Charms, Charmers and Charming

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ABSTRACTS

Photo: György Takács, Gyimesbükk/Ghimeş-Făget, Romania, 2005

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Adonyeva, Svetlana

Magical Forces and the Symbolic Resources of Motherhood: Russian Rural Tradition (20th Century)

Russian village women of the first two twentieth-century generations understood motherhood as a means of acquiring magical skills. The reasons for the necessity of magical skills are twofold: first, because giving birth was such an extreme emotional situation, women turned to otherworldly powers for an explanation of what was happening to them. Second, infants were often in need of some kind of assistance. Russian traditional culture understood these problems of infant care as situations caused by otherworldly powers and as therefore needing otherworldly means of resolution. Women had limited knowledge of and access to the world of spirits until they became mothers. The birth of a woman's first child drew her into the role of motherhood and simultaneously into a different relationship with the Other World, the world of spirits. With motherhood, a woman was initiated into the practice of healing magic for the first time. We recorded accounts of a number of women describing magical activities to protect their child by using incantations. For example, a woman born in 1926 (Arkhangel'sk oblast), told us in 1990 that in the event of a child's sickness, two people participated in a magical cure — the child's mother and grandmother (mother-in-law). The mother-in-law stays in one place in the home and speaks for the mother, while the mother holds the child in her arms and 'walks around with him/her inside the house from window to window at dawn. "First dawn Marya (the mother-in-law pronounces when the mother approaches the first window), second dawn Darya (at the second), third star Peladya (at the third), do not laugh, do not mock at my child. Laugh and mock at the bottom of the river instead . . ."'. With the mother's active participation and in her name, the older woman leads the magical speech, thus gradually providing the younger woman with the right to a voice in the communicative network of 'matriarchs' and 'forces.' The powerful intonation of the charm introduces, as it were, the chanting voice – that of the older woman − into the yet-silent lips of the young mother.

Betea, Raluca

Condemnation and Punishment: Charmers and Their Clients in the Bulgarian and Ukrainian Iconography

The present paper proposes an analysis of the eighteenth- and nineteenth- century visual representations of witchcraft that can be found in the regions of Bulgaria and Ukraine. A number of Bulgarian paintings and prints display the scene known as 'The visit to the witch', which condemned the phenomenon of witchcraft. This kind of visual representation depicts a witch who is surrounded by devils. The witch is presented when she gives a bowl – which supposedly contains medicine – to an ill person. The patient is helped by a women who stands nearby and supports him. A very interesting aspect is a detail that appears in some of these images: a devil urinates into the bowl. According to the inscription to be found in the main church of the Rila monastery, the witch is accused as being the servant of the Devil, while in the Preobrajenski monastery the scene is depicted in the composition of Hell, in close proximity to the river of fire. Two Last Judgment canvases from the northern part of Bukovina display a scene wich bears some similarities with the depictions mentioned above. In the space of Hell a woman who believed in a fortune teller is painted kneeling, while a demon reads her cards. It is noteworthy to mention that the inscriptions attached to all these

images do not include the verbal charms said by the practitioners, but they do present the purpose of the spells performed.

These visual representations are very relevant taking into consideration the fact that sinners accused of practicing or resorting to magic are seldom included in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine iconography. Although these images do not provide information regarding the accomplished verbal charmes they do offer significat insights into certain aspects related to the charmers, their clients and the relations between them (actions, gestures and the objects used in the rituals). The analysis of these images will also address gender issues, by engaging with the problem of the gendering of witchcraft. In all cases the person who practice magic is a woman, while the patient is always a man. The women are also explicitly depicted as supporting the sick men to look for witchs' help and also as believers in magic. Furthermore, these images reveal the way in which the religious discourse addressed the complex issue of witchcraft. The visual discourse initiated by the Eastern rite Churches was determined to produce a negative image of witchcraft, the persons who practiced magic being accused of Devil's pact and condemned to eternal damnation.

Borsje, Jacqueline

Eastern Roots of a Medieval Irish Charm

The subject of the present paper is a medieval Irish powerful text for healing eyes. It is extant in two versions: once as part of a narrative context in the Middle-Irish *Birth and Life of Saint Moling* and once filling a blank space in a medical manuscript, and thus presumably representing a cure used in daily life. The charm refers to the healing capacities of supernatural entities, words and matter. Interestingly, among the last category, we find the saliva of God and of Mary. If we read 'God' as a reference to Jesus we note that in the history of relics those from Jesus and his mother are most sacred. Although mention has been made of Jesus's baby teeth, blood, tears and breath, and of Mary's milk and hair, any trace of their saliva appears to be absent. The *historiolae* about Jesus's healing saliva in the New Testament Gospels are therefore probably crucial to the understanding of the charm, but what about Mary?

This paper will present a close reading of these two versions and demonstrate that concepts central in them have predecessors in Egyptian religion, and that motifs stem from biblical and apocryphal Near-Eastern and Mediterranean texts. Special attention will be given to traditions about Saint Philip in Greek and Latin. I will tentatively suggest that this charm supplies a new clue for knowledge of traditions about this apostle in medieval Ireland.

Cianci, Eleonora

Medieval German Love Charms

In the Medieval German tradition there are some interesting love charms dating back to the 14th - 15th centuries. The oldest one (*Ad amorem*), contained in a 14th century manuscript coming from Erfurt, quotes Roman pagan divinities such as Venus and Mercury along with Christian Saints and some motifs which also occur in other types of charms. Another German charm of the 15th century (*Alrawn du vil güett*) is probably meant to bring back the beloved

man to a broken-hearted lady; similarly, a wounded heart appears in a 15th century love charm from Heidelberg (Pal. germ. 691) and there might be a kind of parallelism between the wounded heart and the typical charm motif of the five wounds of Christ. All those texts have not been studied yet, although they show interesting dialect peculiarities of 14th - 15th century High and Low German mixed with Latin, as well as belonging to a challenging manuscript tradition.

In this paper I will explore some of the recurring themes in these love charms in order to understand whether it is possible to talk about love charm as a type and I will outline the parallelism between this group of charms and other Medieval German charms. I am also going to point out the peculiarities of dialect and this unique manuscript tradition in those texts, looking for other variants and parallels in other languages.

Eliferova, Maria

Charms within Non-Charm Texts: Shifts in Pragmatics

Despite the large body of evidence of Old Norse mythology and folklore, very little is actually known about the charm tradition of this corpus. While we do know the ON term for 'charm' (*galdr*), nearly all surviving examples of texts interpreted as such are parts of poems or, at best, incorporated into legendary sagas where they are performed by fictional characters. So, there is no evidence that they were ever used in practice.

However, there is one instance of what might be an actual charm within a saga. To my knowledge, *Allra flagða þula* in *Vilhjálms saga sjóðs* (a late 14th or early 15th century chivalric saga) has never been recognised by scholars as a charm. Yet it strikingly parallels a very popular Russian charm, the *Sisinius Prayer*, whose earliest manuscript copy (written on birch bark) comes from Novgorod and is roughly contemporary with the saga. Both texts have a protagonist who fights against multiple supernatural beings by listing their names. The Russian charm was a healing one, intended against 'fevers' – various types of sickness embodied in female demons. While the charm featuring St. Sisinius was widely known in Eastern Europe, it is only in Russia that it became a healing charm against multiple 'fevers' (the original charm from the Balkans deals with a single demon and is supposed to protect babies).

In both *Allra flagða þula* and the Russian healing charm, the goal of the performance is rescuing a person (in the saga, William's father abducted by giants; in the charm, the patient suffering from fever). There is some evidence that disease could be construed as abduction by troll-like creatures. In Turkic folklore, the evolutionary links between shamanic tales about rescuing a sick person from the realm of giants and epic, adventurous tales about heroes rescuing members of their family abducted by giants can be traced quite clearly.

While the plot of defeating a supernatural character by uttering his/ her name is also found in the well-known tale of *Rumpelstiltskin* (English *Tom Tit Tot*, Aarne-Thompson Type 500), this tale typically deals with a single adversary and does not contain lists of names or any incorporated texts comparable to *Allra flagða þula*. It is reasonable to infer that *Allra flagða þula* is a later development of what was originally a healing charm (the Christianized version of which survived in Russia as the *Sisinius Prayer*). In the saga it is re-interpreted as part of a romance-like tale of adventures.

Cosma, Simion Valer

Curses, Incantations and Undoings of Spells: The Romanian Priest as a Charmer (Transylvania, 19th Century)

Most of the works on church history, especially those of the last two decades, depict the Romanian priests from 19th century Transylvania as part of the intellectual elite, having a major role in the modernization of Romanian society. The image of the priest as a village 'intellectual' marks a transition from the figure of the peasant-priest, uneducated and superstitious, characteristic in the period before the development of a modern educational system. The same works also mention clerics that perpetuate behaviours and practices considered as belonging to a previous age, which are the target of modernizing and disciplining measures. But this sort of priest, with his characteristic behaviour and practices, is frequently described as being a marginal presence in the context of the 19th century progress and modernity of the Romanian society of Transylvania. If one approaches other types of sources, such as the press, the literature and the folkloristic materials of the day, one observes that in the same century, in spite of the modernizing and disciplining measures, the Romanian priest from Transylvania (Orthodox or Greek Catholic) still benefits from an image that incorporates a series of traits typical of witches and shamans. The fame of certain exorcists or healers, as well as the fear of the curses of the Romanian priests, go beyond the ethnical or confessional borders. In this paper I intend, first, to circumscribe the image of the Romanian priest, as it is depicted in the folkloristic materials of the era, literature, folklore and other documents. In the second part I intend to analyse the question of the priestly curses and that of the different rituals of breaking spells or removing curses, taking into account the theological discourse concerning this matter and the descriptions in the churchly patterns, but also the popular beliefs about these, together with the practices situated outside prescribed religion. The paper will focus on the whole ritual, analysing the verbal charms but also the actions and the gestures undertaken by the priest. At the same time I will examine the relationship between the priest and other "specialists" of magic in the peasant universe (witches, midwives). The presentation also reflects on the relationship with the supplicants for various "services" having in view the fact that the more famous priests were sought not only by Romanian customers, but by Hungarians and Saxons as well. Applying a more interdisciplinary approach, this paper aims to go beyond a reductionist or unilateral depiction of Romanian clerics and their activities, paving the way for a more nuanced picture.

Fadeyeva, Liudmila

The Church of Saint Clement of Rome: the Sources and the Symbolics of the Image in Russian Charms.

This paper is based on the small group of Russian charms in which Saint Clement of Rome is one of the personages who help the protagonist. All of these are written texts with clear traces of book influence. The research centres around more than simply the figure of Saint Clement as a Christian saint whose reverence in Russia has an interesting history. First of all we will speak about a legendary image of the church of Saint Clement which appeared in the place of his death at the bottom of Black Sea and then used to come into sight from the sea every year in memory of his martyrdom. This plot (theme) is well known from the texts of Christian books. We can find a mention about the church of Saint Clement in charms in hand-written collections (for example, in the medical book dated 1781 from N. S. Tikhonravov's collection of manuscripts – some of these texts were published by A. L. Toporkov recently). In my paper

I also explore the sources for the hagiography and iconography of this image in the charms and pay the special attention to the North Russian icons of Saint Clement with a cycle of his life on the margins. Also it is important to compare the symbolism of the image in the charms with its correspondence in the Russian spiritual verses.

Fröhlich, Ida

Charms and Related Forms: the Blessing and the Curse

The uttering of the blessing and the curse on the mounts of Ebal and Garizim is referred to in Deuteronomic historiography as the closing ritual following the occupation of the promised land (Deut 11:29, Josh 8:30-34). Receivers of the blessing are those who keep the Mosaic law while those who violate it will be cursed. The blessing and the curse list the same items in a positive and a negative way. Curses sent by God are plagues: disaster, panic, pestilence, consumption, fever, inflammation, fiery heat and drought, blight and mildew, boils, ulcers, scurvy, itch, madness, blindness, and confusion of mind; furthermore frustration in every human venture such as marriage, the building of a house, tillage, animal husbandry or farming; finally, subjection in social and national terms (Deut 28). The blessing and cursing formula is known as the closing formula of seventh-century Neo-Assyrian treaty or covenant documents. The list of the plagues shows a thematic similarity with amulet type texts.

The Qumran Rule of the Community prescribes the uttering of the blessing and the curse at the yearly admission ceremony of new members (1QS II.1-18). Blessing texts (The Rule of Blessings or 1Q28b) and incantations (11Q11) offer examples for the collective recitation of apotropaic texts at special days of the year. Some of the formulae of the text are recurring elements in later amulets. The present paper aims to investigate the role of tradition and innovation in the use of the blessing and cursing formulae, and the relations of these texts to amulet type texts and apotropaic practices.

Hunter, Erica C D

Syriac prayer-amulets from Turfan

Syriac prayer-amulets were found amongst some 519 Syriac fragments that were discovered at the monastery site of Bulayïq, near Turfan [Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Province, western China] by the Second and Third *German Turfan Expeditions* between 1904 and 1907. Now housed in various repositories in Berlin, the Syriac fragments have recently been catalogued, exposing a wealth of material and opening new horizons in our understanding of Syriac Christianity and especially the Church of the East in Central Asia and China. Whilst the majority of the Syriac fragments pertain to liturgical and biblical material, as might be expected from a monastery, the prayer-amulets form a small, but significant category, and give rare insight into the private devotions of Christians at Turfan. This paper will highlight physical features that delineate particular formats associated with personal prayer-amulets and give instructive insight into their preparation, as well as tracing the transmission of texts that continued as late as the nineteenth century in northern Iraq.

Ilyefalvi, Emese

Charms and Taboo Words – Taboo Words in Charms

In this paper I examine the relationship between taboo words, swearing, threats and charms with reference to the European practice. What kind of taboo words could function as a charm? Which types of charms allowed for the use of such words and why?

In Hungarian incantations, collected by 20th century fieldwork or drawn from the historical sources, taboo words mainly appear in charms against harmful creatures of folk belief or in healing charms specially against skin diseases or against the evil eye. Structurally and from the aspect of the typology they can turn up in many variations, but mainly occur in the declarative form, more precisely as members of the subgroup 'denial and cussing of the illness'. To cure skin diseases, mainly sty denial, it was common all over Europe to use obscene/indecent words in order to scold or to express denial. Obscene phrases also appear in apotropaic charms formulating wishes or commands. The most frequent taboo words in charms are related to faeces and defecation or refer to the genitalia.

The paper gives an insight to these texts and analyses the function and role of taboo words in different charm texts and charm types.

Ilomäki, Henni

Oral Charms and Literary Notes

Charms are communicative expressions that strive to change a state of affairs. The target may be to promote an activity, to heal a patient or to turn something bad into something good – or the other way round. According to folkloristics, charms appeal to one or more listeners in the otherworld, like *hiisi* or Virgin Mary, and the effect is based on the power of the word. Actually this means a word spoken aloud.

In practice, most of the material that researchers have access to is in the form of written notes. This applies not only to medieval charms preserved in monasteries and libraries, but also to records from later fieldwork. The situation has recently changed as a great deal of audio-visual material has been recorded. However, the comparison of old and modern texts is challenging and several questions remain unsolved.

What is the difference between an oral and a literal charm of identical theme? Are they identical variants of the same mental text? If not, what makes the difference? How does the performer of an oral or a written text react to the many different uses of a charm? For instance medieval monks both copied and read charms aloud. Even during the 20th century there were people writing down and sending to the Finnish Folklore Archive charms that they had heard – some of them in actual use. How did these informants comprehend the relationship between the audial and literal versions?

We have no genuine comments on these problems by charmers themselves, except for some fragmentary hints concerning espousing of the skill. When settling the remaining questions, one point of departure is to consider the factors that influence a charmer's adopting process. Another possibility is to examine the scene of the supposed /documented performance of a charm.

The large collection of Finnish charms containing more than 40 000 texts has mostly been written down during the 19th and 20th centuries. Some of the literal records had been noted down by scribes during court sessions, starting in the 17th century. Corresponding charms

were recorded two centuries later by folklorists in quite different circumstances. In both cases the original text is oral. What kind of factors influence the differences?

These starting points afford a possibility to study the relationship between the orality and literacy of charms.

Ippolitova, Aleksandra

Charms on Plant-picking in Russian Herbalist Manuscripts of the 17th – 20th Centuries

Russian herbalist manuscripts are collections of short texts which described different plants and their use. This manuscript tradition existed from the 17th until the early 20th century. Manuscripts include various ritual instructions for gathering plants, in particular verbal formulas. The verbal formulas for plant-picking may be divided into three groups: 1) canonical prayers; 2) folk prayers; 3) spells and magical formulas. Folk prayers for collecting any kind of plant have a similar structure: they begin with prayer addressed to God (or to St. Nicolas, the angels etc.), this is followed by the request to Mother Earth for blessing and for permission to disrupt plants, or to 'Mother of Herbs', for something that will be useful for humans. At the end of these formulas we find short canonical prayers (e.g. a Trinitarian or other formula). There are only three types of extended verbal formulas related to plants. There are "paporotnik bez serdtsa" (17-18 centuries, a charm with Christian elements), "molchan" (second quarter of the 17th century) and "ulik" (18th century). All the texts have a clear functional specification in 'preparing' the plant for future use either in social (molchan, paporotnik bez serdtsa) or in love magic (ulik).

In the later period of the existence of herbalist manuscripts the number of canonical prayers required for collecting one plant increases; verbal formulas appear in spots where there were none before; new texts emerge that were not known from the early tradition with the formulas for plant-picking.

Such motifs in Russian herbalist manuscripts as images of Mother Earth and Mother-of-Herbs have analogies both in oral Russian and in European medieval traditions, which can be interpreted in different cases as typological similarities or as borrowing.

Jiga Iliescu, Laura

I just wanted him to teach me the words… **The Shepherd as Charmer: a Carpathian Study**

D.S. is a former shepherd who lives in a village of the Romanian Carpathian area, close to the passage between Transylvania and Oltenia, where transhumance was professed on a large scale (and is still extant today in a somewhat more restrained form). This man is well known in his milieu as a person *who mysteriously knows many things*. The discussion we had in the summer of 2014 suggested questions to me that opened further investigation, one of them being the subject of the research I bring to your attention here.

First of all, I wonder if it could be pertinent to speak about *some* shepherds as a distinct group of charmers whose paradigm combines features like being a stranger – travelling for a long time over a wide and foreign space, including border-crossings; living high in the mountain, outside the sphere of domestic space and of the control of the larger community; owning

specific knowledge, non-accessible (hence esoteric) to the *others* More than that, each shepherd has his bludgeon and lamb coat, objects that, besides working as professional and individual marks, get magical powers in the hands of the right person. In the meantime, there is a rich charming repertoire performed only by these *wizard* shepherds and in strong connection with the shepherds' milieu.

Proceeding to a deep analysis of D.S.'s recordings, I look for the manner in which he describes and classifies his knowledge.

I pay special attention to an episode constructed around D.S.'s attitude towards another charmer whom he met once and who appeared to him more dangerous and powerful because of the *words* he owned and used in a specific charm. Even though he did offer to teach D.S. he was refused, for reasons of great importance to D. S. regarding his status as medicine man.

In the paper I also discuss the issue of the teaching of charms. One of the ritual conditions often required for the act of passing on a charm (including both words and gestures) is that it has to be *stolen*. But what exactly does *stealing* mean? At least in the D.S.'s testimonies, I propose to discuss the technique of *stealing a charm* in term of *silence* as a prohibition on speaking, corroborated by a specific informal teaching/learning process.

Kapaló, James A.

Charming without Borders: Gagauz charmers as religious, ethnic and linguistic 'boundary-workers'

The Gagauz are a Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christian minority dispersed throughout several Balkan and South Eastern European countries. Although the Gagauz have an Orthodox Christian culture, an indigenous knowledge system in relation to sickness, healing and possession co-exists alongside canonical Church teaching and practice. There is a high degree of cultural contact between, on the one hand, Gagauz Christians and Turkish Muslims, aided by their common language, and on the other, between the Gagauz and other Orthodox Balkan peoples (Bulgarians, Romanians and Greeks). This is particularly evident in the healing and charming culture, with numerous examples of cross-cultural borrowing, multilingual practices, and inter-ethnic healer-patient relations. Minority peoples are often uniquely positioned to work across boundaries, drawing on the power of the Other in order to acquire magical, charismatic and religious capital. This paper is based on ongoing fieldwork, started in the July 2014, in Greece (Orestiada) and Bulgaria (Bulgarevo, Kumanovo, Karamanite) amongst Gagauz, Turkish and Tatar charmers and healers. Based on observations, I introduce some shared ritual healing practices and texts and explore the role of the Gagauz as cultural mediators across ethnic, religious and linguistic boundaries.

Ķencis, Toms

Fighting Fire with Fire: Latvian Witchcraft Against Witches

Recent scholarship on witches in Latvia (authored by Sandis Laime) provides a solid ground for in-depth examination of Latvian charms against witches and witchcraft. Various kinds of charms target various witches and serve as a counter-measure to their activities. The research on witches allows us to structure the corpus of witchcraft-related charms functionally, geographically and chronologically. At the same time, my presentation continues the

comparative mapping of charming in the Baltic region – discovering intersections of Western and Eastern charming traditions, migration routes of particular charms, and models for the adaptation of international texts.

Charms against witches provide an excellent material for cross-genre analysis, showing mutual influences of oral and written sources, traditions, practices and theories.

The preliminary research of Latvian charms against witches demonstrates multiple layers of cultural traditions. First of all, this segment of magical texts can be analysed in a social context as related to the theory of the limited common good in the early modern village or parish. Secondly, many charms reflect traits of popular demonology, as such related both to conceptions of satanic possession, disseminated in times of which trials, and lower mythology of the vernacular religion, the latter relating witches to spirits of the untimely or evil dead. Functionally, Latvian witches in charms are close relatives of both European popular daemons 'evil eyes' (by malefaction through envy) and Slavonic fever daemons *trjasovici* or 'shakers' (by relation to particular illnesses).

Khristoforova, Olga

"You shall Remember me": Witchcraft and Power in Russian Local Community

The paper is based on the author's field research material. The ongoing research among the Old Believers of the *Verkhokamie* region (the Urals, Russia) started in 1999.

1. In *Verkhokamie* the belief in sorcery and its agent, *znatkoy*, persists to the present day. The *znatkoy* is neither a witch, nor a sorcerer. He receives his power and mystical knowledge in the course of certain special rituals, and this power/knowledge may be represented in belief narratives as a substance or a being. On the other hand, the *znatkoy* continues to learn right until the time of his initiation, and he damages other people not through his own inner evil power, but through verbal formulas (that can be spoken freely or read out from the *black book*), as well as through manipulations with objects and potions. Normally the *znatkoy* is a male, because women are believed not to possess the perseverance required for the initiation, nor enough time to spend learning all the necessary skills. These beliefs are generally typical for the Russian North, while in the South there still exists a belief in female witches, who possess their abilities from birth and do harm to people with the aid of their evil inner power.

2. 'You shall remember me' is a typical phrase used by the *znatkoy* in the Northern tradition. In many belief narratives recorded in *Verkhokamie*, after he pronounces the phrase, its addressee begins to encounter problems related to their health, home, or other aspect of life. This is a standard plot-line in narratives on witchcraft, but in a few records there also exists another option. Though the phrase is pronounced, nothing harmful happens. Normally this latter type of story serves to deny someone's status as *znatkoy* in the eyes of a neighbour on in a whole village ('he only boasts, but can do nothing').

3. These texts, as well as some other field data, allow me to suggest that the phrase 'You shall remember me' is one of the key elements, or markers of a *znatkoy*'s model of behaviour. Some local inhabitants use this model 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 mistake in behaviour, such as demonstratively exposed or frequent use of the markers of the model, result not in rising the status, but in a contrary outcome: the person's threats come to be regarded as bluff, and he himself becomes an object of mockery.

Lea, Deborah

Sieves, shears & a swallow

As part of investigating the landscape of the magical 'wise men and women' have been neglected in favor of their more exotic cousins, witches. Yet, these individuals should not be ignored in the quest to comprehend popular experiences of the magical. Contemporaries, such as Thomas Cooper, perceived 'good witches' to be 'rife'. Modern day assessments are more exact, estimating that as many as a several hundred thousand cunning-folk operated in early modern England'. They played a vital role; providing practical and mystical explanations and solutions to the many trials of life. Remedies varied from a down-to-earth poultice of hog's lard and turpentine, to an esoteric ritual with an unhappy ending for a swallow. Considering such cases enables the understanding of early modern perceptions of causality and supernatural intervention. Moreover, they expose the flexible boundary between religion and magic. Numerous remedies reveal the survival of Catholic rituals into the post reformation era. Reciting 'cruxificus hoc signum vitam eternam' would allegedly obtain the petitioner drink; yet this 'spell' was a survival pre-reformation liturgy. Translated from the Latin it means, 'In this sign is eternal life' and would most likely be said while making the sign of the cross. Moreover, this paper will give an analysis of one particular individual's practices, Thomas Lomax, whose intact, handwritten, book of charms was discovered in Preston archives. In sum, this paper will illuminate the fascinating practices of these individuals and the crucial contribution they made to early modern folk culture.

Lielbardis, Aigars

Latvian Charms between Western and Eastern Christianity

Historically, the river Daugava was a significant waterway within the ancient trade system connecting Northern Europe with the Roman Empire. In the 11th century many areas of what today constitutes Latvia were familiar with Eastern Christianity, as testified to by archaeological and linguistic material. Since the end of the 12th century the area of present day Latvia was part of the Livonian territory and came under the influence of Western Christianity. In the medieval period Livonia continued to be a region of lively religious and trade activity, since religion, political and economic influence were mutual driving forces.

The corpus of Latvian charms contains texts which can be traced back to the time when Latvian culture first came in contact with Eastern and Western Christianity. The motifs of black ravens and rivers as veins take the shape of folk songs, which is a traditional form of Latvian folk poetry, contain parallels with the Eastern tradition of charm texts. Whereas the 'bone to bone' type charm texts, which in Latvian tradition also take the form of folk songs are comparable with Second Merseburg Charm, representing the Western tradition. Charms that take the form of folk songs confirm that the texts had been used and transmitted orally for a long period, because the metric and poetic features of folk songs help better memorise texts.

Mamaeva, Ekaterina

The Village Poet as Charmer. The Question of Functional Similarity between two Powerful Figures in the Russian Village

My research is dedicated to a phenomenon existing in Russian peasant culture nowadays – that of individual poetry which is extant in the entire country. I`m going to talk about Northern regions such as the Vologodskaya and Archangelskaya regions, where my colleagues and I have been working every summer since the 1980's.

After a while we began to notice that for the past 10 years poems had appeared in great numbers from different authors. Some of these poems are similar to classical Russian poems, others follow various folklore genres such as limericks and traditional lyrical songs. But the thing that impressed me most, and this is what I would like to talk about, is the status of the author of these poems. I can best compare it to the status and the power of the charmer. If a person makes his/her poems accessible to the public and has the reputation of a good master and family man/woman, he/she automatically receives great power and opportunities. The author becomes an authority in the village credited with the capacity to solve various social and psychological problems.

Milne, Louise S.

The terrors of the night: charms against the nightmare and the mythology of dreams

The nightmare has been conceived of since antiquity as a supernatural agent: a demon, a minor god, or a wandering human spirit. The ancient Mesopotamians wrote of the god of nightmares as attacking lone travellers in desert places; the Egyptians invoked the protection of Bes, a monstrous multiple deity, against bad dreams; the Greeks called this demon *ephialtes* (the leaper); the Romans altered this to *incubus* (one who lies on, or crushes, the dreamer). Throughout the Middle Ages, charms and invocations conserve and develop this mythos. Thus, an Old English Journey Charm asks for "God's protection / Against the stab of the pains, against the blow of the pains / Against the terror of the grim ones /Against the great horror that is hateful to everyone / And against all loath [things] that fare in upon the land. / I sing a victory chant, I bear a victory-stave… /May the mare [night-mare] not mar me" (*Ic me on þisse gyrde beluce*..; mid-11C,Corpus Christi College MS 41). Charms against the Germanic *Trud* and the Scandinavian *mara* also survive from medieval and early modern sources. This paper explores the common imagery in a wide range of this material, including some non-European sources, examining particularly the ways in which the magical language evokes the thing it is attempting to repel. This doubling effect can be linked to traditions of nightmare-representation, wherein the nightmare is seen as simultaneously inside and outside the dreamer. The language of charms against the terrors of the night is often read as garbled or corrupt, but such inchoate or "illegible" passages are also interesting; "nonsense" in such cases may also be mimetic and apotropaic, mimicking the effects of terror, confusing the demon, and enhancing the effectiveness of the charm.

Nikolić, Davor

Rational Argumentation in Irrational Discourse: Argumentative Techniques in Verbal Charms

In the study of verbal charms, which has grown significantly during the last decades, folklorists have studied not only the structure of verbal charms, but also the act of charming and the role of the charmers – i.e. the persons performing the act of charming. This triadic focus of interest, where all instances are accorded equal importance, is very similar to the rhetorical approach and its focus on the speaker, the message and the audience. The study of modern rhetoric is necessarily connected with argumentation theory and pragma-linguistics because they are all interested in the influence of specific texts or discourses on the desired audience.

Because verbal charms essentially rely on belief in the magical power of words, they have been traditionally treated 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 stylistical feature of this folklore genre, but nevertheless there are many signs of rational argumentative techniques employed in order to achieve the desired effect (verbal charm as a peformative speech act).

Typical argumentative structures can be seen in the common use of analogies, especially those which rely on the experience of divine creatures and saints (especially in Christian verbal charms). In healing charms, the argumentative procedure of qualifying the source of illness (abusive argumentum ad hominem) is very often used. This procedure is also typical of charms with the function of exorcism. The third important aspect of argumentative discourse is the argument from authority, which is expressed in paratextual comments made by the charmer, but is also encrypted in the structure of the charm.

This paper discusses the way in which these three aspects of argumentation are employed in Croatian verbal charms collected from the 19th century onwards. In addition, the analysed corpus is compared with English and German verbal charms in order to demonstrate some common argumentative traits in European Christian charms.

Passalis, Haralampos

The Virgin Mary (Panagia, Theotokos) in Greek Narrative Incantations: The Sacred Afflicted

Sacred personae of the officially recognized religious systems often appear in incantations in order to enhance the therapeutic efficacy of the ritual. Their appearance is particularly common in Greek narrative incantations where they often assume the role of the auxiliary agent who expels the malevolent factor and provides a cure to the afflicted person. In this context, the appearance of Christ, the Virgin Mary, Angels, archangels, apostles, as well as various saints, is also quite frequent. There is, however, a peculiarity in terms of the role that the figure of the Virgin Mary (Panagia, Theotokos) assumes. This holy figure can assume not only the role of an auxiliary sacred agent who provides a cure for the afflicted person, but also that of the afflicted, seeking healing treatment by another holy figure. With regard to the latter instance it is worth mentioning that such affliction could have as its source another sacred figure such as one of the apostles or even the angels. But which are the types of charm where the Virgin Mary appears as the afflicted person? What kind of factors lead to the onset of this affliction and which are the symptoms experienced by the holy figure? How is this affliction

cured and by whom? And finally, how could we explain this ambiguity of the Virgin Mary (Panagia) who seems positioned in a liminal and transitional space between the sacred and the secular, divine and human, healer and afflicted? These are some of the questions that this article seeks to examine and answer.

Pócs, Éva

Hungarian Incantations between Eastern and Western Christianity

If we review the vast corpus of Hungarian incantations, currently containing some 8 000 texts either preserved in a written form or noted down by folklore collectors in the modern period, we can roughly distinguish two major groups: texts used by the common lay population which are not necessarily of Christian character, and texts which were used by both the lay and clerical elite strata right until the 18th century and are almost exclusively religious in content. Hungarian incantation texts appeared quite abruptly along a broad spectrum from the end of the 15th century onwards and are used in certain rural areas to this very day. They represent many different types that prevail in both writing and in oral tradition and indicate the simultaneous existence of priestly and lay healing activity, the practice of both elite magic professionals and village specialists, as well as forms transmitted through oral tradition and in writing. More than half of the Hungarian incantation types known to us are in some sort of connection with clerical or religious texts – with church benedictions, prayers, legends etc. Some of the texts are fully clerical in their origin, while in other cases the religious connection is only indicated by certain textual motifs, formal or structural elements, the language or style of the texts. The texts which clearly show a religious influence either belong to the general European Christian types or are related specifically to Latin Christianity (as well as to the Latin language as regards the first centuries of the Middle Ages in Hungary) or to Orthodox Christianity. The marked presence of incantations of an Orthodox character in the 16th - 17th centuries is particularly remarkable, since Hungary's connections with the Byzantine church were limited to the 10th – 11th centuries and practically ceased after that period. After the Middle Ages the Orthodox religion was practically absent amongst the Hungarian population with only the Greek Catholic denomination remaining present in a small percentage in the North-Eastern region of the Hungarian-speaking areas.

In my work which summarised and systematised all textual types I tried to survey the full corpus of Hungarian incantations, with its 120 textual types and groups, with a view to clerical connections. In the present paper I wish to discuss briefly some of the questions that this work generated through specific examples of each issue. The questions in case are the following.

The first question regards the importation of clerical texts or textual motifs into the textual corpus of a *par excellence* magical genre – when, from where and under what kind of clerical influences did this take place? What were the sources of written clerical culture that these texts came from, who were the users, what were the oral, MS or printed mediating factors through which they made their way into this textual corpus? Which church was it that mediated these clerical influences to the region in question – a meeting zone of Latin and Byzantine Christianity? Which specific textual types and incantations types, which ages and social strata carry the influences of Eastern and of Western Christianity? How did the incantations of Latin and of Orthodox Christianity live alongside each other and how were they used or borrowed mutually in areas and communities of mixed denominations?

In answering these questions I offer some specifically selected examples of each instance in order to shed light on the issue at hand.

Roper, Jonathan

Charming in Newfoundland: Recent and Contemporary Evidence

This presentation is based upon fieldwork in the Canadian Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2013 and 2014, and is an attempt to describe the form charming took there in recent times, and takes today (as charming is still an active practice in at least part of the Province). based on information provided by charmers and their clients. Approximately 90% of the population of this Province have their roots in south-western England or south-eastern Ireland. The incomplete medicalization of the island part of the Province is one of the motives that leads people to resort to charmers to tackle non-life-threatening ailments such as warts, bleeding, and toothache, and the charmers, inasmuch as their closely-guarded procedures are accessible, seem to deal with these ailments in ways analogous to their ancestral populations in Europe.

Rudan, Evelina – Tomašić, Josipa

How to Die More Easily or Charms and Charming Devices by a Person's Deathbed

Many types of charms have been thoroughly researched up till the present time – charms for good health, healing charms, love charms, charms to prevent somebody from falling in love, charms for increasing or preventing fertility, and so on. However, there also existed a set of charms and charming devices that ensured an easier or quicker death. This paper explores several examples of texts and devices designed to enable an easier death, such as the prayer of St. Martin used as a charm, as well as apotropaic devices using a yarn, a pumpkin or a prayer for the intercession of St. Nicholas the traveller. Also, the work poses the question whether it was fear of death that caused so much angst in the traditional culture as to necessitate this kind of help. This could be inferred from various descriptions of the attitude towards and the preparation for death. Conversely, could it be that the primary reason for this manner of assistance was empathy for the dying person who was in agony, struggling to 'separate his soul from his body'? Or maybe the issue was the kind of angst which, in traditional culture, is the result of a state of existence between life and death, being neither here nor there, but at the same time, being both here and there.

Smid, Mária Bernadett

The Prayer of Saint Cyprian: Text and Context

The starting point of my presentation is a Catalan broadside version of the prayer of Saint Cyprian from the 17th century. I explicate the context and the use of printed prayer through an inquisitorial trial of The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition of Barcelona held between 1641−1644. It turned out from the testimonies that the eremite of the Saint Bartholomew hermitage near Solsona acted as a local healer who used the prayer expurgated by the Catholic Church as a charm.

Besides the broadside spread, the history and the character of the prayer text, the trial gives the opportunity to show a historical example of the local charming practices.

Stiùbhart, Domhnall Uilleam

Scottish Highland Charms across Protestant and Roman Catholic Boundaries

The corpus of Scottish Gaelic charms collected by Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912) and preserved in Edinburgh University Library is by far the largest and most significant of its kind in British ethnography. As Carmichael recorded names and contextual details of the charmers themselves, we can locate these individuals in digitised state and church records. Using this rich personal information, we can trace charmers' origins, and assess how their personal circumstances and social status altered during their lifetimes.

The notion remains widespread that Carmichael recorded his charms overwhelmingly in Roman Catholic areas, supposedly more superstitious districts where such items persisted as archaic survivals dating back to early Christian times. In fact, Carmichael gathered many charms from Protestant areas, whether recently evangelised Hebridean islands, or in long-standing Presbyterian mainland areas. There are certainly general differences between charms in these districts. Many charms collected in Presbyterian communities, are shorn of saints' names and origin legends, marked by pointed simplicity, flatness, and lack of linguistic effect. As much prayers as charms, these items focus upon the devoutly religious character of the charmers themselves.

Charms employed in Presbyterian areas tend to deal with physical ailments rather than occult powers: the familiar 'bone to bone' charm to cure sprains; charms against chest seizures, rickets or consumption; charms for removing motes – and fish scales – from eyes; and the blood staunching charm, with its biblical imprimatur in the gospels.

Despite these characteristic denominational differences, it is clear that charms did cross putative religious boundaries. A number of charmers in Alexander Carmichael's notebooks were originally incomers to the districts where they lived, 'migrants' from mainland districts now working as servants for farmers from the same area. These individuals, some at least of whom were Catholics, brought with them charms from their native communities.

Such individuals could be regarded as 'charming entrepreneurs' introducing exotic new texts to enliven local corpora; we might compare them to contemporary evangelical 'religious entrepreneurs', itinerant lay preachers. The question remains, however, whether locals pointed them out to collectors because they were indeed the most significant charmers in the district, or because the latters' non-local background made them more conspicuous, and thus reckoned to possess unusual material worth recording. Also, drawing attention to the relatively isolated incomer may have distracted troublesome outsiders from recording locals more firmly embedded in community and family networks.

Even so, Carmichael's notebooks include several charms recorded in long established Presbyterian areas, specifically stated to have originated in neighbouring Catholic districts. Such evidence suggests that, with some charm-types at least, denominational boundaries were relatively porous. Although religious maps of the Highlands portray differentiated blocs of Catholic and Protestant parishes, at a micro-level communities were considerably more variegated, their inhabitants considerably more mobile. The large-scale economic and demographic upheavals convulsing the region during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries led not only to major emigrations overseas, but significant internal migrations as

well. Charms travelled with these population movements, to be recorded far from where they were originally practised.

Timotin, Emanuela

Ancient Magical Practices on the Border of Western and Eastern Christianity. A 16th Century Romanian Charm for Finding Hidden Treasure

This paper focuses on a 16th century Romanian charm for finding hidden treasure, a charm which has no parallels in the Romanian manuscript and oral charm tradition. I intend to reveal how a set of ancient beliefs on the possibility of finding hidden treasures were assimilated into a highly Christianised discourse by a priest originating from south-eastern Transylvania, a region on the border of Western and Eastern Christianity. Special attention will be paid to the multilingual character of the charm, written both in Romanian and in Slavonic, and to the scribe's education and activity. The analysis will also focus on the frequent reference to various Catholic saints, a specific feature of this text, and it will inquire to what extent it can be explained as a result of a textual tradition or as an influence of the scribe's social milieu.

I shall finally discuss whether the scribe's origin and region of activity contributed to the preservation of this charm; other contemporary magical texts will be taken into account.

Toporkov, Andrey

Russian Verbal Charms: Between Magic, Folklore and Literature

In the middle of the 19th century verbal charms came to be seen as archaic pagan prayers, which barely change over time. Actually, this concept has little to do with reality. The compilers and copyists of manuscript verbal charms could significantly change their texts. There was even a tradition for the literary rendering of verbal charms. The first publisher of Russian such charms, Ivan Petrovich Sakharov (1807-1863), altered the texts sent to him by his correspondents and composed renderings of the charms in a stylised, pseudo-folk spirit. Some fake verbal charms, composed by Russian writers and publishers of folklore, were translated into English back in the 19th century and are still cited in works devoted to Russian magical traditions as authentic texts.

Tsonkova, Svetlana

Verbal Charms, Charmers and Charming in a Banat Bulgarian Village

The Banat Bulgarians are a small, unique and energetic Catholic community of ethnic Bulgarians. Having emigrating to the Banat region (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) some two hundred years ago they now form a community living in a few villages on the territory of today's Bulgaria. Due to historical circumstances, their culture, language, mentality and daily life went through peculiar modifications. Traditional Banat Bulgarian culture is a complex combination of autochtonic archaic elements and syncretic innovations, developed under the influence of and through contact with various neighbouring foreign cultures (Hungarian, German, Romanian, etc.) Thus, this culture has and expresses

characteristic and unique features and patterns. This also holds true for the sphere of verbal charms. On the one hand, Banat Bulgarian verbal magic fits in with the broader Catholic and Central European cultural context. On the other hand, the old traditional charms, charmers and charming practices are now functioning and surviving in a dynamic cultural environment which is in many ways very ambiguous, demanding and even risky, but also offers new possibilities for revival and reinterpretations.

My paper will present Banat Bulgarian charms, charmers and charming as texts, practices, rituals, practitioners and attitudes. I shall mainly rely on the material which I collected during my recent fieldwork in a Banat Bulgarian village in Northwest Bulgaria. My paper has two focuses.

Firstly, I shall present the verbal charms as words and texts of power, and discuss the local belief in their power. These charms have their place and role within the canonical framework of the Catholic church. At the same time they are texts which cross a number of borders: between canonical and non-canonical, between belief and disbelief, between supernatural and quotidian.

Secondly, I shall describe two Banat Bulgarian charmers and their practices. They will be discussed from the perspective of magical crisis management, and also as part of the everyday life and communication in the village. The charmers and their clients will be seen in the network of their interactions, and also from the perspective of the Catholic village priest.

Tuomi, Ilona

Caput Christi.– The Written Environment and the Textual Transmission of an Irish Charm

St. Gall MS 1395, a collection of fragments from various periods, includes a page of Irish origin and apparently ninth-century date, containing four charms, one of which is a healing charm against headache, written in Latin and followed by instructions in Old Irish. The same charm also appears in highly diverse contexts in the Hiberno-Saxon document 'Book of Nunnaminster' (London, British Library, MS Harley 2965), and in two considerably later manuscripts (Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1336 and London, British Library, Add. 30512). A close study of these manuscripts provides a basis for theorizing about ancient Irish magical practices on the one hand and about their written transmission on the other. By highlighting the investigation of the characteristics of the text, and the cultural settings of compilation, an attempt will be made to elucidate the parameters of scribal strategies. Accordingly, questions of mise-en-page performance as well as the broader relationship of the charm and the surrounding text are addressed in order to understand the written environment of magical language as well as the transmission of such language over nine centuries.

Veselova, Inna

Magic in Ritual Speech. North-Russian *Vinogradje* as a Collective Charming Genre

Since 2007 St.Petersburg State University has been conducting its field studies in the basin of the Mezen' River. This part of the Russian North has been studied by folklorists continually for more than a hundred years. All forms of epic poetry (heroic bylinas and spiritual verses),

as well as wedding songs and funeral lamentations, traditional lyrics, *zagovory* and descriptions of calendar rituals and rites of passage have been collected and recorded.

I focus my attention on the structure, plot and formulas of traditional *zagovory* which are used in *Vinogradje. Vinogradje* is a well-collected and studied folklore genre. It represents a sort of carol with the refrain '*Vinogradje, krasno-zelenoje*' (Grapes red and green!). On the Russian North during the two-week period of the Christmas festivities groups of women go round visiting all the houses of the village singing *Vinogradje*. The well-known type of *Vinogradje* consists of good wishes for the master, his wife, children and whole household, of demanding gifts for the singers and of threats of distress should the master prove miserly. The large amount of folkloric and anthropological data we have gathered has made it possible to reveal specific features (poetic, communicative and ritual) of this genre, quite close to *zagovory*.

It turned out that *Vinogradje* is performed not only during Christmas festivities or weddings, but also on an occasional basis – when a group of women decides that a situation requires remedy through symbolic means. For example, when they see that a young man and a young woman are spending a long time together (*guljaut*), and they judge that they would make a good couple to get married, they sing them a *Vinogradje,* using their names as personages in the song. On these occasions the women sing the song with a special plot where they describe the girl's white marquee in the fields, where she is sewing a shawl with wonderful embroidery and her meeting with the young man, who is a good hunter. The singing of *Vinogradje* became something like the strongest recommendation to begin the wedding procedure. We also have records of *Vinogradje* used in order to solve the problem of married couples who have no children. The structure, plot and formulas of traditional *zagovory* are recognized in *Vinogradje* texts. In my judgement *Vinogradje* presents a form of collective charming performed publicly by a group of women and aimed to solve matrimonial problems

Voigt, Vilmos

Russian Metal Icons Gazing into One's Eyes

Russian metal icons are a form of 'magical object' for ordinary people known all over the world. Their tradition, going back approximately 500 years, has by now crystallised into religious and artistic motifs. However, as regards the magical use of these icons there have only been a few papers published. In one of my previous papers I have described the benediction (in fact: malediction) texts inscribed in these icons, usually on the back of the object. On this occasion I wish to explore one particular form – the type when the central figure gazes into the eyes of the onlooker. This exploration belongs to area No. 3, the microanalysis of a particular type. Regrettably, the verbal background of Russian metal icons is a little researched topic, thus I am hoping that this paper will offer some previously unknown facts.

Tatjana Vujnović

Traces of Charms in Serbian Folk Lullabies

In Serbian folk tradition, lullabies were sung both to calm children and to make them fall asleep, but they also accompanied the birth of a new family member and his/her introduction into the community. According to folk beliefs, a new-born child was particularly endangered

from evil forces such as witches, bad creatures (*babice*) or evil wishes (*urok*) that someone might have for the child etc. These hazards were believed to be particularly acute at the moment of falling into sleep, because in traditional Slavic culture, dreaming and sleeping were believed to be conditions close to death, and night was the period of increased demonic activity. This is why putting a baby to sleep was accompanied with verse formulae which expressed a wish that the child be protected from evil spirits and acquire the benevolence of the divine forces.

The poems which aim to invite dreams for a baby and at the same time keep *urok* and/or insomnia at bay belong to this type of texts and these are real magical formulae: *Сан т` под главу, уроци на страну; Уроци ти по гори ходили, / Траву пасли, с листа воду пили, /Моме сину ништа не удили!* (*May a dream come under your head,* urok *move to the side; May curses go into the mountains,* / *Eat grass, drink water from leafs,* / *And do not hurt my son!*). Similarities between putting a baby to sleep and casting incantations are analysed in the paper. Mothers who most commonly put babies to sleep and recite charms to cure a sick child often function as mediators between *this world* and the *other*, so they also take on the role of the person casting spells. On the other hand, in lullabies, evil forces are most often opposed to dreams (as well as God, saints, angels, happiness *etc*.), which are a condition in which the child is safe. Dreams are also active subjects which protect the sleeper, so this is why they are invoked by a magical formula. Our research is based on over fifty lullabies which were recorded in Serbian in the South Slavic region and published in various collections, monographs and serial publications dating from the 19th century onwards.

Vukelić, Deniver

Micro-analysis of *uroci* (evil charms and spells) in the Croatian Tradition

In line with one of the main subject areas of the Conference, this paper focuses on the micro-analysis of *uroci* (sg. *urok*), evil charms and spells in Croatian written and oral historical and traditional narrative. They are less common then their cure, *basme* or *bajalice* (sg. *basma/bajalica*), charms, in Croatian ethnography, ethnology and history, but it is possible to reconstruct some of them and to analyse their performative construction as the magical concept (on multidisciplinary levels – linguistic, historical and ethnological). Sources for this research have been Croatian oral literature, written collected magical traditions and witchcraft trials. This analysis will offer some definitions, context, background, counter-measures and micro-analysis.

Wamelink, Nanouschka

"As Long as there is Life in my Body I shall not..." Vows of Abstinence as Binding Spells in the Life of Saint Catharine of Siena

Saint Catharine of Siena, who lived in the 14th century, was well known, among other things, for her extreme food abstinence and her intimate relationship with Jesus. As becomes evident

from her *Life*,[1] she believed that by extreme fasting she could make Jesus and other divine beings accede to her wishes and she proved to be an adamant negotiator in her relationship with the divine. At one point, for instance, after she had been keeping a strict regimen of fasting for some time, her mother fell seriously ill. In her prayer, Catherine demanded from God that he should cure her mother and she stated that she would not budge before God had done so.[2]

This is reminiscent of a *vow of abstinence* in which, according to David Martinez, a person binds himself/herself 'under a solemn obligation' not to do something until a certain goal has been achieved.[3] This kind of *binding spell* can also be used 'in the context of business dealings or contractual arrangements'[4] which seems to be the way in which Catharine used it. In this paper I will demonstrate how the concepts of *binding spells* and *vows of abstinence* as defined by Martinez are helpful in understanding the ways in which Catharine used her body, and more specifically her fasting, to make divine beings satisfy her requests in various instances. Additionally, I will build on Don Skemer's remark that 'healing charms were most often "peech acts"'[5], by arguing that Catharine's fasting can be understood as a *physical speech act* in which her diminishing body was both a means for, and a sign within the communication with divine beings in which these binding spells were uttered.

Závoti, Zsuzsa

'…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

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 this to the obscure sources and to the anonymity of medical practitioners. Only the coming of the Norman Conquest will bring about more transparency to medical practice and practicing physicians. After long decades of relating mental disorders to higher beings, the trend for 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 was shifted from reason to faith, soul and mysticism; and symptoms of mental disorders were predominantly considered as demonic possessions, where often „[v]ictims experienced prejudice, exorcisms and social marginalization" (Diamantis, Sidiropoulou and Magiorkinis 691) and treatment involved rituals that meant to exorcise the invading demons. Anglo-Saxon medicine written down in the tenth century is an intricate mixture of both: it frequently resorts to, for instance, the Pater Noster putting demons to flight, but it also cites rational medical writers such as Galen or Alexander of Tralles.

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[1] There are two versions of Catharine's *Life*. For this paper I will use George Lamb's English translation of the *Legenda maior* (written by Catharine's confessor Raymond of Capua between 1385 and 1395) as well as the Latin edition from the *Acta Sanctorum* (1643).

[2] Lamb, George. *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena by Blessed Raymond of Capua Confessor to the Saint*. London: Harvill Press, 1960: 196-197.

[3] Martinez, David. "'May She Neither Eat Nor Drink". Love Magic and Vows of Abstinence.' In: M. Meyer, P. Mirecki (eds.) *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*. Leiden: Brill, 1995: 336, 345.

[4] *Ibid*: 347.

[5] Skemer, Don C. *Binding Words. Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006: 9.

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 demonstrate that thus these charms are on 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 mental disorders are, subsequently I will discuss how they were regarded until the eleventh century with special respect to the so-called rational attitude. Secondly, I will identify those Anglo-Saxon remedies and charms that treat mental disorders. Lastly, I will analyse the charms themselves and the supernatural beings that bring about the illnesses, thus affording a picture of response to mental disorders in Anglo-Saxon England.

(Bibliography: Diamantis, Sidiropoulou and Magiorkinis: Epilepsy during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Enlightment, *Journal of Neurology,* 257 (2010): 691-698.)