Charms and Charming

Studies on Magic in Everyday Life

Edited by Éva Pócs

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English language editing by
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Preface

Éva Pócs

The present volume focusses mostly on the verbal aspects of everyday magic, placing in the centre what is perhaps its richest, most varied and poetic manifestation, the verbal charm or *incantatio*. The authors represent many countries and languages from Europe from East to West, but it is no accident that their majority hail from Central and Eastern Europe. These are regions where traditional face-to-face rural communities have survived – sporadically, and randomly – but nonetheless retaining some of the ancient methods of European magical practices, which continue to play a part in numerous areas of daily life. Several of the Eastern European authors of the volume are still able to present and analyse their data on magical practices relying on their own, contemporary field research, and can throw light upon the various functions of verbal charms in everyday life.

The practice of magic has been ubiquitous from tribal societies to modern metropolises all over the world, but verbal charms also belong to a universal or at least pan-European genre: their first surviving examples date back to Homeric epics.[1] The majority of charms – as representatives of a special textual genre transmitted verbatim over the ages – have survived a number of linguistic and religious changes and are repositories of very old traditions. However, verbal charms are not a uniquely oral folklore genre even if our experiences in some parts of Europe with a living folk tradition would tempt us to believe this to be the case. It is well known, that in medieval and early modern Europe charming was a living practice among all social strata. MS and printed relics of written culture, the rich medieval textual legacy found in archives, monasteries and literary sources need to be studied no less than the texts amassed in the folklore archives of Europe or texts that can be found, to this day, in the rural field context. In some places these are known from the living practice of everyday specialists of magic: healers, lay and even priestly practitioners. We can distinguish a characteristically rural "folk" stratum of charm that we find among the

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[1]   See Károly Marót about the remnants of the „magical poetry" in the Iliad, the „bone to bone" motiv of the 2nd Merseburg Charm among them: Marót 1960.

peasantry, which is transmitted orally and is closely tied in with magical practices. There is another layer, which in the distant past was associated with clerical use and in the modern period with use by the nobility or, in Western and Central Europe, by the bourgeoisie, the medium of the transmission of which was literacy. In medieval Europe, the roles of charms were partly played by the official benediction and exorcism rites of the church. The pan-European character of verbal charms and the existence of several textual types all over Europe, alongside local variants, are mostly attributable to these common clerical influences. The various categories of European charms are so closely interrelated that it is almost impossible to tackle any research problem from within the narrow confines of a single people, language, or discipline.

This was the main motivation for publishing a 'pan-European' collection of essays on the subject. Another reason is rooted in the characteristics of research practices concerning verbal charms so far. Researchers' interest in the genre manifested itself as far back as the early 19th century in the works of scholars studying national mythologies and national folklore (e.g. Jakob Grimm, Vuk Karadžić, Arnold Ipolyi), resulting in several national collections and catalogueues focussing on the verbal charms of one or another of these languages and peoples. However, these researchers worked in relative isolation from each other in both geographical and linguistic terms, even though the Finnish series "Folklore Fellows' Communications" did manage to assemble German, Russian, Baltic and Finnish scholars of verbal charms, most of whom followed the methodology of the Finnish historical-geographical school to examine the origin and geographical prevalence of individual textual types, looking for and reconstructing "original" texts.[2] Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, German, Scottish and Scandinavian researchers compiled rich collections of textual types of a given linguistic area or in other cases catalogueued the motifs of particular types.[3] Scandinavian and Finnish researchers, who studied charms from the perspective of theology and the history of religion, created the space for tracing the connections of this textual material to the practice of benedictions and exorcisms pursued by the medieval church. They also threw light upon the interconnections between the orally transmitted peasant traditions and the practices and textual material related to the clergy and its official literacy with respect to both the Western and the Eastern Church. Outstanding among them is the figure of Ferdinand Ohrt who, besides his large collections of Danish charms and prayers,[4] offered peerless examples of the analysis of charms from a modern historical and religious historical perspective in a series of studies and articles produced during the decade starting in 1929.[5]

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[2]   Krohn 1901–1902; Ebermann 1903; Brummer 1908; Mansikka 1909; Christiansen 1914; Harmjanz 1932.

[3]   Majkov 1869; Bang 1901–1902; Carmichael 1900–1971; Hästesko 1914; Ohrt 1917–1921, 1927; Mansikka 1929; Gorovei 1931.

[4]   Ohrt 1917–1921, 1927a.

[5]   Ohrt 1927b, 1929, 1930a, 1930b, 1930c, 1930d, 1931, 1936a, 1936b.

After years of forced silence during WWII, from the 1960's onwards efforts were renewed to present a classification and analysis of the material of various linguistic regions. Researchers placed the emphasis partly on connections with their own historical and clerical traditions[6] and partly on the relationship and interactions between the magical practices and popular medicine of the peasantry.[7] An attempt by Irmgard Hampp to summarise and describe the pan-European characteristics of the genre foundered only due to insufficient familiarity with Eastern European charms.[8] Adolf Spamer outlined the area of prevalence of German textual types found in one of the most popular German books of magic and examined the role which MS and printed books of magic played in the last centuries in the use and transmission of charms. At the same time, he provided the best summary to date about the spread of certain textual types in time and space.[9] Let us mention at least a few of the various national collections, typological attempts and comprehensive studies appearing one after the other since World War II, from Eastern and Western Europe.[10] Besides the above, research into the medieval German, English and French textual material continues unabated[11] even today, as does the exploration of contemporary Lithuanian, Russian, Estonian, Hungarian and Romanian material. These research efforts have resulted in the publication not only of regional readers,[12] but also other large-scale summaries and comprehensive editions.[13] There are efforts underway to produce modern textual analyses based on the latest, pragmatist trends in linguistics,[14] and we are also witnessing the republishing, particularly in Eastern Europe, of 19th and 20th century collections.[15]

In the early 21st century the pan-European map of charms has become increasingly complete and accurate. Jonathan Roper proposed creating international indexes of charms in connection with the publication and classification of the English textual corpus.[16] At the present moment three Russian researchers, Andrey Toporkov, Tatyana Agapkina, Vladimir Klyaus; as well as Jacqueline Borsje from Holland and Emese Ilyefalvi from Hungary are at the forefront of the effort to create, catalogue and index

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[6]   Van Haver 1964.

[7]   Bonomo 1963; Radenković 1982.

[8]   Hampp 1961.

[9]   Spamer 1958.

[10]   Bonomo 1953; van Haver 1964; Grambo 1979; Radenković 1982; Pócs 1985–1986; Lecouteux 1996; Bozóky 2003; Schulz 2003.

[11]   See e.g. Holzmann 2001; Schulz 2003; Olsan 2004, 2013; Bozóky 2013.

[12]   E. g. Agapkina – Levskievskaia – Toporkov 2003; Cristescu 2003.

[13]   See e.g. Klyaus 1997; Vaitkevičienė 2008; Toporkov 2010; Agapkina 2010; Timotin 2010; Kõiva 2011; Pócs 2014; Ilyefalvi 2014.

[14]   Cristescu 2003; Ilyefalvi 2010.

[15]   See e.g. William Ryan's review of the Russian situation in Ryan 2004.

[16]   Roper 2005.

digital archives and to render the national corpuses of verbal charms accessible through electronic channels.[17]

Early in this century, an international organisation was also established to support the growing effort to study charms: The *Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming* was set up under the auspices of the *International Society for Folk Narrative Research* (ISFNR). Members co-operate internationally to organise conferences, publish joint volumes,[18] and an electronic journal called *Incantatio* has also been launched with its base in Tartu.

Our goal with the present volume is to continue and strengthen co-operation among researchers from the various relevant disciplines, who have already been employing a range of parallel and divergent, but complementary methods to study verbal charms, these ancient and distinctive representations of our shared European culture. The majority of these essays are about verbal charms. The collection is subdivided into two parts. Part I highlights the wide range of roles they played in everyday life from healing through threatening witches with the evil eye all the way to charms that repel demons. The final chapter in this section gives us a glimpse into the rich world of the local mythology as it appears in Mongolian ritual poetry. Part II mostly comprises essays that offer phenomenological and theoretical explorations of verbal charm as a genre of textual folklore. The reader will encounter a wide variety of methodological approaches and a broad thematic range such as the generic boundaries of charms, their connections with other genres and clerical benedictions, distinctive textual motifs of charms as a genre; the life of texts, questions related to the birth of oral traditions, the relationship between oral and written texts, variance, transference, reception and dissemination; charming as performance and its relation to non-textual rituals. Three further essays go somewhat beyond the boundaries of the theme of verbal charms and discuss a closely related topic, that of magic tied in with images and objects.

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[17] See Klyaus 1997, 2009; Agapkina – Toporkov 2013.
[17] See e.g. William Ryan's review of the Russian situation in Ryan 2004.
[17] Roper 2005.
[18] Roper 2004b, 2009; Kapaló – Pócs – Ryan 2013.

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Verbal Charms in Everyday Life

A Letter to the "King of the Forest".
Contemporary Magic Practice in Russia

Svetlana Adonyeva

This paper is largely based on our recent fieldwork conducted in Vologda region (*oblast'*) in the Russian North. I selected some examples of stories about wizards that could be of use in this context – stories about their reputation and their practices. One of the magic practices appeared to me so interesting, in respect of the social role of a wizard in the village community, that I decided to limit myself to its description. I want to tell about the magical practice of sending letters to the forest king or *leshyi* discovered by us and our colleagues, ethnographers from the St. Petersburg Institute of Ethnography in the northeast of the Vologda region.[1]

People resort to this magical practice when a human or a domestic animal gets lost in the forest. It should be noted that it is very easy to get lost in the forest of the Russian North. Between settlements widely separated from each other and connected by very few roads, there are forests that stretch for hundreds of kilometers. For example, when, during one of our expeditions, my six-year-old son and my colleague's seven-year-old-son set off for a walk beyond the village, the local people saw this as a threat to their lives.

I came into contact with the magical practice of searching for lost people or animals for the first time in the following circumstances. In 2007, when we arrived in a village in Siamzhenskii District of the Vologda region, we learned that a few days before this a man had disappeared from the village. The man had left home early in the morning and had not returned. He was found dead in the woods a few weeks later. To avoid questions, I should say: his death was not violent. During the weeks of the searches the local people used all available tactics, both rational and irrational. The police and an army helicopter were called in, the villagers scoured the edge of the woods. At the same time, fortune-tellers tried to narrow down the search by their speculations. One of the villagers went to the church in the district centre to ask for special prayers to be

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[1] Stepanov 2009; Safieva and Stepanov 2007.

said and a local witch, as we were told secretly, carried out a special ritual for the safe return of someone lost in the forest. A member of our group, Andrei Stepanov, had been working the previous year in nearby Verkhovazhskii District and he had already heard about this type of ritual and had asked about it in detail. During this critical moment for the life of the village, we ourselves refrained from direct questions about the ritual. Later on, we recorded numerous interviews and the ritual was described both by those who acted as customers and by those who performed it.

Now let us turn to the description of the ritual. Here I am using interviews from our archive, the archive of St. Petersburg State University, as well as the publications of A.V. Stepanov and his personal oral testimonies, since he has been engaged in the research of this topic in the "field" for several years.[2] I will describe the situation, that was be recorded by camera, in which the ritual specialist shows the researcher how she usually performs this ritual. When the actual magic act takes place, however, she never allows witnesses to be present.

So, I will now turn to the ritual itself. If an animal (a cow, a calf, a dog, a sheep) or a human gets lost – they have not returned from the pasture, or have gone into the forest and not returned home in time, the owners, in the case of an animal, or the family, if a person is involved, after they have carried out the usual search turn to a ritual specialist, i.e. a witch.

Here I have to give some explanations, which will be useful to us later on. Our village informants distinguish between two types of witch or wizard. There are those who know some spells and are able, for example, to stop bleeding or to cure toothache. But there are also those who not only "know" magic tricks and texts, but who also know in the sense of "are familiar with", i.e. deal with supernatural powers and it is to them the villagers will go in order to remove a jinx or to get a herdsman's spell. Everybody knows that they can do both "good things" and "bad things". Furthermore, rumour suggests that these wise-folk cannot help but inflict magical damage because of the devils who serve them. And the devils must be kept busy at all times, otherwise they may start tormenting their master. To keep the devils under control, such wise-folk send them "to count the needles on a fir-tree", i.e. ask them to do meaningless work, so they won't be a nuisance.

So, this witch who consorts with evil spirits does the following: she takes a piece of birch bark or paper and, standing beside the chimney of the stove, scribbles something on it with charcoal, as if writing a letter (1). While doing this she pronounces the magic text asking the forest master, the forest king, to return the object that is being searched for.

Let me also explain the magical significance of the locus chosen for the ritual. The Russian stove (2) is often a place where rituals take place. It serves as a communication

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2   Stepanov 2009; Safieva and Stepanov 2007.

device between the human and the spirit worlds. For example, after a funeral people shout into the stove that the deceased is no longer in the house. Here too grandmothers washed babies, creeping into the oven and reading prayers over them. In the same locality, we recorded a story in which one wizard transferred his knowledge to another, also making use of the stove. The initiator stands in the house at the mouth of the stove and speaks "words" into the stove, while the one being initiated sits on the roof by the chimney and "gathers them in".

When the bark letter is ready, it is handed over to the customer. The latter should go to a crossroad or to the place where the person or the animal was last seen, and throw it behind him, back-handed and with his left hand. According to other accounts, the customer can also do this by the gates which separate his yard from the street.[3] This magic ritual has been recorded not only by us, and not only in the XXI century. On the map we can see that it has been recorded in numerous provinces of the European part of Russia. The oldest ethnographical references date to the second half of the 19th century.

I will also to describe a fragment of our video. The woman (she was over 90 years old when this was filmed) shows how she usually performs this ritual. She takes a piece of bark and a piece of charcoal, approaches the stove and scribbles on the birch bark. Her words are not very clear, but, nevertheless, it is noticeable that her speech changes when she is pronouncing the magic text. It speeds up and becomes rhythmic. The final words are pronounced with a rising intonation as if summoning the lost animal:

"I take a piece of charcoal. I'll scribble it down like this. I'll put it here and I scribble it down: 'I, servant of God, Anna, will get up without saying a blessing, will go out without crossing myself-not out by the door , not out through the door, not out by the gate, not out through the gate-out into the deep, dark forest. 'King of the forest, King of the forest, release my little cow, release her and chase her away, send her home as quick as you can'. There are others (i. e. other wise-women) who can get people found ... So that's what I write. Then you throw the paper and say 'Come home as quick as you can'. So, that's what you write. That's all there is to it."[4]

In my title and in the paper itself I have avoided using the real name of this ritual, because it immediately raises considerable astonishment among ethnographers. The local people call it "writing the kabala".

What does the loss of livestock and people in the forests of Vologda region have in common with the secret teachings of Judaism? Where could Russian villagers who grew up under the Soviet regime, have learnt about Kabbalah?

A closer study of the materials allows us to understand that this has nothing to do with the esoteric Jewish tradition. The magical practice of drawing humans or

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[3] ED DTxt07-050_Vol-Verch_07-08-16 ZamiatinaAD

[4] FA DV07_Vol-Verch_001.

animals out of the forest uses as a tool for interaction between people and spirits the old Russian legal practice of the XIV–XVII century – the so-called kabala patents or letters. The word *kabala* came into the Russian language from the Tatars with the meaning of a promissory note. Examples of the business writings of medieval Russia mention both ordinary promissory notes and kabala service patents; under the latter, the interest accrued on a debt should be covered not by money but by service. These were documents arranging property contracts between people, specifically the conditions for loans. Money or property could be provided to the debtor on various terms. Kabala conditions in a loan had their own specific characteristics, entrenched in the Russian language with the idiomatic expression "to fall into kabala", that is to become personally dependent due to an outstanding debt. One person receiving a loan promised to return the interest on the debt through personal service that is to work for the lender. Kabala patents or notes confirmed the existence of such a contract. They were usually drafted by a third person, a representative of the prince or tsar, an official.

How then could this socio-economic and legal practice be transferred to the relationships between spirits of nature and human beings? Let us consider the logic used in these situations, using an example with an animal.

Let's say a calf gets lost in the woods. If it is not found in the usual way, the issue is transferred to a different jurisdiction, i.e. to the department of super-social and super-physical relations of the community. And in the rural community the person responsible for maintaining a permanent relationship with supernatural powers is the witch or wizard. The witch qualifies this event as the loan initiative of the forest spirit. The spirit takes something that does not belong to it, the calf belongs to someone else, some particular person. The witch notifies the forest king that his action is being defined as an entry in a loan relationship. He has borrowed the calf, and will be obliged to pay off the interest accrued for example, by performing some service for the lender. If he does not want to do that, if he does not want 'kabala' relations, he should return what he took as soon as possible.

The communicative act, the addressee of which is the spirit of the forest, is called kabala, i.e. the act of entry into a kabala deal. The actual texts to be pronounced when the wizards are producing the letter might contain any of the following:

> Devil, devil, have your game but give it back.[5]
> Imps, little spirits, throw away my calf.[6]
> It wasn't you who fed my dog, it wasn't you gave my dog a drink, give
> me back my dog.[7]

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[5] FA СямDTxt1-6.
[6] FA СямDTxt1-26.
[7] FA СямDTxt1-91.

Forest king, chase Vitia home, fast as you can, fast as you can.[8]
F... (Effing devil) devil- return our livestock.[9]
Devils, go devilling, imps, go imping. Give our goat back.[10]
Forest devil, return my animal if you took it. If you don't give it back
then I will take you to court and send you to jail.[11]

These are the imperatives or appeals to the forest spirit, sometimes with the use of obscene language. The speaker orders the addressee to return the things sought: to give back, to drive home, to return. The appeal may also threaten the addressee with a court appearance and jail if he does not comply with what is required.

The practice described here allows us to see how the social network of a contemporary north Russian village is organised.[12] Both people and spirits are equal members of this network. The legal owners of peasant households may enter into a socially regulated relationship with the owners of "spaces" (in this particular case with the owner or spirit of the forest) regarding such matters as property and territory. The spirits of the forest as well as of other spaces (the *vodianoi* or water spirit, the house spirit *domovoi*, the bath-house spirit *baiannik* and so on) are not gods. Nobody serves them or sacrifices to them, they are not sacred. They are subject to the same rules as humans. But since they are still not human beings there must be an intermediary between the human and the master of the forest – the witch or wizard, who performs the same function as that performed by a Russian civil servant in the XVII century. Like a notary public, she/he executes the deals and assists in other social and proprietary interactions of the community members, or, like a foreign affairs official files a note of protest as in cases of breaches of international law. Therefore, Russian villagers maintained in the past and still maintain today relations with the metaphysical powers of nature, organizing them through the categories and rules of law. Wizards, who "know things" and "who know or are familiar with spirits", act as their representatives in these relations. This is one of their social roles in the village community.

Abbreviations, Archives

EA – Electronic archive "Russian Everyday Life" (Propp Centre): http://daytodaydata.ru.
FA – Folklore archive of the Philological Faculty of St. Petersburg State University.

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[8]   FA Верх20а-5.
[9]   FA СямDTxt1-122.
[10] FA Сям20-25.
[11] FA СямDTxt1-86.
[12] *Olson and Adonyeva* 2013, 221–254.

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"You *Will* Remember Me":
Witchcraft and Power in Russian Local Society[*]

Olga Khristoforova

Anthropologists rarely consider witchcraft in terms of power.[1] The reason of this, as A. Niehaus put it, lies mainly in the Weberian notion of power. For Max Weber, power meant primarily the secular relations of domination and political institutions. Thus, he overlooked the cultural resources of power, the ground that gave birth and supported its local concepts.[2] More appropriate for anthropological research is the Foucaultian understanding of power. It implies, that power penetrates far beyond the limits of the institutions where it manifested itself directly; rather, it constitutes – mainly in latent or background forms – the fabric of social relations.

This article analyzes the relations between power and witchcraft based on materials collected in Northern Russian rural communities focusing on the patterns of behaviour of those considered to be sorcerers. It is based on my ongoing field research among the Old believers of *Verkhokamie* region (the Urals, Russia) that started in 1999.

Up to the present day in *Verkhokamie* belief in sorcery and its agent – *znatkoi* ('the one who knows' from *znat'* 'to know') or *koldun* (the etymology is rather obscure) persists. This actor cannot adequately be described in terms of the widespread opposition between a witch who receives his/her powers by learning and a sorcerer who possess it from birth. On the one hand, *znatkoi* receives his/her power and mystical knowledge in the course of some special rituals, and this power/knowledge may be represented in belief narratives as a substance or a being. On the other hand, up to the time of initiation, *znatkoi* continue to learn, and he damages other peoples not through his inner evil power, but through some verbal formula (that can be oral or read in the *black book*) as well as some manipulations with objects and potions. Besides,

[1] See, for example Stephen 1987; Rowlands – Warnier 1988; Arens – Karp 1989; Ashforth 1996; Niehaus 2001.
[2] Niehaus 2001: 9.

normally he is a male, because women are not regarded to be sufficiently persistent for the initiation not have enough time to spend learning all the necessary skills. These beliefs generally are typical for the Russian North, while in the South belief in female witches still exists, who possess their abilities from birth and do harm to people with the aid of their evil inner power.

"You *will* remember me" in the Russian Northern tradition is a typical phrase used by *znatkoi*. In many belief narratives recorded in *Verkhokamie*, after he pronounces this phrase, the addressee begins to encounter some health, home, or other problems. Here are some examples.

> I hiccup, I am spoiled, I have an *ikota* inside me [she is possessed by demon.] I am bewitched <…>
> *How come?*
> By words, somehow. There existed *kolduny* long ago. And nowadays it is said they still exist. They spoil a person by words…
> *Do you know who did that to you?*
> Yes, I do. I used to work at a factory… And everything was fine with me. I didn't make any bad quality things… And then mechanics came and said I should use their samples only. I began to use them and somehow made some waste. And this foreman, he *knew* [that is, he possessed the special knowledge, he was *znatkoi*]. He had a girlfriend, a pretty creature. How come she was in love with a person like that? He was all wrinkled, a tiny one, this man she lived with. He bewitched her, that's why she loved him… And it was he who told me: *"You will remember me"*.
> *That was because you made a bad quality thing?*
> Yep. I had no intention. It was an accident. But these people, they cannot tolerate. They trust Satan… Satan suggests them to do this, not to tolerate, to bewitch people. So he bewitched me. It was 1945 or 1946; the War was over.[3]

> I was about seventeen then. Pretty young… I know who bewitched me! Once I was a guest, and I helped to serve drinks. And this man came, I gave him a drink and he said: "Drink yourself." But I could not drink before men! In the past, there were rules… It was not like today. So, I said I would not. There was a big bowl in front of him. And there was my uncle, my dad's brother. He told him "Why don't you drink? Come on, eat and drink. She wouldn't drink before you". That was what he said.

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[3] I.M.B., female, born in 1926; Kezs.; 1999; recorded by O. Khristoforova.

"So, if she doesn't, *she will remember me.*" I had just arrived, and that happened. I think it would have been better to have drunk; I wouldn't have suffered afterwards...[4]

This is a standard plot of narratives on witchcraft, but there are a few records that show another option. Though the phrase is pronounced, nothing harmful happens. Normally this latter sort of story serves to deny someone's status as *znatkoi* in the eyes of a neighbour or the whole village ("he/she only boasts, but can do nothing"). For instance,

this Onisia Petrovna had a husband, the first one, whose name was Egor Timofeevich. He used to boast: "I've got plenty of demons, a lot of them!" Here lives Tonia Petrovna, and me, we are all neighbours, know each other for the whole of our lives, and he tries to… "You are dead! I'll twist you! You'll perish!" And he died in our house, got paralyzed! Apoplexy. We had a party, a feast of some kind. And he died in our place. It was… 28 years ago. And me, I'm still alive…

There was a woman who lived right there, on the corner. There was Arsentii, who had become a widower and he took her as his wife. This Dusia, she never got married before, but had plenty of children. What a quarrelsome woman she was – God forbid! And she also used to scare us: "I *know,* I will bewitch you, if someone contradicts me, he will regret it." And later a close friend of hers, she asked her: "Hey, Dusia, do you really *know?*" – "The hell I know, I intimidate them, they must be afraid of me!"… To my mind, if a person is *znatkoi*, he veils it. Just in case, if he spoils someone, he must cure him afterwards! …And then, the rumors come: "It is him, who bewitched!"[5]

These texts, as well as some other field data lead me to suggest that the phrase "You will remember me" (and its analogues) is one of the key elements, or markers of the *znatkoi*'s model of behaviour.

This model includes some other verbal and non-verbal markers. Among the verbal ones are:
- Suggested *znatkoi* does not speak much; he/she speaks slowly and uses a lot of hints;
- s/he loves to give instructions of mystic/magic nature, and to read the future;
- s/he mutters, mumbles, and talks to him/herself.

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[4] S.F.V., female, born in 1907; Siv.; 1999; recorded by O. Khristoforova.

[5] V.A.G., female, born in 1936; Kezs.; 2004; recorded by O. Khristoforova.

- Among the non-verbal gestures are:
- s/he pats the back, or shoulder of the victim;
- s/he acts strangely, making moves that cannot be explained by the others (tries to enter someone's house or yard without any reason, makes circles inside the house, makes someone go out with him, refuses do drink a refreshment before the host, asks not to stir sugar in his/her *kvass*, etc.).

There are also some typical signs of *znatkoi*'s way of life (mostly unsociability) and appearance (a mop of uncombed hair, dishevelled beard, bushy eyebrows, constantly moving eyes, strange clothes, etc.). They put this person outside of common standards and make his/her appearance correspond to the demonic image typical for the tradition.

Why do *znatkiie* (or observers of their behaviour) construct this image? What makes them look like this? What forms the basis of their traditional image?

The signs of a *znatkoi*'s image (his/her appearance, behaviour, and way of life) can be divided into two patterns: 1) dominant; 2) deviant (bizarre, abnormal). The first one represents the direct demonstration of power, when gestures are aimed at suppressing and subordinating the communicating partner. Dominant gestures and phrases, being accepted and confirmed by a community, result in the elevation of the person's status, and legitimize his/her claims to power.

The use of the deviant pattern (bizarre actions and words that produce the feeling that the person is "out of his/her mind"), at first glance, results in a decrease of social status. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account that mostly people with initially low status (the lonely, poor, breaker of moral standards etc.) tend to use it. Moreover, sometimes they succeed in their attempts to inspire with their abnormal behaviour the feeling of danger and irrational fear in the community; their neighbours start to take them into consideration, express a sort of respect, and thus also acknowledge their symbolic power.

The narratives on *kolduny* may describe not only the two "pure" patterns, but also its combinations. It seems that these combinations only strengthen the suppressing effect. We may regard this wide range of behavioural scenarios as a mechanism that creates the necessary conditions for a suggestive influence on the social milieu of a *znatkoi*. With the status of *znatkoi*, a person receives the authority to impact the others' behaviour. The community regards his/her abilities as supernatural, magic; thus *znatkoi* accumulates around him/herself the topics and motives of the witchcraft discourse and becomes its centre.

So, the people aspiring to the reputation of *znatkoi*, as well as those who have already received it, use the same behavioural patterns. The crucial point that segregates *znatkois* from *samokhvaly* (those who only boast) is the confirmation of their status by the community. Therefore receiving the reputation is not only the result of copying (deliberately or not) some well-known patterns, but the final point in a social interaction in which the community tests the pretender's abilities.

This process of testing includes several elements that are mostly common for the Northern Russian tradition but may have local variations. Among the common motives are:

- Tracing the causal connection between a conflict with a supposed *znatkoi* and the subsequent misfortune;
- identification of any "oddities" in his/her behaviour (the list is open, and limited only by the general frame that may be described in terms of transcending established social norms and borders);
- testing the pretender with some ritualistic maneuvers.

Here is an example of such testing with the negative result.

> And the grandma chequeed him out If he is a *znatkoi*, you should just stick scissors above the door reciting the Resurrection prayer, and he never goes through! The grandma did this, and he went through… And she was pretty sure, I heard this: "Hey, Egor *knows* nothing, I chequeed him out, and he went through! He came and he went". Though he had intimidated us...[6]

A negative result of the testing normally impedes the development of the witchcraft discourse in relation to the pretender, and blocks the narratives about his/her magic actions. Instead, the community uses another narrative form describing him/her as a *samokhval*. This type of narrative has different pragmatic functions. It is important to stress, though, that instead of the definite, consensual outcome of the testing it may lead to an ambiguous result, when one part of the community approves the pretender's status, and the other denies it. These cases are of special interest because they allow us to study in detail the mechanisms of correcting established narrative clichés and inserting new topics and motives in the traditional interpretation of the subject.

To sum up, some local inhabitants use the model described above to change their social status, provoke fear and respect, etc. But the entertainment is quite risky, because they actually try both to form the reputation of a powerful person and at the same time to act as if such reputation was already established. Any mistakes in behaviour, demonstratively exposed or frequent use of the markers of the model, as well as the use of direct threats ("I'll bewitch you!", or "You're dead!") instead of the prescribed verbal formula ("You will remember me"), lead not to rise of the status, but to a contrary outcome: this person's threats are regarded as a bluff, and he himself becomes an object of mockery.

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6 V.A.G., female, born in 1936; Kezs.; 2004; recorded by O. Khristoforova.

List of Abbreviations

Siv. – recorded in the Siva region of the Perm district.

Kezs. – recorded in the Kez region of the Udmurt Republic.

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How to Die More Easily: Charms and Charm Devices on a Person's Deathbed

Evelina Rudan – Josipa Tomašić

One of well-known Croatian folk prayers is a prayer known in different parts of Croatia as Unity,[1] Sacred Numbers (Kuhač), The Prayer of St. Martin,[2] Twelve Apostles,[3] Ten Sayings.[4]

The prayer is written in different areas[5] and in different dialects. It is recorded at different periods of time, from the oldest recorded (St. Sisinnius Amulet[6]) to the most recent in the 20th (Dubrovnik, 1992, a short version[7]) and 21st century.[8]

A recorded version of the prayer in Croatian Glagolitic medieval amulet "is the oldest known Slavic text and is a unique Glagolitic linguistic heritage of European proportions",[9] as is classified by A. Zaradija Kiš drawing on research by M. Pantelić.[10] However, that type of text, as shown in comparative studies by F. Ilešić,[11] has its origin in the song Ehad Mi Yode'a (Who Knows One?) which was a part of the Jewish Haggadah. Some researchers believe that the song came to the Jewish Haggadah from Zoroastrian tradition.[12] It is possible that the song has its origin in Zoroastrian tradition because it was not always a part of the Jewish Haggadah. Encyclopaedia Judaica

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[1]   Kurjaković 1903; Šetka 1954.

[2]   Jardas 1957; Rudan, personal collection, 1997; 2002. See appendix 1.

[3]   Šetka 1954.

[4]   Šetka 1954.

[5]   Cf. Jurić-Arambašić 2001: 166–169; Zaradija Kiš 2004: 224.

[6]   It is a Croatian Glagolitic medieval manuscript that was used as an amulet (for detailed information on the manuscript cf. Milčetić 1911: 198–201; Pantelić 1973: 167–179). The manuscript consists of eleven thematic units. One thematic unit, 10th part of the manuscript, is a prayer Dvanaest riči svetih i pravih [Twelve Sacred Words], the oldest known Croatian version of the prayer. The prayer had prophylactic function and it was prayed as a protection against "all devils, fairies and the moon that harms men and children" (Pantelić 1973: 176).

[7]   Cf. Marks 2011: 121.

[8]   Rudan, collection 2002, complete version. Stipe Botica (2011: 291–297) brings six versions of the song/prayer, all six recorded in the 21st century (from 2001 to 2005) in different areas.

[9]   Zaradija Kiš 2004: 105.

[10]   Pantelić 1973.

[11]   Ilešić 1902.

[12]   Cf. Ilešić 1902: 213; Pantelić 1973: 178.

states that the song "is first found in Haggadot of the 16th century and only in those of Ashkenazi ritual",[13] while the Croatian Christianized version of the text is from the 15th century Glagolitic manuscript. Marija Pantelić says that the source of the Croatian text was probably "a Christian-latin version with Judeo Cabalistic tradition relicts".[14] Some researchers agreed that the Jewish Passover song Ehad Mi Yode'a originated in Germany in the 15th century and that "the Christian theme of the original was changed to one of Jewish content".[15]

That type of text was recorded in Polish, Ukrainian, Italian, French and Slovenian tradition. Some versions (Slovenian) have just two elements different than in the Jewish song.[16]

Both Jewish song Ehad Mi Yode'a[17] and Croatian text have dialogueical structure, questions and answers that enumerates basic religious motifs and truths. After each question comes an answer and the reply to each following question also repeats the previous answers. That kind of repetition creates a special rhythm and has a mnemonic function.

Croatian prayer is structured as a counting-out rhyme[18] of mostly thirteen questions. The counting-out rhyme structure includes an introductory stanza which is repeated every time, a question that includes a different number in repetition and an answer which includes all previous answers (from last to first, in reverse). The answer to the first and the last (thirteenth) question is the same, God himself. Most versions

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[13] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Mircea 2007: 237.

[14] Pantelić 1973: 190.

[15] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Mircea 2007: 237.

[16] Ilešić 1902: 212.

[17] The song Ehad Mi Yode'a (Who Knows One?) consists of 13 stanzas and every stanza starts with a question (Who knows one?.. Who knows two?.. Who knows thirteen?). The reply to each following question also repeats the previous answers and all the answers are repeated in the last stanza, the thirteenth question: Who knows thirteen? I know thirteen. Thirteen are the attributes of God; twelve are the Tribes of Israel; eleven are the stars in Joseph's dream; ten are the Commandments; nine are the months of pregnancy; eight are the days of circumcision; seven are the days of the week; six are the books of the Mishnah; five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs: Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel; three are the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Two are the tables of the Covenant; One is our God in haven and on earth. Encyclopaedia Judaica brings information that the aim of the song "was to keep children awake until the end of the *seder*" (237) and that sometimes "the song is chanted responsively: one person, usually the leader of the *seder*, asks the question, and the whole company answers, each person responding as quickly as possible in an effort to finish the answer first" (237). The song today has great performance possibilities: it has a modern dance version, a choral performance version, dance music version, etc.
(see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1XApoSRaaY; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6jtLtiWj4I; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoMu__m-DjM).

[18] The text is sometimes classified as a counting-out rhyme, a cumulative song with educational purposes. Its dialogical structure helped children in memorizing common Christian truths. However, available data show that it was used as a prayer with magic effect and even though it has a dialogical structure, the prayer is always prayed by one person. Available data as well as field research show that the person saying the prayer does not intervene the text, does not try to make sense of the words he/she is saying but is saying everything the way he/she heard it even if he/she does not understand some verses. That fear of intervening the text is a part of charm function of the text because the power of the words is more important than understanding the words.

of the prayer have 13 or 12 stanzas, sometimes 10 stanzas. Last stanza, like in the Jewish song, repeats all previous answers: O child, will you tell me of the Thirteen? (or What is Thirteen?). Thirteen is the Lord Altmighty and that glorious holly Cross of His; twelve are apostles;[19] eleven are humbled virgins (or eleven thousand virgins of St. Ursula);[20] ten are Commandments of God;[21] nine are Choirs of Angels;[22] eight are Heavens (or eight blessings, or eight humbled virgins);[23] seven are the Sorrows (and Joys) of The Virgin Mary (or seven Sacraments, or seven deadly sins);[24] six are the large stone waterpots;[25] five are the Holy Wounds;[26] four are God's evangelists;[27] three are the patriarchs (or Holy Trinity);[28] two are Moses' trees (or Moses' tablets of stone, or two secrets);[29] One is the Lord Altmighty and that glorious holly Cross of His. The questions and answers represent basic Catholic truths (Old Testament, New Testament, Church tradition).

Milan Lang, along with the lyrics of the song, brings information about the performance:

> Ova se pjesma pjeva ovako: Jedan zapjeva prvo pitanje, a drugi na to
> otpjeva prvi odgovor. Onda se pjeva drugo pitanje, a na nj dolazi drugi

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[19] Motivated by the New Testament, the passage from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 10, 1–5) where Jesus calls twelve apostles giving them power against unclean spirits.

[20] In Catholic Church tradition 11 or 11,000 virgins are associated with St. Ursula cult. The legend says that St. Ursula was a leader of eleven thousand virgins of Cologne reputedly martyred in the 4th century by the Huns. Bones of eleven thousand virgins were found in the streets and gardens of the city of Cologne. These relics became a centre of the cult of the Holy Virgins of Cologne (cf. Montgomery 2010).

[21] Ten Commandments that God gave to Israelites (Exodus 20, 1–18).

[22] This verse is probably motivated by the Church tradition. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, a Christian Neoplatonist from the late 5th or early 6th century, in his work *On the Celestial Hierarchy* describes angelic world "as divided into nine ranks of beings: the seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, powers, authorities, principalities, archangels, and angels" (Corrigan – Harrington 2015).

[23] Motivated by the New Testament, by eight blessings in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 5, 1–12).

[24] The motif of *seven sorrows* (or seven joys) of Blessed Virgin Mary is very popular in Croatian traditional culture. The motif comes from Church tradition and is connected with the Passion of Christ. Croatian traditional culture knows many prayers and popular songs inspired with this motif. For prayers cf. (Šetka 1954).

[25] This verse is motivated by the Gospel of John (John 2, 6–11), the first Jesus' miracle when He turned water into vine. The motif of *six waterpots of stone* is well known in the Croatian traditional culture and it is often used as a sacred number with highly symbolic meaning (cf. Botica 2011: 192).

[26] Catholic Church tradition knows of practices in honor of the Five Holy Wounds of Christ caused by His death on the Cross. This motif as well as Jesus' death on the Cross and pierced side of His body (John 19, 33) has became a part of Croatian traditional culture.

[27] Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. On influence of all four Gospels on Croatian traditional culture cf. (Botica 2011: 157–197).

[28] Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This answer as well as answers on the 10th and the 2nd question are the same in the Croatian prayer and the song Ehad Mi Yode'a. We can say that the answer to the 1st and the last question is also the same – God – but in Croatian version it is a Christian God who died on the Cross.

[29] These are two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone written with the finger of God that Moses brought from mount Sinai (Exodus 31, 18). In Croatian traditional culture two tablets of stone have became two Moses' trees.

odgovor, ali se za ovim doda još i prvi odgovor. Tako se redom na svako pitanje daje odgovor, koji mu pripada, a za njim se pjevaju još i svi pređašnji odgovori, te se svaki put završi prvim odgovorom. Prvi se odgovor svaki put ponovi. Na dvanaesto pitanje dolazi dvanaesti odgovor, a potom 11., 10., 9., 8., i t. d. sve do 1. Tako se onda prvi odgovor ponavljenjem pjeva 24 puta, dok se 12. odgovor pjeva samo jedamput. Za ovu pjesmu kažu stari ljudi, da se mora svaki put do kraja ispjevati, kad se započne; jer tko je ne ispjeva do kraja, sagriješi. [The song is sung this way: one person asks the first question and the second person answers. Then comes the second question and the second answer, followed by the first answer. After each question comes an answer, and after every answer all other answers are repeated. The first answer is repeated each time. After the twelfth question comes the twelfth answer, then the 11th, 10th, 9th, 8th, etc. until the 1st. The first answer is repeated 24 times, while the 12th answer is repeated only once. Old people say that this song, once started, must be sung to the end; the one who does not sing it to the end commits a sin.][30]

Most versions have four components: the one who asks a question (mostly undefined, unnamed person), the one who answers (a child, a schoolboy/girl), questions and answers in a form of a number (What is One?.. What is Two?.. What is Thirteen?) and a blessing (Blessed Saint Martin, pray for us).

Therefore, the motifs, theme and content of the prayer, make it a typical prayer which served as a compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Even the repetition in numbers can be seen as a way of learning Christian truths. Furthermore, praying on a person's deathbed, as a way of helping the person and his soul, is in accordance with the Church official teachings.

However, some data on performance and function of the song/prayer suggest its magic effect. Although the content is Christian and it has a structure of a counting-out rhyme, the prayer is used as a charm.

The features of a charm can be seen in the performance and use (function) of the prayer. Some data show that the prayer must be said three times at a sick person's bedside.[31] To make the prayer effective, no mistake must be made in saying it. If a mistake is made, the person being prayed for will die. Example:

Kad ne asne bajańa, a ne zna se, oće li bolesnik umriti, moli se ova molitva, da se ne zabuni. Ako se šapćuć ta molitva izmoli, ozdravit će

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[30] Lang 1913b: 361.
[31] Kurjaković 1903: 123.

bolesnik; ako se smete i zbuni, umrit će. To obično dojde koja žena iz sela i moli nad bolesnikom. [When there is no help of charm devices, and it is not known whether the patient will die, this prayer is prayed flawlessly (with no errors). If the prayer is whispered, the patient will get well; if the person saying the prayer makes a mistake in saying it, the patient will die. A woman from the village is usually the one saying a prayer over a person's deathbed.][32]

A number on which a mistake is made indicates in how many days the person will die:

Jedinstvo (se) izgovara uz postelju umirućega, s vjerom da utječe na njegovo ozdravljenje ako osoba ne pogriješi ni u jednom stihu. Ako pak pogriješi, drži se da će bolesnik umrijeti za onoliko dana na kojemu je broju pogriješio. [Unity is to be said on the person's deathbed believing that it can affect the person's healing if the prayer is said correctly, with no mistakes. If the person saying the prayer makes a mistake in saying it, it is believed that the sick person will die in as many days, as the number at which the mistake was made.][33]

The prayer is prayed for healing. These circumstances surrounding the performance are surely not in accordance with the Church's teachings, but the content is.[34]

The power of the prayer when said flawlessly, making no mistake, is seen in two more comments, two pieces of information on the function of the prayer: the story of the devil and a child, where the child is saved by saying the prayer:

Došao djavao u slici ljudskoj k jednom čovjeku te ga obladao, da mu dade za skupe pare ono, za što zna u kući. On pristane. Došavši kući, pripovjedi do ženi. Ona se dosjeti zlu, jer je bila noseća. Otada se je uvijek Bogu molila, da joj dijete sačuva. Bog ju je uslišao. Čim se je dijete rodilo, dodje djavao k njemu, te mu stane davati sljedeće upite, a dijete sklopljenih ruku odgovara: kaži meni, malo dijete, što je Jedinstvo? – Jedinstvo je Bog jedini, koj' nas čuva i brani. (...) Poslije ovih odgovora vrag je pukao. Pa i sada, kažu, kad se ovo izreče, jedan djavao pukne. [The devil, in human form, came to a man and tricked him into giving him everything he had in the house. The man agreed to it, not knowing that his wife was with child. When the wife found out about the agreement,

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[32] Lovretić 1902: 200–201.

[33] Kekez 1993: 67.

[34] On the relationship between charms and prayers, difficulty to differentiate these folklore genres and complex relationship between charms and Christianity cf. (Gay 2004; Kapaló 2011; Velmezova 2011).

she prayed every day to God to protect her child. When the child was born, the devil came and questioned him: Tell me, little child, what is one (or what is unity)? – One (or unity) is the one God who protects us and defends us. (...) After the child answered all thirteen questions, the devil exploded, fell apart. Even now people say that one of the devils will explode (or fall apart) when this prayer is said.][35]

In the other example the prayer was used for a protection from the hailstorm:

Ovu se molitvu molilo kad je prijetila tuča (grad). Trebalo je točno mo-liti, jer se vjerovalo u protivnom da će sve grad potući. [The prayer was prayed against the hailstorm. It needed to be prayed correctly, making no mistakes, and believing that, if said incorrectly, the hailstorm will destroy the crops.][36]

However, this paper is concerned with the function of the prayer on a person's deathbed. The older data show that the prayer was prayed for healing, but the mistake in saying it could lead to the person dying sooner.

In the newest recorded text (MS Rudan,[37] Sutivanac) the informant specified that the prayer was used for an easier death, as a way of helping a struggling soul, the soul in agony:

[A cousin of mine was very ill for three months. My mom called me to pray this little prayer for God to set her soul free. They also sent for me when aunty Tonina Rocinova was ill. (...) If I hear that someone is very ill and dying, I'll pray that little prayer for him, so he can die more easily. Indeed, they called me when aunty Tonina Rocinova really struggled and simply could not die.][38]

Another informant gave the same explanation ten years earlier.[39] Other than this information recorded in Istria, Josip Lovretić in Slavonia recorded and described a few devices that ensured an easier death almost a century ago:

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[35] Šetka 1954: 126.

[36] Jurić-Arambašić 2001: 168. Similar information about the performance of the prayer brings student Anamaria Brkić in 2015 in her research on local oral tradition. She confirmed that her grandmother prayed the prayer as a protection from the hailstorm. It needed to be prayed correctly, without pausing, in one rhythm. In her research she brings only a short version of the prayer (MS collection of Department of Croatina Oral Literature 2015a: 1–19).

[37] See appendix 2.

[38] Rudan, MS, 2002; Told by: Albina Šugar, born Roce, 1926.

[39] In 1991.

Ako dugo boluje, pa ga kupaju, meću u kupeḷ biḷku lisiču glavu, ili debelu tikvu, a nekoji meću brezove šibe u kupeḷ, da prije umre. [...] Ako bolesnik ne može umrijeti, meću mu pod posteḷu motak prijesne pređe, kako je s raška skinuta. Ako još ne umre, odrežu komad tkańa, objese u crkvi na križ preko Spasiteḷa, ili na kandel, gdje gori vječno svjetlo, ili na svetog Nikolu putnika, pa onda vele: Ili ostati, ili umrijeti. [If a person is sick for a long time, when they bathe him, they put a chanterelle or a pumpkin in the bath, and some people put in birch branches, for quicker death. (...) If a sick person can not die, they put a yarn under his head. If a sick person still has trouble dying, they take a piece of cloth and hung it on the cross in the church, or on the candle with a Vigil Light, or on St. Nicholas the Traveller, and then they say: stay or die.][40]

It is quite common to pray for healing, but to pray for an easier or quicker death is not so common. Available data show that the prayer and devices which ensured an easier death were used only when it was certain that the dying person was in agony. The prayer and devices for an easier death functioned as a way of helping a dying person.

And yet it seems that here helping also involves another aspect in the situation. It seems like helping does not mean simply providing help to a dying person. Employing prayer and devices for an easier death says something about the way people perceive death and the existence between life and death.

The way traditional communities observe death is different than the way we see it today. This could be inferred from various descriptions of how people prepare for death, of ways of expressing condolences, of the status and marking of the person in mourning and even how people announced their own death.

From various descriptions of death customs,[41] further, from some examples[42] and individual testimonies,[43] as well as from some oral genres, like proverbs,[44] it could be inferred that death is seen as a natural process, with no fear or dread. This attitude

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[40] Lovretić 1898: 29.

[41] Kotarski 1917: 213–217; Ivanišević 1905: 88–95; Lang 1913a: 125–138; Lovretić 1898; Jardas 1957: 99–102.

[42] "Poznavao sam starca Petra Jakopića, koji nije imao žene ni djece; on je platio župniku za sprovod, lijes je čuvao mnogo godina na tavanu, križ mu je bio u turnu farne crkve, a dupliri u ńegovoj ladici među čistim rubačama, koje su bile pripravḷene za ńegovu smrt." [I knew an old man Petar Jakopić. He had no wife or children. He gave money to a vicar for his funeral, saved a coffin for many years in the attic. A cross for the funeral was in the church and the funeral candle was stored within clean shirts prepared for his death.] (Kotarski 1917: 213).

[43] "Zato smo se rodili, da bumo hmrli." 'Kak bu Boža vola. Nikak ne bu dugo, da bu i na nas došel red, jer dan dale – smrt bliže. A ima i takvih koji će reći: "Rajši denes, neg zutra" ili: "Š čem pre, s tem bole".' [We are born to be dead. It is God's will. Before long our hour will come too, as time goes by – death comes. And some will say: "Better today than tomorrow" or "The sooner the better"] (Lang 1913a: 125); "Rođeni smo za umrit" [We are born to die] (Ivanišević 1905: 88).

[44] "Tko se rodi, onaj će i umrijeti; Danas čovjek, sutra crna zemlja; Dan po dan, dok i smrt za vrat" [He who is born, must die; Man today, ashes tomorow; As times goes by, death comes] (Tomašić – Botica 2009: 3, 5).

towards death is influenced by Christianity, where death is defeated on the Cross, as well as fatalistic thinking in traditional communities. On the other hand, that attitude comes from the help and support the dying person and their family get from community members. In traditional communities almost no one has to be afraid of dying alone. The family of the deceased gets help from community members in funeral preparations. In small towns, even today distant family and community members, not so much the immediate family, do the preparations for the funeral.

In earlier times all funeral activities where well arranged, the roles and responsibilities were clearly defined: calling the priest, guarding the dead, praying over the dead, washing the dead, dressing the dead, cooking for the wake, cleaning the house, expressing condolences, etc. Everything was well known and structured. It was easy and safe to die. But the potential for danger was present on a different level.

Custom data demonstrate fear and anxiety of disorder or mess caused by insufficient preparation for death. This can be seen on a social level as well as on a personal one.

First, on the social level this is manifested mainly as fear of unfinished business, which may cause problems to family members: "Ne daj Bog, da predi hmerjem, dek mi deca ne narasto ili dek s v red ne postavim ove ili one pri gospodarstvu" [God forbid that I die too soon, before my children grow up, or before I put everything in the household in order].[45] It is important to preserve reputation for the deceased and for his family. Family reputation depends on the reputation of deceased members as well as of the living ones.

Secondly, the personal level includes a relationship with God, a good Confession, Penance and Reconciliation. The goal is to make sure the soul leaves peacefully and arrive where it belongs. Even then it is very important to have external confirmations that preparations were done well. This is confirmed by testimonies of community members: "Viš, kak je lepe hmerl, a bil je pošten kerščenik" [See, he died well and he was a good Christian];[46] "Kakov život, takva smert" [The way he lived is the way he dies].[47]

Therefore, in a traditional way of thinking, everything is subordinated to include death into everyday life. Death is present in everyday life and no one shies away from referring to it, talking about it and is not intimidated by it. Death is a part of order, not disorder; of cosmos, not chaos. A member of the traditional community is scared of chaos and everything that can produce it. He is afraid of everything (spaces, situations) that indicates unclear boundaries between order and disorder, everything that indicates a space where it is not clear whether it is in cosmos – the space of order,[48] or in chaos

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[45] Kotarski 1917: 213.
[46] Kotarski 1917: 214.
[47] Kotarski 1917: 214.
[48] Eliade 2002: 20.

– the space of disorder. Spaces where the afterlife happens can be seen as chaos, or as an order of a different category. What causes fear is not a dead man in a grave, or knowing that we will all die. What is mortifying is the possibility that the deceased would come back, that he would violate the normal order of things.

For this reason, there exist customs that clearly show that everything belonging to the afterlife (including the corpse that is still in the world of the living and not in the grave) is actually dangerous and in a way unclean.[49] In rural areas the custom is to put a bowl of water in front of the house for everybody coming in after the funeral to wash their hands before entering a home. This ritual can't be seen as hygienic necessity. When it comes to hygiene after the funeral, there is no difference whether you wash your hands in the washroom or before entering the house. Washing the hands before entering the house is a way of marking of the dangerous places and their potential influences – the cemetery – and the pure ones – the house.

In a sense, a dead man in the house represents a special type of danger. He is between life and death, neither here nor there, but at the same time both here and there. As Mary Douglas explains, "danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is undefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others".[50] The danger lies in this marginal state and there is nothing more marginal than the transition from life to death. This is why there are guards next to the body. That custom, guarding the dead, is known as Vigil or Wake. The guards can keep wake and pray together with family members or instead of them. We can see them as support and consolation to the family members in these sad moments.

Certainly this is not the only function of the Wake. The function is also to protect the space of the living from the dangerous influences of the dead body. There is the need to protect the space: the dead man who is still in the house – he is not there where he belongs, but where he does not belong anymore. On the other hand, there is the need to protect the dead man and the separation of his soul from his body: the body that is certainly here and the soul which might be there or still here.

The wake includes apotropaic devices for preventing the dead from coming back: in the form of a *fudlak*,[51] by cutting tendons beneath the dead body's knees,[52] or in the form of a werewolf, by keeping cats and dogs away from the dead body.[53] It is also important to make sure he gets all of his belongings, such as his clothes, his pipe, etc., otherwise he can come back to ask for them.[54]

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[49] On concepts of purity and danger cf. Douglas 2002.

[50] Douglas 2002: 119.

[51] Istrian *fudlak* is more like a vampire than a werewolf (cf. Rudan Kapec 2010; 2012).

[52] Jardas 1957: 100.

[53] Lovretić 1898: 30.

[54] Cf. Rudan Kapec 2012.

It is clear enough that a dead man in the space of the living is dangerous. It causes fear and dread. After all, the guards are not there to keep the dead man from leaving. They are there as a way of showing respect to him and his mourning family, but also as a way of a securing the space of order (space of the living) from the space of disorder (space of the dead).

Therefore, the dead man in the space of the living presents a danger. However, the dying person is not completely harmless as well. He is in an unclear state, a state of existence between life and death, order and disorder. Uncertainty and vagueness of that condition is causing fear and anxiety among community members as well as compassion for the man on his deathbed. For all those reasons the prayer was the cure for fear. It was believed that the prayer had the strength to resolve this vague existence – it will bring either healing or death. Praying aspects of the song *Unity/The prayer of St. Martin* work as a prayer for healing and as a prayer for a Christian soul. Its charm aspects work as a clarification of that blurry and dangerous state between here and there.

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APPENDIX 1

This is a translation of one of the versions of a poem The Prayer of St. Martin.

Molitva Svetoga Martina

The Prayer of St. Martin

Povej mane, dete, ča je jedan?
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog
I ta slavni križ njigov.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

O child, will you tell me of the one?
One is the Lord Almighty
And that glorious Holy Cross of His.
And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča su dva?
Dva su stabla Mosijeva
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog
I ta slavni križ njigov.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

O child, will you tell me of the two?
Two are Moses' trees,
One is the Lord Almighty
And that glorious Holy Cross of His
And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča su tri?
Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,
Dva su stabla Mosijeva,
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog
I ta slavni križ njigov.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

O child, will you tell me of the three?
Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham,
Two are Moses' trees
One is the Lord Almighty
And that glorious Holy Cross of His.
And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča su četiri?
Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko,
    Matej,
Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,
Dva su stabla Mosijeva
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog
I ta slavni križ njigov.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

O child, will you tell me of the four?
Four are God's evangelists: Mathew, Mark, Luke
    and John,
Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham.
Two are Moses' trees
One is the Lord Almighty
And that glorious holy Cross of His.
And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je pet?
Pet je ranic na Boga,
Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko,
    Matej,
Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,
Dva su stabla Mosijeva
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog
I ta slavni križ njigov.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

O child, will you tell me of the five?
Five are The five Holy Wounds
Four are God's evangelists: John, Luke, Mark
    and Mathew,
Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham.
Two are Moses' trees,
One is the Lord Almighty
And that glorious Holy Cross of His.
And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je šest?

O child, will you tell me of the six?

Šest je vodonoš kameneh,

Six are the large stone waterpots

Pet je ranic na Boga,

Five are The five Holy Wounds

Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko,
  Matej,

Four are God's evangelists:

John, Luke, Mark and Mathew,

Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,

Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham.

Dva su stabla Mosijeva

Two are Moses' trees,

Jedan je sam gospodin Bog

One is the Lord Almighty

I ta slavni križ njigov.

And that glorious Holy Cross of His.

A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je sedan?

O child, will you tell me of the seven?

Sedan je žalosti i radosti svete deve Marije,

Seven are The Seven Sorrows and Joys of The
  Holy Virgin Mary,

Šest je vodonoš kameneh,

Six are the large stone waterpots,

Pet je ranic na Boga,

Five are The five Holy Wounds,

Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko,
  Matej,

Four are God's evangelists: John, Luke, Mark
  and Mathew,

Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,

Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham.

Dva su stabla Mosijeva

Two are Moses' trees,

Jedan je sam gospodin Bog

One is the Lord Almighty

I ta slavni križ njigov.

And that glorious Holy Cross of His.

A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je osan?

O child, will you tell me of the eight?

Osmera su nebesa,

Eight are The Eight Heavens,

Sedan je žalosti i radosti svete deve Marije,

Seven are The Seven Sorrows and Joys of The
  Holy Virgin Mary,

Šest je vodonoš kameneh,

Six are the large stone waterpots,

Pet je ranic na Boga,

Five are The five Holy Wounds,

Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko,
  Matej,

Four are God's evangelists: John, Luke, Mark
  and Mathew,

Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,

Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham.

Dva su stabla Mosijeva

Two are Moses' trees,

Jedan je sam gospodin Bog

One is the Lord Almighty

I ta slavni križ njigov.

And that glorious Holy Cross of His.

A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je devet?

O child, will you tell me of the nine?

Devet je kori anjelskih

Nine are The Nine Choirs of Angels,

Osmera su nebesa,

Eight are The Eight Heavens,

Sedan je žalosti i radosti svete deve Marije,

Seven are The Seven Sorrows and Joys of The
  Most Holy Virgin Mary,

Šest je vodonoš kameneh,

Six are the large stone waterpots,

Pet je ranic na Boga,

Five are The five Holy Wounds,

Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko, Matej,
Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,
Dva su stabla Mosijeva
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog
I ta slavni križ njigov.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

Four are God's evangelists: John, Luke, Mark and Mathew,
Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham,
Two are Moses' trees,
One is the Lord Almighty
And that glorious Holy Cross of His.
And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je deset?
Deset je zapovedi Božjeh,
Devet je kori anjelskih
Osmera su nebesa,
Sedan je žalosti i radosti svete deve Marije,
Šest je vodonoš kameneh,
Pet je ranic na Boga,
Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko, Matej,
Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,
Dva su stabla Mosijeva
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog
I ta slavni križ njigov.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

O child, will you tell me of the ten?
Ten are Commandments of God,
Nine are The Nine Choirs of Angels,
Eight are The Eight Heavens,
Seven are The Seven Sorrows and Joys of The Most Holy Virgin Mary,
Six are the large stone waterpots,
Five are The five Holy Wounds,
Four are God's evangelists: John, Luke, Mark and Mathew,
Three are the patriarchs:
Sam, Isaac and Abraham. Two are Moses' tree,
One is the Lord Almighty
and that glorious holly Cross of His.
And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je jedanajst?
Jedanajst je devic umiljeneh i okrunjeneh,
Deset je zapovedi Božjeh,
Devet je kori anjelskih,
Osmera su nebesa,
Sedan je žalosti i radosti svete deve Marije,
Šest je vodonoš kameneh,
Pet je ranic na Boga,
Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko, Matej,
Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,
Dva su stabla Mosijeva
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog
I ta slavni križ njigov.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!

O child, will you tell me of the eleven?
Eleven are crumbled and humble virgins,
Ten are Commandments of God,
Nine are The Nine Choirs of Angels,
Eight are The Eight Heavens,
Seven are The Seven Sorrows and Joys of The Most Holy Virgin Mary,
Six are the large stone waterpots,
Five are The five Holy Wounds,
Four are God's evangelists: John, Luke, Mark and Mathew,
Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham.
Two are Moses' tree,
One is the Lord Almighty
And that glorious Holy Cross of His.
And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je dvanajst?
Dvanajst je apoštoli Božjeh,
Jedanajst je devic umiljeneh i okrunjeneh,
Deset je zapovedi Božjeh,

O child, will you tell me of twelve?
Twelve are God's apostles
Eleven are crumbled and humble virgins,
Ten are Commandments of God,

Devet je kori anjelskih,	Nine are The Nine Choirs of Angels,
Osmera su nebesa,	Eight are The Eight Heavens,
Sedan je žalosti i radosti svete deve Marije,	Seven are The Seven Sorrows and Joys of the Most Holy Virgin Mary,
Šest je vodonoš kameneh,	Six are the large stone waterpots,
Pet je ranic na Boga,	Five are The five Holy Wounds,
Četiri su vanjelišti Božji: Ivan, Luka, Marko, Matej,	Four are God's evangelists: John, Luke, Mark and Mathew,
Tri su patijarki: Sam, Izak i Abraham,	Three are the patriarchs: Sam, Isaac and Abraham.
Dva su stabla Mosijeva	Two are Moses' tree,
Jedan je sam gospodin Bog	One is the Lord Almighty
I ta slavni križ njigov.	And that glorious holly Cross of His.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!	And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Povej mane, dete, ča je trinajst?	O child, will you tell me of the thirteen?
Trinajst je sam gospodin Bog	Thirteen is the Lord Almighty
I ta slavni križ njigov.	And that glorious holly Cross of his.
A ti slavni sveti Martine, moli za nas!	And you, glorious Saint Martin, pray for us!

Translated by Evelina Rudan
(Jardas 1957: 378–340)

Appendix 2

Molitva Svetega Martina	The Prayer of Saint Martin
Jena vera, jedan Bog	There is one Faith,
tri imena se jedan,	There is one God,
pomozi, Bože, seli h nan.	three names all in one
Blaženi sveti Martin,	help us God and come to us.
moli Boga za nas.	Blessed Saint Martin,
	pray for us.

Dva su stabla do neba,	Two are the trees
Jena vera, jedan Bog,	high up to the heaven,
tri imena se jedan,	There is one Faith.
pomozi, Bože, seli h nan	There is one God,
Blaženi sveti Martin,	three names all in one
moli Boga za nas.	help us, God, and come to us.
	Blessed Saint Martin,
	pray for us.

Tri su patrijarhi,
kako i jablanci,
Izak¸ Jakov i Abram
ki je od Boga vidabran
Dva su stabla do neba,
jena vera, jedan Bog
tri imena se jedan
Po Blaženi sveti Martin,
moli Boga za nas.
mozi Bože, seli h nan.

Three are the patriarchs
like lombardy poplars
Isaac, Jacob and Abraham
whom God has chosen,
Two are the trees
high up to the heaven,
There is one Faith,
There is one God,
three names all in one
help us God and come to us.
Blessed Saint Martin,
pray for us.

Četiri anđelići Bojži
Luka, Ivan, Marko, Matij,
Tri su patrijarhi,
kako i jablanci,
Izak¸ Jakov i Abram
ki je od Boga vidabran
Dva su stabla do neba,
jena vera, jedan Bog
tri imena se jedan
Po Blaženi sveti Martin,
moli Boga za nas.
mozi Bože, seli h nan.

Four are the God's angels
Luke, John, Mark and Mathew,
Three are the patriarchs,
like lombardy poplars,
Isaac, Jacob and Abraham
whom God has chosen.
Two are the trees
high up to the heaven,
There is one Faith
There is one God,
three names all in one
help us God and come to us.
Blessed Saint Martin,
pray for us.

Pet je rana Bogu
....
Šest je odotoči
....
Sedan Marija Žalosnih
...
Osan milosrdneh dev
...
Devet je anjeli koronih
...
Deset Bojžih zapoved
...
Edanajs je tаših devet
...
Dvanajs je apostoli Bojžih
...
Trinajs je sam gospodin Bog
...

Five are The five Holy Wounds
...
Six are the large stone waterpots
...
Seven Marys of Sorrow
...
Eight are Virgins of Mercy
...
Nine are The Nine Choirs of Angels
...
Ten are Commandments of God,
...
Eleven are a thousand virgins
...
Twelve are God's apostles
....
Thirteen is Lord our God himself
...

(rkp. Rudan, 2002.; kazivala: Albina
Šugar, rođena Roce, 1926.)

Translated by: Evelina Rudan
(Rudan, MS, 2002; Told by: Albina Šugar,
born Roce, 1926)

Curses, Incantations and the Undoing of Spells: The Romanian Priest as Enchanter (Transylvania, 19th Century)

Valer Simion Cosma

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginnings of Romanian historiography, historians have been interested in topics such as the history of the church and religious life. This is especially relevant in the case of Romanians from Transylvania, where, up until the nineteenth century, two churches – Orthodox and Greek Catholic or Uniate – were their sole institutions, whose hierarchs were the sole representatives of the people.[1]

If, during the communist regime, such topics were not popular among historians, the immediately following period, after the 1989 Romanian Revolution, witnessed a genuine effervescence regarding studies dedicated to Romanian church history.[2] An important part of these investigations aimed for the restitution of the historical past of the Greek-Catholic Church, which was dissolved and banned at the beginning of the communist regime.[3] Most of these works approached the institutional history of the two Romanian churches and the biographies of several hierarchs. The focus of this type of historical investigation was on the institutional development and on the political and cultural activity of the clergy. Moreover, these studies concerned how both clerical activity and the religious life of the congregations were regulated, in accordance with post-Reform and post-Trento principles of religion and society.

These works created a portrait of the Romanian priest and his activity that, unfortunately, mainly reflects the normative discourse of the two churches, and reflects much less everyday life within rural society, the complexity of modernization and

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[1] Hitchins 2013: 247.

[2] Ciocian 2000; Ghitta 2001; Miron 2004; Andrei 2006; Vulea 2009, etc.

[3] Miron 2004: 28.

its effects on peasant' religious life, or differences between "official religion" and "practiced religion". Historians have written very little generally about folk religion, magic and sorcery, and, where these topics are mentioned, they rarely exceed simplistic descriptions based on antagonistic attitude of the clergy. The latter represented lawfully institutionalized sacred faith, so wizards or witches were seen as representatives of a culture of paganism and the archaic primitive faith. As Ioan Pop-Curşeu stated in his work dedicated to magic and witchcraft in the Romanian culture, "ethnographic research on witchcraft is extremely well represented, while the historical approach is misrepresented". Thus, an interdisciplinary approach, combining "synchronic and diachronic perspective[s]" is required.[4]

In this study, I propose an analysis of a small piece of this complex topic, probably one of the most delicate subjects, namely how the Romanian priest might be considered as an enchanter in some specific situations, and the connection between charms and church benedictions, rituals and healing and apotropaic prayers. I intend to approach mainly the Orthodox priest and the Orthodox doctrine and liturgical literature, taking into consideration the church view on charms, charming and witchcraft. Also, I present some cases involving Greek-Catholic priests, to reflect similitudes that exist at the level of "practiced religion".

To begin with, this study makes two main assumptions. First of all, beyond the official discourse of both churches, which aimed to catechize the flock and purify religious life, labelling a large number of popular beliefs[5] and practices as pagan remnants or superstitious (in a post-Enlightenment sense),[6] many clerics believed in what they were fighting against: the power of magic. On the other hand, as I argue

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[4]   Pop-Curşeu 2013: 38.

[5]   According to Rolf Schulte: 'So-called popular belief encompasses everything that the majority of a population imagines to be true of a world beyond the realm of their everyday experience. It includes religious belief in a modern sense, as well as belief in the effectiveness of magic. This is necessarily a diffuse concept because it describes heterogeneous phenomena, but it differs from the widely used term "superstition", for popular belief in the early modern period embraced far more than the church's official concept of what constituted deviation from Christian beliefs. There is no sharp delineation between magic and religion, and any assertions to the contrary misjudge the realities of both mediaeval and early modern religious practices; clerics, too, believed in what they were fighting against: the power of magic.' (Schulte 2009: 160–161).

[6]   According to Euan Cameron: "The term "superstition" derived from classical antiquity, and nearly always contained a pejorative sense – it implied "bad" as opposed to "good" or "correct" belief or practice in the realm of religion. Though its etymology was never clear, it always presupposed an opposite, or even a cluster of opposites.[5] In the late Roman Empire, pagans described Christianity as superstition in one sense; Christians described paganism as superstition in another.[6] In general "superstition" could be opposed to other forms of putatively "wrong" religion, such as idolatry, heresy, or fanaticism. It could also be opposed to putatively "right" or valid religion, to terms such as "piety", "true religion", "orthodoxy", or "reasoned faith". Finally, it can be used as it is typically used in modern secular society: as a pejorative term to describe *any* belief system that falls short of the speaker's chosen standard of "rationality". At the high water-mark of modern confidence in scientific rationalism, "superstition" has become the preferred term of abuse used by any secular atheist to describe religion of any kind. The resurgence of religion as a factor in world politics, and postmodern aversion to the condescending attitudes of Western rationality towards the rest of humanity, have made such aggressive uses of the term rarer; but the connotations persist. However it is used, the term has the effect of driving sharp distinctions, where the need may be more for subtle shades than hard lines." (Cameron 2010: 4–5).

in the following pages, in church teachings and liturgic literature, charms, maledictions and other forms of magic and witchcraft are perceived as real threats, not just as "superstitions" and "primitive" habits and beliefs. In this regard, church tradition established a series of rituals and prayers designed to prevent and combat their harmful effects. These were still in use, despite the growing fight against "superstition", after the Reformation and Enlightenment.[7]

Secondly, in spite of the role ascribed to priests, as defenders of the faithful and opponents of sorcerers and charmers, church documents from the nineteenth century refer to cases of priests accused of performing rituals forbidden by church laws, and so considered as witchcraft. In addition, numerous folk materials gathered by folklorists in the nineteenth century depict customs, practices and popular beliefs involving clerics, which, from the church point of view and also from an anthropological point of view, may be regarded as magic.

The analysis focuses on the relationship between depictions of the priest as an enchanter and healer. Furthermore, it comprises some observations on the priest's role as a mediator of divine justice, closely related to his role of enchanter.

The choice of this particular period, namely the nineteenth century, has a dual motivation. On the one hand, this is a time of abundant ethnographic description of popular beliefs and practices, due to the emergent interest in folklore among intellectuals. On the other hand, the Romanian Church's own historiography also describes this period, focusing on the modernizing and civilizing role of clerics in the service of the nation and of the Habsburg/Austrian-Hungarian administration. It also minimizes their role in supporting a pre-modern vision of the world and the peasant's magic system.[8] But the main reason for my choice, is that during the nineteenth century, both Romanian churches were deeply concerned with the regulation of the clergy's education and activity, with the purification of religious life, and with the fight against "superstitions" and magical practices and beliefs.

Reform of Transylvanian Religious Life

The first mentions of witchcraft practices involving Romanian clerics date from the seventeenth century. Then, in the context of Protestant Reform winning many followers in Transylvania, especially among Saxons and Hungarians, the Transylvanian Romanian Orthodox Church was the target of a process of reform and dogma cleansing.[9] The Metropolitan Sava Brancovici compiles, in a circular issued in 1675,

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[7] Pócs 2013: 167.

[8] Cosma 2015: 49–52.

[9] Dumitran, D. 2007.

a series of "empty beliefs and *bobonoşaguri* [superstitions]" spread among the clergy he shepherded, in order to eradicate them.[10] During the eighteenth century, after the establishment of the Uniate Church, the cleansing of religious life and the fight against superstition continues. Within this context, the work of the clergy is strictly regulated in accordance with the post-Trento reformist principles.[11]

We can observe a good example of "reforming" attitudes in the works of the Uniate Bishop Peter Paul Aron, who, according to the early twentieth-century Romanian historian, Augustin Bunea, "fought against vain beliefs, as he banished the sinful pagan customs of the time, rooted deep within the life of the Romanian people" [pe cum combătea credinţa deşertă, tot aşa sbiciuia episcopul Aron şi obiceiurile păcătose şi păgânesci ale timpului seu înrădecinate în viaţa poporului român].[12] One church circular issued in the second half of the eighteenth century by this bishop, and presented in Bunea's history, describes popular practices labelled as magical and pagan, some involving priests or church sacramentals. He commands the priests to ensure that the faithful:

> … guard themselves against and keep away from all kinds of transgressions: magicians, sorcerers; enchantments: pouring wax; of *baere* or *advare* of enchantments: *sâmvăsii;* from living fire, fire leaping, shooting into the water on the second day of Easter, hideous Christmas carols on Christmas night, when many achieve deadly sins in spite of the Holy Mass; from some God knows what dining; from feasts with drinks and dances, and from taking the holy cross out in the same way, between frontiers; from quarrels at *vovedenie,* at night, when they gather at the wake, where they must not quarrel and must not strike with shovels on their back, but to pray for the soul of the deceased and for his sins against God: from the black plough during the Black Plague.[13]

Such circulars were widespread from the late eighteenth throughout the nineteenth centuries. Orthodox bishops and metropolitans such as Vasile Moga, Andrei Şaguna, and Ioan Meţianu, and Greek-Catholic bishops such as Ioan Bob, Ioan Lemeni,

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[10] Lupas 1918: 72.

[11] Miron 2004: 182–185.

[12] Bunea 1902: 387.

[13] Bunea 1902: 388. [… să se păzescă de tot feliul de nelegiuiri: vrăjitorii, descântătorie; fermecătorie; versări de ceară; de baere, sau advare de farmece: sâmvăsii: focuri vii, săriri preste foc, trageri în apă a dao zi de Pasci, colinde urîte din noaptea Crăciunului, pentru carele mulţi şi de sfînta Liturgie cu pecate de moarte atunci remân: de nisce mese a nu sciu ce Doamne: de nedeile cele cu beuturi şi cu jocuri, precum şi de eşirea cu crucea într'acelaşi chip, la între hotare: de gâlcevi la vovedenie, adecă noaptea la oameni morţi, când se adună, să nu gâlcevescă, cu lopeţi pe spate să nu lovescă: ci pentru sufletul a celui reposat, şi pentru ale sale pecate lui Dumnezeu să se roage: de plugul cel negru în vreme de ciumă.]

Alexandru Șterca-Șuluțiu, and Ioan Vancea,[14] had the same concern for disciplining the clergy and purifying religious life by "removing from the church the foreign customs and the annual feasts".[15] Along with a number of scientific papers published by the first generation of Romanian scholars,[16] such church circulars reveal popular beliefs and religious practices considered superstitious and/or pagan, many involving clergy or intertwining with religious rituals. However, this reforming approach cannot be reduced to a continuous fight against beliefs and magical practices, in the spirit of either the Protestant Reformation or of the "anti-superstitious" Enlightenment, which played a fundamental role in modernization. A rich historiographical tradition[17] argues this point, but it is in fact a prisoner of the Weber paradigm regarding the "disenchantment of the world";[18] it might be considered influenced, and at the same time part of, cumulative distortions produced by the application to a pre-modern, non-Western society of successive Western interpretative lenses.[19] Along with history, ethnology and ethnography were also shaped by and part of such distortions.[20]

As Ovidiu Ghitta, a historian from Cluj (Romania), underlines in a recent introduction to an eighteenth-century Greek Catholic catechism, there were "permissible forms of magic, [...] popular forms of invocation of sacred aid, which post-Tridentine Catholicism has not only perpetuated, but also encouraged" (2008, LXXIII). This observation is true also in the case of the Orthodox Church, as can be seen from the content analysis of *Molitfelnic*, a fundamental liturgical book for priestly activity, which I constantly reference throughout this paper. Magic and witchcraft practices fought against by the two churches were those performed by rural worshippers; not so

[14] Here are a few representative titles regarding hierarchs' biographies that emphasise their aim to regulate and purify the activity of the clergy and religious life: Stanca 1938; Popea 1879; Lupaș 1911; Soroștineanu 2005b; Dumitran, D. 2007; Ghișa 2008; Bonda 2008; Cârja 2007.

[15] Soroștineanu 2005b: 62.

[16] Șincai 1804–1808; Maior 1813; Popp 1818; Vasici 1831; Bojincă 1833, etc.

[17] Along with the titles mentioned in note 3 above, some other representative historical works are: Iorga 2007 [1902]; idem 1909; Lupaș 1918, etc.

[18] Scribner 1993: 494.

[19] In his book *Russia on the Eve of Modernity. Popular religion and traditional culture under the last tzars*, the historian Leonid Heretz presents these cumulative distortions and their role in misleading understanding of popular religion and traditional culture in the Russian case. The first three distortions are relevant for the Romanian case. He writes on this issue: "The first and most important... identified by Keith Thomas in the Western context... was the Protestant definition of true Christianity as pure faith based on Scripture, by which measure all rituals or beliefs lacking in explicit Biblical sanction are heathendom and devilry. A second distortion was produced by the Enlightenment and its general attitude of contempt for organized religion: even in its official versions, traditional Christianity represents gross superstition, and whatever influence a corrupt and obscurantist clergy is capable of exerting on a benighted flock only serves to keep that flock mired in the swamps of primeval ignorance. The third refraction occurred with Romanticism (which, it should be stressed, gave birth to the scholarly study of the Russian people) and its obsession with real or imagined antiquity; for the Romantic, folk beliefs and practices provide unique and priceless clues in the great search for authenticity, which is now lost but had once existed, in the childhood (assumed to be pre-Christian, and therefore pagan) of the race." (Heretz 2008: 16.)

[20] Some representative works on charms, maledictions, and disenchantments: Marian 1893; Ciaușanu 1914; Gorovei 1931.

much those performed by the altar servants. The critical rhetoric of the ecclesiastical hierarchy regarding the beliefs and practices of the "dark" and "superstitious" masses must be understood in a light of churches asserting a monopoly over mediation with supernatural forces.[21]

But, as we will see throughout this paper, in daily practice, the contrast between priests and wizards or witches is not so categorical. This is because the popular understanding of church benedictions, sacraments and sacramentals, on one hand, and charms, disenchantments, bewitchments, and spells, on the other hand, was flexible and blurry, and dependent on context to a high degree. Besides, beyond the churches normative discourse, influenced by the post-Enlightenment understanding of magic and superstition, the liturgical literature and church teachings continued to approach charms, spells, and maledictions as real threatens to human life, and many priests continued to copy, use and edit manuscripts of counter-spells until late in the nineteenth century.[22] This study comprises an analysis of rituals and prayers performed in order to fight against the effects of charms, spells, bewitchments, and demonic attacks, as written in the *Molitfelnic.* It also includes some observations regarding the connection between healing charms, disenchantments, and church benedictions and prayers. I make further observations based on the analysis of folk beliefs and practices.

The *Molitfelnic*: Benedictions, Exorcisms, Healing and Apotropaic Rituals

Christianity is a religion of healing, and one of the major functions of a priest, from the early centuries of Christianity, is that of the healer.[23] There are a series of rituals, prayers, and ordinances performed by priests, well established in liturgical literature, designed to bring healing to the soul and body. The fundamental book in the Romanian church tradition, as in other Eastern churches, incorporates rituals, benedictions and prayers that the priest has to perform in different occasions. This book is entitled the *Molitfelnic* or *Efhologhion.*[24] The importance of this liturgical book in sacerdotal activity can be judged by the fact that no other religious book has had more editions than this one.[25]

Analysing the editions published from the sixteenth century until the beginning of the nineteenth century, preserved at the Library of the Romanian Academy, shows that

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[21] Worobec 2001: 70.

[22] Gaster 1883: 417; Drăganu 1922–1923: 238; Timotin 2011: 9.

[23] Lindemann 2000: 236; Porterfield 2005: 44; Daunton-Fear 2009: 15; Stancu 2012: 65.

[24] It also goes by the name of *Efhologhion sau Molitevnic.* In this paper, I refer to the 1896 edition of *Molitfelnic*, which was very popular within the Romanian clergy. It was published after the 1834 edition: *Efhologhion* or *Molitfelnic*, 2nd edition, Bucureşti, Tipografia "Cărţilor Bisericesci", 1896.

[25] Bejan 1936: 687.

these editions do not always contain the same texts. Usually, they contain the texts of church services and rituals important in the life of every Christian – the ordinances of birth, baptism, marriage, confession, entry to a monastery, unction, and death – and texts of the services regarding certain community feasts, such as the mass when founding a new church, and the 'Great Blessing of the Waters' during the celebration of Epiphany or Christ's Baptism. Alongside these, there are a series of "prayers useful for different things" such as the prayer for postpartum women, for midwives, for a woman who lost a child, blessings for a journey or a new house, for purifying wells, salt bowls, oil bowls etc.. In addition, we find in editions of the *Moliftelnic* quasi-healing and apotropaic prayers, for those who cannot sleep, against charms, or for a haunted house. Alongside, the printed texts, there are manuscript versions of the *Molitfelnic*. These are usually somewhat different, because they were out of the ecclesiastical control and were compiled according to the needs of the copyist or user; sometimes they contain prayers not included in later editions.[26]

The nineteenth century was a period of strong ecclesiastical control on liturgical literature and religious practice, but the influence of, and/or pressure from, popular piety demanded that counter-spells from the old manuscripts, officially disapproved by Church, continued to be included in liturgical books published by the Church., One such example is "The prayer for the twinging of the limbs [*năjit*]", part of an *Little Aghiasmatar or Short Molitvenic to Help Priests with Parishioners' Diverse Emergencies* [Aghiasmatariu mic sau scurtare din molitvenic pentru înleznire preoţilor la feliuri de întâmplări grabnice la inoriaşii săi], issued at Sibiu in 1851. An abridged version of this prayer is contained in the last official edition of the *Molitfelnic*[27] and also in the edition I use here.

The edition used for this study, as we read in its introductory description, comprises the regulation of sacraments (rom. *Sfintele Taine*) and church prayers, called *molitve, molifte* or *molitfe,*[28] and church services that the priest reads and performs occasionally. These rituals, ordinances and prayers are called *ierurgii* or *evlohoghii,*[29] and are much like the "sacramentals" in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church.[30] Furthermore, the book contains rituals and prayers for various issues and situations: invocations against enchantments and spells, prayers for exorcisms modelled on those of Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil the Great, prayers to expel demons and unclean spirits, invocations in case of diverse diseases for people or animals, and rituals for different crises, like drought or heavy rain.

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[26] Timotin 2011: 10.

[27] Timotin 2011: 25.

[28] "Church prayers", according to philologist Şăineanu 1929 [1896.]: 407.

[29] *Ierurgii*= sacred offices/rituals; *evlohoghii*= prayers or services/rituals with prayer, according to theologian Branişte 2005: 355.

[30] Teodorescu 1923: 66; Branişte 2005: 355.

The Orthodox theologian Ene Branişte, author of major works on tradition and liturgical practices, describes these religious services as:

> … services, ordinances and prayers for blessing and sanctification of man in different times and circumstances of his life, and for the blessing and sanctification of the surrounding nature and different things or objects of human use. They are usually more about the sacraments and the Mass, performed either before them, as a preparation (such as religious services before baptism in connection with human birth) or after them, as a crowning or perfecting their purpose (for example unraveling of weddings on the eighth day after the wedding, commemoration after the Mass, etc.). [Their goal] is to purify the believer and the surrounding environment, the living things and the objects that the believer needs for his living or for his material and spiritual life.[31]

According to Branişte, then, purification and sanctification are required due to original sin, which, according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, "introduced disorder, suffering, pain and misery… to human life, [and] ruined the initial beauty and harmony of nature. [Through religious services], the cleansing and sanctifying power and action of the Church flows not only on to a human, but also on to the entire world of creatures, carrying it away from the power of the curse and hallowing it".[32] These rituals and prayers (*ierurgii*) that accompany the sacraments are designed to regulate the rhythms of reproductive life by invoking divine blessing for human, animal and agrarian fertility.[33]

It is reasonable to infer that, from a socio-anthropological point of view, by performing the rituals prescribed by the church, the priest helps maintain the existing socio-cultural system or restores an unbalanced order. When a ritual is enacted, it may produce effects in several interrelated areas.[34] The Church rituals performed by priests may say something about the state of being or status of an individual, as it is the case of Baptism or exorcising rituals. They also show a concern for the state of the cosmos. That is because the priestly ritual system includes, in its worldview, ideas about the cosmos and the created order that goes beyond the societal order, including a concern for the natural world as well. This cosmic order encompasses human relationships with the sacred, the natural world and with other people. Through priestly rituals, human beings may participate in the maintenance of the divinely created order.[35] As the famous

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[31] Branişte 2005: 355.
[32] Branişte 2005: 355–356.
[33] Scribner 1987: 3.
[34] Gorman Jr. 1990: 28.
[35] Gorman Jr.1990: 37–38.

theologian John Meyendorff argued, in the perspective of Byzantine theology, during the celebration of Epiphany or Christ's Baptism, the ritual called the "Great Blessing of the Waters" means, in fact, exorcising the cosmos, whose basic element, water, was considered a refuge for dragons and demons. Frequent mention of the demonic forces of the universe in patristic and liturgical texts must be understood in this theological context, because the texts in question do not derive solely from biblical sources, though they often reflect mythological beliefs. The "Demonic" in nature comes from the fact that creation has fallen from its original meaning and orientation.[36] In the prayer the priests perform during the ritual of the "Great Blessing of the Waters", they ask God to "make it [the water] a source of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a remission of sins, a protection against disease, the destruction of demons, inaccessible to the adverse powers and filled with angelic strength".[37]

In addition to this theological understanding of the "Great Blessing of the Waters", according to popular beliefs recorded by folklorists in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century, when the priest places the cross in the water during this ritual, all the demons are banished; the water purified in this way becomes a source of miraculous power used to protect the entire household (animals, objects etc.) and, subsequently used in other magical rituals.[38] This popular belief overlaps with the church's teachings about the meaning of ritual effects, underlining its power. As Bob Scribner argued, regarding the use of benedictions, exorcisms and sacramentals in pre-industrial Germany:

> … the nature of the problem was cosmological. The functioning of the material world was seen in terms of divine agency, either providing blessings to ensure the flourishing of material creation, understood as human, animal or agricultural reproduction; or in the expulsion of those demonic and diabolical forces which interfered with it. The role of religious ritual in this process was none the less ambivalent. It could be seen to provide spiritual efficacious what was indicated corporeally. It also provided natural order by invoking divine blessings on the world and by its apotropaic power of banishing the demonic spirits who provoked disorder.[39]

The analysis of the rituals in the *Molitfelnic* reveals the priest as a mediator of the sacred. In a universe where the border between magic and religion is drawn in relation

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[36] Meyendorff 2011: 199.
[37] *Molitfelnic* 1896: 140.
[38] Toşa – Munteanu 2003: 59; Marian 2011a: 258–259; Gorovei – Ciauşanu 2012: 19, 230.
[39] Scribner 1987: 40.

to whom is performing the ritual, what the clerics practice is, at first sight, religion, but what others practice is magic.[40] The opposition between official religion and magic is clearly stated in counter-spell rituals, such as the ordinances "for a house or place disturbed by charms and disenchantments" and "for sick animals", or in prayers or rituals for different diseases, such as the prayers "for headache and evil-eye" and "for the twinging of the limbs" (which people call *nǎjit)*.[41] Besides the liturgical literature, the opposition between the clergy and other magical agents, decipherable in many religious rituals and folk beliefs, is postulated for the first time within the church regulations.[42] At first, the priest seems to stand in opposition with the witches and other performers of magic acts, and some folk beliefs assign him with the power of tracing and punishing them.[43] However, this opposition is not so categorical if we consider how these actions were understood by believers. Disenchanters, enchanters and wizards are not very clearly defined categories, "they often get confused with each other";[44] their magical actions, must be seen in context, they are not evil or benign in themselves.

The same opposition became much intensive, at least at the level of churches hierarchy, from the seventeenth century on; as we can discern in the charms' manuscripts, already mentioned in this paper. But beyond the churches negative rhetoric and interdictions, as a rich scholarly literature attests,[45] there was constant interaction between "official religion" and popular magic until late in the nineteenth century. Analyzing a large number of charms' manuscripts dating from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, the Romanian-Jewish scholar Mozes Gaster argued that the prayers from the Church official canon had a strong influence on charms, disenchantments and incantations.[46] In 1938, following the path of research of Bogdan Petriceicu-Hasdeu and Mozes Gaster, Nicolae Cartojan drew attention to the medical folklore manuscripts. He concluded that the texts contained in those manuscripts were deeply Christianized in order to be tolerated by the Church.[47] This process of Christianizing charms and disenchantments

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[40]   Lindemann 2000: 235–236.

[41]   For this study, I quote only a few prayers and rituals, to illustrate the image of the priest as enchanter, but *Molitfelnicul* includes a wide range of prayers and ordinances for various common problems for people and the church: prayers for toothaches, prayers and rituals to purify wine polluted by contact with an animal, prayers for school exams, etc.

[42]   The book *Seven sacraments of the church* (1645), in accordance with Rule of Basil the Great, says of witches: "The wizard and whoever pours wax, or casts lead, also he who ties the knot at weddings so that the grooms cannot consummate their marriage or other wizardry and witchcrafts, should not receive Christ's body for 20 years. Beware what wizards are: wizards are those who call out and use devils for sorcery, in order to know unknown things or for other evils they might wish, after their evil will and ill desire, those who wish injury and mischief to particular righteous men" – quoted in Gorovei 1990: 110.

[43]   Bilţiu – Bilţiu 2001: 35–36.

[44]   Fochi 1976: 3–7.

[45]   The most representative titles regarding the interactions between apocryphal literature, popular magic, charms' manuscripts and liturgical literature: Hasdeu 1879–1880; Gaster 1883; 1891; Cartojan 1938.

[46]   Gaster 1891: XLIII.

[47]   Cartojan 1938: 234.

was undertaken mainly by priests and monks, for a long time almost the only literate minority of Romanian society. We can see this from the following three examples. In 1884, the bishop Melchisedec published in an article entitled "A charm-prayer" five disenchantments which he had discovered in a codex edited in 1838 by a monk at the Bisericani monastery.[48] In the third issue of the review *Dacoromania* (1922–1923), Nicolae Drăganu published a previously unknown version of the conjuration against the demon which brings hail, written in the middle of the eighteenth century. He discovered this conjuration in a manuscript held by the priest Ilarie Boţiu.[49] A "Book for Undoing Charms", published in 1867 in Sibiu, says in its afterword that:

> These holy prayers for undoing charms were found it at Kif monastery, at the end of a book written by the Saint Damaschin, and until now it was not printed.[50]

More recently, Emanuela Timotin wrote a study based on the analysis of 122 disenchantment manuscripts used to cure various disease and to remove the evil influence and effects. Those manuscripts were edited between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and are preserved at the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, and in three libraries from Cluj-Napoca (Romanian Academy Library, Cluj, "Sextil Puşcariu" Institute for Linguistic and Literary History, Lucian Blaga Central University Library). In her study, Emanuela Timotin emphasises interactions between church prayers, charms and disenchantments, and the role of priests and monks in editing and using them.[51]

According to Christian tradition, sin is the origin of all diseases and miseries that afflict people.[52] These ills are also considered as divine punishment, or the effect of demonic attack, enchantment or disenchantment. This view overlaps with how diseases and misfortunes are explained in popular culture.[53] As Christine D. Worobec concluded, regarding Russian and Ukrainian peasants in Imperial Russia, a closer look at peasant beliefs about possession and bewitchment reveals that they followed Orthodox teachings regarding demons, the constant struggle between good and evil, the power of the holy cross, the magical properties of holy water, and the authority of saints, as well as faith healing, exorcisms and prayers.[54] We can see an example of priestly intervention in the "Ordinances for the House or Place Disturbed by Enchantments and Disenchantments". The ritual performed by the priest is preceded by confession

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[48] Timotin 2011: 5.

[49] Drăganu 1922–1923: 238.

[50] Gorovei 1990: 221.

[51] Timotin 2011: 8–9.

[52] Porterfield 2005: 22; Daunton-Fear 2009: 15; Stancu 2012: 9.

[53] Coşbuc 1909: 12; Fochi 1976: 4–5; Stahl 1983: 207; Olteanu 1997: 6; Worobec 2001: 64; Pócs 2004a: 175.

[54] Worobec 2001: 70.

from the house's occupants, fasting, and praying for divine mercy. Reading a series of prayers from liturgical books is considered as having the power of a counter-spell. Such readings are accompanied by the sprinkling of holy water, fumigation, all of which are meant to cast out the bad spirits and the effects of the enchantment. The text of a curse to remove evil and attract the divine wrath over these demons reads as follows:

> Curse ye all guile beings, starters of malice, cursed and hated devils no matter whom, from where you are and how you are; you who poison and enchant places and people's homes, the servants of God (N); you doers of evil's work, along with whomever gave themselves up to you, that guile man ...[55]

The confession of members of the household, required by this ritual, is a form of "spiritual therapy", a sacrament, and a form of "diagnostic",[56] a necessary step in the process of healing or removing the effects of witchcraft or demonic attack. The prayers read by the priest invoke an entire divine hierarchy, and reference similar cases described in Biblical or Christian literature, wherein God or his representatives have defeated demons or their agents. The naming and description of the condition or affliction for which the ritual is performed are followed by a request for divine intervention to remove suffering, and their alleged causes, as we can observe in the two excerpts below:

> Remove, alienate, do away with all devilish works, the way of Satan and all enmity, evil eyes, insatiable and jealous, of the eye of wrongdoers from your servant (N).[57]
> Seek with mercy towards this house and towards thy servants (N), and from the sorrows of evil trickery of men, the poisoner and sorcerers, of enchanters or enchantresses and cunning devils, save them.[58]

The first excerpt is part of the "Prayer for Headache and Evil-eye". The Evil Eye belief is widespread in Central and Eastern Europe, as Éva Pócs has shown in *Evil*

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[55]   *Molitfelnic* 1896: 370–372. "Blestemu-vă pre voi atotviclenilor, începătorii răutăţilor, blestemaţilor şi urâţilor draci, care, cine, de unde sunteţi, şi câţi sunteţi; voi care otrăviţi şi fermecaţi locurile şi casele oamenilor, a servilor lui Dumnezeu (N); voi lucrătorii răutăţilor, împreună cu cela ce s-a dat pre sine vouă, vicleanul om…"

[56]   On this stage of diagnosis in popular medicine, including the one practiced by priests, see Cosma 2014; and Stahl 1983.

[57]   *Molitfelnic* 1896: 270. "Depărtează, înstrăinează, goneşte toată lucrarea diavolească, toată calea satanei, şi toată vrăjmăşia, privirea cea rea, nesăţioasă şi plină de gelozie, a ochilor celor făcători de rele de la robul tău, (N)"

[58]   *Molitfelnic* 1896: 370. "caută cu milostivire spre casa aceasta şi spre servii Tăi (N), şi de supărările cele rele ale viclenilor oameni, ale otrăvitorilor şi descântătorilor, ale fermecătorilor, sau fermecătoarelor şi viclenilor diavoli, mântuieşte-i."

Eye in Hungary: Belief, Ritual, Incantation.[59] The second fragment is part of a prayer in the "Ordinances for the House or the Place Disturbed by Enchantments and Disenchantments". Both draw attention to the importance of spells, enchantments and incantations as the source of various diseases and afflictions. The constant performance of such prayers and rituals during the nineteenth century, and their presence in contemporary editions of the *Molitfelnic*, demonstrates that, despite the growing influence of secularization, modern cosmology and the understanding of causality, belief in witchcraft, charms and spells remained widespread in religion and religious life within the church as well as within popular culture.

Along with insights mediated through liturgical literature, other type of documents from Church archives shows us fragments of magical religious practices in a manuscript annotated by a Greek-Catholic priest from Blaj in the last decades of the nineteenth century. His notes are about prayers and services requested by churchgoers on different occasions. For example, on the 23rd August 1891 he wrote that Sofia Ganea has a foot and a hand which hurt, and requested the "Prayer of Saint Basil the Great" to be read for her.[60] Another entry on the 5th October 1893 says that Maria Spineanu, a 70 year-old woman, troubled by swelling and hard disease, requested a prayer for the undoing of spells.[61] An explicit connection between demonic possession and bewitchment is made in an entry on the 13th April 1896, when the priest read twice the "Prayer of Saint Basil the Great" for Gligore Oniga from Sâncalu (60 years old), who claimed that his daughter bewitched him.[62]

The manuscript contains hundreds of notes like this, enabling us to observe the healing power ascribed to the priest, church rituals and prayers, and the concomitant belief that diseases are caused by bewitchment, spells and demonic possession. This understanding of diseases and misfortunes motivated peasants to beseech priests and monks, as well as healers and sorcerers, to employ countermagical rituals against demons, unclean spirits or malevolent witchcraft performed by evil individuals or enemies. As Christine D. Worobec wrote, about Russian and Ukrainian peasants from the nineteenth century, the thaumaturgical arsenal of the Orthodox ritual – prayers, incense, communion, consecrated bread, holy water, and oil – could be used to fuel both exorcism and the identification of individuals responsible for malefic action. She concludes that monks and priests regarded as intertwined cases of possession and bewitchment, thus legitimating and nourishing peasant understandings and beliefs.[63]

If the *Molitfelnic* provides insight into the Church's priestly work at various times and crises, folklore data gathered during the second half of the nineteenth century indicates

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[59] Pócs 2004b: 205.

[60] Ms. VIII/102, 79.

[61] Ms.VIII/102, 92.

[62] Ms.VIII/102, 107.

[63] Worobec 2001: 64–65.

the presence of practices and magic beliefs related to religious rituals. Some of these rituals are related to the presence or activity of the priest. Seasonal cycle rituals and rites of passage are preceded and accompanied by numerous magical practices performed by other ritual specialists, such as old seers or midwives. They employed Eucharistic and other elements consecrated by the priest (at Epiphany, Easter or the Day of the Cross) in magical rituals to speed up a potential marriage[64] or increase catches in fishing or hunting; they bathed children in holy water with flowers and money, to ensure their beauty and wellbeing,[65] or conducted rituals for preparing the dead or protecting the inhabitants of a home.[66] These data emphasize both the integration of formal ritual practices within broader folk magic and the interfaces between official religious and folk beliefs and practices. Along with the examples reviewed so far (and others to be presented later), the existence of charms manuscripts and folk beliefs also show that the clergy played a major role in shaping popular religion and culture, and that a large number of priests and monks, until late in the nineteenth century, contributed a view of the world similar to, or very like, that of the peasants.

Liturgy, Psalms and Priest's Curses

Aside from rituals fighting spells and enchantments, the priest could also perform a liturgy or a *sfeștanie* (the blessing of "holy water"), to attract luck and divine blessing, and control the effects of enchantments. This was also a method for solving various problems affecting an individual or a household. A popular belief mentioned by Elena Niculiță-Voronca in Bucovina, at the end of nineteenth century, ran as follows:

> … in the first Sunday with a new moon, one should pay for a liturgy in church [...] and any wish that one has, or any request, for health, luck, a good life, or anything for that matter, will come true.[67]

The diary of the Greek-Catholic priest from Blaj, mentioned above, contains numerous notes about believers requesting and paying for liturgies. On the 4th February 1892, Ilena, daughter of Costea Mafteiu from Oeni, requested a liturgy and "Prayers for the One Who Suffers Longer", because she was suffering from dizziness.[68] On the 18th February 1897, Anica Posia paid for a liturgy for Saint Anthony of Padua to

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64 Marian 2011b: 87.

65 Pavelescu 1945: 42–43, 53.

66 Burada 2006: 30; Rădulescu 2008: 145.

67 Niculiță-Voronca 2008: 240.

68 Ms.VIII/102, 82.

be performed on Friday 19th February for damage caused to her.[69] A liturgy for Saint Anthony was also requested on the 22nd of August 1897, by Németh András, employee of the railway company, to discover who stole his watch and jacket.[70] These examples reflects the popularity of Saint Anthony of Padua, the power ascribed to Romanian priests over and above ethnic, confessional and social borders, and also the magical effects ascribed to liturgy. Liturgies are performed, along with prayers from *Molitfelnic*, Psalms, candles, and fasting, for healing disease and solving problems like the discovery of thieves or the recovery of stolen objects. If we consider the priest and the rituals he performs from the believers' point of view, we notice the similitudes with charmers and disenchanters, and the magical effects assigned to clerical rituals and invocations.

The liturgy can also be perverted to a malefic act, employed to cause someone's death. In this respect, we find that "for health, as for everything that is good, one can pay a service during full moon and only for enemies in new moon".[71] In other parts of the country, "they pay a service for everyone in the first Saturday: either for enemies or for doing good".[72] Ion Muşlea cites a circular issued by the Orthodox Bishop Vasile Moga on December 22, 1824, concerning the power of the Liturgy for evil purposes. This circular mentions the involvement of a priest in practices that caused the death of a person. The bishop commanded that all priests should keep away from such practices and "not deceive people's beliefs with spells, as did the priest Iosif from Cârţişoara, who performed a mass upon the shirt of Gheorghe Ciortolan".[73] In the Apuseni Mountains, a practice based on the ordeals principle was used to punish thieves, at the beginning of twentieth century. This practice involved fasting, prayers to St Anthony of Padua and Mary, carrying seven wafers to the church, and paying the priest to read the Psalms. But the thieves also had the option of counteracting by returning to the victim, without him knowing, a part of the stolen goods. By doing this, the chastisement invoked on thieves returns on the victim.[74] This belief shows that, within peasant understanding of supernatural forces in various rituals and practices, the moral dimension is very ambiguous; the forces triggered could be impossible to control. These examples also show how a priest might use the powers assigned to him more like a charmer, and church rituals might be pressed explicitly into magical acts.

Underlining the ritual pressure against an offender, Kádár József, a Hungarian folklorist describes a custom from the Cluj area, during the second half of the nineteenth century:

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[69] Ms. VIII/102, 113.

[70] Ms. VIII/102, 115.

[71] Niculiţă-Voronca 2008: 240.

[72] Niculiţă-Voronca 2008: 240.

[73] Muşlea 1972: 403.

[74] Pavelescu 1945: 58.

In Moldoveneşti, it is customary to threaten some people like this:
Leave it to me to bring about your doom. One speaks these words to
villains. If one wishes to cause someone else's death, one can take the
following course of action. Fast for nine Tuesdays, not eat and not drink
anything, during which one pays for a church service every week, where
the priest reads Psalms 19 and 90, which list the curses of David. This
custom is called *furesare*. The man targeted for that particular ill wish
grows sick and dies soon after. Only a sorcerer who can figure out that
the disease comes from some enchantment can only cure this disease.[75]

These practices emphasize the ambiguity of the sacred, and demonstrate the power
ascribed to the priest, to bless or to curse, to heal or bring down diseases and misfortune.
The priest actively participates in the popular witchcraft system; he can steer away,
or bring about, ill fate.[76] Paying the priest to read the Psalter was used also as a mean
of punishing rivals or enemies, as we see in the case of Sava Oniga from Geoagiu de
Sus, who, on the 3rd November of 1896, requested a Psalter on Antoniu and Nicolae,
because they brought her to trial.[77]

Another version of this practice, called the "Black Psalter", and involving fasting
and reading the Psalter, is depicted in a material collected by Elena Niculiţă-Voronca:

You pay for one or even more, maximum twelve Psalters to be read for
you. But especially you have to pay for a "black psalter" on Wednesday
or Friday night, with candles downwards, to drop in the water, and in
nine days you'll throw him/her down as with a scythe.[78]

According to Alexandru Ofrim, the "Black Psalter" ritual, as it is still practiced,
means the reverse reading of the Psalter, accompanied by candles turned upside down
and ritual nudity, performed by a witch.[79] One explanation as to why rituals performed
by priests should be considered as more powerful than those performed by witches,

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[75] Kádár 2005: 61. "În Moldoveneşti se obişnuieşte a se ameninţa unii oameni în felul următor:
– Las că-ţi vin eu de hac. Aceste cuvinte se spun răufăcătorilor. Dacă cineva vrea să piară un astfel de om, se face
în felul următor. Se ţine post timp de nouă zile de marţi, nu se mănâncă şi nu se bea nimica, se plăteşte în fiecare
săptămână câte-o slujbă preotului, care rosteşte-n biserică psalmii XIX şi XC, în care se regăsesc afuriseniile
lui David. Acest obicei se numeşte *furesare*. Omul pentru care se ţine post şi slujbă, nu peste multă vreme se
îmbolnăveşte şi moare. De această boală îl poate vindeca numai un vrăjitor, care îşi dă seama că boala vine de
pe urma unor făcături."

[76] Pócs 2004a: 174.

[77] Ms. VIII/102, 111.

[78] Niculiţă-Voronca 2008: 212–213. 'Plăteşti de-ţi citeşte o psaltire sau mai multe, păn' la 12. Dar mai ales să-ţi
citească "psaltirea neagră", miercuri sau vineri, noaptea, cu lumânarea înturnată în jos, să picure în apă şi păn'
la nouă zile îl culci cum l-ai culca cu coasa.'

[79] Ofrim 2001: 266.

charmers and wizards in rural society lies in their ability to read and use sacred books, which are themselves ascribed supernatural powers in traditional culture.[80]

By stating this, we arrive at the last issue in my brief presentation, that of the dreaded priestly curses. If the rituals mentioned so far had to do mainly with the healing power Christian tradition assigned to the priest – fasting, reading psalms, performing liturgies – the priest's power to curse derives from his traditional attributes in the field of justice.[81]

In his book on the history of curses, Dan Horia Mazilu stressed the importance of church books on curses, used in solving judiciary issues. Different bishops issued curse books to address otherwise insoluble situations, to prove or to discover the truth. Preserved by initiated priests, they were passed on from generation to generation, employed only in extreme situations, such as to revenge a murder against an unknown murderer, or to punish a serious offender against the solidarity of a community. Those who owned them enjoyed great prestige within the community. According to church law, only hierarchs were allowed to curse, but, in practice, many priests used these curse books, or curses from liturgical books.[82]

The power of clerical curses, the link between priesthood and justice, were reaffirmed in the second half of the nineteenth century, as we can see from the preface of the book *Anathema and Curse*, published in 1907 in Cluj, after a Russian translation from 1868:

> Anathema and curse in order to punish evildoers, and to the praise and blessing of doers of good. […] according to the gift of the eternal Holy Spirit, that fell on the saint apostles, we have the same power to bound and unbind our believers, which are following God's commands, we send them happiness, our blessing and forgiveness of sins, and on evildoers and transgressors, that defy God's commandments, and are craving to damage their fellows […] if they have stolen or committed injustice on somebody, God knows their name if we don't, and we are anathematizing and cursing them, we are giving them to the eternal darkness, along with all like them […][83]

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[80] Ofrim 2001: 44–46; Cosma 2013: 356–359.

[81] Mihoc 2012: 10.

[82] Mazilu 2001: 268–273; Nicoară 2000: 194.

[83] "Afurisenie şi blăstăm spre pedepsirea făcătorilor de rele şi spre lauda şi binecuvântarea făcătorilor de bine: [...]şi noi nevrednicii după darul duhului sfânt cel pururea curgător, care s'a dat sfinţilor apostoli, având aceeaş putere a lega şi a deslega pe drept credincioşii noştri, cari plinesc poruncile d-zeieşti, pe aceia îi fericim şi le trimitem binecuvântarea noastră şi iertarea păcatelor, iară pe cei răi voitori şi călcători de lege, cari defaimă poruncile lui D-zeu şi poftesc paguba deaproapelui lor [...] de i-au furat sau l'au nedreptăţit l-au amărât pe N. N., pe unii ca aceia de au nume N. N. , iar de nu au, D-zeu ştie numele lor, îi afurisim şi-i blăstămăm şi-i procleţim, dându-i anatemei şi întunerecului de veci cu cei de un cuget cu ei [...]"

These curses follow patterns known from prayers used for exorcising, and from curses in certain psalms invoking divine wrath upon enemies, as we see from examples published by George Ciuhandu in the early twentieth century:

> Please God, punish my enemy and kill him. Punish him with the Holy Cross of Jesus Christ. Punish him with the prayers of Saint Mary, your Holy Mother, punish him with the Saints, punish him with the Holy Gospel, punish him with the Sacred Mass, punish him with the prayers of the Holy angels, punish him with the prayers of the Great John the Baptist etc.[84]

But, apart from curses established and issued by the Church, there were both allowed and forbidden rituals involving these texts. Just as we saw before, ritual texts can be perverted into maledictions, prayers can be used as curses, in order to bring upon the death of an enemy. The power to curse attributed to the priest both by church tradition and popular belief, was not limited to judiciary issues. Priests often relied on this power for completely different reasons. "Night services and enchantments", along with maledictions, were much-discussed topics among the priests at conferences at the end of the nineteenth century. Here we find mention of situations where a priest "cursed the whole community".[85] The historian Nicolae Iorga, describes a narrative from the eighteenth century, of a priest allegedly paralyzing a man through a curse.[86] The power of priestly curses is emphasised in another brief piece of evidence. In his short story, *Precupa*, the novelist and priest Ion Agârbiceanu describes the popular belief that a priestly curse can cause mortal illness or madness. Precupa, a boy servant for the priest, was one day sent to the mill, but sold the flour and drank the money. The priest cursed him. Since then Precupa was possessed by the Devil. His wife was convinced the priest had something to do with it, so she insisted that her husband went to another priest for confession, and to ask for a ritual reading, traditionally called *molitvă*.[87] In this situation, notice that another priest had to perform a ritual in order to remove the effect caused by the first priest's ritual. This is similar to cases when a disenchanter or a priest revokes the action of a charmer or sorrcerer, a common pattern in folk narratives.

In the area of Western Christianity, the healing, exorcising and cursing priest became practically extinct by the twentieth century.[88] But in Romanian Orthodox Church these kind of stances and attributes assigned to priestly activity were still in use in

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84 Ciuhandu 1930: 371.
85 Soroştineanu 2005a: 28.
86 Iorga 2007: 215.
87 Agârbiceanu 1962: 270–271.
88 Pócs 2013: 186.

the same period, and not only as traces and remnants at the level of popular religion. Contemporary researchers[89] continue to emphasize this major aspect of the Orthodox tradition in spite of the complex transformations produced by modernization at every level of Romanian society.

Conclusions

In conclusion, by exploring this small slice of the large and rich realm of popular religion, I think we can safely state that, in nineteenth-century Romanian rural society, in Transylvania, the priest was mainly a mediator of the sacred and a fully integrated actor within the rural magical system, and less of a patriot or an *aufklärer* as he is usually described in Romanian historiography. We cannot reduce his complex activity strictly to the churches' normative narratives or to clerical prescriptions. There was no clear demarcation between religion and magic in rural society. In addition, the opposition between the priest (representative of the institutionalized sacred), and witches and enchanters (representatives of popular practices, demonized in Christian tradition), is relative and ambiguous. In daily practice, the priest often cooperated, directly or indirectly, with other agents performing sacred rituals, or supplemented their actions. In some cases and situations, the priest performed rituals and enacted curses to bring about diseases or afflictions, thus acting as an enchanter, all according to the peasant' magical system.

Secondly, in spite of their claim to be fighting against "superstition" and magical practices and beliefs, both Romanian Churches continued to sustain a traditional view of the world, based on a constant struggle between good and evil. This worldview understood charms, bewitchments, spells and witchcraft as real threats to biological and social life of peasant society. My analysis of church rituals, prayers and services, along with counter-spell manuscripts, church documents and folk beliefs reveals that there was constant dialogueue and interaction between the official teachings and practices of the church, and folk beliefs and practices. Peasant views of bewitchment, possession, disease and misfortune demonstrate how peasants appropriated Orthodox understandings of causality, of the Devil, and its workings in this world. At the level of ritual practice, priests were often perceived as more similar to charmers, in spite of hierarchical and theological concern for a clear delineation between magic and religion: between a priesthood representing the official supernatural, and charmers, witches and wizards, representing its pagan or demonic equivalent.

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[89] Ofrim 2001; Gavriluță 2008; Komáromi 2010; Czégényi 2014.

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Micro-Analysis of *Uroci* (Evil Charms and Spells) in the Croatian Tradition

Deniver Vukelić

Introduction

Uroci (a Croatian and South Slavic word belonging to a wider semantic field of curses, evil charms and spells) are a magical concept of charms and spells still accepted in many cultures, including that of Croatia, that are intended to be utilised for magical attacks on individuals, animals or plants. In Croatia, as well as in the wider South Slavic cultural space, they are believed to be invoked by specific magical procedures within one magical system, by combining several systems, or sometimes even as autonomous energetic entities. For such *uroci* are believed to possess magical functions which can be cast upon a charmed being, last for some time and manifest themselves through symptoms and effects; they can, however, also be removed (from a human, animal or plant) with the application of a specific magical countermeasure. *Ureći* (Croatian verb) in the Croatian language means to spell, to curse, to enchant or charm someone negatively.

Classification of *Urok* Beliefs and Roles of Individuals Within its Performance

Urok beliefs can be divided into four main groups:
1. *Uroci* as energetic entities which exist in nature (and which can synergize with a living being and effect it negatively, similar to a virus or bacteria).
2. *Uroci* as simple spells with a specific and simple magical act, gesture or object, this act is believed to have a negative effect on the targeted person, or is recognised as negating his or her freedom of choice in some aspect of life.
3. *Uroci* as exclusively verbal charms, magical performative speech, which are believed to have a negative effect on a targeted person, or is recognised as negating his or her freedom of choice in a particular sphere of life.

4. *Uroci* as complex spells, blended from several different magical acts from several different magical systems (verbal magic, plant magic, written magic, astrology...), which are believed to have a negative effect on a targeted person, or are recognised as negating his or her freedom of choice in some aspect of life.

The first group of *urok* beliefs describes *uroci* as natural forces, energetic entities; bound by its actions to perform a specific goal, not necessarily within the concept of a Judeo-Christian Satan or forces subordinate to him. They are, in some of its variants, personified invisible beings found in certain deserted areas which are prohibited to visit. They have not been created by anyone, they have existed from the very beginning; an evil wind gathers them, while a good one disperses them. They can exist in fire, water, ground, air, or stone. It was believed, according to Croatian ethnographical writings, that anyone who wanted to do so could evoke them and force them onto someone or something by directing their gaze onto them, according to their own wishes or reasons.[1] It is noted that among Slavic people, *uroci* are sometimes specific demonic creatures with their own identity, and among other Slavs that they are only magic functions or have a magical effect.[2] Also, it is important to note, this personification could also be considered as part of the healing process in charming, providing identity and other aspects of life in order to provide the charmer with focus in the process of charming the sickness.

Most known examples of the second group, *uroci* as a simple magical act, is *the evil look*, or *the evil eye* (Greek *ophtalmos baskonos*, Latin *oculus malus*) which is also connected with *the evil tongue* (Latin *mala lingua*), or with hatreds of gods (in Antic Period), or recognised as the Devil's work (in the Christian medieval or early modern period), or with *bjesovi* (Slavic folk demons and spirits of nature).[3] Belief in the power of the evil eye is one of the most common factors in many old European and World cultures, which is verified by the fact that the most usual expressions used in the practice are of the same semantic construction (Italian *mal'occhio*, German *böser Blick*, French *mauvais oeil*).[4] The exact term originated in Europe from the Medieval Latin translation of the Bible, *The Vulgate*, more precisely from Gospel of Mark,[5] where Christ is quoted as follows:

21 Ab intus enim de corde hominum malæ cogitationes procedunt, adulteria, fornicationes, homicidia,

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[1] Matasović 1918: 4–5.

[2] Matasović 1918: 41–42.

[3] Matasović 1918: 4.

[4] Pócs 2004: 206.

[5] Mk 7:22.

22 furta, avaritiæ, nequitiæ, dolus, impudicitiæ, **oculus malus**, blas-
phemia, superbia, stultitia.

Many pre-modern societies believed that the human eye does not collect light, but emits its own specific radiation and in such a way scans the environment, thereby creating sight. From that came the belief that such radiation can have negative magical functions on other beings if the intent behind that look is negative. The concept of the evil eye shares many characteristics with other systems, primarily with witchcraft (from the evil tongue to explaining someone's misfortune or in systems of cursing). The role of the evil eye in medieval and early modern witchcraft was very important in the healing or preventing of diseases, the manufacturing of which is one of a witch's main attributes, and also in charming and its countermeasures, as in witch identification. It also fulfils its role in the social systems of smaller communities and neighbourhood circles, according to the sociology of witchcraft accusations.[6] Among the folk, the most common belief was that *urok* spelling was practiced by witches or old women who wanted to bring evil upon the community. It is important to state here that this category includes not only the belief in the look which could bring *urok* on someone, but also a hand gesture or some other gesture or simpler spell. The evil eye could be cast intentionally, but also unintentionally; it was believed that someone could also be cursed with *urok* without any evil intention, for example, if a person who casts the evil eye is the member of a marginalised group believed to possess magical attributes.[7]

The third group of beliefs in *uroci* is that which views *uroci* as solemn verbal magical acts and/or oral magical performance, and that *urok* is the consequence of the spoken magical phrase which in itself contains the intention, the will and the act itself for which is believed to negatively affect the targeted person, or is recognised as negating freedom of choice in some aspect of life.

But, the most common group of urok beliefs is the fourth, and that demands more complex magical acts taken from multiple systems, for example, the aforementioned verbal magical act, in combination with gestures and herbal potion or an animal or mixed medium, with magical accessories accompanied with a knowledge of specific atmospheric, spatial and cosmic (astrological or climate) conditions. An example of such an *urok* is *nagaz* which came to Europe from the middle-east, and was also in use in the Croatian historical lands. They were most usually created as physical objects: a piece of cloth with urine, saliva, or combined with other magical objects.[8] The object would be left on the ground, on the battlefield, at the crossroads, at a house's threshold or gates; it was considered a form of magical land mine, with the belief that the targeted

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[6] Pócs 2004: 220.

[7] Bailey 2003: 45–46.

[8] Iolar 2013: 218.

person is cursed if he or she crosses over it. Such examples are many. Also, in the system of *uroci*, as in those of other forms of magical acts as well, different roles for the person included in the magical episode or act can be evidenced.[9] These roles include:

1. Charmee; the person who has specific needs, desires, intention or loss, and wants to deal with it in a magical way and with magical methods.

2. Charmer; the magical person who in the name of the Charmee performs *urok*, this can be a different person with special knowledge, but the Charmee him/herself can also take this role.

3. Victim; the targeted person to whom *urok* will bring a specific negative effect (loss of marriage, happiness, success, love, health, life...), or that with *urok* the target will be directed into assisting in some positive outcome for a Charmee (love, social, judicial or material), or by it is negated their freedom of choice in some aspect of life.

4. Object; physical objects, phenomena or beings that the Charmee tries to gain with *urok*, it can be the Victim alone if the goal is a feeling or emotion of the Victim towards Charmee.

5. Counter-charmer; magical person who can remove *urok* from the Victim or Victim's family members with specific magical acts. It can also include a magical battle (i.e. by returning the *urok*) with the Charmer or Charmee.

In some cases it is believed that *urok* can also be removed by the Victim himself, with the use of certain magical acts.

BELIEFS IN *UROK* PROTECTION AND *UROK* CLEANSING

Throughout history, the most common defence from all kinds of *urok* spells were amulets and talismans. For example, in Ancient Egypt, the most common defence was The Eye of Horus amulet, known as *udjat*. But, it must be made clear, that it was believed that amulets and talismans cannot be used for cleansing *urok* spells, but only for protection from possible ones. If *urok* was already cast on a person, that person should firstly be cleansed, and only then could the affected person be protected with an amulet or talisman.[10]

In the Bible, among the other laws of Moses in the Old Testament, this law can be found: "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are abominations to the Lord."[11] From

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[9] Paradigm of role classification is taken according Golopenţia 2004: 149–151, and then adapted for the purposes of this research and article.

[10] Iolar 2013: 222.

[11] Deuteronomy 18:10–12.

this it is clear that in the Judeo-Christian world spelling was forbidden and a sin, a taboo, and a similar opinion is presented throughout the medieval and early modern period.

In some Croatian areas, women who performed *urok* spells were called *uročice*, and among Croatian people in Herzegovina, they were called *promjernice*, because they could *take measure*, they could *urok* s*pell* someone or something.[12]

One of the oldest customs of avoiding *uroks* as demons is with a "curse on demons", or physical act such as spitting:[13] spitting on a path crossed by a black cat, spitting on children to protect them from *urok* cursing, spitting in the face of someone who is thought to be with the evil eye.

Uroci were most typically healed and still are healed and cleansed today with charms and charming (Croatian *basme/bajanje/bajalice*). Charms are better preserved in Croatian folk tradition than *uroci* themselves, because people believed it was more useful to have an "antidote" than the "poison" itself. Also, many everyday illnesses and pains were believed to be caused by *uroci*: from headaches and fevers, to more serious diseases afflicting both people and animals. So, people who practiced *urok* cleansing were considered mediums, and it was believed they could remove *urok*, or transfer the *uroci* from the victim to themselves, but without harm. By rule, they had to be should be specially prepared, and in Christianity "by the Church cleansed".

The common magical method for *urok* cleansing, was and still is water. Coal was also often used in conjunction with water, as since antiquity it has been regarded as a water purificator. Many spells connected with *urok* cleansing used both water and coal accompanied with verbal charms.[14] It is important to state here that there are several forms of water which are believed to be adequate for such a procedure: "virgin water", fresh water taken from a well, "holy water" from a Church, and "*omaja*", water collected from under the mill wheel.[15] Other materials and objects typically used together with verbal magic in the process of *urok* cleansing, besides water and coal, were: saliva, bowls, glasses, flowers, wood, silver coins, horse shoes and other iron objects, old money, knives, Christmas candles, and others.[16] Functions and gestures which were performed with the magical objects and charms were: crossing, rubbing, fasting, walking around a church on the knees, cooking, bathing, standing on one leg, throwing coal or salt, and others.[17] *Urok* spells were usually cleansed during the day, because it was believed that they are more powerful during the night.[18]

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[12] Matasović 1918: 4.
[13] Matasović 1918: 44.
[14] Matasović 1918: 52–53.
[15] Matasović 1918: 53.
[16] Matasović 1918: 54.
[17] Matasović 1918: 54.
[18] Matasović 1918: 55.

One of the common practices of *urok* spell cleansing was with the technique of verbal annulations, by counting backward to zero. In this process it was believed that unwanted phenomenon would be condemned to a void.[19] The following is such a charm: "Urok sjedi na pragu, uročica pod pragom, urok skoči te uročicu uguši / uroka od 9 oka 8 / uroka od 8 oka 7 / uroka od 7 oka 6 / uroka od 6 oka 5 / uroka od 5 oka 5 / uroka od 4 oke 3 / uroka od 3 oke 2 / uroka od 2 oke 1 / uroka od 1 oke 0" ('*Urok* sits on the threshold, *uročica* under the threshold, *urok* jumps and suffocates *uročica*, *urok* of 9 eye 8...').[20] In the Bosnian magical folk tradition, for example, which was commonly mixed with Croatian, there is a written charm with a similar principle of annulation and negation, which was used by mothers to cleanse *uroci* from their children: "Ide Arap po gorici, nosi čarap na nožici / ni Arapa u gorici, ni čarapa na nožici / ni na moru mosta, ni na dlanu dlaka / ni na mom djetetu (ime) uroka" ('Arab goes through the hills, he wears a sock on his foot, nor is the Arab in the hills, nor sock on his foot, nor bridge on the sea, nor hair on the palm, nor on my child [name] *urok*').[21]

Examples and Analysis of *Urok* Beliefs

This research was conducted on examples collected from ethnographical writings from the end of the 19th Century, and the first half of the 20th Century, from different areas of Croatia (east, south and north of Croatia to cover most of it), and published periodically in the journal *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena* by the Yugoslav Academy for Sciences and Arts. The most interesting examples can be found among folk beliefs connected to love, courting, marriage and sexuality. The most common *uroci spells* are concerned with love magic, and as such their goal was to win over someone's affection or to keep it. Of course, there is the possibility that at the time of their use these spells weren't thought of as *uroci*, but as we will see in the examples that follow, most of them were performed with a combination of verbal magic, gestures, objects, and a targeted person, Victim, is ought to be left with no freedom of choice in doing something or is by the magic use forced to do something for a Charmer/Charmee. Beacuse of that reason we view such spells as *uroks*.

Example 1 – Love magic, Otok village near the town of Vinkovci.
In 1902, the Croatian ethnographer Josip Lovretić recorded several love spells and charms from the village of Otok, near the town of Vinkovci, in today County of Vukovar and Srijem:[22]

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[19] Roper 2003: 21.

[20] Matasović 1918: 33.

[21] Iolar 2013: 222.

[22] Lovretić 1902: 191–194.

When a young girl or a young man wants to be loved by a specific person, they do this: 1. A cloth, with which a dead man's jaw was bound, is removed when the dead person is on his way to the graveyard, and that cloth is circled three times around the targeted person without his or her knowing. 2. The water with which the deceased is bathed is given to the person which is desired. 3. When a woman dies, they put eggs between her feet, through the night, and then they give those eggs to a person whom they love. 7. On a Friday, they carry an apple into the drying room, and then the person takes off his clothes and turns the apple around once, naked, saying: "As apple around drying room, so she around me." 8. They take the root of a hyssop plant, they cut it vertically, one part they coat with fat and one with honey, and they bury it in the ground in two places, so that the person they love passes between those two halves. Sometimes, they don't bury the root, but they hold the halves, one in each hand and hug the loved one, gathering the root behind their backs as it was before cutting. And, in both cases, after parting with the loved one, they bind the root with three woollen threads, red, green and black, uttering the charm: "When he sees me, he blushes, when he courts me, he greens, when he doesn't see me, for me he blackens." 9. They take saliva when their loved one spits, they take his form if he stood in the wet ground, and hair, and they mix that and put it in a chimney, and if he doesn't love her, he will dry like the one in the chimney. 10. A girl asks two sisters who are both breastfeeding to squirt some milk into her palm. Then she takes flour and kneads a cookie. She dries it in the sun, and on a young Friday at sunrise she looks at the cookie and thinks about the object of her desire and says: "Like this doughbinds, so you for me get blind." 13. When a cat gives birth on a young Friday or a young Sunday, she can burn those kittens on a fire, and mix the ashes in the food of the victim, so he will get blind for her as do blind kittens.[23]

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[23] '*Kad divojka (ili momak) oće, da je momak (ili da ga divojka) zavoli, vrača ovako*: 1. Marama, kojom je mrtavac bio ispod brade svezan, skine se s mrtavca, kad ga u grobje ponesu, pak tu maramu momak ili divojka tri put obnese oko onoga, kog voli, ali da onaj ne zna. – 2. Onu vodu, kojom je mrtavac opran, daju u piću onomu, kog žele da obmame. – 3. Kad žensko umre, metnu jaja mrtavcu među nožne članke, da prinoći, pa daju ta jajca onom, kog vole, da jide. – 7. Nose u mladi petak prije zore jabuku u suvaru, pa onaj, ko triva, gol golcat okrene jedan put jabuku uokolo i govori: "Kako jabuka oko suvare, tako on oko mene," i dade mu u mladu nedilju, da jabuku pojide. – 8. Od trave miloduva uzmu korin, razrižu uzduž, jedan dio namažu mašću, a drugi medom pa zakopaju u zemlju u razmak, a glede, da kroz taj razmak projde onaj, kog vole. Više put ne zakapaju taj korin, nego ga drže svaku polu u drugoj ruki i ogrle onog, kog vole, a dok grle, dotle spoje korin, kao što je bio, dok nije bio razrizan. Ili korin zakapali, ili u ogrljaju sastavili, svakako ga, kad se rastanu, omataju sa tri vunena konca: crvenim, zelenim i crnim, pa govore: "Kad me vidio, onda se crvenio; kad skobio, onda se zelenio; a kad ne vidio za mnom pocrnio." – 9. Ugrabe sline, kad pljune onaj, koga žele, pa uzmu njegove stopine, ako je na vlažnoj zemlji stajo, i uzmu kose, to umeljaju u blato i prilipe u odžak, i ako onaj onu ne voli, nek se osuši ko u odžaku. – 10. Divojka zaišće od dvi sestre, koje obadvi dicu doje, da joj svaka ištrca malo mlika u dlan iz svojih

When groom comes to bride with his party: 2. She takes the reins of his horse, circles around it and looks upon the groom while saying: "I don't bridle horse with rein, but you with me." Then he will listen to her as a good horse listens orders of his rider.[24]

If your husband is a cheater: 2. You take two little pigeons, you cut off their heads, and arrange them so the husband must pass between the heads, and then you join them, so their heads kiss each other with their beaks, and you put them in a bed, so you would kiss each other like pigeons.[25]

Analysis: The first examples of love magic are connected to beliefs about the magical powers of the deceased and burial sites. It was believed that objects could become magical mediums of *urok* spells if they were from a dead person, or were in physical contact with him or his grave. Some other examples of love magic are based on sympathetic magic, of the analogy of magical acts and real world happenings. They include the usage of different plants, cookies, compound magical objects made of cloth and bodily fluids, and the act of creating them is governed by cosmic conditions, days of the week or month, such as a young Friday or Sunday, during the crescent Moon. Verbal performatives are sympathetic, and often follow *similia similibus* formula, such as in: "Kako jabuka oko suvare, tako on oko mene" ('As apple around drying room, so he around me'), "Kad me vidio, onda se crvenio; kad skobio, onda se zelenio; a kad ne vidio za mnom pocrnio" ('When he sees me, he blushes, when he courts me, he greens, when he doesn't see me, for me he blackens'), "Kako se ovo tisto slipilo, tako ti za mnom oslipio" ('Like this dough glues, so you for me are blind'). A common base for all of these spells are their primary aim, that the targeted person, nearly always male, focuses his desire onto the Charmer. Of course, by doing this, the Victim loses their freedom of choice. Also, it is important to note that some *urok* spells are figurative, and include giving body fluids to the Victim (to consume or to wear), or even involve the killing of animals for ritual purposes. There is also present a form of *nagaz*, a magical object, created so that the Victim may cross over it and be bewitched. Also evident, is the magical look, the evil eye, which in these traditional love charms is not identified as such but it is very clear that this is what it is.

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prsa. Uzme tri štipetka brašna pa na dlanu zamisi kolačić. Na suncu ga osuši, pa u mladi petak do sunca is'oda progleda kroz taj kolačić, misli na momka i govori: "Kako se ovo tisto slipilo, tako ti za mnom oslipio." – 13. Ako se mačka omaci u mladi petak ili mladu nedilju, sažeže mačiće na vatri i onaj pepeo umiša u jilo onome, kog oće da primami, pa će oslipiti za njom ko slipo mače.'

[24] '*Kad mladoženja k mladoj dolazi sa svatovima*: [...] 2. Neka uzme uzdu, zaokruži je i kroz nju nek izgleda momka i govori: "Ne uzdam konja uzdom, već tebe sa mnom." Onda će je on slušati ko dobar konj svog kočijaša.'

[25] '*Ako je muž trkalica*: (...) 2. "Uzme par golubića, otkine jim glave, metne ji tako, da muž mora proći izmed glava, a onda sastavi glave, da se kljun s kljunom ljubi, i metne u postelju, da se ljube ko golubovi."'

Example 2 – Magical contraception, the village of Otok near the town of Vinkovci
The aforementioned Croatian ethnographer Josip Lovretić also recorded, in the same location, magical acts performed as a form of contraception:[26]

> When going to be wed: 6. The woman kicks the church door with her right foot and says: This door [is made of] fir-wood, I [so become] barren sister.[27]

> If woman doesn't want to give birth again: 6. When she is with her husband for the first time, she urinates on hot coal and buries it in the field, she will not be pregnant until the coal is live again. 12. If a child dies, and she doesn't want to be pregnant again, she turns the dead baby upside down in the cradle and says: "My fruit and kin is dead, God don't give anymore, Nor to carry, Nor to give birth, God grant me to be accurate."[28]

Analysis: These examples above, also from Otok near Vinkovci, can be regarded as everyday life advice. They can be viewed as a form of magical contraception, because the main goal of each is to prevent the woman from becoming pregnant. They can be categorised as *urok* spells for several reasons. Besides their form and structure, their primary premise is to prevent the formation of new human life, and in all probability deprive the male half of the marital couple freedom of choice. All of these examples can be categorised into a second, third and fourth group of *urok* spells, from simple gestures and acts, performative speech, to complex and compound mixtures of speech, gestures, accessories and other conditions. Also, here the usage of one's own body fluids and secretions (blood, urine...) or parts of the body (hair etc.) or clothes (shirt etc.) which are used in the magical act as a link to the person that performs the act. It is interesting that in these cases that it is one person who assumes the magical roles and functions – a woman performs the magical act, *urok* for birth control, performs it on herself, so technically she is the Charmer, Charmee, Victim and Object simultaneously. "Collateral" Victims are unborn children, and the husband, if he doesn't agree or is ignorant of his wife's decision. From a linguistic view, verbal magical acts are performed and realized with impossible future, analogy and comparison with using *similia similibus* formula.

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[26] Lovretić 1902: 191–194.

[27] '*Kad pojdu na vinčanje:* [...] 6. Lupi desnom nogom u crkvena vrata i kaže: "Ova vrata čamova, ja seka jalova." To veli da ne bi rodila.'

[28] '*Ako žena želi da više ne rodi:* – 6. Kad prvi put bude s mužem, pomokri živ ugljen i zakopa ga u ledinu, da ne rodi, dok ugljen ne oživi. – 12. Ako ženi umre dite, a ne želi da više rodi, okrene mrtvo ditešce na postelji, da budu noge, di je uzglavlje, i govori: "Umro mi je plod i rod, / A više mi ne do Bog, / Ni da nosim, ni da rodim, / Bog do, da pogodim."'

Example 3: *Urok* spells from the town of Koprivnica

Another Croatian ethnographer, Rudolf Horvat collected several spells in the town of Koprivnica and its vicinity which can be classed as *urok* spells:[29]

> For a husband to stop drinking wine, the wife does the following. She takes a bowl of wine, and puts it under a dead man's hearse, under the very head of the corpse. When the corpse is put in the coffin she should immediately take the bowl of wine. When the crescent Moon rises, she should mix this wine with other, normal wine and let her husband drink.[30]

> To win a court case: you should take a white cloth which was used to bind a dead man's jaw in order to close his mouth. When you are at the court, you hold that cloth and spell the following: "As that dead man couldn't talk, so my opponents won't. This cloth is after use usually laid in a coffin, so it must be stolen."[31]

Analysis: These examples from Koprivnica, concerned with marital life or judicial usage, as well as some examples from Otok, have as a strong element, a belief in the power of the dead. A main condition of these *uroci* is the belief that objects can be magical artefacts because of the connection to a deceased individual. Both *urok* spells utilise the idea of magical analogy, in which a metaphorical act is transformed into a real result. More precisely, it can be seen as a verbal compound of the second *urok* spell: "As that dead man couldn't talk, so my opponents won't", in which the comparison of a dead man in combination with an object which bound his mouth before burial, is the main premise of a belief in this kind of *urok* spell.

Example 4: *Urok* spells from Poljice

Croatian ethnographer Frano Ivanišević documented *urok* spells from Poljice in Dalmatia:[32]

> There is lot of magic, *urok* spells, charms, and evil eyes on the first day of a wedding. They say that the enemy can spell charms on you: if he locks the door and throws the key into the sea or buries it in the ground,

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[29] Horvat 1896: 254.

[30] '*Da muš ne pije vina,* neka žena učini ovako. Uzet će posudu vina, pa će je metnuti pod mrtvački odar tako, da bude baš pod mrtvačevom glavom. Čim metnu mrtvaca u lijes, treba da se odmah uzme posuda s vinom ispod odra. Kad bude mladi mjesec, pomiješat će žena ovo vino sa drugim naravnim, pa će ga dati svomu mužu, da ga pije.'

[31] '*Da dobiješ pravo kod suda,* valja da imaš u sebe onaj bijeli rubac, kojim je bila mrtvacu podvezana brada, da mu ne budu otvorena usta. "Kao što nije mogao govoriti onaj mrtvac, tako ne će moći ni moji protivnici", misli si (sic!) onaj, koji s rupcem ide na sud. Ovaj se rubac obično meće u lijes do nogu, pa ga valja ukrasti.'

[32] Ivanišević 1905: 181.

the young couple won't be able to consummate the marriage until it is unlocked. Because of this belief people don't allow the bride on their wedding day to close doors or bind any objects. They tell a story about a man, who was cursed with *urok* spell, and on the first night, when he ought to lay with his bride, he couldn't take off his pants, and he went into the bed, and the bride lay under the bed.[33]

Analysis: Locking *urok* spells are often mentioned in folk beliefs. It is possible that the spelling was followed by other elements, body fluids or secretions, or the use of a person's belongings, and, of course, some verbal charms. There are many written sources, including from among Jesuit official records from the time of witch trials and prosecutions in Croatia, in which there are reports of the finding of locked locks or knots in the ground or elsewhere, with the intention of locking someone's marital life, in a sexual and communicational sense.

Beliefs in *Urok* Protection and Their Cleansing

In the Croatian oral tradition there are written, collected and preserved many different magical spells which were believed to protect from and cleanse *urok* spells, like charms and other apotropaic magical acts.[34]

A few interesting writings from the same sources above are clearly concerned with this type of spell. In the vicinity of Vinkovci, in Otok, Croatian ethnographer Josip Lovretić also documented beliefs about charms.

First are examples of those protecting against *uroci*, apotropaic spells:

When a young woman or a young man prepares for church or dance, they spit into their palm, and then with that palm hit his or her own forehead, while saying: "When on my palm hair grow, then I can be *urok* cursed."[35]

A young man takes flint, fat and 9 hazelnuts, and then urinates on his godfather's wheel on the axis of a carriage. On that day a girl cannot

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[33] 'Puno se još gata o urocin, čarin i zlin očiman prvoga dana vinčanja. Kažu, da dušmanin more ti bacit čari: ako zaključa sponu i kljunak ti dan, baci u more ili zakopa u zemlju, ne će se dvoje mladi' moć združit, doklen se god to ne otključa. Zato i ne dadu nevisti prvi dan ni zatvorit vrata ni uz' zavezat na ničen. Pripovidaju o nikon, na koga bačene čari, da prve večeri kad iša' leć svojin virenicom, nije moga' svuć gaće, jednu nogavicu svuci, da će drugu svuć, a ona se sama obuci, pa sve tako veliko vrime. O drugon pripovidaju: on doša' do postelje, a žena pod postelju.'

[34] Vukelić 2014: 257–264.

[35] Lovretić 1902: 192. 'Kad se divojka ili momak sprema u crkvu ili kolo, pljune u dlan, pa dlanom mane po ćelu govoreć: "Kada po mojem dlanu dlaka porasla, onda me urekli."'

do anything to him. Also, on the wedding day he wears in his pocket an unprepared *kalin*, so woman's sorceries don't affect him.[36]

Analysis: Both examples are examples of sympathetic, imitative magical practice,, in the first example we can observe a simple act of body fluid usage on a specific body part, in this case the forehead and palm, which are both without hair, so verbal spell evokes the impossibility of *urok* spelling. The second example is based on the same principle, and the main analogy is of the non-mixing of something.

The other example is a technique for diagnosis if someone is under *urok* spell:

> The suspect grabs water with a spoon from a plate three times. If he doesn't succeed in grabbing the water, then it is known that he is cursed.[37]

A similar example exists in written form in Stupnik near Zagreb, and was recorded by Croatian ethnographer Stjepan Korenić:[38]

> If a woman wants to know if there are real *urok* spells, she takes nine spoonfuls of water and puts them in a bowl. From that bowl she takes water with the spoon to another bowl. If there are now only eight spoonfuls of water, there are real *urok* spells. Afterwards, she puts five burning coals into the bowl. If the coal pieces make a loud noise and immediately sink to the bottom of the bowl, then the *urok* spells are very strong. Then she boils that same water and with it she cleanses the *urok* spells. She coats the eyes, hands and feet of the cursed man with that water and he will immediately be better. Afterwards she throws the water under the bed and says: go away there where you came from![39]

Also, another similar example comes from Koprivnica, documented by Croatian ethnographer Rudolf Horvat:[40]

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[36] Lovretić 1902: 192. "Momak uzme kremen, masat i devet lišnjaka, pa zamokri kumov točak u glavinu, da mu taj dan divojka ništa učiniti ne može. Na vinčanje nosi u džepu neprimljenoga kalima, da ga se ne prime divojkine vračke."

[37] Matasović 1918: 22–23. "Kada ga obaje, grabi kašikom tri put iz tanjira vodu. Ako je u tri put ne izgrabi, onda se zna, da je bolesnik urečen."

[38] Korenić 1896: 148.

[39] 'Ako hoće žena da dozna, jesu li pravi uroci, uzme 9 žlica vode i metne ih u zdjelu. Iz te zdjele prelijeva vodu žlicom u drugu zdjelu. Ako je sada vode 8 žlica, onda su doista uroci. Poslije toga meće u zdjelu pet gorućih ugljena. Ako ugljeni jako zacvrče i odmah padnu na dno, znak je, da su jaki uroci. Poslije skuha tu vodu i njom tjera uroke. Natare oči, ruke i noge, i odmah je čovjeku bolje. Nakon toga baci vodu pod postelju, i kaže: odlazite onamo, odkud ste i došli!'

[40] Horvat 1896: 255–256.

Urok curses are healed like this. An older woman takes a cup of fresh water and puts three burning coals in it. Before putting the first one in, she makes the sign of the cross on the cup and prays: "*Uroci*, if you are male, go under the hat! With the help of God and power of Blessed Mother Virgin!" Before putting the second one in, she again makes the sign of the cross on the cup and prays: "*Uroci*, if you are female, go under the stove! With the help of God and power of Blessed Mother Virgin!" Before putting the third one in, she again makes the sign of the cross on the cup and prays: "*Uroci*, if you are a girl, go under the corolla! With the help of God and the power of the Blessed Mother Virgin!" The sick person drinks some of the water, puts it on their eyes and forehead, left hand and right foot, right hand and left foot, and all the while he mustn't wipe it. He must repeat this twice more, each time after 15 minutes. Then he takes the water that is left in a cup and throws it away in the yard of the house towards the sun saying: "Without knowing it came, without knowing it went!" Returning to the house he shouldn't look around the yard. Everything must be done before the sunset.[41]

In other writings from the field, also from Otok,[42] there are to be found two complete charms for *urok* cleansing together with the procedures which follow the verbal magical act:

They take a plate and a spoon. Then he who charms goes to the well, and at the well he hails Madonna three times. From the well, he takes three spoons of virgin water in a plate, and returns without noticing anything and without saying anything. In the room, the Charmer (Counter-charmer, as a matter of fact) puts their fingers into the water and makes the sign of the cross. Then he/she crosses the one who will be counter-charmed, and puts water on his eyes and crosses his hands and legs. While doing that, she speaks: "*Uroci* are going away, Holy Trinity rules by mercy and

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[41] '"Vuroki" se liječe ovako. Starija žena uzme lončić friške vode, pa u nj baci tri žarka ugljena. Prije no baci prvi, prekriži rukom lončić i moli: "Vuroki, ako ste muški, otliadjajte pod škrlak (škriljak)! Z božjom pomoćjom, preblažene majke device moćjom!" Prije nego baci drugi ugljen, učini opet križ nad lončićem veleći: "Vuroki, ako ste ženski, otliadjajte pod peču! S Božjom pomoćjom, preblažene majke device moćjom!" Prekriživ lončić i treći put, opet govori: "Vuroki, ako ste devojački, othadjajte pod partu (vijenac). S božjom pomoćjom, preblažene majke device moćjom!" Bolesnik pije malo ovako pripravljene vode, natare njom oči i čelo, lijevu ruku i desnu nogu, desnu ruku i lijevu nogu, a ne smije toga obrisati. Dva put poslije po četvrt sata sve to ponavlja. Na to uzme lončić s preostalom vodom, pa je izlije na dvoru prema suncu, govoreći: "Ne znajuć došlo, ne znajuć otišlo!" Vraćajući se u kuću, ne smije se ogledati na dvor. To sve valja učiniti prije sunčanoga zapada.'

[42] Matasović 1918: 23.

the virginity of Blessed Virgin Mary." She gives a few drops of water to the Counter-charmed, to be drunk.[43]

Analysis: In Croatia, but also in the wider South Slavic tradition, this example of belief in acknowledgment of *urok* spelling is typical, but so also is *urok* cleansing by using water and burning coals. Here there are two strong natural elements present, which are in opposition, and throughout human magical and religious history they were very often used in purification purposes, both of spaces and people. In these examples from Koprivnica, we can witness that with the magical use of coal and water through specific ritual of purification, verbal charms which communicate directly with *urok* spells are also used, thus personifying them. Inside of the verbal charm, there is also an evocation of divine help, directly from a Christian God, or the Holy Virgin Mary.

In the same source,[44] the following procedure of *urok* cleansing with fruit tree branches and magical dialogueue is also attested:

> They say that *urok* spells most affect someone who is handsome and easy on the eyes. If a man is handsome and cursed, they collect branches from a fruit tree that has already blossomed and the flowers have fallen. They also pick the flowers and dry them, and afterwards, together with the branches, boil them. In the resulting water the cursed one, the Victim, bathes. While bathing, the following is said: "Fruit! All paradise fruits gave birth / You are barren, fruitless / Your flowers you drop / In flower you smear / of cursed you become face." When he is bathed, if someone asks him: "How are you, ill man?" He must answer: "Fine, thanks to God. I cleansed *uroci*. If I could, I would happily do the same to him who spells someone."[45]

Analysis: This, a very interesting example, also according to sympathetic, imitative magical principle, with an analogy in the spoken part of the spell, which is made with comparison of Victim and fruitlessness of the fallen fruit. It is also can be seen

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[43] 'Uzmu tanjir i kašiku. Onaj, ko baje, ide na bunar, a do bunara tri put Gospu pozdravi. Iz bunara uzme tri kašike nenačete vode u tanjir i vraća se natrag ne obaziruć se, ni ne govoreć ništa. U sobi umoči bajalica prste u vodu i prekriži se po siniji. Onda prikrsti onoga koga će bajati, pa mu tare oči, a onda unakrst noge i ruke. Dok tare, govori: "Urok orica, sveto Trojstvo izrica po milosti i kriposti blažene divice Marije." Nekoliko kapi dade obajanome, da gutne ove vode.'

[44] Matasović 1918: 23.

[45] 'Kažu, da uroci najlakše prozriju onoga, ko je lip i ugledan na očima. Ako je čovik lip, pa urečen, onda naberu granja od one voćke, koja je cvala, pa opala. Kupi se i to cviće, pa se osuši, a posli se skupa s granjem kua i u toj se vodi urečeni kupa. Dok se kupa govori ovo: "Voćko! Sve su rajske voćke rodile, / A ti neplodna, nerodna, / Cvateš, opadeš / U cvitu oprudeš, / Urokljivom lik budeš." Kad se urokljivi okupa, ako ga ko skobi i zapita: "Kako je bolesniče?" – mora on odgovoriti: "Dobro, fala Bogu. Oneredio sam uroke. Da mogu srećom i onoga, ko ureče koga."'

in the dialogueue which follows strict order after the ritual bathing and cleansing. In his book, Josip Matasović[46] outlines a few other cases, such as this one from Šimun Debelić of Retkovac, a formula against *uroci*:

> *Uroci* prophets, go away from my head, with God's help, power of Blessed Virgin Mary, what is without name may it get lost, what is without name may it disappear – with God's help, power of Blessed Virgin Mary. – While saying these words, both people, the one who is saying them, and the one who is being healed, must make the sign of the cross.[47]

A very similar example, based on the same principles, can be found in a note by Stjepan Babogredec:[48]

> When someone is *urok* cursed, then the Charmer first evokes the Madonna, then rubs their head while saying: "Two are spelling, three are spelling off / Where are you going *urok* / I'm going on mother's Kata / You don't go there / God Himself says that it doesn't hurt / Dear Madonna that it doesn't stay here / From Lord God power / Dear Madonna will be of help / Without father it worked, without mother it was born / Without name it died." After that the Charmer blows with his mouth, so the *uroci* disappears.[49]

Analysis: In the first example it can be seen that at the beginning and the end of the charming evokes supernatural forces which are giving affirmation for power for cleansing *uroci*. But, the main part of the formula is in annulations, "bez imena zametnilo se, bez imena nestalo ga" ("without name let it be lost, without name let it be gone"). It is similar to the other examples, where calling on the influence of divine help within the Christian paradigm is used in the verbal act, as also the annulations with words based upon a sympathetic magic principle wishing the same effect of annulation in material world.

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[46] Matasović 1918: 28.

[47] "'Uroci proroci, idite napolje iz glave moje – s Božjom pomoćom, blažene divice Marije moćom; bez imena zametnilo se, bez imena nestalo ga – s Božjom pomoćom, blažene divice Marije moćom." – Izgovarajući te riječi mora se krstiti i onaj, tko ih izriče, i onaj, koga se liječi.'

[48] Matasović 1918: 2.

[49] 'Kad je netko urečen, tada molitelj najprije zaziva Gospu, zatim tare glavu i govori: "Dva uriču, tri odriču, / Kamo ideš uroče / Idem na majkinu Katu, / Ti tamo ne'đi! / Sam Bog veli, da ne boli, / Draga Gospa da tu ne stoji, / Od Gospodina Boga moći / Draga Gospa bit će u pomoći. / Bez oca se radilo, bez matere rodilo, / Bez imena poginulo." Poslije ove riječi puhne molitelj ustima, da tako uroci nestanu.'

CONCLUSION

A goal of this research was to define, categorise, and to give examples with analysis, of various examples of preserved and written belief in *uroci* in the Croatian tradition. This goal was achieved with the defining and categorizing of *urok* spells according to the classification which was created by acknowledging *urok* forms which were followed in both the Croatian and the wider South Slavic area. *Uroci* are defined as belonging to one of four possible groups of magical attacks on humans, animals or plants. The first group of *urok* spells can be acknowledged as a form of energetic entity which, by some specific magical act, can be driven and controlled onto some specific target which is then harmed in some way. The other three groups of *uroci* are categorized according to the way in which they are performed: as a simple gesture or act, a solemn verbal magical act, or, the most common, as a compound magical act which is created through a combination of gesture, verbal act and other elements, such as magical objects or accessories, special conditions and so on. Also, the functions and roles in *urok* spelling are acknowledged by similar and upgraded differentiation by the Romanian linguist Sanda Golopentia.

The four categories were then illustrated with examples from several different Croatian regions, Slavonia, Dalmatia, North-Western Croatia, and this was followed by the acknowledgement that the largest number of *uroci* in the records are recognised as being related to love and marital life.

Beliefs about the magical powers of the deceased, their clothes, accessories and/or burial place is very strong. Their belongings, but also other objects close to them, were believed to have special powers and thus became primal elements of creating *urok*. The most typical systems are those of sympathy, antipathy and evil eye. Among other elements, as in many magical rituals, there is the noticeable use of body fluids or secretions for binding the spell to a certain Victim. In such examples, the idea of *nagaz* is often present in the creation of enchanted magical objects which trigger the spell onto the Victim, but not under that name. Verbal elements of the magical act are in most cases in the *similia similibus* formulae, which are believed to invoke imitative principle links between the act and its realization, from the world of ideas to the material world.

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Rational Argumentation in Irrational Discourse: Argumentative Techniques of Verbal Charms and Folk Prayers

Davor Nikolić

Introduction: Rationality and Rhetoric of Verbal Magic

One could ask if the use of pleonasm in the title is done just to acquire rhetorical effect by contrasting "rational" with "irrational", since argumentation is supposed to be a rational, reason-giving use of language. But as observed by Ch. W. Tindale,[1] one of the most influential scholars in the field of rhetorical argumentation, this strict definition can be justified only in the field of logic and to some extent in the field of dialectics but not in actual human verbal or even non-verbal communication. This does not mean that the argumentation is not governed by the principles approved by common sense or *ratio*, but that discourse cannot be adequately reconstructed without incorporating the rhetorical dimension.[2] Rhetoric, as we know it from the time of Aristotle, is not just about rational use of language (*logos*) but also about affecting the audience by appealing to their emotion (*pathos*). During many centuries rhetoric had acquired the image of being irrational and even anti-rational but in the last decades of the twentieth century this has been revised.[3] Today, we are deeply aware of the fact that even science, viewed from the early modern period onwards as the rational discourse *per se*, is rhetorically constructed.[4]

Nevertheless, it is still legitimate to label some types of discourse as irrational because they seem to lack all the basic characteristics of rational discourse. Moreover, it could be said that irrational discourse is totally opposite to rational one – it is its antithesis. Magic is considered to be a typical irrational discourse and it was often confronted with science,[5] which was especially common in anthropological works.[6]

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[1] Tindale 2004.

[2] Eemeren – Houtlosser 1999: 164.

[3] Eemeren et al. 2014: 34.

[4] Cf. Prelli 1989; Gross 1990.

[5] Cf. Burke 1969: 40–42.

[6] Cf. Malinowski 1948; Tambiah 1990.

In its basic sense, magic is an "action taken on the belief that it will help produce a desired outcome, despite the appearance that such a belief is irrational or unhelpful".[7] So what is irrational: magical action or the very belief that such action can produce a desired outcome? When thoroughly examining this and similar definitions,[8] it seems that a specific action of using magic (reciting a spell, making special moves or wearing a specific amulet) is done rationally and it follows typical patterns approved by common sense.[9]

Common sense deals with matters described as *natural* while magic obviously deals with *supernatural* matters. If we agree that the supernatural is what lies beyond the scope of common sense (i.e. what cannot be explained through natural causes or events), we cannot say that the supernatural is irrational – it would be more proper to say that it is *extrarational*. The supernatural is often termed as *paranormal* because these phenomena "fall so far beyond anything that could be accounted for under normal circumstances and forces".[10] Humans were always drawn to the supernatural but it is interesting to observe that our apprehension of the supernatural was in most cases done rationally. Apprehending something that we do not know must obviously be done through something that we know very well – using our common sense. This process of apprehending the unknown or that which is more distant by using the known or the more familiar is very similar to the metaphoric transfer from source to target domain, as it is understood by cognitive linguistics.[11]

By concluding that our communication with the supernatural is achieved (not exclusively) by the procedures governed by common sense, it is logical to introduce argumentation in the study of verbal magic. The influential twentieth-century definition of rhetoric as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" given by K. Burke[12] is followed by the remark that this basic function of rhetoric is certainly not "magical". Burke's definition comes close to the traditional definitions concentrating on "persuasion" although Burke views "identification" as a requirement of persuasion. Nevertheless, the argumentative view which connects rhetoric with the ability to find the appropriate means of persuasion remains predominant and is by many considered as paradigmatic[13]. A rhetorical perspective is

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[7]   Watts 2007: 256.

[8]   E. g. Simpson – Roud 2000; Malone O'Connor 2011.

[9]   Here it could be interesting to point out to the distinction that prominent argumentation theorists make between rationality and reasonableness. Acting *rationally* means using one's faculty of reason while acting *reasonably* means utilizing one's faculty of reason in an appropriate way. Therefore "acting reasonably presupposes acting rationally while observing at the same time the appropriateness standards prevailing in the exchange concerned" (Eemeren et al. 2014: 6).

[10] Watts 2007: 374.

[11] Cf. Kövecses 2005.

[12] Burke 1969: 41.

[13] Cf. Eemeren et al. 2014: 34

necessary because argumentation as a communicative practice can best be understood and adopted through its rhetorical features[14].

ARGUMENTATION APPROACH TO VERBAL MAGIC

Although there are many definitions of argumentation which can be used as the starting point, probably the most complex one is the following, made by the leading argumentation theorists of the pragma-dialectic approach: "Argumentation is a communicative and interactional act complex aimed at resolving a difference of opinion with the addressee by putting forward a constellation of propositions the arguer can be held accountable for to make the standpoint at issue acceptable to a rational judge who judges reasonably"[15]. At first, it seems that this definition is not applicable to the verbal charms because they essentially rely on the belief in the magical power of words and therefore they have been treated traditionally as a form of irrational discourse which emphasizes the role of sound patterning and nonsense words. Indeed, the common use of nonsense and "magical" words is the main stylistic feature of this folklore genre, but nevertheless there are many signals of rational argumentative techniques employed for the purpose of achieving the desired effect (verbal charm as a peformative speech act in terms of pragmalinguistics).

On the other hand, the performative strength of charms was confronted with those of prayers (canonical and folk ones) but today it is well understood that the dichotomy magic/religion is clear only in *etic,* the scholar's perspective. As observed by Kapaló,[16] charms and folk prayers are in *emic* terms considered as religious genres; therefore, in order to understand argumentation procedures in verbal charms, one must be aware of the specific nature of religious and especially popular religious discourse.

The communication process in the act of casting a verbal charm (for protection from evil or for expulsion of evil) basically seems triadic as it involves the person who recites a charm (charmer), the text (charm) and the person (or sometimes animal) protected or healed by the charm. In most cases of folk prayers the charmer is both the addresser and the addressee. It is reasonable to assume that those are *natural* elements in the charming process but there is also the fourth, essential element – the entity against whom or against which the charm is used. That entity can be labeled either as *supernatural* (the evil eye, the devil, a nightmare etc.) or *natural* (disease, thunder, a snake etc.). The border between these two types seems firm only theoretically because in many cases natural entities are perceived as having supernatural origin. Finally, there

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[14] Tindale 2004:xii.

[15] Eemeren et al. 2014: 7.

[16] Kapaló 2011: 96.

is also the hidden or sometimes very much obvious fifth element – the *supernatural* force called upon to help the charmer.

The charmer believes that the recited charm will help the person to be protected or healed by it, and this belief can be defined as irrational because there are no rational methods to prove it. The similar thing could be said both for canonical and folk prayers because the only principle which governs the efficacy of the prayer is faith. Without entering into a discussion about faith and reason, let us confine our attention to the text of the charm or the prayer with charm elements. We will see, paradoxically or not, that the textual organization is governed by many principles of rational discourse, i.e. argumentation "aimed at convincing the addressee of the acceptability of the standpoint by making them see that mutually shared critical standards of reasonableness have been met"[17]. If argumentation is a procedure by which someone's claim becomes a very probable truth,[18] and if we seek to recognize argumentation in the process of verbal charming, three reasonable questions arise: Who are exactly participants in this argumentation? What is the asserted claim? What argumentative techniques are employed? The first question has been thoroughly studied by folklorists and the other two could obviously be asked by argumentation theorists and rhetoricians. It is worth mentioning that the third question has also been discussed by folklorists, especially those interested in the stylistic features of verbal charms. In accordance with our rough dichotomy between rational and irrational aspects of verbal charms, it could be said that greater (if not the utmost) importance was given to the features which contribute to the irrational impression, namely use of nonsense words, patterning and etymological sequencing. The implications of over-elevating the poetical qualities of charms at the expense of their practical intent is discussed by Roper[19] while the shift from a focus on the power of sound to the power of rhetoric was recently elaborated by Passalis.[20]

This paper is concerned with detecting, describing and evaluating the segments in verbal charms and folk prayers which could be qualified as employing argumentation techniques. These techniques are the appeal to authority, reasoning by analogy and the abusive *argumentum ad hominem*. The insights were acquired by examining one large corpus of Croatian folk prayers, verbal charms and folk prayers with charm elements (269 texts), the collection gathered by Friar Stanko Petrov in the first half of the twentieth century.[21] All three types of texts were analyzed and will serve as illustrations further in the paper.

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[17] Eemeren at al. 2014: 6.

[18] Škarić 2011: 13.

[19] Roper 2003.

[20] Passalis 2012.

[21] The corpus is one of the three separate collections of folk prayers compiled by Friar Jeronim Šetka and publicly presented in 1954. Although it is the biggest collection of Croatian folk prayers (1231 records), it is still in manuscript and preserved in the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. For this and previous research on charms and folk prayers (Nikolić 2012) I used the copy from the Croatian Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb.

The argumentation model which was used for "translating" and analyzing the text of charms and folk prayers is the now-famous model proposed initially by Stephen Toulmin in his book *The Uses of Argument*.[22] It is basically an expansion and elaboration of the classical rhetorical syllogism. When asserting a *claim* (C), which by its nature must be disputable, we are doing that by founding it on a certain ground or *data* (D), which should be undisputable, and linking these two elements with some very probable judgment (for instance some kind of *topoi*) which is in this model termed as *warrant* (W). The warrant itself is just a very probable truth (unlike the ground which should represent the truth) and therefore it needs to be supported by *backing* (B). Because the warrant is disputable it can be "attacked" by using a *rebuttal* (R), which of course has to be supported by its own backing. In the end, the strength of the rebuttal affects the strength and the validity of the claim. Therefore, Toulmin introduced a *modal qualifier* (Q), which expresses how probable is the claim (ranging from barely possible to almost certain). The illustration of the model is shown below:
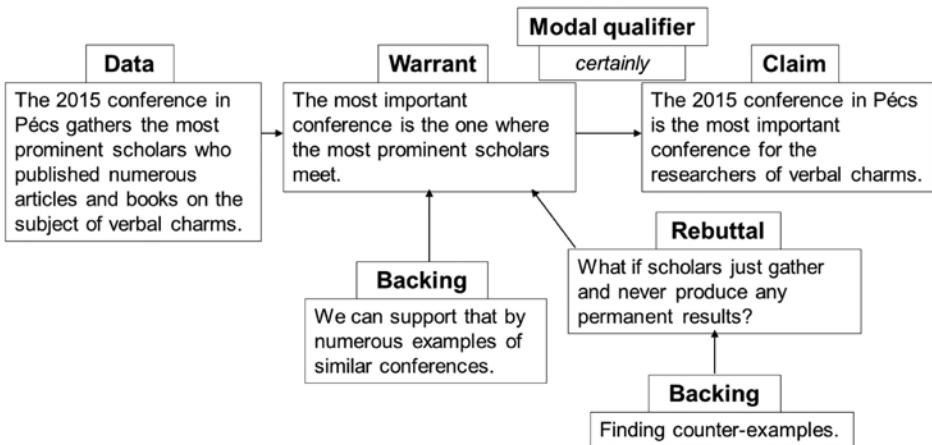
Toulmin's argumentation model

The claim becomes stronger if the warrant is more abstract and wider in scope, but it becomes even stronger if it successfully resists the rebuttal. Although Toulmin's model is not without its critics, "it stands out as among the first to seriously consider the range of problems with the traditional logical idea of argument and try to ameliorate those concerns".[23] The model is, of course, mostly concerned with the actual product of argumentation, neglecting the argumentative and rhetorical situation, but rhetoricians can especially benefit from its use because of the strong visual aspect.[24]

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[22] Toulmin 2003 [1958].

[23] Tindale 2004: 8.

[24] Nikolić – Tomić 2011.

When applying this model to verbal charms and folk prayers it should be clear that most elements are not clearly expressed in the actual texts but they can be derived by analysis.[25] The general claim of apotropaic charms could be expressed as: "The evil entity will not affect me."; whereas for the charms with the function of exorcism the claim could be expressed as: "You (the evil entity) must leave the person possessed." These deduced claims will serve as the starting point for further analyses.

APPEAL TO AUTHORITY

The most common and perhaps the most important argumentative procedure in the analyzed corpus was the appeal to authority. It is a technique already recognized by folklorists and it is considered as a constitutive element of verbal charms.[26] The insights from argumentation theory could be helpful in understanding the rational foundation for the appeal to divine authority. Most scholars agree that appeal to authority has two basic forms: *cognitive* or authority of expertise, and *administrative* or authority of command.[27] Jean Goodwin[28] finds that the same general division is made by other scholars but under different names, such as *epistemic* and *executive, epistemic* and *deontological* or *theoretical* and *practical*. In addition to the authority of expertise and to that of command, she proposes the third type – *the authority of dignity*,[29] following John Locke's understanding of *Argumentum ad Verecundiam*. Although the Catholic Church is usually described as an institution which is grounded on the authority of command, the analyzed corpus of verbal charms and folk prayers offer many examples where it could be argued that the authority of expertise or dignity is being used.

If the charmer (natural instance) makes an assertion towards a supernatural entity, he or she performs a transgression and the appeal to authority seems to be a logical bridge beyond the two spheres. The human being does not have the power to affect supernatural forces (charmers themselves frequently express that they alone do not have any real power and that the true power comes "from above"), but the supernatural entity does. God–Holy Trinity–Jesus Christ, Blessed Virgin Mary or saints are not actually summoned nor is their actual presence needed. They are called upon to act

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[25] It should be noted that analytical research in argumentation theory is aimed at reconstructing argumentative discourse as it occurs in argumentative reality from the perspective of the model of argumentation chosen as the theoretical starting point. Reconstruction needs to be in agreement with the requirements instigated by the theoretical model taken as the starting point and it must be accounted for by referring to empirical data from the discourse that is analyzed as they are to be viewed in the specific communicative context in which the discourse occurs (Eemeren et al. 2014:11).

[26] Cf. Kapaló 2011.

[27] Walton 1992; 1995; Wilson 1983.

[28] Goodwin 1998: 268.

[29] Goodwin 1998: 275.

in the future and this is either expressed explicitly in the verbal formulations of the charms and the prayers or it is implied. Translating this procedure to an argumentation scheme reveals some interesting aspects:

Claim: You (the evil entity) must go or leave the possessed entity.

Data: God–Our Lady–saint is called upon to act against you.

Warrant: The power of God–Our Lady–saint is unlimited.

The claim where God (either as single deity, Trinity or one divine person) is the authority appealed to is indisputable because it is *logically* correct that something which has God the Omnipotent as its adversary must lose. Therefore, we will find no trace of backing of the warrant in the following examples:

Na me sunce, s mene grisi,	*Sun [come] over me, sins [go] off me,*
sveto Trojstvo, ti me odriši.	*Holy Trinity, do absolve me.* (PN 113)[30]
Na me voda, s mene grisi.	*Water [come] on me, sins [go] off me,*
O, Isuse, ti me odriši.	*Oh, Jesus, do absolve me.* (PN 264)
Biž', bolesti prinemila,	*Go away, unfriendly disease,*
eto križa Isusova!	*here comes the Cross of Jesus!* (PN 242)

It could be said that in the last example (the opening formula of a charm), argumentation serves almost as a reminder to the evil entity of the greatness of the power of God even when manifested in the sign of the cross (as a gesture or as a crucifix). When analyzed more thoroughly, this kind of argument seems more elaborate than a simple appeal to the authority of command; moreover, it could be argued that it amounts to pure logical syllogism.

The claims where we have holy but not divine characters as the authority appealed to open the space for a possible rebuttal: Our Lady or a saint are not God so their power is not unlimited. This rebuttal is very logical and therefore in these cases the warrant has the backing which assures that their help is of equal power as the divine one. In terms of the argumentation scheme the first backing could be expressed as: *Blessed Virgin Mary has the biggest influence on Lord Jesus Christ because She is His mother*. This backing is seen in the lines of many folk prayers, for instance:

Da, mi znamo temeljito,	*Yes, we know fundamentally,*
da Ti moreš stanovito	*that You can certainly*
od Isusa isprositi,	*beg Jesus*

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30 PN stands for Petrov-Nimac because the collection was passed to Friar Franjo Nimac. This system of acronym and ordinary number was introduced by Šetka for the final manuscript.

da će nama oprostiti.	*to forgive our sins.*
Sama, znamo, više moreš,	*We know that you alone can do more*
neg svi sveti, kada oćeš.	*than All Saints, when you want.* (PN 27)

Although Mary's maternal relation to Jesus is undisputed, it is important to observe that the word *mother* (*majka* or *mati* in Croatian) is mentioned multiple times in this prayer as well as the notion that Jesus is her *son* (*sin* in Croatian):

O prislavna Božja mati,	*Oh, most glorious mother of God,*
dostoj mi se milost dati,	*may you give me the grace*
da ja ljubim sinka tvoga,	*to love your dear son,*
moga Boga pridobroga.	*my too good God.*
(…)	*(…)*
Smiluj mi se, Majko slavna,	*Have mercy on me, glorious Mother,*
jer znam da si vazda spravna	*because I know you are always ready*
molećega uslišati	*to grant the one who prays*
i jaku mu pomoć dati.	*and give him/her real help.*
(…)	*(…)*
Spomeni se, draga Majko,	*Remember, dear Mother,*
I promisli svakojako,	*and in every way consider*
da si za nas uzvišena	*that you are exalted for us*
Božja majka učinjena.	*and made mother of God.* (PN 27)

We could state that the appeal to the authority of Blessed Virgin Mary is seen as a link, a bridge between humans and God. This is in concordance with the notion of the necessity of an appeal to authority when dealing with supernatural forces. For Christians, Jesus is both God and Man, as it is formulated in the doctrine of the double nature of Christ. This dualism is reflected in charms and folk prayers through a more familiar approach when addressing Jesus as opposed to addressing God as transcendental entity but the human side of Christ is also highlighted by establishing the Blessed Virgin Mary as the closest intermediary, as seen schematically:

charmer	→	*Blessed Virgin Mary*	→	*Jesus*
(human)		*(human but mother of God)*		*(human and God)*

In the case of saints, the authority is of two basic types: saints as intermediaries and saints as patrons with specific powers. Angels, as distinct divine entities, are always intermediaries and they are mostly appealed to as a group in a manner of a litany. Their presence seems to be a rhetorical strengthening of the divine power:

Zovem Boga, Oca,	*I call upon God, the Father,*
Gospu za majku,	*Our Lady as a mother,*
Anđele oko nas,	*Angels around us,*
sotone od nas,	*devils [go] away from us.* (PN 7)

When saints are appealed to as intermediaries, they often take the role reserved specifically for God, namely the absolution of sins. Numerous short charm-like prayers appeal to St. Peter as an absolver of sins in an imperative mood:

Na me voda, s mene grisi,	*Water [come] on me, sins [go] off me,*
sveti Petre, ti odriši!	*Saint Peter, absolve me!* (PN 71)

Nevertheless, the true intermediary nature of St. Peter's authority is seen in more elaborate variants, where divine power is expressed metonymically:

Na me voda, s mene grisi,	*Water [come] on me, sins [go] off me,*
sveti Petre, ti odriši	*Saint Peter, absolve me*
i desnica Božja ruka,	*and God's right hand [absolve me],*
koja stoji povrh puka. Amen.	*which stands above the people. Amen.* (PN 216)

The specific power of saints is seen through special signs given by God, stigmata being the most important because of their visual character. St. Francis of Assisi becomes an authority in this manner as in the example:

O Frančeško, Oče sveti,	*Oh, Francis [Francesco], Holy Father,*
ne daj duši grija steći.	*don't allow the soul sins to commit.*
Tvoje rane vele mogu	*Your great wounds can [do wonders]*
i za nas se mole Bogu,	*and they pray for us to God,*
i svetomu Mijovilu	*and to Saint Michael*
i Ivanu Krsitelju.	*and to John the Baptist.* (PN 30)

This example demonstrates something which could be termed as *hagiostratifica-tion* or the stratification of saints because St. Francis is described as someone who has earned stigmata and that gives him the authority to intermediate with God, but he is in a way subordinated to the Archangel Michael and John the Baptist. The latter is not just close to Jesus as his blood relative, but more importantly as the person by whose baptism Jesus's divine origin as well as the concept of the Trinity was revealed.[31]

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[31] Matthew 3:16–17.

In the analyzed collection St. Francis is the non-biblical saint who is used most often as an authority (being followed by St. Catherine and St. Nicholas) and this correlates with the influence of the Franciscans in the territories where the collection was collected (all three collectors being Francsicans).

There are many examples of the appeal to the authority of saints as protectors from specific misfortunes, for instance, St. Peter and Paul are called upon to protect from snake's poison whereas St. Anthony of Padua is called upon to heal rheumatism. The misfortune which charms and prayers were most commonly deployed against was thunder or the demonic creature called *Irudica* (Herod's wife), who was believed to be responsible for heavy thunder and lightning.[32] Two saints are authorities in this area: St. Elias and St. John the Baptist. The former is mostly described as an expert authority while the latter poses authority which can be explained as *circumstantial*. The examples where the authority of saints is used to repel Herod's wife will be discussed in connection with the use of abusive *argumentum ad hominem*. In the following example it is explicitly stated why thunders must go away from the charmer: the authority appealed to is *thunderous* and he *repels thunders*:

> Oj Ilija gromeni,   Oh, thunderous Elias,
> koji grome odgoniš,   you who repel thunders,
> odgon grome od mene.   repel thunders away from me.
> Moj je Isus kod mene.   My Jesus is beside me. (PN 211)

This pleonastic attribution is primarily seen as a means of producing rhythmic effect by combining different types of etymological figures of speech but it can also be interpreted as a rational method of defending the authority appealed to. The power of Elias is strengthened (or implicitly authorized) by stating that Jesus is beside the charmer. It can therefore be concluded that warrants where the primary authority is not God need backing, which explains why an appeal to Blessed Virgin Mary or to saints is ultimately of the same strength as a direct appeal to the undisputable authority of God.

The special case of appeal to authority is seen in the formulaic closure of many prayers. This corresponds to folk prayers from other ethnic and national communities.[33] In these cases, the appeal to authority is the most explicit because it uses direct speech and this kind of framing gives the prayers 'a distinctive "immanent" and "unmediated" quality that reinforces their authority as a direct source of blessing, protection and salvation':[34]

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[32] Šetka 1970.
[33] Cf. Kapaló 2011.
[34] Kapaló 2011: 93.

Sam je Bog govorio:	*God Himself spoke:*
"Ko bi ovu molitvicu govorio	*"The one who would say this [little] prayer*
tri puta na liganje,	*three times at bedtime,*
a tri puta na ustanje,	*and three times when getting up,*
tri bi duše saranio:	*would burry [in peace] three souls:*
Prvu dušu oca svoga,	*The first soul – his father's,*
drugu dušu majke svoje,	*the second soul – his mother's,*
treću dušu i sam svoju."	*the third soul – his own."* (PN 21)

The fact that the instruction to pray a specific prayer for a specific purpose is always authorized by quoting God can be seen as the necessity of practitioners to justify their use of a non-canonical prayer. It should be studied more systematically if this framing was originally developed in the circle of the lower clergy (the above-mentioned Franciscans) as a way to instill the instruction of praying into their flock (especially in times when these territories were either governed or bordered by the Ottoman Empire).

The appeal to authority is without doubt the most prominent argumentative procedure in verbal charms and prayers. It demonstrates not just the importance of the authority of command in the Catholic Church but also the necessity of commoners to justify their essential magico-religious needs. From the point of view of argumentation theory, the appeal to authority is of course not always the strongest of arguments, but in the context of religious discourse, and especially popular religious discourse, its use demonstrates the power of administrative authorities.[35]

Reasoning by Analogy

The other two argumentative techniques, reasoning by analogy and the abusive *argumentum ad hominem,* appear less frequently but they are nevertheless important procedures for strengthening the asserted claim. Argumentation theory regards reasoning by analogy as common and pervasive form of argument.[36] In its basic form, it must have one premise asserting that there is a similarity between two cases and the conclusion that accepts the plausibility that what holds in the first case must hold in the second.[37] Analogies are seen as a powerful cognitive tool because "in thinking of unfamiliar objects as similar to familiar ones, we enable working hypotheses for dealing with novelties, paths to become familiar with new things and phenomena".[38]

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[35] Cf. Goodwin 1998.
[36] Walton 2014: 23.
[37] Walton 2014: 24.
[38] Bermejo-Luque 2014: 58.

In the case of verbal charms and folk prayers analogies are closely connected with the argument of authority. It can be easily detected in historiolas with the concluding element that if someone recites the charm or prayer, he or she will enjoy the same protection or healing as the holy person in the historiola. Maybe the most famous illustration of this type of analogy is the *Super Petram* charm type where it is implied that the person reciting the charm (or the person whom the charm is intended to help) will no longer suffer from toothache just as was the case with St. Peter.[39]

A similar procedure, but without any explicit appeal to divine authority, is found in charms which bear a resemblance to counting-out rhymes, and these texts are commonly referred to as *Unity* (*Jedinstvo* in Croatian) or *Holy numbers* (*Sveti brojevi* in Croatian). Starting from establishing the oneness of God, charms in most cases reach the number twelve or thirteen by repeating all the previous elements. In one example (PN 176) the actual counting-out part is preceded by a historiola of the devil who is tempting a child by asking it what comes first, what comes second and so on up to what comes thirteenth. After the last valid reply has been given, the devil bursts, as the final sentence of the charm explicitly states: "And even now, it is said, after this is spoken, one devil bursts". In other variants of this charm there is no explicit concluding analogical formula but it is plausible to believe that they were recited with the same or similar function. In one text from the other collection (Š 613) the collector remarks that a female informant heard from her mother that after one child knew all thirteen answers St. Nicholas gave the child his stick, one ball and blessed salt mixed with water. By following the ball child found the infernal house where he was instructed by the saint to sprinkle the house with holy water and to demand its name be deleted from the infernal book. Another variant (which includes the reverse counting-out procedure) ends with the closing formula: "He [the devil] went away, he couldn't do anything; God enlightened it [the child] to give such answers". This example is an explicit appeal to the authority of God and it shows how reasoning by analogy in popular religious discourse is based on the ultimate power of divine authority.

In the analyzed corpus reasoning by analogy appears more explicitly in the prayers to Blessed Virgin Mary where the praying person asks for the enlightenment of his or her refering to the fact that she has already enlightened the whole world by giving birth to Jesus:

> *Dobro jutro, Gospo mila,* Good morning, dear Lady,
> *kad si sina porodila* as you bore your son
> *i vas svitak prosvitlila.* and enlightened the whole world,
> *Ti prosvitli pamet moju,* may you enlighten my mind
> *da uživam slavu tvoju.* so I can enjoy your glory. (PN 71)

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[39] Cf. Roper 2005.

In this and similar examples reasoning by analogy is stylistically and rhetorically enhanced by using the etymological figure of polyptoton. Etymological sequencing establishes a pseudo-causal relationship between two meanings of the verb "to enlighten" so it is possible to infer that something that was already done in the past and on a larger scale can be relatively easily repeated on a very small scale (enlightenment of one's mind).

Abusive *Argumentum ad Hominem*

The third argumentative procedure, the use of abusive *argumentum ad hominem* will be illustrated by one type, charms directed to the demonic figure of Herod's wife (sometimes referred to in plural form). It should be noted, however, that this type of argument from Locke's essay onwards has been generally considered as fallacious and applicable only to eristic situations,[40] although modern scholars find that it possesses argumentative strength when it expresses the inconsistency of one's actions.[41] The *ad hominem* can be legitimate when denouncing somebody belonging to a certain group which has lost ethical credibility (for instance being a member of the government found guilty for corruption).[42] This type of abusive *argumentum ad hominem* is found in many charms concerning the expelling of *Irudica,* as in the following typical example:

> *Bište, bište, Irudice,*   *Go away, go away, Herod's wives,*
> *matere van poganice.*   *your mothers are heathens.*
> *Od Boga proklete,*   *You are cursed by God,*
> *od svetoga Ivana razapete.*   *and crucified by St. John.* (PN 36)

The claim that *Irudice* must go away is strengthened both by the appeal to the authority of God and St. John the Baptist but also by discrediting them as being the offspring of heathens. St. John becomes an authority of dignity establishing causal reasoning because he was imprisoned and finally killed on Herodias's orders. In folk belief she will be punished for her wrong doings on the Judgment Day but until then she will constantly be shot in the head by St. Elias's lightning. The argumentative discrediting of Herod's wife on the grounds of her heathen and cursed family becomes even more elaborate in this full charm:

> *Biži, biži, Irudice,*   *Go away, go away, Herod's wife,*
> *mater ti je poganica,*   *your mother is a heathen,*

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[40] Cf. Schopenhauer 2002.

[41] Cf. van Eemeren et al. 2014: 581.

[42] This kind of reasoning is expressed in the popular expression: *Caesar's wife must be above suspicion.* Julius Caesar is supposed to have said this as an argument for divorcing his wife Pompeia.

sestra ti je cesarica	*your sister is an empress,*
od Boga je prokletnica,	*she's cursed by God*
od Ilije sapetica.	*and crushed by Elias.*
Sveti Ile orućnik,	*Saint Elias is an armorer,*
moje duše pomoćnik!	*and my soul's helper!* (PN 244)

This charm was very dynamic and we can find it incorporated as the closing element into many different folk prayers. Recent field collections demonstrate that this section is often preserved although many younger informants are not sure about the exact nature of the demonic figure mentioned in the prayer.[43]

Conclusion

After examining illustrations of three argumentative techniques (appeal to authority, reasoning by analogy and abusive *argumentum ad hominem*) it is plausible and reasonable to incorporate the insights of argumentation theory to the study of verbal charms and folk prayers. Already recognized features such as appeals to authority can be studied from different perspectives in order to gain fuller understanding not just of verbal charms and folk prayers but of the mechanisms which construct popular religious discourse. An interdisciplinary approach to the subject of verbal charms, charmers and charming is already recognized not just as necessary but also as fruitful in gathering new insights. Argumentation theory could also benefit from analyses of discourses or genres which were usually seen as irrational. Folk prayers and verbal charms thus prove their deep human construction because human beings, in addition to being able to behave both rationally and irrationally, can later rationally analyze their acts.

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[43] Cf. Jurić-Arambašić 2001; Marks 2011.

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Fighting Fire with Fire: Latvian Witchcraft Against Witches*

Toms Ķencis

By definition, witches are agents of witchcraft. However, their role is doubled in the case of witchcraft used against witches. This aspect of witchcraft is represented by a class of verbal charms and other magic practices designed for this purpose. The mirror-like nature of agent and object in this case is a fertile starting point for an investigation into social logic of magic. A particular definition of *witch* here is key to unlocking this logic. Witches in Latvian verbal charms are related to the rural household economy, they represent real practitioners of magic within communities, as well as they belong to a pantheon of maleficent spirits. Household witches, kin to other beings of so called lower mythology, are mostly related to the patronage of cattle and the yield of dairy products, in some rare cases also to the production of crops. As such, their functions often overlap with the magical activities of real persons within closed communities, defined as a neighbour or a local witch. A community witch, a real person, can be identified within rows of signifiers consisting of witches, wizards and enviers. Here the economic function is paired with maleficent activities of bewitching and envy, the latter being a magical act that resembles representations of Evil Eye in southern and eastern European mythologies. The third type of witches in Latvian charms are evil spirits or demonic witches, related to the souls of the dead, the devil, and other maleficent beings like riding-hags and ghosts. Images of the community witch and the demonic witch are often merged, reflecting the ideas circulating in Europe during the peak of witch trials in the early modern age.

The source material of my analysis consists of written records of verbal charms stored in the Archives of Latvian Folklore. From the whole corpus of about 54 thousand charms, 420 are related to witches. Those 420 are scattered across sections of charms against witchcraft, against enviers, charms for cattle, charms for dairy and others.

As the question of the charmer's identity is quite central in my inquiry, the main factor of selection was the presence of the terms *witch* or *bewitchment* in text of a charm or the title of a charm, thus choosing a somewhat emic approach. Working further, I relied more on semantic than formulaic similarities to group the charms around a particular understanding of a witch represented in particular charms. Next step of analysis was the cross referencing of the obtained images of witches with images of witches in other folklore genres like belief legends, customs, folksongs and fairy tales. Some more systematized ideas about witches and witchcraft have already been presented in research done by Kārlis Straubergs on witch trials, charms and customs, and Sandis Laime,[1] who has done one-genre research similar to mine, regarding so called night witches in Latvian belief legends.

The resulting classification of witches in Latvian magic lore combines functions of agents and their ontological status (relationship to human, natural and supernatural identity). An entity I call the economic or household witch acts within the economic system of limited good. In Latvian folklore it is related mostly to dairy production and as such involves also an agency of patronage, even somehow juxtaposed to witches. The household witch can belong to various classes of supernatural beings from patron deities to treasure bringing demons. However, she is not a primary agent of witchcraft. Such a person is a community witch, a real person within the rural community. Although the image of the so-called community witch is influenced both by late modern demonology and goes hand in hand with the ideology of envy, this witch certainly is human and mortal. The third type of witch, like a partial inversion of the first type, combines supernatural identity and maleficent functions. It is a class of beings that can be anthropomorphic, such as demons related to ghosts, devils and other evil spirits but most likely not humans. This division is a rather mechanical, theoretical construction and although it might help with the insight into social logic beyond witchcraft, boundaries between all three types are blurred and some charm texts can be attributed to different types or none at all. Therefore in the following demonstration I will use the most typical and/or distinctive texts to illustrate particular types of witches and their features, as well as commenting on the context.

HOUSEHOLD WITCH

There are charms against milk-stealing witches that invoke imagery of the sea both as place of punishment and of opulence. While the latter seems to be simply a representation of sympathetic magic, the former might point towards an ancient set of ideas, maybe even related to Proto-Indo-European heritage. On the one hand, both

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[1] Laime 2013.

charms below are recorded in relatively close vicinity of the sea and the sea might be a "natural" imaginary reference. On the other hand, the sea is a place from where various monsters come in Latvian fairy tales as well as in Slavonic folklore, and is a place of vanishing and punishment in other types of Latvian charms as well.

> *Title:* Words for milk, cream and butter[2]
> Wizards, fairies,[3] witches back off, run into a deep sea. There you will find iron ladder, there you will be chained by nine keys, and there you will not get free forever. I am telling you, witch, and do not come to the doors of my stable: I will tie you up with a copper string; I will whip you with an iron whip. There you will perish, there you will groan to death, there you will not get free forever! Three steel crosses stand on heads of my cows.
> LFK Br 168, 486
> Number: 3[4]

> *Title*: For cows, when bewitched
> Round are my cows, like they were built by a mason. Seawater my milk, sea clay my cream, sea stone my butter. Let enviers churn-down like three-times-nine treadles of weavers.
> LFK 1560, 907 Jg Līvbērze
> Number: 1

Witches are clearly related to one type of economic activity, and they are close to other entities with similar functions like wizards and enviers. The last feature is also repeated in many other examples, which allow us to speak about the generic principle behind these charms. This principle appears to be the theory of limited good. Briefly, this refers to the idea widespread in communities of closed peasant societies across Europe and the Middle East, that values such as health or friendship as well as goods like dairy products, crops, eggs etc. exist in finite quantity and are always in short supply within the community, therefore the only way to increase your personal well-being and

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[2]   Title: title of the charm as it was in its original context (in book of charms or provided by an informant); Text: verbal part of the charm, instructions are not in italic, and my comments within the text regarding unclear parts in [square brackets].
LFK: identification number in the Archives of Latvian Folklore. The first number signifies a manuscript or collection, the second number identifies text within the manuscript. The 1–3 letters long abbreviation refers to the district where the charm was collected. If available, more precise place-name or name of collecting institution is provided. Number: indication of how many examples of particular charm or close varieties of it are stored in the Archives.

[3]   Lat. *laumas*, as well as *spīganas* is a synonym of *raganas* – witches. The concept is related to Lithuanian *laumes.* Both *laumas* and *raganas* since the seventeenth century in local documents are translated in German as *Zauberin* or *Hexe,* sometimes specifying that she is *fliegende* – flying.

[4]   Published in Treuland 1881.

wealth is at expense of somebody else.[5] Witchcraft here is the mechanism of hacking the circulation of goods. Still, charms do not provide a precise description how it is done, but more exact directions are provided in other folklore materials like belief legends. They seem to be basically of three kinds. First, the desirable result is acquired by words, i.e. performing a verbal charm, with or without accompanying gestures and other ritual actions. The second possibility speaks of a gaze as it is in the case of evil eye. The third possibility involves a magical servant, some kind of treasure bringing demonic creature who serves the will of the charmer. In all three cases, the acting person or benefactor from magic practice can be called a witch. However, the third case also allows for an interpretation where witch is a demonic creature bringing goods to his/her owner. It is an international image, widespread at least in Northern Europe, and called in German *Butterhexe,* that is butter-witch, and *Milchhexe* – milk witch.[6] At the same time this butter-witch functionally overlaps with other treasure bringing creatures of the same region – the dragon, if you directly translate German *Drache*.[7] The similarity of the Latvian name for this demon *pūķis* (in the Latvian language also meaning *dragon*) and Estonian *puuk* leads one to think about the common Germanic origin because a butter bringing creature *der Puk* was also known in Schleswig-Holstein[8] and seems to be a linguistic and typological relative of a rather widespread image in Northern European lower mythology, including Puck from Shakespeare's *Midsummer night's dream*:

> ... are not you he
> That frights the maidens of the villagery;
> Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
> And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
> And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
> Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
> Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck.[9]

Latvian folklore on dragons contains multiple layers. Starting already from the sixteenth century, local clerical and judicial authorities identify the dragon with the devil. Presumed owners of a dragon therefore are treated as servants of the devil.[10] Both the proceedings of witch trials and folktales contain two interpretations of dragon as a treasure bringing demon. First, a dragon is purchased (often from the same devil)

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[5] Pócs 2004: 213; cf. Foster 1965.
[6] Eckstein 1927: 1723; 1934/1935: 293; Weiser 1930/1931: 1863.
[7] Mackensen 1929/1930: 364.
[8] Eckstein 1927: 1726.
[9] *Act* II, I, 32ff.
[10] Straubergs 1941: 527.

or acquired otherwise and then it serves its master. The latter is usually identified as a witch or a wizard. In the second interpretation, the witch or wizard turns into a dragon and flies to steal milk and butter in this form. At the same time, the magic economy is related to that particular institute of patronage, where all magic evil-doers like witches and wizards are juxtaposed to Māra or Mary of Cattle. She appears with just slightly different names in the same context of milk and witches in various charms, e.g.:

> *Title*: When animals are let out or gathered in
> Take a long rod and go along an animal by one side, drag the rod from head to tail; do the same along the other side and say meanwhile: "Dear Mother of Cattle, Mary, Jesus Christ save it from witchcraft and witches fatherly. Amen."
> LFK 500, 36 Vlm Puiķulē
> Number: 35

> *Title*: Words for milk, cream and butter
> Spin, Māra, silk thread, spin with me, spin with yourself! Bond fairies, bond witches for not stepping in my stable! Dear Māra, goad my cows into the grass of a swift river. Four carts – carts of milk, four carts – carts of cream, four carts – carts of butter drive into my stockyard. God the Father…
> LFK Br 167, 482
> Number: 3

In the following charm Māra's attribute is a milk pail. The same is believed about witches: if one looks at church goers through the hole where a branch has fallen out from piece of coffin or cross, she can see which community members are witches: "Witches and masters of witches (Lat.: *raganu turētājas mātītes*) appear with hair untied and with milk pails hanging over hands".[11]

> *Title*: Words for enviers
> A single flower grows in (name) the stockyard of cows, nine branches, nine tops. Dear Māra now comes herself to milk the cow, with nine milk pails, nine milk pails. Fairy wanted benefit from (name) – nine daggers through the fairy's heart.
> LFK 1313, 411 Lp Rāva
> Number: 3[12]

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[11] Straubergs 1944: 438.

[12] Published in Treuland 1881

According to the majority of researchers, this Māra or Mary of Cattle combines images of the Virgin Mary who like other Catholic saints moved to the margins after the Reformation and the higher Latvian fate deity Laima.[13] The silk threads she weaves is an attribute of the latter, a genuine Indo-European fate deity. One more level incorporated into this image might be some forgotten deity who was a patron of cattle before Christian or even Indo-European times. It might be The Mother of Milk, one of more than fifty patron mothers encountered in Latvian (especially northern) cult practices, as such a relic from early centuries of the Common Era. That would explain the trajectory of syncretism as neither the Virgin Mary nor Laima were predominantly cattle-related. Mother of Milk also manifested in the form of a toad or a grass-snake. In several folktales these manifestations literally serve as milk bringers: a witch summons them and they vomit into a bucket of milk stolen from the neighbours' cattle.[14] Concluding, there is a dairy-production centred image of the magic agent in Latvian charms. The agent is the benevolent server of its master or protector of its worshipper and at the same time a maleficent witch for other community members from whose share of milk or butter is withdrawn from the limited supply of a village community. As it is clearly said in this short and rather popular charm:

> *Title*: Charms during churning butter
> Clumps of clay in my churns,
> Only whey in neighbour's churns.
> LFK 17, 6025 Vlk Nigrā
> Number: 26

Community Witch

Alongside the charms featuring the ambivalent Mary of Cattle, stands a cluster of charms with a much more recognizable Christian representative. These charms probably belong to more recent ages and traditions, reflecting also views of early modern demonology. The subject of these charms can more readily be identified as a community witch, a real person, perhaps a neighbour. There is a charm if you know the person you suspect of the malefaction:

> *Title*: Casting away wizards
> If someone's animal is bewitched, if one knows who did it, then a piece of
> cloth worn by that man should be cut off secretly. Bring it home without
> looking back. Burn it and give it [ashes] to the animal, saying: "Let you

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[13] Cf. Rumba 1935; Biezais 2006.
[14] Straubergs 1944: 218; cf. Adamovičs 1995: 40.

yourself have the same that my animal has." Then everything must be hidden for the sorceress is not able to get anything to eat from the house where the animal is bewitched, otherwise she will remain unaffected.
LFK 1639, 3631 Jg Ruba
Number: 1

The same mechanism can be applied universally if the person suspected is unknown to the charmer:

Title: When an animal is bewitched
Lord, Lord, Lord, let your will be done, not mine. If someone has thought something evil or envied, let he himself get what he intended for me. In the name of...
LFK 1602, 2111 Rg Bebri
Number: 1

Title: Words for enviers
Oh, Lord, have pity on me, the sinner! Three times. Let my cattle be blessed from all defects and pestilences, take away the power from wizards and sorcerers [Latvian: *pesteļi*]. Lord, Lord strong and mighty, give to all my enemies, who rise against me, let them be slain in front of me. By one way they shall retreat, by seven ways they shall run away from me. Let the Lord deliver me from all evil, the Lord will save me from all defects. Amen, amen, amen!
LFK 935, 10782a Valsts Lubānas ģimnāzija (also 1313, 413 Lp Rāva)
Number: 16

While the last charm speaks of enemies in such general terms that they could be both natural or supernatural, the following charm which concerns mortality, seems to be a rather good indication that the object of protective witchcraft, ultimately, the witch, is a mortal person:

Title: Words for enviers
If milk is bewitched, take a scythe and draw a cross over the milk and its container, and say: "let the devil split your heart in half". Then stick the end point of scythe into the ground and slowly draw it out. If [you] don't draw it out, the wizard is dead.
LFK 530, 2288 Jlt Rugājos
Number: 6[15]

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[15] Published in Treuland 1881.

Salt is widely used as a means of magic protection in the Latvian tradition,[16] and in charms against witches it appears also in the context of eyes. Eyes here are a property of a witch as well as an instrument of maleficium.

> *Title*: For begrudged cow that does not give milk anymore
> Horns for cow, milk and whey belong to me; envier, wizard, witch – salt
> in your eyes timely – eternally.
> LFK 1459, 3547 Vlm Vecate
> Number: 38

The last one clearly points towards the maleficium with a gaze, in other words towards the evil eye. That is especially apparent in the following charm, featuring the number seventy seven:

> *Title*: Words for horses
> Oh, Lord, fill my stable full of horses, like you have filled mine [yours?].
> Seventy seven moons, seventy seven reflections of the moon, seventy
> seven suns, seventy seven reflections of the sun; seventy seven stars and
> seventy seven reflections of the stars – these shall guard my horses from
> wizards and witches. And who wants to get to my horse to charm it, she
> shall shine-off and become pale like the Moon.
> LFK 933, 73 Tl Ārlava (also Br 224, 53)
> Number: 25 (motif of the number 77 appears also in nine more charms).

The magical number 77 is not limited to the local tradition. It appears in some Slavonic prayers as well as in such geographically distant representations of tradition as Hungarian charms against the evil eye.[17] In summary, a community witch is human and thus a mortal agent of witchcraft who interferes in the economic system of a community by the means of supernatural helpers, magic words or through a maleficent gaze. As such her name is synonymous with other signifiers of maleficent agents like wizards or enviers. The demonization of a community witch might be closely interconnected with the discourse of witch trials in early modern times. Hence the Christian imagery appears as a counter-measure for evil doings.

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[16] Straubergs 1939: 390.

[17] Pócs 2004: 215.

DEMONIC WITCH

Still, the same means of invocations of Lord Jesus Christ can appear in charms directed towards clearly non-human adversaries or demonic witches. Like in these two charms where bewitchment is attributed to evil spirits and witches are related to Satan:

Title: Bewitching words
You, spirits of hell, back off, you have no share here. Here only Jesus remains for me, he has the good share.
LFK 266,259 Jlt Kacēnos
Number: 33

Title: For wizards, enviers and witches [here all words are in feminine form]
In the name of Jesus Christ, name of God the Father, leave you, Satan and evil spirit, you wizards, enviers, enemies, witches, I am expelling you with words of Christ. In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the respectable Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. Amen.
LFK 1423, 145 Md Litenē
Number: 2 (from the same village).

As evil spirits, these witches sometimes can be cast away simply by reciting Our Father:

Title: –
When witches lead someone out of his way, he must recite Our Father three times; make sign of the cross in front three times, and turn his hat around the head three times.
LFK 910, 9703
Number: 2 (also two similar charms for wolves).

In some cases charms against demonic witches are designed as longer vernacular prayers, including motifs from other charm types and biblical texts. Such charms are probably of relatively recent origin.

Title: Prayer for cattle
Oh, you, eternal God, creator and provider of all things, who feed humans and animals, nourish little birds in the air, and let no sparrow fall from the air without your consent. You, who care for horses and colts, for cows and calves, for sheep and pigs, and command the grass to grow for their feeding.

I command you to save from the devil's wizardry and all fierce envious eyes all the big and little animals what you have given to me, let them succeed for me, do not wrangle with each other, or deteriorate otherwise, neither beasts of the forest tear them and eat them; bless them in appropriate time with fruits alive and healthy, for no need rises for them. For the sake of your dear Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, who was born from the Virgin Mary in town of Bethlehem in a cattle-shed, slept on straws in a manger and as some lamb is slayed at the pole of the cross, highly praised in eternity! Amen!
LFK 302, 1578 Jk Sēlpilī
Number: 4
Cf. Matt. 6:26, Luke 2:7

Title: When animals are bewitched
I beat down wizards, witches, unclean spirits and evil-doers. In the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ himself strikes those enemies of mine, or this illness itself with the double-edged sword of his mouth. Amen. Christ gets in the name of …
LFK 530, 19 Jlt Tilža
Number: 2
Cf.: Revelation 1:16

One of the definite features of the demonic witch is her ability to fly or "run in the air". However, charms contain no details of how it happens, while other folklore materials speak of flying on the broom, turning into a dragon, or flying in immaterial form like a ghost. The latter version seems to be represented in this charm, equalling witches with spirits:

Title: –
If one sees a witch running in the air, she must say:
"All spirits do good,
Praise Lord God.
Me too! But you what?"
Then the witch perishes.
LFK 686, 198 Tl Cēre
Number: 2

An impressive cross-genre cluster of folklore material refers to specific protection against witches with sharp objects. Such objects can be of a natural origin, like thorns and thistles, as well as manmade like scythes, and symbolic or poetic like roofs of

needles. Such diverse means of magic protection and the widespread nature of this idea might suggest an older layer of representations concerning facing the same adversaries who later are fought with elements of Christian prayers and exorcisms cited above. The magic protection with real or symbolic sharp objects is intended for use against supernatural foes.

> *Title*: Words for enviers
> Iron man, steel blanket, three bushes of thorns, and three bushes of thistles
> grow on their paths, there let the wizards, fairies, witches become mute,
> deaf, stupid, let them stab themselves and hang to death. In the name of…
> LFK 612, 355 Aizputē
> Number: 2

> *Title:* Words of milk, cream and butter
> Run, witch, across the air, my yard you will not enter!
> My fence is forged in iron, rafters built from scythes,
> Rafters built from scythes, roofs thatched with needles, –
> [be] By scythes cut, by needles pierced.
> LFK 1400, 1400, also Br 168, 483
> Number: 18[18]

The majority of these beliefs are specific to the summer solstice, saint John's Eve, which is never mentioned in witchcraft lore of an economic nature, the latter probably going on all year round. Next to *Walpurgisnacht*, St. John's Eve is also the most popular witching time in Germanic countries.[19] Specific instructions for magic protection are described both in Latvian customs and charms like this one:

> *Title*: Words of milk, cream and butter
> In St. John's Eve the cattle-shed must be decorated with thistles and net-
> tles. When decorated, then [one] must go three times around it and sing:
> "Run, witch, around in the air,
> Do not touch my cattle-shed;
> My cattle-shed is forged in iron,
> Roofs are thatched with needles."
> When it is done, then witches do not trouble one that summer.
> LFK 809, 686 Jk Sece
> Number: 2

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[18] Published in Treuland 1881.
[19] Cf. Weiser 1930/1931.

However, there are no verbal charms related to the rowan-tree, otherwise used for protection against witches in a rather similar way: "For protection against witches, thrust into the ground rowan sticks with the thick end upwards around the house, drill smaller sticks into the door of the cattle-shed and mangers, tie the door with rowan bark".[20] A rowan-tree stake must be driven through the chest of a wizard who resurrects after death, and the coffin of the witch must be bound with rowan hoops.[21] The magic properties of the rowan tree might be connected to the belief that it was the material of Christ's cross. Following the syncretic nature of folk magic, the imagery of sharp objects from the charm above can be found in the form of a folksong and can be easily combined with Christian motifs:

> *Title*: Words that protect the cattle-shed from witches on St. John's Eve
> "Amen, amen it is and it will happen. God the Lord with his holy hand will tie all witches to the wall of a cattle-shed before the rooster sings and they will perish. Three times nine angels will whip them with nettles until they will repent their sins, standing on their knees." Recite 3 times.
> LFK 501, 279 B Gravendāles skola
> Number: 1

The witch in this cluster of charms most likely is not the same economic witch mentioned before. Even more, the latter as a patron helps to protect the household from demonic witches:

> *Title*: Words for enviers
> Saint Mārīte, Laimiņa mommy, have mercy upon us, stab the flesh from [with?] needles, twist the wreath from scythes and thorns, from thistles put a crown for wizards and witches not to bewitch us. God, dear, stand along us each hour.
> LFK 1629, 126
> Number: 2

The demonic witch is clearly an antagonist in texts of charms. Within the same function it combines at least two layers of imagery – the devil related evil spirits from vernacular Christian discourse and an older set of ideas about evil spirits and demons, represented in charms where magical protection is constructed invoking an analogy with sharp objects – weapons against the adversary. The latter image of the witch is related to so called *night witches* – neutral or maleficent female spirits, usually appearing in

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[20] Straubergs 1944: 66; cf. 1944: 80.
[21] Straubergs 1944: 66.

forests, swamps and riversides. In belief legends, night witches are sometimes depicted also as milk bringers and servants of human masters.[22] Legends attribute mostly anthropomorphic appearance to night witches as a single or a few beautiful maidens with untied hair of light colour, or as terrible hags. "Repugnant witches are mentioned relatively more often in belief legends on witches who milk cows, whereas beautiful witches more often wear dolly clothes, seduce men, swing on branches of trees or perform other playful activities.[23] Relying on Pócs,[24] Laime assumes that the image of the community witch might partially be a result of the anthropomorphization of older beliefs about demonic witches.[25] The other source should be popular Christian demonology.

BYROADS

Many charms are examples of universal protective spells or do not provide information on the image and type of the witch mentioned in them. Still, those charms too can illustrate certain facets of witchcraft lore – both by highlighting the imagery of witchery and by filling in the blank spaces in research of cultural sources of verbal magic, transition routes of international motifs, and coexistence of different cultures and sets of ideologies.

If the very idea of the evil eye is almost globally known,[26] a particular charm on three evil tongues has entered the Latvian tradition from Western Europe, probably through monastic or Baltic German culture:

> *Title*: How one can help bewitched [person]
> Three fake tongues have hidden you. Three holy tongues have spoken for you. The first is God the Father, the second – God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They will give you joy of soul and flesh, health. Flesh and blood are born, perished and transgressed. One woman says: God and Mary are corrupted in you. One servant says: Thus I've born for you through God's heaven. The heaven is upon earth under your feet. You stand in the midst of it like a ruler. I bless you after those transgressions, because our Lord Jesus Christ was enduring hard suffering. All of those who were speaking against the Jews were trembling there. Then the other

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[22] Laime 2013: 85.
[23] Laime 2013: 104.
[24] Pócs 1991/92.
[25] Laime 2013: 70.
[26] Seligmann 1927: 687.

one comes to be my helper. I want to refuse the suffering in the name of
God the Father X, God the Son X, and God the Holy Spirit X. Amen.
LFK 1036, 180 Rīgā
Number: 13

Of the same origin is the very widespread motif of St. Peter's keys, usually encountered in charms against theft, wild animals, rabid dogs, and excessive drinking.[27] Here in this example witches again are equalled with wizards and enviers:

Title: For all evil
The key of St. Peter, lock all wizards, enviers and witches. In the name
of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. + Amen, Amen,
Amen. +
LFK 828, 7416 Vlk Trapene
Number: *5*

At the same time, charms that invoke rivers as a magical boundary seem much more popular (recorded 63 times). As illustrated in both examples below, this motif can appear in combination with Christian guardians in non-rhymed versions, as well as being encountered in folksong form without Christian imagery:

Title: Words for enviers
Swift water spring runs along the doors of my stable; enviers, sorceresses,
fairies, witches, godmothers do not come! You cannot cross here: God
himself will meet you there. Lord Jesus Christ and his mother will guard
my cattle. In the name of…
LFK 1562, 1185 Md Ḷaudonas pmsk.
Number: 63

Title: –
River of milk and butter flows
In the stockyard of my cows,
There the envier broke his neck,
There nine witches,
There drowned the fairy's daughter
Sunless in the eve.
LFK B.D. 32491 Lp Vērgale
Number: 1

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[27] Ķencis 2013.

Conclusion

Latvian witchcraft against witches represents an entangled mix of various magic traditions and ideas regarding the nature of the witch and how one can protect oneself. Clarifying and contextualizing particular images of witches helps us understand the social logic behind witchcraft, its human and supernatural facets. The two main contexts when researching Latvian witchcraft lore are the theory of limited good, which explains sustainability and the mechanics of first type of charms against witches, and the second context is Christian demonology that has greatly influenced all local witchcraft ideology in Europe since early modern times. The Christian layer helps us to discover also the imagery of older vernacular demonology that may sit behind it. As a folklore genre, charms are regulated by narrative economy, therefore must be seen together with other folklore genres. Similarly, international comparison helps our understanding of certain motifs and their distribution.

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"…And Swore that He May Never Harm the Sick or Anyone that can Sing this Charm": Response to Mental Disorder in Anglo-Saxon England in the Context of Medical Charms

Zsuzsa Závoti

The topic of mental disorders in Anglo-Saxon England is a much neglected and hitherto unexplored area of study. The wider subject of Anglo-Saxon medicine itself is murky enough owing to the obscure sources and to the anonymity of medical practitioners. Only the coming of the Norman Conquest brought about more transparency to medical practice and to the identity of practicing physicians. After a long period of relating mental disorders to higher beings, the trend of rationalizing these conditions arose from the Hippocratic school continued by Galen and his followers in later centuries. However, in medieval times, with the coming of Christianity the stress on rationalism shifted to faith, soul and mysticism; and symptoms of mental disorders were predominantly considered as demonic possessions, where often "victims experienced prejudice, exorcisms and social marginalization"[1] and treatment involved rituals meant to exorcise invading demons. Anglo-Saxon medicine written down in the tenth century is an intricate mixture of both: it frequently resorts to, for instance, incantations or the Pater Noster putting demons to flight, but it also cites rational medical writers such as Galen or Alexander of Tralles. However, Anglo-Saxon medicine apparently preserved some traits as well that have roots in earlier Germanic pagan traditions.

Anglo-Saxon medical recipe books give guidance on how to treat certain illnesses, amongst them what modern psychology would consider mental disorders. These texts not only give instructions on concocting herbal salves, but also on what rituals should be carried out should elves or other supernatural beings pester humans and what charms should be performed in order to recover mental balance. The present paper seeks to

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[1] Diamantis, et al. 2010: 691.

demonstrate that these charms operate across multiple boundaries: they show the transition and interaction of Christianity with paganism, the boundary of rational and "non-rational" medicine, and lastly they imply what medieval Anglo-Saxons thought to be the boundary of sanity and insanity. Firstly, I will define what we mean by mental disorders. Secondly, I will identify some Anglo-Saxon remedies and charms that treat mental disorders. I will analyze the charms themselves and the supernatural beings that bring about the illnesses, thus giving a picture of the response to mental disorders in Anglo-Saxon England.

Perhaps the most challenging issue is to find out what Anglo-Saxons considered to be mental disorders. The definitions and evaluations of mental abnormalities change from period to period and from society to society, so undoubtedly the Anglo-Saxon view was very different from ours. Since approaches and terminology in the field of treating mental abnormalities have gone through drastic changes in the past centuries, it has to be established what we mean by "mental disorder" and "mental abnormality". For instance, the latest version of the *International Classification of Diseases* (hereafter ICD) identifies the group of "mental and behavioural disorders" and separately the group of "diseases of the nervous system" (ICD-10). Thus, if we applied the categories of ICD, a large group of symptoms that are in the scope of our interest, namely those of the diseased nervous system, would fall out of the category of "mental disorders". Therefore, for the sake of completeness and simplicity, although maybe going against the flow of academic psychology, we will use the terms "mental disorder" and "mental abnormality" as umbrella terms including all sorts of mental illnesses, personality disorders, cognitive disorders, altered states of consciousness, etc.

There is no evidence that Anglo-Saxons recognised a condition such as "mental disorder" as an independent category at all, except when they were influenced by foreign principles. Ailments whose prevalent feature we suspect to be mental disorders were thought to be the workings of outer forces that had supernatural powers. We also have to take into consideration that some conditions that qualify now as mental disorders might not even have existed amongst Anglo-Saxons. In fact, it is very likely that they recognised only cognitive disorders (e.g. dementia) and mental disabilities (e.g. Down's syndrome) at best as "mental disorder proper" and did not consider most of today's personality disorders an illness, unless it was a sudden change in behaviour or physical wellbeing or strikingly abnormal (but not suddenly changed) behaviour, like epilepsy. What Anglo-Saxons did recognise as conditions that needed therapy were apparently altered states of consciousness occurring due to a pathological state of the body, as e.g. delirium emerging from high fever. Conditions that resemble mental disorders and are associated with fever are commonly provoked by, for instance, infectious diseases. Pneumonia, typhoid fever, malaria and smallpox can be complicated by the so-called "infective-exhaustive psychosis" whose chief types of reaction are "delirious, epileptiform, stuporous or comatose,

hallucinatory, and confusional".[2] These could all be interpreted by Anglo-Saxon observers as the impact of supernatural beings.

The means of rational medicine were not shunned altogether: as the leechbooks suggest, rational treatments for mental disorders were embraced and included side by side with non-rational treatments. However, the number of non-rational treatments far exceeds that of rational ones, suggesting that the understanding of mental states was essentially animistic.

The texts we analyze (*Bald's Leechbooks, Leechbook III* and *Lacnunga*) are medical compendia written in Old English around the tenth century. They are miscellaneous collections of recipes reflecting Classical, Byzantine, medieval continental and Germanic folkloric influences; they apply both Christian and Germanic magico-religious medicine, and rational medicine based on humourism and on the principle of four elements. The remedies treat various ailments both with herbal mixtures whose efficacy lies in the chemical properties of the plants; and with ritual actions, prayers and charms, i.e. *galdor* in Old English.

The Old English corpus is replete with *galdor*, and its verb *galan*. The *Old English Dictionary* translates *galdor* as "incantation, divination, enchantment, a charm, magic, sorcery; incantātio, cantio, carmen, fascīnātio".[3] As penitentials and legislative texts, such as the *Confessional of Pseudo-Egbert* and the *Pseudonymous Canones Eadgari* show, *galdor* was punished, on the one hand, on the grounds that it was lethal or injured people. On the other hand, it was forbidden as a pagan practice. The word *galdor*, however, is also used throughout the medical compendium *Lacnunga* whenever an incantation or prayer is to be sung which does not strictly belong to liturgy. In some cases, *galdor* is expressively distinguished from *gebed* (prayer) when they occur in the same remedy. Thus, *galdor* does not necessarily denote a harmful act. It is more the name of a ritual act, a method used when something has to be uttered, and this method often assumes a magical nature: it is a way in which transcendental forces can be addressed. As Jolly puts it,

> when early medieval legal or homiletic texts placed galdra with other
> "magic" practices, such as sorcery (wiglung and drycræft), they were
> placing them in opposition to the religious truth of Christianity, since
> scientific knowledge was not a separate category from relevatory knowl-
> edge. These texts banned galdra because of their association with demonic
> and evil practices; in other contexts, such as the medical texts, the word
> lacks these prohibited associations, implying acceptance of the practice.[4]

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[2]   Campbell 2009: 146.
[3]   Bosworth – Toller 1898: 359.
[4]   Jolly 1996: 101.

According to the Old English medical sources, we can identify two major groups of causes of mental disorders: those of apparently rational background and those inflicted by supernatural beings. Mental disorders that were explained with natural causes could often be traced to foreign, "imported" principles, like humourism, Hippocratic and Galenic theories. However, during the course of centuries, these rational terms were prone to become associated with supernatural causes in the medical texts written in Anglo-Saxon England. Mental disorders of supernatural origin were thought to be caused by supernatural creatures. A major disease-causing agent is the group of devils originating in Christian concepts. It is tempting to assume that each devil possession meant a mental disorder, and that each time Anglo-Saxons saw a disease manifesting in mental abnormalities that they could not interpret, they saddled it on devils. However, this was not the case. Anglo-Saxons had a wide range of terms that denoted supernatural ailments and expressed conditions that could involve both mental and physical disturbances. These terms, however, did not necessarily have to include *both* types of conditions in each and every case. Possession by devils has its pagan parallels: Anglo-Saxons believed in supernatural beings whose existence originated in Germanic paganism, and these beings posed a threat to humans as they could inflict physical and mental maladies.

The first group contains, for instance, the condition called *lencten adl,* literally "spring-disease". *Lenctenadl,* according to Cameron, "most commonly described an endemic form of tertian malaria, one in which the parasite remained dormant during much of the year, becoming active in spring".[5] Initial symptoms of malaria include headache, fever, chills and joint pain similar to viral diseases. However, without proper treatment, symptoms can get more severe manifesting in, for instance, cerebral malaria, coma, seizures,[6] impaired consciousness, abnormal spontaneous bleeding, and jaundice.[7] As Bartoloni and Zammarchi write, severe malaria may include "any degree of altered consciousness and any other sign of cerebral dysfunction" in addition to "confusion, disorientation, delirium or agitation (...) and nistagmus [*sic*]",[8] nystagmus being involuntary eye movement. "Subjects with cerebral malaria (...) may exhibit various forms of abnormal posturing, including decerebrate rigidity (extensor posturing, with arms and legs extended), decorticate rigidity (extensor posturing, with arm flexed and legs extended), and opisthotonus".[9] Thus, *lenctenadl* might indeed have been frightening to see and probably reminded medieval people of a condition where

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[5] Cameron 1993: 10.

[6] *Guidelines for the Treatment of Malaria* 2010: 23.

[7] *Guidelines for the Treatment of Malaria* 2010: 35.

[8] Bartoloni – Zammarchi 2012.

[9] Bartoloni – Zammarchi 2012. Opisthotonus is a "type of spasm in which the head and heels arch backward in extreme hyperextension and the body forms a reverse bow" according to the medical dictionary accessed at http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/opisthotonus.

a malevolent supernatural intruder took hold of someone's body and mind. In the leechbooks, it is usually flanked by other mental disorders or it is treated with liturgical means. Just to name a few examples, for instance, in *Bald's Leechbook I*, entry 65 for *lenctenadl* is followed by recipes for *ungemynd* and *dysgung* (madness, foolishness); entry 41 in *Leechbook III* has a recipe that is good for both *lenctenadl* and *gewitseocnys* (mind-sickness). In addition, in most of the cases, *lenctenadl* occurs in recipes together with illnesses caused by supernatural beings: in *Bald' Leechbbok II* entry 65, it stands together with *feondes costung* (probation by devil) and *ælf* (elf) in *Leechbook III* entry 1 with *feondes costung, mære* (creature causing nightmare)*, and *nihtgenga* (night-goer); and in *Leechbook III* entry 41 with *feondes costung* and ælfsiden (elf-magic)*. Further, as Hall argues, *feondes costung* and *ælfsiden* are closely associated with *lenctenadl* in the Old English medical texts and "these different sources of harm seem probably to be complementary rather than synonymous".[10] The fact that *lenctenadl* was not a light flue but was deemed serious enough to resort to heavenly subterfuge is bolstered by the elaborate liturgical elements in the recipes. For instance, the first part of *Bald's Leechbook* presents a leechdom which most plausibly required a clerical person to complete:

> BL I, entry 62
> Wiþ lenctenadle: wermod, (...) wyrc to drence on welscum ealað, do haligwæter to 7 springwyrt. Þis mon sceal writan on husldisce 7 on þone drenc mid haligwætere þwean 7 singan on: "In principio erat uerbum et uerbum erat aput deum et deus erat uerbum. Hoc erat in principio aput deum omnia per ipsum facta sunt." Þweah þonne þæt gewrit mid haligwætere of þam disce on þone drenc, sing þonne credo 7 pater noster 7 þis leod: *beati immaculati* þone sealm mid *ad dominum* þam xii gebedsealmum. "Adiuro uos frigores et febres per deum patrem omnipotentem et per eius filium Iesum Cristum per ascensum et discensum saluatoris nostri ut recedatis de hoc famulo dei et de corpusculo eius quam dominus noster in luminare instituit uincit uos leo de tribu iuda radix Dauid. Uincit uos qui uinci non potest + Cristus natus, + Cristus passus + Cristus uenturus, + aius, aius, aius, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. In die saluti feris incedens gressibus urbes oppida rura uicos castra castella per agrans, omnia depulsis sanabat corpora morbis." 7 þriwa þonne onsupe þæs wæteres swelces gehwæþer þara manna.[11]

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[10]   Hall 2007: 121.

[11]   Deegan 1998, vol. 1: 95–96. Against *lenctenadl*: make a drink of wormwood, (...) in Welsh ale, add holy water and caper-plant. This should be written on a paten and washed with holy water into the drink and sung upon: *In principio*… The wash the writing with holy water from the paten into the drink, sing the *credo* and the *pater noster* and this song: *beati immaculati*… this psalm with *ad dominum* the twelve psalms. *Adiuro*… and then both men should sip this water three times. [Translation mine]

This leechdom makes use of Christian liturgical texts as charms. First of all, the remedy requires a paten that is a liturgical vessel upon which bread is offered to God and the "consecrated Host is again placed after the Fraction."[12] The text to be written, sung and washed into the drink consists of the beginning of John's Gospel, psalms 119 and 120 (*Beati immaculati* and *Ad dominum*), an adjuration of fevers and a corrupted version of a part of Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale* ("...Inde salutiferis incedens gressibus urbes..."). Interestingly, the drink thus prepared and blessed then should be drunk both by the preparer and the patient. This act demonstrates that the power of the ritual itself was at least (if not more) important than the medicament. The words written on the paten become akin to the Host and by washing them into the drink they endow it with sacred power. The prayers and psalms further bless the drink and when the healer and patient thus drink it, the act symbolically becomes a communion. Storms says of this remedy that "writing itself was a form of magic power, the paten represents power, and the words derived power from their religious associations, their contents and their rhythm".[13] The battle against *frigores et febres*, the fever demons, are fought with a herbal concoction made efficacious by prayers, charms and the symbol of communion.

Entry 62 in *Leechbook III* has recipes for ælf-adl (ælf-sickness), ælf-sogoþa (illness afflicted by ælf not yet identified) and *feondes costung*. As Hall points out, it is possible that this entry provides recipes against ailments that focus on internal pains rather than mental disorders;[14] however, mental disturbances are prevalent in the surrounding entries. Therefore, it is very likely that these conditions also included various forms of altered state of consciousness. The description of ælfsogoþa in the leechdom ("Gif him biþ ælfsodoþa him beoþ þa eagan geolwe þær hi reade bein sceoldon") also suggests jaundice which might be caused by infection; and severe infections can cause delirium or other mental disorders, as the "infective-exhaustive psychosis" mentioned before.

> *LB III, entry 62*
> Gif him biþ ælfsodoþa him beoþ þa eagan geolwe þær hi reade bein sceoldon. (...) Writ þis gewrit: "Scriptum est rex regum et dominus dominatium, byrnice, beronice. lurlure. iehe. aius. aius. Scs. Scs. Scs. dominus deus Sabaoth. amen alleluiah." Sing þis ofer þam drence ond þam gewrite: "Deus omnipotens pater domini nostri iesu cristi. per inpositionem buius scriptura expelle a famulo tuo N. Omnem Impetuu castalidum. de capite. de capillaris. de cerebro (...) omnium membrorom intus et foris. amen." Wyrc þonne drenc: font wæter, rudan, saluian, cassuc, draconzan, þa smepan wegbrædan niþewearde, fefer fugian, (...) elehtre – ealra emfela.

12 "Paten" in *Catholic Encyclopedia*. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11541b.htm,
13 Storms 1948: 260.
14 Hall 2007: 106.

Writ iii crucem mid oleum infirmonum ond cweþ "pax tibi". Nim þonne þæt gewrit; writ crucem mid ofer þam drince ond sing þis þær ofer: "Deus omnipotens pater domini. nostri. iesu cristi per Inpositionem huius scriptura e per gustum huius expelle diabolum a famula tuo .N." ond credo ond pater noster. Wæt þæt gewrit on þam drence ond writ crucem mid him on ælcum lime ond sweþ: "signum crucis xpi conseruate In uitam elernam. amen". Gif þe ne lyste, hat hine selfne oþþe swa gesubne swa he gesibbost hæbbe ond senige swa he selost cunne. Þes craft mæg wiþ ælcre feondes costunge.[15]

As we have seen before, the recipe both employs the power of uttered sacred words and the power of physical, written sacred words as well. We also have Latin sentences and corrupt Latin and Greek words which have "*no communicable* meaning (...) but give voice to a choice of imaginable (or perhaps rather *un*imaginable) avenues towards the desired effect".[16] The written sacred words are both dipped in the drink and used for making crosses over the limbs, so the drink and the limbs are imbued with the power of the writing. In addition to this, two prayers resembling exorcism are recited. The exorcism-like prayers address and beseech the omnipotent God to expel a "diabolus" and "omnem impetuu castalidum," "castalidum" being the Latin gloss for ælf in glossaries. Thus the remedy is thought to be efficient both against devils and against attacks of the ælf. The use of *elehtre* (lupin) also indicates that we have a condition that involves mental abnormalities, as there is a markedly frequent use of lupin in remedies for ailments whose names express mental disorders (e.g. *ungemynd*) or are caused by supernatural beings suggesting that these conditions might often have involved seizures. As Dendle points out, it is not a mere coincidence that these remedies utilize lupinine alkaloids in many cases, since "lupinine, sparteine, and lupine seed extract have a slight sedative action on the CNS [central nervous system]; all three were shown to delay the onset of experimentally induced seizures".[17] While lupin is used only in a few "ordinary" cases like indigestion or consumption of poison, it is present in nearly all the remedies that appear to involve mental disorders.

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[15] Olds 1984: 146–148. If he has elf-hiccup his eyes are yellow where they should be red. (...) Write this writing: "It is written, king of kings and lord of lords. Byrnice, Byrnice, lurlure iehe aius, aius, aius. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Amen. Alleluiah." Sing this over the drink and the writing: "Omnipotent God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the imposition of this writing expell from your servant N. all attacks by elves of the head, hair, brain, (...) of the whole complex, both internal and external. Amen." Make a drink of font water, rue, sage, sedge, dragonwort, the stalk of smooth plantain, feverfew, (...) lupine – all equal amounts. Make three crosses with oil of extreme unction and say: "Peace be with you." Take then the writing, make a cross with it over the drink and sing this over it: "Almighty God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the imposition of this and through the taste of it expell the devil from your servant N.," and credo and pater noster. Wet the writing in the drink and make the sign of the cross with it on each limb and say: "The sign of the cross of Christ preserve you until life eternal. Amen." If you don't wish to do this, ask him to do it himself or a close relative and sign as best he can. This craft is powerful against all temptations of the fiend (Olds 1984: 146–148).

[16] Versnel 2002: 146.

[17] Dendle 2001: 95.

Another illness-inflicting supernatural being that sprang from Germanic background is *dweorg*, dwarf. Although the question of dweorg is still debated, it is generally agreed that the term denoted a feverish condition with convulsions.[18] *Dweorg* was most plausibly a condition that was characterized by intermittent fever and the high fever caused an altered state of consciousness of the sick. The altered state of consciousness and hallucinations hinted at the intrusion by supernatural beings, while possible convulsions assumed the physical abuse and "riding" of this invisible supernatural being. It occurs twice in the *Lacnunga* and once in another compendium titled *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*.

> *Lcn, entry 81, a*
> Writ ðis ondlag ða earmas wiþ dweorh:
> + T + ωA. 7 gnid cyleðenigean on ealað; Sanctus Macutus, Sancte Uictorici.
> 81, b
> Writ ðis ondlag ða earmas wiþ dweorh:
> + T + p + T + N + ω + T + UI + M + ωA. 7 gnid cyleþenigean on ealað;
> Sanctus Macutus, Sancte Uictorici.[19]

Of entry 81 a and b, Pettit says that "[i]t appears that essentially the same remedy is duplicated. Whether the second version is a correction of the first, or whether its expanded symbolic inscription genuinely confers autonomy on them both cannot be determined".[20] The abbreviations have not been identified so far. It is not clear either what should be done with the list of names: should they also be written on the patient? should they be uttered during the ritual? or is it their mere presence in the written text that makes the remedy efficacious?

> *Lcn, entry 86*
> + Wið dweorh: man sceal niman VII lytle oflætan swylce man mid ofrað,
> 7 writan þas naman on ælcre oflætan: Maximianus, Malchus, Iohannes,
> Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion. Þænne eft galdor þæt
> heræfter cweð man sceal singan, ærest on þæt wynstre eare, þænne on þæt
> swiðre eare, þænne bufan þæs mannes moldan; 7 ga þænne an mædenman
> to 7 ho hot on his sweoran, 7 do man swa þry dagas; him bið sone sel.
> "Her com ingangan inspidenwiht.
> Hæfde him his haman on handa, cwæð þæt þu his hæncgest wære.

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[18] See Pettit's summary of previous scholarship on the topic in Pettit, E. T. 1996.

[19] Pettit 2010: 70; a) Write this along the arms for fever: + T + ωA. And crush greater celandine in ale: Saint Machutus, Saint Victorius.
b) Write this along the arms for fever: + T + p + T + N + ω + T + UI + M + ωA. And crush greater celandine in ale: Saint Machutus, Saint Victorius (Pettit 2010: 71).

[20] Pettit 1996, vol. 2: 523.

Legde þe his teage an sweoran. Ongunnan him of þæm lande liþan.
Sona swa hy of þæm lande coman þa ongunnan him ða liþu colian.
Þa com ingangan deores sweostar.
Þa geændade heo, 7 aðas swor
ðæt næfre þis ðæm adlegan derian ne moste,
ne þæm þe þis galdor begytan mihte,
oððe þe þis galdor ongalan cuþe.
Amen. Fiað"²¹

The notion behind the treatment of *dweorg* in this remedy springs both from Christian and from pagan backgrounds: the access to sacramental wafers had to be ensured, the names of the Seven Sleepers had to be known as well as their role in soothing fevers and aiding a sound sleep; the *galdor* had to be known and chanted. Again, we can see that both written and oral charms were used in the remedy. The names of the Seven Sleepers written on the wafers occur many times in the Old English corpus, being used against fevers and to ensure a sound sleep. The oral charm describes the process of healing and thus it makes healing happen. It is a powerful formula which, on the one hand, acts as a remedy; on the other hand, it also protects those who have possession of it. The charm thus does not need recital to have effect: mere knowledge of it is enough against diseases.

We can conclude that there was a strong tendency in Anglo-Saxon England to view mental disorders and altered states of consciousness as supernatural afflictions. Mental abnormalities due to infective-exhaustive psychosis were recognised as ailments that needed therapy; however, treaments combating modern day personality disorders are missing from Old English sources. Mental abnormalities that were interpreted as harrassment by supernatural beings were treated both with herbal concoctions and ritual actions, such as reciting charms or making the sign of cross on limbs: thus, elements of rational medicine were combined with elements of magico-religious medicine.

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²¹ Pettit 2010: 72–74. + For fever: one must take seven little sacramental wafers such as one makes offertory with, and write these names on each wafer: Maximianus, Malchus, Iohanees, Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion. Then afterwards one must sing the incantation that is related hereafter, first into the left ear, then into the right ear, then above the crown of the person's head; and then let a virgin go to him and hang it on his neck, and let it be done so for three days; he will soon be better.
"Here came walking in an *inspiden* creature.
It had its bridle in its hand, said that you were its horse.
It laid its reins on your neck. They began to travel from the land.
As soon as they left the land then the limbs began to cool.
Then came walking in the beast's sister.
Then she interceded, and swore oaths
That this [*i.e.* this beast] might never harm the sick person,
Nor the person who could obtain this incantation.
Or who knew how to recite this incanation.
Amen. Let it be done." (Pettit 2010: 73–75).

The remedies also show that the existence of supernatural beings that originated in Germanic folklore were still very much part of Anglo-Saxon reality after the time of the Conversion. Maladies caused by these beings were often fought with charms, and in many cases oral and written charms were combined within one single remedy. The usage of charms was also accompanied by ritual actions like making signs of the cross or hanging wafers on the patient's neck by a virgin, so there is an inherent dynamic and a close connection with action in Anglo-Saxon charms, showing that charms are, in fact, verbal forms of extremely powerful acts.

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One, Two, Many: Dream-Culture, Charms and Nightmares[*]

Louise S. Milne

Something seemed to tear me, and I awoke struggling. Such was my dream – more horrible than it seems, for the terror of dreams bears no relation to the hideousness of their incidents, but to some hidden emotion.
John Addington Symons, 3 July 1861

The charm comes out of a mythological universe of mysterious names and beings... a separate world... reached through imagination or belief or acceptance of traditional authority...
Northrop Frye, *Spiritus Mundi* (1976)[1]

Researchers may focus on charms as evidence about belief-systems in particular regions, periods or demographics; for insights into wider theoretical issues in the anthropology of religion, magic and ritual; or for their intrinsic qualities as a poetic and/or performative genre. This paper contributes primarily to the second and third of these foci. I am interested in charms as a cultural intersection for beliefs to do with dreams and nightmares. I draw on materials from a wide range of times and places to explore certain tenacious semiotic structures in the interlinked media of charms, curses and evil dreams; made visible in the ways that people conceive of, mount, and guard against external occult threats. Resonances between the characteristic rhetorics of bad dreams and charms shed light on the "cultural scripts"[2] which shape them both.

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[*]   This is a companion piece to Milne 2017, which interrogated some of the same material from a somewhat different perspective. For more extended discussion e.g. of methodology and context, see this earlier essay.

[1]   Frye 2006: 147 and 136.

[2]   By "cultural scripts" I mean something close to R. L. Gordon's "widely-shared cultural representations... appropriated by individuals in particular situations" (Gordon 2013: 262). As Gordon comments, "Social action in the absence of social scripts is scarcely thinkable. Social scripts, which vary greatly in scope and complexity, are internalised largely through the verbal communication of culturally-specific norms and expectations, and modified and refined through practice and experience. The norms and expectations in turn are derived from larger cultural constructions" (op. cit. 262–263). Cf. Schank – Abelson [1977] 2008.

The Nightmare and "Ego-Shattering" Dreams

First, some definitions. The nightmare is a subset of what might be described as "self-shattering" dreams and visions: dreams characterised by a strong emotional charge, laden with *affect* (desire), and experienced in terms of extreme ego-alienation or alterity. Considered as a group, ego-shattering dream-types must be extremely ancient, as the capacity to experience them arises from the conditions of consciousness itself (waking and sleeping), howsoever these may be codified culturally.[3] I have argued elsewhere that affect-laden dreams share a certain rhetoric.[4] They have marked liminal characteristics, such as commotion and chaotic semiotics (nonsense, reversals or inversions of natural order), expressed through typical visual structures (dream-demons are envisaged as hybrid creatures or shapeshifters, predatory in form, with teeth, claws, or fangs).

In the traditional, or archaic, nightmare,[5] the subject perceives him/herself threatened by an alien entity, identified as supernatural in origin. The dreamer is convinced this is a real encounter with an invasive creature. In psychoanalytic terms, the dream-creature is hallucinatory; it is an alienated (i.e. disguised, unrerecognisable) avatar of the self. Such an avatar possesses fearsome power because it is animated by the dreamer's own repressed desire. No one is capable of recognising the agency embodied in a terrifying dream-avatar as emanating from one's own self – its radical alterity is the whole point – yet, the desire propelling the scenario must be the dreamer's own (whose else could it be?). This animating desire can be fairly described as repressed, since the dreamer cannot recognise its source in the self. So: alienated, inadmissable desire, projected into a dream-avatar, produces the impression of profound alterity in the archaic nightmare.[6]

But the psychology of the individual is not all there is to ego-threatening dreams. In cultural terms, while the raw agency of the dream-entity is (covertly) supplied by the dreamer, visual aspects of the creature, its ascribed motivation, its typical scenarios and habitats, come from the cultural store. As culture changes, so do belief-narratives, and so do dream-types, including affect-laden ones. Nowadays, nightmares are by far the most common manifestation of this kind of dream. The other cognate types are erotic, ecstatic, prophetic (mantic) or initiatory dreams – important in ancient, pre-modern and tribal cultures (and in traditional belief-communities) – and these overlap and exist in combination with the nightmare. What such dream-types have in common is their ego-shattering – or, in some cases, ego-remaking – potential.

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[3] For general overviews of cultural institutions and traditions that shape dream-experience, see e.g. Tedlock 1992; Shulman – Stroumsa 1999; Coxhead – Hiller 1981.

[4] Cf. Milne 2008; 2011; 2013.

[5] Milne 2008.

[6] For anthropological parallels, see e.g. Tuzin 1975 for an application of the Freudian concept of repressed desire in dreams, and Gordon 2013 on the issue of magic and suffering.

It may seem obvious that culture supplies scenario, costume and mise-en-scène for such dreams and their interpretation. I would further argue, though, that culture does more than furnish supernatural shapes for affect-laden avatars: it configures the affect itself, and thus general import of the dream, as positive or negative. The dreamer's culture informs his/her mind-set and setting,[7] determining whether the experience of an affect-laden dream manifests as a nightmare or something better; whether the emotion involved is construed as terror, awe, or ecstasy.

The rhetoric of traditional nightmare imagery involves certain peculiar semiotic twists, which serve both to express the emotional commotion at the heart of the experience, and to occlude the avatar's point of origin in the self. Part of my point here is to provide further evidence[8] that, on some level, the characteristics of nightmare rhetoric and associated apotropeic media show knowledge of the existence and action of repression. The present essay explores this hypothesis further by focussing on a general issue in dream and charm rhetoric: patterns of numerosity (apprehension of number). Human numerosity – the capacity to apprehend number –is made up of two core systems: "subitization" (fast apprehension of small numbers, i.e. more than one, up to three or four); and "magnitude appreciation" (the ability to apprehend "large but approximate numerical magnitudes").[10] Hence the title of this paper: One, Two, Many.[9] As we will see, it is through this dimension of numerosity that cultural scripts can intervene most effectively to dispel threat in a range of dream scenarios.

DREAM-CULTURES AND CULTURAL SCRIPTS

The immediate context for dreams is the collective cosmological worldview of a group of dreamers: their "dream-culture." "The dreams of an individual" – as Schmitt wrote twenty years ago – "from the moment they are accounted, put in writing, disseminated to everyone, take on a collective value and a social significance."[10] To understand how dream-culture works as a complex interface between individual and belief-system, we must first think about dream-experience as a matter of representation. Even before they are retold, dreams are constructed out of memories (representations).

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[7] The terminology "set and setting" (i.e. mind-set and setting) comes from the cross-disciplinary literature on drug use; there is widespread consensus that the nature of the experience which follows imbibing a psychoactive substance is determined by the person's expectations (i.e. relevant cultural scripts) and the context in which the drug is taken. For literature and history of the term, see e.g. Hartogsohn 2017: 2–12.

[8] Cf. Milne 2017.

[9] Coolidge and Overmann 2012: 205. Also important is "ordinality", "the ability to construct ordered sequences," however, for our purposes, the fact that people grasp number in terms of both small quantities and "many" is the key point.

[10] Schmitt 1999: 274–275.

A dream is thus a kind of text, which effectively does not exist unless it is remembered (i.e. constructed/construed). Each time a dream is remembered, talked about, drawn or written down, the text is assimilated into the collective world of representations: that is, it is redacted at increasing levels of sophistication into dominant cultural scripts and belief-structures. All representations of dreams, fictional or historical, in whatever media – from epics and sagas to prayers and runic amulets – necessarily draw on their current dream-cultural matrix (in practice, consisting of several interwoven, even contradictory traditions).

Ego-shattering dreams, in particular, like charms, are rooted in the mythic domain.[11] The dream-demon takes shape, and the desire attributed to it is apprehended as threatening or beneficial, because the nature of the encounter is instantly identifiable through the dreamer's internalised cultural repertoire. Dream-culture generates all kinds of details about the dream-creature, both in the first phase of the dream's internal construction, and later, in terms of redactions and interpretation.

This is where numerosity – the human capacity for apprehending number[12] – comes into play. The simplest kind of nightmare involves an attack by a solo dream-demon. In such examples, there is one ego (the dreamer), and one creature (the demon); the latter is a disguised avatar of the self, wearing a culturally specific shape. In the case of a malevolent dream-visitor, desire in the scenario is split and polarised: part is attached to the invasive avatar (menace, threat), and part to the dreamer's ego (terror, fear). Cultural scripts can be brought into play in and around that primary tension, to further "split" the incoming avatar in a variety of ways. A protective script from the dreamer's birth culture may be triggered during the primary redaction; that is, the protection may be woven directly into the dream-text itself as it is remembered/constructed. Or, such a script may be invoked later, by the dreamer, a family member or ritual specialist (secondary redaction). These protective scripts typically introduce a benevolent entity into the dream scenario – a guardian figure – a god, saint or angel – to stand between the dreamer and the demonic attacker. This is, of course, a standard dramatic move in the genre of charms.

Alternatively, on waking, the dream-encounter may be swiftly interpreted as a manifestation of malign desire on the part of some third, hidden agency (such as a witch); beliefs about the Spanish *bruja*[13] or Scandinavian *mara* fall into this category.[14] Though paranoic, this cultural strategy may also be therapeutic in effect: in blaming the threat on someone else, its source is, at least, firmly located beyond the

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[11] Frye 2006: 130–137, 147; cf. Mitchell 2000: 72.

[12] Coolidge – Overmann 2012; 2013.

[13] Campagne 2008: 384–389.

[14] Cf. Pócs 1999: 31–34. For literature on the Scandinavian *mara* and its analogy legends, see summary in Milne 2017: 98–101.

dreaming self.[15] For millennia, charms of various kinds have been mobilised to enable and instigate these splitting effects, to ward off the nightmare-creature and neutralise the desire it embodies, often by rebounding that desire back to an assumed point of origin outside the dreamer.

The One-Two Dream-Demon Encounter

Pre-industrial peoples had a rich range of possible templates for dream-demons: actual gods or spirits, personified diseases, or the supernatural alter-egos of enemies or neighbours. The earliest evidence comes from the first literate cultures. Akkadian texts contain a huge number of references to demons oppressing or interrupting sleep, demons or ghosts appearing in dreams, and sleeplessness caused by illness or worry. The context is typically magico-medical: dream-interpretation books are lists of omens or symptoms, with their relevant ritual counter-actions or remedies.[16] Thus a tablet compiling common diagnoses mentions two kinds of nightmares caused by *lamassu* and šēdu demons:

> If a man, while he lies asleep, (dreams that) a town repeatedly falls upon him, and he sighs, but nobody hears him – a lamassu and a šēdu are fastened to his body.
>
> ⸻
>
> If a man, while he lies asleep, (dreams that) a town repeatedly falls upon him, and he sighs, and someone hears him – a very evil *šēdu* is fastened to his body.[17]

A medical text describes signs of sorcerous attack in the patient:

> If a man's head constantly afflicts him; (in his) sleep [....]; his dreams are frightening [OR] [he has po[llutions repeatedly] in his sleep]; he spoke in his sleep [....]; his knees are paralyzed; his chest has paralysis; (and) his skin (lit., flesh) is constantly covered with moisture – That man is bewitched.[18]

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[15]   On the "paranoic" aspect of cultures with strong and detailed witchcraft belief-systems, the classic account is Douglas 1966, ch. 5; for general anthropological models of witchcraft as to do with tensions among neighbours, while sorcery accusations come from afar, see e.g. Stewart – Strathearn 2004: chs. 1, 6, 8.

[16]   Cf. Butler 1998: 43–72.

[17]   VAT 7525, col. III, lines 28–35, Staatliche Museen, Berlin; Butler 1998: 51–52. As here, Akkadian demons fastened themselves to the bodies of their victims, and had to be removed through ritual; but "normally, the pair *lamassu* and *šēdu* occur in texts as two types of benevolent spirits, [as] designations for...personal deities..." (Butler 1998: 52).

[18]   R. C. Thompson 1923: 86/1, col. 11, lines 3–7; Butler 1998: 54.

The earliest fictional nightmares are depicted also in *Gilgamesh*.[19] Enkidu, doomed to die, has a series of ominous dreams, in each of which he encounters a terrifying demon:

> There was something, my friend, in my dream of last night / the heavens thundered, the earth gave echo / and there was I, standing between them. / A man there was, grim his expression / just like a roaring Thunderbird were his features. / [His] hands were a lion's paws / [his] claws an eagle's talons. / He seized me by the hair, he overpowered me...[20]

In this classic example of a "One-Two" dream-demon scenario, the hybrid antagonist has a predator's extremities (beak, claws, talons), exemplifying the threat of penetration; a tenacious element in the imagery of affect-filled dreams.[21] The archaic nightmare demon typically has teeth or beak and claws. But a sexual attack also threatens through penetration, and the two may be combined. In this striking late Graeco-Roman relief, known in two forms (fig. 1a and 1b), a clawed siren descends on a sleeping man, with the (implied) objective of wounding, raping or seducing him; this represents an erotic dream or nightmare (or both).[22]

Gilgamesh also gives us an example of the most basic template for reframing a nightmare scenario: the "One-Two-Three" dream, wherein the attack is interrupted by an equally powerful helper. Such patterns are strongly reinforced when mythical beliefs are instituted in organised religion; and further reinforced in this case, as *Gilgamesh* is a mythico-literary work, wherein we can expect ideal cultural guidelines about dream-experience to be followed. In the hero's series of incubation dreams, here is his fourth dream, related to Enkidu:

> My friend, I have had the fourth [dream] / it surpasses my other three dreams! / I saw a Thunderbird in the sky / up it rose like a cloud, soaring above us. / It was a [ ]... its visage distorted / its mouth was fire, its breath was death. / [There was also a] man, he was strange of form / he ... and

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[19] Quite a few of the dream-texts cited here are in some sense fictions; I defend their usage as evidence of dream-culture on two main grounds. First, the function of a dream episode in the context of a longer fictional narrative text is invariably to foreshadow (the characters do not know the meaning of the dream, the audience for a mythological story, saga or folktale already know the outcome); but the interest for the cultural analyst is the imagery and action chosen to do this. Since all dreams are "texts", fictional dreams can be regarded for our purposes as a dense (i.e. more redacted) type of dream-text. Second, dream-texts, though aesthetically crafted, demonstrably draw on the dream-culture and express the dream-rhetoric of their time and place: a dream episode must be recognisable as oneiric to the audience in that culture. On this question of fictional sources as evidence for cultural beliefs, see e.g. W. V. Harris 2013: 290.

[20] Ur tablet, vv. 62–69. c. 12C BCE; trans. George 1999: 131.

[21] Cf. Milne 2008; 2011; 2017.

[22] Though efforts have been made to identify this scene as a mythological episode, possibly depicting Selene and Endymion, there is no consensus on the identification; the claws on the siren appear to rule out Selene, and Endymion should be an ageless youth, with no beard. See e.g. Woodford 2003: 64–65, fig. 39.

Fig. 1a. Incubus as clawed siren, 2C. Roman. Marble, 40.3 x 40 x 10.2 cm. Museum of Fine Art, Boston, Inv. no. 56.119. Photo: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2006.

Fig. 1b. "Selene & Endymion." 1C. Plaster, 16cm. Bagram Treasury, Afghanistan National Museum, Kabul.

stood there in my dream. / [He bound] its wings and took hold of my arm / ... he cast it down [before] me... / ...upon it.[23]

The scenario parallels the negative encounters dreamed by Enkidu, except that a new entity, *strange of form*, appears to save the hero from the predatory thunderbird. Gilgamesh himself is – according to the Sumerian King List – the son of a type of incubus (a *lilû*-demon);[24] his protector appears with no prompting.

Dreams and Illness

Disturbed sleep is symptomatic of many kinds of illness. Rather than looking at the evidence about this and trying to diagnose "what was really wrong with them," we can take seriously what people thought was going on, in their own mythological terms; more exactly, how people mobilised their belief-systems to conceptualise the related experiences of bodily pain and bad dreams.[25] In a world filled with demons, to be ill was to fall under the shadow of death – to have one foot in the underworld – and so become vulnerable to evil otherworldly agencies. Underlying all healing hymns, prayers and charms is the common perception of the sick person as inhabiting a liminal state or place – as in sleep and dreams – where two worlds meet. Hence the central position of dreams in magical texts. As the late Classical "Apollonian Invocation" puts it, once the initiate has succeeded in summoning a divinity:

> when he enters, ask him what you want to find out about: divination, oracles
> in verse, sending dreams, revelation by dreams, interpretation of dreams,
> causing illness, in fact about everything included in the arts of magic.[26]

When disease is commonly viewed as an indicator of supernatural malevolence, illness becomes an oneiric place where responsible agencies could be perceived, identified and opposed.

Classical incubation cults,[27] for example, positively interpret typical nightmare scenarios for therapeutic effect. Here is a depiction of a healing dream on a *stela* at a temple to Amphiaros (fig. 2). In the foreground, the god heals the supplicant, binding his upper arm. The background shows the dream as it appeared to the patient: sleeping

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[23] Old Babylonian Nippur tablet, vv. 9–19. Early 2nd mill.; trans. George 1999: 117.

[24] Cf. Butler 1998: 62.

[25] For examples of how cultural scripts can radically alter the interpretation and experience of pain, see e.g. Bynum 1987: 194–218; 246–259; and Scarry 1985: 161–180.

[26] Betz 1992: *PGM* I.327-3; Gordon 1997: 70.

[27] Wacht 1997: 179–265; Renberg 2017: I. 3–33.

in the temple, he is bitten on the shoulder by a snake (note the teeth). Since the snake is the god's chthonic avatar, the biting scene represents in coded form the same event as the foreground scene. This is an instance of the One-Two-Three structure wherein a therapeutic context re-stages a threatening dream scenario, fusing into one frame both the imagery of the dream-attack and its neutralising interpretation. The cultural script identifies the snake as a guise for the god, and renders the attack as divine medical intervention.

In the Amphiaros relief, the supernatural agent thus has two forms of affect – malevolent (biting snake) and benevolent (healing god) – together in one representation. In the great Akkadian poem, *Ludlul bêl nêmeqi* (or *The Righteous Sufferer*, Babylonian, c. 1500–1000 BCE), the protagonist's dream-visitor switches character, from malevolent to benevolent, over a series of dreams. The protagonist complains:

> The *alû* (-demon) has donned my body (as) a garment.
> Sleep covers me like a large hunting-net.[28]

This type of demon was regularly referred to as causing sexual dreams and nightmares; it *afflicts* [lit., *hits*] *a man as in a dream*.[29] In the poem, the Righteous Sufferer is tormented in this way, until the god Marduk intervenes:

Heavy was his hand upon me, I could not bear it!	A second time [I saw a dream].
Dread of him was oppressive, it [me].	In the dream I saw [at night],
His fierce [pun]ishment [ ], the deluge,	A remarkable purifier [ ],...
His stride was …, it … [ ]	He pronounced the resuscitating incantation,
[Ha]rsh, severe illness does not … [ ] my person,	he massaged [my] bo[dy].
I lost sight of [aler]tness, [ ] make my mind stray.	A third time I saw a dream.
I gro[an] day and night alike,	...
Dreaming and waking [I am] equally wretched.	[He applied] to me his spell
	which binds [debilitating disease],
A remarkable young man of extraordinary physique,	[He drove] back the evil vapo[u]r to the ends of the earth,
Magnificent in body, clothed in new garments,	He bore off [the head pain] to the breast of hell,
Because I was only half awake, his features lacked form.	[He sent] down the malignant spectre to its hidden depth,
He was clad in splendo[u]r, robed in dread ---	The relentless ghost he returned [to] its dwelling,
He came in upon me, he stood over me.	He overthrew the she-demon, sending it off to a mountain,
[When I saw him, my] flesh grew numb.	He replaced the ague in flood and sea,
[ ] "The Lady(?) has sent [me]",	He eradicated debility like a plant,
[ ]...	Unpleasant sleep, the pouring out of slumber, he took far [away]
	like smoke with which the heavens get filled[30]

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28 *Ludlul bêl nêmeqi*, II.71–2; Butler 1998: 44; Rensburg 1995.
29 CT 16, pl. 27, lines 32–33; Butler 1998: 51.
30 Foster 2005: 402–4; composite trans. from Larbert 1960 [1995]: 53, for the final lines.

Through most of the poem, the narrator presents himself as oppressed by a single evil entity, depicted subjectively in terms of the misery it causes him: he is wretched *day and night... dreaming and waking*. Then he receives a new kind of dream-visitor, whose features "lack form", because the dreamer is in a liminal state, ill and half-asleep (notice that Gilgamesh's dream protector is also "strange of form"). This second figure – Marduk or his messenger – "drives back" what are now categorised as a whole array of variously personified illnesses and demons, *to the ends of the earth, to the breast of hell*, etc. Once they become plural in the text, these demonic ills cease to be subjective; they are described objectively, and also ascribed agency (they have malignance, relentlessness etc). After the cure, a couple of images in the praise of Marduk's actions are worth attention:

> It was Marduk who put a muzzle on the mouth of the lion who was eating me

> ——————————————

> Marduk despoiled my pursuer of his sling and turned aside his slingstone.[31]

So, the demonic dream-attack in these lines is associated with the actions of tearing and shooting (note the teeth of the lion).

ONE-TWO-MANY: SICKNESS DEMONS AND DREAMS

Let us consider in more detail how protective multiplicity could be structured into ancient and traditional dream representations. Formally, multiple figures may be introduced at either end of the dream, bracketing the scenario in various ways. So, the resolution of the threat may involve a multiplication situated in the dream-text itself: thus the protector of the Righteous Sufferer in the end dispels a sheaf of disease-spirits. Or, multiplication of personnel may occur outwith the frame of the dream, as part of formal therapy or counter-charm; thus representations of Classical incubation cures position groups of presiding priests or worshippers at the edges of the scene (e.g. fig. 3); in the same way, the duo of healer saints, Cosmas and Damian, perform their trademark surgery during the patient's dream with onlooking angels around the bed (cf. fig. 4).[32] Or, the initial attacking demon as well as the protectors may be construed as multiple.

The multiple nature of fever demons is an old and tenacious idea. The "she-demon" mentioned by the *Righteous Sufferer* evokes the famous Babylonian monster, Lamaštu. She recurs in Akkadian compilations of demonic illnesses:

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[31] Lambert 1960 [1996]: 56.

[32] Harrold 2007; Rutt 1994.

Fig. 2. Amphiaros healing the man Archinos, c. 400-350 BCE. Votive relief, Sanctuary of Amphiaraos at Oropos, Greece. Marble, c. 49 x 54 cm. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Inv. no. 3369. Photo: J. Patrikianos

Fig. 3. Asclepius healing sleeping patient, c. 350 BCE. Votive relief, found near site of Asklepieion, built into wall of house. Marble. Peiraeus Archaeological Museum, Athens, Inv. no. 405. Photo: Ephorate of West Attica, Piraeus and the Islands.

Fig. 4. Attributed to the Master of Los Balbases, The Verger's Dream: Saints Cosmas and Damian perform a miraculous cure by transplanting a leg. Spanish, c. 1495. Panel from an altarpiece. Oil on wood, 169 x 133 cm. Photo: Wellcome Library, 46009i.

> The *di'u*-disease is the Lamaštu(-demoness), the Obliterator. It does not
> let (one) sleep, nor does it make sleep pleasant [good].[33]

Lamaštu is depicted in a rich body of amulets and incantations, dating from the 2nd-1st millennium BCE. She is singular but with seven names – an attribute inherited from her Sumerian parent, the seven evil Dimme damsels – and she brings forth sevenfold evils.[34] Best known as a demon of childbirth (itself, of course, a highly liminal and dangerous state), she was also nocturnal, attacking sleepers and causing nightmares. Among her standard names: "Sword that splits the Head, She who Lights the Fire, Goddess whose Face is Wild."[35]

In the oldest Lamaštu representations, she is given some variant of a dog-head form. A huge corpus of amulets depict her with outspread arms and fingers: "her hands are a net, her grip means death;[36] furious and with very long hands, very long fingers and nails... she entered the house through the front door."[37] Later, she was represented as a more complex hybrid – lion-headed and taloned – and embedded in an iconography. She stands on a boat (to travel through the underworld), carries a bundle of snakes, or holds a snake (or snake and dagger) in each hand (cf. fig. 5). She is associated with biting animals (dog, snake and scorpion). She inhabits the wilderness, lies in wait like a wolf, and sniffs out victims.

Here is a common spell (Hulbazizi no. 60) against attacks in sleep, to be accompanied by incantations specific to Lamaštu (among others). It is voiced by the patient:

> Spell. Something passes by the edge of my bed
> frightening me, and making me panic
> showing me fearful dreams
> let them commit it [the demon] to Nedu, the great [doorkeeper] of the Underworld
> At the command of Ninurta, firstborn son, beloved progeny.
> At the command of Marduk, who lives in Esagil and Babylon.
> Oh door and bolt, may you know
> that I have fallen under the protection of
> these two divine lords. Spell.[38]

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[33] CT 17. pl. 25, lines 5–7; Butler 1998: 51.

[34] Wiggerman 2000: 217–218. Note that other Assyrian and Babylonian demons were also sevenfold; Wiggerman 2000: 226, n. 45. The details which follow here about Lamaštu are drawn from Wiggerman's detailed survey.

[35] Farber 2014: 145.

[36] Old Babylonian, BM 120022.

[37] Old Babylonian, BIN 2 72.3f; cf. Wiggerman 2000: 231–232.

[38] Hulbazizi no. 60, trans. Finkel 2001: 61–62; cf. Wiggerman 2000: 246. Wiggerman has the demon coming from under the bed; however Akkadian *mashdu > maldu* means "edge of the bed" or "side" (*Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, v. 10, M 1, 363), and the verb *eteequ* means "to go past, to go through, to cross (over)" (my thanks for this elucidation to Prof. Dr. Vladimir V. Emelianov, p. c., 19th Feb. 2016).

Fig. 5. Figure of Lamaštu standing on an ass, with suckling jackal and wild pig, Akkadian text. Neo-Assyrian amulet, Mesopotamia, c. 800-550 BCE. Stone, c. 6 x 13 cm. British Museum, Inv. No. 117759. Photo: The Trustees of the British Museum.
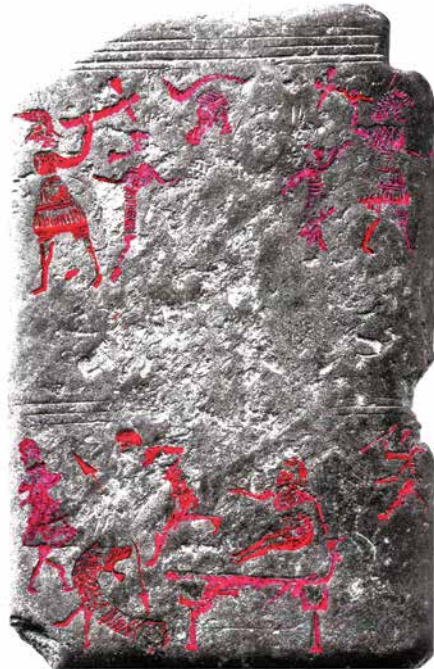
Fig. 6a and b. Scene analogous to Hulbazizi incantation, no. 60. Late Babylonian amulet, National Museum of Iraq, Baghdad, Inv. no. 19189. Photo: Orient-Abteilung / Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin; red ink emphasis added by author.

This spell has a visual equivalent. A Late Babylonian amulet (fig. 6a and b)[39] carries what is probably the earliest extant depiction of a nightmare-demon. The lower register dramatises the action of the Hulbazizi incantation. As Wiggerman describes it, "the scared sufferer is sitting straight up in his bed [around] which crawls a little dragon, attacked by someone with a spear."[40] This dragon creature by the bed is the bad dream itself. In the upper register, two *Ugallu* ("Great Lions" – protective lion-men) brandish maces to deter such demonic intruders. The *Ugallu* creatures (and the figure with the spear) exhibit the same traits (predator heads, sharp weapons) as the dragon-demon. The whole scene thus multiplies and re-distributes among the protectors the generic characteristics of the nightmare (teeth, claws, monstrous body, commotion, terror).

The Lamaštu corpus also exemplifies how the image of a demon could come to be used as protection against that demon (and, by extension, other demons). This is a key strategy in apotropeic visual cultures: the demon is to be deterred by its own representation, or by a representation with the same qualities.[41] Against the likes of Lamaštu, Babylonian magical medicine tries to break up the deadly One-Two encounter in two main ways. The dreamer is provided with a bodyguard of creatures whose characteristics match those of the attacker. And, an even more monstrous demonic protector may be invoked: Pazuzu, Breaker of the Winds (sometimes termed the "husband" of Lamaštu).

Thus, in the Neo-Assyrian "Hell Plaque" (fig. 7), a complex exorcism ceremony is underway, depicted in low relief in four main registers. In the third register, the patient lies in bed, flanked by two fish-costumed priests. Above are two registers of cosmic symbols and animal-headed protectors; below, a larger-scale Lamaštu rides through the underworld (home of demons), with Pazuzu following, presumably to dissuade her. Presiding over all this, above the frame of these registers, rises the head of another Pazuzu, sculpted in the round, his two paws resting on the top rim of the plaque. The change in scale, depth and formal position clearly situate him in a different dimension of being. Solo Pazuzu heads (cf. fig. 8) were used also as standard apotropeic representations, like the later Gorgoneion.[42]

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[39] Becker 1993: 5, no. 7.

[40] Wiggerman 2000: 224. I am indebted to Dr. Lutz Martin, Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, and Prof. Dr. Ricardo Eichmann, German Archaeological Institute, Berlin, for tracing this image for me. Wiggerman describes but does not reproduce it, referring us to the photo in Becker (Becker, et al. 1993: 5, no. 7), which is too dark to be able to distinguish the scene. This amulet was not excavated and so does not come from a secure datable context; it was sold, presumably by a local, to the excavators in the 6th season of excavation, 1933–1934 (p.c. Eichmann, 1st Feb. 2016).

[41] According to Bahrani, in Akkadian, a *Salmu* (= image, representation): "rather than being a copy of something in reality... was seen as a real thing. It was not considered to resemble an original reality that was present elsewhere but to contain that reality in itself... ontologically equivalent... existing in the same register of reality... For the Mesopotamians, everything encountered could be read as a sign..." (2003: 127).

[42] On Pazuzu heads, Lambert, 1970, with illustration at T4; Heeßel, 2002. For *gorgoneion* references and an illustration, see e.g. Milne 2017: 82–84, fig. 1.

Fig. 7a. "Hell Plaque." Neo-Assyrian, Mesopotamia, c. 800-550 BCE. Bronze, 13.8 x 8 cm. Musée du Louvre, Inv. no. AO 22205. Photo: RMN / Franck Raux.

Fig. 7b. Detail showing top register of "Hell Plaque," with head of Pazuzu in the round. Neo-Assyrian, Mesopotamia, c. 800-550 BCE. Bronze, 13.8 x 8 cm. Musée du Louvre, Inv. no. AO 22205. Photo: RMN / Franck Raux.

The Ancient Egyptians used the image of Bes, the lion-headed dwarf, as an apotropeic monster-god. Thousands of Bes figurines testify to his popularity. By the first millennium BCE:

> [Bes was] equated with Shu, god of the air, who filled the cosmos with the breath of life... [Bes's] nakedness, his ithyphallic form, his hideous face and stuck-out tongue [repelled] hostile forces... Bes's dancing and noisy music-making... also [drove] away evil powers... men and women... dressed up in Bes masks to perform protective dances...[43]

Bes commanded wide apotropeic powers, including protection in childbirth, and also could be deployed in dreams. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, Bes appears in the context of incubation cults, as practiced, for example, in the temples of Asklepios-Imhotep.[44] Suites of rooms where pilgrims came to sleep were known as the chambers of Bes, and decorated with representations of the god.[45]

As a defender against nightmare demons, Bes was carved in multiple on a customised funerary head-rest[46] owned by the royal scribe Qeniherkhepeshef (19th Dynasty, c. 1210 BCE), whose grave goods included a book of spells relating to dreams.[47] A row of Bes figures holding knives are positioned below the point where the sleeper would lay his neck. A larger, more elaborate, solo Bes figure dances and waves a clutch of snakes on the other side of the block. As in the Bes dances, the imagery of knives, snakes, noise and commotion – as well as the monstrous faces of Bes, singular and multiple – is there to repel oneiric attacks.

MULTIPLICITY IN THE NIGHTMARE SCENARIO

Patterns established in antiquity for conceiving and representing nightmare had great longevity. Rhetoric in the large corpus of medieval curses, from the Middle East to Northern Europe, testifies to these continuities. On an early medieval incantation bowl (fig. 9), from a region once ruled by Babylon, the text (though garbled and incomplete) mentions *migraine* caused by a *she-demon*, associated with *spells in a dream of the night*. Apparently a counter-curse, it starts with a catalogue of gruesome bodily ills:

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[43] Pinch 1994: 44.

[44] Omran 2014: 70-112.

[45] Cf. Lang 2013: 77–78.

[46] Headrest of Qeniherkhepeshef, 1225 BC, 19th dynasty, Deir el-Medina, Egypt; limestone, British Museum no. EA63783. For illustrations see Milne 2017: fig. 2. a-c.

[47] Cf. Milne 2017: 82–86, figs. 2a–c. Many such Egyptian head-rests survive – some intended as tomb furniture – others used for sleeping; cf. Szpakowska 2003; Pinch 1994: 40–43.

Fig. 8. Head of Pazuzu, Neo-Assyrian amulet, cast with ring for suspension at top, c. 800-600 BCE. Bronze, c. 10.5 x 7cm. North Iraq. British Museum, Inv. no: 132964 [Heeßel no. 153] Photo: The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig.9. Incantation bowl, Late-Post Sasanian, Aramaic text, c. 6-8C. Ceramic, 19cm diameter & 5.2 cm depth. Made in S. Iraq, found in tomb in Babylon. British Museum, Inv. No. 91719. Photo: the Trustees of the British Museum.

the flux of the body, spittle, the effusion (of) water upon the breast, [....] devouring flesh, shedding of blood... Now [....] (the woman) that curses Mahperoz son of (…) Hindu. Now the bewitchment that cursed El – (that) have I loosened I sen[d] ... Dissolved are the bones of snapping (fingers), dissolved are the tubes of pipes, [....] [....] (dissolved are) the bones, dissolved the sinews, and migraine [....] of the she-demon, that you bring to an end the vows and spells that appear in a dream of the night [....][48]

Other incantation bowls are more explicit: Mahlefa son of Batšittin wishes against Mar Zutra son of Ukkamay:

knocking and flinging and hanging... send against him fever & shivering ...& headache & groaning... & demons & devils & liliths... [they will]

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[48] BM 91719; trans. Segal 2000.

heat him & inflame him & set him on fire & affright him, ending with
the injunction that all these creatures together, *will not give him sleep
for his eyes & they will not give him rest in his body in his dreams & in
his visions* [emphasis added].[49]

The call for nightmare here is the climax for piled-up imagery of commotion
(knocking, flinging, etc), tied together in a package with fever, headaches, desert
creatures and dark powers.

Much further North and West, over the next thousand years, illness was perceived
in terms of attack by a multiple demonic agency. The late medieval Blæsinge amulet[50]
names seven sisters[51] as fever demons:

+ I conjure you, seven sisters ... *Elffrica (?), Affricea, Soria, Affoca,
Affricala.* I conjure you and invoke (you?) through the Father and the
Son and the Holy Spirit, that you may not harm this servant of God,
neither in the eyes nor in the limbs nor in the marrow nor in any joints
of the limbs... agla.[52]

An incantation from c. 1000 CE refers to these sisters as "shivers and fevers",
active at specific times, and during sleep:

[against] the midday ones, the nightly, the daily, the bi-daily, the three
daily... or whatever sort you are: I conjure you... you may not have leave
to harm this servant of God by day or night, neither waking or sleeping...[53]

In the Irish *Serglige Con Culainn* (*Wasting Sickness of Cú Chulainn*; earliest ex-
tant version probably composed c. 9C; earliest MS, late 11C–early 12C), the hero's
nightmare-illness is central to the action. Cú Chulainn is with a group by the water,
hunting birds for their feathers. They see an otherworldly pair of seabirds, joined by
a golden chain, singing a magical song. Cú Chulainn is advised not to harm them, but
he shoots at them anyway, hitting one. He then falls into a feverish sleep – a sojourn
in the Otherworld – during which the two sisters at whom he shot – now in human

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[49] Counter-charm incantation bowl, 6–8C, Iraq, BM 91771; trans. Segal 2000. Illustrated in Milne 2017, fig, 4.

[50] Zealand, Denmark; MacLeod – Mees 2007: 133–134; Stoklund 1986: 189-211.

[51] The number seven became standard for fever demons, Simek (2011: 38) argues: "The reason for a fixed number of seven demons may derive from the biblical statement that Jesus had driven out seven demons from the body of Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2: *de qua septem daemonia exierant*). As this statement became proverbially linked with Mary Magdalene in the Middle Ages, seven demons became canonical." See also Eliferova, this volume.

[52] Simek 2011: 34; cf Bozóky 2013: 102–103.

[53] Codex Vaticanus Latinus 235, trans. Simek 2011: 36.

form – take turns at thrashing him. This goes on for a long time; they leave him for dead, he is ill for a year.

Multiples enter into this tale first at the start, with the group attack, the flock of birds, then Cú Chulainn's attack on the paired birds. Cú Chulainn then subjectively experiences a One-Two nightmare scenario with a twist (there are two attackers, but only one at a time hits him). Then the text gives another view of this dream, from the outside, wherein the spirits causing the hero's illness are described as multiple. Cú Chulainn's charioteer, Lóeg, makes this comment:

Mór espa do láech	Great folly for a warrior
laigi fri súan serglige,	to lie under the sleep of a wasting-sickness
ar donadbat genaiti	for it shows that spirits/demons,
áesa a Tenmag Trogaigi	the folk of Tenmag Trogaigi,
condot rodbsat,	have overwhelmed you,
condot chachtsat	have captured you,
condot ellat,	have taken possession of you,
eter bríga banespa.	through the power of womanish folly.[54]

So, externally, the wasting sleep is read as a sign that not merely one or two, but a horde of demons ("the folk of Tenmag Trogaigi") is in possession of the hero.

In an Old English *Journey Charm*, from around the same period, a traveller guards himself against a horde of nocturnal supernatural enemies, and the fear they bring. These are again concrete in their means of attack, enigmatic in form:

Ic me on þisse gyrde beluce and on godes helde bebeode	I lock unto me this stave and entrust [myself] in God's protection;
wið þane sara stice, wið þane sara slege,	against the stab of the pains, against the blow of the pains,
wið þane grymma gryre,	against the terror of the grim ones,
wið ðane micela egsa þe bið eghwam lað, and wið eal þæt lað þe in to land fare.	against the great horror that is hateful to everyone, and against all loath [things] that fare in upon the land.
Sygegealdor ic begale, sigegyrd ic me wege...	I sing a victory chant, I bear a victory-stave...
ne me mere ne gemyrre...	May the mare [night-mare] not mar me... [55]

The charm delineates a dream-cultural view of nightmares wherein internal affect (terror, horror) and external effect (stabs, blows) are tangled together, and linked to inchoate creatures of the night, abroad in the world,[56] capable of "marring" a person; in this case outwith the context of illness.

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[54] Trans. Dillon 1953: 11. 316–323; cf. Hall 2004: 143.

[55] Mid-11C, Corpus Christi College MS 41, 350–353, trans. Hill 2012: 148.

[56] Cf Milne 2008, 2017; From the 20C on, these weapons are often modernised as knives, spikes etc.

A 12C bronze amulet, found in a grave at Högstena, Sweden (*SR* V, no. 216), is inscribed with a comprehensive list of aggressive entities:

ᚠᛅᛚᛅᚼᛅᛏᛁᛁᛞᚱᚠᛅᚠᛏᛏᛁᛞᚱᚱᛁᛞᛏᛏᛅᛏᛁᛞ
ᛁᛞᚱᚱᛁᛅᛏᛏᛅᛏᛁᛞᚱᚼᛁᛏᛁᛏᛅᛏᛁᛞ
ᚱᚼᛁᚠᛏ--ᛁᛁᛞᚱᚠᛅᚱᛅᛏᛏᛁᛞᚱᚠᛏᛁᛁᚼ
ᛏᚠᛅᛏᚼ-ᚠᛅᛏᛏᚠᛁ--ᛦᛏᛁᚠᚼᚠᛏᛁ-ᛏ

Gal anda viðr, gangla viðr, rīðanda viðr, viðr rinnanda, viðr sitianda, viðr
sign(and)a, viðr f(a)randa, viðr fliuganda. S[kal] alt fyrna (?) ok um døyia.

> I incant against the spirit, against the walking (spirit), against the riding one, against the running one, against the sitting one, against the signing one, against the travelling one, against the flying one. It shall completely wither (?) and die.[57]

Here, the effect of multiplicity is wound down into a singular enemy, which is then extinguished.

The church worked hard to replace pagan supernatural entities through an *interpretatio christiana* which recuperated all such agencies as rebel angels.[58] Thus, for example, the late 13C *Southern English Legendary* – in a section on the Archangel Michael (lines 223–260) – explains that dreams are brought by the spirits of angels which stayed neutral in the battle between God and Lucifer:

223 Boþe þe luþer & þe gode aliȝteþ ofte adoun	223 Both the bad and the good [spirits] often alight down
224 And to men in slepe comþ and in auision	224 And come to men in sleep and in a vision
225 And sseweþ hom in metinge moni a wonder dede	225 And show them in dreams many a wondrous deed [thing]
226 Ac þe gode of gode þinge & þe luþer euere of quede	226 But the good [spirits show men visions] of good things and the bad ever of bad [things]
227 And derieþ ofte men in slep & bodieþ sorwe & care	227 And [they] often harm men in sleep and announce sorrow and care
228 And ofte hi of liggeþ men þat me clupeþ þe mare...	228 And often they lie upon men, which men call the [night]mare...

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[57] Most of the Högstena amulet translation is agreed on (130, n. 19); for variant readings of first and last phrases: Jungner 1936: 278-304; Krause 1993 [1970]: 55.

[58] In the context of one such text, the Old Norse *Elucidarius*, Gunnell (2007: 128) speaks of "the medieval church's deliberate attempt to equate all popular nature spirits with demons or fallen angels, an idea reflected in numerous *exempla*-based folk legends found all over the Nordic area", going on to quote a late 19C Danish example: "when the Lord expelled the fallen angels from heaven, they fell on the earth and became the troll folk... some fell on roof tops and became *nisse*, some fell in the water and became water sprites..." (n. 79). An identical tradition accounts for the origin of the fairies in Ireland, cf. e.g. Wilde 1887: 208–215.

231 Mest hi greueþ selimen wanne hi liggeþ upriȝt	231 Usually they oppress goodmen as they lie down [asleep]
232 Op hom hi liggeþ heuie inou nere hi nere so liȝt...	232 they lie on them heavy enough whether they [the spirits] were ever so light
233 Hi of liggeþ as an heui stok as hi wolde a man astoffe	233 They lie on men like a heavy [tree] trunk as if they wanted that a man suffocate
234 Þat he ne ssel wawy fot ne hond ne vnneþe enes poffe	234 So that he shall not move hand or foot nor scarcely draw a breath
235 Dai ȝat such luþer chamberlein þat awakeþ men so sore	235 Curst be such an evil chamberlain that waketh men so painfully[59]

The text moves from the idea of demons bringing all good and bad dreams, to bad demons causing suffocating, pressing nightmares (*maren*), to the same demons impregnating women and seducing men:

239 Þe ssrewen wolleþ ek oþerwile mankunne to bi-traie	239 The evil creatures desire also at other times to betray mankind,
240 A-liȝte a-doun in monnes forme biniȝte & bidaie	240 alight down in human form by night and by day,
241 And liggeþ ofte bi wymmen as hi were of fleiss & blode...	241 and lie often with women as though they were of flesh and blood...
243 And ofte in forme of womman aday and eke niȝt	243 And often in woman's form, in the day and also night
244 Hi leteþ men hom ligge bi and bitraieþ hom outriȝt	244 they let men lie with them and betray them outright:
245 For hi weteþ wuch beoþ men þat to folie habbeþ wille	245 for they know which are the men who have desire of folly:
246 Al one in som deorne stude hi stondeþ þanne wel stille	246 Alone in some hidden place they stand then very quiet/still,
247 And mani fol hom liþ so by in wode and eke in mede	247 and many a fool lies with them thus, in the wood and in the meadow.
248 Ac þer nis non þat so deþ þat ne acoreþ þe dede	248 But there is none who does so that does not suffer from the deed...
253 And ofte in forme of womman in moni deorne weie	253 And often in the form of woman on many a hidden path
254 Me sicþ of hom gret companie boþe hoppe & pleie	254 men see a great company of them both dance and play,
255 Þat eleuene beoþ icluped...	255 that are called eluene ...
256 And bi daie muche in wode beoþ & biniȝte upe heie doune	256 And by day they are often in the wood, and by night upon high hills;
257 Þat beoþ of þe wrecche gostes þat of heuene were inome...	257 [They] are from among the wretched spirits who/which were taken out of heaven...[60]

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[59] Text, D'Evelyn – Mill 1956–59: II, 409–410; trans. Hall 2004: 141, apart from the translation here of lines 223–228; for help with the latter, I thank Professor Joseph Harris, Harvard University (p.c. 4th Nov. 2018). For bibliography on the MSS readings and later uses of the *Legendary* materials, in particular the term *eluen*, see Hall 2007: 75 n. 2.

[60] Trans. Hall 2004: 141; text, D'Evelyn – Mill 1956–59: II, 409–410.

So a close linkage was felt to exist (at least among priests) between nightmare, forbidden desire and sexual dreams. Notably, the bad spirits are said to actually sense which men desire to lie with them (a point to which we will return). Illness and death comes from such congresses, which happen in wild "hidden" places.[61] After listing three kinds of malign One-Two encounters, the section ends with the spirits in multiple form: *en masse* they constitute the "great company" of elves,[62] "hidden" in woods and hills, who "dance and play" in woman-form.[63]

Against a multiple entity, multiple protectors could be listed; sheer iteration[64] of personnel is characteristic of many written ancient and medieval charms.[65] The legendary Seven Sleepers of Ephesus[66] comprise a protective entity which is already multiple. Muslims and Christians alike inscribed amulets with the names of the Sleepers.[67] In the Anglo-Saxon charm, *Against a dwarf* (*Wið dweorh*), one starts the proceedings by writing on separate wafers the magical names of the Sleepers:

Wið dweorh man sceal niman VII lytle oflœtan, swylce man mid ofrað, and writtan þas naman on œlcre oflœtan: Maximianus, Malchus, Iohannes, Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion	Against a dwarf one must take seven small holy wafers, such as one makes holy communion with, and write these names on each wafer: Maximian, Malchus, John, Martimian, Dionysius, Constantine, Serafion [i.e. the names of the sleepers][68]

The charm must then be sung in each ear and over the patient's head, and a packet (of the wafers?) hung around a maiden's neck for three days.

The mysterious *dweorh* in this scenario emerges from the general context of European folklore and dream-culture, wherein nightmare creatures – like the northern

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[61] Lines 248–252: "Ac þer nis non þat so deþ þat ne acoreþ þe dede / Hore membres toswelleþ somme & somme ofscapeþ vnneþe / And somme fordwineþ al awei forte hi be[o] ibroʒt to deþe / More wonder it is iwis hou eni ofscapeþe of liue / For an attr iþing it is to lemman oþer to wiue" ('there is none who does so / that does not suffer from the deed: / their penises swell-up [?] somewhat / and some [? men] survive with difficulty / and some dwindle completely away / whereby they are brought to death. / A greater wonder it is, for sure, how any escapes alive / for a poisonous thing it is / to a [male] lover or a woman.' trans. Hall 2004: 141).

[62] Cf. Hall 2004: 141, n. 184.

[63] Cf. the Trooping Fairies motif, ATU F241.1.0.1.

[64] Cf. Rudan-Tomasic, this volume.

[65] Cf. Skemer 2006: 107–115. Simek 2011 (op. cit., 39) cites, as an extreme instance of the tendency to iteration, the 12C charm in Codex Vaticanus Latinus 510, f. 168r., likely to have emanated from the Abbey of Clairefontaine in Picardy, which invokes against the fevers an extraordinarily long list of sacred and biblical figures, including ranks of clergy, planets, rivers of paradise, and all the names of God: "Coniuro vos febres per deum patrem omnipotentem et per omnia [nomina] sua. Eloy, Evangelista, Sabaoth, Ely, Adonay, Tetragramaton, Immutabilis, Etemus, Christus, Messias, Soter, Emmanuel, Dominus, Unigenitus, Alpha et 0, principium et finis, [ver]bu[m], 56 Stella I fulgens, Lux, Sol, Oriens, Pons, Mercator, Letitia, Sponsus, Zelos, Phebos, Karos, Pons, Agazas, On, Bonus, Incorporeus, Perfectus, Creator, Fixus, Homo husyon, Veritas, Vita, Ymago, Forma, Agitus, Immaculatus, Altissimus, Admirabilis, Figura, Virtus, Sapientia, Pax, Pacientia, Humilitas, Splendor, Agyos, Kyrr[i]os, per omnia nomia sua adiuro vos febres, et non habeatis potestam super hunc famulum dei."

[66] For the wider background to this legend and its dissemination in Britain, see e.g. Magennis 1991: 43-56.

[67] Cf. MacDonald 2009.

[68] BL MS. Harley 585, c. 1000 CE; trans. adapted from, and text following, Griffiths 1996: 188.

mara or the eastern *trute* – could also be identified as minor spirits: goblins, elves, fairies, kelpies, etc. The condition the *dweorh* causes is a kind of compelled soul travel, described in the main charm text that follows:

> Her com in gangan, in spiderwiht,
> hæfde him his haman on handa, cwæð þæt þu his hæncgest wære,
> legde þe his teage an sweoran. Ongunnan him of þæm lande iþan;
> sona swa hy of þæm lande coman, þa ongunnan him þa liþu olian.
> þa com in gangan dweores sweostar;
> þa gændade heo and aðas swor
> ðæt næfre þis ðæm adlegan derian ne moste,
> ne þæm þe þis galdor begytan mihte,
> oððe þe þis galdor ongalan cuþe. Amen. Fiað.

> Here came walking in, in here, a spider-creature [?] –
> he had his coat in his hand, said that you were his horse,
> laid his reins on your neck.
> They began to travel away from the once they came from the land,
> then the limbs began to feel cold.
> Then came walking in the dwarf's sister;
> she made an end to it and swore oaths
> That this [riding] would never be permitted to harm the sick one,
> or one who could obtain this charm, or know how to chant this charm.
> Amen. Let it be so.[69]

In my previous discussion of this imagery, I related it to traditions of night riding or soul travel.[70] Here, the relevant aspect is how it manages number. Whatever the identities of its key supernatural figures may be, the ordering of their action is clear. First, come the seven sleepers (multiple and magical), ritually invoked, and three humans: the charmer, the patient and a maiden (multiple and mundane). The *dweorh* (or *spider-wiht*?) is the primary dream-antagonist, riding the soul of the patient (One-Two). Into this scenario, the historiola of the charm brings a third figure, the enigmatic *dweores sweostar* (dwarf's sister?). Whatever her provenance, she intervenes as a supernatural protector, blocking the malignant action of the *dweorh*. Finally, multiplicity is enfolded into the ending, as the charm text evokes a belief-community of all future users.

Apart from the unusual motif of skin-riding, the structure of the charm follows a recognisable apotropeic pattern of numerosity: the therapeutic effect is achieved by

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[69] Glosecki 1952: 186–187; Grattan – Singer 1952: 160–162; Dobbie 1942: 121–122.

[70] Milne 2017: 102–103.

"breaking in" to the One-Two scenario, to introduce an opposing supernatural guardian. For good measure, the action is bracketed by multiples: an honour guard of the Seven Sleepers, and an audience of future healers and beneficiaries.

The One-Two-Three structure is also followed, more surprisingly, in an account by Guibert (1064?–c. 1125), Abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy, about a nightmare experienced by his mother:

> When it was midnight (since it is the habit of the Devil to invade souls weakened with grief), as she lay in her bed full of deep anxiety, suddenly, while she lay awake, the Enemy himself lay upon her and the burden of his weight almost crushed the life out of her. As she choked in the agony of her spirit and lost all use of her limbs, she was unable to make a single sound: completely silenced but with her reason free, she awaited aid from God alone.

Note that, though she cannot move or speak, she is aware of what is happening. Then comes a strange intervention:

> Then suddenly from the head of her bed a spirit, without doubt a good one, began to cry out in loud and kindly tones, "Holy Mary, help her." The spirit spoke out in this fashion for a bit. She fully understood what he was saying and was aware that he was thoroughly outraged. [Then] he sallied forth burning with anger. Thereupon he who lay upon her rose up, and the other met and seized him and by the strength of God overthrew him with a great crash, so that the room shook heavily with the shock of it, and the maidservants, who were fast asleep, were rudely awakened. When the Enemy had thus been driven out by divine power, the good spirit who had called upon Mary and routed the Devil turned to her whom he had rescued and said, "See that you be a good woman."[71]

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[71]   Guibert de Nogent, Book 1.13, composite trans.: 'Cumque ejusdem noctis fieret intempestum, et illa atroci anxietate plenissima proprium cubile foveret, sicut Diabolo consuetudinarium est, ut potissimum animis tristitia maceratis immergat, subito vigilanti illi ipse Inimicus incubuit, et gravissimo pene usque ad extinctionem pondère jacentem oppressit. Cum sub hac ejus spiritus suffocaretur angustia, et omnium membrorum ex toto libertate careret, vocis autem cujuspiam sonitum nullatenus emittere posset, solumque Dei, muta penitus, sed ratione libera, praestolaretur auxilium, ecce a lectuli ejus capite quidam spiritus, haud dubium quin bonus, sic inclamare non minus affectuosa quam aperta voce coepit: "Sancta Maria, adjuva!" Et cum aliquandiu sic dixisset, et quod dicebatur plene illa intelligeret, sentiente illa quoe tantopere vexabatur, cum grandi animadversione erumpit; quo erumpente, ille qui incumbebat assurgit, quem ille obvius apprehendit, et utpote ex Deo violentus cum tanto fragore subvertit, ut; impulsu graviter cameram quatiente, asseculas sopore depressas insolenter nimis exciret. Illo igitur sic divinis virtutibus exturbato, pius ipse spiritus qui Mariam clamaverat et daemonem pepulerat, conversus ad eam quam eruerat: "Vide, inquit, ut sis bona femina", Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua sive monodiarum suarum libri tres*, 1.13; Guibert 1907: 43–44. For varying translations of the first clause, Guibert 1984: 69–70; 2011: 36–37. For medieval clergy, as the Venerable Bede, in his widely used *De temporum ratione*, defines the hours of the day, *intempestum* is the name of one of the seven divisions of the night: so here, the reference is to the middle of the night, or midnight. I am indebted to Steve Farmer (pc., 24th Nov. 2018), for kindly unravelling this issue, and for this reference.

Guibert is aware that a "good spirit" is a theological difficulty, which may be part of the reason he has the benevolent spirit pray to Mary. But the interest here is that the dream-narrative thus has a prayer embedded in it, and that the pivot and conduit for occult protection is the third dream avatar. Mary, implied as the ultimate source of the help, remains off-stage. Especially interesting are the dynamics of desire among the three personae. Malevolence on the part of the attacker is clear: this is the Enemy himself, not just any incubus. The human victim is physically in agony, but characterised as mentally free, and open to divine aid. In other words, she anticipates, *in media res* of the dream-scenario, the enaction of the apposite cultural script. The good spirit manifests first as a "kindly" disembodied voice above and behind her head, as it prays to Mary (as in the utterances of the *dweores sweostar,* the words are not given). During this repeated prayer, two things are said to happen: first, the woman "fully understands" the good spirit's intent; two, the good spirit itself fills with outrage and anger. This effectively maps a focus of energy and desire between the woman and her guardian, building up, until the latter reaches a kind of tipping point, and surges forward, suddenly embodied. This is the point which breaks the attack: the devil releases the woman, and turns to fight. So now all the desire is focussed in the two occult agents. The spirits clash; the good one overthrows the Enemy with a mighty bang. The maidservants then rush in as witnesses, woken by the commotion.

Violent Emotion in Nightmares, Spells and Curses

The business of switching desire – controlling, deflecting, or relocating dangerous occult energy on to a third party – is, of course, the *raison d'être* of many charms and all curses. In the ego-shattering dream, desire can switch, as in were, in midflow from one extreme to another. We might speculate that this is because there is really only one source of desire in the dream. Despite the impressions of profound alterity concerning the dream-creature, it remains an avatar animated by the dreamer's own desire; that is, its umbilical connection to the ego is disguised, the negatively polarised desire embodied in the avatar is absolutely alienated; yet still all the affect in the dream emanates ultimately from the same source. This fluidity of affect is central to the ways in which cultural scripts can change the shape of the nightmare.

We have seen examples of affect turning from negative to positive in the serial dreams of the Righteous Sufferer, and a dynamic movement of energy through the personae of Guibert's mother's nightmare. In the summer of 1898, the Irish writer J. M. Synge (1871–1909) had an ego-shattering dream that started ecstatically and ended in terror. Here is his account:

> Some dreams I have had in this cottage seem to give strength to the opinion
> that there is a psychic memory attached to certain neighbourhoods. Last

night, after walking in a dream among buildings with strangely intense light on them, I heard a faint rhythm of music beginning far away on some stringed instrument.

It came closer to me, gradually increasing in quickness and volume with an irresistibly definite progression. When it was quite near the sound began to move in my nerves and blood, and to urge me to dance with them.

I knew that if I yielded I would be carried away to some moment of terrible agony, so I struggled to remain quiet, holding my knees together with my hands.

The music increased continually, sounding like the strings of harps, tuned to a forgotten scale, and having a resonance as searching as the strings of the cello.

Then the luring excitement became more powerful than my will, and my limbs moved in spite of me. In a moment I was swept away in a whirlwind of notes. My breath and my thoughts and every impulse of my body, became a form of the dance, till I could not distinguish between the instruments and the rhythm and my own person or consciousness.

For a while it seemed an excitement that was filled with joy, then it grew into an ecstasy where all existence was lost in a vortex of movement. I could not think there had ever been a life beyond the whirling of the dance.

Then with a shock the ecstasy turned to an agony and rage. I struggled to free myself, but seemed only to increase the passion of the steps I moved to. When I shrieked I could only echo the notes of the rhythm.

At last with a moment of uncontrollable frenzy I broke back to consciousness and awoke. I dragged myself trembling to the window of the cottage and looked out. The moon was glittering across the bay, and there was no sound anywhere on the island.[72]

The context of this dream corresponds in key ways with traditional emic world-views connecting dream, illness and the otherworld. Synge was staying in the Arran Islands, off the West coast of Ireland. Convalescing after a serious illness the previous year – the disease that was soon to kill him – he was indeed, so to speak, in the shadow of

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[72] Synge 1992 [1907]: 54–55.

death. He spent weeks among the islanders, talking with them, intentionally immersing himself in their tales and culture. In a sense, he wanted to join their dream-culture, which he saw as a stronger, purer version of traditional Irish dream-culture; more precisely, perhaps, he reshaped his own birth dream-culture (Protestant, Anglo-Irish upper-class) through contact with theirs.[73] Context, "set and setting", thus inform his nightmare, which sounds very much like a close encounter with the *sidhe* (or *si*), the fairy host.[74] And there were equivalents for this host in "Anglo-Saxon" dream-culture; recall those whom the *Legendary* called *eluene* (elves), the "great company" who "hoppe & pleie" (dance and play) in wild places, and who can sense desire in men.[75]

In Synge's dream, he is swept up with the host in huge excitation, at first intensely pleasurable, then changing "with a shock" to "agony and rage". Note again the rhetoric of commotion. For Synge, the emotional climax expresses as dance and music; elsewhere, as we have seen, imagery of fighting, wild animals, noise and frenzied movement could be used to signify the same kind of escalating affect.

The 11C Sigtuna amulet (fig. 10) banishes an ogre of wound-fever – a personified sickness – in these terms:

ᚦᚢᚱ✛ᚾᛆᚱᚱᛁᚦᚢ✛ᚦᚢᚱᚴᛆᛏᚱᚤᛏᛁᛌᚠᛚᛁᚢᚦᚢᛌᚾᚤᚠᚢᛌᛏᛁᚾᛁ
ᛆᚠᚤᚦᛁᛆᚦᚱᛁᛏᛆᚦᚱᛆᛌᚤᚠ✛
ᛆᚠᚤᚦᛆᛏᛁᚾᛏᚤᚦᛁᛆᛌᚤᚠᚢᛁᛁᛁ✛
ᛁᛌᛁᛆᛌᛁᛁᛁᛌᛆᛏᛁᚤᛁᛌᛆᛌᚤᚠᚢᛌᚾᛁᚢᛏᛁᚢ
ᚤᛁᛌ

Þurs sārriðu, þursa drōttinn! Flīu þū nū! Fundinn es(tū).
*Haf þǽr þriār þrār, ūlf*ʀ*!*
*Haf þǽr nīu nauðir, ūlf*ʀ*!*
*iii isi*ʀ *þis isi*ʀ *auki (e)s uni*ʀ*, ūlf*ʀ*. Niūt lyfia!*

> Ogre of wound-fever, lord of the ogres! Flee now! [You] are found. Have
> for yourself three pangs, wolf! Have for yourself nine needs [OR: *harms*;
> OR: *n-runes*], wolf! Three ice[-runes]. These ice[-runes] may grant that
> you be satisfied [?], wolf [OR: *This drives on, it drives on further, the
> wolf experiences it*]. Make good use of the healing-charm![76]

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[73]   On the great interest of Irish nationalist writers at this period in Irish folklore, especially in fairy beliefs, see e.g. T. Thompson, 2005. Arguably, this focus itself constituted an intervention to reshape Irish dream-culture *per se*, resulting in a willed intensification of associated dream imagery, at least among the tight-knit literary community participating in this effort.

[74]   Cf. e.g. Wilde c. 1887; T. Thompson 2005.

[75]   See above, lines 253–256; Hall 2004: 141; D'Evelyn – Mill 1956–59: II, 409–410. Another parallel for this host is the Wild Hunt (for a recent summary, see Hutton 2014); this has a complex mythos also connected to dreams, which I hope to explore in a future study.

[76]   Composite trans. from McKinnell et al. 2004: 126; MacLeod – Mees 2007: 118–119; cf. Eriksson – Zetterholm 1933. The charm is written backwards, to increase its magical impact. On the *n-rune*, see Mitchell 2008.

In Eddic poetry, the "lord of ogres" (*þursadrottinn*) is Thrym, the giant who steals Thor's hammer. Addressing this entity as wolf characterises him, of course, as a predator with teeth and claws. Again, there is the conjunction of a supernatural agent, feverish illness and predator imagery.[77] The intent is magically to turn malign action – pangs, needs, the scenario of the hunt – back onto the "wolf," who then becomes the one to "flee."

The Sigtuna runic rib-bone (c. late 11C, early 12C) invokes a similar set of elements: a fever demon is fought and bound, and its malevolence rebounded to a third party, the "sorceror" responsible for sending the illness:

ᚼᛆᚱᛁᚿᚲᛐᚿᚱᛁᛑᚲᚢᛐᚴᛐᛐᛐᚿᚱ:ᚠᚱᛐᚠᛁᚲᛒᛐᛐᛉᛐᛐᚲᚱᛁᛑᚿᚲᛒᛐᚱ-
ᛉᛐᛐ:ᚱᛁᛑᚿᚲᛐᛐᛣᚲᚼᛁᛑᛐᚲᚿᛐᚱᛑᚲᚿᛐᚱᛐᚱᛐᛐᚲᚿᛐᚱᛐᚲᛉᛐᚠᛁᚱᚲᚠᚿᚠᛐ
ᚠᛁᛣᛐᚲᚠᛐᚾ:ᛒᚱᛐᛐᛐ ᚱᛁᛑᛐ

Ioril sār-riða vaxnaur (?) kroke (?).
Batt hann riðu, bar[ði] hann riðu, ok sīða sarð.
Sārāran-vara hafir fullt fengit.
Flȳ braut riða!

Ioril wound-fever . . . He bound the fever, he fought the fever and fucked the sorcerer. Wound . . . has taken full. Fly away, fever![78]

This scenario exists in reverse: a sorcerer may send a nightmare to attack a distant victim. The *Ynglinga saga* (13C, drawing on a 9C source), relates the story of King Vanlandi of Norway and a Sami princess, Driva, whom he marries, then abandons. Driva employs the witch Huld, first to compel the King's return, then to send a night-demon (*mara*) to kill him:

> Once [the King] took up his winter abode in Finland with Snae the Old, and got his daughter Driva in marriage; in spring he set out leaving Driva behind, and although he had promised to return within three years he did not come back for ten. Then Driva... bribed the witch-wife Huld, either that she should bewitch Vanlande to return to Finland, or kill him. When this witch-work was going on Vanlande was at Upsal, and a great desire came over him to go to Finland; but his friends and counsellors advised him against it, and said the witchcraft of the Finn people showed itself in this desire of his to go there. He then became very drowsy, and laid down to sleep; when he had slept but a little while he cried out, saying that the *Mara* was treading upon him. His men hastened to help him; but when they took hold of his head she trod on his legs, and when they laid hold of his legs she pressed upon his head; and it was his death.[79]

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[77] Cf. Mitchell 2008.

[78] MacLeod – Mees 2007: 120.

[79] Snorri Sturlson, *Ynglinga saga* 16, *Heimskringla*, trans. Laing (Sturluson 1844); cf. Finnur Jónsson 1912: I. 7; Morris 1991: 85; Lindow 1995: 10.

The desire that comes over Vanlandi to rejoin Driva is the standard aim of a love charm or sex spell; but it doesn't work, his friends restrain him. The witch then redirects that energy into the violence motivating the *mara*.

In the famous curse of *Skírnismál* (13C), Gerðr is threatened with multiple ills:

26. Tamsvendi ek þik drep / en ek þik temja mun mær/, at mínum munum / þar skaltu ganga / er þik gumna synir / síðan æva séi.	26 With taming stick I touch you / for I will make you tame / girl, to my wishes. / There you shall go where sons of men / never see you again
28. At undrsjónum þú verðir / er þú út kemr / á þik Hrímnir hari / á þik hotvetna stari...	28 A monstrous sight may you be / when you move out of doors / let Hrimnir speechless stare at you! let every creature glare at you!...
29. Tópi ok ópi /tjösull ok óþoli – / vaxi þér tár með trega / sezk þú niðr / en ek mun segja þér / sváran súsbreka / ok tvennan trega:	29 Idiocy and howling / plaguing pang and unbearable need / may your tears grow with grief / Sit down / and I shall describe to you / a heavy sea of sorrow / and a double grief.
30. Tramar gneypa / þik skolo gerstan dag...	30 Evil sprites will bow your neck / through the bitter day...
31. Með þursi þríhöfðuðum / þú skalt æ nara / eð[a] verlaus vera; / þik geð grípi / þik morn morni; / ver þú sem þistil[l] / sá er var þrunginn / í önn ofanverða.	31 With a three-headed ogre / you must for ever eke out your life / or have no husband / May passion seize you / pining consume you! / Be like the thistle / that was crushed / at the end of the reaping!
33. Reiðr er þér Óðinn / reiðr er þér Ásabragr / þik skal Freyr fíask / in firinilla mær / en þú fengit hefr / gambanreiði goða.	33 Enraged with you is Óðinn / enraged with you is Æsir's Prince / Freyr shall turn his hate on you / –most vicious girl!– / for you have gained / the gods' powerful wrath!
34. Heyri jötnar / heyri hrímþursar / synir Suttungs / sjalfir ásliðar / hvé ek fyrbýð / hvé ek fyrirbanna / manna glaum mani / manna nyt mani.	34 Let the giants hear / let the frost ogres hear / the sons of the Suttungar / the Æsir hosts themselves – / how I forbid / how I deny / the joyous noise of men to this maid / the joyous fruit of men to this maid!
35. Hrímgrímnir heitir þurs / er þik hafa skal / fyr nágrindr neðan...	35 Hrimgrimnir the ogre is called / who will have you / down below the corpse pens...
36. Þurs ríst ek þér ok þría stafi, / ergi ok æði ok óþola...	36 "Ogre" I carve for you / and three characters: / "Lust" and "Burning" / and "Unbearable Need"...

This text has, of course, a multitude of meanings;[80] for us, the relevant points are how it mobilises the constellation of nightmare elements – sex with a hybrid monster, extremes of affect – and orchestrates these in terms of numerosity, and of polar extremes of desire. Mental and physical commotion are stressed throughout. Desire, both as excess (passion, lust) and as deficit (need, grief), is wished on the victim; the rage of the gods is implied as its source; she is never to know the "joyous noise" of men (i.e. sexual joy). A supporting cast of human and supernatural multiples are brought on to augment these effects: "the sons of men" to never see her (or sleep with her), "every creature" to glare at her, "evil sprites" to bend her neck, etc. And, the audience for the curse is also a set of multiples: hosts of gods and giants are named to "hear" and so bear witness. The whole is delivered at the point of a stick (the taming wand); and, in a brilliant metaphor, spikiness is inverted in the case of Gerðr herself, made fragile and vulnerable as a dry thistle.

There are parallels, then, between the dream-culture of the archaic nightmare – nocturnal attacks by demons – and spells designed to overwhelm a victim with sexual desire or pain, by means of demonic attack. The magical papyri are filled with such spells (and their resemblance to Skírnir's curse has long been noted).[81] For example, in the Formulary, "Wondrous eros-binding spell",[82] the user invokes chthonic powers and ghosts to raise "the daimon of a dead person," who will then visit on his behalf:

Fig. 10. Sigtuna amulet (back), 11C. Bronze, 8.2 x 2.9 x 2.75 cm. Sigtuna, Sweden. Historiska museet, Stockholm, Inv. no. 19692. Photo: Gabriel Hildebrand SHM 2011-09-21.

> every place and every street and every house [to] lead and bind [the woman] whose magical material you have [i.e. presumably her hair, clothing etc]

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[80] See Mitchell (2007: 90–94) for the literature on Skírnismal; Harris 2013: 90, on the thistle stanza especially.

[81] Cf. Dronke 1997: 398–399.

[82] Betz 1992: II. 336–356.

in order to love [me]... [she must] not have sexual intercourse... nor do anything with another man for pleasure except with me alone (NAME), so that she (NAME) may not be able to drink or eat, that she may not be content... not have peace of mind, that she (NAME), may not find sleep without me (NAME).[83]

Such spells routinely promise to take away "sweet sleep" from the victim. Modern Romanian love charms go further in this direction. The charmer works on behalf of her client, to bring the "fated one" – the client's love object – to her:

she asks the moon or the belt to transform themselves into a dragon snake, or into a rooster *with a beak of iron,* [to] go after her fated one *in this village... in the second village... in the ninth village... beyond nine seas... beyond nine iron groves* and steer him toward her; she asks "her" star *to go out in the world/over the world* while she sleeps and bring her her fateman: *through woods, through thickets / ...through fields with no roads / over rivers with no bridges / over fences with no stiles...*

She asks Sir Fire... to turn himself into an agon-dragon *with scales of gold... with the muzzle of a she-cuckoo* or into a fairy she-snake, find her fateman and give him no rest until he comes to her; she throws a kerchief down the chimney asking it to turn into a rooster: *with forty-four wings / with forty-four claws / with forty-four beaks / with forty-four tails* [and to] peck him with its beak, smite him with its wings, scratch him with its claws and drive him to her...[emphasis added][84]

Notice the emphasis on impossible distance, the way in which the visual elements of the nightmare demon, in terms of beak and claws, are made more powerful by multiplication, and the sense that the client's desire ("her star") is fuelling the trajectory of the monster while she sleeps.

The reference to sleep as the place where this kind of magic can happen may be a standard formula, as in the medieval fever charms cited earlier: "not by day nor by night, neither awake nor asleep, nor in any place" (*nec in die nec in nocte, nec uigilandi nec dormienti, nec in ullis locis*).[85] In charms, spells and curses not otherwise concerned with dreams, this rote usage itself testifies to widespread belief in attacks during sleep and by night.

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[83] Patchoumi 2013: 304–305.

[85] Cf. Betz 1992: 9; Milne 2017: 98.

[84] Golopentia 2004: 168.

[85] Cf. Simek 2011: 31; Franz 1909: II. 483.

In Romano-British curses,[86] from the Temple of Mercury at Uley (South-West England), the wording is: *nec eis sanit[atem nec] somnum perm[itt]as nisi...* (Uley 43); *ne meiat, ne cacet, ne loquatur, ne dormiat, n[e] vigilet nec s[al]utem, nec sanitatem nessi...* (Uley 4).[87] *Defixiones (*curse tablets) of this kind, throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Empire, were typically deposited at "standard transition-points between worlds, such as tombs, rivers, fountains and wells, bath-houses, and rubbish-dumps; and at key points in the vicinity of the intended target, such as the threshold of the house..."[88] As Gordon comments,

> Where death is the aim [of the curse], we can say that the desire to re-assert parity through physical suffering has tipped over into a desire for the ultimate reversal of the initial asymmetry, the point at which the principal triumphs utterly over his or her opponent. More often, however, especially in thief texts, the physical suffering is not an end in itself but is understood [as] producing insight or recognition on the part of the target – the physical suffering is to be accompanied by mental suffering.
>
> ... the principal [i.e. the author of the curse] either pairs physical and mental suffering or picks out the latter for special attention.[89]

The constellation of negative desire, mental suffering (*per mentem*, *per memorium*), the common formulae about sleep and bodily penetration – especially of the "obscure but vital parts" (*intestum*=digestive organs; *medullae*=vital parts)[90] – presents clear parallels between the rhetorics of curses and nightmares.

Some curses, like the Roumanian love charms, evoke more specifically the characteristic imagery of dream-demons. A Roman example from Este, Italy, sets the three- and two-headed hounds of Hades – multiple, hybrid, uncanny predators – "to rip the senses and ability to think out of the target" (*tibi trado ut tu il[l]u(m) mit[t] tas et deprem[as], tradito tuis canibus tricipiti et bicipitibus ut ere[repi(n)t] capita, cogita[tiones?], cor...*).[91]

86 For details of 27 British curse tablets found in South-West England, see biblio. in Milne 2017: 97–98 and n. 14.

87 See Tomlin 1993 for the background on the Uley site in Gloucestershire, and Oxford University: http://curses.csad.ox.ac.uk/sites/uley-home.shtml.

88 Gordon 2013: 266; cf. Mees – Nicholas 2012, Mees 2009.

89 Gordon 2013: 271–272.

90 Cf. Gordon 2012; 2013: 272.

91 AE 1915: 101 (AE = *L'Année épigraphique*; https://www.cairn.info/revue-annee-epigraphique.htm), in Gordon 2013: 272.

A spell recorded during the witchcraft trial of Ragnhildr tregagás, in Bergen, Norway in 1324, sent the "magical minions" of an evil valkyrie, Gondul, to "bite" and stir passion against the victim:

> I send out from me the spirits of (the valkyrie) Gondul.
> May the first bite you in the back.
> May the second bite you in the breast.
> May the third turn hate and envy upon you.
> [The caster should then spit on the person to be cursed][92]

The target was her ex-lover, and the intent was to destroy his marriage to someone else. In this case, the performed context of the spell is known from the trial. On the wedding night, Ragnhildr hid herself in the bedchamber to speak the incantation, having concealed bread and peas in the bridal bed, and a sword at the head of the bed.[93] The day after, she revealed what she had done, publically mocked the groom, and declared to the bride:

> My mind rejoices that, since [they are] bewitched, [his] genitals will be
> no more use for intercourse than this belt rolled up in my hand.[94]

So the elements of the nightmare mythos are present – biting demon(s), excess (hate, envy) and deficit (impotence) of affect (for the victim), sharp object (here used to attract rather than repel demons) – distributed through a combination of spell, mythological imagery and performance. This trajectory of desire evokes the tale of Vandlandi and the *mara*. The demonic visitors in each case act as avatars for the thwarted desire of their principals. The nightmare mythos works in such instances like a set of railway points, a mechanism engaged to channel and redirect strong affect from positive to negative.

CONCLUSION

Focussing on patterns of numerosity enables us, perhaps, to see somewhat more clearly some key rhetorical mechanisms through which charms draw on the mythos of the nightmare; the latter understood as an elastic constellation[95] of elements in dream-culture, which can be arranged and rearranged for various therapeutic, cathartic, exorcistic or

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[92] Quoted in Mitchell 2011: 170: "Ritt ek i fra mer gondold ondu. Æin þer i bak biti annar i briost þer biti þridi snui uppa þik hæimt oc ofund." Mees 2009: 128–129; Macleod – Mees 2007: 37.

[93] Mitchell 2011: 56–57, 169–171.

[94] Mitchell 2011: 57, 232 n. 104.

[95] For the notion of an elastic constellation, see Milne 2016.

antagonistic purposes. The scenario of the nightmare, or affect-laden dream, lends itself to this kind of reframing, or recuperation, for two main reasons. First, because of the paradox intrinsic to its existence: the nightmare avatar is both absolutely Other, and at the same time, umbilically connected – in a genuinely occult (i.e. hidden) sense – to the dreamer, through his/her emotions. People appear to have always apprehended the potential for switching the polarity of desire in the affect-laden dream, from positive to negative and vice versa. Second, since the dream-text is retroactively constructed in the field of representation, it can be strongly (re)shaped through redaction. Processes of redaction start with the near-instantaneous (the dreamer's own assembly of the dream as a memory), and can be extended through specialist intervention and/or interpretation. That is why terrifying dreams are amenable to transformation through cultural scripts. Threat is dealt with by splitting and/or multiplying avatars in the dream scenario.

Finally, the materials presented here support Frye's insight, that the charm as a genre is indeed intimately woven into the "mythological universe of mysterious names and beings," to which the denizens of nightmare belong. It is clear also that there is an aesthetic dimension to the ways in which people have adapted, deconstructed and repurposed the basic constellation of the nightmare mythos: so the invading hybrid – with its sharp extremities, bent on penetration – its own counter-imagery at every turn, and this counter-imagery is readily harnessed by magical practitioners. Frye speaks of the "separate world" of the charm – from whence comes the nightmare – "reached through imagination... belief or acceptance of traditional authority." Perhaps we can turn this around, and say that the "mysterious names and beings", which make up the mythic system themselves reside in the rhetorics of charm and nightmare; rhetorics which are then able to retain "traditional authority" precisely because of their inherent potential for variability, "selected for" – found fit for purpose – over so many generations.

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The Mythological World of Mongolian Charms

Alevtina Solovyeva

Introduction

This article aims to introduce to a wider audience the special and diverse world of Mongolian ritual poetry. Despite the effects of the socialist era and the intensive changes brought about by contact with global culture more recently, contemporary Mongolian society has still preserved a significant space for traditional lifestyle and worldview. The characteristics of this region were built up by the weaving together of different ethnic and religious traditions (including Zoroastrism, Tengrism, local Shamanic traditions, and different schools of Tibetan Buddhism), as well as from other historical and cultural features. All of these have contributed to the unique skein of images and meanings dwelling in the world of Mongolian ritual poetry, invocations, prayers, verbal charms – a world manifest in everyday life and practice. In this article, I shall discuss some basic types of Mongolian ritual poetry, focusing on the genres performed by non-professional lay people, *dom shivshleg*. My paper is based on archival and published Mongolian sources, as well as on fieldwork data collected by the author in different parts of Mongolia.[1]

Mongolian ritual poetry is represented by an entangled diversity of genres and traditions, regional, ethnic and religious, including what has been the dominant pair for the last few centuries of the "yellow" and "black" faiths, i.e. Tibetan-Mongolian Buddhism and Shamanic practices (*böögin mörgöl*). As far as these ritual texts are concerned, it is often hard to identify a specific text as belonging to, or originating in, a particular tradition, as all of them, despite their contradictory relationships,[2] have been melding together and developing under mutual influence, and have both shared and formed the common space of the Mongolian religious "environment", mythology and everyday beliefs.

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[1] Fieldwork materials were collected during the annual expeditions to different parts of Mongolia from 2006 to 2018.

[2] This topic is the focus of many works (see, for example, Kollmar-Paulenz 2012).

During the twentieth century, Mongolia has undergone a number of varied periods, characterized by differing ideologies and attitudes towards religion and rituals, as well as to traditional beliefs and practices. The most significant of these for our current purposes was the period of socialism and the spread of "scientific" atheism, the persecution of religion, and the fight against superstition. As a result, many practices, including those connected to ritual poetry, were interrupted, and could only be performed unofficially, secretly, and occasionally. However, in some ways these conditions were stimulating for the non-professional genres of ritual poetry. The second significant period began with the collapse of the socialist regime (1996), and the active revival and development of religious life, the national movement for a "return to traditional roots", and the huge interest towards different kinds of spirituality. This period in Mongolian society is still ongoing. In this situation, different kinds of ritual poetry are in high demand and popular in a variety of spheres of life. They have reassumed their previous stable positions as everyday practices. The most popular functions of ritual poetry have now become the re-establishing of relationships with the traditional supernatural world, deities and spirits, (who have not been getting proper treatment during the socialist past)[3] and supporting personal well-being in rapidly changing and unstable conditions.

The consequence of the period of unfriendly attitudes towards religions and ritual practices was the partial interruption and loss of traditions. These traditions are being restored in various ways in a revival of traditional practices, which blends re-traditionalization with the reinvention of tradition. These processes are also connected to the use of different kinds of sources for the recovering, reconstructing and developing of ritual practices and traditional rites. Thus, for example, for Buddhist practices, sources include the institutionalized patterns of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as old religious manuscripts in Tibetan and Mongolian that were preserved through the socialist period. The sources for the rebuilding of Shamanic practices have more a complicated character. Amongst them a significant role is played by collections of texts, old and new, written down by scholars,[4] and also tthe individual creativity of particular professional performers, the shamans (*böö/udagan*).[5] The oral transmission of patterns is also still an important mechanism for all traditions. Nowadays both Mongolian Buddhism and Shamanic practices are regarded as basic religious traditions of Mongols, and are drawn upon in the building of a new national identity. At the level of ritual and spiritual services, both faiths share the same tasks and functions, and this is also reflected in ritual texts. As a historical continuation of the textual dialogueue between the two faiths, contemporary ritual texts of one tradition often includes sacred

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[3]   This re-establishing of relationships with the traditional supernatural world is practised at both the individual and the state level.

[4]   According to interviews conducted by the author, in the contemporary tradition, some shamans even declare they received ritual initiation by a scholar, a situation which seems to be quite well respected.

[5]   *Böö* – a male shaman, *udagan* – a female shaman, shamaness.

characters, symbols and formulas from the other tradition,[6] and, sometimes, even the similar (or the same) texts. A good example of this is provided by the contemporary worship of Genghis Khan – one of the most important state and national symbols and protective deities of contemporary Mongolia. The ritual text, *Genghis Khani magtal*,[7] addressed to the spirit of the great khan, "the father of the nation", is today performed by ritual specialists of both faiths: by lamas and by shamans. At the same time, as a part of corporate policy and legitimization, each side regards this text and the practice of performing it as its own unique prerogative. In addition, the same text might have different "official" origins – translated from a Tibetan manuscript[8] (according to the Buddhist community) and a transmission from ancient times (according to the shamans) of the "*holy words of Genghis Khan's spirit*".[9]

Now, with professional religious services flourishing again in the new conditions of communication and media resources, some traditional genres of Mongolian ritual poetry are however undergoing a reduction in their scope and lose some of their functions to the religious specialists and the professional ritual genres.

Professional Religious Genres

Having set out some historical and cultural features of the contemporary situation that Mongolian ritual poetry exists in, it is time to proceed to the topic of this article: the most popular religious and non-religious[10] genres of Mongolian ritual poetry performed by professionals, representing both the sources and the context for the non-professional ritual poetry and verbal charms.[11]

Mongolian ritual poetry and charms are based on different traditions which might be described by means of certain genres and their performers, professional, religious and non-religious, specialists and ordinary people. All of these genres are united by the universal idea about the power of the word – whether it is manifested in communication with a supernatural world or in the ability to influence the real world. In the

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[6] In this article, I use the term "formula" to mean a more or less fixed combination of words with a special semantics or meanings. This is similar to the usage of "formula" suggested by Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord.

[7] *Magtal* – the genre of ode, praise (see below).

[8] This explanation is popular, but does not name any specific source, as at least no named Tibetan original.

[9] G.G., 1984, Khalkha, 2016. The reference "G.G., 1984, Khalkha, 2016" here, and similar references further on, can be understood in this way: "G.G." are the initial letters of the name interviewee, "1984" is the year of birth of the interviewee, "Khalkha" is the name of Mongolian tribe the interviewer belongs to, and "2016" is the year, when the interview was conducted.

[10] Here I use a conventional division into "religious" and "non-religious" genres to describe and analyze some of the important differences between texts which are regarded by cultural bearers as belonging to various traditions inside Mongolian culture – Buddhist, Shamanic, unidentified.

[11] To follow the usual anglophone genre system is sometimes not possible or useful, so here I use a combination of terms, including emic terms.

contemporary situation, religious agents are very influential, as they hold authority in the rebuilding of traditional knowledge following the socialist parenthesis. In addition, nowadays some traditional folklore genres (such as the traditional Mongolian genres of praise and curse, discussed below) face a decline, and have had their their functions partly taken over by Buddhist and Shamanic religious agents.

Buddhist ritual poetry is represented by a huge number of texts, which include a variety of genres;[12] some of these are meant only to be performed by lamas, others are supposed to be performed by lay people, and yet others are shared between religious specialists and lay people.

The most popular Mongolian terms for Buddhist ritual texts are *nom*,[13] *sudar*,[14] *tarni*,[15] and *mani*.[16] Most of "books" (*nom*), and different kinds of texts under this name, are supposed to be performed by lamas: according to folk perception, the ability to read them is the main feature defining the power of lama. Here is an example from a field interview:

> What is the difference between lama and shaman?
> Lamas are powerful because of their "books", shamans are powerful because of their helper-spirits.[17]

In Mongolian culture, sacred Buddhist texts exist in both the Tibetan and Mongolian languages. In the former language, the texts are original texts, in the latter, there are both translated and original texts. All the genres in these texts are characterized by an active interaction with oral tradition, both Tibetan and Mongolian. In this case, active interaction and mutual adoptions between written and oral texts (and the different traditions behind them) are conditioned by the politics of flexibility and absorption that Buddhism is famous for, rooting itself in a new society by means of some similarities and contacts which might characterize Mongolian and Tibetan cultures. (This is in addition to other factors, such as besides the common mode of co-existence of written and oral pieces of culture, as well as other historical and regional reasons.) The written tradition is represented by different kinds of texts, "canonical" ones, "apocryphal" ones, and mixed ones, combining texts from both written and oral traditions (for one such example, see "the Sutra of circling with water" below). "Sutra" as a marker of religious literature refers to a variety of genres and topics, the most popular nowadays

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[12]   About some of these examples, see (Chiodo 2000–2009).

[13]   *Nom* – in Mongolian, "book". In such contexts, it usually refers to a book of religious texts, and "doctrine", or "teaching".

[14]   I.e. sutra.

[15]   A genre of Buddhist spells.

[16]   I.e. mantra.

[17]   N.G., 1945, Khalkha, 2010.

being devoted to certain deities and rituals, which include detailed descriptions of worship, rites and their benefit for people. Similar texts also exist in oral tradition.

In folk belief, the sacred texts of Buddhist ritual poetry endow lamas with supernatural, magic abilities. These abilities are used for concrete ends – causing rain to fall, finding a thief or a lost object, moving very fast, commanding demons, healing, killing, charming. *Tarni,* just like *mani*, are usually relatively short and simple forms, also in use among lay people. They are very popular genres, mostly shared as a form of practical knowledge for dealing with certain difficulties – dogbite, fright, nightmare, theft, gossip, etc. They might also be regarded as helpful tools for more general and solid aims – health, wellbeing, wealth. In Mongolian culture, Buddhist sacred texts exist and are performed in two languages – in Tibetan (the majority of the texts) and in Mongolian. In common practice, they are applied by lay people who do not know Tibetan and who perform these texts as phonetical transmissions of Tibetan words (with inevitable distortions), which are supposed to be powerful independent of their literal semantics. As an example of this kind of spell, we might take one against fright and nightmare: *E ma ho uma pani pani suuhaa.* These kinds of text are transmitted and circulated in both oral and written tradition. In addition, the written tradition is represented in handwritten form (in cases where people write the words down in order to memorize them or to transmit them to another person) and in printed form (in special "pocket" religious editions of the Buddhist prayers and hymns transcribed into the modern Mongolian Cyrillic alphabet). Contemporary "pocket editions" often provide a short description about the what benefits a particular text will provide:

Nogoon Dara Ehe tarni / Tarni to the Green Tara

Um žavzunma pagma dolma la čancallo
Um dari dud dari duurij suuha

The commentary of this tarni says: "it helps to get happy life, health, protection from illnesses. The merciful mother deity, the most effective supporter for people".[18]

A *Tarni* is an appeal to the names of variety of deities,[19] and it has functions such as bringing wealth, health, children, protection from the rage of nature spirits, diseases, the protection of cattle, etc. Often the texts are performed by lay people according to instructions given by lamas (these prescribe certain conditions for performance – time, place, the number of repetitions), but they also might be performed without the

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[18]   Enhbold 2018.

[19]   Originally Hindu and Buddhist, and more recently also from local Tibet and Mongolian traditions.

supervision of religious specialists. A narrative tradition occasionally formed around some such texts reveals some curious features of folklore perception of the power of worlds. One of the popular topics of such narratives concerns sacred texts devoted to Tara, Dara Eh', mentioned above.

> Once, two demons (chotgor) decided to harm a young family and they did so as the wife and husband argued and were offended by each other. Then the woman took the child and decided to go to her parents' home. Two demons were hiding nearby, waiting for her to grab the baby. But the woman was wise, when she was leaving her husband's house, she put a mark with ashes between child's eyebrows, and then went away. It was already dark outside, she was walking with her child and whispering tarni of Dara Ehe, and when she was passing the place where those demons were hiding, they couldn't see her. One said:
> "Look, who is going there?"
> "Oh, it is lame Dara Ehe carrying a bald hare in her hands."
>
> So, they didn't recognise that woman and the child. To those with bad eyes, this mark makes a child look like hare.
>
> "But why Dara Ehe was lame?" [My question].
> "Oh, that is because the wife stumbled reading the prayer."[20]

The first point of interest here is the way *how* the sacred text is believed to "work": holy words do not only scare malevolent demonic agents away, they also have a magical ability to change the appearance of objects in their sight, and delude them. Another point of interest is that we find in this text the motif of the importance of performing the sacred words correctly[21] – the mis-spelling of the young woman in the performed *tarni* made Dara Ehe lame.

In Buddhist traditions, the performance of the text has not only a qualitative, but also a quantitative dimension – a greater number of performances of a sacred text means an increase in its merits and virtues. In respect to this idea, the verbal performance is partly substituted by symbolic action – turning the special prayer wheel with the sacred texts inside, where one turn of the wheel is equivalent to one verbal

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[20] G.H., 1976, Khalkha, 2011.

[21] This motif is very popular in traditional cultures. In the Mongolian context, it also very popular with regard to epic storytelling. According to popular belief, the interruption of, or a mistake in, a performance might influence on the life of the performer badly, and even lead to his death. In one of such examples, the performer, finishing, forgot to "send" the hero of the epic story back to the havens and was punished by a serious sickness (see: Nekludov 1981).

performance. Such wheels are a typical attribute of temples and monasteries, both for monks and visitors. Smaller versions of the prayer wheels are very popular, and might be found in houses, cafes and restaurants, cars and buses. Often the symbolic human action (turning the wheel as a reading of the text) in these models of wheels is once again replaced: wheels are turned by the wind or by accumulators.

In everyday practice, the verbal performance of the sacred texts (or substitutes of a verbal performance, as in examples above) is not the way of activating a text's helpful abilities. Another way, common to many other religious traditions, is to have their images, which are believed to "clean" the space and keep everything bad away. For example, it is very popular to keep at home the text of *Altan Sudar* / The Gold Sutra in contemporary Mongolian tradition. In everyday practice, the wearing of objects containing sacred texts inside them is also popular. Such objects represent a kind of amulet, *sahius*, which are usually made and prescribed by lamas (this practice is similar to the practice of wearing images of deities).

The part of Mongolian ritual poetry regarded as the province of shamans is often referred to by the name – *Böögiin mörgöl*.[22] Among the most popular genres here are *duudlaga* (invocations) and örgöh *mjalaalga* (offerings). These genres appeal to different kinds of deities – helper-spirits (*ongot*), nature spirits (*lus-savdag*), deities from the Mongolian mythological pantheon and local traditions (different *tengri* – the supreme deity Harmusta Tentgri, Ata-tengri and other tengri-deities, the deity of the fire place, Galyn Burkhan and others), important symbolic figures (as Genghis Khan), and Buddhist deities (Buddha, Khan Garugi, Jamsaran and others). These usually are long texts, built up with alliteration, having many tens of lines. They include very detailed descriptions of the status, titles, epithets, appearance, characteristics, attributes of their divine or supernatural addressees. Some of epithets might be quite impressive, as below, in the fragment of evocating nature spirits (*lus-savdag*), who often is the helper-spirits of shamans:

> Those, who eat human meat,
> Those, who have bronze-stone hearts,
> Those, who have whips,
> Those, who ride wolves…[23]

This fragment was written down recently, though it corresponds with the previous examples.[24] Below is another example, which is supposed to be performed as a part of the worship ritual for one of the Mongolian sacred mountains, Burkhan Haldun (which is believed to situated near the birthplace of Genghis Khan):

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[22] This might loosely be translated as a "Shamanic cult" or "Shamanic prayer".

[23] J.N., 1917, Khalkha, 2006.

[24] See, for example, (Rintchen 1975), or manuscripts collected by Walther Heissig (the archive in the library of Abteilung für Mongolistik und Tibetstudien Institut für Orient- und Asienwissenschaften (IOA) Universität Bonn).

Our highly esteemed Burkhan Haldun,
Recognised among world heritage,
Not to the Qing state Mongols,
To our Genghis Khan's Mongols showing,
Tangut, Tibetan [sacred] books will not be read,
Let's worship the mountain and oboo[25]
By Mongolian steppe rites,
Let's introduce to the world [our] traditional customs.
The Blue Mongol clans,
The Blue Sky's (*Tenger*) adherents,
Owners of the sacred sutras,[26]
Old aristocratic whoops
Hurai, hurai, hurai![27]
Wonderful offering is happening,
The eternal blue Sky (Tenger)[28] will be merciful.[29]

This text is interesting in its combination of details. It has a traditional structure and the mixture of sacred elements usual for this kind of ritual poetry: Genghis Khan, the eternal blue Sky, the sacred scripts of sutras, and the appeal to the old aristocratic clans. At the same time, it obviously focuses on contemporary issues and ideas, as seen from its emphasis on "original" Mongolian traditions (in opposition to the customs of the historical past), the Qin dynasty, the idea of introducing Mongolian traditional customs and rituals to the world, and the notion of the world heritage, etc. The set of texts connected to Shamanic performance is huge, diverse and very flexible as well, as besides texts of varied local and historical traditions, it nowadays also includes the highly individual creativity of the performer too.

Traditionally, most of these texts are supposed to be performed by specialist-shamans, inasmuch as one of the main functions of a shaman is regarded to be a mediator between different worlds and their agents – deities, humans, spirits and demons. To conduct this mediation shamans are supposed to have their special abilities and techniques. But nowadays, the practice of delegating and proscribing the performance of certain fragments to the clients is becoming more popular (in a similar way to what is happening with Buddhist texts). This might be explained by the historical interaction

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[25] A ritual construction of stones and woods, devoted to the worship of nature spirits.

[26] The epithet of Mahayana Buddhist characters.

[27] An untranslatable magical formula, reinforcing the performing words, ordering them to become true, which is regarded in contemporary tradition as a belong of Shamanic practices.

[28] *Höh mönh Tenger, Altan Delhii* – the eternal blue Sky, the golden Earth – a formula which popular in different Mongolian genres, including mythology and epic traditions.

[29] Byambadorj 2014. The author of this book is a practicing shaman, living in the capital of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar.

between the two religous traditions, as well as the processes of revival and reconstruction of traditional and religious practices after the socialist period already mentioned, which involve religious specialists assuming authority. In addition, the development of the relatively new Mongolian urban environment demands patterns and "supervision" in order to adapt traditional practice in these new urban circumstances. For example, a popular situation now in urban conditions is when shamans teach their clients how to perform the daily worship of nature spirits, the Big Dipper stars, the Deity of the fireplace – rituals and rites which are well known and widespread all over Mongolia and, in rural conditions, are performed by almost every family as part of their daily routine, independently of any religious specialists. Today shamans also have at their disposal printed editions of their ritual poetry, just as lamas do, and shamans can spread this poetry amongst their followers and clients, as well as by means of contemporary social networks, including the internet. Different kinds of ritual poetry are widely available to, and consumed by, lay people according to their own understanding of current needs (the kind of spiritual support and results they need at a given moment).

Professional Folk Genres

Above I discussed a few examples[30] of Buddhist and Shamanic ritual poetry, religious traditions which provide sources and an influential environment for the genres of ritual poetry performed by lay non-professional people in Mongolian culture. Another important source is represented by a number of traditional genres mentioned above – *yurool*, *magtaal*, *haraal*.[31]

The two first, *magtaal* and *jurool*, are both genres of praise, addressing animate and inanimate objects. They may address deities (as in the example above – *magtaal* to the spirit of Genghis Khan), sacred places, venerated mountains and their spirits, swift horses, people with particular statuses (famous wrestlers, honorary guest, etc), buildings (houses and temples) and many other objects. These texts have from tens to hundreds of lines. In contrast to the other genres, they do not invoke, but chiefly describe the object. According to the particular situation, this laudatory description is supposed to improve the characteristics of the object (new house), to provide its favour and goodwill (sacred places, deities and spirits), and to bring ritual praise as a sacrifice. Beliefs about these genres and their abilities are also reflected in the narrative tradition: in one of the stories, the mountain, which received a good *magtaal* as an offering, helped the man who performed it.

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[30] These few examples do not fully represent these very different traditions with their huge sets of texts. These deserve a series of separate articles in order to be discussed properly. The examples here are simply given as an illustration for readers to gain a general idea about these genres.

[31] *Yerööl* – praise, *magtaal* – ode, *haraal* – curse.

Once people were chasing a thief. He rode towards the mountain called Hugnu-Khan. He composed a magtaal for this mountain and was performing it when passing this mountain. Suddenly the mountain became covered with fog, and the people chasing that man could not get him, so he escaped. People tell this story. So, you see, how important it is to praise mountains and springs.[32]

These genres, especially *yurool,* have an amazing ability to catch and accumulate different kinds of details, sacred, symbolic, profane, fashionable, so in one text there might sometimes be combined the names of supreme deities, ritual details, technical devices (like a sewing machine or a refrigerator), official posts (the head of a collective farm, a factory director, a secretary of the local communist organisation), and so on. Here is a short fragment of the long praise, devoted to the newly-built yurt of a young married couple (this is one of the most usual occasions for a *yerööl* performance):

At the day which embodies 10 000 lucky signs,
Which embodies the state and power,
Overflowing with happiness and joy,
At this wonderful day
Of the good month, which we were waiting-waiting,
This good, lucky day, which we were searching-waiting.
Today, at this day,
Overflowing with the lucky,
You are settling your yurt
On the high place.

In the wonderful land,
Where grandeur is flourishing,
Cattle and herds are multiply,
Milk and food overflowing,
The state of Genghis Khan expanding,
Happiness is growing,
Progress in work is boiling,
The bride and the groom united,
Turned into intelligent family,
Settled the solid yurt…[33]

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[32] J.N., 1917, Khalkha, 2006. "Mountains and springs" is a stable pair which is many contexts equivalent to the pair (and in the contemporary Mongolian language a binomial already) *lus-savdag*, a collective name for nature spirits, where *lus* are patrons of the water (springs), and *savdag* are patrons of the earth (mountains).

[33] Ts.J., 1926, Khalkha, 2006.

The detailed description of everything which is in the house then follows:

A bridle and a halter,
With a smooth silver winding,
With chopped silver plaques,
With black belts decorations.
A bicycle and a sewing machine,
Flute with mottled ribbon,
A box with beautiful sounds –
Radio set "Rodina"[34]
Are together with them,
Everything here is in a complete set.[35]

The same detailed observation can sometimes focus on family members and guests, who accidentally become belongings of the house that is being praised, and thus guarantors of its future happiness.

Very poetic and colourful texts are represented by the obverse of the praising *yerööl* and *magtaal*: *haraal*, the professional curse. A curse can be quite long and include different kinds of images and details, mixing statements with a literal meaning ("Choke on blood") with skilfully-built-up allegories. Some examples of the latter include "may your paddock grow over with lush grass" (this is a wish that a person's cattle die) and "may bright stars shine over your head" (this is a wish that you stay homeless). In the Mongolian language there is a euphemism for *haraal* – the *yerööl* on blood, literally "the praise on blood" or "bloody praise". People say: "On the tip of *haraal* is blood, on the tip of the *yerööl* is fat".[36]

In the past, these genres usually were supposed to be performed not by lay people, but professional performers. Specialists of composing and performing *yerööl* and *magtaal* were invited to special occasions (weddings, festivals devoted to sacred places). The figure of the *haraalch*, the master of cursing, is more mythologized due to their speciality, and there are many differing accounts in contemporary folklore of who it is that can have such abilities. Various beliefs hold that the successful candidate would be a person born with particular characteristics,[37] or would be a person of a particular tribe or clan, or would be a skillful religious specialist who has learned the correct texts (*nom,* for lamas) or would be one who worships the right deities and spirits (for shamans). In

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[34] Radio set made in Soviet Union with the Russian name "Rodina", which means "Homeland".

[35] R.M., 1943, Khalkha, 2006.

[36] G., 1936, Khalkh, 2010.

[37] Some beliefs with a basis in folk etymology (*haraal – har* – black) hold that a true curser should have a black tongue (or that the end of their tongue should be black). Other beliefs connect the ability to curse with religious specialists. In such an understanding, this black mark made with ash.

contemporary Mongolian tradition, narratives about masters of praise and curse from former times are very popular, while some simple praisers might even be found amongst relatives who left manuscripts or books, thus partly transmitting the knowledge to the contemporary generation. Nowadays these genres, despite the fact that they were not under much pressure in the socialist period, and thus could adapt to the new ideology, face a decline. As far as performance is concerned, they were transformed to artificial forms supported by official culture. And as far as function is concerned, these traditions were shared by non-professional lay people and religious specialists (lamas and shamans). Here is a description of how one of our informants recently began to perform *yurool*:

> My father was yeröölch,[38] when he died, he left me a book. Recently I started to read it and learned a bit. Now people sometimes call me to speak yerööl, and I come and say it. But I never said yerööl to scholars, feel a bit nervous… But I shall try.[39]

In the professional religious sphere, traditional genres underwent some transformations and acquired new uses, according to professional needs and ritual environment. For example, the *yerööl* for the deceased (performed in a certain number of days, e.g. three or forty, after death), which are performed by some lamas, appeared and got relatively popular only recently.

Non-Religious/Non-Professional Ritual Poetry

The emic term for ritual poetry which is not specifically religious nor specifically intended for professionals is *dom shivshleg*. This term is most closely to what we elsewhere call verbal charms.[40] This term reflects its close connections with the action, packing as it does two codes of ritual into a single binomial, in which *dom*[41] is the actional part and *shivshleg*[42] is the verbal part. *Dom shivshleg*, just like other poetic genres in Mongolian, is built up on alliteration.

Although *dom shivshleg* is connected to and influenced by other genres of ritual poetry, actively adopting their symbols, characters and formulas, it represents a unique and separate genre. Despite this, *dom shivshleg* is almost entirely unremarked upon in the academic literature.[43]

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[38] A professional performer of *yerööl*.

[39] R.M., 1943, Khalkha, 2006.

[40] Roper 2009.

[41] In Mongolian *dom* – ritual or magical action, healing.

[42] In Mongolian *shivshleg* – verbal charms, whispering.

[43] This situation partly reflects the relative conservatism of Mongolian studies, with its focus upon certain tradi-

Mentioned should be made of the fact that this genre is one of very few ones concerning ritual practices, which had favourable conditions for development during the socialist period, as rival religious agents sharing the similar functions were suppressed: *"Lamas despaired, new doctors didn't come yet, and we had to fix problems ourselves"*.[44]

In this section of my article, I shall describe the main types of *dom shivshleg*, their performers and the most popular images they involve. I use a classification based on the topic/type of the text, as is generally used in the academic study of charms,[45] and on the object of ritual manipulation, for the sake of whom it is performed. In this article, I introduce several the most popular types, concerning:

- Children (healing, apotropaic)
- Cattle (healing, apotropaic)
- Adults (healing, apotropaic).

Practices concerning children are the most popular focus of Mongolian verbal charms. In Mongolian traditional culture, children occupy a central position, being partly regarded as supernatural beings, *burhan*, deities. This is reflected in many different narrative genres, in ritual practices, and in beliefs (for example, children under three are believed to be able see deities, ghosts and demons, and to communicate with them, to remember their previous lives, and so on).

According to this perception, children, especially those under the age of three, exist in a liminal condition, situated between the words of humans and the world of spirits. Most ritual and verbal practices devoted to children relate to this idea and represent an effort to "pull" small deities in the world of people and to save keep them here, thus keeping them from death. An example of such a charm runs:

> You are the one who came out from the hands of strangers.
> You will stay, you cannot die.
> You are the one, who was nursed in the cradle of strangers.
> You will not step over this threshold, you will not die.
> You are the one who was dressed in clothes of strangers,
> How do you think Kazakhs will let you go?![46]

Most practices concerning children are connected to the notion of fooling and misleading malevolent agents (demons and spirits, all of them bad). This idea is reflected

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tional or religious genres. There are nevertheless a few works that look at the genre of *dom shivshleg*, including: Sodnom 1968; Dulam – Nandinbilig 2007; Otgonbaatar – Tsendina 2016.

[44] Otgonbaatar – Tsendina 2016.

[45] For discussion on this, see: Roper 2005.

[46] Dulam – Nandinbilig 2007: 82.

in different forms, both in verbal and ritual practices. The main motif of the text above, "a child of strangers", is used to persuade negative agents that the child does not belong to the real family (i.e the Mongol one), but to another family of another ethnic group, (e.g. to a Kazakh one). This is done so that they lose interest in harming the life of the child. Also of interest here is the combination of recipients of the message – the text is explicitly directed to the child, but implicitly it is directed to the malevolent forces.

The details involved in this text are reflected in ritual practices. If a child is weak and often falls ill, or if it is a child born into a family where young children have died before, the child is supposed to be given to another family for a while, whether they be relatives or friends (seldom it happens as in the charms, that it is given to the family another ethnic group). At the very least, the child should be nursed in the cradle of other people (usually of another ethnic group). A similar practice concerns clothing: the child is dressed in the traditional clothes of an ethnic out-group. Alternatively, the usual order of the cloth (i.e. the side of closing the *deli*[47]) may be changed. This text also correlates with the practice of changing the name of the child – in this text it is the child of strangers taken "from the hands of strangers", a "foundling". In other texts, it might also be "bad names", which hide the baby from evil influence (for example, *ene bish*/'not this', *muu nohoi*/'bad dog', *baas(aa)*/'shit'). This *dom shivshleg* usually supposed to be performed by parents.

Another popular *dom shivshleg* very closely connected to ritual practices is that of the words used to stop a child crying, "the circling with a water":

> Did it happen because of guests?
> Because of a person from a strange family it happened?
> Because of the motley dog it happened?
> Did evil spirits make it happen?
> Shireg, shireg[48]!
> Did it happen because of a man from the road?
> Because of the bareback camel it happened?
> Fire – shireg suhai[49]!
> River Gang – shireg suhai![50]

The words which follow the ritual actions have a number of variations, reflected both in oral and written traditions.[51] These words are supposed to be performed during the ritual "circling with water", which also varies in practice, but which always includes as

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[47] A traditional Mongolian robe.

[48] "Shireg, shireg" – an onomatopoeic representation of the sounds made by the salt thrown into the fire, here also has the meaning of magical influence.

[49] "Shireg suhai" – a magical formula which combines Mongolian and Tibetan words.

[50] Otgonbaatar – Tsendina 2016: 13. This text was written down by the authors of the article in oral form.

[51] "Sutra telling about the rules of circling with a water", see Otgonbaatar – Tsendina 2016: 15.

a basic action a circling around the child with a vessel containing water (the circling is usually done 3 times in a clockwise direction). An adult person from the family often put a bit of "bad earth" in a vessel (taken from under the fireplace, the threshold, the legs of the child's bed), or a bit of ash from the fireplace, or a bit of salt (in this case, some salt is also supposed to be thrown into the fire – as spirits and demons were scared of the loud sounds it makes and would leave the baby alone). After the water has been circled around the child, it is then supposed to be taken outside and thrown in the direction from which the bad influence came (or simply thrown in the "bad" direction, which in Mongolian traditional beliefs is the north-east). In some variations, this ritual combines two functions at the same time – a divination (aiming to find out what was the cause of the harm, as illustrated by the questions in the text above) and an act of healing (in this traditional sense, the discovery of the source of the harm equates to healing). To find out what the cause of the harm was, the members of the family should put oil, or hot lead, or wax into vessel of water, after circling it around the child, and the participants of the ritual then try to interpret the image on the water. After that, according to local traditions, these images of "the enemy" are supposed to be broken and thrown away, or, conversely, to be kept close to the child's bed as protectors against this kind of harm). The divinatory part of the ritual, as reflected in a form of questions in such texts, comes in different variants and might be performed as a complete text. Some versions include a continuation with a recognition of the harm, as in the following fragment:

> I know who you are!
> Go back to your deep land,
> Go back to your big, deep hole!
> Go on your way,
> Go back by your road,
> Go away, honking, by the buzzing gorge,
> Leave, opening the open hole in the mountain!
> Ragchi, ragchi, suha!
> Mangalam![52]

This example of *dom shivshleg*, the "circling with water", provides rich material for research into the interactions of different traditions (religious, local, oral and written). Here, I shall briefly discuss one of many such examples. Different versions of this *dom shivshleg* exist in oral and written forms. The written form is represented by two manuscripts (written in Mongolian and Tibetan).[53] Usually the description of the ritual

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[52] Otgonbaatar – Tsendina 2016: 19–20. This text was discovered in a written form – as an addition in Mongolian language to the Tibetan description of the ritual.

[53] See the comment and the reference above.

actions varies very little, whereas the words, which reflect different folk traditions, vary greatly. The text above is a fragment of such manuscripts, where the description of the actions is written in Tibetan and the verbal part is in Mongolian, reflecting Mongolian oral traditions. An example of the verbal formula written in Tibetan is below:

> Therefore, by this water circling around, circling around,
> Therefore, by this water throwing away, throwing away,
> Therefore, by this water turning away, turning away.
> This is the water of defenders-Dharmapala,
> The water, calming down the harm from disease-causing demons,
> The water, virtuous for the entire visible,
> The water, eliminating all obstacles,
> The water, having happiness and having no harm
> The water, making the enemies and demons leave
> Therefore, by this water circling around, circling around,
> Therefore, by this water throwing away, throwing away,
> Therefore, by this water turning away, turning away.
> Therefore, by this water throwing away, throwing away,
> This is the water of King Pehar.[54]

As we can see the differences between Tibetan and Mongolian traditions are reflected clearly in the texts of ritual poetry. Among the most evident differences are the description and the recipient of the message. In the Mongolian oral examples and in the written Mongolian fragment, the main description concerns asking for (or searching for) the source of the harm, and the speech is thus addressed to the child and to the malevolent agents. As optional elements, the text might also include sacred names (of deities) and symbols (the water of Gang), as well as special (untranslatable) magic formulas from various traditions, including Buddhist "shireg, shireg", "hurai, hurai" (this is regarded as Shamanic), or Mongolian phonetic transmission of Tibetan words ("ragchi, ragchi, suhai", "mangalam"), or even a combination of Shamanic words ("shireg") and Buddhist words ("suhai").

In direct contrast to the oral Mongolian tradition, the Tibetan Buddhist written examples are based on the description of the magical abilities of the water and that it belongs to a powerful deity (Pehar, for example). In some variations, the words are addressed to the supreme and protecting deities (Buddha, Dakini, Damdin, Jamsaran).

The second most popular group of Mongolian non-professional ritual poetry is that large group concerning cattle. It has few general types: healing, apotropaic, and, specific to the Mongolian and Tibetan traditions, the "farewell" type.

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[54] Otgonbaatar – Tsendina 2016: 16. Tibetan manuscript.

Below is an example of healing words, which are supposed to be performed by one of the older owners:

> The head of the animal up,
> The head of the illness down,
> Em dom, em dom!
> Keep far from the axe,
> Keep close to the sun,
> Eat the grass from the mountain Sum(b)er,[55]
> Drink the water from the Milk ocean (Suu(n) Dalai).[56]
> Em dom, em dom![57]

This type of ritual text usually also includes sacred symbols. Among the most popular of these are Sum(b)er, Suu(n) Dalai, and Doloon Burhan.[58] The sending of the creature needing healing (the sick animal) to the sacred location is the specific characteristic of such texts. As with many other healing types (for children and adults), the messages of these texts are usually followed by short formulas (here, "*em dom, em dom*"[59]) which are believed to reinforce the magical power and influence of the whole text.

The apotropaic type is represented by a variety of texts, as, for example, the text below:

> My golden, silver, fanged mine,
> With a sable tail mine,
> Go far away from here!
> My Altai-Khangai, the foot of my mountains,
> Take these scissors in Your golden armpit and rest well![60]

In this text, we also have a double addressing – first, towards the subject of malevolent influence, in this case the wolf, here named by a series of descriptive euphemisms, and secondly to the protective sacred characters, Altai and Khangai.[61] The first addressee, the wolf, receives praise ("My golden, silver...", etc) as well as a plea to keep away

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[55] Mount Meru/Sum(b)eru is the sacred five-peaked mountain of Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist cosmology, and is considered to be the centre of all the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universes.

[56] Suu(n) Dalai is the Milk Ocean, the Milk Sea, a sacred locus in Mongolian cosmology and folklore.

[57] M.N., 1956, Khalkha, 2016.

[58] Doloon Burhan are the Seven gods. The Big Dipper is a very important element in Mongolian mythology, folklore, rites.

[59] This loosely means "healing tool", "healing rite", "medication".

[60] E.M., 1973, Khalkha, 2015.

[61] Altai and Khangai are real geographical locations (mountain ranges) and at the same time are very important characters of folklore and everyday life beliefs, regarding as chief deities of nature spirits.

from the livestock, whereas the second addressee is requested to protect the kettle. The request is represented symbolically ("take these scissors in your golden armpit") and very closely connected to the ritual acts, without which these words would be incomprehensible. During the ritual, a male person from the household, or the man responsible for the cattle pasture, must take some scissors and wrap up the blades tightly with a rope, symbolically closing the wolf's jaws. He must then "give" these scissors to the deities Altai and Khangai, so they keep them out of reach. This ritual has many parallels elsewhere, including in Slavic tradition.

> Funeral ritual poetry, concerning cattle generally, has two basic aims and messages, – to request forgiveness from the killed animal, and to ask it to be reborn soon in the same household as the same (or a better) animal. Both of these messages are based on folk interpretations of Buddhist concepts, namely that of not harming any living being, and of reincarnation.

> I did not kill you, because I wanted to kill,
> I'm bowing low, I'm praying to you.
> Because of hunger, we went to suck the milk.
> I wish your soul goes to the Holy land,
> Be reborn soon as a bringing happiness calf.[62]

> Sometimes the words are spoken to the first vertebra of the animal, which is believed to be a vessel of the soul:

> At the place you fell,
> Turn into spotted calf,
> At the place you were killed,
> Turn into mottled calf.
> Be reborn soon![63]

Non-professional ritual poetry concerning adults includes a variety of types, covering different occasions and activities (such as hunting, as well as other activities). Among the most popular are, once again, the healing and apotropaic types. The apotropaic type is very widespread and includes different objects of danger, as, for example, lightning:

> If you are tall, strike in the mountain,
> If you are wide, strike in the steppe,

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[62] *Lovor,* 57.
[63] Skorodumova – Solovyova 2014: 54.

If you are orphan, strike in me!
If you ate spleen, smash [me] into pieces,
If you ate stomach, then miss [me].[64]

These words are supposed to be performed during a storm in order to prevent a lightning strike. The addressee of this text is the lightning itself. The dialogueue, which is taking place during the performance, may seem unusual but it is very tightly connected to the cultural context, language, beliefs and everyday habits. The speech is built up on the principle "if A, then B", where A is a characteristic of the addressee, and B is an imperative. The semantic relations between A and B are revealed to be as follows: if the characteristic of the addressee (lightning) is right/true (from the point of cultural bearer), then the lightning should not strike the person; if the characteristic is wrong/fake, then it is free to strike. Thus, the true characteristics of lightning are being tall and wide (this is something which is possible to say in Mongolian) and to have eaten stomach (a right type of food) and the wrong characteristics are being an orphan (something socially problematic) and having eaten spleen (a wrong food, which Mongols are forbidden from eating). The words should mislead the lightning into not striking the performer (or should persuade it not to strike). Often variations of this type include a description of the performer's origin (whether this be real, or more often, fake), claiming that he or she belongs to certain Mongolian tribes or clans (aristocratic clans, which are believed to be related to Genghis Khan). According to traditional beliefs, these have a kinship with the sky. In this case, the reason given to the lightning not to strike is their kin ties.

Another not so obvious danger concerns such an everyday action as the cutting of nails. However, in many different traditional beliefs, nails have very rich semantics, often they are believed to be involved in magic manipulations, regarded as an object containing the soul or "energy" of a person, or as an independent character which could be ambivalent towards the person, or even (as in Tibetan folk beliefs) as a shelter of spirits.

A wide steppe lays
Behind seven hills.
There is a white grass
Growing in this steppe.
I shall not tell a cow
Where you are.
You will not tell death
Where I am.
When the horns of a wild goat

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[64] Dulam – Nandinbilig 2007: 92.

Reach the heavens,
When a tail of a sheep
Reaches the earth,
Then come,
With two fast horses,
With sacrificial food,
Come to me![65]

These words are supposed to be said after cutting one's nails. In Mongolian traditions, nails are regarded as a kind of supernatural being, which, according to folk beliefs, is very angry with the human it belongs to, because during life people take care of their hair, combing and touching it, but all the time they hurt their nails, and cut them off. If a person cuts his or her nails, and then just throws them away, the nails will show death (meaning the envoys of death, spirits-servants of the god of hell) where this person is. So, according to such beliefs, cutting one's nails should be followed by certain *dom shivshleg* in order to prevent the nails taking revenge on the person who did it: after cutting one's nails, one should spit upon the cut nails and say the right words. This text is very rich example full of images and euphemisms, as can now decode:

"Behind seven hills" – an unhuman location;
"A white grass" – the nails;
"I shall not tell a cow" – according to traditional beliefs, cows like to eat nails, so a cow is an enemy of nails, as death is the enemy of humans;
"When the horns of a wild goat reach the heavens, when a tail of a sheep reaches the earth" – these are impossibility conditions, signifying *never*;
"Come with two fast horses, with sacrificial food" – come and take the soul to another world, meaning death.

Here, I have presented only few examples of the very rich and various tradition of Mongolian non-professional ritual poetry, covering various activities (household chores, hunting, etc), situations and states, including different goals – healing, apotropaic, attracting wealth and good luck, etc. The only type which is not widespread are love charms (the author of this article could not find any examples either in contemporary traditions, nor in previous collections). The idea behind these charms is reflected only as a motif in narratives, often concerning Buddhist monks possessing supernatural abilities.[66]

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[65] Sodnom 1968.

[66] Interestingly, legends such as skilful monk-magician who tries to manipulate the woman he would like to charm, using her hair, is found here, – a motif which is very popular in different verbal charms traditions. Often in Mongolian narratives, the woman gives the monk a hair from a cow's tail, and the cow starts to chase the monk. See, for example – Toporkov 2005.

Performers, Images, Transmissions

As is obvious from the examples regarded above, the texts of *dom shivshleg* are full of images, symbols and meanings which semantically metastasize through various spheres of Mongolian culture – language, mythology, religious and folklore traditions, practices and habits – and which form the joint space of the word of verbal magic. In this respect, it is not so surprising that the figure of the performer becomes deeply involved in these semantic knots. In the absence of professional or religious specialists, certain features and characteristics of a performer are emphasized in the performance of certain types of text. These required features represent a variety of physical and social characteristics: a full set of teeth, six fingers, having a certain profession (blacksmith, hunter), being from a particular clan/ethnic group, being from (or having) big family, being an orphan. This latter is shown in the text below, as in many others:

> [Blowing the dust out of eyes]
>
> That who is blowing you out not me
> Buddha god is blowing you out!
> From which direction of the earth
> Did you attract this harm,
> Interring the eye of my child?
> As I have not seen my father,
> As I shall not see your litter [harm]!
> I am driving you away,
> Further than seven mountains,
> I am driving you away,
> Down the hills.
> As I have not ever seen my father,
> As I shall not ever see you again![67]

Though the performance of this ritual, blowing is imputed to the one of superior deities (Buddha). The characteristic of the performer is a key working formula of the text: "As I have not seen my father, so I shall not see your litter [harm]!", "As I have not ever seen my father, so I shall not ever see you again!"

The determining characteristic of the performer might also be that of kinship. The most popular example is provided by texts devoted to children – many healing *dom shivshleg* are supposed to be performed by *nagats*, by the uncle, more specifically, the mother's brother. The performance of *dom shivshleg* might also differ in the way they

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[67] Dulam – Nandinbilig 2007: 90.

are done – whether individually or collectively, whether secretly or openly, whether the words are spoken loud and clear or whether they are obscurely whispered. The existence and transmissions of these texts also has a complex character, as is also common with many other traditions. Texts, together with descriptions of acts, circulate orally within large families and certain settlements, usually transmitted from the older to younger members and sometimes shared horizontally between members of the same age-group. Most of them however are not regarded as knowledge that should be kept secret. They may be written down for memorizing, combined with written texts, as in the example above where Mongolian words of charms were added later on to a Tibetan manuscript with a description of a similar ritual (the circling with water).

Instead of a Conclusion

Mongolian non-professional ritual poetry, *dom shivshleg*, represents a unique independent folk genre, co-existing with and actively interacting with other religious and folk genres of ritual poetry. It adopts a variety of images, symbols, characters and formulas from different traditions and incorporates them into the new context of verbal charms, which has its own ways of representation and statement. Among the most popular images are protecting figures (deities and worshipped spirits, Buddha, Tara, Khan Garudi, Dolon Burhan (Big Dipper), Tengri, Supreme nature spirits Altai and Hangai, Genghis Khan), malevolent agents (spirits of disease, demons and guests, wolves and dust, lightning and nails), sacred and magical locations (Sum(b)er uul (the mountain Sumer), Suu(n) dalai (Milk ocean), seven hills), objects of supernatural influence such as water and fare, objects of another ethnic group (clothes, cradles), and features of supernatural abilities (kinship with the sky, being an orphan or having a big family). Amid this weave of elements, a significantly meaningful role is assigned to the performer, a non-professional lay person, whose often quite ordinary characteristics turn him into a powerful component part of the ritual. The most popular kinds of ritual poetry are healing and apotropaic ones dealing with children, adults and cattle. In the socialist period non-professional ritual poetry, as opposed to other, related genres, had an opportunity to develop its roles and functions at the expense of professional religious rituals. Though it still retains a degree of popularity, the reviving professional religious genres are regaining authority in ritual life and everyday practices.

Despite the originality of Mongolian non-professional ritual poetry, many of its functions, characters, formulas, structural elements, semantics, and mechanisms of dealing with another world have typologically universal characteristics. For example, beliefs about the cleaning/healing functions of water or apotropaic abilities of fire, the supernatural abilities of a stranger, the ways of misleading and fooling malevolent agents, formulas based on sending them away (or on a journey to sacred locus to be

healed, or the formula of closing jaws, are all based on the principle of similitude, which is well-evolved in many traditional cultures.[68] Comparative research on the types, motifs and formulas of Mongolian verbal charms is the necessary next step of discovery, and demands a separate article.

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[68] See, for example – Agapkina 2010.

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Magic Texts,
Magic Objects

Oral Charms, Literal Notes

Henni Ilomäki

The charm is an instance of communication designed to bring about a change in a given circumstance. Primarily directed at an otherworldly listener, the charm is a form of speech that relies on the power of the word. Although the charm is a medium intended to be used in special circumstances, scholars usually treat charms recorded in a non-authentic situation – texts noted during fieldwork or manuscripts handed through a chain of inscriptions.

A fundamental question is whether an oral charm performed at the request of an outsider can be considered the same as one recited in a moment of urgent need. How is a charm performed on demand related to the words in the performer's mind, the verbal composition that he calls upon in moments of genuine need? Does a folklorist-collector's metatext sufficiently diminish the gap between these variants? What is the relationship between a charm performed orally and its textualization? Do we have identical variants, if a note on the verbatim level represents accurately a corresponding spoken word? How does the medium affect the content of a message? According to a strict interpretation, a record, a corresponding written item is not an actual charm. It is not an address to a figure from the otherworld – it is merely a textualization, an ineffectual verbal representation. If this is indeed the case, what elements are missing in the written representation of a charm?

In my search for answers, I base my conclusions on the Finnish-Karelian tradition of charms. The 34 volumes of *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* ('The ancient poems of the Finnish people') contain roughly 40,000 charms. Some 40 of the charm variants were written downin the 1600s as evidence in court cases to prove accusations of witchcraft while the greater part of the charm corpus was written down by folklore collectors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The charms were recorded during oral performances requested either by a judge during a trial or a folklore collector interested in preserving magic texts.

Many factors are at play in the relationship between the oral performance and its written version. Indeed, differences can already be discerned at the verbal level. Just

how accurately could a clerk of the court write down the words of a performance that he could only partially understand? It was unlikely that the folklore collector taking notes by hand would have been able to capture verbatim the free-flowing words of any recitation of more than a hundred lines.

ON THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FINNISH-KARELIAN CHARMS

Finnish-Karelian charms seem to differ from European equivalents in regard to religious aspects. Instead of a dominant Catholic influence they show a rich variety of emic concepts combined with Christian motives. This is due to the historical background of the Finnish folk culture. The Roman Church extended its formal control to the western part of Finland, then deemed the eastern county of Sweden, during the 11th century and maintained this influence until the Reformation in the 16th century. During this period the Christian verbal tradition had a strong influence on the vernacular folklore, and charms include plenty of motives originating in Catholic preaching. At this time, Karelia was influenced by the Orthodox Church, and this remained even after the Swedish church was reformed on the orders of the king. The slow mental process concerning the change of religious attitudes did not happen simultaneously in different parts of the country, and a gradual intertwining of various elements lasted for centuries. People did not really make any distinction between elements of Christian and folk-religious character. Catholic saints replaced archaic figures, for instance St. Mary displaced several ethnic female predecessors. As the skill of charming survived here and there until the end of the 20th century, emic motives together with Christian ones are still found in the charms. Mythic epic reflects crucial communal beliefs, values, practices, and established modes of communication in interaction and the charmer utilizes the same poetic elements that appear in mythic runes.

The themes, motives, and expressions in different charms vary dramatically. Short commands and mechanically uttered rhymes were used by anybody, but my focus here is on charms that required the professional skills of a ritual specialist, the sage (Finn. *tietäjä*). In addition to employing a given theme these charms also involve the raising of the charmer's personal dynamic force, the supplicatory or threatening address, and the identification and banishment of evil. To begin with, I will define the concept of charm as a genre.

The Power of the Word – The Source of the Charm's Efficacy

The genre-specific feature of the charm is the assumption of the unconditional efficacy of the power of the word – a force that guarantees the realization of any goal. The problem to be dealt with is some matter that shakes the equilibrium of the individual or the community, and the aim of the charm is to bring about a change in situation (hunting or fishing luck, healing, banishment of evil). The addressee of the charm can be a conceptualized adversary (disease, curse) or an otherworldly figure.

The operative force of the spoken word has been examined by J. L. Austin whose term *performative sentence* refers to a statement that actually carries out its meaning: the uttered word is an act. The examples mentioned by Austin are for instance the outcome of a marriage pronouncement or the naming of a ship.[1] Thus the will to carry out the objective is represented in words regarded as binding. This can be seen in the accounts from some court cases in the 17th century.

In 1689, while on trial in the Kuopio District Court, Riitta Utriatar admitted to saying the following words to her neighbour who had just lost a cow: "You'll certainly find it, but it will be no longer be useful to you." Three days later, the cow was found dead, and Riitta's words were interpreted as an utterance meant to cause harm; she was subsequently forced to pay compensation.[2] Similarly, in a 1679 trial in the Haminalahti district court, a threat resembling a curse was thought to have left a smith unable to practice his livelihood after hearing the words "Let the heat remain in your forge, so that you perish of hunger" (Hertzberg 1889: 5). Both the learned judge and the accused, a representative of the common people, believed in the instrumental power of the charm. Officials and even priests were known to seek help from healers well-versed in the art of charms.[3] Belief in the charm's efficacy requires those that resort to their use to have an implicit understanding of the power of the word.

Those accused of sorcery sought to exploit the fact that the charm, whose language departed from everyday discourse, was difficult for the representatives of officialdom to understand. Nonetheless, anyone standing trial for magic had to think twice before composing misleading modifications of a charm text because of the possibility that local peasant jurors were familiar with the tradition.[4] Austin's thesis on the performativity of an utterance requires that the interlocutors have the ability to make an identical interpretation. The realization of a pursued result is based on shared comprehension. Cursing words are effective because of their believed magical background in the otherworld.

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[1]   Austin 1962: 4–6, 13–16, 36.
[2]   Saloheimo 1990: 537.
[3]   Saloheimo 1990: 358–541.
[4]   Saloheimo 1990: 422–543.

Like words invested with significance, the charm seeks to create a change in an undesirable situation: to restore the lost state of equilibrium, to remove a lack, to ensure success, and so on. The power of the word functions even mechanically, without a conscious magical intention, as in the common charm "eat the wart, Moon, don't eat me." Nonetheless, my focus is on charms dealing with the word power derived from mythical knowledge mastered by the sage. In order to communicate with figures from the otherworld, the powerful ritual specialist uses words to establish a connection to an addressee. By creating variations on traditional motives, the performer perceives his or her *ritual self* and magical ability and security within the reality of the otherworld.[5] The ritual specialist's personal dynamic force fortifies the impact of the spoken lines while confirming the realization of the recited threat.

The capacity of the spoken word is based on the belief in the harm that can be caused and prevented by using them emphatically. Malevolent human words may be invalidated by words uttered by a powerful addressee.

Päästä, päästäjä Jumala,	Set free, saviour God,
puutteista, päätteistä,	from attacks and innuendos,
sukukunnan suusanoista,	from the kinship's mouth-words,
laikunnan lausunnoista,	from the family's pronouncements,
kylän suurista sanoista,	the malicious words of the village,
kirokiukuisten sanoista,	the evil cursing words,
akan kehnon noiteista,	from an old woman's wretched spells,
miehen mustan murtehista,	men's rending words,
pitkä hiuksen himpehistä,	the long-haired's hints
tymännyksen ryötehistä, VII4 1742.[6]	the put-downs junk.

The ability to keep envy under control emerges as a key theme in the use of magical words. The effectiveness of a performative utterance was a strategic tool for all those seeking their share of the limited amount of happiness or wealth believed to exist. Thwarting active and potent envies was a common theme in charms – for example, "soot in the eyes" would be wished upon the person who awakened suspicion (VII4 1751). The power of the word could subdue the magic of the envier:

Teräksisen pissyn pissän,	I'll set up a steel paling,
aijan rautasen rakennan	a fence of iron I'll build
ympäri oman lehmäni	around my own cow,
kahenpuolen vaivannäköni.	on both sides of my efforts,

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[5]   Siikala 2002: 42–269; Ilomäki 2004: 47–58; 2014: 68–73.

[6]   The signums refer to texts in the *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*.

Maasta asti taivahah,	From the heavens to the earth.
taivahasta maahan asti.	from the earth to the heavens
Sisiliskoille sitelen,	I'll tie it with lizards,
käärmehillä käännyttelen,	I'll bind it with snakes.
heitän hännät häilymähän,	I'll leave the tails to swing,
pää kesrät kehajamahan.	their heads to tremble,
Syömähän kylän kiroja,	To devour the village curses
kylän noijat noppamahan,	to pick the village witches,
katehia kaatamahan. I4 1542.	to topple the envies.

Envy and curses, personified and equated in the above text, are subdued magically with the verbal safeguard made from relevant materials to protect the objects of envy. The power of communicative charms is derived from mythical knowledge, personal strength and authority.[7]

Communication – A Distinctive Feature of the Charm

Oral speech is discursive by nature. Without doubt, any opening line of speech or verbal art is based on the assumption of the existence of a listener and the attitude to the matter being expressed.[8] As a medium of expression, writing is less dependent on the recipient of the message; the written text can be composed without a certain kind of reader in mind. Even though a piece of writing might be intended primarily for a particular recipient, the writer its not necessarily conscious of the virtual reader.

The ability to interpret oral messages requires a shared body of knowledge that is made possible by spatial and temporal proximity combined with shared experiences. Folklore is preserved in the memory through day-to-day interactions as language use and behaviour.[9] Relevant narration is conveyed in leisure-time activities with listeners responding to the performance. The proverb is presented as a comment to another person, riddles are posed to others, songs can be sung together. The addressee of a lament is the deceased who has departed to the otherworld. When the lamenter addresses herself, it is an instance of auto-communication.[10] How is the distinctively communicative character manifested in charms?

The charm recited by a ritual specialist endowed with personal dynamic force is communication consciously directed to an otherworldly listener.[11] In an authentic

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[7]   Siikala 2002: 71–04; Tarkka 2013: 104–106.

[8]   Ong 2002: 148.

[9]   Goody 2000: 27.

[10]   Arukask 2012.

[11]   Davor Nikolić defines five types of adressees from *natural* (disease, thunder, snake) to *supernatural* (evil-eye,

situation, charms are based on the community's conviction that the ritual specialist, an individual with a command of mythical knowledge, has the ability to communicate with supernatural beings. This communicative element is stressed as the charmer adjusts his/her linguistic expression to match the task at hand (cursing, banishment, healing, obtaining prey) and to approach the addressee in the most appropriate manner. Even a secretly mumbled charm is a situation-bound utterance, constructed for and directed to an assumed listener.

The interpretation of written charms is supported by knowledge of the communicative nature of the genre. It can be assumed that the ancient Mesopotamian charms[12] preserved on clay tablets were virtually priestly scribes' ritual speeches. The communicative nature of the text was realized as long as the inscription was understood as words to supernatural recipients. In that case graphic signs performed the same task of conveying a message as the speaking voice. By contrast, in medieval Europe, monks in monasteries copied charms used for healing the sick; their aim, however, was to preserve and pass on valued knowledge[13] but not to communicate. The communicative element was also absent when the charm was put into writing to serve as proof in a court of law, and guilt had to be proven. When forced to perform and demonstrate their skill, individuals well-versed in charms were then bound to face punishment. Occasionally the accuracy of the written record was undermined by the clerk's inadequate language skills or when the person on trial intentionally modified the words of the charm. These written records served to document charms performed on demand – not those used in order to eradicate a specific problem.[14] Without the presence of the otherworldly listener, the recited charm loses its essential feature, its communicative element.

The realization of the goal set (the charmer's sense of power, the patient getting healed, the curse being carried out, etc.) is the "answer" to the message conveyed in the charm. How the performer feels about the aim of the charm is vividly illustrated in a 1669 trial held in Dalarna. Elin Paavalintytär, an old woman from a Finnish village[15] in Sweden, was accused of sorcery, but refused to perform a healing charm for the court. She confessed to having the ability to determine the origins of a disease by reciting the charm over salt (The idea of the instrumental value of salt in performing

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devil, nightmare) ones. An adressee is someone to be banned, another a helper, the charmer himself is the fifth one (Nikolić 2015). In Finnish charms mixed figures may be included in one text. The "perspective of the folk" (Kapaló 2011: 79-101) does not make any difference between them.

[12] Schwemer 2007; Tallqvist 1895.

[13] Smallwood 2004: 15.

[14] This is why motives from various contexts are combined in many of the charms in the SKVR. The performer of the charm has simply presented his/her repertoire.

[15] Towards the end of the 16th century, families from Savolax, eastern Finland, moved to the woodlands in Middle Sweden. For a long time they maintained their vernacular dialect and elements of folk culture, even some knowledge of charms was preserved until the beginng of the 19th century.

magic had been assimilated from sacraments in the Catholic Church). She declined to repeat the charm in court because she had no patient, not even an item of clothing or a possession through which she could communicate to the source of the disease. Eventually, Elin was forced to dictate a fragment that nonetheless remained unintelligible to her interrogators.

Kiwi kiwin kärsie,	The stone can bear the pain,
Pahat wahwan kästie,	the flagstones can take the pressure,
älkän iho ihiminen.	but not the human skin.
Tungen tuhlo tuska,	I squeeze the agony of the wind
Ihost ihiminen rauha,	from the skin of the wretched man,
karwast ämänd täckä,	from the skin of a mother's child,
ämänd tuoman ruomist,	from the body born by a mother
kiwi kiwisten pojes	stone ache go away,
jo pako taman. VII5 Metsäs. 226.	and flee from this one's skin.

Some two hundred years later, charms resembling the one recited by Elin Paavalintytär were written down in, among other places, Border-Karelia, Olonets, and Northern Ostrobothnia:

Hoi kivi, Jumalan luoma,	Oh stone, God's creation,
Tules töitäs tuntemaan,	Come and get to know your harm,
Vikojas parentamaan,	Come and fix your flaws,
Tästä ihmisen ihosta,	On this person's skin,
Emon tuoman ruumihista! VII3 1301.	This body born of a mother!

Kivut maahan kirvotkoho,	Drop the pains into the earth,
Pakot maahan painukoho,	Send the compulsions into the earth,
Tuskat tuulille yletkö	Lift the agonies to the winds
Ihosta inehmo raukan,	From the skin of this wretched man,
Karvasta kavon tekemän,	From the skin of a woman's child,
Emon tuoman ruumihista! II 785.	From the body born of a mother!

Kivi keskellä ketoa,	A stone in middle of the field,
Reikä keskellä kiveä,	A hole in the middle of the stone,
Joka on veänty veäntiällä -	That's been carved with a gimlet,
Puhkastu purasimella,	Pierced with a chisel,
Yhen sormen mentäväxi	For one finger to go through,
Peukaloise mahuttavaxi,	For a thumb to go through,
Johon tuskat tungetahan XII2 6164.	To shove the pains

Although these variants contain motives corresponding to the charm dictated by Elin Paavalintytär, they differ by naming an addressee that is lacking from the version in the court. However, these variants were performed during fieldwork and thus are not genuine, but imitate a charm needed in an urgent situation. Elin's charm is near to nonsense, and the account offers an insight into her understanding of charming. The charm from Olonets (II 785) emphasizes the crucial difference between a human ("the body born of a mother") patient and the evil supernatural pain. The Ostrobothnian charm presents a measure to remove the pain: according to an archaic idea it is stuffed into a hole leading to the otherworld.

The object in oral curses is not always apparent. Olavi Haakoninpoika, who yelled "Woe unto you" to an official, was acquitted because, at least according to the interpretation of the court, his words lacked a defined target.[16] In other words, the intended recipient of the message was rather the official than the supernatural evil referred to in the curse, and thus the characteristic communication of a charm was not carried out. In nineteenth-century folklore records, the addressee varies from an otherworldly figure whose help is requested to various adversaries such as diseases, predators threatening livestock, etc. The one in need of help (e.g., a patient) may be a third party, but not as the intended recipient of the message. While the charmer takes part in the dialogueue with articulate speech, the otherworldly figure is supposed to respond by realizing the goal: the patient is healed, the hunter gets his catch, etc.

Over time, some charms have lost their mythical task of communication, turning instead into quotidian or playful sayings: "Ahven arka perse märkä, tule onki ottamaan" (Timid perch, wet ass, take my hook).

Oral and Written Presentation

Researchers from many disciplines have been fascinated with the nature of oral and written culture as the communicative environment. The notion of the differing mentalities behind oral and written expression has been regarded as central in the production and transmission of information. For instance Ruth Finnegan contests the presumed divide between the thought processes of people in preliterate and people in literate societies. Nonetheless, variation remains the distinguishing feature of texts created and transmitted in environments of oral culture.[17]

Variation certainly allows space for creativity, though it is dependent on social context. Variation is not carried out only on the level of expression, oral texts benefit from the conventional idiom, the knowledge capital of the entire community. The

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[16]   Eilola 2003: 101–102.

[17]   Finnegan 1988: 59–68, 81–82.

breadth of the Finnish charm corpus demonstrates the validity of Lauri Honko's concept of *organic variation*,[18] but comparison of the repertoires of individual users of charms is beyond the scope of my paper. The difference between oral and written variants is connected to contextual factors, but when it comes to the composition and transmission of charms it is necessary to formulate the questions more carefully. While a charmer does not alter the text for the benefit of any listening audience, he/she does sharpen the verbal tools to meet the requirements of precisely defined communication with the otherworld.

Literate culture is often associated with an analytical outlook and individualism. The written text is assumed to arise from an individual's imagination and to reflect personal preferences, experiences, and abilities of its creator.[19] However, even written communication is cumulative, and on the other hand, new information filters into the preliterate community through contacts with the outside world and connections to book culture. Moreover, the notion of collective memory is misleading because even orally transmitted information is represented in the mind of individuals.[20] When there is exposure to book culture, folklore tends to find a place on the interface of oral and literate culture.[21] Instead mechanical repetition, creative renewal of shared knowledge is a key characteristic of oral cultures.[22] Does this concern charms?

Actually there is no such thing as a community that relies solely on oral communication. Since the Middle Ages book culture has shaped the worldview and oral traditions of Europeans. Not only have the teachings of the Catholic Church given colour to folkloric themes, but also the texts read aloud by the laity have allowed the imprint of book culture to enter the consciousness of listening audiences.[23] Medievalists have debated the dichotomy between oral and literate culture; after all, book learning was disseminated in the Middle Ages through reading aloud and orally summarizing and interpreting texts. Written information was transmitted orally, through listening, and only when literacy became more prevalent did sight begin to play a central role.[24] The transmission of written texts through listening has been characterized with the term *aurality*.[25] In the case of charms, this kind of transmission was far from commonplace, but isolated motives of liturgical texts were assimilated. Although charms' oral and literal derivation remained on the whole distinct, the opportunity for two means of transmission to mingle took place when a literate individual heard a charm read aloud.

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18 Honko 2000; Roper 2005: 165, 171–174.
19 Coleman 1996: 8; Amodio 2004: 5–6.
20 Goody 2000: 44.
21 Finnegan 2007: 101.
22 Foley 1995: 33–35.
23 Goody 1988: 79; Coleman 1996: 1–33; Amodio 2004: 10, 19–20.
24 Amodio 2004: 10–11, 22.
25 Coleman 1996: 27–28.

The inscriptions of charms in medieval manuscripts were created in this cultural environment thanks to monks. These records have been studied from both the perspective of oral and literal derivation; although charms are believed to have originated in the oral tradition, their transformation into written notes have turned them into reflections of the ecclesiastical book culture of the era. The modification of the motives indicates that the variations are not based on decisions made by the recorders, but rather on the many wordings in the oral variants.[26] How should this contact between two means of transmission be described?

It is impossible to trace the various stages of the transmission process. We do not know if the monks who prepared the manuscripts knew charms by heart or whether they referred to a written version. Did the use of an aurally derived variant have an impact on the communicative character of the text or was the appeal to the God of Christianity the charm's only communicative feature? Regarding charms, the reciprocal contact between the models of transmission is interesting in any case since this reciprocity was linked to an ideological association between Christianity and earlier folk belief.

Correspondingly how is the essence of the charm preserved or changed when the healer learns it from a written source (a *witch book* or some random entry) but uses it orally? In order to specify the opposite character of oral and literal texts it is necessary to study the role of remembering in the creative process.

The Process of Remembering

In non-literate communities oral traditions contain fundamental knowledge and constitute a reserve of moral concepts. The intellectual capital and verbal art are made manifest in performance, but when the performer's voice falters its tonal verbalization diminishes to nothing. It is the process of remembering that preserves the item of folklore and enables its repeated transmission.

The retention of observations in memory and their retrieval are the basic tasks of human memory. The mind is a substance onto which perceptions leave permanent traces. Remembering is a physiological process, which begins with the concrete representation of a sense perception in the brain. The components of an event of remembering – encoding, retention, and retrieval – refer to neurological processes, for memory phenomena affect the brain's morphological units. Remembering is the abstract metaphor for an active physiological phenomenon in the brain tissue and the ability to recall information. The essential thing about remembering is the ability to identify and retrieve materials that have been stored. The conscious experience of

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[26] Olsan 2004; Smallwood 2004.

retrieval requires an encounter between the preserved recollection and the associated new information.[27]

What kinds of heuristic devices are needed to retrieve preserved information once again? The ability to reason is based on conceptual units operating in the brain. The retrieval of a memory requires hermeneutic interpretation of the perception, which, without the memory trace, is meaningless.[28] Comparisons have been made between the isomorphism of memory traces made from the sensations of hearing and of reading. As an object of perception, the written text is stable and unchangeable; the reader can memorize it by returning to it over and over again.[29] The representation of aural neural stimuli takes place only once since even repeated hearings are usually slightly different. The recollection or retrieval of words in the oral tradition builds a kind of pattern of transmission.[30] The information transmitted aurally is preserved in the brain as memory traces shaped by peripheral stimuli. The process is not dependent on the genre, but concerning charms, contributory factors must be considered.

In oral communication, verbal images do not have to be precise and strictly defined but rather they generate new variants flexibly.[31] The memory trace left by an aural perception also differs from one produced by reading in that it includes stimuli external to the text, context-bound phenomena such as the intensity of the voice and changes in pitch, peripheral sounds as well as paralinguistic gestures and expressions, and occasionally even the reactions of fellow listeners. This is essential when listening to a charm.

Although a recollection can be mechanical and unintentional as well as contextually unnecessary, the process of remembering a charm for ritual use is most likely a conscious act. The early notion of verbatim repetition as a requirement for maintaining the charm's potency has long been discarded.[32] How lines are remembered during a given performance is determined by the efficacy of the words for each situation. The choice of motives does not depend on verbal invariability, for the charmer bases the choice of verbal material on the interpretation of mythical knowledge. Because the aim of a charm is to bring about a change, more important than the repetition of the exact words is the use of supportive motives to fulfill the task. Then the retrieval process of remembering unavoidably brings forth the relevant words.

Whether the textual conventions of written expression, for example, alliteration, meter and rhyme, are actually part of non-literate culture has been questioned.[33] In the

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[27] Malcolm 1977: 197; Tulving 2002: 42–61.

[28] Carruthers 2008: 19–26.

[29] Malcolm 1977: 195; Goody 1988: 174–177.

[30] Finnegan 1988: 172.

[31] Amodio 2004: 9; Goody 2000: 27–33; 2010: 3.

[32] Hautala 1960: 21; Piela 1983.

[33] Goody 1977: 193; 1988: 86–88.

Finnish-Karelian Kalevala-meter charm tradition, however, it is impossible to dismiss the role of alliteration as an aid to memory and a source of creative variation. Alliteration even has an associative effect on word choice. The production of lines is also supported by the compulsion of trochaic tetrameter. The following example shows, besides the influence of these elements, the parallel use of Christian and archaic emic motives.

Reproduction of Charms and the Reserve of Lines

Kalevala-meter folk poetry is based on a paradigmatic reserve of lines. The reproduction of charms is dependent on the same mnemonic techniques used by performers of other poems. The context of a charm actualizes the magical potential of the familiar expressions from mythic poetry. The charm is made up of encoded fixed motives,[34] and the sage recognises their applicability to each case and places them in communication with an otherworldly listener. The combinations of communally recognised mythical knowledge both constrain and support the sage.

Motives from various sources are adopted to serve in the lines of the charm, and the addressee may simultaneously be a Christian figure or a being from folk belief. The lines nonetheless support the idea of the sage's ability to successfully carry out the goal. The charm for sprains, the Finnish equivalent of the well-known *Merseburg Incantation*, contains borrowings of motives from mythic poetry, healing magic, and origin legends.

Jesus kirkkohon ajavi,	Jesus was riding to church,
Maaria mahatteloovi	Mary travelling
Hevosella hirvosella,	On an elk-like horse
Kalan hauvin karvasella,	The colour of a pike,
Lohen mustan muotosella.	Upon a black salmon-shaped one.
Hivelty hevosen jalka,	The horse's leg was sprained,
Taittu tamman sääri-varsi	The mare's shin bone twisted
Kivisellä kirkkotiellä.	On the church's stony road.
Jesus korjasta kohosi,	Jesus rose from the sledge,
Maaria maahan ratsahilta	Mary stepped to the ground
Luita sovittelemahan,	To fix up the bones,
Jäseniä järkkimähän. I4 1701.	To straighten up the limbs.

While the Saviour in the international prototype injures his leg on a stone, in Finnish variants it is his horse that sprains its leg on the stony road leading to the church. An

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34 Siikala 1986: 189.

archaic motive shows up as Jesus sits down on the mythical stone "on the clear open sea, on the tranquil wave" (IV3 4275) in a landscape of the otherworld. The pain is banished into a stone, "deep within the hill, the hole inside the stone" (VII3 907); this is the mythical Mountain of the World. Seated on the hill is the Mistress of Pain "with a basket under her arm and the pain mittens on her hands. All pains are wrapped in her mittens, afflictions gathered in her basket" (VII4 2561). Often motives from the *Healing charm of stone* (VII4 2544) are absorbed because of the stony road in the starting lines.

In the Finnish charm it is a horse, not Christ, whose leg is injured. Finding the cause of the pain usually constitutes part of a healing charm. In this case, an explanation is achieved through adopting the legend about the hazel hen's shrinking towards the end of the world as punishment for frightening the Saviour. "The hazel hen fluttered, the land shook, Jesus's heart cracked" (VII4 2557), and the horse was frightened. Healing the sprain magically required a virtual sprain thread. This is why the charm may include the couplet "Where the knots are tied, the charm threads are counted" (VII4 2561). Occasionally, Jesus sits down on a stone to "charm the threads" (VII4 2557) that is to recite a charm. The final healing words resemble the international model:

Mist' on liikkunna lihoa,	Where flesh has been stirred,
siihen liittele lihoa.	there join the flesh.
Mist' on suonet sortununna,	Where veins are injured,
siihen suonet solmiele.	there tie the veins.
Mist' on kalvo katkennunna,	Where a membrane has been cut
siihen kalvo kasvattele! VII4 256.	there make the membrane grow!

The closing lines may be from the *Ointment charm* and include an appeal to the bee to fetch nectar to ease the pain:

Mehiläinen, ilman lintu,	Bee, bird of the air,
käy on mettä Mehtolasta,	collect some nectar from Mehtola,
simoa Tapiolasta	mead from Tapiola
kipehille voitehiksi,	ointment for the pain
vammoille valentelioksi!	to pour over the wound
Voi'a yltä, voi'a päältä,	Rub upon, rub over,
kerta keskeä sivalla,	brush once in the middle,
keskeä kivuttomaksi,	take the pain from the middle
päältä nuurumattomaksi,	take the scratches from the surface
jott'ei tuska päälle tunnu	so that pain is no longer felt
eikä pakko päälle paisu,	and the ache does not swell
kipu ei keskeä kivistä,	no pain to ache in the middle
pakko ei syömmehen pakene! VII4 25.	no ache to slip into the heart

Whether the venue of communication is oral or literate, the composition, performance, and even transmission of texts take place according to the same logic – that is to say, their reproduction is based on the existing reserve of linguistic images. In a non-literate culture, the process of transmission is dependent on memory, regardless of the kind of preserved textual items in existence. Encoding and retention of memory content are also crucial components in the process of learning.

Learning and Absorbing Charms

How are the elements of a folklore text recognised, learned, retained in the memory, and then performed? The creation of an oral text subject to variation is contingent on the existence of a reserve of idiomatic verbal capital, a body of conventions recognizable to both listeners and performers. A performance is not a simple repetition of an immutable text, but instead the performer draws upon the reserve of expressions and imagery in accordance with the given event. John Miles Foley describes this as a metonymic creative process leaning on *inherent meaning*. Alongside the familiar elements of a performance, the listener's memory may retain a deviant variant. It may enter a new repertoire and change again in the next performance. Although the personality of a charmer plays a role in the choices made,[35] they are strongly influenced by the performance area.[36] Hunting charms depict a natural forest with motives slightly different from those used to describe the otherworldly forest, the place where evil is banished. In the case of an open wound, charms request nectar from the bee, but the ointment required for a woman giving birth is "slime from a ruff, milt from a burbot." Charmers need to grasp the situational nature of a respective genre.

Remembering always has some meaningful context, it is not an end in itself for it is spurred by an interest in the matter to be remembered. Learning is situated, and reviewing learned information invariably brings to mind the model. How the teacher is regarded has an impact on retrieval; the same can be said of the learner's previous experience related to the tradition. The transmission of a charm via writing and reading is a different process than learning an oral charm. We may ask whether medieval monks memorized charms or did they simply read them from manuscripts.

Learning an oral charm probably takes place by hearing it recited in an urgent situation to solve a problem. Practically when a charm is performed in order to heal a person, who then learns the text, or when a person – openly or in secrecy – witnesses the reciting to someone else. Hunting charms were probably taught purposefully to a novice by an experienced hunter. Any text acquired aurally is retained in the memory,
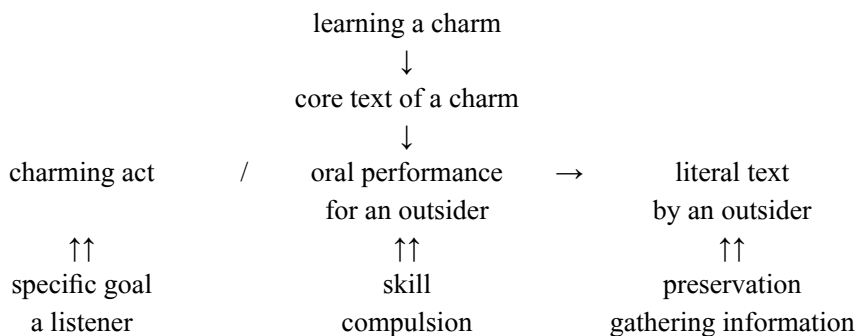
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[35] Goody 2000: 44.

[36] Foley 1995: 209.

though shaped by the absorber's interpretation of its applicability. All learning rests on existing capital of knowledge, but one can choose to deviate from what is learned, and thus the creative retrieval produces a new variant. Committing oral charms to memory no doubt requires numerous hearings and purposeful memorization.

The process of mastering a charm, whose relevance is dictated by situation, is different from adapting other oral traditions because this learning situation is a confidential encounter between two parties. The use and control of charms differ from other folklore genres that are performed for an audience. Many of those well-versed in charms from Viena-Karelia told folklore collectors from whom they had learned their charms. Varahvontta Lesonen heard his father, "a good hunter and singer" (I4 184), recite his blood-stopping charm. Mihhei Vasiljeff had absorbed the same charms from a "Laplander" (I4 17), but also from his father and grandfather (I4 17, 21, 22, 38), just like Toarie Ohvolasjovna (I4 4). Olona Lesoni learned the powerful blood-stopping words from her mother and father, though both parents recited the lines somewhat differently (I4 165, 166). The renowned sage Miina Huovinen performed charms with similar themes markedly different from each other. Many of the experts reckon that they heard their charms generally just from "older folks". None of them make any mention of a charm being performed publicly.

The Core Text of a Charm

A charm transmitted aurally is associated in each case with a problem requiring a solution. The performances differ from each other because of the condition requiring a change (an illness, a curse, envy, hunting or fishing luck, damage caused or to be inflicted), the client (a patient, a cursed person, a person in need of marriage luck and so on), and the surroundings (alone, in the company of the person in need). Thematically related lines may be framed by words underscoring the charmer's dynamic force and used to exalt or threaten the otherworldly listener. Descriptions of the harm to be banned may be included in the text, a *historiola* or a resembling theme may be attached just in order to strengthen the magic power of the charm. As far as the goal of a charm is concerned, however, it is necessary to identify the relevant motif. Repeated hearings demonstrate to the apprentice that the words vary in relation to changing goals. It makes sense to master one core text that is relevant from one situation to the next.

In an authentic problem-solving context, the pleas to its addressee are made with a selection of appropriate expressions. While the choice of words is based on a paradigm of rhymed motives, all combinations of expression are individual and depend on the situation. The mental core text of a charm functions as a source variant that can be made applicable according to the situation. It is made up of a set of elements necessary to acknowledge the objective and to bring about a change.

<pre>
                    learning a charm
                          ↓
                  core text of a charm
                          ↓
   charming act   /   oral performance   →   literal text
                         for an outsider   by an outsider
        ↑↑   ↑↑   ↑↑
   specific goal   skill   preservation
     a listener   compulsion   gathering information
</pre>

Constituted from a core text, the charm performed in a situational context focuses on the task at hand and the addressee. These elements are lacking in charms recited on demand for collectors or any other outsiders. Even when an addressee is mentioned in the text, it is not understood as a relevant "listener". The credibility of the written version can also be undermined by the performer's lapses in memory, possible anxiety and desire to maintain secrecy – all due to the artificiality of the situation. The written record of an oral charm performed on demand is just the textualization of a charm, a mere verbal manifestation. Additional distortions of the written variant are caused by misinterpretations brought about by the recorder's lack of familiarity with the language or culture and problems with note-taking techniques. The recorder also has a goal (to preserve), but it differs from the sage's goal to bring about change. However, recorded charms are valuable and even indispensable material for charm scholarship.

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Gifts from the Sky: Yezidi Sacred Objects as Symbols of Power, Tools of Healing and Seals of Divine Favour[*]

Eszter Spät

This paper studies the socio-religious role of a certain type of sacred object among the Yezidis of Northern Iraq. These objects may have their origins in amulets or charms, but later acquired much more complex functions and connotations in Yezidi religious tradition. Iraqi Yezidis have lately attracted much attention as victims of the so-called Islamic State (or ISIS) and of violent Islamist extremism. They have been the subjects of hundreds, if not thousands of journalistic articles and a number of documentaries dealing with their precarious situation and sufferings, as well as academic articles mainly concentrating on the questions of psychological trauma, migration and the problem of victimization. Relatively very little attention has been paid to what makes Yezidi culture unique: their religious traditions, customs and institutions, including the various material manifestations of the Yezidi belief system.

In this article I shall focus on one specific aspect of this religious tradition: sacred objects known among Yezidis as *nîşan*s and *hadima*.[1] Though these sacred objects do not necessarily constitute the most important aspect of Yezidi religion and related socio-cultural institutions, studying them offers more than a mere description of material objects used in a religious setting. The multi-layered significance and use of such objects demonstrates the flexibility of Yezidi religious tradition, a talent for innovation within the framework of tradition, which has made possible the survival of this "bookless" religion in an inimical milieu of bookish religions.

[1] I use standard transliteration for the Kurdish words.

THE 'PRIESTLY' CASTES AND THEIR *NÎŞANS*

Yezidis are a small Kurdish-speaking ethno-religious group, numbering approximately half a million souls. Most Yezidis live in Iraq where their most important sacred sites can be found. There are also smaller communities in Turkey, Syria, the Caucasian states and these days in the Western diaspora, primarily in Germany. In Iraq, Yezidis constitute two distinct communities, one living on and around Mount Sinjar, near the Syrian border,[2] and another living east of the Tigris, in the north-eastern part of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Yezidis follow their own religion, which is distinct from Islam, Christianity or Judaism. Yezidi religion was until recently based exclusively on oral tradition, with no books or written texts, which has led to the development of a number of religious traditions and institutions unique to Yezidism.

One of the peculiarities of the Yezidi socio-religious institutions is the existence of what is usually referred to by the literature on Yezidis as a 'caste system.' Yezidi society consists of three layers: *Mirîd*s[3] (variously translated as commoners, laymen or followers), and the two 'priestly' castes of sheikhs and *pîr*s. Each Yezidi must have a sheikh and a *pîr*.[4] The choice of one's sheikh and *pîr* is not arbitrary, but is inherited within family lineages. Sheikhs and *pîr*s fulfill certain religious and ritual obligations on behalf of their *mirîd*s and receive regular alms (*fito*) in exchange. The positions of religious leaders are inherited within the first two castes and there is a strict ban on intermarriage between the various castes.[5] According to Yezidi belief, the ancestors of sheikhs and *pîr*s were *khas*, or Holy Beings, who were in close connection with the Divine.[6] From these ancestors they have inherited, besides their leading positions and certain healing powers, sacred objects called *nîşan*s or 'signs'. These *nîşan*s denote the special descent of the family, and are simultaneously believed to possess supernatural powers themselves (figure 1).

Most of the *nîşan*s in the possession of the priestly castes comprise small metal objects, as a rule attached to special striped bags woven in the traditional manner. All Yezidi homes, regardless of caste, possess such bags (although these days, the bags of the *mirîd* families may be simply sewn from cloth bought in the market and embroidered with flitters.) Hanging on the eastern or western wall of a home (or lately of refugee tents), these bags contain the *berat*, a small ball made from the earth of Lalish, the sacred valley of Yezidis, possibly earth from various sacred sites, as well

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[2]   It was the Yezidi community of Sinjar which was attacked on August 3rd 2014.

[3]   Alternatively, also spelled as *murid* in the literature on Yezidis. The term is of Sufi origin, denoting the follower of a Sufi master.

[4]   This also holds true for those born into the 'priestly' caste.

[5]   For more information about the Yezidi caste system, see Kreyenbroek 1995: 129–135; Spät 2005: 42–48.

[6]   For more on the Yezidi *khas*, their connection to Yezidi Angels and the role of the divine *sur* ('mystery', interpreted as the essence, light and power of God in Yezidi terminology) in Yezidi mythological history, see Kreyenbroek 2006: 12–14; Spät 2010: 111–123.

Figure 1: The *nîşans* of a family of the of the Pîr Bûal lineage, brought to Lalish to be baptized in the White Spring. Photo Eszter Spät, 2017.

as other objects which are attributed a religious importance. The main difference be-tween *mirîd* families and the 'priestly' castes is that the bags of the latter are adorned with *nîşan*s[7] (figure 2). These *nîşan*s or small metal objects may have their origins in the amulets or charms used all over the Middle East to ward off all supernatural harm and evil, whether stemming from demonic beings, malevolent magic or the evil eye.[8] However, among Yezidis, they are no longer used as mere amulets or charms. The primary meaning and function of *nîşan*s is implied by their name: they are "signs" which signal and commemorate the special origins of 'priestly' lineages descending from the *khas* or Holy Beings. Some people refer to them not simply as *nîşan*s, but as '*nîşan*s of the *khas*.'[9] Most of the *nîşan*s are inherited from the Holy Beings who were the founders of the "priestly" lineages and people stress that they are of heavenly origin. A few Yezidis, who are both educated and religious, express the opinion that two kinds of *nîşan*s exist: those with a miraculous origin (they are *semawî* or *ezmanî*, that is, from heaven or the sky, or *qudretî*,[10] that is, created by the Power of God); and those which were created[11] by people, though these latter are also very old. However,

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[7] Some priestly families, though far from all, may keep further sacred objects inside the beg.

[8] For examples of metal objects such as amulets and love charms in the region see Fodor 1987–1988; and Donaldson 1938: 20, 40, 50. However, neither of these works, nor any other I have seen refer to the simple copper rings which are considered the most powerful Yezidi charm of this type, as shall be shown below.

[9] Kurdish: *nîşanê(t) khasa(n)*.

[10] *Qudret* (Arabic) refers to the power or might of God. The Yezidi expression '*qudretî*' is explained as something not made by humans, i.e. something that was created by divine power.

[11] The Kurdish expressions used by my sources were *çêkirin* and *sanaʿat*.

for most (traditional) Yezidis, all *nîşan*s are objects of heavenly origin, whether handed down from the Holy Beings or from human beings credited with supernatural powers stemming from the world of the angels.[12]

The most common (and according to some, the most sacred) form of the *nîşan*s are copper rings or circles of varying sizes (figure 3). These are called *hadima* (or just *hadim*). This word, as some of the owners pointed out themselves, comes from the Arabic word *khātim*, meaning 'seal', a name that speaks for itself. Seals are objects which are used to prove the authenticity of a message or a document. They are to be found on written documents or can be sent together with an oral message. They are handed down within a family, from father to son. Though written documents played only a small role in traditional Yezidi society, these *hadima*s handed down from their Holy Being ancestors, served as 'seals' demonstrating the pure origin of Yezidi religion and its priestly castes in the minds of their possessors and their *mirîd*s. Furthermore, the Arabic word may also refer to seal-like objects used as amulets, rather than proper seals,[13] an aspect which is reflected in the Yezidi perception and function of *hadima*s, as shall be demonstrated below.

The word *hadima* is often extended to cover all of the *nîşan*s attached to the bags, though some people claim that by rights only the copper rings should be referred to as *hadima*, while the other metal objects may have different names (or none at all.) Beside these copper circles or rings, *nîşan*s may come in many different forms, some clearly connected to amulets widely used in the region against snake or scorpion-bite and the evil eye (figure 4). There are also real rings (worn on the finger), some with apparently magical inscriptions, as well as numerous strangely shaped metal objects whose provenance or intended meaning is hard to divine. An elderly female *pîr* pointed to a flat (and apparently broken) piece of metal and explained that it was the leaf of the Singan Tree,[14] a huge tree "that four men would not be able to reach around it". As she explained, it stands on a hillside above the sacred valley of Lalish, just next to the *Silavgeh* or 'place of greeting'.[15] As she said "we used to pass by it [when going on pilgrimage] … but now that people come by car, nobody sees it anymore. They say, these are the leaves of the Singan Tree. It has great power (*qudret*), God gave it great power" (Figure 5). However, she could not explain how the leaf turned into metal, other

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[12] On sacred objects created by *koçek*s or seers possessing special powers, see below.

[13] According to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *khātim* "is applied not only to seals proper… but also in the very common seal-like objects with regular inscriptions of a pious or auspicious character… which are amulets and further readily distinguished from seals by the absence of a personal name" (Allan - Sourdel 2012). Of course, Yezidi *hadima*s usually do not display any writing.

[14] Kurdish: *Dara Singan(a)*. It was not clear whether Singan(a) was the name of this single tree or of a species of tree. Kurdish dictionaries do not contain this word.

[15] This is a small sacred structure built at the point where pilgrims first spotted the valley and fired their guns. Today a paved road leads to the valley from another direction and people no longer cross the ridge, although some pilgrims, mostly the young, still climb up here.

than that it came from "the air" (that is, from the sky, was of heavenly origin) and that it was even more special and sacred than the simple copper rings.[16] Other objects appear to have once been belt buckles, some even bear the initials 'RAF'(Royal Air Force) or the words *Dieu et mon droit*, invoking the impact of the British mandate period on the material culture of the region (figure 6). One *nîşan* even displayed the word 'SM Madras', though the younger males in the family were quick to point out that this was not really a *nîşan*, it was affixed to the bag only for "beauty". (After some argument as to what constituted a real, sacred *nîşan*, they finally agreed that only the copper rings or *hadima*s could be considered so, and the rest of the objects were added only for beauty. However, this is likely to be a very modern view, not unconnected with the spread of school education and the ability to read Arabic as well as Latin characters.)

Regardless of their exact shape, *nîşan*s are literally used as 'signs' (or proofs) of the special origin of a priestly family's lineage. They represent the elevated standing of the priestly castes within Yezidi community and the role they play in Yezidi religion. An extension of this function is when *nîşan*s are used to collect the *fito*, a form of alm or tax due to one's sheikh and *pîr* in exchange for the ritual duties which the 'priestly' castes perform on behalf of their *mirîd*s.[17] On holidays, the family's *mirîd*s come, sometimes from considerable distances, to pay their respect (and the *fito*). During the visit, a sheikh's or *pîr*'s 'followers' make *ziyaret* ('pilgrimage') to the *nîşan*s, kiss them and may even deposit the *fito* inside the bag to which the *nîşan*s are affixed. In other cases, the owner of the *nîşan*s himself goes on a *fito*-collecting trip once a year in villages where his *mirîd*s live. Thus, an elderly *pîr* in the village of Shariya, when I asked to see his family *nîşan*s, not only showed me his family's collection, but then hung the bag with the *nîşan*s over his shoulder and took a wooden cane (*gopal*) in his hand. This was to demonstrate how he travelled around the three villages 'belonging' to his family. The wooden cane, while not a *nîşan*, was a part of the ritual set-up, as it was used to knock on the doors to signal that their *pîr* had come to collect the *fito*. To simply go in and ask for the *fito* would have been, according to him, *ayibe*, that is, embarrassing, shameful (figure 7). I have also heard of people from 'priestly' families, who travel considerable distances every year, sometimes from Kurdistan to the Sinjar region (a distance of more than 150 kilometers). As the result of past migrations, the *mirîd*s live in Sinjar, while their hereditary sheikh or *pîr* live west of the Tigris. Once a year, male members of such families take their *nîşan*s to Sinjar to go around and collect the *fito* due to their family. These travels were not even interrupted during the period between 1992 and 2003, when there was an internal border with military chequepoints, between the territory controlled by the Baghdad government and the quasi-independent Kurdistan Region.

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[16] Such vagueness concerning mythological details is quite common among Yezidis.

[17] Today *fito* is always paid in cash, but I was told that in the past, before the arrival of state salaries and cash economy, they could be paid in the form of agricultural products.

Figure 2: Bag with *nîşans* of a family of the *pîrs* of Khetîpisî. Photo Eszter Spät, 2012.

Figure 3: *Nîşans* of a family of the sheikhs of Amadin. Photo Eszter Spät, 2012.

Figure 4: *Nîşans* of a family of the *pîrs* of Alu Bakr. Photo Eszter Spät, 2013.

Figure 5: Leaf of the Singan Tree. Photo Eszter Spät, 2012.

Figure 6: *Nîşans* of a family of the Pîr Khecal lineage. Photo Eszter Spät, 2012.

Figure 7: *Pîr* from the Şemsê Pîra lineage ready to go and collect the *fito* due to his family. Photo Eszter Spät, 2013.

NÎŞANS AS AGENTS OF POWER AND HEALING

However, *nîşan*s are more than mere signs of prestigious origin and (consequently) sources of income. *Nîşan*s can be seen as objects active in their own right, with their own agency: in a way they contain and share the power of the holy beings who created them or conjured them from the supernatural world or heaven. This power, inherent in the *nîşan*s, is reflected in the stories connected to the objects, which in their turn reflect the turbulent history of the Yezidis. Yezidi oral tradition recounts how *nîşan*s withstood the repeated attacks (or *ferman*s in Yezidi usage) on the community. These *ferman*s constitute the basis of modern Yezidi identity and comprise a huge part of Yezidi oral history. The one recalled most often is the "*ferman* of Feriq Pasha"[18] (that is, the attack by the Ottoman general, Omar Wehbi Pasha) on the Yezidis of Sheikhan and Sinjar in 1892. This was the last concentrated attack against Yezidis in the region (prior to ISIS' attack in 2014). Thus, before August 2014, much retelling of Yezidi history and past persecutions centreed on the figure of Feriq Pasha. According to our historical sources, Omar Wehbi Pasha attacked Lalish, the sacred valley of the Yezidis, where he destroyed the tomb of the most important Yezidi holy beings and looted the Central Sanctuary, taking with him the *Sanjak*s or the Standards of the Peacock Angel (the most sacred objects of the Yezidis) as well as other sacred objects. Then he proceeded to lay waste to Yezidi villages in the area.[19] Though it does not seem likely that the General or his troops would have paid much attention to the sacred objects in the possession of 'priestly' families in the villages his troops attacked (as these small copper objects had little market value outside the framework of Yezidi religious beliefs), oral tradition holds that "Feriq Pasha took our peacocks [the *Sanjaks*], our books[20] and our *nîşan*s". The latter category is believed to include not just the objects housed in the Central Sanctuary in Lalish, but also all *nîşan*s belonging to sheikhs and *pîr*s in the villages looted by Omar Wehbi Pasha. However, as there is no family of the 'priestly' caste which does not possess at least a few *nîşan*s, a need is felt to find an explanation for this apparent contradiction. Accordingly, there are accounts detailing how these objects miraculous returned to their rightful owners under their own steam. "Feriq Pasha took the *hadim*, took the Mişûrs,[21] took the Peacocks… but the *hadim*

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[18]   His nickname refers to his rank and literally means 'General Pasha'.

[19]   Guest 1993: 136–137. For more on the *Sanjak*s or "Standards of the Peacock" see: Spät 2009.

[20]   There is a disagreement among Yezidis about the possibility of their having possessed sacred books in the past. Many believe, and our sources indicate, that they already believed in the nineteenth century that Yezidi sacred books used to exist but were stolen during the periodical attacks on Yezidis. Today some oral traditions attribute this theft specifically to 'Feriq Pasha'.

[21]   *Mişûr*s are documents, considered sacred books, in the possession of *pîr* families. (For more on *Mişûr*s see Omarkhali 2017: 58–66, and 377–390.) Today only very few *pîr* families actually have such books. Personally I located only one manuscript in Iraq (and based on my own experience and Omarkhali's finds I am somewhat doubtful as to the existence of other alleged manuscripts), but its owner claimed that once all *pîr* families used to possess a *Mişûr*, although these were stolen by Feriq Pasha.

came back to their own place, they returned on their own through their miraculous power (*keramet*)." Others attribute this miraculous return not just to all *nîşan*s in general, but specifically to the object in the possession of their family. As members of a sheikh family recounted, their own *nîşan*, the Bowl of Babadin, caused such grievous harm to Feriq Pasha (or his servant) that the pasha was filled with righteous fear and he returned not just the Bowl but all *nîşan*s to the Yezidis in order to avoid all further divine retribution.[22] They claim that the 'Feast of *Nîşan*s' (*Ida Nîşana*) on the twenty first of February, a holiday restricted to and known only among sheikh and *pîr* families, is held in commemoration of this event.[23]

*Nîşan*s, however, possess the power, not only to protect themselves, but also to impart protection to Yezidis. This aspect of their power is best seen in the way they are used for healing. The healing power of the *nîşan*s is intricately intertwined with the healing power inherited by members of the 'priestly' castes from their Holy Being ancestors. Tradition holds and Yezidi hymns (*qewl*s) recount, that Sheikh Adi (the central figure of Yezidi mythology) provided each of his companions and friends with a *ma'aş* or 'salary', 'livelihood'. This curiously materialistic term covers the ability to cure all kind of ailments, an ability that the Holy Beings passed on to their offspring. Each sheikh or *pîr* family has its own specialty, or rather special ability to heal.[24] Some cure snake and scorpion bites, others cure madness believed to be induced by jinn, yet again others restore the health of those affected by fever, headache or rheumatism. The list is as long as the number of sheikh and *pîr* families.

When people first get sick, they go to see their own sheikhs or *pîr*s and 'make pilgrimage' to the *nîşan*s (figure 8). This is especially so in the case of children, who often get sick, but whose ailments are often not serious and it suffices to visit one's own sheikh or *pîr* and their sacred objects to affect a cure. However, should the sickness continue, people may choose to turn to a family specialized in a certain type of sickness, or to a person famous for his/her abilities at healing some kind of affliction. Though, as mentioned above, all families of the priestly

Figure 8: A man kissing the *nîşan*s of the of Pîr Bûal lineage. Photo Eszter Spät, 2017.

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[22] A forthcoming article will deal in detail with this story and its importance in Yezidi collective memory.

[23] Of course, while other priestly families also celebrate this event, they in no way connect it to the miracle performed by the *nîşan* of another family.

[24] The words used to refer to the healing gifts of a lineage are *ma'aş*, or even more often *teslim*. The latter word comes from Arabic *taslīm*, meaning: delivery, handing-over, surrender, resignation. In Yezidi terminology it refers to the power that was 'given' (to the Holy Being ancestors and then their offspring).

castes are believed to possess some of the inherited power for healing (*teslim*), in reality some families or persons are considered more skilled at healing than others. Nor are all *nîşan*s necessarily equally effective either. While in some families the visitors just kiss the *nîşan*s affixed to the bag and all *nîşan*s are indiscriminately believed to have healing powers, in other families there are concrete ideas about which *nîşan* is useful for healing certain sicknesses and how they should be used. During one of my visits to the house of an elderly *pîr* (from the lineage of Khetîpisî), she just said that people (primarily their own *mirîd*s) come and visit the *nîşan*s if they are sick, and could not furnish further details. However, her daughter-in-law (from the lineage of Mehmedê Reben), who was present, started explaining how her own mother used one certain *hadima*, much like one of those in the possession of her mother-in-law (she pointed at it on the bag), to cure children suffering from 'smallness of the moon' (*kêma heyvê*). This is a mysterious, but widely known sickness afflicting children, believed to be caused by the waxing and waning of the moon. Her mother used to soak the *hadima* in water and then make the child drink the water for a cure. Another *hadima*, resembling a small round stone or marble with a hole, was used by her mother to cure earache: water was warmed and then slowly poured into the ear of the child through the hole in the *hadima.* Theoretically, a prayer is also said when conducting a healing ritual with the help of the *nîşan*. However, these days at least, this prayer mostly consists of a short, free-style evocation of God and the Holy Being or *khas* who was the ancestor of the lineage (and the original 'owner' of the *nîşan*s), as formal prayers or sacred texts, memorized verbatim, are no longer known by most people, not even in the 'priestly' castes.[25] Often the ritual merely includes 'making a wish' (*xwezî çêkirin*) to the effect that the person be cured.

There are some special family lineages who are considered to be able to cure various mental afflictions, generally believed to be caused by the jinn. It is held that the Holy Being connected to the lineage is able to command the jinn, or at least some types of jinn (who may either leave the afflicted alone or chase the malevolent jinn away.) In these cases, the cure usually involves incubation, that is, sleeping at the place dedicated to the holy being. While sometimes this may take place inside a shrine dedicated to the Holy Being, at other times the sufferer is taken to the family home and made to lie down in the room where the *nîşan*s hang, preferable directly beneath the *nîşan*s. This, for example, is the case with the family of Pîr Khecal (famous for curing aggressive madness) in the village of Kheter, or with a family from the Şemsanî lineage in Khanke, still referred to by the villagers as *Mala* (House of) Sheikh Baadran, after

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[25] Many people from sheikh or *pîr* families claimed that their parents or grandparents used to know and recite sacred texts. However, it is impossible to ascertain whether this was indeed so and knowledge of religious texts has declined very sharply in the past decades or whether this description is merely an idealized image of the past. In any case, today the number of those who are familiar with the sacred texts to the point of being able to publicly recite them is very limited.

a long deceased grandfather, who was famous, along with his wife, for his prowess at curing jinn induced madness.[26] Both the man and his wife passed away years ago, only a younger co-wife is still alive, and neither she nor the remaining descendants are known for their powers of curing madness. All the same, when some of the Sinjari refugees settling in the village or the refugee camp next to it displayed signs of mental distress (such as crying fits, sudden dizziness or fainting spells), they were taken by the locals to the family and made to lie down under the *nîşan*s. According to my acquaintances, the cure proved successful in most cases.

Not all *nîşan*s come in the form of small metal objects attached to bags. While these are by far the most common forms of *nîşan*s, there are a few families who also possess other sacred objects. These are almost invariably used for healing, reflecting the special powers of the Holy Being who was the founder of the lineage. There is, for example, the 'Bowl of Babadin,' a metal bowl decorated with astrological symbols, which probably served as an Islamic magic bowl in an earlier incarnation as attested by the Quranic quotation of the Throne verse in its centre. The 'Bowl of Babadîn' helps barren Yezidi women, who drink water from the bowl to conceive. Another sheikh family, also from the Şemsanî lineage,[27] possesses a small wooden bow and arrow hanging next to the bag with the *hadima*s.[28] This particular *nîşan* is used to heal pain in a person's side and chest.[29] What is more, this *nîşan* is the rare case where a prayer (or rather an incantation) is still a part of the healing ritual. The sheikh and the client recite a ritual dialogueue referred to as prayer (though its wording in no way resembles texts usually known as Yezidi prayers or *dua*): "Where have you come from?" "From Quds [Jerusalem]." "What were/are you looking for?" "I was hunting for the pain in the chest." "In the name of God and Sheikh Shems, I will not allow it." Then the sheikh shoots (at close range) the side of the sufferer three times with the arrow.

Yezidi Seers and Their Hadima or Khelat (*'Gift'*)

Besides the 'priestly' lineages, there is another group of Yezidis who also possess *hadima*s or 'seals.' These *hadima*s act as proofs of special spiritual standing and as tools for performing miraculous feasts, whether of healing or divination. However, the *hadima*s of this group are not inherited from and through their ancestors but rather

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[26] People still recall how successful they were at curing madness and also how the wife was able to communicate with the jinn to whom she regularly took food.

[27] The family also claims to be the descendants of the former *pêşimam* ('leader of faith') of the Duban plain, a rank which no longer exists.

[28] The same family had only two small *hadima* attached to the bag. When asking about their power, I received a rather nebulous answer to the effect that they are for 'wishes' (*miraza*) and Sheikh Şems will fulfill the wishes.

[29] According to Chyet's *Kurdish-English Dictionary*, *neks* means "pain in one's side or flank (below the ribs), *from asthma, shortness of breath or pneumonia"*.

they are personal gifts or *khelat* from the supernatural world. This special group is that of *koçek*s or Yezidi seers.

Yezidi *koçek*s are people who are in direct communication with the spiritual world, or rather they are chosen by a being from the spiritual world for communication, and thus, they can see or know things that other mortals cannot (both about the past and the future.) Beside the name *koçek*, Yezidi seers are also called *çavnêr* (roughly: whose eyes see/look), while in the region west of the Tigris female seers are usually referred to as *feqra*. Yezidi seers fall outside the caste system. Anybody can become a seer, regardless of caste, religious knowledge or gender. In fact, most seers come from the commoner class; the majority of them are illiterate or have had very little education. The few *koçek*s who belong to the 'priestly' castes come from families who tend to have financially constrained circumstances despite their religio-social standing, they have not attended school and – at least those I have met – are women.[30] What makes Yezidi seers able to communicate with the supernatural world is the fact that they possess a *delîl*, or spiritual guide.[31] Perhaps it may be nearer to the truth to say that the *delîl* possesses the seer, as seers display many of the symptoms that scholarly literature associates with possession. Defining the exact nature of a *delîl* is very difficult. Some people say that they are angels, or even *khas*, or Holy Beings, but most seers refuse to explain the nature of their *delîl*. The best that can be said is that it is an undefined spiritual power, which ultimately derives from the power of God.[32] Becoming a seer is a long process. In the majority of cases it starts with the person suffering from various mysterious illnesses, both physical and mental. This suffering (*cor*)[33] is visited on the budding seer by the *delîl*, and is seen as both a form of initiation and a series of trials or exams which the seer must withstand or pass. Once the sufferer recognises the true source and reason of his or her suffering and accepts that they are fated to become a seer,[34] their suffering either comes to an end or at least becomes more moderate and controllable, and they receive various 'gifts' or abilities from their *delîl*s, which enables them to become successful seers.

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[30] Today there are more female seers than male ones, though in the past this may have been different – at least when people talk about the famous seers of the past, they always mention men.

[31] *Delîl* literally means 'guide'.

[32] Many common Yezidis confuse *delîl* with jinn, but *koçek*s categorically reject any comparison between the jinn, created beings just like humans, and *delîl*s, messengers or beings of the divine world. There is indeed a category of seers, the so-called *cindar*, mostly confined to the region of Sinjar, who work with jinn. However, this is considered a different category and (at least in the Kurdistan region) a much inferior one.

[33] *Cor* seems to be specifically Yezidi term, apparently not used by Muslim Kurds. Yezidis claimed that it may be used for any kind of suffering, but I only ever heard it in the context of the suffering of the seers.

[34] Many seers recount how they first wished to reject becoming *koçek*s and how their *delîl*s increased their suffering as a punishment. This period of initial suffering and denial, followed by what can be called a "state of controlled possession" can be compared to Lewis' description of the universal features of "the assumption of shamanistic roles". Lewis 1989: 48.

HADIMAS AS PROOFS OF AUTHENTICITY AND SYMBOLS OF RIVALRY

Though it is never actually spelled out in so many word, stories told about seers and various reactions to them imply that there is a hidden tension or rivalry between the 'religious establishment,' that is, the hereditary 'priestly' castes and seers. While the latter are the inheritors of 'routinized charisma,' they often display little interest in spiritual matters and scant knowledge of religion. Seers are usually *mirîd*s – with many of them women or coming from the poorest families and with little education, basically representing the 'subaltern' of Yezidi society. However, they often exhibit a lot of interest in religious matters and are seen by others as deeply spiritual beings possessing *keramet* or miraculous power earned in their own rights. The existence of the subtle rivalry between the two kind of 'charisma,' inherited and personally deserved, is reflected in the field of sacred objects. Seers also possess *hadima*s. These *hadima*s do not merely represent a mere imitation of the priestly caste and their *nîşan*s, rather they are a subtle, but objectified expression of spiritual rivalry. This idea is emphasized by the alternative term used for the *hadima*s of seers: *khelat* or gift.[35] *Hadima*s do not constitute (unconditional) inheritance from one's ancestors, instead they are personal presents or gifts from God or from the *delîl*, which the seer 'deserved.' In other words, they act as badges or seals of divine approval. They always come into the possession of the seer in some miraculous way (or what is interpreted as such), usually only after a seer has understood his or her own nature and mission and afterwards set out on the path of communicating between the supernatural world and humans.

Koçek Kh. claimed that he had first had an inkling that something was happening to him around 1971, but he did not know what it was. By 1978, he realized that he was a seer and this was also when his *delîl* made his presence clear to him by sending him a *hadima.* He and his friend were keen to make me understand the real meaning of *hadima*, explaining that:

> *this* hadima *came from the sky, from heaven, from the spiritual world (*batin*), sent by the* delîl*. It is "*qudretî*", it was not made by a human, it was not bought at the bazar ... every* koçek *has a* delîl*, it sends [the* hadima*] to the* koçek*, so that he may know ... it is like a sign (*nîşan*), like a sign (*nîşan*) for him, sent by the* delîl*.*

Koçek Kh. himself received a dream from his *delîl* telling him where to find his 'gift':

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[35] In their book *Yezidism in Europe*, the authors interpret *khelat* to mean the bag in Yezidi households, which contains *berat* from Lalish and possibly other sacred objects (Kreyenbroek 2009: 28). I have never heard people referring to the bag with this word in Iraqi Kurdistan, so this probably refers to linguistic usage among Yezidis in Armenia or Turkey.

It told me at night, in my dream, I was asleep. It said, go to this place and I will show it to you there.[36] *I went and [the* delîl*] brought it in front of me, threw it in front of me, on the earth, on a pure piece of earth.*[37]

This *hadima* was a small crescent moon of copper. Koçek Kh. now always keeps it on his person. Sadly, he was opposed to my taking a photo of the *hadima*, but was still willing to display it – what is more – he had all those present (the writer of this article included) kiss his *hadima*.

Feqra B., a female seer, recounted how she first knew that she was a *koçek* when she was only a little girl of seven, because she received a *khelat* (gift) from the sky:

I was small, I was seven years old, a *khelat* came for me from the sky… Thanks to God a gift came, the Lord of the World[38] gave me a gift, *mashallah*… I saw it in my dream, in a dream. [The *delîl*] said to me, "go in the morning, go and wait, a *gift* will appear for you". It just said "Go and wait", I mean wait outside, "the Lord of the World will give you a *gift"*. I stood there [next day], mashallah, it came from the sky, *mashallah* it came, it came for me. My mother had the dough for bread outside.[39] When it came, it passed by me, it fell into the dough. I put my hand into the dough, *mashallah,* it was the *hadim*… [After that] I started to 'ask questions' [i.e. to 'look'][40] and I saw [as a seer]… a lot of people came to me. *Mashallah* power (*keramet*) came, and *mashallah* a gift (*khelat*) came. I 'fell into book', my 'book' came [I went into trance].

However, according to her account, her parents, fearing both the censure of the neighbours and government repression,[41] were deeply opposed to her acting as a seer and pressured her to give up any such activity or behaviour (figure 9). Under pressure, she stopped 'looking' for people and her *delîl* abandoned her. She lost her power for long years and was forced into marriage with a cousin at age thirteen. Years into her marriage

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[36] Or: "I will give you a *nîşan* there." Since 'to show' something is the same expression in Kurdish ('give a sign', *nîşan dan*) than 'to give a *nîşan*,' it is not certain which expression is used here, though Koçek Kh. otherwise refers to the object as *hadima* and *khelat*.

[37] 'Pure' (*paqij*) in this context means an uninhabited place, in nature, away from the presence of people.

[38] *Rabul Alemî* from the Quranic expression, *Rabbi l-ʿālamīn*. It is often used by Yezidis to refer to God.

[39] To this day, Yezidis bake their flat bread (*nan*) outside, in special ovens. (Today, sometimes gas-heated metals plates are used, but baking with them is also carried out outside.)

[40] The expression, *pirsiyar kirin* (to make questions) is also used in the sense: 'to ask questions for clients', i.e. to do divination, to work as a seer.

[41] People agree that under the Saddam government seers had to hide. Most say that seers' activity, which attracted crowds, who came both to ask for advice and to see the *koçek* fall into trance, could easily be labelled as suspicious or even seditious. The Saddam government was also keen to rid the populace of what it deemed 'superstition.'

and after she had had several children, her *delîl* manifested itself again and she started 'falling', that is, suffering periods of unconsciousness which often heralds one's becoming a seer. Her husband was opposed to her becoming a *koçek*, but finally (after being threatened by her *delîl*) relented and accepted that his wife become a seer. She says that though her power was no longer as great as when she was a child, after all her suffering

Figure 9: *Hadima* of Feqra B. Photo Eszter Spät, 2014.

she still became a strong seer, able to 'look' for her clients and 'fall into book'. The expression, 'fall into book' (*defterê keftin*) is used by Yezidi seers to describe the experience of falling into trance, that is, into a state of altered consciousness, where they communicate directly with the supernatural world. Once Feqra B. started 'falling into book' again, she received a new *hadima* as a sign of her renewed status as a *koçek*:

> I fell into book, an old man from my village said, "I will go and bring some water for *Dêy Faqra*."[42] He brought the water…. When he put it in my hand, it became green, all green, there was a sound like a snap and there appeared a *hadima* in it. This *hadima* is now always in my home.

This second *hadima*, she said, looked exactly like the first one, which she always carried with her. They were both copper rings, though the one she kept at home was said to be bigger in size.

Another female *koçek,* Feqra S., who also went through a long and painful period of suffering, described how she received *khelat* or 'gift' (it looked as if it had originally been one half of a snap fastener or press stud button, with a flower or star pattern on top) saying:

> I was suffering a lot at first … but then, thanks to God, to the miraculous power of God, God gave me my permission,[43] God gave me my

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[42] 'Mother Feqra.' Mother or Father are honorifics used to refer to seers, often even by their own family members, including parents.

[43] *Destûr*, literally means permission. Thus, her *delîl* gave her permission to 'look' for other people, that is, to 'come out' as a *koçek*. As a general rule, seers' suffering diminishes, or at least becomes more controllable, after they receive permission to act publicly as seers.

khelat (gift)… this is my *hadim*, it is like a star… I was sitting alone one Wednesday,[44] something flew out of the air, I saw it fly, it flew like a sparrow, it fell before me like a star, I looked under the chair and brought out my 'gift'.

*Hadima*s are so intricately bound up with the miraculous power of seers that people claim that the great seers of the past did not merely receive *hadima*s, but were able to create or conjure them. In fact, the ability to create *hadima*s was one of the gifts mentioned when Yezidis expressed their doubts about the seers of today (even if they actually visited them) as compared to those of the spiritually superior past, who were "real powerful *koçek*s, not like the *koçek*s today". Koçek Selman, whose picture can be found in most seers' home and even in some pious households,[45] lived around the first half of the twentieth century and his person is still recalled by many as someone their mother, father or grandparents used to know. Thus, people recount that when a friend asked him, he created a *hadima* from his own saliva, taking it out of his own

Figure 10: *Nîşans* of the of Sheikh el-Wezir family. Photo Eszter Spät, 2011.

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[44] Wednesday is the sacred day of the week for Yezidis and a special day for seers.

[45] This picture seems to be based on a drawing rather than a real photograph.

mouth. Others say that he created *hadima* from dough by blowing on it.[46] In another instance, an important sheikh family in the village of Bozan, who traditionally fill the post of the religious leader of the Sheikh *el-Wezir* (a member of the Yezidi Spiritual Council) and act as the guardians of the shrine of Sheikh Şems in the holy valley of Lalish, proudly displayed their collection of *hadima*s (attached not to one, but two bags). These *hadima*s included, as they themselves drew my attention to it, a *hadima* created from a leaf of tobacco by Kochek Selman, consisting of three concentric copper rings (much like other *hadima*s on the bag), with the outer ring pushed or hammered flat on one side (figure 10).

Thus, as we can see, the *hadima*s of the *koçek*s are, just like the sacred objects in the possession of *pîr*s and sheikh*s, 'seals'. They prove the authenticity of seers, the fact that they really are channels of communication between humans and the world of the angels. They are also of heavenly origin (*semawî*), just like the *nîşan*s of the 'priestly' castes, with the difference that they are not inherited from the ancestors, but are personal gifts from the supernatural world.

Looking and Healing with the *Hadima*

Just like the *hadima*s and *nîşan*s of the priestly caste, the h*adima*s of seers are more than mere symbols of the favour of the supernatural or even 'seals' of one's authenticity as a seer. They are active sacred objects with their own power and agency stemming from the connection between the seer and the world of angels or the heavenly world. As such, they channel the *keramet* or miraculous power of the *delîl*. Accordingly, *hadima*s may play an important role as tools in the activity of a seer. They can be used for healing, as well for divination. Koçek Kh. was holding his *hadima* above the head of an elderly lady in my host family, while working to cure the ache in her knee, attributed to the evil eye. Though I never witnessed her curing people, Feqra B. is said to apply her *hadima* in the same way. Whether the client is someone who was repeatedly caught while trying to get to Europe, a young man unable to consummate his marriage (due to evil magic by a rival) or a young girl hoping in vain for years to find a husband, her cure is allegedly achieved by holding the *hadima* above the client's head and saying a prayer.[47] Prayer, in this case means 'talking in tongues' (*ziman axaftin*),

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[46] There are also stories about how, when Koçek Selman went after the sheep as child, he had nothing else to eat but bread. However, when he blew on the bread, sugar appeared on it. Another Yezidi told me how his family possessed a piece of candy which was created when Koçek Selman blew on a *berat*, the small ball made from the earth of Lalish, which each Yezidi household must possess. As a child, this Yezidi always asked for this piece of candy when he was sick, considering it a *toberga* (earth brought from a holy place and believed to possess healing power.)

[47] This may be supplemented by other resorts. For example, a young relative, who was repeatedly caught in Greece, was given some *toberga* or sacred soil from the shrine of Mem Şivan to wear sewn into his undershirt.

an expression also used by Yezidis to refer to the communication between seer and his/her supernatural guide. Yezidi 'talking in tongues' perfectly fits the description of glossolalia. Not all *koçek*s can talk in tongues (though some Yezidis in the Kurdistan region consider it a *sine-qua-non* of being a genuine *koçek*.) Those who do, typically talk in tongues when 'falling into book', that is, when they are in an altered state of consciousness (which may last from twenty minutes to hours.) It is understood that in this state it is the *delîl* who talks through their mouth.[48] There are also seers, usually 'accomplished' ones, who can speak in tongues without falling into book, simply when they 'look' for their clients. So when a seer, like Feqra B. above, "says a prayer" as part of her healing technique while hanging the *hadima* above the head of the patient, she may not be reciting traditional Yezidi sacred texts,[49] but rather just pronounce a few basic formulas and call on a list of Holy Beings for help, or she may speak in tongues, uttering words coming from the *delîl*, which nobody else understands.

*Hadima*s may also be used for 'looking' (divination, answering the question of a client), and for other forms of direct communication with the *delîl.* During my interview with Feqra B., who was keen to demonstrate her powers as a seer, she offered to write in English with the help of her *hadima*. (Born in a very traditional Sinjari village around 1970, she never went to school and could not read or write, let alone in English, unless in an altered state of consciousness.) The demonstration proved to be rather embarrassing for both of us. Holding her *hadima* tightly, she wrote characters which sometimes resembled Latin letters, sometimes Greek, sometimes numbers, sometimes nothing. I was at a loss, not wanting to hurt her feelings, but I could not very well declare, in front of a number of other people, that this was indeed English writing. To help her save face, I suggested that perhaps she was writing in Greek, but she rejected this suggestion, insisting that her *delîl* was writing in English. Seeing my confusion, she became frustrated and soon fell into trance (that is, 'into book'.) Her 'book' was 'heavy', causing her suffering and fear, which was evident to everybody present. As she and her husband later said, usually her *cor* (suffering) when 'falling into book' was much lighter, but this time she was being punished by her *delîl*, as she should not have used the *hadima* for writing (that is, for showing off her powers in front of a stranger.) Later, I witnessed her 'looking' for a friend who had a query. (Feqra B. said she wished she had learnt of the query the previous day, before 'falling into book', for she received better answers in that state. However, she could also look with the help of her *hadima*, though not as well.) She held her client's hand upside down, pressing the *hadima* into her palm, and started talking in 'tongues', this time without falling into trance. A few minutes later she stopped and gave some advice. When she

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[48]   The 'tongues' may include various languages, from English to Chinese, as well as the tongue of the angels.

[49]   Usually only a small number of religious specialists learn these texts, taking years to learn from another expert. Seers, with their deep interest in religion, may memorize snatches of hymns and recall them during "their book", but I have not met any seer who is actually proficient in reciting sacred texts.

first pressed the *hadima* to her client's palm, she asked if the client felt any shaking in her body. As she received a negative reply, she continued and then asked if the client could feel needles in her arm. This time she received a positive reply. Evidently, had the client felt the power of the *hadima* right away that "would have been very good for her". Apparently, this method of divination is more widespread in Sinjar than east of the Tigris. Feqra B. herself was a native of Sinjar, although since childhood, she spent long periods in a village in Kurdistan where her married older sister lived. As I later learnt from Sinjari refugees, in Sinjar, where 'falling into book' is usually not part of the ritual repertoire of a seer, there are seers who use their *hadima* as a means of instant communication with their *delîl*, that is 'to look' for their clients.[50]

Stones as Charms

A special case of sacred objects or 'gifts from the sky' must be mentioned here. Though not made of metal, but simply stone, and (in my hearing at least) not referred to as *hadima*, but simply as *khelet* or gift (i.e. gifts from the supernatural), they resemble *hadima*s in their miraculous provenance and even more in their use.

Abu Z.[51] is a figure not easy to fit into any clear category in the Yezidi system. Many people referred to him as a *koçek*, while others insisted he was a *cindar* (someone working with jinn), though he rejected both appellations. His activities fall outside the usual Yezidi categories. His use of what he referred to as "herbal remedies" (which he buys from shops specialized in such herbal medicine), indicates at least a certain amount of Muslim influence. However, his practice and the assistance he provides resemble those of 'traditional' *koçek*s to a great degree. People go to him asking advice on what troubles them, expecting him to heal their pain and other physical or mental afflictions, and provide supernatural intervention in case of dangerous undertakings. There is, though, one important difference: Abu Z. works with stones. He has a whole collection of curiously shaped and coloured stone objects which came to him in miraculous ways. According to him he had known that he "had something" since he was a child, but it was only years later that he had his first dream instructing him to go and look for the two objects: a strangely shaped stone, millions of years old, with huge holes which he called *jumjum* or skull, because it resembled a human skull; and a copper rod, which fit exactly into the hole on top of the "skull". Following his dream,

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50 As far as I could ascertain during my field research, *koçek*s "falling into book" only appeared among Sinjari Yezidis following 2014, when they moved to the Kurdistan Region fleeing ISIS. No doubt, this happened under the cultural influence of local seers, who were much sought after by the refugees, especially as many people have lost contact with their old seers as the community was dispersed. Feqra B. started falling into book as a child, while she paid frequent visits to Kurdistan.

51 Unfortunately, being from the Arabic speaking village of Beshiqe, Abu. Z. did not speak Kurdish, and I had to rely on the rather sketchy translations the other Yezidis present were willing to give.

he found the two objects on the same day, even though they were some ten kilometers apart from each other. From that moment on, he started 'looking' for people, using these sacred objects. He would press the rod to the palm of a client, then reinsert it in the hole on top of the "skull" and be able to tell what was ailing the client. During the ensuing years he came into the possession of at least a dozen of special stones, all of which were revealed to him in miraculous ways, from dreams to finding one in his shoe when he got up one morning. They included a small foot-shaped stone used to cure pain in the feet, a stone with a hole in it used to extract jinn from those possessed through the hole, a small black stone from the time of Adam with the image of the sun, moon and stars (visible only with a looking glass) and another stone, a hundred and sixty years old, with pieces of sacred thread (*dezî*) run through the hole in its middle, good for curing fear and the effects of the 'evil eye'. He found a stone just the day before our meeting. He went to an olive grove near the village with his hosts. On entering the trees, he had a strong premonition that something was waiting for him there. He started walking around and looking, until he found a small piece of stone half buried in the ground and knew that this was the stone he was meant to find. The stone, marked with crisscrossing lines was, according to him, a several thousand years old relic with Sumerian writing.

Abu Z. had a 'student' himself, a young *koçek*, eleven-year-old Koçek M. The young boy recounted how, after word had spread that he was emerging as a seer (after long bouts of illness during which he was taken to see various seers), other *koçek*s came to visit him. Such visits are a norm in the tightly-knot social brotherhood of seers, many of whom keep in close contact with each other. One of the first visitors was Abu Z., whom he had already met previously, when his family was taking him around to see *koçeks*, looking to cure his illness which baffled doctors. The same day than he saw Abu Z., he was also visited by another *koçek*. The second visitor told Koçek M. that he was going to receive a heavenly gift (*khelat*), and he would see the exact place of this gift near the shrine of Sheikh Şems in his dream. As it happened, he saw a dream that night, showing him some round stones near the shrine of Sheikh Şems. The next day he went and found the stones in the place indicated by the dream. He referred to these stones as his *khelat* or gift as a seer, and added that now 'I 'look' just like Abu Z.', that is, he put the stone into the hand of a client, if this was what his *delîl* commanded. Abu Z. also told him that he was going to receive further 'gifts' in two years' time. Unlike the curiously shaped stones of Abu Z., the stones found by (or sent to) Koçek M. were simply fist-sized round stones, roughly resembling a ball. Such round stones, referred to as *top*s have a special significance in Yezidi religion. *Top*s can be found decorating many shrines. When some Yezidi shrines were flooded during the construction of the Mosul dam, when a huge area was inundated, *top*s were among the sacred objects transported from the old shrines to a new place, where the shrines were rebuilt.

DIVINE FAVOUR: ORDINARY PEOPLE AND FINDING A *HADIMA*

As the accounts above demonstrate, great significance is attributed to unexpectedly finding an attractive small metal object. Such an unexpected find is interpreted as a gift signaling the support and blessing of some higher power. The idea that such a lucky find is a tangible sign of divine favour is so deeply ingrained that sometimes even 'ordinary' Yezidis, who do not boast of any spiritual power or prestigious origin, believe that they may have been 'sent' a *hadima*, especially if they cannot identify the object they have found.

In 2011, when I went to meet a young *feqra* in the village of Bozan, she was visited by an elderly Yezidi woman, who wanted her to 'look' on the behalf of her daughter-in-law who had fallen ill in Germany. She also wanted to consult the seer concerning a small metal plaque or (square) medallion that a relative had found in Germany, under a tree. It was roughly three by four centimeter with a relief on it showing two hands reaching in supplication toward a many-rayed sun (figure 11). It had no inscription on it, but it looked like a mass-produced object, distributed perhaps at some religious event as a cheap keepsake. However, the fact that it was found unexpectedly under a tree, coupled with the image of the sun (which is a symbol of God in Yezidi religion and lately of Yezidi religion itself)[52] caused both the relative in Germany and the old

Figure 11: *Hadima* found in Germany. Photo Eszter Spät, 2012.

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[52] Yezidis are supposed to pray in the direction of the sun – albeit it is extremely rare to see a Yezidi to pray, so this claim was hard to check. Today the idea that Yezidis are 'sun worshippers' (*rojperest*) is also widespread both among Muslim Kurds and Yezidis. Though it may be argued that this self-definition is fairly recent and developed under the impact of romantic Kurdish nationalist ideas, today the image of the sun is displayed on many Yezidi buildings and shrines, as well as on the Yezidi flag created after the 2014 ISIS attack.

lady to think that this was a *hadima*. The *feqra* confirmed that this was indeed a *hadima* and was of the opinion that it was a gift from Sheikh Şems, a Great Angel incarnated on earth as a *khas*, whose person is closely connected to the sun. A member of the *Sheikh el-Wezir* family who just happened to be present was somewhat dubious that this was a genuine *hadima*,[53] and there ensued a long discussion complete with rubbing and smelling the object to see if it had the right smell. *Hadima*s are said to have a special, characteristic smell, peculiar only to them. (*Koçek*s, at least those willing to display their *hadima*s, have also asked me to smell their *hadima*, as its special smell was supposedly a proof of its heavenly origin.)

On another occasion, when I was talking with Yezidi friends (from the *mirîd* caste) about *nîşan*s and their heavenly origin, an old lady from my host family proudly produced a small purse, kept in the waist band of her skirt.[54] Inside was a tiny metal object, a five-pointed star set in what looked to me like the buckle of a child's (or possibly a doll's) belt. She found it one day in the small sacred 'grove' (consisting of a few unhappy trees surrounded by a low stone wall) dedicated to the holy being Mem Şivan, next to her house. Due to the fortuitous nature of her find, she was deeply convinced that it was a *hadima*, come from heaven. To prove it, she rubbed it between her fingers, asking us all to smell it in order to demonstrate that it had a special smell – a mark of a true *hadima*. Though her family members seemed slightly skeptical, she displayed a very deep satisfaction with her find and hid it again in her clothing.

Unlike the hidden rivalry between the priestly caste and *koçek*s, where receiving a *hadima* may be seen as a subtle reference to the spiritual superiority of the seers over sheikhs and *pîr*s with their routinized charisma and inherited sacred objects, ordinary Yezidis who believe they have found a *hadima* do not claim themselves any special power or social standing in the community. For them *hadima*s are not seals or badges attesting to social prestige, special ancestry or supernatural powers. Rather, they are gifts from higher beings, a sign of their favour, a proof that they extend a protecting hand over them and their loved ones.

*Nîşan*s and *hadima*s, sacred objects mostly in the form of small metal charms, play an important role in the everyday religious life of Iraqi Yezidis. They are powerful objects of heavenly origin, which can serve as channels of communication with the spiritual world or cure all kinds of ailment and fulfill wishes. They denote prestigious origins or spiritual authenticity. Most importantly, however, they are signs of divine favour and protection – and divine favour and protection, is not restricted to sheikhs, *pîr*s and seers. All Yezidis, even ordinary 'commoners', are under the protection of

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[53] This may have been yet another subtle expression of the rivalry between the hereditary priestly caste and seers. In any case, I was promptly taken back to the home of the *Sheikh el-Wezir* and shown the family *hadima*s, including the one created by Koçek Selman.

[54] Amulets, sacred thread (*dezî*) and *toberga* or soil from holy places may also be hidden in the waist band of women's skirts, in pouches sewn for this purpose.

the divine. They are, after all, the "people of the Peacock Angel", who follow the religion of the greatest of all the Angels of God. It should therefore not be surprising that a *hadima*, the simple metal "seal" of divine favour, can occasionally also come into the possession of ordinary Yezidis, with no spiritual power or prestigious origin.

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Hungarian Incantations Between Eastern and Western Christianity[*]

Éva Pócs

If we review the vast corpus of Hungarian verbal charms which consists of some 8000 texts preserved in writing or noted down by folklore researchers in the modern period, we can roughly outline two distinct groups. One group comprises texts of a non-religious character used by ordinary people, which are not necessarily of a Christian nature, the other contains charms that are almost exclusively religious in content.

More than half of the known types of Hungarian verbal charms are in some kind of connection with texts of clerical origin or religious content, such as church benedictions, prayers, legends and so on. The texts of verbal charms have suddenly begun to appear in a broad variety from the 15th century onwards and represent many different types that live on in written form or in oral tradition. The charms of the common people also manifest a wide range of clerical influences. These are texts either entirely of clerical origin, or, in other cases, the religious connection is indicated merely by certain motifs, elements of form or content, or the language and style of the charm. Texts showing clerical influence are either of a general European Christian type or are more specifically related to Latin Christianity (and also to the Latin language in the early centuries of the Hungarian Middle Ages) or to Orthodox Christianity.

These connections do not mean that one could divide the body of Hungarian charms with absolute validity into two groups, texts of an Eastern and a Western type. The clerical connections of the texts are extremely complex and varied. The practice of benediction by the Catholic priesthood influenced the popular practice of charms both directly and indirectly through the prayer-books disseminated by the church and particularly through semi-official chapbook publications sold at shrines. In addition, a great many texts originating in clerical benedictions but known for a long time as lay charms may have migrated from Western Europe into the healing practice of Hungarian priests or lay healers.

Orthodox connections are also complex and varied and pose a number of questions that have so far remained unanswered. One intriguing question is the marked presence of charms of the Byzantine type in the 16th–17th centuries, it is all the more intriguing as the only period when Hungary had formal connections with that church was in the 10th–11th centuries, after which time these connections practically ceased. In the early modern period we find a great many MS recipe books used by the nobility which contain texts that we might 'suspect' of showing Orthodox or Byzantine influence, that are only known from the Orthodox regions of Eastern Europe and are not found in orally transmitted rural practice. After the Middle Ages the Orthodox religion practically ceased to exist among the Hungarian population, with only a a small number of representatives of the Greek Catholic denomination surviving in the North-Eastern regions of the Hungarian-speaking territories, amounting to but a small percentage of the population. Accordingly, the influence of the Orthodox faith on Hungarian verbal charms can hardly be explained by the direct influence of the church or the priests. Probably a far greater role was and still is played by the mutual cultural connections between the Orthodox and Catholic populations living alongside each other, often in communities of mixed denomination. Their charms, transmitted in speech or writing, mutually affect each other; esteemed healers of Orthodox or Catholic faith may well have clients of mixed ethnicity (Romanian and Hungarian or Serbian and Hungarian) and mixed denomination. These healers may use charm texts that they had found effective, together with the corresponding ritual, regardless of which denomination they come from. This way, 'encounters' of East and West can mean a number of things in the context of Hungarian charms. By examining these texts we may detect interactions between Eastern and Western clerical practice, Eastern and Central European ethnic groups and between textual types from Eastern and Western Europe, as well as between literacy and the oral tradition. Popular charms collected from oral tradition are in some cases purely magical texts devoid of any church influence; at other times they carry the traces of Byzantine or Latin Christianity, or possibly both. With the examples that follow I will demonstrate the religious, cultural and social contexts and diversity of these texts. Obviously within this short introduction all I can offer is a limited segment of a complex web of relations between East and West, the elite and the popular or the written and the oral, which cannot serve as a basis for generalisation, only as an exposition of a few key problems.

CLERICAL INFLUENCES, WRITTEN PRACTICE

The practice of benediction (saying blessings) was relatively unified throughout the territory of the Western church, indeed, most of the textual corpus was shared with the

Orthodox church.[1] From the 10th–14th centuries onwards unofficial benediction texts have survived in great quantities in monastic records. Several textual types that later became known as charms used by village healers, have been proven to go back to a semi-official origin in clerical practice, but their first Hungarian examples appeared in records by priests, as notes scribbled on the covers of Bibles, prayer-books or hymn-books; next they appear in the 16th–17th centuries in recipe books of the nobility or aristocracy or, occasionally, of students who had attended German or Dutch universities. These include texts that show a strong influence of clerical benedictions, as well as pieces that had migrated to Hungary from Eastern Europe, forming parts of the charm stock of the Eastern church and its monasteries, and contain elements of Byzantine apocryphal legends. Good examples of the influence of Roman Catholic benedictions are two prayers (actually functioning as charms) which were probably autograph notes made by János Zápolya (Szapolyai) sometime between 1511–1526, on the inside cover of a collection of sermons from the 16th century. One of the texts served to heal a condition referred to as *sőly* (*süly*[2]):

> 1. Against ulcers or *sőly*[3]
> *Sőly!* You were not supposed to arise here.
> My Lord God!
> *Sőly!* I curse thee with the curse of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, with the wrath of the Father.
> *Sőly!* I curse you with the curse of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost and the wrath of the Holy Trinity.
> May you be gone from here!
> May the bishop St Gracius not find you here!
> *Sőly* of seventy seven kinds!
> Neither my head, nor my heart's liking, nor do I charm you,
> but I greet you with the holy crucifix of God
> with the holy mother's milk of Our Lady,
> may the Holy Trinity drive you away from here,
> may the holy prophet St Elijah not find you here. Amen.[4]

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[1]   See the most important manual of Latin church benedictions: Franz 1909. About the Hungarian benediction practice see Bárth 2013; about the connections of the Hungarian incantations and church benedictions see: Pócs 2014: chapter IX; 2013.

[2]   In recent dialect records this usually refers to cancerous ulcers.

[3]   Süly is a collective noun used to refer to all diseases with poisonous and infected sores, growths, ulcers or scurvy as symptoms.

[4]   Ilyefalvi 2014: 42, 61.

The next example is a Hungarian variant of the Longinus charm which, instead of showing the direct influence of benedictions, is a text that had been used as a charm already in Medieval Europe/used in Europe as a charm since Medieval times. Used for stopping bleeding throughout Western Europe, it was one of the most widespread texts of its kind. Ferdinand Ohrt described the innumerable Latin and occasional Byzantine sources of the charm,[5] and it was Irmgard Hampp and Jonathan Roper who published late mediaeval German and English variants respectively.[6] It also appears in Hungarian historical sources: we have one record from a medicine book from 1677 belonging to a noblewoman, Anna Apafi; and another from a MS recipe-book from the 20th century:

> Curing *szegezis* ['slip in the waist']
> > There was a warrior called [---],
> > who pierced through the heart of our Lord Jesus on the crucifix.
> > Just as he cannot possibly harm the deity,
> > so may you, the servant of God, never be harmed by *szegezis* or any
> > > kind of kin,
> > in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!
> > The glory, God eternal, is not ours
> > But belongs to thy Holy name only.[7]

We cannot determine precisely where, when and how a given type of charm may have originated, whether it came from priestly benediction, or was it passed on orally or in MS form among the folk and where was it also preserved by healing monks. What is certain is that several texts are still alive today among Orthodox priests and monks, while in the area of Western Christianity such texts are practically extinct. (The last priests to heal by charms were found among the Catholic populations of Southern Italy and Spain.) The Longinus-charm had probably found its way into the recipe books of noble women from the MS legacy of some priestly figure, and finally arrived in 20th century popular practice through the MSs of lay healers.

Our next example is a charm which contains a *historiola* about the Virgin Mary spinning and the Infant Jesus talking as a baby – it originates from the years between 1651 and 1671, and has links to Eastern Christianity. This text is one that connects the apocryphal legends of the spinning Mary and the miraculous Infant Jesus directly into the circulation of Hungarian verbal charms.

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5   Ohrt 1938: 51–57. See also Jacoby 1933.

6   Hampp 1961: 201–205; Roper 2005: 112–113.

7   Pócs 2014: XXII.

[For the success of a trial]
In Nomine Domini. If you want to have a trial against somebody and you
want to win it, before you go into the court building, outside the building
say these words, and then Pater noster Tribus vicibus. ['Three times.']

> Our Lady, the fair Virgin Mary sat outside in the land,
> in the middle of the Red Sea,
> her distaff was on her lap
> and she was spinning on her distaff,
> and on her lap she was rocking her blessed holy son.
> There came to her thirty Jewish maidens to pass the judgement of the law
> and summoned her to be judged by thirty Jews
> for calling herself a virgin,
> even though she was rocking her son.
> So Our Lady the fair Virgin Mary began to weep bitterly.
> Then our Lord Jesus Christ spoke at the age of forty days,
> 'Why are you crying my holy virgin Mother?'
> 'How could I help crying, my blessed holy son Jesus,
> when the daughters of thirty Jews who pass the judgement of the law came
>   here,
> and summoned me to the thirty Jews,
> for calling myself a virgin,
> even though I am rocking my son.'
> There spoke our Lord Jesus Christ,
> 'Pick me up, oh virgin and take me on your arm,
> and take me to see thirty Jews
> who pass the judgement of the law,
> and I shall answer for thee.'

Pater noster. Et Credo.[8]

Texts From Ms Books of Magic – Elite Literacy and the Influence of Lay Magicians

MS books of magic began to appear in Hungary from the 17th century onwards at a
time when printing was popularising Western European books of magic and the mag-
ical methods employed by members of the elite which they described. This was the
reason why such books became the veritable best-sellers of the magic market. Books
of magic existed in a wide variety of types in Western Europe throughout the late

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[8]   Jankovics 1981: 330. Last publication: Ilyefalvi 2014: 55–56, 65.

Middle Ages and the early modern period. They usually contained recipes for healing, detecting stolen treasure or thieves, procedures of love magic, ways to secure good luck in hunting or cards, or ways of protecting the subject from enemy weapons in warfare. Besides the motifs of learned magic the repertoire also included the texts and gestures of clerical benedictions; indeed, certain types of books of magic may contain texts of popular magic known as the charms of rural specialists to this very day.[9] In Hungary the tradition of books of magic seems rather meagre: we know about their MS relics vagy inkabb/ about them in MS form since the 17th century.[10] As regards content, books found in Hungary specialised almost exclusively on treasure-hunting. Some texts indicate Western influences, such as the mediating role of students who had studied in the West. Their textual range covers methods of elite magic rendered religious in style by the use of Christian prayers, the holy names of Christian deities and saints; segments from the gospels; names of God and spirits; formulas for summoning and coercing angels and spirits. That they may have been adopted directly from the West and were mostly used by the more educated layers of society is indicated by the fact that these texts show no traces of the orally transmitted Hungarian rural tradition of charms – in other words these treasure-hunting texts were not part of the common sphere of interaction between elite and popular culture.

The next example comes from an 18th century textual record but harks back to a text known from a 16th century clerical MS that used to be recited when making a magic rod for treasure-hunting. [11]

> Then go on to say this prayer:
>> I will you, you rods,
>> by the living God, the true God and the holy God,
>> and by him who had created the heaven and the earth from nothing,
>> and us, too, he had created so, by one word,
>> and I will also, by the day of judgement,
>> that you should point not at copper or tin or iron or other foolish things,
>> but just at gold, silver and gems,
>> and move at anything that is good.

This charm exemplifies the close connections between the textual corpus coming from clerical literacy, such as exorcisms, on the one hand and lay books of magic on the other, in other words between priestly and lay practices of magic.

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[9]   One good example is the *Romanusbüchlein,* examined by Adolf Spamer (Spamer 1958).
[10]   See a review of Hungarian books of magic for treasure-hunting, with textual examples: Láng–Tóth G. 2009; Láng 2011.
[11]   Last publication: Ilyefalvi 2014: 259. About the *Gyöngyösi charms:* Pócs 2013.

Folkloristic Charms Transmitted by Oral Tradition

As regards the body of texts which we assume to have been transmitted by oral tradition, there have been traces of rural, non-elite practice in the written sources already since the early modern period. A relatively close view of the rural practise of charms is offered by the over 100 verbal charms contained in the minutes of witchcraft trials held in Hungary in the 16th–18th centuries.[12] Statements of rural suspects and witnesses in these court cases also give us glimpses of the contemporary practice of healers and charmers. In this context we only encounter popular, orally transmitted texts that were used mostly for healing, as well as for bewitchment, preventing bewitchment, love magic and treasure hunting. Some of these texts had originally been orally transmitted texts while others descended from church benedictions or from piestly pracices of healing, exorcism and blessing. One short example of the latter case is a text against hearthache from 1735 from the repertoire of a female healer (from the minutes of a witchcraft trial in Debrecen).

> I bind by the living God,
> by his holy strength,
> his holy might,
> his golden ring on his holy finger,
> may seal this evil nightmare…[13]

Besides the textual corpus inherited from elite culture, clearly there has always been a lay, popular practise of charms, which consisted not only of emulation and learning, but also existed, was indeed bound to exist, independently of the clerical practise and textual corpus even during the centuries of the Middle Ages. Besides this, the first Hungarian relics of folkloristic charms also emerged in a clerical setting, not only because priests may have used the practice of charms, but also because unlike most of the lay population, priests were literate. The so-called Bagonya Charms were noted down by a local vicar in 1488 and included some texts that were mediated by the church and others that were completely lay in origin and had come from the oral tradition of magic in use among the peasantry. Each of these three charms contains magical elements for expelling disease, as well as motifs of Christian supplications and benedictions. One text, a Hungarian variant of what is known as the 2nd Merseburg charm, serves to heal a sprain in a horse.

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[12] For a summary description of this body of texts see: Ilyefalvi 2014: 179–219.

[13] Last publication: Ilyefalvi 2014: 49, 63–64.

Menyelés[14] exit de pedibus equorum ['The sprain leaves the horse's foot']

> Our Lord Christ rode on a donkey
> to Jerusalem
> and his donkey went lame.
> Our Lady saw this
> and spoke these words:
> 'My son, Jesus Christ,
> I see your mount has gone lame.'
> Christ heard this
> and spoke these words:
> 'My dear mother,
> it has gone lame, because it has sprained a foot.'
> 'My dear son, Jesus Christ,
> I can command by your holy reputation
> and by your will
> your mount to recover.'

This charm-type, which was originally, before the 9th century, clearly rooted in German pagan traditions became transformed into a Latin text with Christian characters and subsequently went on to be translated, toward the end of the Middle Ages, into local vernacular languages, which also meant that the charms came into use by local lay healers. In Hungary, noted down in 1488 by a local parish priest, the texts survived in a nobleman's archives. There is a rich variety of parallels to this text in the 20th century folklore practice of Southern Hungary. If we go back as far as 1588, protestant pastor Péter Bornemisza's sermons criticising popular superstition also makes it clear that we are talking about a text which is used by the rural public but had found its way to lay practise through the mediation of clerics.[15] When he noted down this charm as a superstition inspired by the devil, Bornemisza also made it clear that the female village healer who was their source had learnt them from a Catholic priest, along with 8 other charms. These Hungarian sub-types of the 2nd Merseburg charm, known from the 15th–16th centuries, are among the variants used in the Orthodox Eastern European and Byzantine area of influence, while the West-European types known from modern records did not become widespread in Hungarian practice until later. They might possibly originate in the practice of the German settlers who arrived in the 18th century after the the Ottoman Turkish occupation ended.[16]

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[14] 'Sprain'.

[15] Bornemisza 1578: 806–807.

[16] Pócs 2010.

A Shared Treasure: Latin and Orthodox Faith in Literacy and in Oral Tradition

The types of charms entitled "The Meeting between the Saint and the Evil One" within the Hungarian corpus (better known by its German name generally used in European research as *Begegnungssegen*) are widely known among Christians of all denominations all over Europe. Its elements related to the Latin and the Byzantine denomination, its Eastern and Western European types provide varied examples of the interactions between the written practice of the priesthood and the orally transmitted tradition of the lay user. They have preserved the oldest traces of the European textual stock going back as far as the texts used in ancient Babylon for expelling demons.[17] It would be rewarding to conduct more in-depth investigations into this largest textual group of Hungarian charms from the point of view of the above considerations, but the present frames do not permit me to do so. Most Hungarian variants are charms of the Eastern European type against the *evil eye* or *'St. Anthony's fire'* (erysipelas),[18] but they also contain a great many inserted Roman Catholic textual motifs related to storm averting benedictions. The next example is a charm against the evil eye collected among ethnic Hungarians living in the Gyimes/Ghimeş region of Romania, which shows connections to the Orthodox Balkans.

> Curing the evil eye
>> The vile evil eye set out,
>> with its seventy-seven kinds of daughters
>> and its seventy seven kinds of diseases.
>> It found the disease of little Ferike (you say the name),
>> in his arms and his legs,
>> splitting them into splinters,
>> sucking out his blood.
>> The blessed fair Virgin Mary came upon him,
>> 'Where are you going, you vile evil eye?'
>> 'I am going to this child's lodgings,
>> to his arms and legs and head, for his pain,
>> to bewitch him viciously,
>> to split his flesh into splinters,
>> to suck out his blood.'
>> 'Oh, turn around, turn around, you vile evil eye,
>> go to the rocks, to the wilderness,

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[17] For a full review of the textual material available today and a detailed analysis of the various types see: Pócs 2014: 709–793.

[18] I wrote briefly about these types in my paper summarising beliefs and magic related to the evil eye: Pócs 2004.

where no one eats leavened bread,
where no black horses neigh,
go into that desert place!'
I say these words so that
a thousand angels should console him.[19]

The majority of charms with a religious content collected from oral tradition in the modern era, which show Western connections (*Three flowers/Dreiblumensegen; Three Women/Dreifrauensegen; Complaints of the Sufferer/Petrussegen*), come from a limited number of collection points, often from just one or a handful of locations. This is clearly related to the fact that these texts had migrated to us through a written medium by means of printed publications, prayer books, flyers of 'useful prayers', sold at church festivals and pilgrimages. Thus, for example, a charm used to cure *the shivers* is, as far as I know, the sole representative of a textual type known to researchers by its German names as *Gichtsegen* ['the gout charm'] or *Fiebersegen* ['fever charm'].

Curing *the shivers*
The rocks crack
and the dead rise,
our Lord Christ was captured and made to stand in front of Judas.
He was asked,
'What are you scared of? Why are you trembling? Have you got the shivers?'
'No I am not, nor do I wish to.
May no one ever have the shivers
who commemorates my bitter sufferings and my death.'
Oh dawn, dawn,
lovely red dawn,
I have been invited to go visiting,
but I am not going,
I shall send my shivers instead.
Anyone who says this three times before sunrise,
and three each of Our Father, Glory Be and Creed,
and offers it for the last shivers of Jesus, and says it from a pure heart, amen. [20]

The next example is a text of unique content, used against the damage caused by witches who spoil the milk yield of animals. These texts are known to us from collections

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[19] Gyimesfelsőlok/Lunca de Sus, Jud. Harghita, Romania, collection of Barnabás Csörge in 2004.
[20] The last sentence is incomplete, in other variants this formula contains the promise of the afterlife for the person who recites the prayers.

in Eastern Transylvania and Moldavia. Their users held these texts in the form of MSs copied from one another. Up till now we know of no parallels to this text. Apparently very archaic, this charm partly contains the origin legend of witchcraft as it is known to this day at the locations where these texts have been collected. Secondly, it depicts a cosmic battle between angels and witches described by infinite magical repetition structures. The motif of the battle provokes very different associations than the customary milieu of European charms, even though the motif of the ladder of gold, silver or wax descending from heaven is a common image in Romanian charms.[21] Although we know of fairly similar battle scenes featuring fairies and witches in Central European charms, these battle motifs probably go back in some way to Byzantine apocryphal literature. The dualistic views transmitted by the bogumilism of the Balkans point to the remote past, and in their background we may even be able to detect the cosmic battle depicted in the War Scrolls of Qumran (1QM), where the sons of Light are supported by the archangel Michael in their struggle against the hosts of Satan.[22]

> Curing the terrible *szélbaj* [*bad winds*, 'palsy']²³
> Our Lord Jesus Christ was sentenced to death by the vicious Jews; they tied him up, tortured him and beat him. They undressed him until he was quite naked. Then some fairy women went up there and gave a cloth for the Lord Jesus to wrap himself in, and the Lord Jesus asked, 'What sort of gift do you want for this?' They replied that they wanted the gift of being able to walk about unseen, so that they could do any manner of things, attack anyone with the scares, with a heart attack, heart weakening, fainting, trembles, sadness, great sorrow; make people shy or crippled, bring them bad hours with bad winds, with great pangs and ninety-nine different kinds of bewitchment and the most vicious *ursita*.²⁴ And the Lord Jesus Christ, all faint, said to them, 'Don't you ask for that you female creatures! ²⁵ For you will never ever, until eternity, come to see the face of my Father.' And they replied, 'It is no trouble if we don't', and it was granted [the gift of bewitchment to fairy females]. And so [—]²⁶ the Lord Jesus Christ took pity on Christian believing folk that they should come to such suffering, and passed this knowledge on to us so that we can help in this manner and seek him with our requests and he will grant us help.

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[21] As György Takács points out in connection with this charm: Takács 2001: 499.

[22] Vermes 1998: 217–222; Davidson 1992: 212–234.

[23] From the MS book of G. J., Hungarian speaking inhabitant of Cădăreşti, jud. Bacău, Romania, a transcribed variant of György Takács's publication.

[24] Ursita is bewitchment with a fatal outcome (from the Romanian).

[25] Women.

[26] Illegible section of the MS.

He ordered the heavenly hosts,
to descend from the hills of Jerusalem,
to descend on golden ladders,
and instantly saddle
ninety-nine white horses,
ninety-nine grays,
ninety-nine browns,
ninety-nine chestnuts,
ninety-nine with guns,
ninety-nine with swords,
ninety-nine with lances,
ninety-nine with knives,
[---],[27]
That the riders should surround the fairy witches,
who torture X. X.[28] with any kind of illness of any name,
to shoot them with guns,
to cut them all over with swords,
to lance them with lances,
the swish them all over with their knives,
from the tip of their feet to the top of their heads,
and throw them into the water of the Jordan
so they turn to nothing,
and melt away
just as wax melts in the heat,
so they disperse
just like candle smoke.
May they never meet again until eternity
just as one mountain never meets the other;
may they never come to agree
just as fire will never agree with water,
may they go to sleep
just as fire goes to sleep from the power of water,
may they turn to nothing in N. N.'s body
and may all kinds of troubles in his heart
so turn to nothing
just as the wind carries the dust away from the roads. Amen.[29]

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[27] Unintelligible line.

[28] This is where you substitute the name.

[29] Takács 2001: 495–497.

Conclusion

At this point in time I would not venture to generalise from the lessons that seem to be crystallising after reviewing my database – this would require further, more profound investigations. What is certain is that in the absence of a deeper familiarity with Eastern European charms we can only loosely apply the dichotomies I repeatedly emphasised. Such dichotomies claim that the material of Latin Christianity is transmitted primarily in a written form and is juxtaposed to the charms of Eastern Europe which mostly spread by oral transmission. As against the type of text characteristic of Western Europe, more solid in structure and tightly regulated in style, the practice that applies in the East is more openly influenced by the living rite, where people apply texts that contain a number of improvised elements in accordance with the situation. All of this may be true in rough outline, but the complex and multifarious systems of connections are sure to bring about far more exact and nuanced answers as regards the relations between literacy and the oral tradition and the encounters of charms pertaining to the spheres of influence of the Eastern and the Western church, particularly as regards certain complex and hitherto little considered aspects of Orthodox literacy.

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Charms within Non-Charm Texts: Shifts in Pragmatics

Maria Eliferova

What is perhaps most paradoxical about the extant corpus of Old Norse texts is the apparent lack of charms – against the fact that pre-Christian mythology and folklore in Old Norse are preserved exclusively well. From the West Germanic tradition, mythological texts are almost totally lost, yet charms are preserved. On the contrary, the Old Norse manuscripts have preserved the Eddas, but they have nothing comparable to *Merseburg Incantations* or the charms from Old English leechbooks.

While the Old Norse term for "charm" or "incantation" is known (*galdr*), there is very little evidence for the texts themselves. References to manuscript collections of charms in Scandinavia are known from the 13th century, and the extant magical books in Scandinavian languages are post-medieval.[1] Again, this is hardly comparable with the surviving West Germanic charms, which do not postdate the 11th century. Icelandic sagas most typically do not include charm texts identified as such, although they often refer to charm performance.[2]

To the students of Old Norse charming, only two classes of sources are immediately accessible. One is a corpus of runic inscriptions which are – more or less probably – intended for charming.[3] However, the vast majority of them are brief and unimpressive. In many cases, it is not easy to establish whether they are charms at all: scholars engaged with Germanic heathenism tend to see magical and religious meanings in almost any inscription. Thus, McLeod and Mees interpret the inscription saying *Liot* as a reference to Woden, claiming that this could have been a by-name of this god.[4] Yet *Ljotr* is a personal name well-attested in sagas, so there is no need to believe that the inscription has anything to do with gods or magic; moreover, there is no evidence that Woden was ever referred to as Ljot(r). At the same time, a minority of runic texts are indisputable

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[1] Mitchell 2000: 335–336.

[2] For a collection of examples, see Mitchell 2000: 336–342.

[3] See, for instance Owen 1928; McLeod and Mees 2006; Hall 2009: 195.

[4] McLeod and Mees 2006: 22.

charms, though shorter and less comprehensible than typical manuscript charms. The very technique of runic script apparently made it difficult to record longer texts.

The other class of sources which scholars generally use to fill the gap in Old Norse tradition is the charms and charm-like incantations ascribed to the characters of the Eddas and some legendary sagas. These are extended poetic texts. Scholars have used them either for commentary upon earlier runic inscriptions,[5] or to extract evidence about Old Norse magical practices,[6] or to draw parallels with Old English charms.[7] Yet no scholar of authority, to my knowledge, has been incautious enough to claim directly that these are genuine texts once used as charms by the heathen Norse.

There are at least some difficulties with these "literary charms". Their parallels to either runic inscriptions or Old English charms are limited to isolated words or phrases. Above all, they were recorded in the 13th to 15th century, within the context of legendary heathen stories preserved by Christians, and never appear outside this context. The more realistic family sagas and royal sagas do not normally contain such "charms". All these considerations make it problematic to see them as true charms.

However, there is still a possibility that some charms survive in the narrative tradition without being recognised as charms. A modern era example demonstrates this. Thus, Pushkin's 1831 poem *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* contains a description of a magical squirrel obtained by Prince Guido:

> There's a little squirrel dwelling
> In a fir tree; all day long,
> Cracking nuts, it sings a song.
> Nuts – most wondrous to behold!
> Every shell is solid gold;
> Kernels – each an emerald pure!
> That's a wonder, to be sure.[8]

In fact, squirrels never appear as characters in Russian folktales or songs. This passage looks like a garbled version of a rare charm at least as old as the 17th century – attested in a manuscript collection two centuries older than Pushkin's poem, the Olonets Codex:[9]

> There is a sea ocean, and from the ocean sea rides out a copper man,
> on a copper horse, with a copper bow, with copper arrows; and he pulls
> the strong bow and shoots well. There is a gold pine-tree growing on

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5   McLeod and Mees 2006; Mees 2009; 2013.
6   Mitchell 2011.
7   Harris 2002.
8   Transl. by Louis Zellikoff; Pushkin 2001.
9   *Olonets Codex* no. 98, folio 33r–33v.

the moss, on the gold pine tree there is a gold squirrel. And the copper man shoots the gold squirrel, and takes out its steel heart, and splits it in three, and says three ailment spells.[10]

The "ocean" is also present in Pushkin's story.[11] Apparently, the cruel act of slashing open a gold squirrel was replaced by a more tolerable (for upper-class readers) performance of cracking open gold nuts by the squirrel; rather than the animal's heart, the nuts' kernels are taken out. In the poem, the squirrel is a magical source of wealth; in the charm it is a magic cure. (The logic of the re-interpretation is poorer: what produces the gold nuts?). It is unclear where Pushkin got this motif. His own transcription of the oral version of this tale does not have any squirrels in it.[12] Arguably, he could have picked up the charm from his nanny Arina R. Iakovleva, with whom he resumed contact during his 1825 exile. While Iakovleva came from a location other than Olonets, both she and the codex containing the charm originated from the Russian-Scandinavian frontier, a space of intense contact between Russians and Finno-Ugric tribes; and the specific "squirrel on a tree" motif may be of Finnish origin (one should also consider Ratatoskr of the Eddaic myth).

Since the charm in question is of a healing or protective kind, it might well have been used by the nanny to protect her young charge. However, Pushkin's poetic digression about the squirrel has nothing to do with protection; he makes of it nothing more than a colourful detail of the fairy-tale world.

Having outlined this challenge – of identifying evidence for charms in texts not intended and/or perceived as charms at all, – I would then like to address a Scandinavian text which has received little academic attention and, to my knowledge, has not yet been recognised as a charm. This is *Allra flagða þula* in *Vilhjälms saga sjóðs* (*Saga of William the Purse*), a late 14th- or early 15th-century chivalric saga). William has to rescue his father captured by trolls. In order to defeat the trolls, he must pronounce all their names. The names are listed in the text, which goes like this:

Líttu upp leikbróðir og láttu fólk þegja, meðan ég nefni níu tugi trölla. Öll skuluð þið standa sem stjaki bundinn uns að ég hefi út kveðið allra flagða þulu.	Look up, fellows, and let folks be silent, While I am naming the ninety trolls. All shall stand there as if bound to a stake Until I will have listed all the trolls.
Fyrst situr Ysja og Arinnefja Flegða, Flauma og Flatsokka [or: Flotsokka]. Skrukka, Skinnbrók og Skitinkjapta. Buppa, Blætanna og Belgeygla. <...> etc.	First sit Noisy [or: Fire] and Eaglebeak, Giantess, Fussy (?) and Flatsock [or: Greasysock]. Sea Urchin (?), Leatherpants and Dirtymouth. Woof, Blacktooth and Parchment Face. <...>

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[10] My transl. after Toporkov 2010: 128–129.

[11] Guido's domain is actually Island Buian, which also appears in many Russian charms – see Ryan 1999: 173, 204.

[12] Pushkin 1997: 362–363.

The original text is cited after Jiriczek (1894), with spelling normalized after the modern conventions for representing Old Norse. The full text actually contains 90 troll names.[13]

If this poem is left aside, today's reader would immediately recognise the whole story of William and trolls as a version of the *Rumpelstiltskin* tale:[14] the story about a supernatural being who threatens a relative of the protagonist. To neutralize the threat, the protagonist must call the creature by its name. However, in the common form of the folktale, the threatened person is a child rather than a parent, and the supernatural assailant is solitary. So there is no need for poetic lists of names.

At the same time, there is a group of texts bearing a striking resemblance to *Allra flagða þula*, but so different from it in geographical and cultural context that nobody has ever thought of making the comparison. These are Russian charms known under the general name of the *Sisinnius Prayer*. The charm identified as the *Sisinnius Prayer* originates from Greece and is widely attested around East Europe, but in most countries, it is a charm against a solitary female demon harmful to infants.[15]

The Russian version retains the protagonist, St. Sisinnius, who defeats the assailant by pronouncing her names, but it is intended against multiple "fevers" who do not specifically target children. There can be seven, nine or twelve "fevers", imagined as human-like female figures with unbound hair. The lists of their names vary, but the monstrosity of their bearers is clear. Here is a version:[16]

> Triasovitsa, Media, Garustosha, Korkusha, Korkodia, Zheltodia, Lumia, Sekudia, Pukhlia, Chemia, Nemodia, Nevia

As in *Allra flagða þula,* some of the names are rhyming, some are etymologically difficult, and many bear negative connotations. *Triasovitsa* is a generic name for "fever" (literally, 'shiver'), *Korkusha* and *Korkodia* are onomatopoetic names suggesting "cough" (the latter also resembles *korkodil*, an archaic and/or non-standard form of "crocodile"), *Zheltodia* means 'making (you) yellow', *Nemodia* is 'dumbing', and *Pukhlia* is clearly related to *pukhnut'* 'to swell'. The rest of the names are more obscure (for instance, *Sekudia* may be a conflation of Russian *seku* 'I flog' and Latin *secunda,* and *Lumia* a distorted *Lamia*).

The earliest version of the Russian *Sisinnius Prayer* is attested in a birchbark manuscript roughly contemporary with *Vilhjälms saga sjóðs*.[17] In this particular case, the

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[13] For the most detailed discussion of the text and its place within the tradition of the *þula* genre, see Gurevich 2012.

[14] Or, in English folklore, *Tom Tit Tot*, AaTh 500.

[15] Ryan 1999: 244–250; 2004: 118–120; Toporkov 2011.

[16] Cited in Toporkov 2011: 176.

[17] Gippius 2005: Document 930.

part with the names is lost, but the text clearly mentions seven female demons with loosened hair, so there are good reasons to think that the charm in its present form has existed at least since the late 14th century.

Notably, the Russian "fevers" bear some apparent physical resemblance to trolls. Their hair is always unbound, which is also characteristic of female trolls. Thus, the old version of *Västgötar* law, among other terms considered abusive to a woman, mentions a claim that one saw her *lösharæp. ok i trols ham* 'with the hair brushed out and in the shape of a troll' – cit. ex.[18] The 18th- and 19th-century icons representing the Sisinnius story sometimes visualise the "fevers" as partly zoomorphic and dwelling in a cave or under water.[19] Caves and underwater places are well-attested in Germanic mythology as trolls' habitats, from *Beowulf* to *Grettissaga*.

While *Allra flagða þula* has both male and female names, they are mostly grouped according to the gender: the poem comprises three lists of female names, three lists of male names and a single mixed list. On the whole, the lists seem unrelated to either the Poetic Edda or the Prose Edda; many of the names are unattested elsewhere.[20]

Can there be any link between the Russian healing charm and the poetic interpolation in the chivalric saga? I think there are good reasons to answer, yes.

Illnesses were indeed conceived as trolls in Old Norse folklore. At least two 11th-century rune-charms are preserved where illness is addressed as *þursa trutin* 'lord of trolls'.[21] There are some extra bits of evidence overlooked by Hall. Thus, in *Bandamanna saga* 10, Egill curses Hermundr saying: "því betur er fyrr taka tröll við þér" ('you'd better be taken by trolls'). In Ch. 12, Hermundr feels a shot from an invisible bowman hitting his armpit, and falls ill. There also an attested female troll name Áma which means 'erysipelas'.[22]

When this thesis was presented at the 2015 conference in Pécs, I got another piece of evidence, for which I must thank Dr. Louise Milne (University of Edinburgh). She drew my attention to a series of West European Latin charms cited in a recent work by Rudolf Simek,[23] which may clarify the origins of the Russian anti-fever charm. While Simek discusses elves, rather than trolls, the healing charms cited in his work are really intriguing. The most impressive one is the Blæsinge lead amulet, a lengthy runic charm in Latin, from Denmark. Unfortunately, its date is unknown, but it is hardly younger than the birchbark manuscript of Sisinnius Prayer, and may be as old as the 12th century.[24] Its text refers to *septem sorores* 'seven sisters', whose names are listed

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[18] Brink 2005: 81–82.

[19] Toporkov 2011: 175–176.

[20] Gurevich 2012: 193–195.

[21] Discussed in detail by Hall 2009.

[22] Cleasby – Vigfusson 1874: 43.

[23] Simek 2011.

[24] Op. cit.: 34–37.

(only five names survive: Elffrica, Affricea, Soria, Affoca, Affricala). Though it is not stated that the sisters are fevers, they clearly represent some illnesses, because they are referred to as doing harm to human body parts. Therefore, medieval Scandinavians were familiar with the healing practice of invoking names of malignant creatures who supposedly caused diseases.

We can deduce that the "seven sisters" of the Blæsinge charm were indeed fevers, like their Russian counterpart, and that the charm is much older than either *Allra flagða þula* or Document 930. In the same paper, Simek points out that there are parallels in Latin manuscripts, one of which is Codex Vaticanus Latinus 235 dating from about 1000 A.D. In this version, the seven sisters are explicitly called *frigores et febres* 'shivers and fevers'. Their seven names are also listed, written in a kind of cipher (though the proper way of deciphering them is unclear, the names are certainly different from those of the Blæsinge charm). Simek also gives a name list from a 15th-century Danish charm of the same kind, this time again comprising different names. It seems that the names of fevers were highly variable. (Interestingly, in a French anti-fever charm, cited in the same work by Simek, the ritual of naming the fevers is absent).

This evidence indicates that the resemblance between *Allra flagða þula* and Russian anti-fever charms is not coincidental. To my knowledge, no scholar so far has suggested Scandinavian links for those details of the Russian charm that are absent in the classical version of *Sisinnius Prayer*. However, the Scandinavian contacts of early Rus' were as intense as their Byzantine ones. The Russian version may well have emerged as a conflation of the Scandinavian anti-fever charm (which has multiple anthropomorphic fevers, but does not have St. Sisinnius) and the original Sisinnius charm (which has St. Sisinnius but does not have fevers). Russia, as a space of cross-cultural interaction between Scandinavian and Greek culture, representing the proverbial way *iz variag v greki* ('from Varangians to Greeks'), is a very likely site for such conflation. And the point of conflation is exactly the invocation of names, present in both charm traditions.

What is even more important, the data collected by Simek confirms that healing charms employing name lists had been indeed known in Scandinavia before the 15th century – possibly, not only in Latin, but in vernacular as well. So the compiler of *Vilhjälms saga sjóðs* was certainly familiar with this tradition to some extent and could have drawn inspiration from it.

As for the story of rescuing a captured person, there is an abundance of cross-cultural parallels demonstrating a direct link between healing and rescuing a captive from trolls or ogres. It has been noticed that in Turkic folklore, shamanic healing charms are nearly indistinguishable from heroic tales of monster-fighting; a shaman must travel to the underworld and to fight a man-eating giant, who represents the illness.[25] An English speaker would immediately recognise this story as a version of *Beowulf*. One of the

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[25] Meletinskii 2004: 279.

most influential present-day students of Turkic folklore, Sergei Nekliudov, informed me of a case where an ogre-fighting passage from a well-known epic poem was used as a healing charm by a Mongolian. The man, who had a leg pain, just opened the printed edition of the poem and read the corresponding passage aloud.

If a piece of epic narrative can be re-used as a charm (as witnessed by Sergei Nekliudov), then it is even more likely that a charm can be re-used as a piece of epic narrative. *Allra flagða þula* may be an actual healing charm (or perhaps a chain of charms) elaborated by the learned compiler of the saga. It is unlikely that the authors or the audience of chivalric romances were interested in the practical meaning of charms. Even if the author of *Vilhjálms saga sjóðs* recognised the real pragmatics of the poem (or poems), he apparently did not intend to give healing instructions to his readers. His task was to give them more fun.

The curious implication of this possibility is that the pragmatics of a genre are less stable than its structure and poetics. A text can be recycled for a totally different purpose. This makes the case for further attempts at identifying more charms within texts previously not seen as related to charm tradition.

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Charms and Localities: Location Descriptions in Charms

Saša Babič

CONCEPT OF LOCATION

For the needs of this research it's necessary to take into consideration the existing definitions of place and space, which are strictly differentiated in the anthropology of place.[1] Although the definition of *place* taken from Oxford dictionary states: "a particular position, point, or area in space; a location", in the context of incantations we cannot ignore the definition of *(physical) space* as "a continuous area or expanse which is free, available, or unoccupied". Place (and time) are created by us and are therefore result of our actions. Although a verbally created cultural constructs with specific manifestations in the society, place is a domain where the individual positions himself simultaneously reflecting such positioning in language.[2] Place is understood as a location of an action and a known world, while space presents the location of the unknown, which might also might be natural landscape. Taking into consideration the anthropological distinction "place – space" we can explain the fluidness of these expressions and merge them into the term *location* in order to study incantations where diseases or the evil have taken over the body and its surroundings, represented as places, and the healer aims to extort it into space, uncivilized area or areas, uninhabited by human. If we consider that the diseases/evils are forced to leave the body thus making it unoccupied, the body then is transformed into space, an uncivilized area. In turn, it is disease/evil that occupies the body as an empty, uncivilized space making it a place. Therefore I understand both, place and space, as *location* of the event, either where the act of incantation is going on, was going on or should have move.

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[2] Muršič 2003/04.

Location in incantations is neither frequent nor a new research topic. One of first researches to mention locations in incantations was O. J. Brummer who as early as the beginning of 20th century has discussed the issue in relation to Finnish incantations. He conducted a research on the kinds of places mentioned in Finnish incantations and compared the locations to other European material. He noticed that all the places mentioned in the incantations are empty, desolate places. At the same time he noticed obvious Germanic and Slavic influences on Finnish (newer) incantations.[3] Brummer[4] took in consideration a corpus of mostly Finnish incantations, within which he identified 14 detailed groups of locations, some typical for Finnish incantations (mentioning Lapland, villages in the north etc.), while others more typical of central European area, especially Germany and its surrounding ex-colonial countries (mentioning places with no sun or moon, no living being or a sound of it, descriptions of wilderness, obsolation, and infertility of the extortion place, vast places with no boundaries; places without Christian symbols such as church or a graveyard phenomena as places from wilderness, like water, wind, earth; places of extinction with Christian terminology, like hell, devil etc.).

Agapkina[5] on the other hand focuses on locations in historiola in east Slavic incantations, where she distinguishes two kinds: sacral centre and locus of expulsion. Sacral centre is the place where historiola is located and is described in details. It is similar to our human world, and therefore it presents "our" world and it is marked with projections of well-known objects and places (it could be specified as place). Sacral centre could be marked also as a place where "Christian soul lives" (as it is put in Slovenian incantations), ie. a part of Christian place. The story of historiola is most often taken (at least partly) from the Bible; therefore places are conceptually highly bounded with Christianity and the places, described in Bible.

The location of expulsion in incantations is location without known objects, sounds, actions, it is "the other" world, where all illnesses should move. The "other world" is distanced and mentioned only with main characteristics,[6] most often with counting absences of human trace: as a place, where nothing is going on, it is rather chaotic, because it doesn't consist of any "civilized activity", its vastness is dispersed, though it has elements like exclusively natural landscape.

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3   Brummer 1909: 110.
4   Brummer 1909: 5–38.
5   Agapkina 2010.
6   Agapkina 2010.

Methodology

For the purpose of researching Slovenian incantation material, I have taken in consideration the published corpus of Slovenian incantations, which was collected and compiled by Milan Dolenc.[7] The monograph contains approximately 610 incantations against human diseases from all over Slovenia. The most productive group of incantations is against snake bite (99 of types and variations); followed by incantations against curse/evil eye (51 of types and variations).

The material has revealed the existence of many different locations in one-partite and two-partite incantations, within which historiolas[8] produced more diverse place namings.

Locations in Slovenian Incantations

Slovenian incantations were highly influenced by German concepts of places of extortion and Catholic views. Catholic perception is most visible in two-partite incantations, where legend stories from the Bible serve as descriptions of the origin of the problem and as introductions. Bible stories were adjusted for the needs of the incantation (for example in incantation against springs with dialogueue between St. Rochus and Mary). The locations used for sacral centre in the historiolas are usually – as also described by Agapkina[9] – (white) path, (green) world, field, church doorstep, (holy/golden) mountain/rock, evil valley, bridge; river Jordan, Danube, Jerusalem etc. Mentioning the (golden) mountain and the (evil) valley in incantations reveals the conceptualized metaphorical opposition of *up* = good vs. *down* = bad,[10] which is connected also to the Christian concepts of heaven and god above the clouds, and hell and devil under the earth.

Locations in incantations can be understood not only as descriptions of a landscape (like historiola) – as it traditionally is –, but also of human body and body parts, which are inhabited or taken by evil or disease. Cognitive linguistics would give explanation of it as a cognitive metaphor, "a pot in which evil/disease" lives.[11]

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[7]   Dolenc 1999.

[8]   Historiolas are short mythological stories that provide a paradigm for a desired magical action, usually as a parallel, reference to the past (in Slovenian incantations most often a Biblical) story in the incantation (Faraone 1988: 284).

[9]   Agapkinga 2010.

[10]   Lakoff – Johnson 1981.

[11]   Lakoff – Johnson 1981.

Conceiving location as a place where evil/disease is present and as a place of action described in historiola helped identify four larger groups in Slovenian incantations: human body and it's body parts, metaphorically described uninhibited places, descriptions of known places, and abstractly described places of evil's/disease's origin.

I. The first group of location presents human (or animal) body itself: body is a location invaded by evil/disease, it is inhabited by disease with intention to harm it.

In historiola disease or evil is personified and expresses intention to take over someone's body and to harm it or "crush someone's bones and drink someone's blood":

> Virgin Mary sits on church doorstep. Evil spell flies by. Virgin Mary says: "Evil spell, where are you going?" "I'm going inside of this person, into his flesh, to drink his blood, to crush his bones."[12]

Such descriptions are present only in two partite incantations, as a part of story with a dialogue, usually between St. Mary or St. Rochus and evil/disease. St. Mary answers evil's intentions with words of prohibition: evil is not allowed to harm that person, it must go away.[13] The argument that St. Mary gives is that person is already inhabited by holy (person), and evil/disease must go into places where no trace of human activity is to be found:

> Don't go there, there I live and also St. Rochus, you must go nine *kvoftr*[14] deep, where no bell rings, where no one mows lawn, where no women reaps.[15]

If disease/evil already took someone's body, then it is forced by words to go out of body, to leave it step by step. It is most often gradually pushed away of the body:

> – Go out, go out, go out – *from this flesh, from this blood, and from all bones,* you evil blood /.../[16]

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[12] Dolenc 1999: 102. 'Devica Marija na cerkven'm pragu kuači. Hudi urak mimo leti. Devica Marija pravi: "Hudi urak kom graš?" *"Jas gram notr' u tega človekal negovo meso dou cerat, negovo kri pit, negove kosti zdrobit."'*

[13] We don't get the answer by evil to these extortion words of Virgin Mary, which positions virgin Mary as a supreme authority.

[14] Dialect expression for "klaftra" which is an old metric unit for 4m³.

[15] Dolenc 1999: 102. "Ne *hodi ti tota*, tam prebivam jas in sveti Rok, *jedi ti devet kvoft'r u gobočino, tam kjer se noben zvon ne guasi, noben kosec ne kosi, nobena žanica ne žane.* /.../"

[16] Dolenc 1999: 80, 81. "Pojdi ven, pojdi ven, pojdi ven – s tega m'sa, *s te krvi in z vseh kosti, ti prežlehtna kri* /.../"

– /…/ You have to go away from this person *as from bones blood, from blood meat, from meat skin, from skin* /…/[17]

– /…/ *from vertex, from brain, fom forehead, from eyes, from cheeks, from teeth, from chin* /…/ *from hands, from fingers, from neils, from whole body into the black mother earth* /…/[18]

These extortion words are usually used in one-partite incantations and mostly against rheumatism, other bone-diseases, and erysipelas.

Body as a location is understood literally in incantations, and not metaphorical-ly – the disease wants to invade body or has already settled in the body, it has taken over the body, it lives in it, mostly with intention to harm it, so it has to be pursued to leave the body, if person wants to live normally and the soul to have place in body and live an earthly life.

In continuation, I will describe what places are, where and in what locations disease/ evil should go from the currently squatted location.

The civilized surroundings:

Stories in historiolas contain descriptions of the known world. These descriptions are usually the location, where a saint is walking and something happens to her/him or she/he meets the evil, which is headed to the person. Between the saint and the evil a dialogueue opens up, which ends with the extortion words. The described holy place of event is similar to the habitus of the people, so the incantation uses that relate to the living places in the human the society, such as: church doorstep, pile of manure, house, green world etc.

– St. Mary kneels *on church doorstep* /…/;[19]
– St. Iob, St. Iob, St. Iob, you sit on *a pile of manure* /…/];[20]
– St. Mary woke up early /…/ *walked in her house* /…/ than *she went into green world* /…/[21]
– /…/ I go *to that house* to mix all the intestines /…/][22]

Some of the locations frequently described in the incantations include: (white) path, house, church doorstep, (green) valley, which actually are the found in the surroundings

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[17] Dolenc 1999: 49. "/…/ ti moraš jendjati *otega človeka ko ot kosti kri ot karvi masa od masa kože ot kože* /…/"

[18] Dolenc 1999: 90. *"/…/ vö z temena, vö z možganih vö s čela, vö z zimic, vö z oči, vö z lalok, vö z lalok,vö z zov, vö z brade /…/ vö z rok, vö s prsičov, vö z nojtičov, vö ze celoga tela, notri dočarne mater zemle /…/"*

[19] Dolenc 1999: 102. "Devica Marija *na cerkven'm pragu kuači* /…/"

[20] Dolenc 1999: 71. "Sv. Job, s. Job, S. Job, ti sediš *na kupi gnoja* /…/"

[21] Dolenc 1999: 94. "Marija je zgodaj vstala, mlada nedele jutru *po hiši* prehajala /…/ je šla potem *zelenim svetu* /…/"

[22] Dolenc 1999: 100. "/…/ Grem *k tisti hiši,* bom vse čreva zmešal in kosti zdrobil /…/"

of the village houses. The locations are from "our" known, positive world. The world of good is our world, it is a known landscape and it is "our" from the point of view of its diametrical opposition to foreign. In this world saints have the power to extinct evil, so the eternal good can live.

Although it is obvious that the world of good is taken from the known surrounding, there are no detailed descriptions of our world: house and church doorsteps are not described with attributes. This is in a way generalization which can be adapted to wider conceptions. Bigger locations, like valley or path have attributes like colour (green, white) which are the colours with conceptual meaning "good".

II. Uninhabited by human, uncivilized locations

Places where the evil/disease should be sent to are usually places where nothing known exists or even where nothing living exists, or at least not a "Christian soul". In human understanding, these places are locations of the unknown. There are five subcategories of such locations:

- Locations, where no human or living being lives: *place, where no ass sits/ where no human lives / where no Christian soul lives/where no worm lives / where no tree grows* etc.;
- Locations, where no sounds from our world can be heard: *where rooster doesn't sing/where no bell rings* etc.;
- Locations without ordinary village landscape: *where no path goes* etc.;
- Locations with magic characteristics: *where shepherd makes fire without fire* etc.;
- Locations unreachable to human: *high mountains/ rocks; deep/ black sea* etc.

Descriptions of these places emphasize that locations of extortion are not the "Christian world", therefore it is a wild and dangerous world. These locations, unknown and unreachable to human, were often conceptually connected to mythological landscapes: fairies and dwarfs live in mountains, sirens and gods live in sea.

Locations from this category are described exclusively in the extortion part of incantations, where the evil force or disease is ordered to go to the place where no living-being exists. By describing the extortion location with details of lacking characteristics, the healer gives detailed instruction to the disease/evil what kind of place is appropriate for it. It is strictly unknown location to people, the most farther and desolate location. Radenković[23] found parallels with the place of extortion present in old Indian incantations and tales, where disease should cross "over 90 rivers" or it should go to the top of the mountain, thus showing that the most distant places are behind many rivers and/or many mountains.[24]

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[23] Radenković 1986.

[24] This concept can be traced also in fairy tales, where the hero goes over at least three mountains and crosses at least three waters to reach the border of the world of magic and the mythological beings.

III. Places of origin

Some incantations thematize illness's/evil's origin. In those, the disease/evil is expelled to its origin, which can be:

- natural phenomena: *sun, fire, water, twilight, mist, fog, wind*;
- farm and the parts of it: *henhouse, garbage can*;
- locations in village or near the village: *chapel, woods, gravel*;
- human clothes and arrangements: *under man's hat, under women's headscarf, under girl's plait* etc.

These versions of expelling disease/evil are of two forms: one directly sends disease to its place of origin (usually natural phenomena), and the other emphasizes the problem of locating the origin of disease/evil, so it questions the origin with the form *if from X than go back to X, if from Y than go back to Y*: *if it is from henhouse, than back to henhouse, if from garbage can, than back to the garbage can*. The second form where the possibilities of origin are counted is more often – following the principle of caution to send it to more places so that at least one would be the right one and would satisfy.

IV. Geographical names of places – biblical places

Locations, named with geographical names are rare in Slovenian incantations, they can only be found in some two-partite incantations, in historiolas with biblical story. The geographical names in historiolas are: *River Jordan, water Danube, Jerusalem*.

River Jordan is used in incantations for stopping bleeding (stop blood of this X's body, as river) and against dizziness:

- Bleeding:
    Jordan stopped, because St. Joannes came there with Christ, where Jesus was baptized; the same you, blood of this X's body, have to stop.[25]
- Sprain:
    Christ and St. Peter went around the world. They came to *the water of Jordan.* They crossed the water. Peter fell in the water and called: Crist, help me! Bone to bone, joint to joint /…/[26]
- Dizziness:
    Christ and St. Peter went around the world. They came to *the water of Jordan.* They crossed the water. Peter fell in the water and called: Crist, help me! Bone to bone, joint to joint /…/[27]

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[25] Dolenc 1999: 122, 123. Bleeding: "Cri, Stoj, kri tiga života N:, Kokar je obstau *Jordan*, ki je peršu s: Joannes k nemu s Cristusom, kir ga je kersitu Jezusa, glih taku obstati moreš ti, cri tiga života N: /…/"

[26] Dolenc 1999: 138. Sprain: "Kristus in sv. Peter sta šla po svetu. Prišla sta do *vode Jordanove*. Šla sta čez vodo. Peter je padel v vodo in zavpil: Kristus pomagaj! Kost stopi h kosti, sklep k sklepu /…/"

[27] Dolenc 1999: 197. Dizziness: "Kristus in sv. Peter sta šla po svetu. Prišla sta do *vode Jordanove*. Šla sta čez vodo Peter je padel v vodo in zavpil: Kristus pomagaj! Kost stopi h kosti /…/"

Bleeding is conceptually linked with flow of a river – as river flows in river-bed, so blood flows in veins; incantation to heal sprain or dizziness uses mentioning of river just as an element in a story, where st. Peter slips.

Danube is mentioned in an incantation against stretched muscles or sprain:

> Christ and St. Peter were walking around the world. They came to *the water of Danub.* St. Peter said: I have sprained my legs, I won't be able to cross the water. Christ said: step on the ground, so that bone can go to the bone /…/[28]

The plot is very similar, almost identical with previous incantation against sprain or dizziness, so the change of the name of the river might be only because Danub is the nearest biggest river in the region.

Jerusalem is mentioned only in an incantation *against all diseases* and *children epilepsy*. The same incantation is used for both purposes:

> Jesus took the saint baptized paternoster (paternoster) in hands and took baptized crutch and went on young Monday to pray *to Jerusalem.* He met heavy diseases /…/[29]

Jerusalem is mentioned as a pilgrimage destination, destination where Christian religion is supposed to have its beginnings. The city has no other reference or meaning only togive it as a fact in construction of historiola story.

Conclusion

Disease is understood as evil, unclean force from foreign worlds, which has occupied and inhabited the body. Body is considered as a location, which has been invaded by disease/evil, therefore it has to be dispelled for the sake of health (physical and psychical). Incantations aim to change the place of the diseases: from person = closed area/*self* to open space = mountain, sea/*foreign*, uncivilized world with no marks of human culture;[30] from inhabited place into uninhabited and vast space, which evil turns into its own place. Though, the focus of the incantation is the healing itself, the

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[28] Dolenc 1999: 148. "Kristus an svet Peter sta po svet hodiua. Prišua sta do *vode Donave.* Svet Peter je reku: jas s'm si pa noge posilu, pa črez vodo ne bom mogu. Kristus je requ: stop na zemlo, da stop qosr h qosti /…/"

[29] Dolenc 1999: 185, and 204. "Jezus je vzel na mlad ponedeljek v roke ta sveti žegnani paternoster in to sveto žegnano palco in šel *v Jeruzalem* molit /…/"

[30] Radenković 1986.

path which has to be done in the process of extorting disease out of the body and out of known world; locations are only marked points on this path.[31]

Slovenian material showed that locations are of three big groups: body and its body parts, locations of event in historiola, and locations of extortion.

The body can be observed as an invaded location mostly through the extortion formula, which commands the disease/evil to go gradually from the bones, through the blood, skin, hair out of the body. The concept of the body as a location can also be observed in the historiola, where Virgin Mary has a dialogueue with the disease in which she explains to it that there's no room for itself, because the holy person, ie. Virgin Mary already lives there. The explanation is a meaningful metaphor that the body already has a Christian soul living in it, a soul which should be left in peace.

Locations in historiolas are rooted in Bible narratives. They follow the narrative of the story and support the context with descriptions of the surrounding. These descriptions are elements of a village landscape, like a path, a church doorstep, a manure etc. Descriptions are enhanced with colours (white, green, golden), which are conceptually linked with life and fertility (there is no desert or rock landscapes). Descriptions give only a general sketch of this landscape, no details are given, which is expected as they serve only for the scenery basis of the happening. Geographical places also belong to this group, which are quite rare in Slovenian incantations: Jerusalem and rivers Danube and Jordan. There are no other geographical names in Slovenian incantations.

Locations of extortion are expressed in extortion part with commanding the disease to leave the occupied body and/or instruct it where it should go; either to distant, non-human locations or return to the origin. High mountains or deep waters are the distant, uninhabited locations while origin of the evil can be from more various locations: either from a part of the farm, like henhouse or from a natural phenomena, like wind or sky, or even from a clothing, like hat of handkerchief.

It is not rare that incantation includes two or three different ways of extorting and two different locations of disease/evil's destination: for example with counting down or/and sending the disease to its origin or/and to the place, where no living being exists.

One-partite incantations mostly have only the descriptions of the place where the disease is supposed to be sent. These places are obsolete, quiet, colourless.

Locations from the surrounding are characteristic for the extortion places in the one-partite incantations of extortion form: for Slovenian incantations are therefore characteristic high mountains or sea (for example in comparison with Estonian incantations, where woods and swamp are more typical), as these were places unknown to people and their conception of them was that there lives no soul, nor there is a natural phenomena well known (wind, air, sun). All these places are additionally linked to holy places, mythological places or places of transition to the other worlds. In these

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[31] Agapkina 2010.

locations we can also see mythological beings (fairies, dwarfs, unicorns etc.). In this regard, we also see white and green colours, which are often present in mythology, having a positive connotation constructed through the metaphor for cleanliness and life.

Time and place in incantations cannot be researched from an objective perspective. Nonetheless, they are an undeniable part of the societal observations, and as Radenković emphasizes, in most of cases, part of the local mythology and beliefs.[32]

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[32] Radenković 1986.

Transforming Reality: Personal Names in Ritual Speech.
The *Vinogradie* or "Song of Praise" from the Russian North[*]

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In July 2007, during a folklore expedition to Zherd' Village (Mezen' District, Arkhangelsk Region), I was privileged to become acquainted with a married couple – Vasilii Alexeievich Kuznetsov and his wife Kalisfenia Ivanovna. Shortly before our meeting these famous local singers had celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Both of them were lead-singers in a village folk choir and the whole family of Kuznetsovs, including their four daughters, made a vibrant family ensemble. We were taken to visit the parents by their eldest daughter who lived in a neighbouring village. Her husband, who was the head of the village council as well as an avid hunter and fisherman, was responsible for organizing our everyday life during the expedition and, because of the bad weather, let us stay in his own house for the first few days, treating us to the fish and game delicacies he had caught himself. In the early morning of St. Peter's Day (July 12th) we were also invited to join in a lavish meal at the Kuznetsovs' house. After we had all been introduced and drunk tea together, I asked Kalisfenia Ivanovna to recollect some of the songs which had been sung in her youth on non-official, i.e. non-Soviet, holidays, such as the folk songs or carols (*koliadki*) sung during the Christmas period. Kalisfenia Ivanovna replied that even a child could sing these *chastushki* (her rather dismissive name for *koliadki*) and offered to sing us a "good and proper" *vinogradie* instead. And so she did! The words poured out of her mouth with ease and confidence and she hesitated only on the eighth or ninth line. At this point she noticed for the first time that I was recording her. She asked me to stop the recording, summoned her husband for assistance and together they started afresh. What they sang was a genuine,

full-length *vinogradie*. It was beautifully performed and one which I had come across previously only in anthologies of calendar folklore. They sang a so-called "maiden" *vinogradie*, where in an open field, "inside a pavilion of white linen and velveteen" a young girl sits at an oaken board embroidering "all four corners" of a towel: on the first corner she embroidered "a bright crescent moon and star", on the second "a shining / bright sun with a halo of golden beams", on the third "a dark forest with its wild beasts", and on the fourth "the blue sea with its ships". In the middle of the towel room had been found for all the rest of Old Rus' with its churches, priests and scriveners [*podiatchii*]. Kalisfenia Ivanovna stumbled over the last few words. She had almost certainly never come across a real-life *podiachii*! Everything else was quite familiar and imaginable for her. At the moment when she had to introduce the name of the towel-embroidering maiden, she turned to her daughter and said "We'll *sing you in*". That was how "Mistress Olga, lovely lass" found herself seated in the pavilion! According to the plot, a fine young man was passing by just then, resplendent "with the pelts of foxes and martens" hung about his shoulders and "bearing a golden spear". Naturally, the name of the young man was that of the Kuznetsov's son-in-law. In the song "his words were fine and fancy-fed" and with a promise "to take the maiden by her right hand and lead her into the golden church [i.e. the one she had just embroidered] to kiss the Holy Cross". Both the daughter and we ourselves were most touched by the song and not only by its beautiful performance, but also by the beauty of the world unfolding before us. Each line of the song was followed by the refrain "Grapes, oh grapes, of red and green!" (*Vinogradie krasno-zelenoie*). The refrain transformed a northern village into a sort of Paradise. No fruit except for bird cherry and rowan berries get the chance to ripen in this severe climate and there is certainly no question of grapes. However, reality was undergoing a miraculous transformation right before our eyes. There was nothing unusual about referring to the daughter and son-in-law as capable and successful people in the song. What was particularly touching was that the parents visualized them as such and with their 'song of praise' *(velichanie)* imparted to their daughter's marriage an additional value – husband and wife were worthy of each other. It was a generous and spontaneous blessing, made even more valuable by the fact that the couple was newlywed and for both of them it was the second marriage. The parents were happy for their daughter and son-in-law and managed to express their feelings in a most sensitive way. It is worth remembering that the performance was absolutely spontaneous: the vinogradie had not been sung before, either at the wedding or on any other occasion. Because of my interest in folklore I had simply asked to hear a calendar song being sung and Kalisfenia Ivanovna had responded, inserting through improvisation her own particular meaning into the ancient words of the song. Later, when we were drinking tea, she recollected that 50 years ago, during hay-making on a distant *kolkhoz* (collective farm) meadow the village women had sung the same *vinogradie* about her and her husband-to-be Vasilii. She and Vasilii had been

"walking out together" for quite a while, so the older women decided to sing them a *vinogradie* as a hint that it was high time for them to marry. After their return from the hay-making, Vasilii led Kalisfenia, not to the church but to the village council, and not to kiss the cross but to sign their names in the Acts of Civil Status Book. The *vinogradie*, nevertheless, had done its job.

The question is how? How did the older women in 1957 and the Kuznetsovs in 2007 manage to "do things with words", as John Austin put it?[1] The "thing" in this case was a blessing, approving marriage in 2007 and inducing marriage in 1957. How had words turned from "just words" into reality-transforming agents?

Natalia Kolpakova worked in the Mezen' district in 1958–1961, that is only a few years after Kalisfenia Ivanovna was *sung* to Vasilii Alexeievich during the hay-making. In the introduction to "Folk songs of the Mezen' region" she wrote: 'The tradition of *vinogradie* singing, which was long-standing and strong in the old North, began to decline, noticeably and swiftly, from the 1920s. The texts of the songs, however, have remained fixed in people's memories with surprising persistence to the present day. Far from being in any way diminished, recordings of songs from 1961 are, on the contrary, in a number of cases, fuller and longer than texts recorded earlier, although nowadays *vinogradies* are remembered only by certain elderly village "songsters" and a very few middle-aged women. They have completely disappeared from the everyday life of present-day collective farms'.[2] As we now understand, N. P. Kolpakova was mistaken in suggesting that the *vinogradie*s disappeared from the lives of the Soviet peasantry, since hay-making on the collective farm fields had clearly become the venue for the performance of *vinogradie*s by middle-aged women for the benefit of their younger village neighbours.

N. P. Kolpakova defines the genre which provides the subject of this article as follows: 'the songs of praise, known as *vinogradina* (grape berry), were named after the refrain "Vinogradie krasno-zelenoie" ('Grapes, oh grapes, of red and green!'), repeated after each line throughout the whole text. They are long songs of praise containing semi-epic imagery and with a slow, stately and monotonous tune, the melody of which is no longer than a single repeated line'.[3] Thus we are dealing with a folklore genre defined primarily by its typical refrain, and only secondarily by the type of plot (semi-epic), function (praising), melody (stately and monotonous) and ritual time of performance (during weddings or at Christmastide). Publications and field records often define the *vinogradie* as a song "for the family" – addressed to an adult married couple, the master and mistress of the household, to a daughter of marriageable age (the so-called *dev'e* or 'maiden' *vinogradie)*, to a young bachelor (the *parnishnoe* or

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1   Austin 1962.

2   Kolpakova 1967: 27.

3   Kolpakova 1967: 27.

'young fellow' *vinogradie*). In the unpublished records of Kolpakova's expedition of 1958 I came across a *vinogradie* to a childless couple. Who is being addressed determines the choice of a particular *vinogradie* 'plot' of which there are nine common ones.[4] As for the communicative conventions of this genre, it should be noted that the narratives addressed to an unmarried girl, a bachelor, a newlywed or a childless couple differ one from the other.

The *vinogradie* performance by the Kuznetsovs showed us a very important genre-specific feature – the use of personal names for those who are being communicated with in the "praising" text, or more precisely for its addressees. The incorporation of personal names unites *vinogradies* with spells, lullabies, village party songs, marriage songs of praise and reproach. Spell plots bring together characters from different worlds: the healer, who gives his name and sets off – after blessing and crossing himself – on a journey around the magic world of the spell; the one who is to be cured is also referred to by name as are the magic and sacral forces called upon for assistance (the rosy dawn, the tempestuous winds, the Mother of God, etc.). In his article accompanying the publication of Great-Russian spells from the L. N. Maikov collection, A. K. Baiburin wrote that "the spell is overfilled with names": if we analyze spell texts, even outside the circumstances of their actual performance, we will come to the conclusion that "introducing the personal name of the initiator of the spell focuses the spell on a highly individualized situation".[5] However, in contrast to the spell-caster, the recipient is never the acting hero of the plot, being the object of the caster's actions and of magic forces.

The spell has, or so it seems, the same aim as the *vinogradie*: improvement of the recipient's private life. But, firstly, this improvement is rather one-sided, being

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[4] In the study *Vinogradie – pesnia i obriad* [Vinogradie – song and ritual] T. A. Bernshtam and V. A. Lapin categorize plots by their connection with a particular ritual and by the type of narration. Classical studies of Russian folklore define the most well-known *vinogradie* scenario as that of a carol or a well-wishing song. V. Y. Propp in his book *Russian Agrarian Festivals* analyzed the carol-type *vinogradie* plot, as one consisting of an introduction which described the singers' journey from afar and their search for a particular house, a main section with praising of the master and mistress, and a conclusion where the singers demand to be treated nicely with food and drink for their extolling, while threatening negative consequences to a stingy host and hostess (Propp 1995: 50–53). *Vinogradie*s of the carol type formed the biggest block of texts recorded by Bernshtam and Lapin – 87 out of 246. Topics related to weddings and marriage form a group of different plots: "The Dashing Young Man" (a plot in the form of questions and answers with praise given to a fine fellow with "three spirals of curls"), "Embroidery" a young girl sits in a pavilion embroidering a kerchief, while a young man passing by starts to boast openly about his merits with the aim of taking her for his wife, "The Ring" (husband and wife lie on a bed under a tree with a ring rolling between them, they send messengers to Heaven, asking for wealth or children), the "Marriage" group with four scenarios: a bird promises a young men he will provide merry-making at his wedding (1); a father must brew beer as it is time to get his son/daughter married (2); a young man is leading a maiden along a narrow plank across a brook (3); a maiden is carried away by the beautiful song of a nightingale enticing her to follow her bridegroom to a foreign land (4). "Vinogradie-the River Danube" is another plot belonging to the wedding-marriage group. In this song the refrain may change to "da iz-za Dunai" ("along the River Danube") – a young man on board the first of a line of ships makes an arrow and throws a ring into the sea. Those *vinogradies* which are unrelated to rituals, are in fact historical songs like "Skopin" or "The Ransoming of Filaret" with the traditional refrain integrated into them (Bernshtam – Lapin 2009: 260–261).

[5] Baiburin 1994: 171.

performed according to the best interests of the requester. The "servant of God" who initiates the spell is a young girl or a woman who would like to tie up her beloved with overwhelming and soul-sapping dependency. The description of the "symptoms' of this feeling is very graphic. The man against whom the spell is cast is shown as suffering "longing and anguish" (but not love) of such a scale and intensity that he is not able to drink, eat, walk about outside or sit with his mother unless he can hear or see the specific, named "servant of God" who has cast the spell. The precise description of the degree of dependency, in my opinion, relates more to the requester's state of body and mind as well as to her longing for love returned. Secondly, unlike the *vinogradie* a spell is not performed in public but in secret from the person to whom it is addressed. Thirdly, in a spell all those involved in the communication (active and passive, sacral and magical, real and supernatural) are named: the spell-caster, who addresses the forces (morning dawn and sunset, the Mother of God and the winds), the requester, in whose interests the caster is acting, and the object of her feelings. It should be noted that the activity of speech and deed with respect to spells is shown only by the sorcerer while the other individuals are passive objects, either those whose assistance is requested or those who suffer the application of forces:

> I'll stand up with a blessing,
> Cross myself and go
> Through the doors out of my house,
> Through the gates out of my yard
> To the open field beyond the gates,
> And stand with my face to the East.
> *I, servant of God (name),*
> Will obey and bow down before
> *Maria, the Morning Star,*
> *Before Solomonia, the Evening Sunset,*
> *Before the Holy Mother, the kindly Mother of God.*
> Oh, Holy Mother,
> You have twelve brothers,
> Twelve tempestuous winds.
> Blow, *winds,*
> To every village,
> To every town
> And find *God's servant (name).*
> Put longing and anguish
> Into his sweet lips,
> Into his body so white,
> Into his hot blood,

And proud heart,
Into his black liver,
Into his red lungs,
Into 77 joints,
And 77 heel tendons,
So he burns and craves for *servant of God (name)*.
Until he sees her, until he hears her voice,
Let him have no drink,
Let him have no meal,
And neither walk into the garden,
Nor spend time with his mother.
Whenever he sees her, whenever he hears her voice,
He can eat and drink,
And with his parents speak.
Let my words be firm and binding,
A lock with a key. (Italics mine – I. V.)[6]

Things are somewhat different with respect to lullabies. The child to whom the sleep-inducing song is addressed may become its main character, for which purpose the singer will give its name in the song. So then, in the world of the lullaby, Liosha/Katia/Vania may be attacked by a big bad wolf or get a smacking.[7] Threats and promises, addressed to a particular baby who is supposed to go to sleep, but pronounced within the symbolic universe of the cradle song, are not intended as an order, like "Go to sleep!" A demand of this kind does not really sound very effective in the context. Threats and promises *inside the reality of the lullaby* are make-believe only, while rhythm, melody and cradle rocking in the *actual world* are what change the baby's state.

*Vinogradie*s use the same trick of integrating an addressee into symbolic reality. The name of the addressee is attached to a character in the *vinogradie*. An interesting example of the use of personal names can be found in published *vinogradie*s from the collection of Aleksei Vladimirovich Markov.[8] Notably, the majority of *vinogradie*s in this book are intended for a bachelor and "Aleksei dear Vladimirovich" is praised

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[6] The Folklore Archive of St. Petersburg State University (FASPSU) Vin20–30. Recorded on July 11, 1990 in the Village of Brasunitsoie of Topez County in the Vinogradovskii District of Arkhangelsk Region from Taisiia Vasilievna Sergeieva, born 1917 in the Village of Borka, recorded by I. Razova and S. Zhavoronok.

[7] Baiu, baiushki-baiu,
Do not lie on the very edge,
A little gray wolf will come,
And take a hold of Lyosha's side.
FASPSU Onezh 10–29. Recorded on July 23, 1981 in the Village of Filevo of Ksachel' County in the Onezhskii District of Arkhangelsk Region from Aleksandra Mitrofanovna Malygina, born 1908 in the village of Cheshiuga, recorded by A. Kalinina and E. Demidenko.

[8] Markov 2002: 821–836.

in many of them. Undoubtedly the narrators meant the collector himself. It is known that A.V. Markov conducted his field research in the Russian North from 1898 until 1909, i.e. when he was 20–30 years of age and not married at that time. In a *vinogradie* of the "young fellow" type sung in July 1899 in the Village of Nizhniaia Zimniaia Zolotiza the singer, Agrafena Matveievna Kriukova, addressed not only the researcher, but all his relatives by first name and patronymic: "birth mother Mariia Polikarpov-na", "birth father Vladimir Semionovich" and "blood sister Zinaida Vladimirovna".[9] While singing *vinogradie*s to A.V. Markov at his own request the narrators tried to arrange his private affairs as well. Some singers left him a certain freedom of choice, delicately leaving out the girl's name. It is unlikely we will ever know, for example, who exactly was the girl chosen by the singer A. M. from the village of Gridino in July 1909. Others praised him together with particular individuals, such as "Matrionushka Mikitishna". Nevertheless, we can see not only the results of intensive and successful field work by an enthusiastic folklore collector, but also the no less intensive attempts of his counterparts, the informants, to change his life by getting a suitable wife for him.

What is the mechanism for changing reality by means of words?

Once again I would like to draw your attention to the communicative distinctions of the *vinogradie*'s performance, and in the first place to the participants in this specific communication: the one who assumes the right to praise and the one to whom such praise is addressed. Depending on relations between the addresser(s) and the addressee *vinogradie*s can become a blessing, an approval, an impetus and even a coercion (we do not know, to what extent, if any, A. V. Markov was inclined to "tie the knot" with Matrionushka Mikitishna). We should always keep in mind that *vinogradie*s, like spells, lullabies and songs of praise – i.e. magic and ritual genres, – are not performed without the intention of changing the addressee's real-life situation: finding a husband or wife for her/him, bringing wealth and prosperity to a household, even helping to conceive babies. The sphere which the *vinogradie* embraces is the wished-for world of the family ideal. In general this ideal has remained practically unchanged since the time of the first recorded *vinogradie*'s (beginning of the 19th century) until the present day: a materially comfortable life with a decent husband or wife and with children. Only the details of the conventions regarding intrusion into someone's personal life have changed. For example, public and collective acknowledgement of infertility problems and the expressed desire for a solution are not possible in the modern setting.

The sociologists P. Berger and T. Luckmann in their book "The Social Construction of Reality" maintain that the "reality" of the everyday world, which is *the reality par excellence* is affected by finite provinces of meaning (dreams, literature, religion). Being symbolic enclaves in everyday reality they transpose their meanings into it, with language acting as a mediator. 'Language is capable of transcending the reality

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9   Markov 2002: 836.

of everyday life altogether. It can refer to experiences pertaining to finite provinces of meaning, it can span discrete spheres of reality. Language links up commonsense knowledge with finite provinces of meaning, thus enabling people, for example, to interpret dreams through understandings relevant in the daytime. For instance, I can interpret the "meaning" of a dream by integrating it linguistically within the order of everyday life by making it an enclave within the latter. The dream is now meaningful in terms of the reality of everyday life rather than of its own discrete reality. Enclaves produced by such transposition belong in a sense to both spheres of reality. They are "located" in one reality but "refer" to other. Any significant theme that thus spans spheres of reality may be defined as a symbol and the linguistic mode by which such transcendence is achieved may be called *symbolic language* (italics mine – I.V.)'.[10]

The principle by which the symbolic enclave works is not simple. By means of symbolic language it creates an abstracted reality, the meaning of which may be transposed into everyday reality by certain mediators. In terms of ritual speech, spells, lullabies and *vinogradie*s have their own particular signs which act as mediators – the personal names of participants in the communication and their titles (maiden, beloved, lovely lass, mistress of the house, fine fellow, master of the household, etc.).

In order to define the relationship between everyday reality and symbolic reality, I would like to use the communication multi-level model, developed for works of literature by Wolf Schmid. Schmid extended the communication model of "address-er–message–addressee" proposed by R. Jakobson. In Schmid's model the "message" became multi-layered and placed the work of literature, taken as a whole with all included narrative instances, within the wider context of author-reader relations. So, a concrete author creates a work of literature and a concrete reader reads it. But the concrete author envisages an abstract reader (the one with whom he communicates on the pages of his book), while the concrete reader imagines, based on signs contained in the text, an abstract author. The abstract author and the abstract reader belong to the work of literature. The world depicted in literature may also have a fictitious narrator, such as Mr. Belkin in *The Tales of Belkin* by A. S. Pushkin, as well as a fictitious reader (such as the one addressed by the author in *Eugene Onegin*). In the world narrated by the narrator lies the deepest communicative level: the level of communication(s) between the characters.[11]

Applying the communication multi-level model to folklore performance we see that in the real world communication takes place between the performer and his or her audience or between addresser and addressee. The performer and the audience are engaged in a specific communication act, which is different from the language of everyday speech. They communicate through the performance of a particular folklore

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[10] Berger – Luckmann 1991: 54–55.

[11] Schmid 2003: 39–49.

genre, which creates a symbolic reality. The folklore genre, as defined by Boris Putilov, is "a system – historically formed and realized both in individual works and in their totality – of content, poetical, functional and presentational principles, norms and stereotypes behind which stand those ideas, relationships, links with various spheres of reality, social institutions and everyday life which derive from the collective experience".[12] The speaker, singer or tale-teller creates the work of folklore in compliance with these principles and norms, while the addressee understands it, guided by the same. The communicative parameters of each genre define, in particular, the status of the participants, the specific time and place, etc. The communicative parameters of the *vinogradie*s, for example, contain ideas about who may "praise" or "be praised" – older people or people of a particular age group may "praise" those who are younger or the same age as themselves, most frequently within the framework of calendar ritual (Christmas carols) or rites of passage (the wedding). No folklore performance is possible without both parties – addresser and addressee – being fully aware of the conventions of the communicative genre. As Natalia Gerasimova has pointed out with respect to the fairytale, 'in order to enter the fairy-tale world one has to accept the "rules of the game", set by the initial and final formulas, which form the framework of the fairy-tale plot: these are the rules of place, time and person. The strong framing position of such formulas is by no means accidental, since it marks the boundaries of what is being related. The initial formula is where the audience is drawn into the fairy-tale action, where the specific figure of the "mediator" makes his appearance, that is the tale-teller who acts as intermediary between the tradition and the audience'.[13] When a work of folklore is presented orally, the performer and the audience coexist in several different realities: the physical reality of the performance and the symbolic reality of the work of folklore. The symbolic reality of the work of folklore is a special world with its own laws and specific features (time, place, plot, formulas, themes characters). Some folklore genres with ritual or magic meaning assume the performer's ability to unite actual and symbolic realities in order to change the former. One of the methods of achieving unity and interaction is the use of the personal names of the participants in the communication and other ways of naming them. However, in each genre personal names function in different ways. Let us have a look at some of the parameters of communication. At the level of everyday reality we should take into account the following – the number of addressers or performers (depending on the collective or individual nature of the performance), whether the interaction involved is public or intimate in character, the number of addressees and the forms of address given to the participants in the communication. At the level of symbolic reality it is important to note whether a named character is active or passive. This approach provides us with

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[12] Putilov 2003: 167.

[13] Gerasimova 2012: 79.

a fully formalized description of the communicative parameters of the *vinogradie* as a genre. In the *vinogradie*, according to these parameters, one or two addressees are named but the performers, of whom there must be several, are never named. In symbolic reality the *named characters are active*: the maiden "sews and embroiders the towel"; the young fellow "awakes from sleep and clears his tipsy head" or is "draped in fox and marten furs, and girdled with black sable", the master of the house "makes decisions and keeps order" etc.[14]

The *vinogradie* performers, whose groups are formed according to gender- or age-related principles (older women at hay-making, adult guests at a wedding, young girls and youths, groups of women and men,[15] going house-to-house to sing Christmas carols) address their songs of praise to bachelor village neighbours, newly-wed couples, masters of the household and childless married couples. The public and collective nature of their performance is an expression of the generalized nature of their commentary, the significance, objectives and values of which are shared by the group as a whole. The performers' aim is to praise the addressee(s) while at the same time wishing upon them improvements in their present status. This aim is achieved through the use of certain conventions. The active nature of the characters, the addressees who are given personal names, is, in symbolic reality, a testimony to their personal merits. In other words, the addressees are praised according to their actual achievements. The well-wishing that follows, therefore, is transformed into a well-deserved reward, behind which lurks unseen the cultural imperative the singers wish to impose. The bachelors are "strongly recommended" to get married, the newlyweds – to set their household, the childless – to have children. The number of improvement scenarios corresponds to the number of *vinogradie* plots (let me remind you that there no more than nine), while the number of specific personal situations can be much greater. Personal names individualize a universal solution, correlating it with a specific time and place and with personal circumstances. As a result everyday reality is turned into an idealized form of symbolic reality for the time of the performance and keeps its suggestive effect as long as memory and imagination allow. The Kuznetsovs, who sang the *vinogradie* to

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[14]   By way of comparison here is a description of the process of mediation between everyday and symbolic realities in lullabies and spells. In the lullaby, a single child is named (the one being rocked to sleep), while the performer, also in the singular, is not named. In the symbolic reality of the lullaby the named character is most often passive – sleep and drowsiness are summoned for him, he or she is the recipient of the order to "go to sleep". In the symbolic reality of spells, on the other hand, the named characters are the wise-man (or-woman), who is also the performer, the "patient" or object of the spell and the wise-man's otherworldly helpers. While the wise-man and the supernatural forces are active, the object of the spell remains passive.

[15]   "Unfortunately not much data on the manner of *vinogradie* performance and types of treats for performers has been preserved. Nevertheless, summing up the collected information we may suggest the following: groups of young girls or women sang *vinogradies* inside the house: in the living space (Russian North), in the ante-room and in the living space (Murom Region, the Volga Region), in the yard and in the living space (the Kolyma Region); groups of young girls and lads – in front of the house (Pskov Region, Sumy Region); groups of men in the North of Russia and Siberia would begin to sing *vinogradies* in front of the house, but if invited in by the host and hostess, they would continue their singing in the living area" (Bernshtam – Lapin 2009: 255).

their daughter and the folklore researchers, impromptu, genuinely believed the force of its charm would last for the whole life-span of its addressees. However, we will never know how the *vyinogradye* sung especially for A.V. Markov influenced the rest of his life.

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The Church of Saint Clement of Rome:
The Sources and the Symbolism of the Image in Russian Charms

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The name of Pope St. Clement[1] is rarely mentioned in Russian magical charms and prayers, but there are some from the Russian North where it is found. Quantitative data do not support considering him as among the most important Christian saint patrons in Russian charms.[2] But the figure of St. Clement as a personage of charms is still of some interest.

St. Clement, the Pope, is named among saints as carrying authority in Russian religious tradition in general and its local north variant. We have such an example in the cattle-breeding magical prayer, obviously reflecting the religious preferences of North Russians. It includes a long list of names of saint patrons, given in a not quite strict hierarchical sequence. And St. Clement takes an intermediate place in it, as if he connects Greek, Roman and Russian church traditions.[3]

In Russian charms, the name of St. Clement is usually connected with the theme of the sea, and also with an image of a church, standing in or at the sea. My aim is to explore the sources of this image and to trace the semantic transformations which it undergoes in Christian literary texts, iconography and folklore.

First, I touch briefly on the history of the cult of St. Clement the Pope in Russia. In the beginning – from the end of the 10C to the middle of the 13C – it was almost

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[1] Clement (Greek *Κλεμης*, Latin *Clemens*) was a Roman of Greek origin. He lived between the 1C and the beginning of the 2C. According to church lore, he was a disciple of the apostles Peter and Paul, and, in 88–97 (or 92–99) he was Pope. Legends about his martyrdom in the Crimea became popular in the 6C. It is considered that the geographical proximity of these Greek lands to the Kiev Rus' promoted the dissemination of the hieromartyr's cult among the population of the Old Russian state, newly converted to Christianity. The Russian Church celebrates the saint on the 25th of November Julian (8th December Gregorian) (Zadvornyi 2005: 1074; Vinogradov – Turilov 2014: 456).

[2] Iudin 1997: 101–102; Toporkov 2010: 175.

[3] Maikov 1994: 119.

apostolic.[4] In this period, it developed first in Kiev, and then expanded further afield. Later, this cult became gradually weaker and nearly died away. Then, in the 16C and first half of the 17C, North Russian icon painters showed a real interest in the history of St. Clement. They decorated churches constructed in his honor with icons, including some episodes from his life.

It is well-known that the cult of St. Clement goes back to the traditions of Saints Cyril (Constantine) and Methodius. According to Constantine the Philosopher's hagiography, on his arrival at Chersonese in 861, he began to search for the place where relics of the martyred prelate lay; he formed the opinion that "saint Clement still lies in the sea".[5] He found the relics in the sea, and part of them accompanied the "Slav teachers" on their travels in the borderlands of the Graeco-Roman world. Their mission encouraged the spread of St. Clement's cult in the Slavic lands.

But in Kiev Rus' the beginning of this cult was connected most of all with the activity of Saint Prince Vladimir. According to legend, fixed in his hagiography and in early Russian chronicles, he transferred to Kiev the rest of St. Clement's relics, obtained through the Korsun war campaign. He put them in a special altar in the first Russian stone church dedicated to Mary, the well-known Desiatinnaia church, Kiev. From this time, St. Clement was perceived as the first holy patron of Russia, its apostle, and his memory was highly significant for Christian life in Kiev. Annually, on the 30th of January, the day when the holy relics were found by Constantine the Philosopher, a solemn service was held in the Desiatinnaia church (testified in the calendar of the Ostromir Gospel, 1056–1057). This day was also celebrated in other Old Russian menologions of 11–14C.[6] St. Clement's relics remained in the Desiatinnaia church as one of the main sacred objects of Kiev, until the chrurch was destroyed in 1240 by the troops of Batu khan. There are no reliable data of their later fate.[7]

Today a special reverence for St. Clement the Pope can be seen in works from the early period of Russian Christian history. These are, first of all, early Russian literary texts, translated and originals, which have reached our time; also church mosaics and murals, created by Greek masters commissioned by Russian customers. We can assume that the most ancient image of St. Clement in Kiev was in the murals of the altar devoted to him in the Desiatinnaia church, where the head of the saint was stored as a relic.[8] According to art historians, "the iconography of his personal appearance and also the plots of his hagiography extended across all Russian lands exactly from

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[4] Sarabianov – Smirnova 2007: 22.

[5] V. Toporov wrote that it was "too courageous an image" in the hagiography's text. Actually it meant a low island opposite Chersonese which was gradually going under, and it had almost been flooded by the time St. Constantine tried to find it (Toporov 1995: 113–118).

[6] Karpov 2007: 5.

[7] Sarabianov 2014: 55.

[8] Zaigraikina 2014: 460.

here [i.e. from Kiev]. And it is highly probable that a considerable part of these samples of more ancient origin, produced still in Chersonese, could be brought to Kiev from Korsun in the form of manuscripts or icons as a part of Prince Vladimir spoils of victory".[9] It is still possible to see a mosaic image of St. Clement in a rank of holy hierarchs, in an altar of St. Sophia's Cathedral, Kiev (the 1040th).

The expansion of St. Clement's cult to the Russian North is marked by the construction of the stone cathedral in his honour in Old Ladoga (1153), by the inclusion of his image in murals of an apse of St. Georgy's Church, in the same town ("A Service of St. Fathers", last quarter 12C). St. Clement was depicted in an upper tier, as part of a rank of holy hierarchs, in the Saviour's Church at Nereditsa, near Novgorod; there he is represented next to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (1199). There is a cycle of murals devoted to St. Clement in the Transfiguration of Christ Cathedral of the Mirozhskii Monastery in Pskov (between 1136 and 1156). This reflected the hagiography of the saint in the most remarkable way. Here, scenes of St. Clement's acts and miracles are placed on the same level as acts of the apostles (two upper tiers in arches represent scenes of the apostles preaching, and Peter's and Paul's histories, and in the lower tier are episodes of St. Clement's life). Unfortunately, these murals are damaged and now nearly illegible.[10]

Interest in St. Clement is also testified by a large number of icons. On the majority of early icons (13C–17C) he is represented standing before an enthroned Jesus or Mary, praying; frequently among the other saints most venerated in Russian tradition. There is St. Nicholas, the Wonderworker; the Hieromartyr Blaise (in Russian "Vlasii"), Bishop of Sebaste; the "Great-martyr" Parasceva, nicknamed Piatnitsa ("Friday"), and so on.[11] Such icons, as well as lists of saints in magical charms and prayers (this parallel is quite pertinent), allow us to judge the worship of the saint in very general terms. But St. Clement's icons, created in the Russian North at the end of the 16C and start of the 17C, also include detailed cycles of his hagiography in their margins. So they show what episodes of his life, what legends and which of his miracles were most attractive to Russian people at this time.

Legendary motives of St. Clement's life were fixed first in Greek texts, then translated by Slavic and Old Russian scribes. A big block of these compositions was included later in the Great menologion by the metropolitan Makarii (16C). Various hagiographies of the saint tell of melodramatic episodes in his parents' and brothers' lives, his discipleship with the apostle Peter, service in Rome and exile to remote Chersonese, where he overthrew idols, baptized people and also found a spring of water. One of the most expressive elements of this narration is the story about his martyrdom: how

[9]   Sarabianov 2014: 56, and 60.

[10] Sarabianov – Smirnova 2007: 117; for more details see: Sarabianov 2014: 58–61.

[11] Zaigraikina 2014: 460; on 13C Novgorod icons see Tsarevskaia 1999.

he was thrown by his persecutors into the sea with an anchor round his neck, then a mysterious church appeared in this place, and the sea waters moved away around it to show the church with the relics of the martyr. These events are described in "The Martyrdom of Saint Clement", the well-known Greek source, existing in numerous Slavic and Russian variant translations.[12]

The extraordinary chapel in memoriam of St. Clement was described by Greek authors, and by Latin pilgrims, who testified that there was a sacred place with the relics of St. Clement in the sea, and it was the very place of his martyrdom. There is a famous eye witness account by the pilgrim Feodosij, travelling in 537 to the Holy Land, who visited Chersonese on his way. He wrote: "And there is a city of Kherson that is at the Pontus Sea; saint Clement suffered there; there is his grave-chapel in the sea where his body was thrown; an anchor was tied to saint Clement's neck; and now in the day of his memory everybody, people and clergy, get into boats, and when they come to the very place, the sea parts for six miles; and people make some shelters and the altar in the place where there is a grave-chapel; and for eight days they serve liturgies, and the Lord works there many miracles; demons are exorcized and if a possessed person can touch the anchor, he will recover".[13]

The first Russian original work about St. Clement to feature the church coming out of the sea as a miracle is the 11C "The Lay on a Renovation of the Desiatinnaia church". Another interesting literary monument of the same time – the Russian version of "The Miracle about an Adolescent", known from 14C–17C manuscripts – is closely connected.[14] This is a very free retelling of a Greek "Legend of Saint Clement's Miracle of the Adolescent Boy" attributed to Yefrem, the 4C bishop of Chersonese. The Russian version substantially differs from the Greek original.[15]

In "The Miracle", the Russian author describes in detail the execution of St. Clement, who refused to make a sacrifice to idols. He says that the pagans wanted to deprive Clement's disciples of the opportunity to bury their teacher and to give him the necessary honours, but suddenly a church appeared in the sea. The author focuses attention on a seven-day pilgrimage to this church by inhabitants of nearby places, who linger at the relics and pray to St. Clement, and an incident that occurred when one of the families accidentally left their son at the place of the relics. Having returned

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[12] Karpov 2007.

[13] Feodosii 1891: 5, and 17–18. "Item civitas Chersona, quae est ad mare Pontum. ibi dominus Clemens martyrizatus est. in mari memoria eius, *ubi* corpus missu*m* est. cui domino Clementi anchora ad collum ligata est. et modo in natal*i* eius omnes in barca*s* ascendant, populus et sacerdotes, et cum ibi venerint, mar*e* disiccat milia vj, et ubi ipsa arca est, tenduntur super se papiliones et ponitur altare, et per octo dies ibi missae celebrantur et multa mirabilia ibi dominus facit. ibi dæmonia excluduntur, si quis vero de vexaticis ad ipsam anchoram attingere potuerit et eam tetigerit, statim liberatur." Some researchers of Clement's cult consider this fragment to be a later insert (Ukhanova 2000: 118).

[14] Karpov 2007: 3, 56, 69–73.

[15] Karpov 2007: 73.
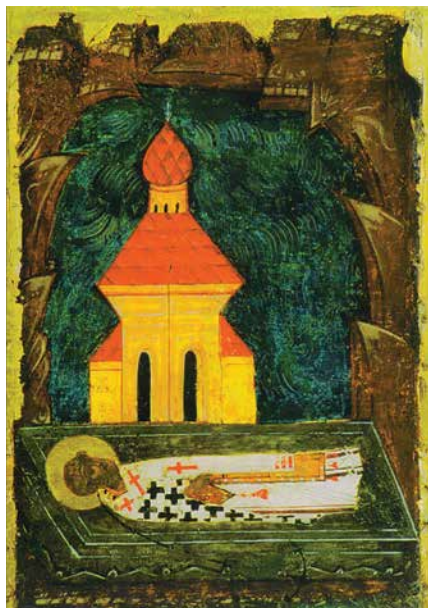
1. St. Clement's relics rest in the chapel at the bottom of the sea. Fragment of the icon Holy bishop Clement, the Pope, with scenes from his life. Mid-16th century, Arkhangelsk Museum of Fine Arts
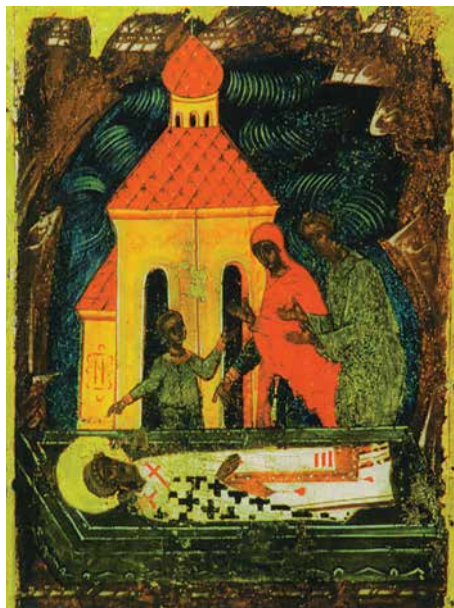
2. St. Clement's miracle about an adolescent. The fragment of the icon "Holy bishop Clement, the Pope, with scenes from his life". Mid-16th century. Arkhangelsk Museum of Fine Arts

to the city, the father and mother understood that their son had not come back with the other pilgrims. In despair, they rushed to the coast, but it was too late: the sea had returned to its usual place. The parents mourned their boy, reproaching the saint for his cruelty, a poor recompense for their prayers. The next year, on the day when the sea parted again, they came back to the place where their child had died. They hoped to find his body and give it Christian burial. But a miracle awaited them: their son met them in the sea church of St. Clement, at the very place where they had left him. Further evidence of the miracle lies in the words of the boy as he answered his parents' questions: "Who guarded you? Who fed you?" The author "draws" an illustration of this episode: the adolescent 'holds one hand at the reliquary and points with a finger of the other hand towards the saint inside it, answering his parents: "Here he is – my guard with God. He fed me, he protected me against the attacks of sea beasts, he kept me all the time"'.[16]

This tale was very popular. Icons of "Holy Bishop Clement the Pope, with scenes from his life" exactly reproduce the episode with the rescued boy. Icon painters use the gesture of the boy in conversation with his parents, and the image of the church in the

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[16] Karpov 2007: 99.

sea at the place of martyrdom, where the event took place. As an example, I refer to two well-known North Russian icons: one, dated mid-16C, from St. Nicholas church, village of Nionoksa, Arkhangelsk region (the icon is in the collection of Arkhangelsk Museum of Fine Arts), and another, late 16c–early17C (now in the State Hermitage), from Solvychegodsk, probably also from a church of Saint Clement. The first icon containsscenes of: Clement thrown in the sea, Clement's Relics in the Chapel below the Sea, Clement's Miracle of the Adolescent Boy; in a cycle of 13 extant border scenes (the lower tier is lost). On the second icon, in a cycle of 20 border scenes, are the episodes of Clement's Execution by Drowning, and two scenes of Clement's Miracle of the Adolescent Boy.[17]

Researchers consider that the "Legend of Saint Clement's Clement's Miracle of the Adolescent Boy" prompted the birth of another Old Russian legend about the rescue of a child from drowning – the Miracle of a Child by St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia.[18] And it is true that the sea miracles of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker – for example, his "Rescue of Three Men" and "Rescue of the Nan Dimitrij" from drowning – are similar to the sea miracle of Clement of Rome. So the origin of an Old Russian legend deriving from, or ascribed to, two cults of holy hierarchs is quite possible. And this is one of the probable reasons why the two archbishops are shown together on icons; for example, on a Novgorod icon, second half 13C, "The Mother of God Enthroned, Nicholas and Clement stand before Her" (State Russian Museum collection), and on a 14C icon depicting the same saved-from-drowning legend, in a northern Rostov variant tradition (Vologda State Historical and Architectural Art Museum Reserve). Both saints are "Sea Wonderworkers".

It is important that the charm from the famous 17C Olonets collection calls Clement exactly "the Sea Wonderworker".[19] Such an epithet for the saint in this case is not connected with the aim of the text (to cure bleeding wounds from spears, arrows, swords, axes and knives). Therefore, the speaker of the text is hailing St. Clement by using the epithet as one of his constant characteristics, settled by tradition. Certainly, it was fixed due to the Miracle of the Adolescent Boy, and the further development of beliefs in the saint as a saviour from drowning. The connection in the visual arts between Clement and Nicholas might be the reason for a strange plural number in a charm from the Olonets' collection, where Clement is the only named saint-assistant. Perhaps, the name of Nicholas the Wonderworker was omitted by the copyist.

A folkloric assimilation of motifs and images, connected with literary and iconographic sources for Saint Clement's hagiography, is a specific problem. As an example, it is worth looking through the texts, using the image of the mysterious church,

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[17] Veshniakova – Koltsova 1999: 55; Veshniakova et al. 2007: 226–235; Zaigraikina 2014: 461.

[18] Ustinova 2006: 59.

[19] Sreznevskii 1913: 485; Toporkov 2010: 97–98.

appearing from or standing in the sea. In folklore, this image receives a generalized sense as a spatial symbol – a holy place, connected with God's presence. A spiritual verse, "Golubinaia kniga" (Pigeon Book), and a related prose novel, "The Tale of Volot Volotovich", name all the main shrines and miracles of the Christian world; Saint Clement's church among them.[20] Here is how "The tale of Volot Volotovich" relates it: "…And the Ocean Sea is the mother of all the seas: it is great and vast. And on the Ocean Sea there is a God's church, and over there the relics of Clement, the Pope, rest, therefore the Ocean is the mother of all the seas".[21] And here is how this image appears in the spiritual verse "Golubinaia kniga" [Pigeon book]:

> …The Ocean Sea is the mother of all the seas.
> – Why is the Ocean Sea the mother of all the seas?
> This sea embraces all the Earth around,
> And there is a navel of the sea in the Ocean Sea;
> The cathedral church
> Of Saint Clement of Rome,
> Of Saint Peter of Alexandria,
> With twelve altars
> Rose from the sea,
> From under the East side –
> Therefore the Ocean Sea is the mother of all the seas…[22]

or:

> …The Ocean Sea is the mother of all the seas.
> – Why is the Ocean the mother of all the seas?
> – The cathedral church, the prayerful church
> Of Saint Clement, the priest of Rome,
> Came out in the middle of the Ocean Sea;
> There are marble domes on the church,
> There are golden crosses on the domes.
> From this cathedral church, from this prayerful church
> Our Lady of Heaven came out;

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[20] Mochul'skii 1887: 123–131.

[21] "…А море Окиянъ всем морям мати: велико и пространно. И на Окияне море стоит церковъ Божия, а в ней опочивают мощи Климента, папы римъскаго; потому и мати всем морямъ Окиянъ." Markov 1913: 33; to compare see also a consolidated text, according to four manuscripts of "The Tale…", in: Buslaiev 1870: 330.

[22] Bessonov 1861: 288–289. "…Окиян море всем морям мати. / – Почему жь Окиян море всем морям мати? / 110. Обкинуло то море вокруг землю всю, / Во нем Окияне во мори пуп морской; / С-под восточной со сторонушки / Выставала из моря церковь соборная / Со двенадцатью со престоламы, / 115. Святу Климанту, папы Римскому, / Святу Петру Александрийскому, – / Потому ж Окиян море всем морям мати…"

> She had a wash in the Ocean Sea,
> She read a prayer to God at a cathedral church:
> Therefore the Ocean is the mother of all the seas…[23]

In the spiritual verses, the literary image undergoes a specific working up. It directs the reader towards an aesthetic representation of the shrine: (There are marble domes on the church, / There are golden crosses on the domes[24]) and an emphasis of its scale (With twelve altars[25]). But the image undergoes some semantic transformations as well. A church, rising from the sea, becomes a symbol of the universal Church, part of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is all-embracing, thus it has a place everywhere, and on the bottom of seas and lakes too. It is significant that the Virgin Mary stays here. But at the same time, the relics of the martyr are not mentioned in these fragments at all. The church has his name, but it is impossible to understand from the text why. More features of the literary legend appear in some variants of "Golubinaia kniga" [Pigeon book]. In the consolidated text, published by P. Bessonov, we meet the following details: "a cathedral / divine church comes out *once a year*",[26] "in that in cathedral church / there is a white stone tomb in the air, / in that white stone tomb / *there are the relics* of the Pope… the Pope, Clement, the Glorious".[27]

As an important symbols of Christianity, the church of St. Clement is used also in Russian charms. In "sacred geography", it is a symbol of a sacred centre – a place where the protagonist goes:[28] "…I'll go, the servant of God, to the sacred Ocean Sea, there is a sacred island there; on the sacred island the white stone Latyr lies; on that stone there is a church of the Pope; in this church there is a golden altar; on this golden altar there is Jesus Christ, the Mother of God, Our Lady of Heaven, in golden clothes, she holds a gold feather and brushes off, and pushes away, and blows out, and sweeps away a yellow foam from the Ocean…"[29] A personage-assistant, curing an illness,

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[23] Bessonov 1861: 303–304. "…Океан море всем морям мати. / – Почему Океан всем морям мати? / 150. – Посреди моря Океанскаго / Выходила церковь соборная, / Соборная, богомольная, / Святого Климента, попа Рымскаго: / 155. На церкви главы мраморныя, / На главах кресты золотые. / Из той из церкви из соборной, / Из соборной, из богомольной / Выходила Царица Небесная; / Из Океана моря она омывалася, / 160. На собор-церковь она Богу молилася: / От того Океан всем морям мати…"

[24] "На церкви главы мраморныя, / На главах кресты золотые."

[25] "Со двенадцатью со престоламы."

[26] "выходит *раз в год* церковь соборная / божественная"

[27] "что во той во церкви во соборныя / стоит гробница на воздухах бела каменна, / в той гробнице белокаменной / *почивают мощи* па́па Римскаго… па́па Римскаго, слава́-Клементьева" Bessonov 1861: 361, emphasis added.

[28] T. Agapkina also points out and refers to a charm (from Kaluga region) where "the church of the Pope" is mentioned (Agapkina 2010: 53).

[29] "…Пойду я, раб Божий, ко святу Окияну морю, есть свять остров там; на святе острову лежит белый камень Латер; на том камне стоит церковь Папы Римской [*sic*]; в ефтой церкве стоит злат пристол; на злате пристоле сидит сам Исус Христос, Матерь Божья, Цариця небесная, в злате ризе, держит золото перо и смахивает, и спихивает, и сдувает, сметает со свята Окияна желту пену…" Vinogradov 1908: 86–87. (№ 96 and much closed to it № 98 from the same manuscript from Cologriv county of Kostroma region).

usually stays here: "There is the Kean Sea. There is an island on the Kean Sea. There is a church of Clement, the Pope, constructed on the island. There is a holy maiden in the church, her name is Anastasia. She holds different needles and sews up a bleeding wound with a silk thread…"[30]

An understanding of St. Clement's church as one of the symbols of the Kingdom of Heaven can involve an aesthetical working up of the image in charms (as it was in spiritual verses). And as a result it looks sometimes like a real "icon in words": "…I, a servant of God…, will look at all four sides. And there is a church of Clement, the Pope, on the East side of the Ocean Sea, on the corner. There is a golden cross on it. The Lord Jesus Christ and four evangelists – Luke, Mark, John, Matthew – are depicted on it. I, a servant of God…, will pray to the heaven Christ himself, and to his Most-Pure Mother, and to four evangelists, and I'll begin to break the spell of sorcerers, of a sorceress, of a whisperer, of a whisperess, of an old man and an old women, of any evil man, of slaves, of faithful and unfaithful…"[31] But not only the idea of the beauty of the church is conveyed in these words. The place is magnificent and its parts look like an icon because it has a great significance. The golden cross is not only the "cross on the dome" here. It is an equivalent of an altar, that is to say, an absolute top of sacred centre – the very place where the saint-assistants stay in the charms.

Moreover in this magical prayer (from Cherepovets county of Novgorod region), the image of St. Clement's church is used very functionally. The aim of this prayer is to protect the wedding procession from evil and sorcery. For the ceremony, where it works, the idea of the way is of primary importance. Consequently, spatial images play a big role in its verbal ritual texts. In the magical prayer, the move from the yard to church – "between the evening and morning dawn to the sacred Ocean Sea"[32] – is a road between two golden crosses, and the protagonist (quite possibly in this case the groom's best man) bows and prays to them at the beginning and at the end of his way. This is the same movement to the sacred centre, and its highest point is St. Clement's church, standing on the East side of the Ocean Sea. However, projected into reality, it may be understood as the safe movement of a wedding procession, going into a bride's house and then into a church – "my traces are overgrown with grass, and filled up with sand and with water".[33] Therefore, we have a reason to raise again a question of the

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[30] "Есть море Киян, на море Кияне стоит остров, на том острове воздвигнута церковь Климента Папы Римского, в той церкви святая девица, а имя ей Анастасия. Держит она у себя разные иглы и шелковою нитью зашивает она рану кровавую…" Shchurov 1867: 166.

[31] "…Посмотрю аз, раб Божий …, на все четыре стороны, а есть на восточной стороне Окиана моря, на углу стоит храм св. Климента, Папы Римскаго; на нем поставлен крест златой; на кресте написан Сам Господь Иисус Христос и четыре Евангелиста: Лука, Марк, Иоанн, Матвей. Помолюся аз, раб Божий …, самому Христу небесному, и Пречистой Его Матери, и четырем Евангелистам и стану отговариваться от колдунов, от колдуньи, от шептуна, от шептуньи, от старца и старицы, от всякаго злаго человека, от рабов и рабынь, от верных и неверных…" Maikov 1994: 27.

[32] "промежду вечернею зарею и утреннею ко святому морю Окиану"

[33] "следы мои травой зарастают и песком засыпают, водой заливают"

universal character of the image of St. Clement's church, appearing from the sea, as an all-embracing Church, personifying all churches, existing in the Christian world. It means by itself the real, quite concrete church, where the wedding procession must bring the groom and the bride.

Summing up, we can make the following conclusions:

1. The folklore image of St. Clement's church, appearing or standing in the sea, has origins in the cycle of legends about St. Clement the Pope, and his miracles, fixed in hagiography of the hieromartyr. In Russian cultural and religious tradition, they date from the epoch of the baptism of Russia. Over centuries, the image of St. Clement's church obtained a constant place in the popular religious imagination, and the visual representation of the episodes of St. Clement's life on murals and hagiographic icons played a strong part in this process.

2. The appeal to St. Clement in magical prayers and charms (and references to his church as well) can be connected with the special veneration of the saint in some areas and places. In Russia, magic texts, using his name, appear mostly in the North. There were many churches of St. Clement here, because he was venerated as a "Sea Wonderworker".

3. The motif of the sea-shrine has a detailed presentation in literary pieces and iconography, connected with them. In folklore – in spiritual verses and especially in magical prayers and charms – it is reflected only as a hint, a short mention of the miracle. But it obtains an important symbolic reference to the concept of a universal sacred place.

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Russian Metal Icons Gazing into Your Eyes

Vilmos Voigt

Russian copper alloy, cast icons are a cherished topic in Christian church art history. They comprise thousands of copper and bronze plates, used in private religious worship following the principle of Russian Orthodox iconography. They are relatively small in size, from 5 x 5 centimetres, to roughly the size of a hand, or even up to 15 x 15 cm ones, and thus they are well suited to inner room private devotion. Their history – at least during the last half millennium – is the subject of vibrant international and interdisciplinary studies, in the fields of church history, art history, iconography and metallography etc. However, in spite of the fact that they exemplify at least hundreds of iconographic patterns, only a few studies exist devoted to their particular patterns, stressing their proper religious and psychological power.[1]

Russian metal icons from the late middle ages have been venerated in the homes of the common people, usually in the so called "sacred corner" of the living room. They are carefully cleaned and decorated for the feasts of the church year, and of the family; and have usually been inherited from generation to generation. All icons attract specific forms of veneration and act as guides for the believers' life conduct. All icons are channels, expressing the divine communication and the God's intention to participate in the life of mortals, "observing" the behaviour of the believers. But, among the numerous pieces, there are only some types of icons, which directly "focus their eyes and gaze at you". In this chapter, I show only the most intriguing forms of that visual – thematic group. Their "sight" on the pictures is not simply a manifestation of "charming force", as it may express a more elaborate context.

In the world famous (and generally misunderstood) poem by the impressionist German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, *Archaïscher Torso Apollos,* we read about an Ancient Greek torso, without the head and thus without the eyes, which still looks at us

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[1] For a general introduction with hundreds of excellent colour illustrations see: Gnutova – Ruzsa – Zotova 2005; and the latest summary publication in Hungarian: Ruzsa 2013 – both with further bibliography.

urging that "there is no place that does not see you" and "You must change your life".[2] The power of the frightening gaze of the higher power is immortally exemplified also in George Orwell's novel, *1984,* diabolized the *Big Brother* looks always and everywhere at you – so familiar a phenomenon to us.

As for a person, who during the last twenty years has written dozens of papers on Russian metal icons,[3] it was surprising to realize, how the distinction on the metal icons between figures "looking aside" or "looking at you" is a conscious one. Following strict theological and iconological models, the different way of "looking" of important figures in Russian icons is not a coincidence, but has an important religious message. On the Russian icons Jesus Christ on the Cross never looks directly "at us", his head leans aside, not having eye-contact with any person. Another such example is the joint picture of Holy Virgin Mary together with the Jesus Child, who on the icons tenderly look towards each other. We know of only one different composition, where the Christ Child is looking not at his mother, but in the opposite direction, towards the angels bringing to him the tools of the crucifixion: it is the so-called the "Virgin of Passion" icon[4] From the frontal-looking principle there is only one iconographic exception, "the Virgin Hodigitria of Smolensk" icon.[5] On such icons, both the Virgin and Jesus look directly at the viewer. On another famous icon, the "Virgin of Kazan" both the Virgin and Christ look straightforward, but with a closer observation we notice that their heads show a three-quarter turn towards the right: avoiding thus the eye-contact with the onlookers.

Some saints, Fathers of the Church, or church donators on the icons usually look firmly in front of you, but in this way they are not expressing any "direct influence by sight". For example Saint Antipas Martyr, Saint Nifont, Saint Paisios the Great, Saint Sergius of Radonezh look in this direct way at the viewer. Such icons in all details follow the same prototype. We show here a lesser known Saint, "Martyr Uar" = Varus, who lived at the beginning of 4th century A. D.[6] Sometimes two saints appear on the icons, both looking to the viewer, as e.g. Saint Vlasius and Athanasius. Three saints may appear in a similar way on the icons of Saint Gregory, the Theologian, Saint Basil the Great and Saint John Chrysostom. Another icon of Saint John of Damascus, Saint Haralambos and Aleksei, "Man of God" follows the same construction. Three Saints are depicted on the icon "Saints Antipas, Florus and Laurus, Martyrs". Similar pattern occurs on the icon "Selected Saints: Athenogenus, Panteleimon, Sadoth".

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[2]   Translated by C. F. MacIntyre.

[3]   See e.g. a catalogue of the exhibition in Veszprém and Balassagyarmat museums, in 2011–2012: Protecting in All Troubles ["Minden bajban védelmező"].

[4]   For an iconographic analysis see: Voigt 2010.

[5]   Its original size is 4, 5 x 5,0 cm., copper alloy, casting, it was made at the turn of 18th and 19th centuries; see also the Mandylion picture above the frames.

[6]   5 x 5,7 cm, copper alloy, casting, and enamel, Moscow, second half of the 19th century.

1. Virgin of Smolensk , 4,5 x 6 centimeter, turn of 18ᵗʰ and 19ᵗʰ centuries

2. Martyr Uar, 2,5 x 5,7 cm., early 20ᵗʰ century

3. Saint Paraskeve Martyr, 3,5 x 5,7 cm., end of 19ᵗʰ century

The Icon of "Saint Nifont" (Nephon) shows particular details. In bishop's vestments he gazes at us. On both sides of his head the inscription reads: "ОБРАЗ ПРПБИ ІА НИФОНТА ПРОГОНИТЄЛІА БѢСОВЪ" ('Picture of the P/ious/ Nifont, who drives away the Devils'). He holds a folded scroll in his hand, with the inscription: "ПРОКЛІАТЪ ВСІАКЪ ИЖЄ КТО ѠСТАВИТЪ ЦРКОВЪ БЖІЮ И ПОСЛѢДУЄТЪ РУСАЛІІ" ('To send away all, who abandons the Church of God and follows Rusalii'). On other types of metal icons we find texts asking for destruction of the devils, but the banishing the "water-spirit-feast" (*Rusalia*) is a unique case. The Pious Nifont, bishop of Cyprus, lived in the 4th century A.D. and was constantly fighting against local demons. He conducted first a "dirty life", but then, with the help of his prayers, he was converted, became monk and bishop. The frontal image stressed the power of exorcism.

Another typical case is that of Saint Paraskeve Martyr who represents the same pattern.[7] The Martyr Paraskeve (Piatnica) lived in the 3rd century A.D., and is a protector of women and the family. She is the most important old woman-martyr, venerated on Fridays. Among the early male saints Saint Nicholas the Wonder-worker is the most popular. He is depicted front-face too, holding the Holy Scripture in his hand, blessing believers.[8] Usually, no direct power is ascribed to Nicholas' gazing eyes. His name-sake has inherited the same iconological pattern. The most popular church-builder in medieval Russia was Saint Nicholas of Mozhaisk, and he was depicted in various ways.[9] The saint is shown in bishop's vestments, and holds the "sword of the law" and an arm-size model of the Mozhaisk monastery church. At his head, Jesus Christ and the Virgin are shown, and above the frames the figures of the "Old Testament Trinity" (Abraham receives the Angels of God) and at the top the *Akheiropoietos* portrait of Christ can be seen. It is the *Mandylion,* the famous "not-made-by-human-hand" portrait of Christ (named also as *Vernicle,* 'Holy Face', according to the tradition it was sent by the Saviour himself to King Agbar, ruler of the city of Edessa. Another illustration follows the 18th century reproduction of the 14th century pierced work technique, giving place only to the important details.[10] Of the icons of Christ, only the "Saviour of Smolensk" type usually gazes at us. If Christ is surrounded by saints, they usually look unto him, while he at the centre looks toward the viewer.

If on the metal icon there is one central figure, and from both sides it is surrounded by persons, they usually look towards the centre, and the central figure looks

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[7]   5 x 5,7 cm, copper alloy, casting, with blue enamel, at the end of 19th century. On the icon the Saint is showing an Orthodox cross and a scroll of writing.

[8]   5,4 x 6 cm, copper alloy, casting, beginning of 20th century, with an inscription of the Saint, in the upper corners of the plate Jesus Christ and the Virgin, below two Russian saints are placed.

[9]   Open triptych, 11 x 9,5 cm, copper alloy, casting, with blue and white enamel, from a Moscow workshop from the early 20th century.

[10]   5,3 x 7,2 cm, copper casting, alloy 19th century, above with the Mandylion.

5. Saint Nicholas of Mozhaisk, 11 x 9,5 cm., early 20th century

4. Saint Nicholas the Wonder-Worker,
5,4 x 6 cm., beginning of 20th century

6. Saint Nicholas of Mozhaisk,
5,3 x 7,2 cm., 19th century

straightforward. Among them the *Sedmitsa* ('The Week') is the best known. In the centre of this icon, the Saviour is enthroned, with the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist on each side. Behind the throne there are Archangels and Church Fathers, below there some more saints. The Saviour is holding an open book, and he looks straightforward at us. The same pattern is followed, when in *Deesis* pictures Christ stands or sits in the centre. On some centrally patterned Virgin Mary or Christ icons, the "gazing at you" construction is unmistakable. A very popular icon is called "The Virgin of the Sign": here the Virgin Mary holds the Child in front of her body. Both figures are in the centre and they look directly at the viewer.[11] The icon called "The Saviour of the Holy Silence" is particularly impressive.[12] Behind a three-fold frame there is a winged angel with threefold halo, in ruler's robes, with hand crossed before the chest. The inscription with Greek letters: *IC XC* (Jesus Christ) and (with Cyrillic letters) *blagoe molchanie* 'holy silence' explains the picture. The eyes of the figure are well visible, and directly gaze at the viewer. Because the topic of the icon is just about "communication/silence" the dynamism of the eyes is not by chance.

The "Mandylion" icon itself deserves special attention. It often appears at the top of metal icons, and represents the *"true icon"* of Christ. In other cases it appears as a single icon, usually for wearing around one's neck.[13] On a hanging veil there is the head of Christ, inside of the glory in a cross-shaped field are three Greek letters: "Ꙍ O N" (hó o n: 'that, who is he'). Under the picture we read in Russian letters: "ꙍБРАЗЪ НЕРУКО" (tvorimyi) 'picture not by hand made'. Christ is definitely looking at the onlooker in this image.

Not only because of their size and artistic perfection, the 19th century large *Deesis* (Greek *δέησις*) triptych plates deserve special treatment (Originally the term refers to interventive prayers by the Virgin and John the Baptist to God, in favour of the sinners. The written texts serve that function). Such carefully produced copper casting alloy plates, with usually dark blue and white enamels, are the largest size Russian metal icons: 11 x 12 cm each. Better-to-do persons could buy them, and the threefold icon could form an entire house altar. The figures on the plates are (from left to right): Holy Virgin Mary, Christ as the High Priest and John the Baptist, with a new-born baby in a baptismal basin. There are no secondary figures on the plates, which are decorated within the rich frames. All the figures are identified with the initials of their names. All the three persons are portrayed showing written texts: Mary holds a prayer scroll, Christ is quoting Holy Scripture (Matthew 11:28 "come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"), and under the baptismal basin there is a

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[11] The open triptych, 10 x 8,9 cm, copper alloy, casting with green and blue enamel, Moscow, last third of 19th century, above the Old Testament Trinity and the Mandylion. On the side wings there are in smaller pictures the scenes from the life of Christ.

[12] 10 x 11,4 cm, copper alloy casting with blue, green enamel. Moscow, last third of 19th century.

[13] 5,2 x 6,2 cm, copper casting alloy, early 20th century.

7. The Virgin of the Sign, 10 x 8,9 cm., last third of 19th century

8. The Savior of the Holy Silence,
10 x 11,4 cm., last third of 19th century

9. The Holy Face (Mandylion),
5,2 x 6,2 cm., early 20th century

text, from Saint John: СЕ АГНЕЦЪ Б̃ЖИИ ВЗЕМА.... ("behold the Lamb of God, which taketh /away the sin of the world"/). Here and on other icons the quotations are not full, because of the limited space, but the believers know anyhow the entire texts by heart. Mary and John lower their heads, not looking at Christ, or for "us". Christ, as Pantocrator (in the inscription: Г̃Д̃Ъ ВСЕДЕРЖИТЕЛЪ), shows the blessing gesture with three fingers.[14] Christ is gazing directly at us, strengthening thus the message of the *Deesis* icon.

In spite of the relatively high "price" of such large icons, we know of many copies of it. And there versions in several sizes too, from 6 x 7 cm plates.[15] Compiled from originally three different icons in the mid 20th century. For personal use they produced also triptychs of 3 x 4 cm plates.[16] In all the sizes, the figures follow more or less the same iconography, even trying to imitate the inscriptions. In all cases Christ is gazing at us.

Deesis Triptychs are known also in some local variations, such as among Old Believers or in the Pomore region. Saint John the Baptist can be modeled differently: with or without the angel's wings, or looking like a hermit, or without the baby in the baptismal basin. But the gazing eyes of Christ are invariably present on the icons.

Even in our days newly made copies of Russian metal icons are widely available. Among them, the central plate of the triptych has become more popular, also as a singular piece. In all details they carefully following the old patterns, including the texts, but they look cheaper in artistic taste (see e.g. figure 13: 13 x 16 cm). In variants of this size, Christ not only looks at us but under his lips he seems to utter some words too.

If we sum up the data, we find a distinction between "looking aside" and "looking at you" eyes. The later one to some extent may be understood by practical, iconographic force: a single person in the centre of the icon, three persons in a central composition or the major protagonist (Christ) standing/sitting in the middle of other persons – such scenes almost automatically show the "gazing at you" effect. The "Saviour of Smolensk" icon, or in some cases the "Old Testament Trinity" icons are examples of that similar treatment. For the letter one, it is important to notice that in the majority of the variants the "Old Testament Trinity" figures sit around a table, they look at each other, and do not look "directly" towards the viewer. On the other hand, in Mandylion and *Deesis* pictures, the gazing eyes of Christ express the particular message of the icon.

Another important feature is the use of written texts on the icons.

If we return to "old" icons of Paraskeve and Nicholas the Wonder-worker, we find written texts in their hands: either a closed or an open book, or a scroll. On the *Deesis*, the same feature occurs for all the three persons.

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[14] 10 x 12,5 cm each, copper casting, alloy with black, green and white enamel, second half of 19th century.

[15] Copper alloy casting with black, green and pink enamel.

[16] In open form 10,8 x 4 cm, copper alloy casting with blue, white and green enamel, 19th century, from Old Believers, Vym area.
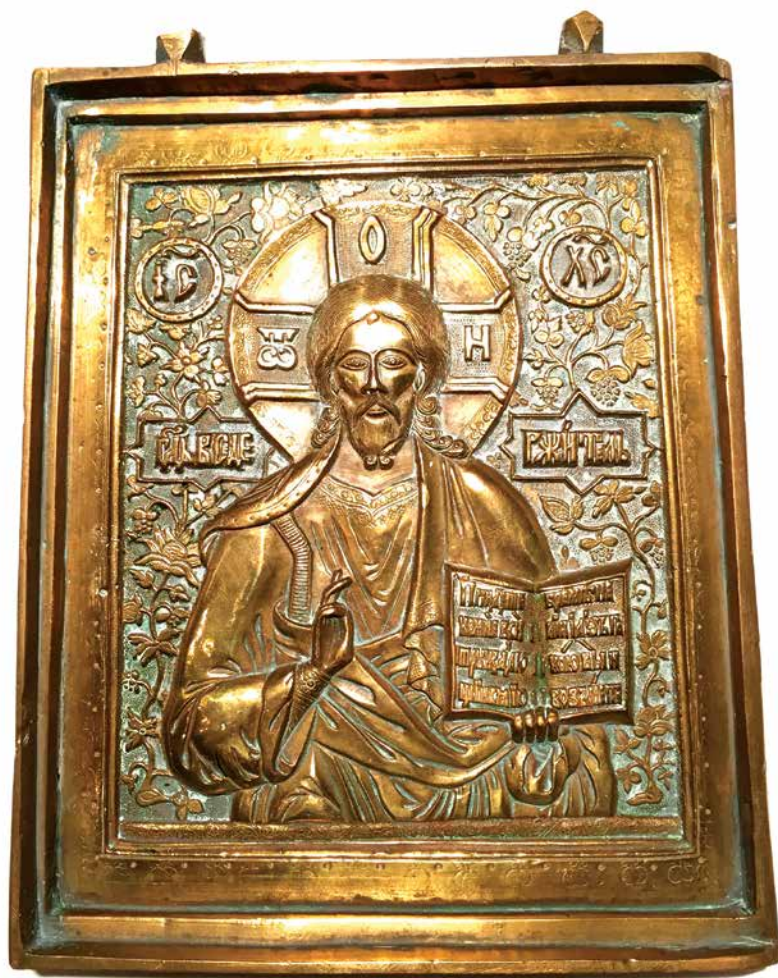
10. Deesis, Triptych, each plate 10 x 12,5 cm., second half of 19th century

11. Smaller Deesis, 6 x 7 cm., compiled in the mid of 20th century

12. Small Deesis, in open form 10,8 x 4 cm., 19th century (Vym area, Old Believers).

Singular plate of Christ from the Deesis, 13 x 16 cm, recent copy

Paraskeve Martyr holds a scroll, with the first words from the Orthodox Credo: "ВЄРУЮ ВО ЄДИНАГО БГА" ('I believe in the only God…').

Nicholas on some icons holds the book of the Gospel, and in some cases the book is open and we can read the text (set into 5 lines, and not containing the last few words: "ВО ВРЕМІА ѠНО СТА ІС НА МѢСТЬ РАВНѢ І НАРОДЪ УЧЄНИКЪ ЄГО И МНОЖЄСТВО МНОГО ЛЮДЄЙ ѠТ ВСЄІА ИЮДЄІА ИЄРУ-САЛИМА И П" – 'And at that time Jesus came down and stood on the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem /and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon /' – Luke 6, 17). The intention of the reference is clear: the people from the entire world should follow Jesus.

The elaborated metal icons display three kinds of use of letters and texts.

In the icons in general the abbreviations are regular. Even for the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ, many of the icons show only the abbreviations of their names ("МР ѲУ" and "ІС ХС"). Besides which there are identifying words too: "Г͠Д͠Ъ ВСДЕРЖИТЕЛЪ" ('Lord the Almighty') and "СТъ ІꙌАННЪ ПРТУА" ('Saint John the Forerunner'). We find the same double identifications on all kinds of Russian metal icons. But the third feature, showing written texts, is a special case. Paraskeve and Nicholas the Wonder-Worker show Biblical verses. It is the same case with the three persons on the Deesis Triptych. John the Baptist declares the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins", Christ is promising rest to believers, and the text of the Virgin Mary is a prayer to her Son: "ВЛО МНОГОМИЛОСТИВЄ ГДИ ИСЄ ХРСТЄ И СНЄ И БЖЄ МОЙ ПРИКЛОНИ ОУХО ТВОЄ." The end of the prayer is not written down on the icon, but it is known to every believer: "ко Мне и услыши молитву Матери Твоея" ('Ruler and all merciful Lord Jesus Christ, my Son and my God, lend your ears to me /and listen to the prayer of Your Mother').

The history and iconography of metal icons follow in general the history of Russian painted icons, of course with modifications, according to the metallurgic technique. Since the same moulds for casting can be used for centuries, and it is possible to produce thousands of copies of the same metal icon – also with the possibility of using similar decorations, e.g. different colour enamels – it is not easy to establish an ideological and iconographic chronology of the special groups of metal icons. Major types of the larger size "gazing eye" icons with multicoloured enamel decoration became widespread in the 19th century after the large casting manufacturers became established in and around Moscow. In earlier times, the monasteries and churches dominated the metal icon industry, and some particular religious communities (for example the settlements of the Old believers) worked out their own subtypes. From earlier times (17th and 18th centuries), the icons from Novgorod or Smolensk can be distinguished from other groups. For Novgorod, the icons of the Saviour or Saint Nicholas the Wonder-Worker belong to their own tradition. The Hodegetria of Smolensk was very popular for generations. Metal icon experts in Russia stress the fact that 19th century copies may imitate 18th century icons, which in turn follow the pained iconographic patterns from the 14th century. This is the case both for the images of individual saints and for group of Saints. Among our icons mentioned already see e.g. St. Paraskeve, St. Nicholas of Mozhaisk and the Saviour enthroned icons.[17]

Thus the historically oldest "gazing" Russian metal icons can be dated back until the 14th century (This is the same time for the same motif on the painted icons). Fortunately, we can go even to earlier times. The most famous image on a "Serpent amulet" (*zmeiivka*) is known as the front-piece *Chernigovskaia grivna*, from the 11th century. In fact, it is the oldest representation of Archangel Michael in Russia,

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17   See the descriptions of the items in Gnutova – Zotova 2000.

who from his central position is looking towards you, holding in his hands a long wand and a transparent sphere (*merilo* and *zertsalo*). On the reverse side there is a Greek inscription "Holy, Holy, Holy the Lord God of Sabaoth, Creator of the Heaven and the Earth", and a personal inscription in Old Slavonic: "Lord, help your slave Basil Amen." There are further Greek letters on the coin, which were interpreted as an incantation.[18] Here the magic use of the "gazing supranormal being" is clear again. The texts on later Russian metal icons of Christ, Virgin Mary, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Nicholas the Wonder-Maker, Saint Paraskeve Martyr, Pious Nifont etc. enforce the power of the central figures with their gazing eyes. The *Mandylion* is by itself the expression of the "Holy Face", looking at you.

There is no need to mention here the universal patterns of the God of Heaven, Sun-God or other "Above-Existing-Beings" looking at you, "World Observing Beings from Above", Magic Eye and other phenomena. In religious iconography, everywhere there is the "highest place" reserved for them, as the *Mandylion* is placed on the top of Russian metal icons. It sounds surprising but in Christian Church art the presentation of "God's Eyes" is not as old and well known as we might think. It is generally missing from Old Christian iconography. On the other hand, the "evil eye", and saints fighting against it, are depicted very early. Today, such popular representations as the triangle with the starring eye, called "Eye of the Lord", became well known from the time of the Baroque, as the symbol of the Holy Trinity, and the "All-Seeing Capacity" of God.[19]

But all this might be a topic for another discussion.

As for Russian metal icons, we can thus conclude: the gazing eye has a specific power: it controls you, enchants and drives away evil forces. It is a visual charm. The sacred texts on the icons support that power. This quality has been understood and expressed in the Russian Church. That is why the motif is until today well known in different context.

For a wider horizon, we have to stress that such icons bear a complex message: texts, saints, Biblical events are registered there, and the protagonists look at you. Their eyes deserve attention from both sets of participants in the religious communication. And finally, the "eye-to eye" contacts are universals in interaction and communication – long before the emerging of mankind (!) and its religion.[20]

Historians of religion have often treated the "eye-power" of God.[21] Most recently the term *Visual Piety*[22] offers further perspectives for studying this important topic. And Morgan[23] has collected the cases of "gazing" as one of the key motifs in religious imagery.[24]

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[18] See Voigt 2016.

[19] See for the instant reference: Kraute 1990.

[20] See for some striking psychological facts and connections: Koenig 1975.

[21] See e.g. Riemschneider 1953.

[22] See, first of all: Morgan 1998.

[23] Morgan 2005.

[24] See two recent publications: Ruzsa 2016 (2091 items) and Ruzsa 2017 (99 items).

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