentelve
és keresztelve, Bözsinek
fejéből, szívéből, lábából
hetven ijedtséget
hetven nyovolyát,
hetven fenét,

hetven nehézséget
szent Szalvatorral és szent Valentével.
Fölajánlom ezen imádságot
szent Szalvatornak, szent Valenténak hét fájdalma,
megijedt anyának, boldogságos Szűz Máriának,
hatodik szent sebére uram Jézus Krisztusnak,
melyek az ő drága vállain voltak.

The old woman, who used to deal with casting lead, spilled the heated lead into a plate of water, upon which she had previously laid two sorghum twigs (from a sweeper) in cross-shape. She prayed three times and she did the spilling three times meanwhile.

*My God, my father
my sweet Lord Jesus Christ,
blessed Virgin Mary,
give me a lucky hour to start,
and an even more lucky one to finish.
Let me help this consecrated one here,
this Bözsi [=Betty, i.e. a nickname for Elisabeth].
I am not doing this by the power of my own,
but by the help of my Lord Jesus Christ.
Out of this baptised and consecrated one here, this Bözsi,
out of her head, out of her heart, out of her feet,
I am chasing
seventy frights,
seventy maladies,
seventy fene [= boils, also appears in the compound word 'lépfene',
which means anthrax]
seventy heavy diseases ['heavy disease' = epilepsy],
with Saint Salvator and Saint Valente.
I offer this prayer to Saint Salvator and Saint Valente,
to the seven sorrows of the scared mother, the blessed Virgin Mary,
to the sixth wounds of my Lord Jesus Christ,
which were on his dear shoulders.
It [that is the whole procedure, J. K.-H.] can be repeated over several
days above different parts of the body.*

10. Hajdúnánás, (Hajdú County, Eastern Hungary), by unknown collector for the Hungarian Folk-Belief Topography, FBA 976

Someone laid his / her hand on the frightened child's head in order to take off the illness. Then he / she said:

Elindulván Krisztus urunk
negyven maltikumokkal,
ötven angyalával,
megtalált egy zsidó lányt,
tőle megijede,
tőle megrettene.
„Eridj Keresztelő Szent János a Jordán vizére,
hozz tüzet,
hozz vizet,
hogy öntsük ónját erre a Lajos fiúra,
hogy ennek szivibe,
sem szive gyökerébe
semmiféle ijedtség
meg ne találtassék.

*Our Lord Christ set forth,
with forty martyrs,
with his fifty angels.
He met a Jewish maiden.
He got frightened of her.
He got scared of her.
Go, Saint John the Baptist, to the river Jordan,
bring fire,
bring water,
let us cast tin for this Lajos boy here,
that no fright will be found
in his heart,
in the root of his heart.*

After praying tin was casted above the heart of the child, whose face was covered. A plate filled with water was placed into a sieve and the sieve was held over the child's body. Hot tin was poured into the plate, and the solidified pieces revealed what had made the child frightened.

11. Gajcsána, Moldova (Găiceana, Romania), recorded from a settler living in Egyházaskozár (Baranya County, collected by Mária Vámos in 1961, FBA 977.

The patient says the following prayer three times in the evening, meanwhile a piece of garlic is hidden under his / her head:

Elindult a nagy Sátán hetvenhét fiával,

hetvenhét lányával
hetvenhét onokájával.
S akkó menyen bé ennek a fejin
s menyen ki talpán
a csontját-bontját issza,
piros vérit hervassza.
“Tér meg, tér meg te nagy Sátán,
hetvenhét fiadval,
hetvenhét leányodval,
hetvenhét onokádval,
menj el a kűsziklákba,
kűsziklába vannak tündérlányok,
menj bé fejiken,
s menj ki talpikon,
s csontja-bontját hánya,
piros vérit igyad,
színyit hervaszd.
S ezt a Rózsát hagyd tisztán,
mind az anyja szülte e világra,
boldogságos Szűz Mária hagyta.

*The great Satan set forth with seventy-seven sons,
with his seventy-seven daughters,
with his seventy-seven grandchildren.
Then they entered through this person's head,
and left through his / her toes,
threw about his / her bones,
drunk his / her red blood,
made his / her face withered.
Return, you great Satan,
with your seventy-seven sons,
with your seventy-seven daughters,
with your seventy-seven grandchildren,
go to the high cliffs,
where the fairies dwell!
Enter through their heads,
and leave through their toes,
throw their bones about,
drink their red blood,
make their face withered.
Let this Rózsa (= Rosie) be so pure,*

*like she was born by her mother,
as it was commanded by the blessed Virgin Mary.*

12. Lábnik, Moldova (Vladnic, Romania), FBA 981 (Diószegi 1960: 85–89).

[...] Miatyánkot, Üdvözlégyet, Hiszekegyet imádkoztak, aztán ajánlást:
Én ajánlom a Krisztus urunk tisztelettyire,
Krisztus urunk milyen tisztán született,
Boldogságos szép szűz Mária
Milyen tisztán kiszülte,
Erre a világra hozta,
Hát könnyörögjön az ő áldott szent fiának,
Könnyörögjön az áldott úristennek
Hogy vegye ki az ő nagy fájásait,
Nagy nyilalásait.

Ezután öntik az ónt a vízbe. Az ónt kilencszer megolvasztják, ezt az ajánlást is kilencszer elmondják. Ha az ón likatos, [a betegnek] nagy betegsége van, nem húzza sokáig, dagadások vannak a gyomrában.

[...] *They prayed Our Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary and Creed, then the following offertory:*

*I offer this for our Lord Christ's honour,
as pure our Christ was born,
as pure he was born by the beautiful Virgin Mary,
let she beseech to her blessed holy son,
let she beseech to the blessed Lord
that he may take his great pains,
his soaring pangs.*

Then tin is spilled into the water. The tin is molten nine times, and this offertory prayer is prayed nine times, too. If the [surface of the solidified] tin is covered with holes, he [the sick one] is very sick, he / she does not live long, [because] there are tumours in his / her stomach.

13. Pusztina, Moldva (Pustiana, Romania), FBA 889 (Diószegi 1960: 84–89)

Levestálba önt kezdetlen vizet, nem beszél senkivel, úgy hozza bé. Kilencszer csorrant belé a tálba. Elmongya az Üdvözlégyet, a Miatyánkot és keresztet vet reá. Az ember le van feküdvé az ágyba és fehérvel le van takarva a szeme egészen. Ha megvan jedve nagyon az ember, akkor megy széjjel [az ólom]. Hogy ne égesse el a kezit, testit, azért van letakarva;

mert nagyon szökdösik. Előbb Miatyánk, Üdvözlégy, aztán elajánlás szűz Máriának, szent lélek úristennek:

Vigasztaló szent lélek úristen
S a boldogságos szűz Mária
Ezt a beteget,
Vegye ki
A szüviből
A karjaiból
A bábuiból,
Az egész csontocskából,
Aggyon neki egésséget
Vigasztalja meg Júzsit.

[...] Öntötték a feje tetejire, jobb fülire, balra, nyakcsigájára, szívire – háromcorig – hátán a farkeresztyire, térgyire, két lábafejire. Ezzel végez. *She fills a soup-bowl with un-started [that is pure, freshly brought, intact] water. She does not talk to anyone while she is carrying it home. She spills out of the water nine times [into the bowl]. Then she prays Hail Mary, Our Father and makes the sign of the cross above [the bowl of water]. The [sick] man is lying on the bed his eyes covered with a white sheet. If one is very frightened, the [molten] lead will spread rapidly. He is covered in order to prevent his hands, his body of the splattering lead. First [comes] Our Lord's and Hail Mary, then an offertory to the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit God:*

*Holy Spirit God, our Comforter,
and Blessed Virgin Mary,*

[...]

Let them taken this [illness]

out of his heart,

out of his her arms,

out of his her limbs,

out of his her bones.

Give him good health,

Comfort him!

[...] *It [molten lead] was spilt over the top of his head, his right ear, then the left one, his neck, his heart, his backbone, his pelvis, his knees, and finally his angles, three times each.*

14. Lábnik, Moldva (Vladnic, Romania) FNA 884 (Diószegi 1960: 83–91)

Elindula Krisztus urunk szent Péterrel,
Megtalálkoztak három fehér asszonval.

Három fehér asszon megnézte,
Szűből megszerette,
Vígasztaló szentlélek úristen
Vígasztald meg.
Térj meg, térj meg
Hetvenhétféle betegség,
Fejiből,
Füleiből,
Hátából,
Mejjiből
Szíviből,
Derekából,
Hasából,
Lábujjiból,
Minden hét izig való csontjából,
Menjen el fekete tenger fenekibe,
Magos kőszikla tetejibe,
Ott legyen helyik,
Nyugodalmik
Betegségeknek.

Háromszor mondja, háromszor önti a kanálból az ónt, összesen ki-
lencszer.

*Our Lord Jesus Christ set forth with Saint Peter,
they met three white women.
The three white women gazed at him,
they loved him from their heart,
Comforting Holy Spirit God,
comfort him!
Get out, get out
you seventy-seven kinds of illnesses,
from his head,
from his ears,
from his back,
from his chest,
from his heart,
from his waist,
from his stomach,
from his toes,
from his bones up to its the seventh tiniest parts,
Go to the bottom of the black sea,*

*to the top of the high rock,
let them find their place there,
let them find their rest there,
these illnesses.*

He says is three times, and casts tin three times by each praying, that is altogether nine times.

15. Áldomás pataka, Gyimes region (Ghimeș-Făget, Romania) FBA 932 (Antalné Tankó 2003: 72–73)

Én es szoktam szükség esetén önt önteni és egy erőst régi imát szoktam mondani, amit az én nagyanyámtól tanoltam és nagyanyám pedig az ő nagyjától. Leírta nekem egy papírra és megtanultam és amikor önt öntök elmondom: Istennek szent fia, ki szálltál Az emberiség váltságára, és ott te Fődi létedbe semmitől se féltél, És nem remegtél. /73/ Ezen te szógád vaj szógálód (nevet kell mondani) akire rea olvasunk, semmitől se féjen, ne remegjen, ámen.

I also used to cast tin, when needed, and I am praying a very very old prayer that I learned from my grandmother and she had learned it from her grandmother. She has written it down for me, and then I learned it, and when I cast tin, I pray like this: Holy Son of Holy God, who descended for our salvation, and in your earthly life you were not scared of anything, you were not trembling, may this servant or servant maid of yours (here the name should be said) be not scared and trembling of anything.

16. Áldomás pataka, Gyimes region (Ghimeș-Făget, Romania) FBA 933 (Antalné Tankó 2003: 72–73)

[...] Istennek szent háromsága,
a te nevedbe hívom,
Mutasd meg, hogy mitől jedett meg a gyermekem.

Utána el kell mondani három Miatyánkot. Addig kell önteni az önt, amíg szű alak ki nem öntődik.

[...] *Holy Trinity God,
I am calling it in your name,
Show me, what has made my child frightened.*

Then The Lord's Prayers should be prayed three times. Tin is spilled until the shape of a heart is formed.

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NOTES

- ¹ Some early modern Hungarian examples of the same divinatory procedure have already been observed in witch-trial documents. Apart from healing fright illness this method was more often used to divine about lost property, hidden treasure or lost people, see Kis-Halas 2004: 286–289, Láng and Tóth G. 2009: 30.
- ² The same conclusion has been drawn by several studies discussing fright illness in Latin American, South European (Sicilian), Yemen and North Balinese communities, see Farmer 1988, Napoli 2008, Quinlan 2010, Meneley 2003, Wikan 1989.
- ³ While Dundes combines the universal wet-dry / life-death scheme with the idea of 'limited goods' in his interpretation of the evil eye phenomenon, Pócs is more careful about any absolute explanations in her analysis 20 years later. She regards the evil eye as one of the several interpretative systems applied either for personal calamities or social disasters in early modern societies and later in smaller peasant communities (Pócs 2004: 426–427). In my opinion fright seems to be very similar to the evil eye in terms of function, too, and I tend to regard it as another explanatory system for misfortunes. My argument is largely supported by the comprehensive and fully detailed survey on folk-healing practices in Békés County in the post-war period by Andor Oláh (1986).
- ⁴ The motif of drinking holy water or Christ's blood, as found in few charm texts, amplifies the baptismal association even more (Appendix A/2, 3.) A rather rare, but not uncommon practice of giving a reddish-drink, sometimes prepared from the dried blood of an animal's heart, to the frightened one might also be linked to the blood-motif. See FBA 279 Orosháza, Békés county, collected by Gyula Nagy for the Hungarian Ethnographical Atlas in 1959.
- ⁵ Roman Catholic priests are mentioned in 4 cases, while Orthodox praxis is reported about in 3 cases, the latter are from Easter Hungary and Romania.
- ⁶ According to Éva Pócs's typology on Hungarian epic charms. The major sub-types are listed in Pócs 1985 II: 470–476. Hungarian charms applied for healing the evil-eye are thoroughly analysed by Pócs (2004).
- ⁷ A detailed comparative analysis of the divinatory method encompassing Central Europe, along with its most recent applications is provided by Kis-Halas 2008.
- ⁸ Lábnik, Moldva (Vladnic, Romania) FBA 892; Beregújfalú, Bereg County (*Берегуйфалу* / Berehujfalú, Ukraine) FBA 940.

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BOOK REVIEWS

James Kapaló, Éva Pócs and William Ryan (ed.), *The Power of Words: Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe*, Budapest & New York: Central European University Press, 2013, 325 pp. ISBN 978-615-5225-10-9

In a recent conversation with colleagues, a discussion arose how the studies of verbal magic are “nowadays coming back to fashion”. If the development of a research discipline can be regarded in terms of such ups and downs, then the volume *The Power of Words: Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe* most definitely represents a step upwards. Beautifully presented with a stylish layout and cover, the focused, fresh and well-ordered content from prominent authors forms an important and excellent contribution to the field.

The volume consists of an introduction, followed by thirteen chapters, an index, and information regarding the editors and the authors. The chapters of the book are grouped in three parts, aptly and precisely entitled.

The first part of the volume is called *Genre, Classification, Terminology*. It contains five chapters, dealing with these methodological issues from a variety of perspectives. Here, a number of national research traditions can be seen. Arne Bugge Amundsen discusses the study of charms in Norway, Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart presents a prominent collector of Gaelic charms, and Vilmos Voigt writes about the historical development of the charms terminology in Hungary. Also, Tatiana Agapkina and Andrei Toporkov demonstrate the importance and the complexities of the charm indexes, while Edina Bozóky takes a serious look at the medieval narrative charms and their characteristic features.

The second part of the book is called *Historical and Comparative Studies*. It contains four chapters, dealing with different levels of comparison, and again covering large geographical scope and chronological span. In one of the chapters, Lea Olsan explores medieval English charms’ marginality and centrality in a variety of contexts. Two other chapters present strong Hungarian traditions: Éva Pócs analyses the relations between Hungarian popular charms and church benedictions, while Dániel Bárh compares benediction and exorcism in early modern Hungary. These are followed by Daiva Vaitkevičienė’s examination of the parallels between Baltic (Lithuanian and Latvian) and East Slavic charms.

The third part of the volume is called *Content and Function of Charms*. It contains four chapters, dealing with different aspects of usage and constructive elements of the charms. Here Emanuela Timotin explores the textual motives the Romanian charms against the *năjit* and their manuscript tradition, while Francisco Vaz Da Silva interprets the Portuguese moon charms for sick children in relation to water. The geographical and temporal scope is broadened

again, as Maarit Viljakainen discusses the role of Virgin Mary in Finnish and Karelian birth incantations, while Gábor Klaniczay analyses the power of words in medieval and early modern Hungarian miracles, visions, incantations and bewitchments.

As a final and very useful part to this excellent volume, there is the detailed index, compiled by the young and promising researcher Emese Ilyefalvy.

In a sum, this book gives a fresh and valuable update on the most recent study of charms and charming. The authors come from different generations and different national traditions. Brought together in this volume, they all provide richness of perspectives, approaches, methods and opinions. Each chapter is a well-focused and serious examination of a particular aspect of verbal magic. Taken all together, these research pieces lead to a fascinating journey into the multi-leveled and multi-faceted world of charms and charming. In this book, the key notions are variety and potential. The variety comes as a multitude of national traditions, historical periods and angles of analysis. The potential is guaranteed by the chapters, which not only contribute to the field, but also give reference and inspiration for further research.

The volume *The Power of Words: Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe* comes from a long, vivid and fruitful tradition of research of verbal magic, and represents the next successful step in this line. This book makes it very clear that the studies of charms, charming and charmers is progressing well and at a steady pace. Not surprisingly, it is published by Central European University Press, well-known for its focus on high-quality interdisciplinary scholarly production.

Svetlana Tsonkova

CONFERENCE REPORT

**“FOLK NARRATIVE IN THE MODERN: UNITY AND DIVERSITY”.
CHARMS SYMPOSIUM, THE 16TH CONGRESS OF
THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR FOLK NARRATIVE
RESEARCH
(JUNE 25–30, 2013, VILNIUS, LITHUANIA)**

After a first promising conference in 2009 in Athens, this meeting in Vilnius represents the second occasion on which the Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research has organised a section dedicated to the study of charms. Thanks to its large number of participants and variety of topics, approached during seven sessions, this conference was far more successful.

The first session of the Symposium was entitled ‘Verbal Charms in Practice’. Three papers were dedicated to medieval English and Irish charms (Lea Olsan, ‘From Literary Text to Performative Ritual’; Ilona Tuomi, ‘This is sung every day about your head against headache’ – Parchment, Praxis and Performance of Charms in Early Medieval Ireland’; Ciaran Arthur, ‘Ploughing through Cotton Caligula A VII: Establishing Connections between the *Heliand* and the *Æcerbot* through Incantation’), while Svetlana Tsonkova gave a comprehensive presentation of medieval and early modern Bulgarian charms (‘Usage, Interaction, Status: Medieval and Early Modern Bulgarian Verbal Charms on Paper and in Practice’). It is worth noting that Lea Olsan’s paper, which focused on the transfer of literary texts (mainly by Latin poets) into medieval Anglo-Saxon charms addressed a problematic topic, which to date has mainly be approached only by specialists on Greco-Roman magic.

Contemporary Gagauz, Alutor, Lithuanian, and Meitei charms and practices of charming were brought into discussion in another session (James Kapaló, ‘She read me a prayer and I read it back to her.’ Miraculous Literacy, the Mother of God and the ‘Reading’ of Charms amongst the Gagauz’; Yukari Nagayama, ‘Protective and Harmful Charms of Native People in Kamchatka: Tradition, Practice, and Transmission’; Daiva Vaitkevičienė, ‘Charming as a Social Practice in the Lithuanian Community in Belarus’; Rajketan Singh Chirom, ‘Chupsa Moithemba: A Tradition of Charming among the Meiteis of Manipur’). If contemporary Gagauz and Lithuanian charms and the practice of charming are better known in contemporary scholarship thanks to Kapaló’s and Vaitkevičienė’s

recent publications,¹ Nagayama's and Chirom's fields were basically unknown to other charms scholars, and so their papers stirred up vivid discussions.

The prominent usage of certain Christian *formulae* in charms and the presence of important Christian figures in charms were discussed by Andrey Toporkov ('The first verse of St. John's Gospel in the magic of Christian Peoples') and Toms Kencis ('St. Peter's Routes in Latvia').

Haralampos Passalis analysed the modifications of a Greek medieval legend in contemporary Greek charms ('From Written to Oral Tradition: Survival and Transformation of St. Sisinnius Prayer in Oral Greek Charms'). As with Passalis, Eleonora Cianci focused on the medieval history of a famous charm type ('The German Manuscript Tradition of the *Three Good Brothers* Charm and Its Development in European Middle Ages'), while Aigars Lielbardis pointed out the sources of Latvian charms ('Oral and Written Tradition of Latvian Charms'). Emanuela Timotin tackled a related problem, and inquired into the question of whether the graphic particularities of charms might disclose if the scribes acquired the magical texts through oral performance or written transmission ('Writing Powerful Words. Codicological Features and Transmission of the Romanian Manuscript Charms').

In the fifth session of the Symposium, Jonathan Roper ('Two Significant Charms Archives Compared and Contrasted') presented aspects of the archives in Dresden and Copenhagen, assembled respectively by Ferdinand Spamer and Ferdinand Ohrt, and insisted on the value of their rich and yet unedited materials on charms. It is highly probable that research in other prominent archives will lead to similar fruitful results. And thus, a larger reevaluation of the archives from this perspective might be very necessary.²

The Slovenian and Croatian charm traditions were given thorough descriptions by Saša Babič ('Charms in Slovenian Culture') and Davor Nikolić and Josipa Tomašić ('Charming Elements in Croatian Folk Prayers'). On the basis of his research in Irish archives, Nicholas Wolfe focused on charms preserved in bilingual manuscripts (English-Irish) and on the context in which these charms were recorded ('Irish Scribal Culture as a Purveyor of Charm Texts, 1700–1850').

Larissa Naiditch focused on the *historiolae* in the German charms, more exactly on the functions of the characters involved in dialogue ('Dialogue in German Charms'). James Kapaló, Haralampos Passalis, and Judit Zsuzsanna Kis-Halas pointed out the variety of charm types against fright; their papers, based on Gagauz, Greek, and Hungarian charms, suggest the topic might interest other specialists, too (J. Kapaló, H. Passalis, 'A Comparative Study of Greek and Gagauz Healing Rituals against *Fright*'; Judit Zsuzsanna Kis-Halas, 'This Child Here Won't Shed Tears of Dreadful Fright, 'Cause He's Not Caught

by Devil's Might'. Change and Stability of Charms against Fright-Disease: a Hungarian Perspective').

The papers in the last session emphasized the variety of sources which can provide valuable information for research on charms: witchcraft trials (Emese Ilyefalvi, 'Healing Charms and Obscenity in the Hungarian Witchcraft Trials'), family collections (Åsa Ljungström, 'Secret Knowledge of the Hidden Books of Magic: Narrativity and Materiality Recycled in Family Lore, Disciplinary History, Local History and Novels'), and the Internet (Evgeniya Litvin, Anna Kozlova, 'New Forms and Strategies of Feminine Magic').

The papers presented during the Symposium often revealed the specific features of local charm traditions or revisited classical topics in charm research, such as the history of certain charm types. At the same time, they also pointed out a series of aspects which seem exceptionally relevant for the evolution of such research: the role of bilingual contexts for the transmission of charms of a certain tradition; the importance of studying the Christian formulae in charms in connection with their liturgical utilisations; the conditions in which a literary text is performed and vice versa; the role of literacy in the charm transmission; and the necessary reassessment of the archives stemming from the work of folklorists who marked the history of the discipline. For all these reasons, this edition of the *Charms Symposium* might be the most successful meeting of its kind.

Notes

¹ See James Kapaló. 2011. *Text, Context and Performance: Gagauz Folk Religion in Discourse and Practice*. Leiden: Brill; Daiva Vaitkevičienė. 2008. *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai: gydymo formulės*, Vilnius, Lietuvių Literatūros ir Tautosakos Institutas; both titles have been reviewed in early editions of this journal.

² In the Romanian tradition, for example, the recent complete edition of Simeon Florea Marian's monumental *Botanica populară română* (edited by Aura Brădăţan, 3 vols., Suceava, 2008–2010) has brought to light numerous charms collected by this folklorist at the close of the nineteenth century.

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