

Writing charms : the transmission and
performance of charms in Anglo-Saxon
England

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Abstract

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Abstract

This is a study of two groups of Anglo-Saxon charms: six charms for remedying theft; and six charms intended to staunch bleeding. The aim of this study is to build up a picture of the life of these charms and their recording, use, performance and transmission by examining the contents and manuscript context of the charms. I argue that by modifying methodologies presented in previous scholarship, it is possible to develop a new approach to Anglo-Saxon charms, enabling the scholar to reconstruct the ways in which an Anglo-Saxon might have recorded, transmitted and performed charms.

I suggest that by taking into account the content of the charms and the way in which they are structured, one can investigate the manuscript context of the charms in order to reveal the worldviews and beliefs of the scribes, users and performers of the charms.

The final chapter of the thesis explores the ways in which the charms relate to oral and literate culture, material culture and performance. Thus, I break down the modern dichotomies so often applied to charms, specifically oral/written, magic/religion, prayer/charm and male/female.

By combining these investigations of charm content with manuscript context, I reconstruct the Anglo-Saxon experiences of charming.

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1. Introduction to the Thesis

Writing Charms: The Use and Transmission of Charms in Anglo-Saxon England

1. Introduction to the Thesis

a. Thesis Statement

This is a study of two groups of Anglo-Saxon charms: six charms for remedying theft; and six charms intended to staunch bleeding. The aim of this study is to build up a picture of the life of these charms and their recording, use, performance and transmission by examining the contents and manuscript context of the charms.

The present study responds to issues created by previous scholarship, considering the content of the charms in conjunction with their manuscript context, and using only the evidence present at the time of the recording of the charm. The content of a charm can tell us what the performer must do or say, and perhaps even how s/he must say it: it can also be used to reveal similarities between one charm and another. The content of a charm cannot tell us who the reader or performer might be, how the charm came to be in its manuscript, and who might be present to hear the charm being performed. In order to answer these questions and rebuild the user, performance and transmission context of the charms discussed in this study I will resituate the charms in their manuscript context, investigating the clues as to who might have used the charms and how that information is encoded in the texts that surround them. By using only the evidence present in the charms and their surroundings, I will create rich readings of the charms that are separate from modern trends.

The idea to place manuscript context at the heart of this study came about as a critical response to previous scholarship, in which the content of charms was generally investigated without reference to their manuscript context. Three key methodologies shaped these content-based investigations. Firstly, the collation of variants of a charm was carried out, collecting together charms that share similarities across manuscript, time and culture, with the view to recreating the original parent text that generated the variants. Secondly, the charms were classified according to their degree of engagement with pagan or Christian culture, without any critical assessment of the use of these categories. Thirdly, the charms were looked at from theoretical perspectives contemporary with the scholars in order to uncover hidden voices. All three methodologies used in previous scholarship share two issues: a charm does not exist in

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a vacuum, and so cannot be interpreted in one; and analysing Anglo-Saxon texts according to the cultural context in which the scholar is working is by nature anachronistic.

The two groups of charms I consider were chosen because they are so similar as to fall into two clearly defined families, and are recorded in a variety of manuscript contexts. This study, therefore, aims to investigate how six extremely similar theft charms came to be scattered among six such widely varied manuscripts, ranging from a compendium of medical remedies (London, British Library, Harley 585) to legal manuscripts (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383; The *Textus de Ecclesia Roffensi per Ernulphum episcopum*), by way of important vernacular texts (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41, whose main text consists of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* in Old English) and collections of ecclesiastical laws, prayers and homilies (London, British Library, Tiberius A.iii; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 190). I will also investigate how, in comparison, all six of the blood-staunching charms appear in one manuscript of a markedly different nature than any of the theft charm manuscripts (London, British Library, Royal 2.a.xx, a private prayerbook). I will explore how the content of the charms relates to each manuscript context, and what this can reveal about the use, performance and transmission of each charm.

The theoretical perspective—that is, the importance of manuscript context—which prompted the investigation undertaken in this study shaped the methodology used (the methodology is discussed in greater detail both below and in Section 2. Methodology). The methodology had to take manuscript context as its central point, whilst also providing a framework for the consistent and logical analysis of the content of a charm and advancing upon (or providing an alternative to) established models of charm scholarship. Thus, the methodology used in this study consists first of all of defining the scope and limitations of the texts considered. It is true that tracing a clear division between charms and other types of texts (such as prayers) is not easy. Previous scholars have not always been clear on how one should define a charm: Felix Grendon, the editor of a large collection of Anglo-Saxon charms, does not provide a definition of what he considers to be a charm, but appears to regard a charm as a text which relies on some sort of 'superstitious' belief, prescribing the recital of a section of text and including some sort of ritual action.¹ Godfrid Storms similarly neglects to give a

¹ See Felix Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', *The Journal of American Folklore* 22 (1909), 105-237 (105), in which he describes the texts discussed:

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definition of a charm, but does provide a definition of magic which shares similarities with Grendon's idea of what is included in a charm. Storms comments that magic is

the art of employing an impersonal power that operates in such a way as cannot be perceived by the physical senses and that is carried into effect by means of a traditional ritual.²

Both Storms and Grendon see charms as being characterised by their reliance on some sort of 'superstitious', numinous belief, implicitly judging these beliefs as unconnected to logic and empirical reality. For the purposes of this study, my definition of a charm takes as its basis the use of reciting sections of text and carrying out ritual action, as in Grendon and Storms' definitions. However, I consciously avoid carrying out value judgements on the charms, and so regard charms not as evidence of illogical superstition, but as a method of combating a particular problem, preferring to define charms by their purpose than their relative efficacy. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the definition of a charm will be 'a text which attempts to remedy a physical complaint or spiritual ill, using patterned text and ritual activity to do so, usually with some element of performance'.³

All the Anglo-Saxon metrical incantations are presented in the text, as well as all prose charms with vernacular or gibberish units; while exorcisms with Christian liturgical units, and Old English recipes involving charm practices, are represented by typical specimens.

See also p. 110 in which he describes the types of ritual action present in charms:

The one hundred and forty-six charms considered here include incantations properly so called, as well as numerous remedies depending for efficacy on the superstitious beliefs of the sufferers. Besides the sixty-two typical charms selected for the text, reference will be made to eighty-four others, which will be designated by double letters, AA, BB, etc., according to the group to which they belong. Examination reveals distinct characteristics which severally appear in a certain number of the charms. These characteristics may be arranged under ten headings, as follows: (1) Narrative introduction; (2) Appeal to a superior spirit; (3) The writing or pronouncing of potent names or letters; (4) Methods of dealing with disease-demons; (5) The exorcist's boast of power; (6) Ceremonial directions to patient and exorcist; (7) The singing of incantations on parts of the body and on other objects; (8) Statement of time for performance of rites; (9) Sympathy and the association of ideas; (10) Minor superstitious practices.

² Godfrid Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (Nijhoff: The Hague, 1948), p. 36.

³ It is tempting to simply inherit the terminology used by previous scholars, and to adopt the word 'charm' without considering whether this term is appropriate. The etymology of the word 'charm' is important, carrying as it does a sense of the Latin *carmen* and the orality and aurality that *carmen* implies. Thus, the word 'charm' encapsulates the performative aspect of the texts, and engages with the Anglo-Saxon term for charms, *galdor*, which appears in texts as diverse as glosses (for *incantata*), homilies, psalms and biblical translations (see the entry in the Bosworth and Toller Old English dictionary for *galdor*), referring to witchcraft, spells and enchantments. However, it is true that 'charm' carries with it some unfortunate connotations, of the supernatural, the superstitious and the illogical. Indeed, many of the equivalent words that one might consider as an alternative ('spell', 'incantation') also carry inappropriate connotations. An alternative might be to refer to the charms simply as 'texts', but this does not allow for a differentiation between the charms and their surrounding texts, potentially leading to a loss of clarity in discussion and to a loss of the sense that in the charms, something is happening that is not necessarily happening in the other texts in a manuscript. Therefore, the term 'charm' is used in this thesis as the best option, but it should be acknowledged that the term is still not completely satisfactory.

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Initially, it could be said that this definition does not exclude such texts as the Mass, as a text which is used to heal, and uses patterned text and ritual activity on a large, communal scale in order to bring about the desired effect. However, there are several features which charms exhibit that texts such as the Mass do not. For example, charms will often fall short of explicitly appealing to God for assistance, whereas prayers are generally constructed as a mode of communication with God; charms employ techniques such as sympathetic narrative (in which the act of reciting the narrative is intended to create the situation narrated in the reality of the charmer); and charms can affect the reality of the charmer without recourse to any outside force, based purely on the power of the charm and the charmer. Thus, the texts which are discussed in this study fit into my definition, and exhibit one or more of the secondary characteristics also detailed above. Other types of Anglo-Saxon healing texts, such as herbal remedies, do not use ritual activity in the same way and do not prescribe the use of patterned text of performance, and thus are discounted from this study. Throughout this study, I am keen to establish that while the difference *in purpose* between a prayer, a charm and a herbal remedy might not be apparent, the methods used by each text to achieve that purpose is different. A prayer must always refer to God, Christ, or some other religious figure in order to bring about the desired effect. A herbal remedy must rely on the efficacy of the chosen recipe, and is generally divorced from any sense of assistance from God. A charm might combine both of these methods, or neither: a charm does not have to refer to God, but it is acceptable for a charmer to do so; in a similar way, s/he might use a herbal remedy, but this remedy will be accompanied by a set of ritual actions separate from the collection and preparation of herbs and/or a set of words to be spoken. This awareness of the efficacy of the charm as being secured not just by God or by herbs, but through the power of spoken words or ritual action, is key to a charm's separation from either a hymn or a herbal remedy. This fine distinction between genres and the problems inherent in attempting to separate them is, as we shall see, an integral part of an exploration of Anglo-Saxon charms.

The scope of the study must also be limited by the number of charms discussed: I will focus on the content, context, transmission and use of twelve charms, six theft charms and six blood-staunching charms. There are many Anglo-Saxon charms extant today, numbering well into the hundreds, and are found in one of two basic contexts:

See Karen L. Jolly's exploration of the term *galdor*, in which she confirms that this term describes the vocalising of the text, and importantly, the performative aspect of the charms. Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England* (Carolina: University of Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 98-99.

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either grouped together in ‘herbals’ or medical manuscripts, or recorded in contexts where they are unconnected to the main texts, either as thematically unrelated but recorded alongside the main text, or as additions or on fly-leaves. The medical manuscripts that record charms are:

- London, British Library Cotton Vitellius C.iii and Oxford, Bodley Hatton 76, containing *The Herbarium of Apuleius Platonicus* or the *Anglo-Saxon Herbal*
- London, British Library Royal 12.d.xvii (also Vitellius C.iii), containing *The Medicina de Quadrupedibus* of Sextus Placitus and *The Leechbook of Bald*, in two parts: books I and II-III
- London, British Library Harley 585, containing *The Lacnunga*
- London, British Library Harley 6258, containing the *Peri-Didaxeon*

Charms that appear in non-medical manuscripts are found in contexts as diverse as religious manuscripts, collections of legal texts and private prayerbooks.⁴ For the purpose of this study, I am particularly interested in charms which have many witnesses in various manuscripts, as this enables a more complex examination of the charms’ manuscript contexts. To this end, the twelve charms were selected that share striking textual similarities, but were recorded in different manuscript contexts. The first group of charms selected for study is a ‘family’ of six theft charms, all of which share the same basic structure, but are pulled into different shapes by their manuscript contexts. These six charms make a comparison of the effects of manuscript context possible, and furthermore allow a detailed consideration of the construction of the charms to be carried out, as well as providing an opportunity to examine the transmission of the charms and parts of the charms from one witness to another. Furthermore, the differing manuscript contexts also represent several different user contexts of the ‘same’ charm, which allows for a consideration of the ways in which charms can be transformed and performed by different users and audiences.

A second group of charms was also identified: a set of six blood-staunching charms which all appear in the same manuscript and share, to a greater or lesser extent, the same basic structure and content. These charms provide an opportunity to examine the possible reasons for the recording of six such closely related charms in one manuscript, and provide a contrast with the theft charms, which are recorded across several manuscripts rather than collected together. Furthermore, the blood-staunching charms are recorded in a manuscript identified as a private prayerbook owned by a woman: this feminine ownership provides an ideal opportunity to test the application of

⁴ Of course, that is not to say that prayerbooks cannot be concerned with medical issues or with healing: in fact, the Royal manuscript has as its theme Christ as a divine healer. However, it is true that ‘medical’ manuscripts will contain almost exclusively charms and recipes, and can engage with the idea of healing without necessarily referring to religious ideas.

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gender-based approaches to the charms, demonstrating the flaws inherent in applying a strongly culturally-bound and content-based perspective to Anglo-Saxon texts. Indeed, I suggest that a female ownership does not make an approach based on modern understandings of gender necessary, and that such a perspective is too coloured by modern beliefs to take account of the manuscript context of these charms. Finally, thanks to its manuscript context in a prayerbook, this charm ‘family’ demonstrates the problems inherent in thinking of charms as belonging to binary categories such as prayer/charm, magic/religion and physical healing/spiritual healing. It is important not to imagine these charms as blurring genre boundaries, as this merely reifies the boundaries themselves: rather, it is preferable to think of the blood charms as demonstrating how inappropriate these distinctions are.

b. The Research Background

This section situates the project in existing scholarship, reviewing major advances in the field. By assessing the changes in methodological perspectives in charm scholarship, I will then be able to set out the ways in which the project contributes to the field and builds on previous scholarship to create new ways of reading charm texts. Finally, I will introduce the central methodologies which underpin the project as a whole.

Scholarship

The study of Anglo-Saxon charms has been popular since the nineteenth century, and is continually advanced by new considerations of the charms and their uses, users and audiences. The scholarship produced in this extended period of examination is varied, and is founded on a multitude of theoretical perspectives: it is impossible to discuss the entire corpus of Anglo-Saxon charm scholarship here, so several works must stand as representative of the whole. There are two works in particular that collected, edited and translated charms from a variety of manuscripts, standing as two of the most important contributions to the field. In 1909, Felix Grendon published a hundred-page article in *The Journal of American Folklore* in which he edited and translated charms collected from various manuscripts (including the *Lacnunga*—in London, British Library Harley 585—and the *Leechbook I-III*—in London, British Library Royal 12.d.xvii).⁵ Grendon’s article was heavily concerned with classifying various aspects of charming: no fewer than twenty pages are spent identifying the ‘Christian elements’ in the charms, and almost as many pages defining five different categories of charm (exorcisms of diseases

⁵ Grendon, ‘The Anglo-Saxon Charms’: see 161 for a list of the manuscripts discussed by Grendon.

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or disease-spirits; herbal charms; charms for transferring disease; amulet charms; charm remedies). The article also contained an extensive set of notes detailing the similarities between the charms edited by Grendon. Below is an example of the standard set of notes provided with a charm, describing the purpose and significant parts of charm E14, and providing references for similar charms:

For elves and their influence, see Group E, p. I37. 1. - *Uncubum sidsan*. Cf. *yflum gealdorcraeftum* (D 4, line 6). Evidently bewitchment by mischief-working sorcerers is meant (see p. 138). Ten other remedies in which a thaumaturgic drink is prescribed are EE I, EE 2, EE 6, EE 10, EE 11, EE 2, EE 15, EE 2I, EE 25, and EE 29. In contrast to E 14, these charms are all distinctly Christian in form, and most of the potions have holy water as an ingredient.
2. - *Recelses*. See note to E 8, line 15. - *Gagates*. Cf. D 5.⁶

The notes provide thorough references to charms in which similar processes or imagery are used, and are therefore useful in identifying groups of charms and tracing the path of particular aspects through the charm corpus. For example, using Grendon's notes, it is possible to collect and compare all the charms which use holy water as part of the ritual activity, in order to reveal how this practice has changed or stayed the same in the various witnesses. The example given above exemplifies Grendon's meticulous system of illustrating similarities between charms: other notes centre on the separation of 'heathen' elements from 'Christian'. For example, in reference to the *Wið Dweorh* charm, Grendon noted that

The charm falls into two main divisions: A (lines 1-8), comprising directions for a superstitious ceremonial; B (lines 9-21), including the incantatory portion. In part A, lines 1-3 form a Christian preface to the superstitious ritual of lines 4-8. Part B is a characteristic Heathen spell with an epic passage (lines 9-16) and an "Amen fiat" tacked on at the end to save appearances.⁷

Both of these examples demonstrate the virtues and deficiencies of Grendon's methodology: although his encyclopaedic approach is helpful in drawing together similar charms (such as those that are directed against elves) and tracking particular components from charm to charm (such as the use of holy water), he described the charms using loaded terms such as 'superstitious' and 'Heathen', and based his

⁶ Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 237. See 212-13 for edition and translation of charm E14:

E 14. WIÐ ÆLFE AND WIÐ SIDSAN *Wið ælfe and wi uncubum sidsan, gnid myrran on win and hwites recelses emmicel, and sceaf gagates dæl þæs stanes on þæt win. Drince III morgenas I neahmestig, oþþe VIII oþþe XII*

E 14. AGAINST AN ELF AND AGAINST CHARM-MAGIC Against an elf and against strange charm-magic: into wine crumble myrrh and an equal portion of white frankincense, and shave a part of the stone, jet, into the wine. After fasting at night, drink this for three or for nine or for twelve mornings.

⁷ Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 215.

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discussions on the dividing of Christian from pagan. The application of the Christian/pagan dichotomy created a reading based on the sensibilities of the scholar rather than those of the Anglo-Saxon.

Another seminal piece of charm scholarship to comment on the similarities between charms from different cultures, drawing together charms which utilise similar imagery and examining how these charms might be connected was Godfrid Storms' *Anglo-Saxon Magic*.⁸ Published in 1948, this book contains editions and translations of charms from various Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. Storms commented directly on the work of Grendon, combining Grendon's findings with those of other scholars such as Oswald Cockayne.⁹ Concentrating—like Grendon—on the content of the charms, Storms took a wide-ranging view of charming, presenting examples of charms from other cultures to shed light on the Anglo-Saxon texts he considered. For example, in reference to a group of theft charms, Storms described several Japanese and Middle Dutch charms (it must be noted that Storms does not make clear from which time period these charms originate) that also prescribe the use of footprints and of the Cross-shape in the ritual activity of the charms.¹⁰

There are also individual articles that were key in shaping the direction of certain aspects of charm scholarship. For instance, an article discussing the *Æcerbot* charm by Bruce A. Rosenberg, published in 1966, followed the same trajectory of works such as Grendon's and Storms', but developed their approaches in a variety of ways. Rosenberg was explicit about his use of the charm as a route to uncovering traditions connected with Roman, pre-Christian Britain: whereas Storms' discussion of the charm focused on the use of Christian rituals in the charm (explicitly saying that he organises his edition beginning with those charms of 'true Germanic origin, free from classical or Christian influences'¹¹), Rosenberg concentrated on those aspects of the charm which relate to pre-Christian ancient traditions. For example, Rosenberg connected the burials of the crosses to Greek, Egyptian, German and Scandinavian folk customs, providing the modern reader with examples of ancient traditions similar to

⁸ Karen L. Jolly provides a neat summary of Storms' work, in which she also identifies problems with his method of extracting charms from their manuscript context and valuing them according to the extent to which they contain 'untouched Germanic material'. See Karen L. Jolly, *Popular Religion*, pp. 100-101.

⁹ For example, in reference to the aforementioned *Wið Dweorh* charm, Storms collects together various scholars' interpretations of the title: see Storms *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 166.

¹⁰ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 210-17.

¹¹ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p.129.

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those in the charm.¹² In this way, Rosenberg's article demonstrated a desire to locate the *Æcerbot* charm in the context of pre-Christian, pagan traditions.

More recent articles also reflect an interest in placing charms into one category or another. L. M. C. Weston's 1995 article 'Women's Medicine, Women's Magic: The Old English Metrical Childbirth Charms' centred around the desire to classify a childbirth charm according to the binary relationship of masculine versus feminine, arguing that because such a charm cannot fall into the masculine sphere it must constitute evidence of the need of the Anglo-Saxon woman to reclaim ownership over her own healing.¹³

A characteristic of the four works cited above is that they all concentrated on interpreting the meaning and use of the charms on the basis of their *content*: that is, the discussion focuses on the imagery and processes contained *within* the charms, supported by external evidence from other cultures and traditions. Taken collectively, these examples of content-based scholarship provide invaluable commentary on the ways in which the charms operate and how they might have come into being. However, a second group of scholarship, based more on context, emerges from the corpus of charm scholarship, advancing on these content-based works and providing an alternative theoretical standpoint from which to approach the charms.

For example, Thomas D. Hill's article 'The *Æcerbot* Charm and its Christian User' engaged directly with Rosenberg's discussion: Hill moved away from discussing the charm in terms of its roots in times previous to Anglo-Saxon England, and instead focused on how the charm fits in to the religious and social conditions present at the time of the charm's use and recording.¹⁴ Hill thus accorded equal significance to the 'Christian' and 'pagan' parts of the charm, moving away from regarding this charm as an example of a Christianised text.¹⁵ Hill interpreted the use of the liturgy in the charm as symptomatic of a society in flux, and valuable evidence of the social and cultural changes happening at the time of the charm's use and recording.

Another example of this shift from 'charms as pagan' to 'charms as Anglo-Saxon, whatever that may entail' is present in a more recent article by Heather Barkley,

¹² The charm requires the performer to construct and bury four crosses as part of the ritual action prescribed. See Bruce A. Rosenberg, 'The Meaning of *Æcerbot*', *The Journal of American Folklore* 79 (1966), 428-36 (431).

¹³ L. M. C. Weston, 'Women's Medicine, Women's Magic: The Old English Metrical Childbirth Charms', *Modern Philology* 92 (1995), 279-93. This article will be discussed in greater detail in 4.iv. *Agenda and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Charms*.

¹⁴ Thomas D. Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm and its Christian User', *Anglo-Saxon England* 6 (1977), 213-23.

¹⁵ Exemplified by Storms, who says of *Æcerbot* that 'although Christian influences... have penetrated everywhere, the old heathen practices and units have kept their ground and remain recognisable throughout.' Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 178.

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concerning the theft charms.¹⁶ Focusing explicitly on uses of the liturgy in the charms, Barkley discussed the content of the charms without labelling any of the elements therein as either Christian or non-Christian, resisting the impulse felt by Grendon, Storms and Rosenberg to classify sections of the charm as falling into one religious bracket or another.

This critical shift from a focus on paganism to a more neutral approach is marked by an upsurge in the popularity of referring to the context of charms as well as their content. By moving away from concentrating on the content of the charms, articles such as Stephanie Hollis' *'Old English Cattle-Theft Charms: Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses'* explicitly related the charms to their place in their manuscripts, examining how the context of a charm influences the ways in which it can be read.¹⁷ For example Hollis' discussion of one of the theft charms (number 12 in Storms' *Anglo-Saxon Magic*) related the content of the charms to the other texts in the manuscript, using this textual relationship to deduce who might have used the charm. In this way, Hollis was able to uncover information about the relationships between the clergy and laity encoded in the manuscript context of the charm which was invisible to scholars focusing on the content of the charm alone. In a similar way, R. A. Buck¹⁸ combined an in-depth linguistic analysis of the content of charms for women's ailments with a focus on the relationship of the content of these charms to their manuscript context. By doing so, Buck used the evidence which would be visible to the Anglo-Saxon user to reconstruct their experience of the charm away from modern ideologies related to women. Karen L. Jolly similarly spent the first four chapters of her book *Popular Religion in Anglo-Saxon England* exploring the context of elf-charms, the topic of the fifth and final chapter. Clearly, critics such as Jolly appreciate that it is not only the manuscripts which provide context for charm-usage, but also the wider issues concerning social and cultural forces.¹⁹ This type of context-centred approach, therefore, advances on Grendon, Storms and Rosenberg by *beginning* with a consideration of a charm's content and then *expanding* their discussion by relating this evidence to the texts surrounding the charm.

This contextual approach is not necessarily linked to later scholarship. Published in 1864-66, the three volumes of *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early*

¹⁶ Heather Barkley, 'Liturgical Influences on the Anglo-Saxon Charms Against Cattle-Theft', *Notes and Queries* 44 (1997), 450-55.

¹⁷ Stephanie Hollis, 'Old English Cattle-Theft Charms: Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses', *Anglia* 115 (1997), 139-64.

¹⁸ R. A. Buck, 'Women and Language in the Anglo-Saxon Leechbooks', *Women and Language* 23 (2000), 41-50.

¹⁹ See Karen L. Jolly, *Popular Religion*, in which she considers the impact of conversion, popular Christianity, medicine, liturgy and folklore on the interpretation of the elf-charms.

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England contain the transcribed texts of the *Herbarium*, *Medicina*, *Peri Didaxeon*, *Leechbooks* and the *Lacnunga*. Unlike Storms and Grendon, who abstracted charms from their manuscript context in order to group them by purpose and content, Cockayne reproduced the order and context of the charms as they are in the manuscript. Cockayne resisted the temptation of commenting on the charms' relationship to each other, and instead allowed the reader to form their own opinions based on the charms' manuscript layout. Cockayne also refrained from providing the charms with titles, unlike Storms (who, for example, referred to charm 21 as *Wip wennum*, which in fact has no title in the manuscript).²⁰ The way in which Cockayne described the charms in his prefaces is fascinating: he adopted a predictably critical opinion of Anglo-Saxon medicine, especially in comparison to more sophisticated Greek medicine, but also acknowledged that the charms contain a logic of their own, intended to

quiet and reassure the patient, to calm his temper and soothe his nerves; objects which, if we are not misinformed, the best practitioners of our own day willingly obtain by such means as are left them... The reader may enjoy his laugh at such devices, but let him remember that dread of death and wakeful anxiety must be hushed by some means, for they are very unfriendly to recovery from disease.²¹

Here, Cockayne showed the beginnings of an attitude towards charms that was grounded less in the cultural context of the scholar, and more in the desire to read the charms in their original context. By way of contrast, Storms stated clearly that charms are 'distinct from [methods] that we like to call normal and natural', and that 'magic... is primarily a practical concern and success is the only thing that matters'.²² It is clear that, unlike Cockayne, Storms was unable to separate the charms from his own understanding of the material, rather than approaching the charms in their context as a way of observing different—but no less acceptable—healing practices at work. Thus, we can see a connection between Cockayne and scholarship written almost a century and a half later, in which Cockayne's editorial practices are taken even further, to encapsulate not just the layout and ordering of a manuscript, but also the experiences of the people involved in the production and use of the texts.

Cockayne's attention to manuscript layout earned him much respect from other scholars in the field, such as J. H. G. Grattan and Charles Singer, who commented in their book *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine* that they are indebted to the earlier

²⁰ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (246-47), c.f. Oswald Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England III* (London: Longmans, 1866) pp. 74-75.

²¹ Cockayne, *Leechdoms I*, x.

²² Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 1.

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scholar's editions of the *Lacnunga* charms.²³ However, Grattan and Singer chose to colour their commentary on the texts with rhetoric that is undoubtedly culturally-bound, but must be recognised as unhelpful to the modern scholar. They described the Anglo-Saxon period as the 'dark ages', a time of 'barbarians' responsible for the 'deterioration' of the implicitly superior classical Greek medicine.²⁴ The respective length of their chapters also indicates their opinions of the period at hand: fifteen pages are given over to 'Barbarian Magico-Medicine' and 'Character of Anglo-Saxon Magico-Medicine', along with almost fifty pages describing the 'Sources of Anglo-Saxon Medico-Magic'; in only two and a half pages Grattan and Singer said all they thought was necessary about the 'Rational Elements' of Anglo-Saxon 'magic' and medicine. Unlike Cockayne, who edited the texts mostly silently—only providing notes on spelling and word-forms—Grattan and Singer appended a letter to each text in their edition indicating the source of the text. A letter (a) indicates Graeco-Roman material; (b) indicates 'Teutonic Pagan charms and lays' as the source; (c) denotes passages 'exhibiting an emotional Christian piety; (d) shows that the text is part of a collection of 'conventional prayers' that 'have little relation to earlier Entries'; and (x) indicates texts 'of no decided character and devoid of any clear association with the four strata a, b, c and d. This last category of texts is referred to as 'neutral'.²⁵ This attempt to create a system based on the sources of the material defeats the object of an edition based on manuscript layout; rather than relying on the texts and their order and relationship to each other as laid out by the scribe, the editors imposed a structure upon the material which is not evident in the text itself. This overlaying of a culturally-bound approach—the need to categorise seen also in Storms and Grendon—obscures the information encoded in the evidence that is present in the text. If Grattan and Singer had not tried to impose this anachronistic structure upon the text, they might not have been faced with having to create a 'neutral' category to take account of texts which do not fit in to their idea of the physical, magical Anglo-Saxon leech. They rendered themselves unable to see the non-opposition of the physical and the spiritual, the religious and the secular.

That being said, Grattan and Singer did touch on the idea of the moment of creation and performance of the texts in terms of the scribes, giving two pages over to a brief summary of who the scribes might have been. However, they described these

²³ J. H. G. Grattan and C. Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine, Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text 'Lacnunga'* (London; New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1952), vii.

²⁴ Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 5, 3 and 4.

²⁵ Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 18-19.

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scribes in terms of their position on the Christian/pagan binary: of the first scribe, they said that his material consisted of 'Pagan elements... of the Mediterranean type; of the second, that he was 'only very superficially Christianised'; of the third, that he was 'almost certain[ly] Pagan'.²⁶ This approach muddies the waters by referring to the scribes in modern terms, rather than seeking to describe them in terms of their Anglo-Saxon experiences. Furthermore, no further explanation is given as to how Grattan and Singer arrive at these conclusions, which would have been illuminating. In the same way, they provided an addition of the whole manuscript which would have been the ideal opportunity to explore these ideas of recording and use, but they could not escape the methodological approach of categorising and opposing ideas in a binary structure.

It might be useful to compare Grattan and Singer's approach to a charm with that of Grendon, Storms and Cockayne. Grattan and Singer consider the theft charm (in this thesis, GS 11a) on page 183; the most striking aspect of their translation is that they appended a title, 'Christian Narrative Rite for Lost Cattle', explaining that

The magician narrates a sacred event thought to bear some analogy to that with which he is faced. The meaning is that, as the birth-place of Christ and His crucifixion are known everywhere, so may the cattle-theft be made manifest.²⁷

While there is no problem with the theory of sympathetic magic being explained in this footnote, the terminology used is problematic: 'magician' is loaded with inappropriate connotations. In Grendon, this charm did not occasion much discussion, except for the comment that that lack the 'Heathen' features seen in the other theft charms.²⁸ The charm fits into his group 'A: Exorcisms, III, Charms A 21-24 (Christian exorcisms)', described as having elements of heathenism 'either absent... or completely obscured by Christian phraseology and religious ceremonial prescription'.²⁹ Here we see that Grendon and Grattan and Singer expressed their need to categorise these charms in terms not of their context but of their content, being concerned with their 'heathen' elements.

Storms commented on the sympathetic narrative, also referring to the charmer as a 'magician', picking out 'heathen practices' which are 'clothed in Christian dress'.³⁰ He asserted that the 'Christianisation of the charm is confined to ll. 1-4 and 8'; even

²⁶ Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 21-22.

²⁷ Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 183, n. 1.

²⁸ Grendon, *The Anglo-Saxon Charms*, p. 224 (charm A.22).

²⁹ Grendon, *The Anglo-Saxon Charms*, pp. 127-28.

³⁰ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 213.

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though he disagreed with Grendon's assessment, he echoed Grattan and Singer's and Grendon's urge to categorise the elements of the charms without any regard for their context. In contrast to all of the above, Cockayne simply provided a translation and a note that the idea of the Cross being lost and then found is related to St Helena.³¹ Perhaps this is due to his aim of editing the whole manuscript, allowing the reader to draw their own conclusions.³²

A contextual approach to a charm not only takes in the experience of the Anglo-Saxon reader, scribe, and owner of a charm, but also that of an Anglo-Saxon performer. In this way, articles such as L. A. Garner's 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in Performance' acknowledged the importance of performance context in interpreting the charms, and explored the performance instructions attached to various charms in order to determine how the charms might have appeared as a performance.³³ In this way, the textual and cultural information *surrounding* the charm is given equal significance to the material *within* the charm, which allows the modern reader to reconstruct the lives of the charms as they were in Anglo-Saxon society, rather than experiencing the charms as textual artefacts to be valued for their connection to pre-Christian and pre-Anglo-Saxon traditions.

Finally, charm scholarship has also been shaped by an approach which tackles the idea of the 'original' text:³⁴ central to the approaches of scholars such as Grendon and Storms, recovering the original text is the ultimate goal of the discussion. The aim of comparing charms from other cultures and times to those of Anglo-Saxon England is to attempt to reconstruct the 'original' text, a charm unaffected by the encroachments of Christianity, a text which will reveal the pagan original that is the ultimate ancestor of the Anglo-Saxon charm. Whilst compelling and interesting, investigations such as these inevitably favour the unrecorded, *ur*-text over the actual recorded text, diminishing the importance of the text in hand. By approaching the Anglo-Saxon charm as a record of performance and a product of its particular manuscript and social context, the charm

³¹ Cockayne, *Leechdoms III*, p. 61.

³² Other important works of criticism that should be mentioned here include Wilfrid Bonser's *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Wellcome, 1963). Although Bonser regarded the Anglo-Saxon period as part of the 'Dark Ages', he took pains to contextualise this judgement by advising the reader to remember that "'dark" is comparative term' (p. 6). Bonser's work is admirable in that he used a variety of sources (chronicles, medical texts, and archaeology) and a knowledge of the church practices current at the time, along with an awareness of relevant historical events (such as epidemics) to construct his idea of Anglo-Saxon medicine.

³³ L. A. Garner, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in Performance', *Oral Tradition* 19 (2004), 20-42.

³⁴ In this instance, 'text' refers to the unwritten, non-extant first version of a charm.

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becomes less a Christianised descendant of the more interesting pagan charm, and becomes a unique witness of cultural, social and personal factors intersecting to create this individual record. In this way, articles such as A. N. Doane's 'Editing Old English Oral/ Written Texts: Problems of Method (With An Illustrative Edition of Charm 4, *Wið Færstice*)'³⁵ regard the charm as a script which makes new performances possible, and as a record of past performances, a witness of Anglo-Saxon charming culture important in its own right. This article also incorporates the idea of manuscript context into its discussion, considering how the layout of the charm in the manuscript might affect how it was performed.

At this point, it is important to assess certain categories that have, up until this point, simply been commented on in terms of their unhelpful nature in charm studies, as anachronistic and insensitive to the Anglo-Saxon context of recording and performance of charms. By using the charms as evidence for, say, pagan practices, one elides the meaning of the charms as texts in their own time. This sort of methodology applies—either implicitly or explicitly—binary categories such as magic/religion, prayer/charm and physical healing/spiritual healing to the charms. These binaries are a product of the modern scholar, living in a society predicated on opposition and sets of binaries. For the Anglo-Saxons, these binaries might have been constructed differently, or not been in existence at all. It is vital, therefore, to assess these binaries and signal to the reader that they are problematic, and explore if these problems can be satisfactorily resolved.

Earlier I explored the relationship between the genres of hymn, prayer and charm, concluding that hymns, prayers and charms have characteristics unique to their genre, but can also share characteristics of other genres, whilst still remaining members of their particular genre.³⁶ Whilst that point holds true, and is demonstrated throughout the thesis, I would like to point to two helpful theoretical approaches that give the assessment of the categories applied to charms shape, considering categories such as genre (i.e. whether it is helpful or even possible to label texts as prayers, charms or herbal remedies) and type of content (magical/religious, physical/spiritual, pagan/Christian). It is natural that one should feel drawn towards a need to categorise these texts as one thing or another: we see categories everywhere, and particularly categories that exist in an exclusive and/or binary relationship. For example, it is only

³⁵ A. N. Doane, 'Editing Old English Oral/ Written Texts: Problems of Method (With An Illustrative Edition of Charm 4, *Wið Færstice*)', in *The Editing of Old English*, ed. D. G. Scragg and P. E. Szarmach (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 125-47.

³⁶ See p. 10.

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natural to assume that a theory is either rational or irrational, or that a swatch of a particular colour is, say, red, and therefore cannot be pink. The traditional theory of categories operates on this basis: a thing, activity or idea is either in a category or it is not, with all members of a category being equal. Therefore a dog fits into the category of dog and no other, with retrievers, daschunds and rottweilers also slotting neatly into the category of 'dog'.³⁷

Some studies, however, showed that there are some categories that have unclear boundaries. For example, one onlooker might class a certain person as falling in the category of 'tall', whereas others may not. An alternative to the idea of traditional categories was therefore proposed, in which we imagine categories as having blurred boundaries, to account for the fact that there is no way to ascertain what 'tall' actually means. This theory, due to its basis in the blurred edges of boundaries, is referred to a 'fuzzy set theory'. Another alternative is to imagine categories as having rigid boundaries, internally structured with the 'best example' of the category at the top, as the most commonly named example of the particular category. These 'best examples' are referred to as 'prototypical members'. For example, the category of 'bird' has, as some of its members, robins, penguins and ostriches, but 'robin' is perceived to be a better example of 'bird' than the others: it is inherently more 'birdy'. 'Robin', therefore is the prototypical member of the 'bird' category. Therefore, one knows exactly what constitutes 'bird', but is also unconsciously aware that some members of the 'bird' category are placed higher in the hierarchy of 'birdiness'.

What, therefore, do these theories have to do with charms? The fuzzy set theory can be used to set out the genres of texts that are similar to charms in such a way:

	Prayer	Charm	Herbal remedy
ritual action	Possible	Either ritual action or prescribed speech is necessary	Possible
prescribed speech	Possible	Either ritual action or prescribed speech is necessary	Unlikely
appeal to God	Necessary	Possible	Unlikely
herbal recipe	Unlikely	Possible	Necessary

³⁷ See George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago; London: Chicago University Press, 1987), xi, xiii, xiv for an introduction to traditional categories; pp. 21-22 for an introduction to fuzzy set theory; and pp. 13-57 for an indepth exploration of prototype theory.

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This table demonstrates the fuzzy set theory at work: the boundary between prayer, charm and herbal remedy is blurred by the fact that, for example, it is possible for each category to contain ritual action. However, there are elements which more clearly define the categories: for example, a prayer must contain an appeal to God, whereas a charm can potentially but not necessarily appeal to God, but a herbal remedy is unlikely to do so. Due to the blurriness of the boundaries, therefore, a given text could potentially be half-in and half-out of the categories of ‘charm’ and ‘prayer’.

Whilst the theory of fuzzy sets is helpful in accounting for the characteristics shared by texts we might regard as a ‘charm’ or as a ‘prayer’, it means that one must still refer to a text as *either* a charm *or* a prayer. The theory acknowledges that these two categories can share characteristics, but it still places texts in a binary relationship: *this* text is a charm, whereas *that* one is a prayer, even if they share characteristics. It is true, of course, that there must be some way of signifying the differences between a ‘charm-text’ and a ‘prayer-text’, as we have demonstrated that differences can be discerned. Therefore, we must look to a theory that allows us to differentiate texts through the terminology of ‘charm’ and ‘prayer’ without still implying a binary relationship between the two.

The theory of prototypes seems to provide a solution to the problem of ‘charm’ versus ‘prayer’, by allowing for variation within each category without forcing a text to shift categories. For example, we might be forced, by fuzzy set theory, to refer to the text below as a prayer:

*+ Rivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigantis
supplices arent fluenta sanguinis. per illorum venas cui siccato
dominico lavante coniuro sta. Per dominum nostrum Iesum
Christum filium tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula
saeculorum.*

Not only is the text preceded by the sign of the Cross, but it alludes to a Biblical narrative³⁸ and concludes with a lengthy liturgical section which appeals to Christ directly. It also, however, contains a section of prescribed speech. Thus, this text seems to fall more neatly into the fuzzy set of prayer, as it has more characteristics of a ‘prayer’ than a ‘charm’. In this thesis, however, this text is referred to as a charm thanks to the approach of prototypes: it is not the most ‘charmy’ of charms, but it does prescribe speech, include a sympathetic narrative and is intended to deal with physical as well as

³⁸ Discussed fully in 4.iii. Caelius Sedulius and Saint Veronica.

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spiritual well-being. It is unclear whether the compiler/user regarded this text as a charm or prayer, or whether s/he even entered into that debate.

Therefore, rather than regarding this text in *opposition* to a charm, it can be understood as being placed lower down the hierarchy of the 'charm' category: there is no need to place it in opposition to a prayer in order to do so, but rather one considers the text in relation to the characteristics required by a to create a 'charm' and those which can be included, but are not necessary. Thus, the method of defining a charm as against another category—and therefore creating a binary opposition—is replaced by a theoretical approach which is then inherently more sensitive to the performance and recording context of the charm, in that it does not impose anachronistic and unhelpful binaries.

It must be acknowledged that some texts will have only the characteristics of prayer and all the characteristics of prayer (such as explicit reference to the Christian God, text in Latin, co-occurrence with other prayers), and therefore might be considered prototypical prayers. Other texts will have some of the characteristics of prayer but no other prayer characteristics, in which case one would still regard them as prayers, just less prototypical ones. Yet other texts will have characteristics of prayer and of charms and can therefore belong to both categories with varying degrees of prototypicality.

That being said, it is not necessary to situate all the texts in this thesis at specific points on this scale; what is crucial is that this thesis does not try to separate prayers and charms along rigid boundaries but recognises that some texts could be categorised as both charm and prayer. Worrying about the difference between charms and prayers, however, could simply be a symptom of the fact that distinguishing between these two types of texts just doesn't work, whatever type of categorisation one uses. Indeed, the theory of prototypes cannot solve the problem of categorisation and binary opposition in general. Binary categories such as 'pagan' and 'Christian' are problematic in a different way to categories of genre. The opposition of 'prayer' and 'charm', whilst unhelpful and potentially as unclear for the Anglo-Saxon user as the modern reader, do not require any value judgements to be made about the texts. 'Pagan' and 'Christian', however, require that the modern reader has carried out some sort of assessment of the material within the text on the basis of what *they* understand to be most 'pagan' or 'Christian'. This is problematic, as the modern reader is then interpreting the text using different standards to the Anglo-Saxon user, thus creating inaccurate readings. The issue with binaries based on modern sensibilities is first of all that they were not necessarily perceived by the user of the charm, and secondly that if

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tensions between pagan and Christian were perceived it was not necessarily in the same way as for the modern reader. This thesis, therefore, strives to not collapse these binaries or blur their boundaries but to remove their binary nature, and to apply definitions to the charms only in ways that are sensitive to their Anglo-Saxon context.

For instance, whilst a charm and a prayer can both invoke God, this does not mean that an archetype of a charm exists at the far left of a continuum and an archetype of a prayer exists at the far right, with texts that share characteristics being placed at various points on the continuum. Rather, one should avoid the temptation of imagining these genres as being opposites at all: a charm that invokes God does not blur the boundaries of hymns and charms, it signals that for the modern reader, the term 'hymn' and 'charm' create problems of interpretation due to their imagined opposition. It is tempting to apply binaries to the charms because we want to see them fit into one category or another, as in earlier scholarship; or, we want to see the charms break down these boundaries to show that Anglo-Saxon society and culture cannot be broken down into a simple series of oppositions. I would suggest that however tempting these options are—with the second option being particularly appealing to the scholar seeking to complicate earlier readings of charms—we should resist them, as the issue is not with whether the charms fit into a binary opposition, but whether these binaries are appropriate at all. For it is true that even if one explores the charms in terms of their tendencies to blur boundaries, one is still implying that the binaries stand. Therefore, one very important aspect of this study is to avoid reifying these binaries wherever possible, to highlight where they have caused problems in previous works, and to dispense with them wherever possible. No complete solution is possible, due to pervasive nature of binaries: as has been said, we see them everywhere, and we require them in order to make sense of the world. That being said, insofar as is possible, this study aims to remain aware of the problems raised by binaries, and to avoid imposing them upon the charms or reifying them wherever possible.

The changes that have taken place in charm scholarship centre around the shift from thinking of charms as isolated artefacts to reading charms as part of wider contexts (in terms of manuscript, performance and Anglo-Saxon culture and society). Taking up the thread of the significance of the wider context, this study takes as its driving force the investigation of the effects surrounding texts have on two groups of charms. Combined with this focus on context, this study will also examine how the charms might be divided into constituent parts, investigating how these parts fit together and how they operate. By drawing together the most useful aspects of previous scholarship

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(such as rigorous attention paid to the content of the charms, and a focus on the wider contexts of the charms), I attempt to carry out a more complete survey of the transmission and use of these two groups of charms than has been attempted before. By making explicit the relationship between the internal structure of the charms and external influences on the charms, this study is able to rebuild the processes by which the charms were constructed. It is impossible to access the experience of an Anglo-Saxon who was reading or using a charm, but it is possible to reconstruct, as closely as possible, the conditions in which this experience would have taken place, utilising the evidence that is present in the charms' contents and surroundings. By using only the evidence present in the charms and their contexts, this study resists the temptation to apply modern preconceptions and frameworks to the charms: instead, the study reconstructs the situations in which the charms might have been used and written, how they might have been used and recorded and by whom.

Most importantly then, this type of context-based investigation re-imagines Anglo-Saxon society and culture as one based not on binaries as they are perceived by the modern scholar (Christian/pagan, clerical/lay, rational/illogical, magic/science, masculine/feminine) but on a set of criteria contemporaneous with the charms. The problem with these particular binaries is that they are based on a modern rather than an Anglo-Saxon understanding of the world, and so impose anachronistic dichotomies onto the texts. I propose to avoid allying the content of the charms to one end of a continuum or another, attempting to read the charms as removed from a framework of binaries wherever possible. Where binary relationships could potentially have existed for the Anglo-Saxons (for example, the Anglo-Saxons were very much aware of the tensions between pre-Christian and Christian beliefs, but did not necessarily see these two ideas a binary) I will always attempt to read the charms in terms of Anglo-Saxon, rather than modern, ideologies. By removing those dichotomies which are grounded in the time of the scholar rather than the charm, it is possible to rebuild more accurately the experience of the Anglo-Saxon charmer, unclouded by modern perspectives.³⁹ The key to this approach is ensuring that the reading of the charms is less culturally-bound than in previous scholarship, and is less wedded to ideas current in modern society rather than in Anglo-Saxon society.

As I have demonstrated in my brief review of charm scholarship above, the current direction of charm scholarship is leaning towards the importance of context, and the use of a multidisciplinary, forensic approach to studying these texts. For instance, it

³⁹ See also the discussion of genre boundaries on p. 9.

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is no longer regarded as appropriate to interpret a charm based only upon its context: one must also consider, for example, Anglo-Saxon laws regarding charming, the production and ownership of the charm's manuscript, and representations of charming and healing in literature. My methodology takes up this approach by examining the various contexts of the charms, in order to avoid filling in the gaps of an interpretation of a charm with opinions and evidence from anachronistic sources. An example of this methodology at work in the discipline of history is provided by Aaron Gurevich, who considered an example of objects placed in rivers in the medieval period: to interpret these objects without seeking a wider knowledge of the significance of these objects to the medieval owner will produce false results. In a similar way, Gurevich claimed, to interpret Viking coin hoards through the theories of the modern economic historians, divorced from the spiritual significance of this action reveals more about the historian him/herself than the Viking minds behind the burial of the hoard. Another example Gurevich provided is that of materials used by parish priests in conversation with their congregations, which are now being studied in conjunction with other theological texts and evidence of official doctrine in order to provide the texts being studied with a more complete contextual background. Historians, Gurevich told us, must be conscious of the human minds and the world-view behind these historical actions, objects and texts: key to this is constructing multidisciplinary studies of historical texts.⁴⁰

Therefore, my methodology, like Gurevich's, divides my interpretation of the charms from any modern concepts, attempting instead to understand them in terms of Anglo-Saxon beliefs and social constructs. For example, in the course of this study I carry out an analysis of a childbirth charm in response to a reading of the same charm which is caught up in the modern struggle against the masculine/feminine binary. This reading applies modern understandings of gender—based on masculine being opposed to feminine—to the charm, associating each gender with a set of characteristics grounded in modern society (for example, relating masculine to the public and official, and feminine to private and unofficial). In contrast, I approach the charm by engaging with only the evidence present in the charm and its manuscript context, thereby accommodating a reading which divorces gender from modern belief and grounds the interpretation in the Anglo-Saxon context of the charm. Although my reading of the charm avoids any modern understanding of the status and power of women by steering clear of modern theoretical constructions, in a way it is just as locked into the current

⁴⁰ See Aaron Gurevich, 'Historical anthropology and the science of history' in *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, ed. Jana Howlett (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 2-31 (14, 17).

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cultural context as any other previous critic: as I have just demonstrated, my methodology echoes and advances on those of Hollis, Buck and Gurevich, thereby as culturally-bound as previous scholarship, but using an approach that is more sensitive to the texts and their Anglo-Saxon context. It is impossible for the scholar to divide themselves entirely from a cultural context of scholarship—by reacting to it, one still remains a part of it—but, as this thesis will show, it is possible to select methodologies that are sympathetic to the texts and their users. It is inevitable that a study of a bygone age will be a culturally-bound activity, creating, to a greater or lesser extent, a modern recreation of a historical period; therefore, all that can be done is to select a method which is distanced as far as is possible from modern preoccupations, which is why this thesis grounds itself in evidence from the period concerned.

It will be clear, therefore, that the central tenet of this study is based on the importance of manuscript context. Each manuscript is imagined as a web in which the charms and other texts are suspended, held in place by various threads of meaning, connections which hold the charms in place and link them to the other texts in the manuscript. On a larger scale, Anglo-Saxon society is also imagined in this way: a web in which manuscripts are held in place by threads of social and cultural meaning. Each charm—and each text within a manuscript—is affected by and affects the other texts. No single text can be lifted out of the web without disrupting the integrity of the web, and thus creating a skewed reading of the text. Each text must be considered in its place as part of a larger organisational structure (the arrangement of texts within the manuscript as a whole), in which it has its own role to play in conjunction with the other texts. Equally, a manuscript can only be properly understood if it is seen as part of the larger environment of Anglo-Saxon society and culture as a whole.

Ultimately, therefore, the purpose of this study is to reconstruct the context surrounding the Anglo-Saxon experience of charming, and to redress the tendency of modern scholarship to impose anachronistic dichotomies and agendas on the charms. The Anglo-Saxon charmer does not just come to the charm as an isolated text; rather, s/he is first of all suspended in the same cultural and social matrix that holds the charms, and is therefore subject to forces due to his/her social status, gender, community, age, and a host of other factors. These factors are now invisible to the modern reader, and so must be reconstructed through an interdisciplinary examination of the aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture and society which impact on the charm (by considering the clues provided in other texts both within and outside the charm's manuscript as to the

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conditions particular to the user of each charm). Secondly, s/he comes to the charm via a manuscript, which has a significance and role of its own. Thirdly, s/he experiences the text as part of that manuscript, and as part of a new performance, a unique expression of the written text in oral and physical actions. Finally, the Anglo-Saxon experience of the text is potentially a group experience—as opposed to the solitary experience familiar to the modern reader—involving a performer, a patient and potentially a wider audience (although, of course, it is also possible for the performer and patient to be the same person).

Methodology: Important Theories

In order to consider the charms in their context(s), it is important to approach them with a methodology that takes account of the charms' participation in both oral and written culture. Traditional textual criticism, which has generally been used by previous scholars to create manuscript stemma, is useful for revealing links between charms that, at some point in their transmission, share a written witness. However, these manuscript stemma can be misused, viewed as a method of tracing a charm back to its lost original, parent text, rather than as a method of visualising the relationships between roughly contemporaneous texts that share the same cultural, chronological and geographical space.

An example of a flawed use of traditional textual criticism can be found in Storm's analysis of a set of theft charms, in which he traces connections between the charms back to a lost original, with the focus being on recreating a pagan text undiluted by Christianity. Indeed, Storms refers to the first charms in his collection as of 'true Germanic origin, free from classical and Christian influences', revealing his preference for 'pagan' texts over those which exhibit 'Christian' features⁴¹).

Aside from the issues associated with applying these binary oppositions to Anglo-Saxon texts,⁴² this approach is too simplistic, relying on the texts being related through a single chain of transmission, and originating from a single parent text. This type of criticism privileges the recreation of the original text over the connections between the extant witnesses themselves, and furthermore relies on tenuous connections of the charms with texts from other cultures. Whilst a comparative method might be interesting, it does not reveal anything about the charms that the texts themselves cannot reveal, and furthermore this method attempts to supply information about the charms

⁴¹ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 129.

⁴² For the problems associated with these binaries, see the discussion on p. 20.

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from places and times at a remove from Anglo-Saxon England. In addition, this method—focused on textual connections—is not an appropriate method to apply to groups of texts that might share an oral rather than a textual connection.

Therefore, the charms within this thesis had to be carefully considered before an appropriate method could be selected. Two methods emerged as the most useful and productive. In cases where texts can be clearly identified as textually related, they can be approached using traditional textual criticism. That is, wherever it is useful, it is appropriate to consider the manuscripts that the texts might share, and create manuscript stemma. An example of this is the theft charm GS 11a,⁴³ as it is recorded in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 190.

Cotton Tiberius A.iii

- 1 *Gyf feoh sy under fangen . Gif hit hors sy sing*
- 2 *on his feteran*
- 3 ***Op þe** on his bridele . Gif hit sy oðer feoh .*
- 4 *sing on **þ[æt]** fot spor*
- 5 *7 on tend **þreo** candela*

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- 1 *Gyf feoh sy under fangen . Gyf hit sy hors .*
- 2 *sing on his feteran . oððe on his bridele . Gyf*
- 3 *hit sy oðer feoh . sing on **þæt** fotspor . 7*
- 4 *ontend .iii. candela.*

The differences between the two texts (highlighted in bold type) could be representative of a textual relationship: the variances between the two are indicative of scribal error or preference, rather than a recording of two different and separate performances. For example, the difference between representing ‘three’ as *þreo* or *iii* is in the writing style of the scribe, rather than indicating anything about the oral circulation and performance of the texts.⁴⁴ Similarly, the scribes place *hors* and *sy* in opposite orders, the Tiberius scribe uses abbreviations whereas the Corpus scribe does not, and the two scribes differ on their spacing in *fotspor* and *ontend*. Most convincingly, the Tiberius scribe has added a superscript *h* into line 3 which does not appear in the Corpus text, suggesting that s/he felt a need to correct the text s/he copied from the exemplar. These differences could all arise as a result of copying and textual production, and do not necessarily suggest that either scribe is recording a performance: the witnesses are very closely related, which suggests that these connections could arise from textual transmission.

On the other hand, it is possible to identify texts which are very unlikely to be related by textual transmission. These texts, as opposed to those which are strongly textually related, will often use very different words to express the same physical

⁴³ The charms will be referred to throughout the study by their number in Storms, rather than by an imposed title: so GS 11, GS 12, etc.

⁴⁴ For a more detailed investigation of the transmission of these two charms, and the example following, see pp. 70-72, *Introduction to the Charms*.

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practice: strongly textually related texts express the same physical practice in almost exactly the same words. For example, GS 13 and GS 14 (recorded in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41 and London, British Library, Harley 585 respectively) share a very different relationship than the one shared by the witnesses of GS 11:

<u>GS 13</u>	<u>GS 14</u>
1 <i>Dis man sceal cweðan ðonne his ceapa</i>	1 <i>þonne þe mon ærest secge þæt þin ceap sy</i>
2 <i>hwilcne m[an] forst[o]lenne</i>	2 <i>losod</i>
This must be said by the man who has been robbed of some of his goods	As soon as somebody tells you that your goods are lost
3 <i>C[w]yð ær he ænyg oþer word cweðe:</i>	3 <i>þonne cweð þu ærest ær þu elles hwæt cweþe:</i>
He must say this before he speaks any other word:	Then you must say first of all, before you say anything else:

Here, the two witnesses express the same idea (the saying of words as soon as a theft has been discovered) in different forms. This is evidence of the fact that both scribes are recording essentially the same practice, but performed—and therefore recorded—in different forms.

Closely textually related texts can be approached with a traditional textual criticism method, which examines the way in which the texts are related in order to place the extant witnesses in the correct place on a manuscript stemma. Texts which are related via oral transmission, however, require a different method of assessment, as their relationship cannot be understood in terms of manuscript stemma. GS 13 and 14, for example, cannot be placed neatly onto a manuscript stemma as there is no evidence for the scribe of GS 13 having had knowledge of the manuscript of GS 14; their relationship is predicated on the existence of an oral charming culture, which they are then recording.

The question which remains is how the scholar is to approach the relationship between charms such as GS 13 and 14 if traditional textual criticism is not appropriate. Therefore, this thesis adopts a different theoretical standpoint from which to approach charms such as GS 13 and 14, which rests on regarding the charms as connected by the same unrecoverable idea, which is not recorded in any of the witnesses. This unrecoverable text is known as the deep text, and is expressed in spoken and/or written form in surface texts.⁴⁵ The surface texts are generated by an awareness of the deep text, accounting for similar—but non-identical—witnesses to a charm tradition, which

⁴⁵ This theory was propounded by Jonathan Roper in his article 'Towards a Poetics, Rhetorics and Proxemics of Verbal Charms', *Folklore* 24 (2003), 7-49 (18). Although Roper considers charms from a later period, this theory is appropriate for any set of charms that are connected by oral performance and transmission.

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express the same idea but in different formats or language. For example, in terms of the GS 13 and 14 charms discussed above, it is possible to imagine the deep text as an idea encompassing theft, recited words and the need for swift action, which is expressed by each performer and/or scribe in a different way, creating individual witnesses that are unique to the particular style and requirements of the performer and/or scribe. Applying this theory to charms connected by oral performance and transmission allows the scholar to account for the similarity of the two texts without becoming entangled in looking for relationships between the scribes or manuscripts which probably do not exist. The deep/surface text theory also allows the different witnesses to a charm tradition to be considered without reference to a reductive approach based on parentage and relationship to pagan culture, and removes the need to discuss charms only in terms of their usefulness in reconstructing the more desirable 'original' text.

As an awareness of context is a central to this thesis, my methodology involves examining the relationship between charms in a way that is sensitive to the context of their performance and/or recording. Therefore, I have assessed which methodology is the most appropriate for each group of charms, so that I may apply the correct methodology accordingly.

Whilst also addressing the ways in which charms are related, this study is also founded upon carrying out a detailed and rigorous examination of the physical appearance of the manuscripts, in line with the focus on manuscript context. The decoration of the charms (including illuminated capitals, illustrations and any excisions) is explored, in order to assess the ways in which the charms are separated from one another and other texts, and to investigate any clues to the ways in which the charms might have been performed. The consideration of the appearance of the charm on the page also allows a consideration of scribal practices, comparing the details of writing and copying practices in order to unite an impression of how the written manuscript witness relates to other written witnesses and/or an unrecorded oral tradition. Furthermore, the texts which surround the charms are considered, and a discussion of how these texts might impact on the performance and reception of the charm texts is undertaken.

Conclusion

First of all, it must be emphasised that the study of manuscript context is central to charm studies, and forms the basis of the current study. Previous scholarship has relied

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on mining charms for evidence of pagan practices and the syncretisation of pagan beliefs into Christian culture, using existing charm witnesses to work back to an original untouched by Christian interference. For example, Godfrid Storms demonstrates how charms can be used as evidence for wider cultural practices, relating the charms to the belief systems circulating in Anglo-Saxon England at the time of the charms' use and showing how the charms developed in the wake of the coming of Christianity. In this way, the theft charms can be used as evidence for the importance of the symbol of the Cross,⁴⁶ for example, or the use of sympathetic magic, and the co-existence of the two. However, using the charms in this way—as isolated artefacts—means that an important dimension of a charm's existence is not considered: a charm's location is key to interpreting its use, as by itself the charm is insufficient as an artefact. As an example, although GS 13 and GS 14 might be considered as evidence for a pagan ceremony of worshipping the four directions,⁴⁷ GS 13 appears in a manuscript containing Christian texts (mass sets, office chants, and a martyrology) and GS 14 appears in a medical compilation: neither manuscript context is necessarily ideal as a repository for pagan ritual. Furthermore, that GS 13 is recorded in an untidy hand in the margin of its manuscript (along with various other charms) whereas GS 14 appears in a clear, legible hand as part of the main text suggests that the two charms had very different recording and performance contexts: despite their close textual connections, the two charms actually led very different lives. This close consideration of manuscript context allows me to rebuild the circumstances surrounding a charm's recording, transmission, use and performance, to better understand the charms' place in Anglo-Saxon England.

Reconstructing the 'original' text is not important: what takes precedence are the events surrounding the generation and propagation of unique witnesses of charms, each produced by a different social, cultural and manuscript context. The other texts surrounding a charm might contain clues about the performance of a charm, even if the charm itself has no performance instructions: for example, a charm which is surrounded by hymns might be reasonably supposed to share in the context of oral performance. Indeed, the relationship between oral and written culture—an aspect of Old English literature much discussed in scholarship—is inextricably linked with manuscript context. The placement of a charm in the manuscript—for example, whether it is in the margin or the main text—the decoration of a charm and the evidence of scribal practices encoded in spelling and the separation of texts can reveal much about the manuscript

⁴⁶ Discussed in detail in 4.ii. *Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms*.

⁴⁷ As stated by Storms: Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 213-15.

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witness' connection to the oral tradition of charming and written exemplars. An examination of these features is key to understanding the transmission of manuscript witnesses of charms from one manuscript to another without recourse to the idea of a linear parentage of one charm to another.

Examining the manuscript context of a charm allows the modern reader to understand each charm as a distinctive performance with unique performance and manuscript contexts. As has been stated,⁴⁸ this thesis approaches the charms in two different ways depending on the nature of the similarities that they share: the use of methodologies that are aware of the different recording and performance contexts of charms goes hand in hand with methodologies that are sensitive to the manuscript context of charms.

Finally, manuscript context shapes our interpretation of the identity of the people involved with the production and use of charms: the manuscript owner, scribe(s), performer(s) and patient(s) of a charm all to a certain degree determine or are determined by the manuscript context. Some charms are quite specific about the people required to take part in charm (for example, the *Æcerbot* charm requires a priest to sing Masses⁴⁹), but often the manuscript context can provide the key to determining who might have used or performed a charm. For instance, if an owner of a manuscript can be identified—even if only to the level of social status or community—that information gives us a clue as to who might have had access to the charm or been present at its performance, with the caveat that if a manuscript is owned by a member of the clergy, its use is not necessarily restricted to that environment. This relates to the discussion above⁵⁰ which considers the proposal that binary categories are unhelpful to the study of Anglo-Saxon charms as they are anachronistic and reductive; therefore to draw an either/or relationship between lay and clerical use of the charms is unproductive and probably factually inaccurate, and should be avoided.

Logically following this point, then, is the second major focus which underpins this study: a move away from the reliance on dichotomies to classify Anglo-Saxon charms. Binary oppositions between various categories form a large part of the purpose and content of previous scholarship. The mining of charms for the recovery of pagan material or the use of charms for evidence of syncretisation of pagan culture into Christian culture produces a false dichotomy of 'pagan' as opposed to 'Christian'.

⁴⁸ See the discussion of deep/surface text as versus traditional textual criticism on pp. 22-25.

⁴⁹ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 172-73.

⁵⁰ See p. 20.

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Whilst there is no doubt that the Anglo-Saxons were acutely conscious of distinctions between pagan and Christian culture, they did not necessarily approach these categories with the same binary approach as nineteenth-century scholars of the texts produced in this period. It is true that writers such as Wulfstan and texts such as *Beowulf* demonstrate an awareness of and concern about the relationship between the concepts of 'Christian' and 'non-Christian',⁵¹ but that does not mean that these same concerns were mapped on to the charms, or that the charms were regarded in the same way by everyone. This is reflected by the wide range of potential formats available to the charmer, and the various manuscript contexts in which the charms are found. The content of the charm might involve sections from the liturgy, or might prescribe ritual activity which was unconnected to a sense of religious belief; similarly, the charms could appear in liturgical, ecclesiastical or religious manuscripts (and, of course, legal, secular and medical manuscripts) without being necessarily being regarded as unusual or problematic. There are only a few occasions in which the charms in this study are potentially seen as problematic by the scribe, but these cases seem to be due to confusion over genre rather than an objection to any 'pagan' content. Therefore, there is no need to impose this sense of binary opposition between 'pagan' and 'Christian', the more preferable tactic being to remain aware of the Anglo-Saxon attitudes to these categories without positioning them at opposite poles.⁵²

⁵¹ See, for example, the section of *Beowulf* which discusses the response to the attacks on Heorot (ll. 178b-183a):

*Swylc wæs þeaw hyra,
hæþenra hyht; helle gemundon
in modsefan, metod hie ne cuþon,
dæda demend, ne wiston hie drihten god,
ne hie huru heofena helm herian ne cuþon,
wuldres waldend.*

Such was their custom
The hope of heathens. They meditated on hell
in their hearts; They did not know the creator,
the judge of deeds; nor did they know the Lord God,
nor were they yet the helm of the heavens able to honour,
wielder of glory.

This extract demonstrates that the author of the text—and presumably the intended audience—understood the difference between 'Christian' and 'heathen' and the tensions that might exist between the categories. It does not, however, suggest an 'either/or' relationship, or the sense of a simplistic binary relationship.

See F. Klaeber, *Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburh* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1950). Translation my own.

⁵² Karen L. Jolly considers exactly this issue, terming the charms 'middle practices', as texts that occupy an ambivalent space between acceptance and suspicion. She points to Ælfric and Wulfstan as writers who were concerned with stamping out heathenism, but points out that Ælfric supports the use of herbs in conjunction with prayers. Jolly points out that the Anglo-Saxon was more likely to see a line drawn between divine and demonic (as opposed to rational or irrational, natural and supernatural in modern terms), and would condemn those remedies that did not rely on God. The answer to this, she suggests, is that charmers would replace 'objectionable elements' such as 'pagan names and worship and evil acts' with more acceptable Christian elements. This suggestion is not borne out by the charms in this thesis, in which it is possible for the charmers to carry out a charm without directly appealing to God for assistance.

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The opposition between pagan and Christian is not the only dichotomy to be imposed upon the charm material by modern scholars. Keen to distinguish Anglo-Saxon material as primitive—or conversely, as logical and rational—scholars have long attempted to divide the charms into the category of either magic or of science. The Anglo-Saxons appear to have had no such qualms: charm material is recorded alongside a wealth of other material, some of which is clearly spiritual in nature, and some of which is more closely related to a modern framework of what constitutes scientific writing. For the Anglo-Saxon audience, there appears to have been no need to draw any boundaries between magical and scientific material: therefore, it follows that the modern scholar, keen to study the use of charms, should keep as closely as possible to the realities of charming as experienced by the Anglo-Saxon audience. Similarly, the Anglo-Saxon charmer seems to have been capable of allowing physical and spiritual healing to share the same charm, without feeling the need to divide medicine (that is, physical healing) from the realm of religion (which prescribes methods of spiritual healing). Furthermore, the charms discussed in this study engage directly with the modern distinction between legal and charming material: although the Anglo-Saxon users clearly did begin to draw a distinction between these two genres, it was still possible for what was substantially the same text to be used in the context of a charm and/or a legal text, without causing too many problems for the users. Finally, this study also devotes a substantial amount of space to discussing the dichotomy of male/female and masculine/feminine, proposing that even this binary opposition was not necessarily visible or required in the context of Anglo-Saxon charming.

c. Structure of Argument

The first chapter of the study (Chapter 2) consists of three chapters which carry out a more in-depth explication of how the methodology was developed and how it operates, demonstrating the process at work on the theft charms.

The second chapter of the study (Chapter 3) looks outwards from the content of the charms to their wider context as part of a manuscript, exploring the connections between charms and their surrounding texts, and the manuscript as a whole.

Take for example, GS 12, which, as we shall see, relies more on the confidence of the charmer than the power of God. The main problem with Jolly's suggestion is that she proposes a simple switching out of 'pagan' material for 'Christian', which reifies these two categories and places them in opposition. A more nuanced approach—and the one taken up by this thesis—is to regard the charms as a product of a society in which the official opinion is not necessarily the one reflected in the evidence, meaning that the charms do not have to bear either a 'pagan' label or a 'Christian' one, thus depriving these categories of their binary status.

See K. L. Jolly, *Popular Religion*, pp. 102-103.

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The final chapter of the study (Chapter 4) builds on these findings to offer an assessment and advancement on established traditions of scholarship, tackling a set of entrenched dichotomies often applied to Anglo-Saxon literature. Firstly, a discussion of the relationship between oral and literate culture assesses the usefulness of the Parry-Lord Oral-Formulaic theory in terms of charm study, considering how the Parry-Lord conception of the orality of Anglo-Saxon poetry affects our reading of the charms. This discussion will also relate the sections of texts within charms—known as ‘units’ within this study—to the Parry-Lord idea of ‘formulas’. This section focuses on how the connection between oral and literate culture can inform an understanding of the transmission, performance and ownership contexts of the charms. Secondly, the link between charms and other aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture is explored, centred on the collapsing of boundaries between charming and material culture, the use of liturgy in the charms, and the binary categories of private/public and secular/sacred in terms of the use of the Cross in charms and Anglo-Saxon culture as a whole. Thirdly, an investigation of how two different theoretical perspectives give rise to two different interpretations of the same charm texts is undertaken, with the aim of scrutinising the relationship between the charms and gender. Much modern scholarship is dedicated to finding the female voice in texts and aspects of material culture from the Anglo-Saxon period: this final investigation puts the manuscript context methodology to one final test, comparing it to the methodology produced by a strongly culturally-bound and content-based theoretical perspective. Standing as a summary for the whole study, the comparison of these two methodologies will confirm the usefulness, rationality and validity of the manuscript context methodology, whilst collapsing a final binary: masculine/feminine and male/female.

Finally, the findings of the study are brought together and summarised, followed by the bibliography and an appendix containing the images used in the study and a tabular survey of the charms.

2. Methodology

2.i: Defining A ‘Unit’

It has already been established in the discussion of methodology that a key part of this thesis consists of breaking the charms down into their constituent parts, in order to examine more closely how and why it appears that individual sections of a charm can be slotted in to or taken out of a witness depending on the requirements of the user. The charms seem to be constructed of several ‘meaning slots’ into which sections of texts can be placed that are appropriate to the purpose and register of the charm. For example, the excerpts from the charms below demonstrate two meaning slots at work: a slot intended for a sympathetic narrative, here describing the Crucifixion, and a concluding slot:

	GS 12	GS 13	GS 14	GS 11a
Theft Charms	<i>iudei christum crucifixerunt pe[s]simum sibimet ipsum perpetrauerunt. opus celauerunt quod non potuerunt celare sic nec hoc furtum celatur nec celare posit per dominum nostrum.</i>	<i>Iudeas crist ahengon gedidon him dæda þa wyrstan hælon pæt hi forhelan ne mihton swa næfre ðeos dæd forholen ne wyrðe per crucem christi.</i>	<i>iudeas crist ahengon dydon dæda þa wyrrestan hælon pæt hy forhelan ne mihtan swa þeos dæd nænige þinga fforholen ne wurpe þurh þa haligan cristes rode amen.</i>	<i>Iudeas crist ahengan . þæt heom cōm to wite swa strangan . ge dydan heom dæda þa wyrrestan . hy þæt drofe on guldon hælan hit heom to hearme micclum . for þam hi hyt for helan ne mihtan.</i>

Figure 1: Theft Charm Meaning Slots

The meaning slot requiring a sympathetic narrative is satisfied, in each case, by a section of text which describes the events surrounding the Crucifixion: but, as the extracts highlighted in bold type indicate, the specific content of the section can change. GS 12, 13 and 14 focus on the hiding of the crime, whereas GS 11a focuses on the punishment due to those that crucified Christ (and so, by extension, the thief: indeed, this particular sympathetic narrative engages closely with the purpose of the text—to solve theft—by referring to the Crucifixion—and the theft—as deeds that cannot be hidden, and that deserve punishment). In a similar way, the meaning slot requiring a concluding section is satisfied by three different formats: *per dominum nostrum*, *per crucem Christi* and *þurh þa haligan cristes rode amen*. GS 11a does not have a concluding slot at all, demonstrating the way in which meaning slots can be dropped

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from particular witnesses, according to their context. Perhaps the user of GS 11a had no need for a concluding section, or did not know a version of the charm that had one at all.

Sections of text that change as they transmit from witness to witness are referred to throughout this study as functional: that is, they retain the sense required by the meaning slot, and engage with the purpose of the charm as a whole, but can change the specific wording used. Sections of text that remain exactly the same as they transmit from witness to witness are referred to as verbal: that is, they are transferred word for word, in an identical form. An example of a verbal section would be the *Rivos* section in the blood staunching charms, which retains exactly the same syntax and diction:

<i>Rivos cruoris torridi. contacta vestis obstruit fletu riganti supplicis arent fluenta sanguinis</i>	By the touch of his garment he impeded streams of hot blood By the flowing tears of the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up.
--	--

Another example of a verbal section is the *Gyffeoh* performance instruction which appears in three of the theft charms in exactly the same form. The term 'verbal' does not imply absolute fossilisation of a section, but rather the relative stability of its content compared to the 'functional' sections.

Heretofore, I have referred to the bits of text that fill in the meaning slots as 'sections'. However, this term is not quite satisfactory, as it does not have the appropriate connotations of being self-contained, and containing significance in terms of the charm as a whole. Therefore, the term 'unit' will be adopted as a way to refer to these bits of text, with 'verbal' and 'functional' being applied where more detail is required.⁵³

⁵³ It may be noted that the units of the charms bear some relation to the Parry-Lord formula, in that they can transmit word for word, act as an individual building block and appear in more than one text. However, the Parry-Lord formula rests on the 'a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea'. The most important characteristic of the Parry-Lord formula is that a formula consists of a set of words that conforms to the rules of metre and represents a simple, single idea. However, a charm unit is not restricted by metre but by register, meaning that it must conform to the purpose and tone of the charm as a whole, maintaining the appropriate semantic field. Furthermore, although a unit of a charm can appear to be formulaic, in that it functions as a 'building block', one of several used to construct a charm, fills the requirements of a meaning slot and matches the purpose and register of the whole charm, it might not appear anywhere else in the charm corpus. Therefore it contradicts one of the most important features of a Parry-Lord formula: that of frequency. For a formula to fit their definition, it must be repeated within a text or across the corpus. See Anita Reidinger, 'The Old English Formula in Context', *Speculum* 60 (1985), 294-317 (295). For more discussion on the relationship of Parry-Lord to the charms, see 4.i Orality.

Milman Parry began developing the idea of Oral-Formulaic Theory in the 1920s. See Milman Parry, 'Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I: Homer and Homeric Style', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* Vol. 41 (1930), 73-143; 'Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. II: The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry' *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* Vol.

2.i. Defining A 'Unit'

As demonstrated in **Figure 1** above, units make up the body of a charm, each one playing a crucial role in the operation of the charm. Indeed, recognising units as the building blocks that make up the charms is vital to a complete understanding of the text as a whole. A charm can be viewed as being held suspended in a web by the many different aspects of Anglo-Saxon society and manuscript culture (religious concerns and secular needs, bodily and spiritual ailments, prayer and 'magic', the other contents of the manuscript and the purpose of the manuscript as a whole): different parts of the charm respond to the tensions of the different threads. Each thread holds taut with the others in order to maintain the web's integrity: in the same way, the units of a charm must complement each other in order for the charm to accomplish its goal, each section performing its own function to contribute to the overall purpose of the charm. For example, the charm below can be divided into three units, each with its own purpose and function:

Charm E (London, British Library, Royal 2.A.xx, f. 49a).

+ *Rivos cruroris torridi contacta vestis
obstruit fletu rigantis supplices arent fluenta
sanguinis.*

This section alludes to the story of the healing of the bleeding woman, healed by Christ:

²⁰ Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹ She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed'.⁵⁴

This section of the charm is a direct quotation from an abecedarian hymn by Cælius Sedulius, *A Solis Ortus Cardine*.⁵⁵ The woman is identified in apocryphal literature as Saint Veronica.⁵⁶

The section's major function is probably best defined as a sympathetic narrative, in that the events within the narrative are intended to be replicated in the sufferer's situation.

The use of this particular narrative suggests a

43 (1932), 1–50. Lord continued the work of Parry, and authored many useful and interesting works. See Albert B. Lord, *Beginning Serbocroatian* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1958); *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991); 'Oral Composition and "Oral Residue" in the Middle Ages', in *Oral Tradition in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. F. H. Nicolaisen (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1995), pp. 7-29.

⁵⁴ *Biblia Sacra, Vulgatæ Editionis* (Tournai: Soc. S. Johannis Evang., 1894), Matthew 9: 20-21:

Et ecce mulier, quæ sanguinis fluxum patiebur duodecim annis, accessit retro, et tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus. Dicebat enim intra se: Si tetigero tantum vestimentum ejus, salva ero.

⁵⁵ See Carl P. E. Springer, 'The Manuscripts of Sedulius: A Provisional Handlist', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 85 (1995).

⁵⁶ For a full discussion of the legend of Saint Veronica, see Mary Swan, 'Remembering Veronica in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Writing Gender and Genre and Medieval Literature: Approaches to Old and Middle English Texts*, Essays and Studies v. 55, ed. E. Treharne (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), pp. 19-41.

2.i. Defining A 'Unit'

*per illorum venas cui siccato dominico
lavante coniuro sta.*

*Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium
tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate
Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula
saeculorum.*

user who also possesses quite a depth of knowledge of Biblical apocrypha. This section alludes to the life of Saint Veronica and to the power of Christ, seen in the miracle itself. These allusions buttress the efficacy of the charm, channelling the experiences of Saint Veronica and the healing power of Christ into the life of the sufferer.

This section functions as a direct address to the ailment, instructing it to stop. These direct addresses are common in Anglo-Saxon charming, found, for example, in the *wen* charm: *Clinge þu alswa col on heorþe, scring þu alswa scerne awage.*⁵⁷

The final section functions as a standard concluding phrase, invoking the power of God and thereby imbuing the charm with His power. This section relates back to the opening sympathetic narrative, echoing the allusive plea for God's assistance.

Concluding phrases such as these are common, and exemplify the combining of physical healing with the language of prayer.

Each unit responds to a different requirement of the user and the society in which they live: for, just as the charm is held in a web of meaning and significance, so too is its manuscript and its user. Thus, from the charm above we can deduce that the composer was competent in Latin and knew of Latin sources;⁵⁸ s/he knew of both Biblical and apocryphal narratives; and s/he was competent in and familiar with the idioms of the Church. There is also a suggestion that s/he was interested in remedies for women and perhaps was a woman, with the suggestion being that Saint Veronica (and therefore the sufferer and user of the charm) was suffering from menorrhagia.⁵⁹ Without an understanding of the way units function as individual units—each with their own role—and as part of the greater whole of the charm—supporting the charm's purpose and efficacy—the modern reader fails to grasp the meaning of the charm which would have been present for the Anglo-Saxon in the construction of the charm. The meaning of the charm—its significance, function, purpose and wider social and cultural connections—are all encoded within the makeup of the charm and the combination of units that form the whole text.

The methodology of this thesis, therefore, rests on an understanding of the wider contexts that surround each part of the charming process: units are part of a charm, a charm is part of a manuscript, a manuscript is part of Anglo-Saxon culture, and the

⁵⁷ This charm appears in London, British Library Royal 4.A.xiv, f. 106b, dated to the twelfth century. See Godfrid Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (Nijhoff: The Hague, 1948), pp. 154-58.

⁵⁸ For a full discussion of Cælius Sedulius and his works, see C. P. E. Springer, 'The Manuscripts of Sedulius: A Provisional Handlist', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 85 (1995), i-244; Carl P. E. Springer, *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity* (Brill: London, 1988), p. 5.

⁵⁹ This is discussed in greater detail in 4.iii. Cælius Sedulius and Saint Veronica and 4.iv. Agenda and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

2.i. Defining A 'Unit'

scribe/user is suspended in their own context of needs, beliefs and opinions that shape the way s/he records and uses the charm. In order to make this investigation of the contexts of charms possible, the next section 2.ii. Introduction to the Charms will summarise the characteristics of the charms considered in this study, followed by 2.iii. Comparing the Theft Charms, which will consist of a case study demonstrating the ways in which units can highlight information about a charm's scribe and user which would otherwise be invisible.

2.ii: Introduction to the Charms

A discussion of the charms is not possible without an introduction to each charm's text and their main characteristics. Thus, in this section I will provide a transcription and translation of each charm, followed by a brief discussion of the major ideas presented in each charm. The blood-staunching charms will be referred to by a letter, arbitrarily assigned to each charm (Charm B, Charm C etc.). Each theft charm will be referred to by its number in Godfrid Storms' *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (so GS 11, GS 12 etc.).⁶⁰

As a 'family', the theft charms all fit neatly into this study's definition of a charm, as a text which attempts to remedy a physical complaint or spiritual ill, using patterned text and ritual activity to do so, usually with some element of performance. Each of the charms has a defined purpose—to rectify the loss of goods through theft—and prescribes the use of words and action, through the reciting of various units and performing of actions. The blood staunching charms are of a slightly different nature: as a family, they lack performance instructions, and so communicate the performance and ritual activity aspect of their character through more obscure signals.⁶¹ Furthermore, the purpose of the blood staunching charms is revealed not through explicit statements, but through the texts which surround it, and the narrative related in the body of the charms. Both families of charms attempt to react to some sort of negative situation through the use of speech and action which is ritualised and weighted with special significance.

Within the two families of charms, further divisions can be perceived. The theft charms can be separated into three different types, according to their various units. The 'Type One' charms (GS 11a, GS 11b and GS 12) have three units as their common centre (the *Gif feoh* performance instruction and the sympathetic narratives *Crux Christi reducat* and *The Hanging of Christ*), along with one unit found only in GS 11b (a legal unit beginning *hit becweð*) and three only found in GS 12 (a list of saints beginning *Peter, Paul...*; a statement of power, *qui querit invenit*; and an excerpt from a hymn). The 'Type Two' charms (GS 13 and GS 14) share the *Hanging of Christ* unit with the Type One charms, but rearrange the charm to focus on a narrative concerning the Nativity and a four-fold invocation of the Cross. The third type of theft charm has only one example in this family (GS 15), and does not have any common units with the other two types, being constructed around invocations of Helena, Garmund, Herod and Christ,

⁶⁰ Godfrid Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (Nijhoff: The Hague, 1948).

⁶¹ Discussed at length in 4.ii. Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

ending with a cursing unit which is also found in charms such as *Wip Wennum*.⁶² GS 15 therefore assumes less importance in this thesis, but is an important member of the theft charm family, exhibiting as it does several similar characteristics to the other types (such as a shared purpose and a recognition of the importance of the Cross, along with a focus on sympathetic narratives).⁶³

Type One charms (GS 11a, GS 11b, S12):

Gif feoh
Crux Christi reducat
The Hanging of Christ (English)

Hit becweð

The Hanging of Christ (Latin)
Peter, Paul...
Qui querit

Type Two charms (GS 13, GS 14):

Cweðan/ secge
Bethlehem is the name...
North, East, South, West
The Hanging of Christ (English)
Through the Cross of Christ

Type Three charms (GS 15):

Invocations of Helena, Garmund, Herod and Christ on the Cross
'Cursing' section

Figure 1: The Units of the Theft Charms

The blood staunching charms also fall into groups depending upon their construction. If F and G are regarded as one charm,⁶⁴ all of the charms except B and C share the *rivos* unit: this unit is the central point around which the rest of the charms are built, remaining the same whilst the other units undergo changes, being adopted, removed and added in each witness. C is related to D-G in terms of register, using imagery of the oceans and streams to connect to the *rivos* of D-G. B is removed from the other charms, not sharing any of the same motifs or units, but demonstrating a similar use of Biblical narratives and invocations of Biblical characters. The removal of B from the other charms is to be expected, as it was recorded at a later date than the other charms, on the final flyleaf of the manuscript. The main connection which binds the blood-staunching charms is their preoccupation with the narrative of Veronica.

⁶² Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 144-145. The line *eal he weornige swa syre wudu weornie* ['may he thoroughly wither, as dry wood withers'] in GS 15 uses the same phrasing as GS 4: *and weorne alswa weter on amber* ['and may you dry up as water in a pail'].

⁶³ This division into three types has also been recognised by Stephanie Hollis. See her article, 'Old English Cattle-Theft Charms: Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses', *Anglia* 115 (1997), 139-64.

⁶⁴ Discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.ii. Manuscript Context.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

B	C	D	E	F/G
	<i>Ociani/ flumina flumen</i>	<i>Rivos</i>	<i>Rivos</i>	<i>Rivos</i>
		<i>Per illorum</i>	<i>Per illorum</i>	
	<i>Per dominum</i>	<i>Per dominum</i>	<i>Per dominum</i>	<i>Per dominum</i>
<i>In nomine</i>				<i>in nomine</i>
				<i>scribis hoc</i>
				<i>Greek</i>
				<i>Veronica</i>
				<i>Libera me</i>
				<i>Criste aduiva</i>
<i>In principio</i>				
<i>Deus propitious</i>				
<i>Marie</i>				
<i>Hoc dic novies</i>				

Figure 2: Units of the Blood-Staunching Charms

The Theft Charms

The following transcriptions are my own unless indicated. Where I have been unable to access the manuscript, or a microfiche image has been of low quality, I have used a reliable transcription, indicated in a footnote. I have indicated the first line of each unit within the charms, highlighting them in bold type, for reference in later discussion. I have numbered the lines for ease of reference, and have expanded abbreviations in italics. The translations are my own.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

Charm GS 11a, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 190, f.130.

Gyf feoh sy under fangen . Gyf hit sy hors. sing on his
feteran. oððe on his bridle . Gyf hit sy oðer feoh. sing
on þæt foþspor . 7 ontend .iii. candela . 7 dryp on þæt hof rec þæt wex
þriwa . Ne mæg hit þe nan man forhelan . Gif hit sy innorf.
Sing þoñne on feower healfe þæs huses . 7 æne on middan . **Cru**x
xpī [*Christ*] reducat . Cru x xpī [*Christ*] per furtūm perit inuenta ÷
[*est*] abrahām tibi semitas
uias montes cōcludat iob & flumina adiu dicii ligatūm per ducat .
Iudeas crist ahengan . þæt heōm cōm to wite swa strangan . ge dydan
heōm dæda þa wyrrestan . hy þæt drofe on guldon hælan hit heōm
to hearne micclum . for þām hi hyt for helan ne mihtan.

If livestock is stolen. If it is a horse, sing over his fetters or over his
bridle. If it is other livestock, sing over the footprints and light three
candles and drip onto the footprints the wax thrice. No-one will be
able to hide it.⁶⁵ If it is household property, sing then on the four sides
of the house and once in the middle, **May the cross of Christ** bring it
back. The cross of Christ was lost through a thief and was found. May
Abraham close to you the paths, roads, and mountains, and Job the
rivers, and bring you bound to judgment **The Jews hanged Christ**. To
them came a great punishment.. They did to him the worst of deeds.
They paid severely for that; they hid it to their own great harm,
because they could not hide it.

⁶⁵ The translation of *man* as 'one' rather than 'man' is discussed in 4.iv Agenda and Gender in the Anglo-Saxon Charms.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

Punishment, by God and by the law, looms large in theft charm tradition, but the theme of punishment by God is the central theme of GS 11a. Built around three units, which will be discussed in more detail below, the charm focuses on the finding and return of stolen livestock or property. The singing of a prescribed set of words, along with a set of carefully described actions, will bring about the return of the stolen goods. However, the charm ends with a warning that as God has done throughout history, He will bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice, and has the tone of an appeal to God to lend himself as judge and punisher to this particular theft: this aspect of the charm seems to take precedence over the return of the property itself.

GS 11a is recorded in three manuscripts: from the eleventh century, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 190, f. 130 (the additions, including the charm, are dated to s.xi¹; the main body of the manuscript is dated to s. xi med., xi²); London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii, f. 106 (dated to s. xi med); and a later, Early Modern transcript of CCCC 190, London, British Library, Harley 438, p. 128, from the year 1656.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ The differences between the manuscript witnesses of all the charms are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.ii. Manuscript Context.

Charm GS 11b, *Textus de Ecclesia Roffensi per Ernulphum episcopum* (the *Textus Roffensis*, or *TR*), Rochester Cathedral, f. 95r.⁶⁷

Gif feoh sy under numen . gif hit sy hors. sing
on his feotere. oððe on his bridels . Gif hit
sy oðer feoh. sing on ðæt of. rec . 7 ontend ðreo
candela . 7 dryp on ðæt of. rec . wæx ðriwa ne mæg
hit ðe marra for helan . Gif hit sy inorf . sing
on feower healfa ðæs huses . 7 æne on middan .
C rux xpī [*Christi*] **reducat** . **Crux xpī** [*Christi*] **per furtūm perit** in
inuenta ÷ [*est*] **abrahām tibi sanitas uias montes cōclu-**
dat iob & flumina adiu dicit ligatūm per ducat .
I udeas crist ahengan . ðæt him com to wite .
swa strangum . ge dydon heom dæda þa wyrstan .
hy ðæt drofe on guldon hælæn hit him
to hearne myclūm . 7 heo hit nafor helanne
mihton . **Hit becwæð** . 7 becwæl
seðe hit ahte mid fullan folc rihte swa swa
hit his yldan mid feo . 7 mid feore rihte beg[e]
tan . 7 letan . 7 læfdian ðam to ge wealde ðe hy
wel uðan . 7 swa ic hit hæbbe swa hit se sealde ðe to
syllanne ahte unbryde . 7 unforboden . 7 ic
agnian wylle to agenre æhte ðæt ðæt ic hæb
be . 7 næfre ðæt yntan ne plot . ne ploħ . ne turf .
ne toft . ne furh . ne fot mæl . ne land . ne læfe . ne
ferse . ne merse . ne ruh nerūm . wudes ne feldes .
landes ne strandes wealtes . ne wæteres . butan
ðæt læste ða hwile ðe ic libbe . for ðam ins [etunian]
onlife ðe æfre ge hyrde ðæt man cwydde oððon
crafode hine on hundrede oððon ahwar on ge
mote on ceap stowe oþþe on cyric ware ða hwile þe
he lifde unsac he wæs onlife beo on legere swa swa
he mote . do swa ic lære beo ðe þinūm . 7 læt me

If livestock is stolen. If it is a horse, sing over his fetters or over his bridle. If it is other livestock, sing over the footprints and light three candles and drip onto the footprints the wax thrice. No-one will be able to hide it. If it is household property, sing then on the four sides of the house and once in the middle, **May the cross of Christ** bring it back. The cross of Christ was lost through a thief and was found. **May Abraham** close to you the paths, roads, and mountains, and Job the rivers, and bring you bound to judgment **The Jews hanged Christ**. To them came a great punishment. They did to him the worst of deeds. They paid severely for that; they hid it to their own great harm, because they could not hide it. **He bequeathed** it and died, he, I say, who owned it with full folk right as his ancestors with money and with life by right obtained it and they let it go and left it to him to have power of it to whom they granted it, and so I it have as he gave it who had it to give unclaimed and unforbidden . and I will own for my own possession that which I have and never will impair, neither plot nor ploughland, neither turf nor toft. neither furrow nor footmearse, neither land nor leasow, neither fresh nor marsh, neither rough nor room, of wood nor of field, of sand nor of strand, of wold nor of water, except it last me as long as I live . since the man is not alive who ever heard that any made a talk or summoned before the hundred court, or anywhere to a folk gemot, in a market place, or in a church congregation as long as he lived he was without litigation in life, be on his last bed as he may be . do as I teach, be thou with thine and leave me with mine. I yearn not for thing of thine, neither lathe nor land neither soke (right of trying crimes committed on the estate) or socn (power of a lord over his villeins, with the corresponding duties), neither thou needst me, nor do I mind thee at all.

⁶⁷ Translation of *Hit becwæð* unit from Oswald Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*, III, (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), pp. 287-89.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

be minūm ne gyrne ic ðines ne læðes ne landes ·
ne sace ne socne · ne ðu mines ne ðærst ne myn
te ic ðe nan ðing ·

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

GS 11b consists of the same three units as GS 11a, but differs in that it is followed by a lengthy legal bequeathing unit.⁶⁸ In this way, GS 11b moves away from the theme of religious law, and towards a status as a legal declaration of theft and ownership, perhaps requiring a public rather than private performance. GS 11b, therefore, is perhaps more likely to have been used by the laity than the clergy, falling as it does into the secular sphere: GS 11b appeals to the law of the land, as opposed to the direct appeal to God's law in GS 11a, and does not reveal the same desire for punishment by God as GS 11a does.⁶⁹ Whereas GS 11a ends with a unit which invokes the *wite swa strangan* incurred for the *dæda þa wyrrestan*, GS 11b's version of this unit focuses on the fact that they *hit nafor helanne*.

GS 11b appears in three manuscripts: the *Textus Roffensis*, f. 95, dating from the twelfth century, Cambridge Corpus Christi College 383, f. 59r (dated to s.xi/ xii), and London, British Library Cotton Julius C.ii, which is an Early Modern transcript of the *TR*. The text in CCC 383 agrees closely with that in the *TR*.

⁶⁸ Not edited by Storms; see Cockayne, *Leechdoms III*, pp. 287-89.

⁶⁹ Of course, drawing a sharp distinction between ecclesiastical and secular law is not particularly useful: in reality, the boundary between the two is likely to have been too fluid to allow any definite division. To illustrate this point, we should look to some charters, in which legal grants of land and property are combined with a cursing unit which references God. This is an example of such a unit, from MS Bodleian 636, f18v-19r. This manuscript dates from 1200-1260: this charter is a copy of an older charter: *Swa ðat hwa swa hit breket . ealre biscope cursunge 7 eal cristine folces he hafe . Amen*. ('May he who breaks this [agreement] have the curse of all the bishops and all the Christian people', Sean Miller, *Anglo-Saxons.net* <<http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=seek&query=S+72>> [accessed 21/08/08]). A similar unit can be found in Latin, appearing in charters of various dates: *perpetuo anathemate subjaceat* ('May he be under a curse forever', Miller, *Anglo-Saxons.net* <<http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=seek&query=S+111>> [accessed 21/08/08]). The word *anathema* has connotations not only of a curse, but a specifically ecclesiastical curse or curse from God (*the Oxford English Dictionary Online* <http://dictionary.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/cgi/entry/50008009?single=1&query_type=word&query_word=anathema&first=1&max_to_show=10> [accessed 21/08/02]). Again, in a charter dating from 900-1000, found in BL Add. 19788, we see the phrase, *sciat se anathematum ab omnipotenti* ('May he know himself to be anathematised from the all powerful', Miller, *Anglo-Saxons.net* <<http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=seek&query=S+67>> [accessed 21/08/08]).

The threat therefore, is not just of legal ramifications, but religious consequences as well. Thus the threat of punishment in GS 11b might be framed by legal material, but not totally divorced from religious principles. For more information on Anglo-Saxon charters, see *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 99-100. See also Sean Miller, *Anglo-Saxons.net* <<http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=show&page=Charters>> for a searchable collection of Anglo-Saxon charters, organised by Sawyer number).

All translations of charter quotations my own.

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Charm GS 12, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41, f. 206.⁷⁰

Gif feoh sy undernumen .
 gif hit sy hors. sing þis on his feotera. oððe on his bridel
 Gif hit si o[ðer] feoh. sing on þæt hofrec
 and ontend .iii. candella dryp þriwa þæt weax
 ne mæg hit nan man f[or]helan .
 Gif hit sy oþer orf þonne sing ðu hit on iiiii healfa ðin
 and sing arest up rihte hit:
 and petur pol patric pilip marie brigit felic
 in nomine dei and ch[r]isti qui quer[er]it inu[e]nit.
Christus illum si[bi] elegit in terris [u]nicarium
 qui de gemino captiuos liberet seruitio
 plerosque/ de seruitute quos redemet hominum
 innumeros de sabuli obsoluit dominio.
 Ymnos/ cum apocalipsi salmosque cantat dei
 [quo]sque et edificandum dei tractat pupulum
 quem legem/ in trinitate sacre credent nominis
 tribusque personis unam.
 Sona domine precintus diebus ac noc/tibus
 [sine?] intermissione deum oret dominum
 cuius ingentes laboris percepturis percepturis [sic] premium/
 cum apostol[is] regnauit sanctus super israel.
 Audite omnes amantes Deum sancta merita
 uiri in christo/ beati patricii episcopo
 quomodo bonum ab actum simulatur angelis
 perfectumque est propter uitam/ equatur apostolis.
 patricii laudes semper dicamus ut nos cum illo defendat deus.
Crux christi reducat
 crux christi perit et inuenta est
 habraeham tibi uias montes/
 situa[s] semitas fluminas andronas [con]cludat.
 isaac tibi tenebras inducat
 Crux iacob te ad iudicium ligatum perducatur

If livestock is stolen. If it is a horse, sing this over his fetters or over his bridle. If it is other livestock, sing over the footprints and light three candles, drip thrice the wax. No-one will be able to hide it. If it is other property, then sing you it on the four sides and sing once straight up: **And Peter, Paul, Patrick, Phillip, Maria, Brigit, Felix.** In the name of God and Christ [or Cyriacus], **he who seeks, finds. Christ chose that one** his vicar on earth who frees captives from a double bond. And those innumerable men whom he redeems from servitude, he absolves from the dominion of the devil. Hymns with the apocalypse and the psalms of God he sings which he expounds to build up the people of God. They trust that law in the Holy Trinity, also one name in three persons. Girded with the belt of the Lord, days and nights in turn he prays to the Lord God, whose monumental labor will take the prize. With the apostles he has reigned holy over Israel. Hear, all who love God, through the holy merit of a man blessed in Christ, Patrick the Bishop, how by a good act he is made like to the angels and on account of his perfect life he is equal to the apostles. Let us always sing the praises of Patrick, so that God may defend us along with him. **May the cross of Christ bring it back.** The cross of Christ was lost through a thief and was found. May Abraham close to you the roads, mountains, woods, paths, rivers, passages. May Isaac lead you into the darkness. The cross

⁷⁰ This transcription and translation are taken from Olsan, 'Inscription', (415-16).

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iudei christum crucifixerunt

pe[s]simum sibi met ipsum perpetrauerunt
opus celauerunt quod non potuerunt celare
sic nec hoc furtum celatur nec celare possit
per dominum nostrum.

[and] Jacob bring you bound to judgment.

Jews crucified Christ.

They achieved the worst thing for themselves.
They hid a deed that could not be hidden. Thus
this thief is neither hidden nor can hide through
our Lord.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

GS 12 differs from GS 11a and 11b in that it contains three new units in addition to the *Gif feoh*, *Crux Christi reducat* and *The Hanging of Christ* units seen in GS 11a and 11b. The result of these changes is that GS 12 reads more like an assertion of power of the performer of the charm, and leaves no question that *qui querit invenit*, focusing on the thief's inability to conceal the theft from the owner of the property. GS 12 appears in only one manuscript, CCCC 41, dated to 1025.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

Charms GS 13 and 14, GS 13: CCCC 41, f. 206; GS 14: London, British Library, Harley 585, f. 180v.⁷¹

GS 13	GS 14
<p>Dis man sceal cweðan ðonne his ceapa hwilone m[an] forst[o]llenne c[w]iþ ðær he ænyg oþer word cweðe: Bethleem hattæ seo burh ðe Crist on geboren wes .seo is gemærsoð ofer ealne middan gearð swa ðeos dæd wyrþe for monnum mære per cruceum Christi and gebide þe ðonne priwa east and cweð priwa + christi ab orient[e] reducat and in [for iii?] west and cweð crux christi ab occidente reducat and in [for iii?] suð and cweð crux christi a meridie reduca[t] and in [for iii?] norð and cweð crux christi abscondita sunt [sic] et inuenta est Iudeas crist ahengon gedidon him dæda þa wyrstan hælton pæt hi forhelan ne mihton swa næfre ðeos dæd forholen ne wyrðe per cruceum christi.</p>	<p>þonne þe mon ærest secge þæt þin ceap sy losoð þonne cweð þu ærest ær þu elles hwæt cweþe: bætleem hatte seo buruh þe Crist on acænneð was seo is gemærsoð geond ealne middangeard þyos dæd for monnum mære gewurþe burh þa haligan cristes rode amen. gebide þe þonne priwa east and cweð þonne priwa crux christi ab oriente reduca[t] gebide þe þonne priwa west and cweð þonne priwa crux christi ab occidente reducat gebide þe þonne priwa suð and cweþ priwa crux christi ab austro reducat gebide þonne priwa norð and cweð priwa crux christi ab aquilone reduca[t] crux christi abscondita est et inuenta est iudeas crist ahengon dydon dæda þa wyrrestan hælton pæt hy forhelan ne mihtan swa þeos dæd næmige þinga f[o]rholen ne wurþe burh þa haligan cristes rode amen.</p>
<p>This must be said by the man who has been robbed of some of his goods. He must say this before he speaks any other word Bethleem is the name of the town where Christ was born. It is well known throughout the whole world. So may this act become known among men. Through the cross of Christ And worship then three times to the east and say three times, May the cross of Christ bring it back from the east. And towards the west and say, May the cross of Christ bring it back from the west and towards the south and say may the cross of Christ bring it back from the south and towards the north and say, the cross of Christ was hidden and is found. The Jews hanged Christ, did to Him the worst of deeds. They hid what they could not hide. So may this deed never be hidden, through the sacred cross of Christ.</p>	<p>As soon as somebody tells you that your goods are lost. Then you must say first of all, before you say anything else: Bethleem is the name of the town where Christ was born. It is well known throughout the whole world. So may this act become known among men. Through the holy cross of Christ amen. And worship then three times to the east and say three times, May the cross of Christ bring it back from the east. Pray then three times to the west and say three times, May the cross of Christ bring it back from the west Christ bring it back from the west pray towards the south three times and say three times, may the cross of Christ bring it back from the south pray towards the north three times and say three times, may the cross of Christ bring it back from the north The cross of Christ was hidden and is found. The Jews hanged Christ, did to Him the worst of deeds They hid what they could not hide. So may this deed never be hidden in any way Through</p>

⁷¹ This transcription is taken from Olsan, 'Inscription', 414. I have used Storms' translations: I have modified his translation of *CruX Christi* a *reducat* from 'the cross of Christ will bring it back from the...' to 'May the cross of Christ bring it back from the...' in order to reflect the use of the subjunctive. In doing this I follow Olsan.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

				the holy cross of Christ, Amen.
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2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

GS 13 consists of four distinct sections, sharing one—*The Hanging of Christ*—with GS 11a, 11b and 12. The theme of this charm, much like its counterpart, GS 14, is that of the power of the Cross to restore order across the whole earth and in doing so, return the stolen property. Unlike GS 11a and 11b, therefore, this charm focuses on the discovery and recovery of the goods, rather than the punishment required for the crime. GS 13 and 14 are so similar, despite appearing in two different manuscripts, that it is likely that GS 13 is either a direct copy of 14, or that the oral version of this incarnation of the tradition was so well known that the textual versions of it bear striking similarities.⁷²

The charms appear in CCCC 41, in which this charm is written in the same margin as GS 12, and in LBL Harley 585, otherwise known as the *Lacnunga* (dated to s. x/xi, xi¹).

Charm GS 15

<p>Ne forstolen ne forholen nanuht ðæs þe Ic age ðe ma þe mihte herod urne drihten Ic gēpohte sancte eadelenan and ic gēpohte crīst on rode ahangen swa ic þence ðis feoh to findanne næs to oðfeorganne and to witanne næs to oðwryceanne and to lufianne næs to oðlædanne. Garmund godes ðegen find þæt feoh and fere þæt feoh and hafa þæt feoh and heald þæt feoh and fere ham þæt feoh þæt he næfre næbbe landes þæt he hit oðlæde ne foldan þæt hit oðferie ne husa þæt he hit oð hit healed Gyf hyt hwa gedo ne gedige hit him næfre. Binnan ðrym nihtum cunne ic his mihta his mægen and his mihta and his mundcræftas. eal he weornige swa syre wudu weornie swa breðel seo swa þystel se ðe ðis feoh oðfergean ðence oððe ðis orf oðehtian ðence Amen</p>	<p>Neither stolen nor hidden may be anything I own, any more than Herod could hide our Lord. As I thought of St. Helen and I thought of Christ, hanged on the cross so I expect to find these animals, not have them gone far away and to know where they are, not have them harmed and to care for them, not have them led off Garmund, God's thane, find these cattle and fetch these cattle and have these cattle and hold these cattle and bring these cattle home so that he who took them may never have any land to put them on, nor country to carry them to, nor houses to keep them in. If anyone tries it, he would never accomplish it. Within three nights I would know his might, his main and his might, and his hand-strength. May he thoroughly wither, as dry wood withers as bramble does, so the thistle, as [and also] he who intends to carry off these goods or drive away these animals.⁷³</p>
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⁷² Discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.i. Orality.

⁷³ This translation and transcription are taken from Olsan, 'Inscription', 411-12.

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GS 15, which shares none of its five units with any other charms in the tradition, is framed more as a threat to potential thieves than as a method of bringing back stolen goods. It is recorded in CCCC 41, in the same section as GS 12 and GS 13.

The Blood Staunching Charms

Charm D (Royal 2.A.xx, f. 16b).

*Rivos cruoris torridi. contacta vestis obstruit fletu riganti supplicis arent fluenta sanguinis. per illorum quae siccata dominica labante coniuro sta. Per dominum nostrum.*⁷⁴

By the touch of his garment he impeded streams of hot blood
By the flowing tears of the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up.
Through that which was dried up by the work of the Lord, I order you, stop.
Through our Lord.

This charm is the shortest of the three charms linked by the largely verbal *rivos* unit. It shares the similarly verbal *per illorum* unit with E, and is witness to the shortest *per dominum nostrum* unit, shared with E (in an extended form), G and C (both of which extend the unit slightly).

Charm E (Royal 2.A.xx, f. 49a).

+ *Rivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigantis supplices arent fluenta sanguinis. per illorum venas cui siccato dominico lavante coniuro sta. Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula saeculorum.*

By the touch of his garment he impeded **streams** of hot blood
By the flowing tears of the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up. **Through those veins** which were dried up by the work of the Lord, I order you, stop.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ your son who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, for all time.

This charm introduces the use of the Cross symbol (+). On a basic level, this symbol could be used as a marker indicating the beginning of a new text. The symbol seems to fall at the beginning of texts, or at a point where a marker of separation or punctuation is required. On a more complex level, it could be shorthand for invoking the Cross of the Crucifixion as an appeal or channelling of power, through the process

⁷⁴ Translation taken from P. Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic' in *Religion and Literature in Western England 600-800* (CUP: Cambridge, 1990), pp. 273-327 (p. 300, n. 111). Corrected by Adlai Lang.

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of self-signing.⁷⁵ Alternatively, in line with the extended concluding unit *per dominum nostrum*, the use of the Cross symbol could be related to an interest in more general demonstrations of piety. Performative uses of the Cross were common in Anglo-Saxon charming.⁷⁶

The close relationship between D and E (and, in terms of the *rivos* unit, between these two charms and F as well, below) is created by the high level of similarity between the *rivos* and *per illorum* units. To use the terminology established in Chapter 2.i. Defining a Unit, the *rivos* and *per illorum* elements are verbal, as they show only small changes in transmission. Perhaps one could go even further and suggest that not only must the *rivos* unit consist of an exact quotation of the hymn by Sedulius, it is also the only possible unit appropriate for that slot: the function of the Biblical paraphrase is sympathetic, and as such it is appropriate that a narrative concerning Veronica, the bleeding woman, is invoked.⁷⁷ However, the *per illorum* unit is different, and could potentially be characterised as functional in that a command phrase can be filled by other words to the same effect. Indeed, command phrases appear throughout blood-staunching and other charms in the Anglo-Saxon corpus in many different forms.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ See, for example, Methodology: 2.iii. Comparing the Theft Charms: ‘This emphasis on the Cross of Christ and the cruciform shape of the ritual is no accident. The myth of the finding of the Cross by St Helen would be familiar to the Anglo-Saxons, and in the context of the theft charm would invoke the finding of lost objects. Furthermore, the Cross of Christ could be seen as a universal symbol of order and justice, the ideal symbol to combat theft and chaos’. This issue is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.ii. Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

⁷⁶ See Chapter 4.ii. Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

⁷⁷ Discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.iii. Caelius Sedulius and Saint Veronica and Chapter 4.iv. Agenda and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

⁷⁸ Perhaps the most famous command phrase in an Anglo-Saxon charm is from a charm against *Færstice*: *ut lytel spere, gif herinne sie!* This charm is recorded in the *Lacnunga*. As a direct command to the pain/spear, *ut* echoes the imperative *sta* in charm D. Charm B also echoes this mood, in the lines *in nomine Patris cessa sanguis, In nomine Filii resta sanguis*.

Imperative/ command phrases appear more frequently in later blood-staunching charms, as in the examples below:

Te per eum exiuit quo perfidus occidit anguis, & sanguinis cuius precium seculi fuit huius, adiuro cessa, nunc vena valeque repressa.

Sey this three times, &c.

(O Thou from whom flowed the blood by which the treacherous serpent dies, & whose blood was the ransom of that generation, I adjure thee, now **cease**, O vein, and, restrained, be well. Say this three times &c...)

Taken from a Middle English medical text: Fritz Heinrich, *Ein mittelenglisches Medizinbuch* (Halle, 1896), cited in Thomas R. Forbes, ‘Verbal Charms in British Folk Medicine’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 115 (1971), 293-316 (299). Emphasis my own.

Three virgins came over Jordan’s land
Each with a bloody knife in her hand
Stem, blood, **stem**- letherly [lethargically?] **stand!**

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However, in terms of the evidence presented by Royal, this unit appears to have been treated as verbal, retaining the same diction and syntax.

The reason for this similarity is perhaps due to the way in which the charms were copied into the manuscript. It is possible that E and D were copied into this manuscript to represent the two different versions of the charm known to the copier, who may have been keen to record a version with a longer *per dominum nostrum* element. Another reason could be that the *per illorum* element was so well-known, that the users of the charm would not consider altering it: other witnesses to this unit are simply not recorded elsewhere.

The *per dominum nostrum* element is a concluding unit which is liturgical in nature but unrelated to the text of the charm. This could have taken the form of an *Amen*: indeed, Charm E illustrates well that this element can be fulfilled by any general statement of faith, which does not have to be thematically related to the purpose or other contents of the charm.

The units of D and E can be summarised thus:

Unit	Type/ slot	Verbal/ Functional
Rivos	Sympathetic narrative	Verbal (due to its derivation from a written, verbal source)
Per illorum	Command	Verbal/ functional (must include certain elements—such as an imperative—but otherwise functional)
Per dominum nostrum	Appeal to God/ Christ	Functional (only the sense remains verbal)

Figure 3: Units of D and E

Charm F (Royal 2.A.xx, f. 49a).

*Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva
+ Rivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu
rigante
supplicis arent fluente sanguinis.
Beronice. Libera me de sanguinibus deus deus salutis
meae
AMICO CAPDINOPO ΦΙΦΙΡΟΝ ΙΑΡΑCΑCΙΜΟ*

Christ help me + Christ help me +
Christ help me
+ By the touch of his garment he
impeded streams of hot blood
By the flowing tears of the suppliant
the flood of blood will dry up.
Veronica. Deliver me from blood, O

Bloody nose (or mouth) in God's name **mend**.

Forbes ('Verbal Charms', p. 301), claims that this charm comes from the Orkneys.

2.ii. Introduction to the Charms

*Fodens magnifice contextu fundavit tumulum usugma
domine adiuva.*⁷⁹

God, thou God of my salvation
Having reaped, I established a lofty-
roofed monument
(Latin transliteration of Greek) God
help me.

This text, whilst preserving the *rivos* unit and the use of the Cross symbol, introduces four new units: *Christe adiuva*; *Veronica*; *Greek I-III*; *Latin transliteration of Greek*. The use of different languages (such as Irish—garbled or genuine—Latin—in OE charms—and Greek) is common in Old English charming. It has been argued that foreign languages create a sense of mystery and magic, and that the connection of Greek and Latin with medical learning may have given phrases in those languages currency in charming:⁸⁰ the ‘unusually high frequency of Greek characters and transliterations’ (seen in the charms and elsewhere in Royal) is explained by Michelle P. Brown as ‘a wish to appear overtly erudite’. However, she also echoes Lloyd Daly’s reasoning, suggesting that the Greek excerpt ‘may have thought to have been imbued with a talismanic quality’.⁸¹

The Greek phrase in this charm can be translated as ‘having reaped I established a lofty-roofed monument’,⁸² and does not seem to have any direct relationship to the charm. This unit probably represents the use of Greek simply for the fact that it is Greek, rather than having any direct connection with the purpose of the charm. It is possible that the phrase ‘having reaped I established a lofty-roofed monument’ relates to the process of a scab forming after a wound: that is, the phrase could be read as ‘having cut, a scab forms’. Indeed, architectural motifs can be seen elsewhere in other Old English charms, such as the *Against a Wen* charm:

her ne scealt þu timbrien, ne nenne tun habben...
Here you shall not build any enclosure, any settlement...

Imagining a scab or a wen as a building is not illogical, and provides a neat explanation for a difficult line of the charm, perhaps referring to the staunching or scabbing of bleeding.

⁷⁹ Sims-Williams identifies line 4 as Psalm 50, verse 16 (using Greek Numbering; in the New International Version of *The Bible*, for example, it is Psalm 51, verse 14); Sims Williams, ‘Prayer and Magic’, p. 296.

⁸⁰ L. W. Daly, ‘A Greek Palindrome in Eighth-Century England’, *The American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982), 95-97 (96).

⁸¹ Brown, Michelle P., ‘Female Book Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of the Ninth-Century Prayerbooks’, in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. C. J. Kay and L. M. Sylvester (Amsterdam; Atlanta, Georgia: Rodopi, 2001), pp. 45-63 (57). See also Daly, ‘A Greek Palindrome’, 97.

⁸² Daly, ‘A Greek Palindrome’, 96.

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The final line of the charm seems to be a Latin transliteration of the Greek: however, tagged onto the end of this unit is the phrase *domine adiuva*. These two words do not translate any part of the Greek unit, and so their appearance is something of a mystery. The scribe could have made an error, and have half-copied the initial lines of charm F again at the end (*xpe adiuva*). More likely is that the scribe is adhering to the common use of an ending unit which appeals to God or Christ, as in D and E. The scribe could also have been consciously echoing the opening section, in order to create a sense of completion.

Charm G (Royal 2.A.xx, f. 49a).

+in nomine sanctae trinitatis atque omnium
sanctorum ad sanguinem restringendum scribis hoc :
COMAPTA OCOΓMA CTYFONTOEMA
EKYTOΠ
+Beronice
Libera me de sanguinibus deus deus salutis mei
CACINCACO YCAPTETE
Per dominum Iesum Christum.

+In the name of the holy Trinity and all the
saints, to stop blood write this:
Stop the blood from the place [Greek *topos* is a
sexual euphemism]
+Veronica
Deliver me from bloods, O God, thou God of
my salvation.
[Corrupt Greek unit telling disease to go
away]⁸³
Through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although retaining elements seen in D, E, F and C (below), this charm introduces a new type of element heretofore unseen. Much like the extended *per dominum nostrum* unit in E, the *in nomine* unit in G invokes the Holy Trinity in a general sense, but also functions as a performance instruction. Like the *Giffeoh* unit in the theft charms, this unit provides instructions for the charmer and makes explicit the purpose of the charm. Performance instructions are not found elsewhere in the blood-staunching charms, in which the purpose is implicit in the content, and the performance must be inferred from the charm's manuscript context.⁸⁴ Indeed, only charms F and G are explicit about the purpose of the charms, and invoke Veronica by name and appeal to her for help, whereas E and D refer only obliquely to the healing of Veronica by reciting the *rivos* narrative.

I have been unable to find a translation for the Greek units in F or G: indeed, Daly comments that due to the difficulty of composing a satisfactory translation, these passages must simply represent 'magic gibberish'.⁸⁵ Indeed, the online catalogue of the

⁸³ Daly, 'A Greek Palindrome', 97.

⁸⁴ Discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.ii. Manuscript Context.

⁸⁵ Daly, 'A Greek Palindrome', 97.

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British Library states for charms F and G that they contain 'some corrupt Greek words'.⁸⁶

It must be noted that—although Storms edits F and G as separate texts, as GS 59 and 60⁸⁷—it is possible that F and G are not separate charms at all, but two halves of one text. Patrick Sims-Williams reads F and G as one charm, beginning with G.⁸⁸ A transcription of the charm(s) as they appear in the manuscript could support this reading:

*Per d[omi]n[u]m n[ost]r[u]m ihm[Iesum] xpm[Christum]
filium tuum qui*

tecum vivit et regnat d[eu]s in unitate

s[pi]r[itu]s s[an]c[t]i per omnia s[æ]c[ul]a

s[æ]c[ul]orum

+IN nomine sanctae trinitatis atque om

nium sanctorum ad sanguinem restringen

dum scribis hoc COMAPTA ΟΟΓΜΑ CTY

ΓΟΝΤΟΕΜΑ ΕΚΥΤΟΠ +Beronice

Libera me de sanguinibus d[eu]s d[eu]s salutis m[ei]

CACINCACO YCAPTETE Per

d[o]m[i]n[um] ihm[Iesum] xpm[Christum]

Xpe[Christe] adiuva + xpe adiuva + xpe ad

iuva + Rivos cruoris torridi con

tacta vestis obstruit fletu rigan

te supplicis arent fluente sangui

nis Beronice Libera me de sanguini

bus d[eu]s d[eu]s sal[utis] m[ae] AMICO CAPDINOPO

ΦΙΦΙΡΟΝ ΙΔΡΑCΑCΙΜΟ fodens magnifi

ce contextu fundavit tumulum

usugma d[omi]ne adiuva.⁸⁹

Through our Lord Jesus Christ your son who lives and reigns in unity with God the Holy Spirit for ever and ever + In the name of the Holy Trinity and all the saints to

Stop blood write this:

Stop the blood from the place

+ Veronica

Free me from bloods, O God, God of my salvation

[Corrupt Greek phrase telling disease to 'go away']

Through the Lord Jesus Christ

Christ help me + Christ help me +

Christ help me +

+ By the touch of his garment he

impeded streams of hot blood

By the flowing tears of the suppliant

the flood of blood will dry up.

Veronica. Deliver me from blood, O

God, thou God of my salvation

Having reaped, I established a lofty-

roofed monument

[Latin translation]

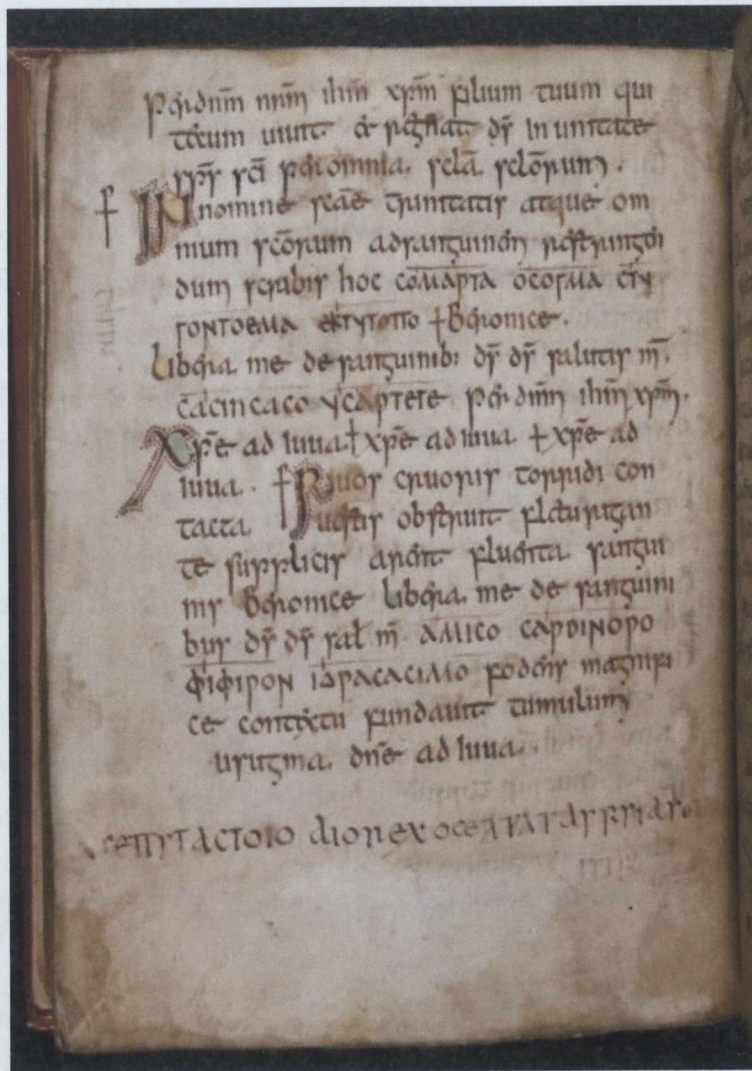
⁸⁶ The British Library Manuscript Catalogue <

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts/HITS0001.ASP?VPath=html/38061.htm&Search=2+a+xx&Highlight=F>>, accessed 1/ 10/ 08. Interestingly, Gneuss notes that there are only two charms in this manuscript, but does not specify on which folio he identifies these charms. Ker does not identify any charm texts within Royal. See Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, Medieval and renaissance texts and studies: vol. 241 (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), p. 79 and Neil Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957, re-issued 1990), pp. 317-18.

⁸⁷ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 293.

⁸⁸ Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', p. 296.

⁸⁹ Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', p. 299.



In support of Sims-Williams' reading, the charms are not separated by any empty space on the page. Furthermore, it does appear that ΟCOΓΜΑ, in G, is transliterated by *usugma* in F, a Latin word that I am unable to find in a dictionary.⁹⁰ Thus, the charms could be read as one text, as the transliteration for the Greek unit is unlikely to appear in a separate charm: it would make far more sense for the transliteration to be supplied in the same text. It is possible, of course, that the scribe has made a mistake and has simply copied the Latin unit into the wrong place, having been confused by recording the charms so close together on the same folio. Indeed, it is not impossible to read the charms as two separate texts. The line *xp̄e adiuua + xp̄e adiuua + xp̄e ad*, i.e. the first line of F, begins with a large decorated capital, which could suggest the beginning of a new text. Indeed, the first line of G begins with a similarly decorated capital, which separates it from charm E. Furthermore, G ends with the familiar concluding unit, *per dominum Iesum Christum*: if F and G were one charm, it would be logical to assume

⁹⁰ Lewis, Charlton and Short, Charles, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879).

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that this unit would be placed at the end of the charm, rather than halfway through and repeated at the end with *domine adiuva*.⁹¹ It is possible that the compiler unwittingly included the same charm twice, perhaps because s/he was conflating more than one collection of prayers: perhaps this led to Storms editing this text as two separate charms. However, I am more persuaded by the arguments supporting F and G being one text, and so for the purposes of this study, F and G will be regarded as one charm, G.⁹²

The differences between charms E, D and G characterise the relationships between the charms in terms of their transmission. This is true of any group of charms. For example, the differences between the Type Two theft charms (GS 13 and GS 14) can be categorised as ‘natural and innocuous textual variants that imply uniformity of practice.’⁹³ These differences do not change the essential sense of the charms: each charm expresses the same practice in a different way, and is a record of what is essentially the same charm changed by the nature of oral performance. Here we see a neat example of Roper’s deep and surface texts at work: GS 13 and GS 14 are responses to the same deep text, expressing the same purpose and action through different words.

GS 13

*Dis man sceal cweðan ðonne his ceapa hwilcne
m[an] forst[o]lenne*

This must be said by the man who has been robbed
of some of his goods

C[w]yð ær he ænyg oþer word cweðe:

He must say this before he speaks any other word

GS 14

þonne þe mon ærest secge þæt þin ceap sy losod

As soon as somebody tells you that your goods are
lost

þonne cweð þu ærest ær þu elles hwæt cweþe:

Then you must say first of all, before you say
anything else:

The two witnesses are not necessarily related to each other by copying of another manuscript or each other. Neither do the two witnesses have to be related by the same performance. They are connected by their shared dependency on the same deep text, which produces a unique performance with each witness. This results in the differences

⁹¹ The different ways to separate these two charms are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.ii. Manuscript Context.

⁹² F and G share an ambiguous relationship. Indeed, it could be suggested that they are actually part of the same charm (explored more fully in Chapter 3.ii. Manuscript Context). Both F and G share units which differ only slightly, suggesting that either the scribe knew these two charms to have been performed independently, both of which use some of the same units and describe what is essentially the same practice in different ways; or that the scribe had experienced these two charms as written texts, linked by written transmission and altered by scribal intervention; or finally, that the two charms are actually one, and the echoing of units is intended to create an echo or refrain.

⁹³ Peter Dendle, ‘The Textual Transmission of the Old English “Loss of Cattle” Charm’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 105 (2006), 514-39 (521).

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between these two charms. Compare this example to the differences between the Type One theft charms:

<u>Cotton Tiberius A.iii</u>	<u>CCCC 190</u>
<p>Gyf feoh sy under fangen . Gif hit hors sy sing on his feteran Op^hpe on his bridele . Gif hit sy oðer feoh . sing on þ[æt] fot spor 7 on tend preo candela 7 dryp on þ[æt] of ræc þ[æt] wex þriwa . Ne mæg hit þe nan mann for helan . Gif hi sy in norf . Sing þonne on feower helafe þæt huses . 7 æne on middan . Crux xpī reducat . Crux xpī p[er] furtum p[er]iit inuenta .ē. abrahā tibi semitā uias montes concludat iob & flumina adiu dicii ligatum p[er] ducat . Iudas xpī ahengan . þ[æt] heom com to wite ne swa stran ---- gan ---- ge dydan- --- heom dæda þa- wirrestan ---- hy þ[æt] drofe on guldon hælan hit heom to hearme micclum . for þam hi hit for hælan --- ne mihtan</p>	<p>Gyf feoh sy under fangen . Gyf hit sy hors . sing on his feteran . oððe on his bridele . Gyf hit sy oðer feoh . sing on þæt fotspor . 7 ontend .iii. candela . 7 dryp on þæt hof rec þæt wex þriwa . Ne mæg hit þe nan man forhelan . Gif hit sy in,norf. Sing þoñ on feower healfe þæs huses . 7 æne on middan . Crux xpī reducat . Crux xpī per furtū periit inuenta + abrahā t semitas uias montes ēcludat iob & flumina adiu dicii ligatū per ducat . Iudeas cris ahengan . þæt heō cō to wite swa strangar . ge dydan heō dæda þa wyrrestan₁₈ . hy þæt drofe on guldon hælan hit heō to hearme micclum . for þā hi hyt for helan ne mihtan.;</p>

Key:

Difference in spelling

Abbreviations

Missing word

Word order

Figure 4: Differences between witnesses of GS 11a

These two charms share a much higher degree of textual similarity than GS 13 and GS 14, which suggests that they have been transmitted through textual means rather than performance. Thus, GS 13 and GS 14 might have been recorded in the extant written texts because the scribes each experienced a performance of the theft charm, which was articulated in different words but expressing the same deep text, without having any knowledge of any other surface texts. The two witnesses of GS 11a, however, demonstrate characteristics more closely related to textual transmission through copying or having awareness of another witness. The two versions of GS 11a are still surface texts, are still the realisations of a deep text, but have been more closely involved with textual culture than GS 13 and GS 14. The evidence for this lies in the type of differences between the two versions of GS 11a. Out of the twenty differences between the two witnesses, twelve are related to the expansion of abbreviations, six are due to

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spelling variations which do not affect the meaning of the words, and the one difference attributed to word order similarly has no bearing upon the meaning of the text. The charms are expressed in almost exactly the same words: this degree of similarity is highly unlikely to be shared by two texts which circulated in oral culture, as they would not have been fossilised by the act of recording in writing. The one difference which does affect the meaning of the text (the added *ne* in Tiberius) could easily be attributed to scribal error—perhaps brought on by the preceding *te* of *wite*). The earlier correction *ob^hpe* suggests that this scribe might not be copying all that carefully (although s/he does notice the error in *obpe* but not in adding *–ne* to *wite*). Thus, in sharp comparison to the Type Two theft charms, these Type One charms are related in terms of textual, scribal difference.

In terms of the blood-staunching charms, the differences between the charms are also crucial to an understanding of how they were transmitted.

<u>Charm D</u>	<u>Charm E</u>	<u>Charm G</u>
<p><i>Rivos cruoris torridi. contacta vestis obstruit fletu riganti. Supplicis arent fluenta sanguinis. per illorum quae siccata. Dominica labante coniuro sta. Per dominum nostrum</i></p>	<p>+ <i>Rivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigantis supplices arent fluenta sanguinis. per illorum venas cui siccato dominico lavante coniuro sta. Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula saeculorum.</i></p>	<p><i>Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva + Rivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigante supplicis arent fluente sanguinis.</i></p>

Key:

Difference in spelling

Missing word

Decoration

Figure 5: Differences between D, E and F

Charm D is very similar to Charm E (sharing very close similarities with the *rivos* unit in G, also in the collation above): in fact, they are even more closely related than the Type One Theft charms. The charms' appearance in the same manuscript probably accounts for this similarity, and adds to our understanding of their transmission. The scribe seems to have been collating a variety of blood-staunching charms, recording them together in the same manuscript: perhaps for personal use or out of a scholarly interest in these types of text. That the texts are so similar suggests that the scribe was

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recording a fossilised written tradition, with the only differences being small spelling variations. However, the addition of the *Christe aduiva* phrase in G and the extended *per dominum nostrum* unit in E could suggest that the relationship between these charms is more similar to that linking GS 13 and GS 14: D and E are recordings of what is essentially the same charm, but alter certain units in performance (for example, the *per dominum nostrum* unit) according to the needs, knowledge and community of the user. G also shares in the recording of this well-known and familiar *rivos* unit, so commonly used that it has been replicated almost exactly in each charm.⁹⁴

Charm C (Royal 2.A.xx, f. 16b).

Ociani inter ea motus sidera motus vertat. restrige trea flumina flumen aridum vervens flumen pallidum parens flumen rubrum acriter de corpore exiens restringe tria flumina flumen crurorem restringentem nervos limentem cicatricis concuspiente tumores fugante. Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum.

The movement of the ocean between the movement of the stars. Restrain three rivers, a dry river [burning], a pale river appearing, a red river flowing bitterly from the body. Restrain three rivers, a river of blood desirous of staunching sinews and pathways of scars, curing the swelling. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whilst on the surface this charm appears to be unrelated to any of the previous charms, it does retain the *per dominum* element, and, more interestingly, echoes the *rivos* unit. The mention of *ociani* and the *flumina flumen* keys in to the lexis of the *rivos* unit ('rivers', 'flowing'). Furthermore, the *flumina flumen* unit has a sufficiently balanced and symmetrical weighting for it to echo the poetic feel of the *rivos* element: it is possible to separate the *rivos* element into two parts, demarcated by the symmetry of the phrases 'by the [x] [y] happened; by the [v] [z] will happen'. Similarly, the *flumina flumen* element is balanced by the repetition of the phrase 'river of rivers'. However, the *flumina flumen* section is not a Biblical narrative, and thus perhaps could indicate that the *rivos* element has a more fluid nature than is initially apparent. Perhaps that section does not need to be filled by only the *rivos* narrative. Perhaps any other narrative related to the stemming of rivers/flowing would work. The connection with the ocean and the stars (*sidera* refers to a group of stars or constellation) perhaps engages with the idea of the tides and the monthly flowing of blood.

⁹⁴ It should be pointed out that it is also possible to make the opposite argument, that scribes may change opening and closing formulas, because they have an extensive stock of variants and alternatives, but copy closely and carefully the unique element of the charm. Therefore it could be that the *rivos* unit is carefully preserved due to its unfamiliarity to the scribe.

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Related by being in the same manuscript and being intended for the same purpose is a charm on f. 52 (a flyleaf; the charm is written in a C12 hand), charm B:

Charm B (Royal, 2.A.xx, f. 52)

In principio erat verum. & verbum erat apud deum & deus erat verbum. Hoc erat in p'ncipio apud[...]. Omnia per ipsum facta s̄. & sine ipso factum ~ nichil.

*Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori (^{trici}) famulo (^{la}) tuo (^e) N. 7 de eius plaga (^{corpore}) ampliu gutta sanguinis non exeat. Sic placeat filio dei sancte que eius genetrici **MARIE**. in nomine + patris cessa sanguis. in nomi+ne filii resta sanguis.+ in nomine spiritus sancti fugiat omnis dolor 7 effusio a famulo (^{la}) dei. N. Amen In no⁺.mine sancte trinitatis, patris noster.*

Hoc dic novies.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. It was in the beginning with God.

All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. 'Gracious God, be kind to me, a sinner, your servant, N' and do not let a drop of blood fall from the great wound of the body. Thus if it pleases the holy Son of God and his mother Mary, in the name of the Father, stop blood. In the name of the Son, rest blood. In the name of the Holy Spirit flee all pains and outpouring from the servant of God N. Amen. In the name of the Holy Trinity, Pater Noster. Say this nine times.

Whilst lacking the *rivos* unit, B and C echo the *rivos* charms in several ways: the *flumina flumen* section of Charm C echoes *rivos* in terms of imagery; the *pater nosters* in Charm B echoes *rivos* in terms of its status of a liturgical text; and in invoking John 1-14⁹⁵ and Luke 18:13⁹⁶, Charm B echoes the *rivos* unit in terms of its use of Biblical narrative. Charm B falls short of invoking a whole sympathetic narrative, instead perhaps using the religious texts quoted directly as a way of channelling God's power, keying in to the enormous power displayed by God in creating the world. Here, where there is no direct correlation thematically between the charm and the religious text quoted, we can see a similarity with the hymn used in GS 12: perhaps the text is used not for its content, but for its status as a text imbued and associated with power. The quotation from Luke 18:13—*Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori*, in which the *publicanus* asks for mercy—perhaps implies that the creator of the charm had some sense of illness as a result of sin, and thus feels the need to recite a Biblical example of asking for mercy when s/he is physically ill.

Charm B is similar to the other charms in Royal in its use of the Cross symbol, despite the difference in date between B and the other charms. Charm B differs from the

⁹⁵ See *Biblia Sacra, Vulgatæ Editionis* (Tournai: Soc. S. Johannis Evang., 1894):

In pricipio erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nichil

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be.

My translation.

⁹⁶ See *Biblia Sacra*:

Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori: 'God be merciful unto me, a sinner'. My translation.

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others in that it provides a brief performance instruction, and places it at the end instead of at the beginning. Perhaps the concluding unit and performance instruction are inverted, with the quotation from John taking the place of the religious concluding unit, inserted at the beginning of the charm.

Charm B introduces a version of the *in nomine* unit, in which religious figures are invoked in the context of an instruction to stop the blood. It is similar to the invocation of *Veronica* in G, but has none of the connotations of female bleeding brought about by the invocation of Veronica specifically. On the other hand, in B the Father and Son are also invoked, which suggests that B takes a more general approach to invoking religious figures, relying on them for their power and assistance, rather than their specific qualities.

Having discussed the major issues of each charm, and in doing so, familiarised the reader with each charm, it is now possible to move on to a case study of the units within the theft charms.

2.iii: Comparing the Theft Charms

Thus far, we have introduced the reader to the idea that we can see each of the charms as a composite of various building blocks. The building blocks or units respond directly to the wider context of a charm, assuming a specific register and purpose according to the requirements of a user of the witness of a charm. The units which make up a charm allow us to place it into a family group, and within that family, into yet more groups which share similarities. The differences between the members of a family group are produced by the different needs of a charm's user. For example, the theft charms can be grouped together away from the rest of the corpus of Anglo-Saxon charms, and can be further divided into three categories:

Type One charms (GS 11a, GS 11b, S12):

Gif feoh
Crux Christi reducat
The Jews hanged Christ (English)

Hit becweð

The Hanging of Christ (Latin)
Peter, Paul...
Qui querit

Type Two charms (GS 13, GS 14):

Cweðan/ secge
Bethlehem is the name...
North, East, South, West
The Hanging of Christ (English)
Through the Cross of Christ

Type Three charms (GS 15):

Invocations of Helena, Garmund, Herod and Christ on the Cross
'Cursing' section

Figure 1: A reminder of the three categories of theft charm

This chapter will examine the relationships between these three 'types' by investigating the role of each unit in the charms.

Within each charm, the units can be assigned a function. For example, in all the Type One charms, the *Gif feoh* unit functions as a performance instruction, giving the performer instructions on how to carry out the charm and its relevant actions. The appearance of this unit is the major similarity between the three charms in Type One, as it gives the reader the same instructions in each case: burn a candle and drip wax onto either hoofprints or the bridle of the lost animal, then sing the *Crux Christi reducat* unit

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in a cruciform shape on all four sides, and then in the middle, of the house. This emphasis on the Cross of Christ and the cruciform shape of the ritual is no accident. The myth of the finding of the Cross by St Helen would be familiar to the Anglo-Saxons, and in the context of the theft charm would invoke the finding of lost objects.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the Cross of Christ could be seen as a universal symbol of order and justice, the ideal symbol to combat theft and chaos.

However, in each Type One charm the performance instructions are not the most significant, because of the very fact of their stability. That they remain verbal in each Type One charm means that they cannot reveal an abundance of information about the different users and performances of the charms, as they do not reflect the different contexts. However, the fact that they remain so verbal does suggest that to each user of these three charms (GS 11a, 11b and 12) the *Gif feoh* unit was perceived as being inextricably linked with the idea of a theft charm, and so must form part of the method for resolving theft. Furthermore, the *Gif feoh* unit forms a convenient way of labelling the charm and identifying its purpose. It is the other units of the Type One charms which reveal more about the different contexts in which these charms were used and performed.

The earliest witness of the Type One charms, GS 12, is the longest, thanks to the inclusion of the hymn section (*Peter, Paul...*). The use of hymns as apotropaic weapons against various afflictions is not unknown: indeed, the very hymn included in this charm has been recorded as being used against yellow fever and demonic possession.⁹⁸ Therefore it makes sense that the composer of the charm might appropriate this hymn for the specific problem of theft, as a way of channelling a more general apotropaic power. However, modern editors have frequently elected not to include the hymn as part of the charm, believing it to be an erroneous entry due to the scribe having a reversed exemplar.⁹⁹

Indeed, depending on which edition one reads, a completely different charm appears. In Storms, the main difference in GS 12 from the other charm of its type, GS 11, is the line 'Peter, Paul, Patrick...', which appears as a single line listing saints' names. Lea Olsan,¹⁰⁰ however, edits the poem entirely differently, with an entire hymn inserted in between the two halves, beginning with the line 'Peter, Paul...'. Stephanie

⁹⁷ For example, in the text *In Inventione Sactæ Crucis*. See Mary Catherine Bodde, *The Old English Finding of the True Cross* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987).

⁹⁸ Stephanie Hollis points out these uses in 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms": Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses', *Anglia* 115 (1997), 147 (fn. 15).

⁹⁹ Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms"', 147-48.

¹⁰⁰ Lea Olsan, 'The Inscription of Anglo-Saxon Charms', *Oral Tradition* 14 (1999), 401-19.

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Hollis argues that the charm would have appeared in the exemplar used by the CCCC 41 scribe as it does in Storms (that is, without the hymn), suggesting that the scribe's exemplar was mixed up, so that he copied the hymn in the wrong place, erroneously including the hymn in the charm text.¹⁰¹ As there is no earlier example of this charm extant to which we could compare GS 12, it is hard to say whether this is the case. However, in GS 11a and GS 11b, the other charms in S12's type, the *Peter, Paul...* section is not included, which suggests that the tradition surrounding this type of charm did not necessarily include the hymn. It is possible that GS 11a and 11b represent surface text realisations of a deep text which do not require this unit, in accordance with different manuscript and performance context. By understanding the charms as related yet different expressions of the same deep text, any difficulties regarding the 'erroneous' inclusion of different slots or units is resolved. There is—and never was—an original text which was regarded by the Anglo-Saxon audience as the fullest and most correct version. Each witness, each surface text, is a unique and valid expression of the deep text.

That being said, Lea Olsan offers an interesting idea as to the hymn's place in the charm, suggesting that the hymn was deliberately included by the scribe (or the original creator of the poem) as an apotropaic defence against harm. Hollis, conversely, is convinced that the hymn has '...nothing to do with theft, and... the extract from the hymn includes three stanzas which were traditionally regarded as efficacious against demons and the yellow plague'.¹⁰² Hollis' position, therefore, is that the hymn is included as a result of scribal error, rather than the scribe actively choosing to include the hymn. However, scribal error need not be the only reason for the inclusion of the hymn. The use of lengthy liturgical texts in charms can be seen in the *Æcerbot* charm, in which psalms and liturgy are combined with practical instructions seemingly unconnected with the liturgy other than by their joint appearance in the charm. The motif of the Cross and the prayers in the charm are linked by a shared Biblical theme rather than by the nature of the charm.¹⁰³ Thus, the inclusion of the hymn in GS 12 need not be down to scribal error: the *Pater noster* or other texts said in *Æcerbot* might not have anything to do with the health of fields, but they are included in the ritual, perhaps as a way of connecting to Biblical events and the power of God. In the same way, the

¹⁰¹ Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms"', 139-64.

¹⁰² Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms"', 147.

¹⁰³ See John D. Niles, 'The *Æcerbot* Ritual in Context', in *Old English Literature in Context* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1980), and Thomas D. Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm and Its Christian User', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 6 (1977), 213-23.

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hymn is linked to GS 12 by its use elsewhere as a defence against harm: it does not have to be thematically the same as the charm itself for it to be of use within the charm.

However, I would suggest that the hymn in GS 12 is not being used in the ordinary way, as a song to praise God, or to ask for His assistance, or even as a way of accessing the power of God and channelling it into an earthly problem (as in the *Æcerbot* charm). I would agree with Olsan that in GS 12, the hymn is being used because of its status as a defence against negative occurrences. In the same way, the Biblical quote *qui querit, invenit* (taken from Matthew 7:7) seems to refer not to the salvation available to every Christian that Matthew intended, but to the certainty that performing this charm will result in the return of the stolen goods.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the combination of the units in GS 12—the secular performance instruction, the unorthodox use of Biblical quotations and hymns—suggest that the performer of GS 12 is confident in his performing of the charm, and does not feel the need to appeal to God. The *Cruc Christi reducat* unit, in the light of the other sections, does not have the appearance of an appeal to the Cross of Christ, but rather a statement of the fact that the Cross will restore order. Indeed, the *Peter, Paul...* unit acts in the same way: not as an orthodox appeal to God, but rather as an expression of certainty that the hymn will resolve the theft. GS 12 is not an appeal to a higher power, but a performance in the context of certainty.

GS 11a, chronologically the next charm in Type One, does not have the *qui querit invenit* or *Peter, Paul...* sections, and, crucially, rewords the *Hanging of Christ* unit. Whereas S12 says

*Iudei christum crucifixerunt
Pe [s] simum sibimet ipsum perpetrauerunt
Opus celauerunt quod non potuerunt celare.*

The Jews crucified Christ
They achieved the worst thing for themselves.
They hid a deed that could not be hidden.¹⁰⁵

S11 says

*Judeas Crist ahengan þæt heom com to wite swa
strangan
Gedydan heom dæda a wyrrestan hy þæt drofe on
guldon. Hælan hit heom to hearne micclum...*

The Jews hanged Christ
That deed brought them a harsh punishment. They
did to him the worst of deeds They paid severely
for that. They hid it to their own great harm.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ However, note that 'so many remedies end with *he biþ sona hal, him bið sona sel* or words to the same effect, that one suspects them to be a sort of conventional closing rather than a firm assurance of the efficacy of the medicine', M. L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 40.

¹⁰⁵ Olsan, 'Inscription', 418.

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In GS 11a, the focus is on the punishment of the Jews for their actions, emphasised by four different mentions of their punishment. GS 11a, therefore, engages explicitly with the idea of crime and punishment and expresses confidence in the fact that God will punish the sinner and restore order. Conversely, in GS 12 the focus is on the fact that the Jews committed a crime which could not be hidden: thus, the recitation of the charm will reveal the theft. GS 12 does not engage with a wider context: it shies away from appealing to the universal order established and maintained by God's punishment of sin, instead relying on the narrower context of protective hymns and the revealing of the crime. Indeed, the language of assertion seen in GS 12—*qui querit invenit... sic nec hoc furtum celatur nec celare posit per dominum nostrum*—switches to the language of petition in GS 11a. GS 12 does not ask for supernatural assistance but confidently asserts that success will follow. The belief that speaking certain words will change reality is central to charming: the certainty of the final line of GS 12 is akin to the *him bið sona sel* unit often found in the *Lacnunga* (for example, in charms CLX and CLXXII). Conversely GS 11 asks for help from the Cross and places a greater emphasis on the Christian theme of universal punishment of crime.

The high degree of similarity between GS 12 and its later companion GS 11a, and the changes that occur in the later witness, could suggest that GS 11a is a conscious redaction of GS 12, in which the charmer removed the unorthodox sections and altered the units to place the charm more firmly in the ecclesiastical context. This is an example of how adaptation of charms by different communities can produce different yet related witnesses. However, it is also important to consider the effect the *context* of the manuscript has on a charm (discussed in 3.ii. Manuscript Context), though in this chapter we are focusing on the information contained in the units within charms, rather than the external factors acting on the charms.

GS 11b, with the addition of the *hit becweð* unit, represents another shift in the Type One charms. Appearing in post-Conquest legal manuscripts, this charm moves away from the wide religious context of GS 11a, and the more personal context of S12, into a legal, public sphere. Perhaps the charm as it appears in GS 11b was performed publicly, in order to report the theft to the community as part of the legal action taken against the thief. Older criticism often reacts to the seeming religious confusion of charm texts by arguing that Anglo-Saxons simply threw everything they had at a

¹⁰⁶ Olsan, 'Inscription', 418.

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problem, whether pagan, Christian or legal. A candidate for this approach is GS 11b, with its legal unit *hit becweð*. Indeed, J. McBryde argues that in GS 11b

the logical process of development by which these independent charms were strung together might seem to have been as follows...: a purely heathen ceremony (as evidenced by the use of wax and candles): sympathetic treatment (i.e. the recovery of the Cross): calling on Christian figures Abraham, Job and Jacob: and finally the charmer [invokes] the aid of the law, by reciting his indisputable claim to his own.¹⁰⁷

I find this to be an unhelpful approach. Regarding charms such as this (the *Æcerbot* has also been approached in the same way by Bruce Rosenberg¹⁰⁸) as a mishmash of appeals to every form of help available does not give the credit that is due to the charmer. It is more sympathetic and logical to regard the charm as educated, rational and coherent, as no doubt its scribe was. The connection of a charm with a legal unit does not represent a panicked scraping together of resources, or even the evolution of the charm from a faith-centric method to a legal process: the perspective that remains the freest of restrictive binary categories is the one that allows us to see these texts as evidence for a society in which legal and religious registers are closely related. This perspective allows the scholar to understand the text and its context as a product of its time, and to avoid clouding the issue by reifying binary opposites. That the problems dealt with by charms can be acted upon with religious *and* legal procedures is evidence of connection between legal and religious registers, and proves that the boundary between charming and legal procedures is not just blurred but not necessarily even real. For instance, in *Wip dweorh*, a pseudo-legal process of healing is envisaged:

*þa com ingangan deores sweostar.
þa geændode heo and aðas swor
ðæt næfre þis ðæm adlegan derian ne moste...*

Then the sister of the beast came in
She put an end to it, and swore oaths
that this should never hurt the sick man...¹⁰⁹

The process of the 'beast's sister' swearing oaths in order to heal the patient demonstrates the continuum shared by charming and legal procedures: they could be combined in order to combat illness. Thus, that GS 11b is made up of a charm and a legal unit is not surprising.

Type Two charms are related to Type One charms by their similar performance instructions: Type One charms, in the *Gif feoh* unit, instruct the performer to say certain words; in the Type Two charms, the *cweðan/ secge* units fulfil the same function.

¹⁰⁷ J. McBryde Jr, 'Charms to Recover Stolen Cattle', *MLN* 21 (1906), 180-183 (183).

¹⁰⁸ Bruce A. Rosenberg, 'The Meaning of *Æcerbot*', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 79 (1966), 428-36.

¹⁰⁹ Godfrid Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (Nijhoff: The Hague, 1948), pp. 166-67, ll. 16-19.

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However, the similarities between Type One and Type Two charms become fewer after this point. Although the Type Two charms have the *Hanging of Christ* unit, it is not the most important part of the charm: the focal point in the Type Two charms is the four-fold invocation of the Cross and its ability to reveal the thief. Indeed, the idea of being unable to conceal the theft is central to GS 13 and GS 14, as is illustrated by the *Bethlehem is the name* section. By referring to Bethlehem as the famous city where Jesus was born, the charm is intended to sympathetically make the theft as well known as Bethlehem, and therefore bring about the return of the stolen goods. That the speaking of the unit is powerful enough to bring about an effect echoes the *qui querit* unit of GS 12, and is evident in other charms, particularly those in the *Lacnunga*. In the Type Two charms, the concept of the universal (or cosmological) Cross is the most important aspect, as illustrated by the *North, East, South, West* unit. The arms of the Cross invoke the four corners of the world, and the mentioning of the four points of the compass neatly extends the effect of the charm across the whole world. As in the *Crux Christi reducat* unit in Type One, the Cross of Christ is appealed to as a way of imposing order over the whole earth.

Storms suggests that the importance of the Cross in the Type One charms is due to 'the conviction that the holy cross, itself lost for about 300 years and eventually rediscovered, will bring back the cattle'.¹¹⁰ This type of sympathetic magic is not uncommon in charms, especially those which use a (frequently Biblical) narrative to represent, for example, the staunching of bleeding or stopping of pain. For example, charm LXIV in the *Lacnunga* features a brief story about Jesus, intended to sympathetically bring about the healing of the afflicted:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people: 'God the omnipotent Father heals you, who created you: your faith heals you, which has freed you from all danger': 'Christ, help us': 'My God and Father and Son and Holy Spirit'...¹¹¹

I would suggest that in GS 12, the allusion to the Cross and the cruciform shape of the ritual action represent the charmer's assertion that speaking the words of the *Crux Christi reducat* unit will bring back the lost cattle because the speaker has the ability to manipulate and channel the power of the Cross. Conversely, in S11, the speaker

¹¹⁰ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 212

¹¹¹ Edward Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms and Prayers from British Library MGS Harley 585: The Lacnunga*, vols. I and II (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), p. 37-39 (37).

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petitions for the intervention of Christ and the power of the Cross from a position of relative helplessness.

However, it is also important to examine the wider context of referring to the Cross of Christ or a cross shape beyond its surface meaning.¹¹² In the *Æcerbot* charm, the cruciform shape of the ritual represents (at the simplest level) the delimitation of the area to be treated by the charm. Also, however, the cross shape represented the points of the compass, and similarly the four rivers of Paradise spreading all over the world¹¹³ and therefore invokes the strength and all-encompassing nature of Christ. Furthermore, the Cross of the Crucifixion symbolises resurrection and therefore encourages the rebirth of life in the field. Indeed, biblical teachings make it clear that if you feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty, balancing need with assistance, you will be rewarded: and the converse also is true: 'And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal' (Matthew 25:46).¹¹⁴ Thus in GS 11a, the cross shape and the *crux Christi* also have a wider symbolism, representing both physical space and divine punishment, order and truth: the charmer appeals to Christ to impose these qualities on the situation, and in doing so, to solve the problem.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Type Two charms is the way in which they relate to each other. As it is, S13 and S14 are generally regarded as being in a separate category to the other charms. It is possible to argue that, although GS 13 and GS 14 share similarities in format and content, GS 13 represents a less complete copy of their shared exemplar: it is unlikely that GS 13 was directly copied from GS 14, as presumably this would have resulted in a higher incidence of similarity. More likely is that GS 13 represents the writing down of an oral version of the charm that is familiar to the scribe: he has no need to record the details of performance, and does not add textualising features such as the 'Amens' of GS 14, and on one occasion uses the shorthand + to symbolise *crux*, which is written out in full in GS 14.¹¹⁵ The differences between these two charms could indicate that the form of the charm was not yet verbal, allowing these two scribes to record two different versions of the same source. It is impossible to know which of these charms was written first, so we are always left with a set of dual possibilities. For example, the *Through the Cross of Christ* unit is interesting here. Does GS 13 translate *þurh a haligan cristes rode* into Latin in order to keep the

¹¹² See Chapter 4.ii. Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms for a more indepth discussion.

¹¹³ Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm' 213-23.

¹¹⁴ *Biblia Sacra, Vulgatæ Editionis* (Tournai: Soc. S. Johannis Evang., 1894):
Et ibunt hi in supplicium æternum: just atuem in vitam æternam.

¹¹⁵ Olsan, 'Inscription', 407.

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charm firmly in a clerical rather than lay sphere, or does GS 14 translate from the Latin in order to repurpose the charm to make it more suitable for a lay context? The direction translations of this period usually take is from Latin to English, and as the charm contains Biblical imagery it is likely that the basis for the charm would have started off as Latin anyway, but it is unwise to make any assumptions about Anglo-Saxon charms.

Dendle provides a neat solution to this problem, suggesting that GS 13 and GS 14 display 'similarity in meaning expressed through difference in form', and in fact do not consciously react to each other, but rather are the product of a charm tradition still evolving and developing, leading to differing recordings of what is essentially the same charm.¹¹⁶ For example he cites the apparent mistake of the scribe's rendering of the Latin word *reducat* as *reducað* as evidence for the scribe working in a language of which he has enough knowledge 'to follow the third person conjugation- but... is apparently thinking in Old English'.¹¹⁷ Similarly, that the Harley scribe writes *þurh þa haligan rode* whereas the CCC scribe writes *per crucem Christi amen* is not a sign of conscious editing but rather an unselfconscious recording of the charm as that individual knows it. Thus, the use of either the vernacular or Latin in these charms provides solid evidence for the scribes knowing the same charm in different forms and recording these forms independently of each other. That being said, it is also true that differences arise in layers: the charm has an oral life which is then recorded, which leads to variations due to one scribe hearing a slightly different performance to another. A second layer of variation can also be introduced by the scribes, who might add in alterations, improvements, or bits of other charms that they have heard elsewhere. In this way, the scribes are as much performers of the texts as the charmers themselves, as they participate in the evolution of the charm family.

Whatever factor it was that introduced the differences between GS 13 and 14, it is possible to regard GS 13 and GS 14 as related surface texts of the same deep texts, free of any agonising over their relationship to their lost, original text. What is important is not how GS 13 and GS 14 can be used to reconstruct this lost original, but how the scribes and performers created these two charms as a reaction to the same deep text.

Type Three has almost no relation to the other categories, except for the fact that it is intended to deal with theft. The figures are invoked by the speaker (*Invocations of*

¹¹⁶ Peter Dendle, 'The Textual Transmission of the Old English "Loss of Cattle" Charms', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 105 (2006), 514-39 (521).

¹¹⁷ Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', 522.

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Helena, *Garmund*, *Herod* and *Christ on the Cross*) not as a petition for supernatural intervention (as God is appealed to in GS 11a), but rather as a bolster to the charmer's power. Unlike GS 11a, the power to remedy the situation rests with the 'I' of the charm, rather than the Cross or Christ. The mention of *Helena* and Christ is not a prayer for help, but rather a boast of the performer's power, which strengthens his authority (as opposed to in GS 11a, where mentioning Christ justifies and enables the practitioner to request and channel power).¹¹⁸ The mention of *Helena*, as in Type Two, also operates sympathetically, so that the property may be found, as Helen found the Cross. The speaker is demonstrating that he is able to call on these figures and thus is powerful: perhaps this declaration of power would increase the charm's efficacy in persuading the thief to return the goods. Indeed, it might be logical to assume that this charm was intended to be performed publicly, frightening the thief into returning the stolen property. Certainly, the final unit of the charm, *May he wither*, functions as a threat to the thief, explicitly performing the function implicit in the *Hanging of Christ* unit of GS 11a and b.

However, in GS 11a and b the punishment will be divine, in accordance with cosmological (and human) law, rather than supernaturally controlled by the speaker. The concept of where the responsibility lies for judgement and punishment could tell us something about which types of people performed these charms. GS 11a, with its focus on the punishment of sinners by God, seems most likely to have been performed by someone involved in the Church. A member of the clergy could perform this charm either for theft of Church property, or on behalf of a lay person needing assistance with theft of his/her property. GS 11b, however, which is intertwined with secular, legal nuances, is perhaps most likely to have been performed by a lay person: the charm does not rely on the power of God to punish, but the power of the law. GS 15 also seems firmly placed in the lay sphere, with its slightly unorthodox invocations of Christian figures, and the power remaining in the hands of the speaker, to curse as he sees fit.

Storms contributes an interesting argument to the case of GS 15, suggesting that 'the promise to treat his cattle well is an admonition to the animals to try and get back of their own accord'.¹¹⁹ This motif of the livestock's obligation to the keeper due to his good treatment of them does not appear in any of these theft charms, but does make an appearance in *Wið ymbe*, also in CCCC 41, in which the bee-keeper reminds the bees of his obligation to care for them, and their obligation to stay with him.

¹¹⁸ Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms"', 143.

¹¹⁹ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 215.

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*Beo ge swa gemindige mines godes
swa bið manna gehwiltc metes and eþeles.*

Be as mindful of my welfare
as every man is of food and home.¹²⁰

Just as man and beast make promises to one another that are invoked in GS 15, so the *Æcerbot* charm invokes the promise made by God to man that

*cunctis diebus terræ, sementis et mesis, frigus et æstus, æstas et hiems, nox et dies non
requiescent.*¹²¹

Perhaps one could also say that when GS 11a and 11b invoke the Cross, they remind God of his other promise to man, that he will reward the pious and punish the wicked: that is, they are asking that God makes good on the promise and obligation to man that *et ibunt hi in supplicium æternum: just atuem in vitam æternam*.¹²² Perhaps, also then, the promises made by the speaker of GS 15 to his cattle echo those made by God to man, which might mean the charm is not as based in secular culture as it may first seem. Indeed, the *Lacnunga* is pervaded throughout by Christian material, and the charms recorded in the *Lacnunga* ‘did not necessarily violate early medieval religious sensibilities’, but rather echoed the petition or hope of ‘non-human intervention’ seen in what modern audiences might regard as more ‘orthodox texts’, such as prayers and the liturgy.¹²³

This tradition of theft charms seems, on the surface, to be quite simple: a group of charms which can be neatly categorised by their component parts. However, as I hope I have demonstrated, these charms are anything but simple, and display complex patterns of transmission made visible by the various units that make up the charms. The next step in this discussion, therefore, is to examine how the manuscripts in which the charms are recorded affects how we read and understand them.

¹²⁰ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 132-33.

¹²¹ Genesis 8:22, *Biblia Sacra, Vulgatæ Editionis*, 5th edn. (Tournai: Soc. S. Johannis Evang., 1894).

¹²² Matthew 25:46, *Biblia Sacra, Vulgatæ Editionis* (Tournai: Soc. S. Johannis Evang., 1894):

Et ibunt hi in supplicium æternum: just atuem in vitam æternam.

¹²³ Dendle, ‘Textual Transmission’, 523.

3. Manuscripts

3.i Introduction to the Manuscripts

In order to fully engage with the way the charms operate and the way they are affected by their manuscript context, it is necessary to understand the basic facts about the manuscripts themselves: their dates, provenances and other contents. While I do not attempt to provide as detailed a commentary as one might find in a catalogue, I will provide all those details which will be relevant in later discussions.¹²⁴

The Theft Charms

The earliest of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts to be discussed in this thesis is London, British Library, Harley 585, dated to 990-1050, and originating from Winchester.¹²⁵ The specific text within Harley 585 which is of interest to us is known by a name which may be more familiar: the *Lacnunga*. A medical text as a whole, the *Lacnunga* contains charms for many and varied ailments, from the more mundane—headache, toothache, diarrhoea—to the more arcane—flying poison, penetrating *wyrmas*, elves. Despite seeming otherworldly, the concepts of flying poison and elves reflect Anglo-Saxon (and modern) understandings of disease being transmitted invisibly and silently, and a penetrating *wyrm* is a striking visualisation of intense pain, regardless of whether the patient actually has worms. Regardless of the imagery used to visualise the process of catching and treating illnesses, the charms in the *Lacnunga* are grounded in real and everyday experiences. It is no surprise, therefore, that a theft charm should appear in a manuscript so connected with feelings and empirical knowledge: theft was doubtless a well-known and despised phenomenon, so a charm to resolve the stealing of property or livestock would be of use to the Anglo-Saxon familiar with remedying other social and personal ills. The particular theft charm in this manuscript is GS 14, and appears on f. 180r, recorded between a charm for insomnia and a charm for pain in the eyes. The manuscript itself is small, bound in red covering which has replaced the original binding.

¹²⁴ For more detailed descriptions of these manuscripts, see Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, Medieval and renaissance texts and studies: vol. 241 (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001).

¹²⁵ Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 75.

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It is 193 leaves long: its small size suggests that it was practical, and would have been carried around and actively used, as opposed to being a collection of little-used curiosities. Indeed, any decoration in the text is simple, suggesting that the text was to be used rather than admired.¹²⁶

Chronologically contiguous with GS 14 is GS 13, which is recorded in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41, dated to 1025, and composed in Exeter.¹²⁷ Given that Harley 585 is dated to 990-1050, the charms recorded in these manuscripts could feasibly have been circulating at the same time: indeed, the charms suggest this. The relationship between the content of GS 13 and GS 14 has already been discussed in 2.iii. Comparing the Theft Charms, so to summarise the connections between these two charms: the two charms are so similar that it is possible that they share an exemplar, or that GS 13 is a slightly edited copy of GS 14, GS 13 representing a more oral, less textualised witness of the theft charm tradition, using shorthand and having briefer performance instructions, suggesting a greater degree of familiarity with the charm. The connections between the two charms are strongly indicative of an oral relationship—that is, that they both independently record different performance of a charm from the same charm tradition—so it is appropriate to think of them in terms of the deep/surface text theory, as witnesses of two surface text expressions of the same deep text. Indeed, the relative closeness of the dates of composition of the two manuscripts makes it possible that the two scribes might have both witnessed a similar variant of the theft charm in oral circulation: indeed, the charms in the margin of CCCC 41 are followed by *Wið eahwærce*, an Old English charm for pain in the eyes, just as GS 14 is followed by a Latin charm for the same affliction. This might suggest that the scribe of the charm in the *Lacnunga* perceived some sort of connection between the theft charm and the eye-pain charm, as did the CCCC 41 scribe: perhaps these charms circulated together, as part of a collection of commonly needed remedies. Interestingly, the eye-pain charms share a high degree of similarity that suggests a *textual* rather than *oral* relationship: the differences between the two charms are restricted to individual letters, the units transmitting verbally rather than—as in GS 13 and 14—functionally.

Unlike GS 14, GS 13 was not recorded in the main body of its manuscript, but was entered, by the same scribe as copied the main text, into the margin of f. 206-8,

¹²⁶ A. N. Doane, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile*, Vol. 1: *Books of Prayers and Healing*, (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), p. 26.

¹²⁷ Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 31.

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along with GS 12 and GS 15 (in the order GS 15, GS 13, GS 12).¹²⁸ The main part of this manuscript consists of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, but also includes mass sets, office chants, an Old English martyrology and the poetic *Solomon and Saturn*. The additions to the manuscript, of which there are many, include other charms, both in Latin and Old English. The charms are written either in lines scored out for the main text but ultimately unused, or in the margins.

Slightly later than these two manuscripts is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 190, dated to 1050, originating from Exeter.¹²⁹ Ker describes CCCC 190 as 'probably two distinct manuscripts', with one half in Latin and the other in English.¹³⁰ The folio upon which the theft charm is recorded (f. 130) falls in the first half, 'written mainly in s. xi',¹ and is one of a small number of Old English texts (mostly notes and glosses) in the Latin part of the manuscript. GS 11a is added in a blank space on the page, probably in s. xi², though Ker does not provide any further discussion of this point.¹³¹ CCCC 190 is perhaps the most similar manuscript to CCCC 41, containing ecclesiastical laws, homilies, and writings by Ælfric and Wulfstan. Furthermore, CCCC 190 and CCCC 41 are the only manuscripts in this collection that record theft charms in the margins.

Also dated to 1050, London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii, a manuscript originating from Canterbury Christ Church, records GS 11a on f. 106.¹³² Tiberius A.iii is best described as a religious manuscript, consisting of prayers and homilies. It also includes prognostics, a lapidary, notes on the dimensions of Noah's Ark and the names of the thieves hanged with Christ. The charm appears among ethical guidelines for monastics: it is preceded by a rule entitled 'one must end life well', and is followed by Ælfric's letter on how to administer holy oil to the sick.¹³³ GS 11a is also recorded in a much later manuscript, London, British Library, Harley 438. Dating from 1656, this manuscript is a transcript of CCCC 190.

Moving now to s.xi/xii, GS 11b appears on f. 59r of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383, a manuscript containing laws. Unlike Harley 585, CCCC 41, CCCC 190 or Tiberius A.iii, CCCC 383 is neither a medical nor an ecclesiastical manuscript, but a collection of secular laws, grants and charters. Closely related to CCCC 383 is the

¹²⁸ Thomas A Bredehoft, 'Filling the Margins of CCCC 41: Textual Space and a Developing Archive', *The Review of English Studies* 57 (2006), 721-732.

¹²⁹ Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 33.

¹³⁰ Neil Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957, re-issued 1990), p. 70.

¹³¹ Ker, *Catalogue*, pp. 70-71.

¹³² Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 240.

¹³³ Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 247.

3.i Introduction to the Manuscripts

Textus Roffensis, which contains many of the same texts, composed sometime in the twelfth century: GS 11b appears on f. 95r. Also in this group of legal manuscripts is London, British Library, Cotton Julius C.ii, an Early Modern transcription of the *Textus Roffensis* dated to 1550-1575. GS 11b appears on f. 66b of this manuscript.

The Blood-Staunching Charms

The blood-staunching charms share a rather less diverse set of manuscript surroundings, as they all appear in the same manuscript, London, British Library Royal 2.a.xx. The contents of this manuscript are varied, described by Ker as ‘glosses, titles, notes and scribbles’:¹³⁴ on the whole, however, the number of prayers and gospel entries in the manuscript characterises it as a private prayerbook, part of a group of related prayerbooks (*The Book of Cerne*, *The Book of Nunnaminster* and *The Harleian Prayerbook*). Dated to the second half of the eighth century, the manuscript also has some interesting Old English additions in the form of glosses, dated to the first half of the tenth century, and some Latin additions (consisting of prayers dated to the middle of the tenth century). The charms appear in two groups: C and D on f. 16r: and E, F and G on f. 49v. Also added to the manuscript, on f. 52r, is a set of charms in a twelfth century hand, added to the final flyleaf of the manuscript, in which B is recorded.

This manuscript engages directly with the category of prayer and charm: how does one differentiate between the two, in a text that is so concerned with spiritual and physical healing? I would emphasise again¹³⁵ that the differences between a charm and a prayer are perhaps only given such significance by the modern scholar, who, unprompted by any signal from the texts themselves, is keen to classify and categorise. It is possible that the Anglo-Saxon user either did not perceive the differences between charms and prayers, or did not let them trouble him/her: in terms of the Royal manuscript, all of the texts are focused on the health of the body and the soul, so perhaps charms and prayers were regarded as appropriate texts for this manuscript, or were perceived as being so similar that no tension or unease was generated. The texts I regard as charms are generally surrounded by texts that require some sort of oral performance: perhaps the most important aspect for the compiler was not the *genre* of

¹³⁴ Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 317.

¹³⁵ See previous discussion of binaries and prototypes on pp. 18-23.

3.i Introduction to the Manuscripts

the texts but their *purpose* and *performance*. Some of that idea is borne out by the other texts considered in this thesis, which appear at first glance to be incongruous additions to a manuscript (such as the theft charm in a legal manuscript), but actually fit neatly into the manuscript's overall purpose and performance context.

It would seem that regardless of my desire to escape from my cultural zeitgeist and to approach these texts in as similar a way to the Anglo-Saxon user as possible, I cannot escape the desire to separate one type of text from another. Whilst I feel that one can successfully remove the sense of binary opposition from the charm/prayer relationship, it is still the case that as a modern scholar I feel the need to differentiate charms from prayers, if only so that I may reduce my corpus by the means of this rational distinction. The prototype theory mentioned above is attractive and effective for this very purpose, and seems to be the most sensitive to the Anglo-Saxon context by removing this anachronistic sense of charm *or* prayer. However, it is unknown whether any distinction between these two 'genres' was clear to or required by the Anglo-Saxon audience at all.

3. ii The Manuscript Context of the Charms

The following chapter will be divided into three sections.

Firstly, Separation and Decoration, Deletion and Addition: Textual Division in the Manuscripts will examine the appearance of the charms on the page. Although the scribes of the charms discussed in this study recorded their texts ‘silently’—that is, without the addition of any commentary—the decisions they made regarding decoration, spacing and separation of texts can reveal how the scribes felt about the texts. For example, the most usual candidate for decoration is the initial letter of a text, highlighted in order to assist the reader in navigating through the manuscript. However, in the charms discussed here—particularly the blood staunching charms—unexpected letters are decorated: what, then, is the significance of these letters that are consistently marked out for special attention? Are these sections marked out because of their content, their theme or their status? Furthermore, instances where scribes have performed an excision (deleting a whole charm from a manuscript) or have added a whole charm to the manuscript after the writing of the main text raises questions about the use of charms in the Anglo-Saxon period. Why might these charms have been singled out for deletion or addition? To what extent can we assess the level of acceptance these charms might have encountered?

The ways in which the scribes separate the charms from one another and from other texts is not necessarily consistent or transparent. Indeed, defining what a charm text actually is—and therefore where it should begin and end—is not easy. A definition might run something like: ‘A charm is a text which attempts to invoke some sort of supernatural intervention with the aim of remedying a physical complaint or spiritual ill, using patterned text and ritual activity to do so, usually with some element of performance’.¹³⁶ However, this definition does not take account of the difficult issues which can be raised by the spacing of texts in a manuscript. Beginnings and endings of charms established by later editions might conflate or separate texts in a different way than that of the scribe, relying on traditional ideas of a ‘charm’ to do so: for example, the the *hit becweð* unit in S 11b is not always included in modern editions of the charm. This is due firstly to modern editors regarding the *hit becweð* units as incongruent with the rest of the charm, and secondly to modern editors arguing that the Anglo-Saxon

¹³⁶ Set out in Section 1. Introduction to the Thesis.

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scribe him/herself perceived the charm and legal unit as two separate texts.¹³⁷ Aside from confusion created by these value judgements, sometimes the division of charm texts in manuscripts is simply unclear, due to tight spacing and inconsistent decoration of initial letters. Thus, investigation into how one charm can be separated from another is required, particularly in terms of the very similar blood-staunching charms.

Secondly, Surrounding Texts: How the Manuscript Context Creates Meaning will discuss the texts immediately preceding and following the charms, and the contents of each manuscript as a whole, in order to unite a reading of each charm that takes into account its place in a larger organisational structure. Of special interest is how the charms engage with other texts in the manuscripts, particularly when this requires the scholar to question boundaries previously assumed to be stable, such as those separating religion, law and secular life. Also key is the complex web of intertextual allusions and relationships which span out from the charms into hymns, psalms, charters, laws and yet other charm texts, and the impact these connections have on the performance of the charms.

- a. Separation and Decoration, Deletion and Addition: Textual Divisions in the Manuscripts

Separation and Decoration

The divisions between texts in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts can be contentious, as scribes can choose to indicate the beginnings of new texts in varying ways: a capital letter can be used to head a new text; a new line can be begun; an illuminated letter could be used; and/or a paragraph mark can be inserted. All of these techniques are used in the manuscripts containing the theft and blood-staunching charms, and it is often unclear where the divisions between the charms and their surrounding texts should be made.

Although Royal 2.a.xx is written in three main hands (the first ff. 2-12r, the second ff. 12v-38, 41-45, and the third ff. 39-40, 46-51), these three main hands can all

¹³⁷ Discussed in 2.iii. Comparing the Theft Charms. Godfrid Storms does not include the *hit becweð* unit in his edition of charm 11b (Godfrid Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (Mijhoff: the Hague, 1948), pp. 204-6): Stephanie Hollis similarly views 11b and *hit becweð* as separate texts, despite Cockayne and Grendon printing the texts as one (Stephanie Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms": MS Contexts and Social Uses', *Anglia* 115 (1997), 139-64 (p. 157), and the manuscript evidence which suggests the unit was indeed part of the charm. Hollis provides a list of articles which argue for the inclusion of *hit becweð* in 11b (Stephanie Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms": Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses', *Anglia* 115, 139-64 (157, n. 34)). See also O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*, 3 vols, (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), III, pp. 287-89.

3.ii The Manuscript Context of the Charms

be characterised as insular minuscule, using a distinctive decorative technique of surrounding significant capitals with coloured dots. The charms are divided between two of the main hands and a third, twelfth-century hand: Charms C and D are in the first hand; E-G fall in the second stint of the third hand; and B is in the twelfth-century hand of the flyleaf.¹³⁸ Generally speaking, within Royal the scribes mark the beginning of new texts in a consistent way, using capitals surrounded by dots and the starting of a new line to emphasise a break in texts. For example:

¹³⁸ See N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 317-18. See also Crowley, Joseph, 'Anglicized Word Order in Old English Continuous Interlinear Glosses in British Library, Royal 2. A. XX', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 29 (2000), 123-51.

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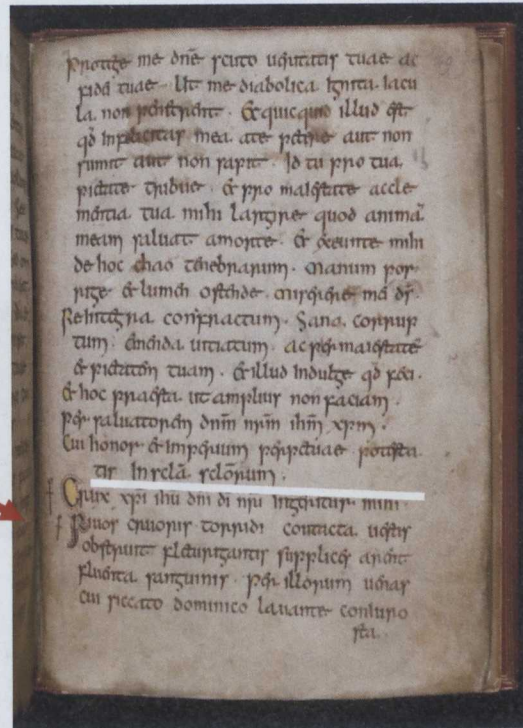


Figure 1, f. 49a, Beginning of Charm E

Figure 1 shows this distinctive style of coloration and dots, in conjunction with an enlarged letter and the starting of a new line to indicate the beginning of E. Note that the line above also begins in the same way, and is differentiated from the other coloured letters by the use of small red dots surrounding the letter. The beginning of D is also signalled with this style of decoration:

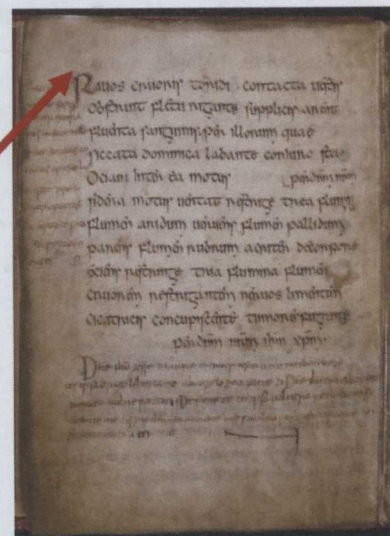
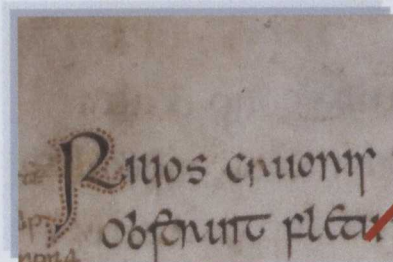


Figure 1a, f. 16, Beginning of Charm D

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The beginning of C is less clear—lacking the characteristic red dots—but is still indicated by a coloured initial:

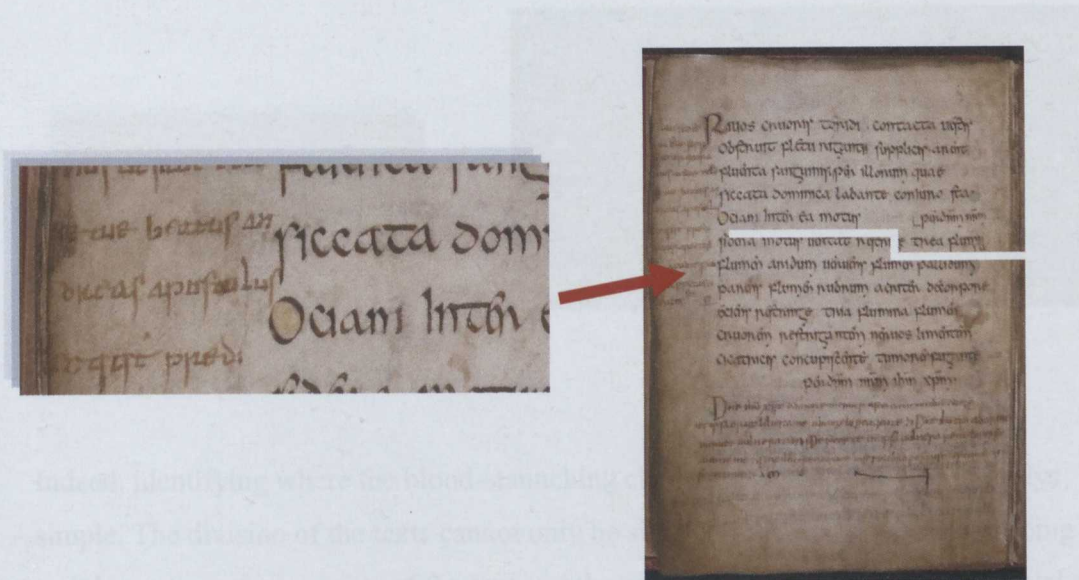


Figure 1b, f. 16, Beginning of Charm C

The division between C and D is made clear not so much by the decoration of the letters, but more by the shift in content, and by comparing D with the other *rivos*-type blood charms, which end with a concluding unit. Perhaps the scribe was a little flummoxed by his/her exemplar or how to divide these two charms, adding the concluding unit *per dominum nostrum* in between the final line of D and the first line of C:

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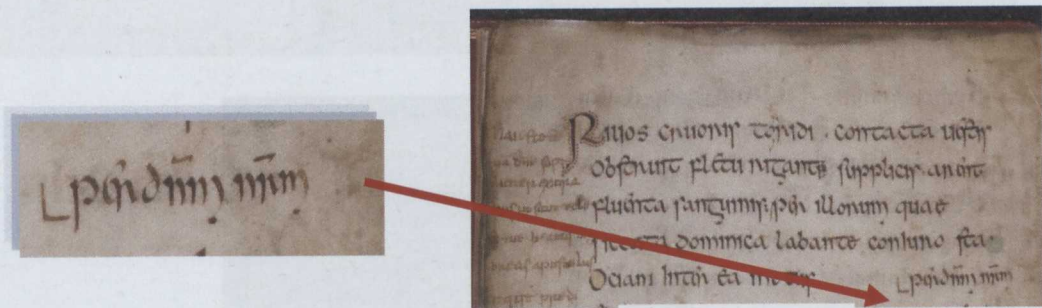


Figure 1c, f. 16, End of Charm D

Indeed, identifying where the blood-staunching charms begin and end is not always simple. The division of the texts cannot only be signalled by such devices as spacing and decoration: the meaning of the text and the units that create meaning are crucial to perceiving separations or connections. Charms G and F fall on the same folio in the manuscript, and appear to be separated by the decoration of the word *Xpe adiuva + xpe adiuva + xpe ad*; this line could be regarded as the first line of F:

Figure 2: Decorated letters in F and G

However, there is a sense that G and F are interconnected in such a way that they could be regarded as the same charm. In Charms F and G, the initial transcribing a Greek phrase and the Latin translation, provide a text-link which bridges the accepted cultural gap between the two charms.¹⁰ The Greek transliterations in G seem to be mirrored by the final two lines of F, in which *OCOCMA* appears to start as it appears. It seems illogical for the transcription of the Greek to be supplied in a separate charm, although the separation of the Greek and the Latin translation could be the result of genuine error made by the scribe.

¹⁰ *Starch, 'The Greek and Latin Charms of the Anglo-Saxon Manuscript Beza Cantabrigiae', p. 102. The Latin translation of the Greek in F and G*

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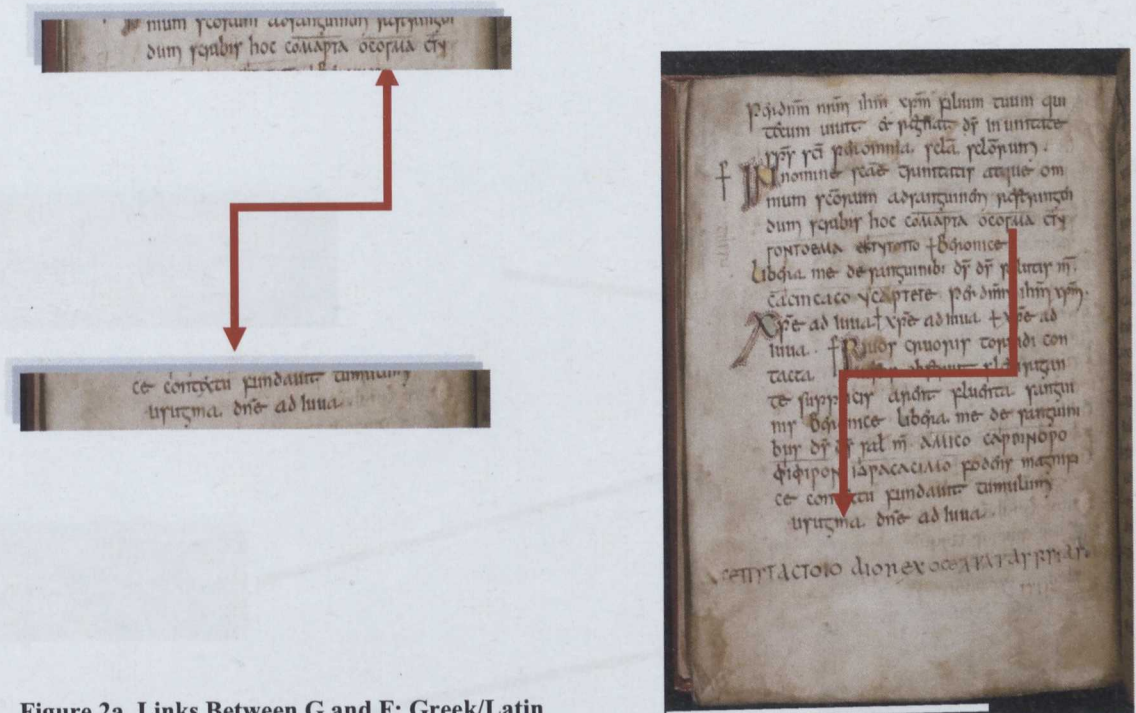


Figure 2a, Links Between G and F: Greek/Latin

Another way in which F and G are linked is by the phrase *per dominum Ihesum Christum*, which appears on the end of G. When the two charms are combined into one, *domine adiuua* (the last line of F) becomes the last line of both charms, creating a neat lexical link between *per dominum Ihesum Christum* in G, *domine adiuua* in F and *Christe adiuua* in F. Thus, *domine adiuua*, instead of being an uncharacteristic concluding unit (compared to the more common *per dominum Ihesum Christum*, seen in the other blood charms as the slightly different *per dominum nostrum*), becomes a tidy end to the charm which links together several different aspects of the whole text.

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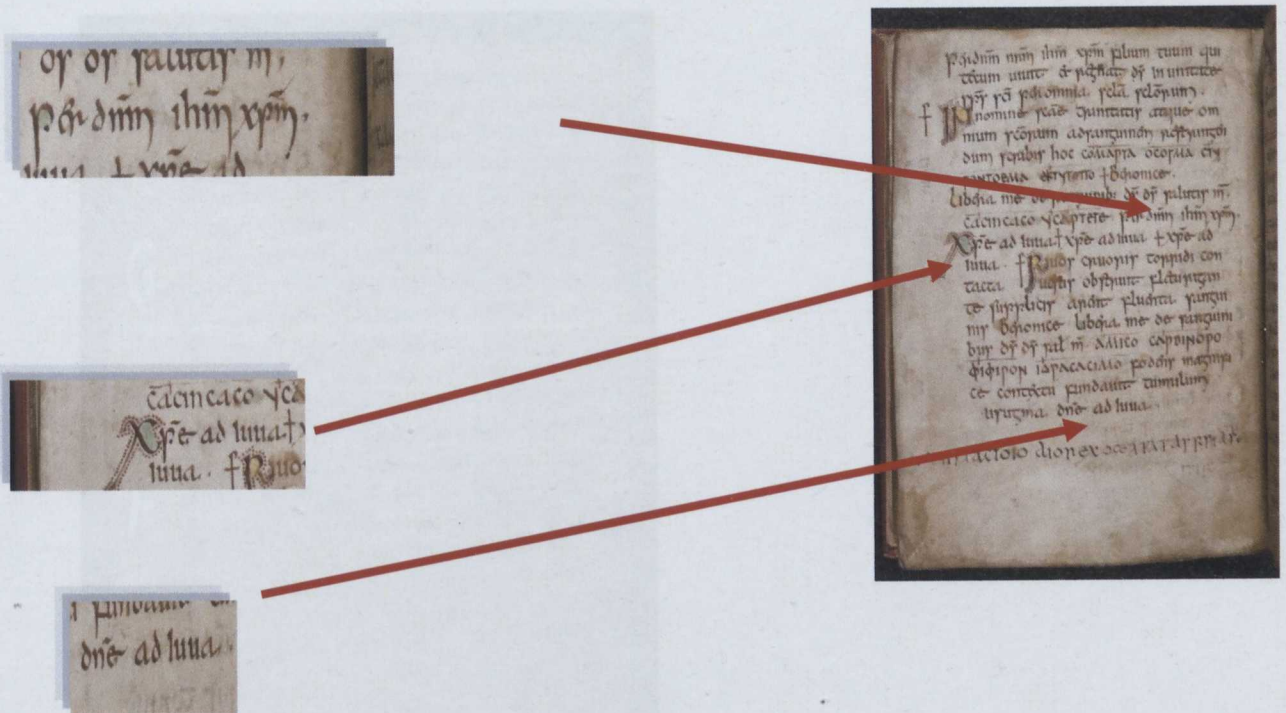


Figure 2b, Links between G and F: Concluding Units

That being said, the lexical evidence for combining F and G is slightly problematic in places. The *per dominum* unit falls unproblematically at the end of G if the charms are regarded as separate, but when combined into one text, the *per dominum* unit is no longer in its usual place as a concluding unit, but right in the middle of the charm. Furthermore, the *Libera me* unit occurs in both F and G, meaning that when combined the unit appears twice in the same charm. However, much like *domine adiuva* echoes *per dominum* and *Christe adiuva*, it is possible that the *Libera me* unit is used as a sort of refrain, echoing itself and mirroring the patterning of the repeated *Beronice* invocations and the pairing of *usugma/ OCOГMA*.

Aside from thematic considerations, further evidence for the separation (or otherwise) of F and G comes in the form of spacing and decoration:

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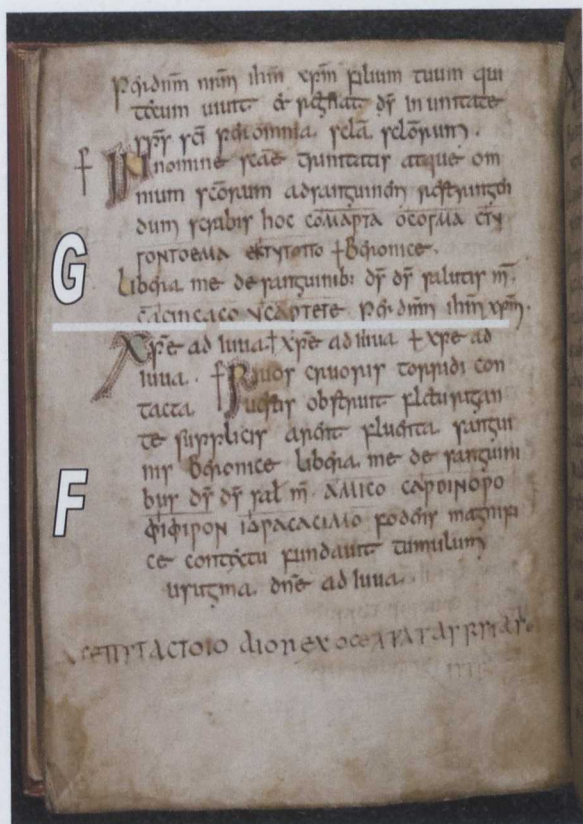


Figure 3: Proposed division between G and F

Whilst the charms are not separated by any blank space, they are separated by the beginning of a new line, and by a coloured, dotted capital. However, it could be that the *Christe adiuua* section is thus decorated because of its importance: it invokes the Cross, a symbol important to the blood charms thematically (in terms of the healing power of the Cross, and of the Holy Blood shed thereon) and visually (the sign of the Cross accompanies all of the blood charms in some way). Indeed, the decoration of the charms is not necessarily a reliable method of separation. Various other units are decorated within the body of the charms, such as *Beronice*, *Libera me* and *per dominum*. Again, it could be that rather than a tool of separation, decoration is used more often to highlight important parts of the charm, holy names or themes and direct petitions for assistance.

D and C are similarly difficult to separate, and display inconclusive uses of decoration. As has been demonstrated in Figures 1a-c, whilst D begins clearly with a

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decorated capital, the beginning of C is demarcated only by the use of an initial capital on *Ociani*. Indeed, the final line of D is written in the last part of the first line of C, almost as an afterthought: thus not even spacing provides a clear gap between these two charms. That being said, the coloration of the *O* must represent some sort of division:

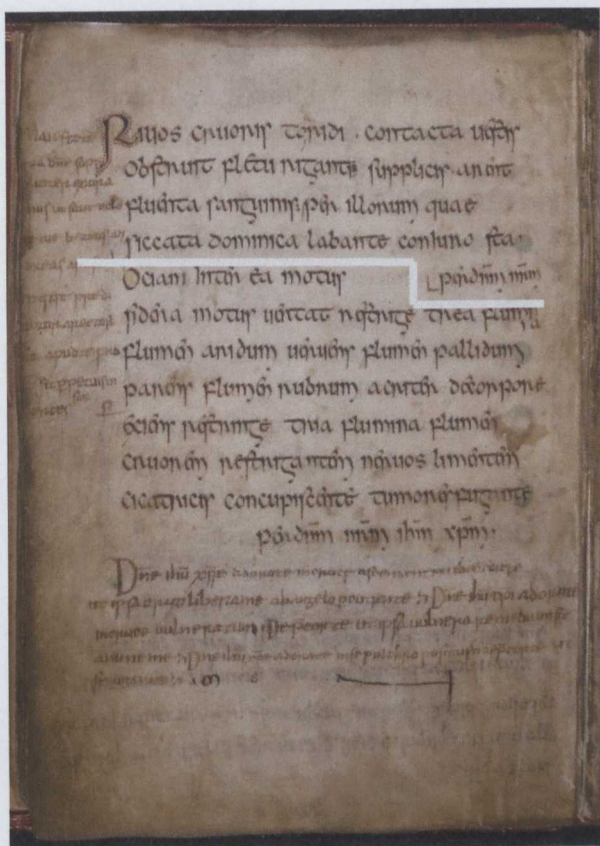


Figure 4: Proposed division between D and C

The thematic link between the *rivos* of D and the *flumina flumen* of C connects the two charms, and does not make it easy to differentiate between the two. Apart from the rather unobtrusive capital *O*, the scribe does not indicate exactly where the separation occurs. However, the most persuasive reason for regarding D and C as separate is that the two charms treat slightly different ailments, with C specifying the curing of *tumores* and presumably bleeding as its purpose. Furthermore, the lack of physical space between the two charms could be due to scribal error, with the scribe having to add in *per dominum nostrum* after s/he had begun D. It is entirely possible that D and C are connected, but they do not have to be part of the same charm. Indeed,

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D and C do not share anywhere near the same degree of similarity as F and G, and are best regarded as similar yet separate texts. F and G, on the other hand, share a more ambiguous relationship of thematic similarity, direct echoing and confusing spacing and decoration. Adding the final piece to the puzzle, but not necessarily any answers, is the fact that the scribe of the manuscript collected together a family of closely related charms, all dealing with the same ailment. For the later reader not sharing in the organisational logic and knowledge of the charms presumably possessed by the scribe, it is almost inevitable that some confusion over the relationship between the charms would be created by their similarity. Of course, the same may well stand for the original scribe, who might have been having trouble with his/her exemplars, leading, perhaps, to the often unclear divisions in Royal.

Perhaps the most interesting example of confusion over separation occurs in Charm E. This charm is separated from the text preceding it by the use of spacing: the previous line ends midway along the page and a new line is begun:

*Cui honor et imperium perpetuae potesta
tis in saecula saeculorum*

+ *Crux xpi ihu dni nri ingeritur mihi*
+ *Rivos cruoris torridi contact vestis*

[The text preceding E ends midway along the line]

[E begins on a new line, below the last line of the previous text]

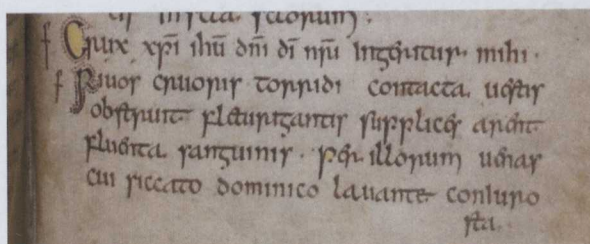



Figure 5: The Beginning of E


In this way, therefore, the charm is separated from the previous text, without any confusion: that is, if one reads + *Crux xpi ihu* as part of E. Whilst it is clear that the line beginning + *Crux xpi ihu* is separate from the text ending *in saecula saeculorum*, there is some confusion over whether it is part of E, created by an unexpected use of decoration. This uncertainty has led to differences between editions and descriptions of the charm: the charm as edited by Storms begins at + *Rivos*, whereas the online British Library catalogue describes the charm as beginning at + *Crux*.¹⁴⁰ A quick glance at the

¹⁴⁰ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 292. Also, see *British Library Online Manuscripts Catalogue* <<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts/HITS0001.ASP?VPath=html/38061.htm&Search=2.a.xx&Highlight=F>>, accessed 18/3/09.

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manuscript makes it clear from where the confusion has arisen. As is common throughout the manuscript, a capital outlined with decorative dots is used to signify a new text, beginning the line + *Crux xpi ihu dni nri ingeritur mihi*. If, as the British Library manuscript catalogue suggests, + *Crux xpi ihu* is part of Charm E, one would expect the rest of the charm to continue below, undecorated, until the beginning of the next text is marked by the beginning of a new line and/ or an outlined capital. However, the line below + *Crux* (+ *Rivos cruoris torrid contacta vestis*) also begins with an outlined capital, and continues on until + *In nomine*, which is taken as the beginning of G. See Figures 6 and 7 below:


 + *Crux xpi ihu dni nri ingeritur mihi*


 + *Rivos curoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigantis supplicis arenae fluentis sanguinis. per illorum venas cui siccato dominico lavante coniuro sta. Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula saeculorum [end of Charm E: beginning of Charm G and F]*

+ *IN* nomine sanctae trinitatis atque omnium sanctorum ad sanguinem restringendum scribis hoc COMAPTA OCOΓMA CTY ΓONTOEMA EKYTOΠ + *B*eronicē

Libera me de sanguinibus d[eu]s d[eu]s salutis m[ei]

CACINCACO YCAPTETE *P*er d[o]m[i]n[um] I[esu]m [Christum]

 *X*pe [Christe] adiuva + xpe adiuva + xpe ad

 + *R*ivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigante supplicis arenae fluentis sanguinis Beronicē *Libera me de sanguinibus d[eu]s d[eu]s salutis m[ae]* AMICO CAPDINOPO ΦΙΦΙΡΟΝ ΙΑΡΑCΑCΙΜΟ fodens magnificentē contextu fundavit tumulum

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usugma d[omi]ne adiuva

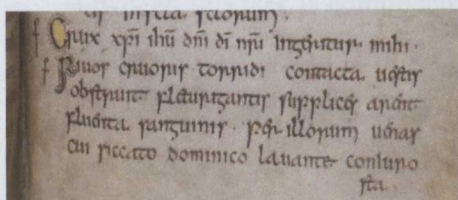


Figure 6: End of folio: E continues onto next folio

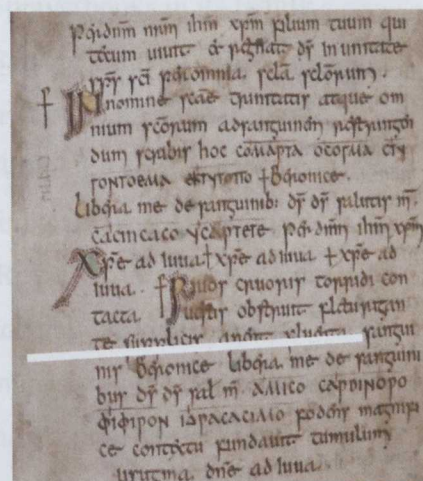


Figure 7: E continues: division between G and F

The shift in sense (from an ending unit, *per dominum nostrum*, to a performance instruction, *in nomine.... scribis hoc*) between E and G makes clear the separation between the two texts. Furthermore, the standard decorated capital, a Cross symbol and the use of colour signify some sort of change. The same cannot be said for the beginning of E. The line + *Crux* could function as a summary or concluding remark to the previous text, decorated in order to emphasise its importance: or, indeed, it could be a text all of its own. W. de Gray Birch, in his edition of the *Nunnaminster Prayerbook*, regards this line in Royal as a separate text, a ‘note on the Cross’.¹⁴¹ Conversely, it could represent the beginning of E, as the meaning of the line is not alien to the context of a charm: in which case the decoration of + *Rivos* is somewhat strange.¹⁴² Perhaps the most logical assumption is that the capital surrounded with dots is not necessarily used exclusively for indicating the beginning of a new text (indeed, the dotted capital appears mid text twice in G). The scribe does have other methods of indicating the start of something new at his/her disposal (such as starting a new line, using a coloured capital

¹⁴¹ W. de Gray Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century, Formerly Belonging to St Mary's Abbey or Nunnaminster, Winchester* (London, 1889), p. 110.

¹⁴² The use of the symbol of the Cross as decoration is discussed at more length in 4.ii. Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

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and using a pictorial marker such as the sign of the Cross). Thus, + *Crux xpi ihu* could be seen as a separate text from both the previous text and Charm E, and Charm E could be separated from Charm G by the use of illumination and the sign of the Cross.

Questions about the separation of the charms could be answered by a brief comparison of the *rivos* charms in Royal with the other prayerbooks in its family. However, this task is complicated by the fact that *The Book of Cerne* (Cambridge, University Library, Ll. 10), *The Book of Nunnaminster* (London, British Library, Harley 2965) and *The Harleian Prayerbook* (London, British Library, Harley 7653) do not record the *rivos* charms. Perhaps this fact is telling in itself: despite the high incidence of similarity between these manuscripts, the Royal scribe is the only one who feels the need to include charms for the purpose of staunching bleeding, and in particular the type of bleeding suffered by Veronica, emphasising the feminine content and ownership context of Royal.¹⁴³ The separation of the charms, therefore, is inextricably tied in to the decoration of the charms. However, in the blood charms, decoration is not only used to represent the beginning of a new text, but also to mark out particular parts of the charms as different to the rest of the text. It has been noted that the beginning of E, + *Rivos cruroris torridi*, is decorated with coloured dots. The other two charms to use the *rivos* unit (G and D) also decorate the 'R' of *rivos*, but crucially, they do so regardless of the position of the unit in the text. Much like E, D has *rivos* as its opening unit, and so the matter of whether the 'R' is decorated because of its position or its significance for some other reason is unclear. However, in G the *rivos* unit begins midline and is still decorated with coloured dots. Furthermore, the *rivos* unit is not only decorated with coloured dots: whenever *rivos* appears, the unit is accompanied with the sign of the Cross (in E and G, and with a marginal Cross in D). Again, it could be argued that the sign of the Cross appears before the *rivos* unit in E because it is the opening unit: but in G, the Cross precedes *rivos* even though it occurred midway through the charm. The reason for the consistent emphasis of the *rivos* unit through the use of decoration and the sign of the Cross, regardless of its placement, is unclear. A possible explanation is that as the unit is a quotation from another text the scribe feels compelled to mark out the beginning of the quotation: but it must be said that s/he does not mark the end of the quotation (although this could be a modern habit, and not to be

¹⁴³ Discussed at length below and in 4.iii. Cælius Sedulius and Saint Veronica and 4.iv. Agenda and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Charms. It is also worth noting that perhaps the Royal compiler/scribe was the only one who had access to these charms; though, as the Royal compiler/scribe seems to know so many versions of the charm, that would suggest it is actually in relatively common circulation

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expected in Anglo-Saxon texts). Perhaps the *rivos* unit, as a recurring component of the blood-staunching charms, is marked out to emphasise its centrality to the tradition, a focal point around which other units orbit.

A similar impulse to emphasise a particular unit can be seen in the theft charms, though not across the whole tradition. S 11b, as attested in CCCC 383, bears an unusual feature, in that the *C* of the *Crux Christi reducat* unit is an illuminated capital. This does not happen in any of the other theft charms, except for the *TR*, where each unit is begun with a decorated capital. Perhaps the CCCC 383 scribe perceived the *Crux Christi reducat* section to be of importance, and so left space for an illuminated capital: and the scribe of the *TR*¹⁴⁴ echoed this by using decorated capitals to begin each component of the charm. The scribes could have attributed more importance to the *Crux Christi reducat* section of the charm because of its mention of the Cross, or perhaps because of its highly patterned nature: in the same way, perhaps the Royal scribe recognised the poetic qualities of the *rivos* unit and thus marked it out as different from the rest of the charm.

That the charms are not clearly separated could suggest some things about the scribe/user of the manuscripts. Least likely—as this contradicts other evidence—the scribe/user did not really understand the charms and does not know where to separate them. More likely is that s/he was so familiar with the charms that clear demarcation was not necessary, and furthermore, that this level of familiarity allows the scribe/user to engage with passages significant to him/her by marking them out with decoration. If these demarcations or decorations appear inconsistent or illogical to the modern reader, this could be because of the modern reader's lack of contextual knowledge about the scribe/user's preferences and knowledge of the texts. Indeed, it would seem that the scribe/user has a particular interest in the blood staunching charms, which consequently are decorated in a different way to the other texts in the manuscript. In addition, the blood staunching charms do not appear in the prayerbooks closely related to Royal, suggesting that the scribe/user of Royal felt strongly enough about the texts to include them, even though that does not conform to the standard arrangement of texts for this group of manuscripts.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Possibly the same person as the scribe of CCCC 383—see Peter Dendle, 'Textual Transmission of the Old English "Loss of Cattle" Charm', *Journal of English and German Philology* 105 (1006), 514-39.' (534, n. 42). The *TR* is the *Textus Roffensis*.

¹⁴⁵ These manuscripts are the *Book of Cerne*, the *Nunnaminster Prayerbook* and the *Harleian Prayerbook*. For more on the other material in Royal, see P. Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', in

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Deletion and Addition

Decoration (or lack of), spacing and legibility are just three aspects of a charm's appearance that can inform interpretations of the opinions of the scribe and the owner of a manuscript, and perhaps also can reveal any agenda shared by the scriptorium, and representatives of the Church. For example, if a nice copy of a charm is copied into an expensive manuscript, it is likely that the charm met with approval from higher up the social spectrum. This, in turn, might suggest acceptance from members of the Church—but this is not necessarily the case. A manuscript is not necessarily the production of a scriptorium, nor will it always have been subject to—or have met with—approval from a member of the Church. Although it is impossible to be sure of the degree of acceptance a charm received from large bodies such as the Church—and on a smaller scale, a scriptorium—it is possible to identify charm texts which caused difficulties for their scribe, or are somehow marked out as being different. These texts are those which are placed in the margins, left undecorated where other texts in the manuscript are decorated, or—in extreme cases—have been excised from the manuscript entirely.

Approval (or otherwise) of the charm is not the only aspect of the charm revealed by its appearance: it is also possible to infer facts about the charm's use and place in written and oral culture. For example, a charm written in a large, clear hand, devoid of corrections or excisions, alongside other charms clearly intended for practical use (especially those including directions requiring the charmer to sing, speak or otherwise perform the charm) is likely to have been included, unproblematically, into active and frequent oral performance. A charm written in an illegible, unclear hand, accompanied by texts either with no thematic relationship or placed in a margin, are likely to be more related to written culture, no longer part of performance but part of an archiving process. Although simplistic, this relationship between manuscript context and performance seems to be borne out by the charms considered in this thesis. That being said, it pays to acknowledge the complexities that exist in relating manuscript context to performance, and the danger of unconsciously applying modern sensibilities to an Anglo-Saxon manuscript. For example, it is true that the marginalia in CCCC 41 appears illegible to the modern reader, but might in fact be perfectly legible to the Anglo-Saxon reader familiar with reading texts not copied to the same exacting standard

Religion and Literature in Western England 600-800 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 273-327 (pp. 301-02).

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as the main text of a manuscript. Indeed, Stephanie Hollis suggests that the marginalia of CCCC 41 is united by a usefulness to pastoral workers, who might have scribbled down these additions as part of their daily ministrations, as an aid to memory.¹⁴⁶

Charms placed in the margin must be read in a different way from those that are fully incorporated both physically and thematically into the main body of text. For example S 12, S 13 and S 15 appear on folios 206-8 of CCCC 41, taking up the space left by five wide ruled lines at the bottom of the page intended for the Bede text, but which were left blank. All of the charms recorded in this manuscript are marginal, added by a single scribe whose hand is contemporary with the main text.

In an article entitled 'Filling the Margins of CCCC 41: Textual Space and a Developing Archive', Thomas A. Bredehoft¹⁴⁷ categorises each of the marginal additions to the manuscript by their ink colour, ruling and position on the page. By this logic, the additions which Bredehoft denotes as 'Stage One' additions consist exclusively of Latin and Old English charms, whereas later material was liturgical or homiletic in nature. The theft charms are part of the 'Stage One' additions to the manuscript, which Bredehoft suggests are characterised by their light brown ink, wide ruling, and avoidance of initial space, as opposed to the characteristics that are generally exhibited by the three later groups of additions (darker ink, narrower ruling and use of initial space). The marginalia scribe uses the first three lines of the wide ruled vellum, but then switches to narrow ruling. S/he also avoids using spaces left for the large initials of the main text. These characteristics suggest that space was not at a premium, and the scribe expected the initials to be completed at some point; conversely, at a later stage in the addition of marginalia, Bredehoft shows that texts occupied every available space.¹⁴⁸

The fact that the charms were not recorded in the main text of the manuscript needs some consideration. Why might the charms have been left out of the main text, even though they represent material circulating to within fifty years of the main text? How might the scribe's opinion of the charms be interpreted, and how might they use the charms? It is tempting to assume that the charms were excluded from the main text because they were regarded with suspicion by the scribe and/or the scriptorium: texts perceived as being suspect in some way (maybe because of their 'magical' properties or

¹⁴⁶ See Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms"', p. 154, n. 28.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas A Bredehoft, 'Filling the Margins of CCCC 41: Textual Space and a Developing Archive', *The Review of English Studies* 57 (2006), 721-732.

¹⁴⁸ Bredehoft, 'Filling the Margins', 721-732.

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their distance from the theme of the main text) might have been given a literally marginal space to reflect their marginal status.

However, placing the charm in a margin does not necessarily indicate that the scribe or the clerical community as a whole regarded either these three charms or charming as a whole as suspicious. The charms' marginal position might not indicate their positioning on the fringes of clerical activity, but rather their importance: the margin is the only part of the manuscript still open to change, and the only part of the manuscript able to record the scribe's personal interests rather than those of the scriptorium.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the presence of the charms in the manuscript could be representative of the interest and relevance of the charms to the scribe. Furthermore, the other additions to the manuscript are all liturgical and homiletic; indicating that material in the margins is not necessarily perceived to be suspicious or unusual by the scribe. Perhaps the charms interested the scribe but not the scriptorium as a whole, perceiving the charms not as alien to a liturgical and homiletic sphere (as we see evidenced in the other manuscripts studied here, such as Royal). However, the fact that the charms were *accepted* without suspicion and recorded accordingly does not mean that these witnesses were in active *use*, and the evidence provided by the appearance of the charms does not provide enough support for these witnesses being part of an active, oral charming practice.¹⁵⁰ A scribe vs. scriptorium model is not the only process that might potentially be in action here: perhaps the passage of time also plays a role, whereby after a decade or so a manuscript with available space might be a good place to record other texts for the minimum cost, regardless of the manuscript's potentially high-status beginnings.

It could be said that the untidy, almost illegible hand in which the charm is written would make it almost impossible for anyone to use this witness as a 'script' for a performance. This implies that the charm was recorded as part of a scribe's personal

¹⁴⁹ CCCC 41 was gifted to Exeter upon the death of its owner, Bishop Leofric. The amount of manuscripts produced during his episcopacy suggests that, although it is unknown where CCCC 41 was actually produced, it is likely that it was produced as part of Leofric's programme of copying English manuscripts. For further discussion of Leofric, see Elaine Treharne, 'Producing a Library in Late Anglo-Saxon England: Exeter, 1050-1072', *The Review of English Studies* 54 (2003), 155-72.

under these same conditions,

¹⁵⁰ Cf. the neatly recorded Canterbury Rune-Charms in Cotton Caligula A.xv: although it is recorded, it is not necessarily intended for performance. See John Frankis 'Sidelights on Post-Conquest Canterbury: Towards a Context for an Old Norse Runic Charm (DR 419)', *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies*, 44 (2000), 1-27.

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interest in archiving the charms for posterity or for some sort of scholarly interest: other charms, recorded in neater, more legible hands are more likely to have been recorded as part of an active participation in the transition between orality and literacy, writing down a charm to enable further oral performances. However, another there is another possible explanation for the untidiness of this charm: perhaps, as a record intended to underpin the scribe's own personal and practical knowledge of the text, a painstakingly recorded text is not necessary. Therefore, one could argue that the untidiness of the text is in fact evidence for the scribe's familiarity with the text through frequent usage, rather than carelessness attributed to the charm having fallen out of use. Furthermore, as has been pointed out above, Hollis notes that the marginal texts seem to be thematically united. Both of these point could suggest that instead of the charm being scrawled down because it was no longer in active use, it was possible for the charm to be recorded so messily because of the scribe's familiarity with it, and the frequency with which it was used. My take on this matter is that the scribe of the charm in CCCC 41 needed a place in which to record charms of which s/he had such a good working knowledge that a neat presentation was not necessary.

CCCC 190 also records a theft charm in a margin, but here in a very different context from the theft charms in CCCC 41. A collection of religious writings and laws, CCCC 190 is the only Anglo-Saxon manuscript studied here to feature the theft charm in the S 11a form surrounded by legal texts (the charm falls between a Latin church injunction against incest and a decretal of Pope Gelasius). The sole Old English addition to CCCC 190, the charm's marginal status in the text seems not to exclude it from the importance of the main text, but to highlight its importance: as the only addition, the charm has been consciously selected to be collated with the other laws and religious writings. Lacking the *hit becweð* unit, the charm in CCCC 190 is, to all intents and purposes, the same as the charm in Tiberius A.iii. However, its inclusion in a manuscript containing legal texts perhaps foreshadows the combining of charm and law seen more completely in S 11b (in the *TR* and CCCC 383).¹⁵¹ The other texts in CCCC 190 are written in a neat, legible hand, suggesting that the texts were recorded as part of a legal reference book. The charm here represents the shift in charm usage from

¹⁵¹ See Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', p. 533: 'The solitary appearance of the charm in an administrative compilation void of other charms or recipes anticipates the charm's post-Conquest manuscript environments'.

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religious to legal, and its marginal positioning implies acceptance, importance and frequent use.¹⁵²

Conclusion

The very appearance of the charms on the page and the way in which they are entered into the manuscripts can tell us much about how they were perceived by their scribes. The most decisive example of this is demonstrated by one of the theft charms, S 11b. In the manuscripts containing this charm (CCCC 383 and the *TR*), the scribes' (or scribe's) crossings out and illuminations clearly reveal their feelings towards the charm texts. Whereas we have no reason to doubt that the scribe of Royal perceived the charms as congruent with the rest of the texts therein, Dendle makes a persuasive argument—based on the decoration of the charm—that the scribes of *TR* and CCCC 383 were much less impressed with the content of the charms in their manuscripts.¹⁵³ The charm itself begins in CCCC 383 fairly inconspicuously. The scribe does not begin a new line for the charm, thus not separating it clearly from the text preceding it (a text discussing wergilds). Furthermore, the entire charm has been crossed out in the same ink used for the illuminations: this indicates that the charm was regarded with suspicion by the illuminator, or at least the belief that the text was unnecessarily or mistakenly included in the manuscript.¹⁵⁴ The missing initial on *Crux* could potentially indicate a less strong reaction—perhaps indifference—or the failure to recognise that it was a new text. Conversely, the scribe might have chosen not to mark out the initial because s/he felt it to be consistent with the preceding text—however, the excision of the charm seems to suggest that even if the scribe did not feel negatively towards the charm, the illuminator certainly did.

The charm begins in a similar fashion in the *TR*, with a non-descript opening (but is not excised). This quiet opening to the charm might represent an attempt to try and blend the charm into the collection due to the lack of relevance of the charm to the purpose of the manuscript, as a text designed to help the Norman rulers develop their own laws. This suggestion is in direct conflict with the idea that the *TR* and CCCC 383 could have been written as records of past legal traditions for the Norman rulers to examine in order to better understand the indigenous people, but it must be

¹⁵² The aforementioned decretal of Pope Gelasius, however, may well suggest that the charm had been archived; such a text may not have been invoked all that often. However, my opinion is that all the other evidence points towards frequent use.

¹⁵³ Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', p. 534.

¹⁵⁴ I am grateful to Thom Gobbit of the University of Leeds for bringing this to my attention.

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acknowledged that the appearance of the charms in CCCC 383 and *TR* suggest a different response to the charms than to the other texts. Indeed, Dendle suggests that the charms are purposely camouflaged into the text, their *Gyf* clauses echoing that of the surrounding legal language. Whilst Dendle accepts that the charms could have had a 'paralegal' status, he argues that they do not operate in the same way as other Old English legal texts, and are less straightforward than other Anglo-Saxon declarations.¹⁵⁵ He concludes convincingly by proposing that the scribes were discomfited by the impractical nature of the text, and with no other texts of the same type in the manuscript, chose to attempt to disguise it: he also suggests that the charms were copied by mistake, the scribe reading only the incipit *Gyf feoh sy undernumen*, mistaking it for a more orthodox legal procedure.¹⁵⁶ Dendle's argument accounts neatly for the appearance of these charms in their manuscripts, and the opinions of the scribes as expressed through their alterations to the texts.

When it comes to the blood-staunching charms, the issue regarding demarcation of texts is more pressing, as it impacts on what the modern editor actually regards as a charm, as has been demonstrated by the discussion of where E begins, and the combining of F and G into one charm. In a similar way, the *hit becweð* unit has been the subject of much discussion, variously as a separate will unit which has simply travelled with the charm as a collection,¹⁵⁷ or as an integral component of a charm composed for use in the legal sphere. The hymn section in S 12 has also been treated in varying ways by modern editors, included by some but explained away by others as the result of a confused exemplar.¹⁵⁸

b. Surrounding Texts: How the Manuscript Context Creates Meaning

A sense of cohesion runs through the charms in *Royal*: as a collection of charms linked not only by their performative aspect but also by the high degree of similarity in their content, it is logical that they would be surrounded by a set of texts sharing a similar organisational principle. Thus, a discussion of the texts surrounding charms B-G is necessary.

¹⁵⁵ Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', p. 536.

¹⁵⁶ Other scholars have commented on the nature of S 11b: Patrick Wormald comments that the charm is 'not of course a legal text', included in CCCC 383 and the *TR* as a result of scribes 'working on autopilot'. See Rabin, 'Hypermetric Verse', *Notes and Queries* 2009 56, 482-485 (482).

¹⁵⁷ Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', p. 538, n. 55.

¹⁵⁸ Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', p. 532, n. 35.

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Charms C and D: Canticum Trium Puerorum, Oratio Sancti Hugbaldi and St.

Andrew

Folio 16b:

Canticum trium puerorum

Prayer, *D<omi>n<e> fons misericordiam*

Charms C and D

Oratio Sancti Hugbaldi abbatis

Marginalia: prayers, *Maiestatem tuam, Domine* and *Domine Ihesu Christe adoro te*

Charms C and D appear first in the manuscript at f. 16b, preceded by the *Canticum trium puerorum* and a prayer, *Domine fons misericordiam*. The text is decorated in the same way as all other texts in the manuscript; each verse begins with a larger letter, which is decorated in alternating green and yellow ink, and surrounded with red dots. In the case of the *Canticum*, the initial of each *benedicte* is enlarged and decorated. This text is related to the first five chapters of the Vulgate Daniel, in which the Song of the Three Children is related: three young men (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, also called Ananias, Azarias and Misael) are cast into a furnace by Nebuchadnezzar and sing a song praising God, resulting in their survival of the fire. The *Canticum* in Royal is formed of the song sung by these three youths, excerpted into one text: it is now more commonly referred to as the *Benedicte*, and, as in the Anglo-Saxon period, is used in the liturgy of Easter services and in the saying of psalms.¹⁵⁹ The *Canticum* is also related to the Old English *Daniel*, recorded in the Exeter Book (Exeter Cathedral Library, MS 3501), in which the song is rephrased and reordered, but retains the sense of the *Canticum* as it appears in the Vulgate.

The version of the *Canticum* in Royal, which records almost exactly the Vulgate version of the song, is a 'wholly atypical, English witness to a Vulgate-based canticle-text', 'an eclectic text' which is not representative of the *Canticum* text as it is found elsewhere.¹⁶⁰ Most of the other witnesses of the *Canticum* do not include all three sections as seen in the witness in Royal: *Benedictus es, Benedicte* and a concluding prayer.¹⁶¹ Of the three manuscripts which form the rest of the group of prayerbooks closely associated with Royal (*The Book of Cerne; The Book of Nunnaminster; and The*

¹⁵⁹ R. T. Farrell, 'Some Remarks on the Exeter Book *Azarias*', *Medium Ævum* 41 (1972), 1-8 (5-6). See also P. G. Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 358.

¹⁶⁰ See P. G. Remley, 'Daniel, The Three Youths Fragment and the Transmission of Old English Verse', *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (2002), 81-40 (97) and Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, p. 377, n. 79

¹⁶¹ Remley refers to these three sections as 'benediction', 'canticum' and 'oratio': Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, p. 376, n. 76).

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Harleian Prayerbook) one includes the *Canticum*, but in a much abridged and slightly altered form: only the *benedicte* section is included:

*Benedicte omnia opera d[omi]ni d[omi]n[u]m et
sic ad finem . ostende nobis d[omi]ne
misericordiam tuam et salutare tuum da nobis*

'All the works of the Lord God bless Him' to the end [i.e. recite the whole *Benedicte*]. Show us, Lord, your mercy and give us your salvation.

Cambridge, University Library, Ll. 1 10, f. 50v.,
Book of Cerne.

The *Canticum*, in some form or other, would be well known to the Anglo-Saxons, of whom many would have committed the whole text to memory.¹⁶² There are hundreds of witnesses to the *Canticum*, parts of which circulated as separate texts (for example, the *benedictus es* section).¹⁶³ Indeed, so well known was the text that, like the R-verse of Sedulius' *O Solis Ortus Cardine*, part of the text appears in a charm against elf-shot, functioning as 'magical' words:

... And awrit on þæs seaxes horne þas word:
Benedicte omnia opera domini dominum.
Sy þæt ylfa þe him sie, þis him mæg to bote.

And write these words on the horn of the knife:
Blessed be all the works of the Lord
Whatever elf has taken possession of it, this will cure him.¹⁶⁴

The focus in the *Canticum* on the power of God to save and to heal is not far removed from the mood of private devotion and desire for physical and spiritual healing seen in C and D. Indeed, the imagery of the three youths was common in liturgy and iconography related to the theme of deliverance, and is used in the process of supplication, and is therefore a suitable text to precede the blood charms.¹⁶⁵

That the *Canticum trium puerorum* is given the title of *canticum*, 'song' or 'hymn', engages directly with the *rivos* unit. The *Canticum trium puerorum* is intended to praise God and relate His miracles, part of an oral performance intended to glorify God and to tap into His power: in the same way, the *rivos* unit in D relates a healing miracle and allows the charmer to simultaneously praise God and channel His healing power into their own lives. Furthermore, just as the *rivos* unit is relevant to the precise needs of the performer, the *Canticum* also fits in to the focus on healing and miraculous events seen in the Gospel lections elsewhere in the manuscript.

¹⁶² Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, pp. 370-71.

¹⁶³ Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, p. 375 and p. 377, n. 79.

¹⁶⁴ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 248-49. This charm appears in Royal 12. D.xvii, on f. 106a.

¹⁶⁵ Farrell, 'Azarias', p. 2-3.

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It is not only the *rivos* unit that links C and D to the text which precedes it: the *per dominum nostrum* unit, which concludes both C and D is a conscious statement of the power of God to bring about healing, and a request for this power to be brought to bear on a particular situation. The use of this concluding unit firmly places the charm in to the same thematic context as the *Canticum*, being concerned with acknowledging and admiring the power of God, specifically in terms of the miracles He performs. Perhaps this practice of tagging a charm with an explicitly God-centred unit is in keeping with beliefs such as those extolled by Ælfric: non-Christian charms which prescribe words to be said while collecting herbs are to be avoided, but the blessing of herbs with the name of God is perfectly acceptable.¹⁶⁶

Although the mood of the later marginal additions to Royal do not necessarily or generally relate directly to the main text of the folio or the content of the manuscript as a whole, the prayer added immediately after the *Canticum* links closely with the theme of the charms and of Royal overall:

*D<omi>n<e> fons misericordiam in
quæ cuncta lauantur contagia de
Lectorum sucurite petimus ut anime famuli tui e
quæm
Adfusione præiosi sanguine reddemisti ut inana
confersattione
Salutum excelsibus sedens Clemens te pastor bone
largire*

Lord, fountain of mercies, in are washed away all the contagion of sins, hasten to aid, we pray you, also the soul of your servant, and grant, Good Shepherd, you sitting clement in the highest heavens, the salvation of paradise to the one you have redeemed from futile ways (vain conversation) by the shedding of your precious blood.¹⁶⁷

The theme of cleansing, protection and the shedding of (holy) blood clearly accords with both the charms and the theme of healing, protection and devotion seen throughout the main texts in the manuscript.

In the margin of folio 16b, in the upper left and lower central margins, is a collection of notes in Latin. They are written in a small script, and are consequently difficult to make out: in the case of the writing in the left hand margin, this difficulty is increased by the fact that the writing almost disappears off the left hand edge of the page. The first of these additions, though incomplete (part of a group of additions,

¹⁶⁶ See Karen Louise Jolly, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in the Context of a Christian World View, *Journal of Medieval History* 11 (1985), 279-93 (284-85).

¹⁶⁷ Joseph P. Crowley, 'Latin Prayers Added into the Margins of the Prayerbook British Library, Royal 2.A.XX at the Beginnings of the Monastic Reform In Worcester', *Sacris Erudiri: A Journal on the Inheritance of Early and Medieval Christianity* 45 (2006) 223-303 (273).

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which, according to the British Library catalogue entry for Royal, are in one tenth-century hand¹⁶⁸), is identifiable as a prayer invoking St. Andrew:

Maiestatem tuam, Domine, suppliciter exoramus: ut, sicut Ecclesiae tuae beatus Andreas Apostolus exstitit praedicator et rector, ita apud te sit pro nobis perpetuus intercessor. Per...

We humbly entreat Thy majesty, O Lord: that as the blessed Apostle Andrew was once a teacher and ruler of Thy Church: so he may be a constant advocate for us before Thee. Through...

The second addition invokes Christ on the Cross:

Domine Ihesu Christe adoro te in cruce ascendentem deprecor ut ipsa crux liberet me de angelo percuciente. Domine Ihesu Christe adoro te in cruce vulneratum deprecor te ut ipsa vulnera remedium sint anime mee. Domine Ihesu Christe adoro te in sepulchro positum deprecor te ut mors tua sit michi vita

Lord Jesus Christ I adore you ascending the Cross: I entreat you that the cross will liberate me from the striking angel.

Lord Jesus Christ I adore you wounded on the Cross: I entreat you that wound will be the remedy for my soul.

Lord Jesus Christ I adore you laid in the tomb: I entreat you that your death will be my life.

The first addition, a prayer to Saint Andrew, is a fairly standard plea for intercession, of the type common in many Anglo-Saxon prayers. In the charms in this manuscript we see Veronica invoked in a similar way. However, there are reasons other than Saint Andrew's status as a saint that might explain his appearance in this particular manuscript. The apocryphal histories of Saint Andrew suggest that he was involved in many miraculous healings: Gregory of Tours tells us that oil that flows from Andrew's tomb is used to heal the sick, and relics from his tomb protect a man from fire. Indeed, Andrew is described explicitly as a doctor:

... 'How long, most beloved [brothers], will you tire yourselves with pointless effort by requesting medicine from men, when there is here a celestial doctor who has often healed the diseases of ill people, not by administering [medicinal] herbs but by the application of his own power?' 'And who,' they asked, 'is this doctor?' The bishop replied, 'He is Andrew, an apostle of Christ.'¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ British Library Online Manuscripts Catalogue, <<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts/HITS0001.ASP?VPath=html/38061.htm&Search=Royal.%202%20A%20XX&Highlight=T>>

¹⁶⁹ See *Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Martyrs*, trans. Raymond van Dam (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), pp. 26-30. Beginning life as part of the apocryphal tradition, the *Actae Andreae* was first recorded in the fourth century by Eusebius, and was condemned as non-canonical by various Church figures. However, despite this attitude towards the apocrypha, Ælfric himself refers to the passions of apocryphal apostles. These apocryphal figures appear in orthodox liturgical texts (such as calendars: Andrew's feast day, according to Bede, is November 30th) and would be relatively familiar in Anglo-Saxon England. See Marie M. Walsh, 'St. Andrew in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evolution of an Apocryphal Hero', *Annuaire Mediaevale* 20 (1981), 97-122 for a discussion of the sources and use in

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Furthermore, in the Old English *Andreas*, Andrew himself is healed by Christ. This theme of miraculous healing sits well in the context not only of the charms, but of the manuscript as a whole. It must be noted, however, that as an addition to the main text, it is difficult to know whether the manuscript was still in its original ownership context of healing and health, thus preventing any definite assessment of the reason for the addition.¹⁷⁰ Joseph Crowley states that this prayer was widely used for mass on the feast of St. Andrew, and notes that this prayer does not have any sources in common with the second addition, nor would it be used in a similar liturgical context; they would probably have been added 'from separate sources at separate times'.¹⁷¹

The second addition is also related to Saint Andrew, consisting of part of his address to the Cross before his crucifixion. This prayer is used in the antiphons forming part of the service performed on Andrew's feast day,¹⁷² and also appears in the *Regularis Concordia* as part of the service of the Veneration of the Cross to be performed on Good Friday.¹⁷³ In a slightly different form, the prayer also appears in *The Book of Cerne*;¹⁷⁴ this is not surprising, as Royal and *The Book of Cerne* are closely related:

*Domine iesu christe adoro te in crucem
ascendentem et spiniam & coronam portantem in
capite deprecor ut ipsa crux liberet me de
angelo percutiente*

Lord Jesus Christ I adore you ascending the Cross
and bearing the spines and crown on your head: I
entreat you that the same Cross might liberate me
from the striking angel.

*Domine iesu christe adoro (te) in cruce
uulneratum felle et aceto potatum deprecor te d ut
tua uulnera remedium siut aniuiae meae*

Lord Jesus Christ I adore you wounded on the
Cross drinking gall and vinegar, I entreat you that
your wound will be the remedy for my soul.

liturgy of the Andrew legend: see also Scott DeGregorio, 'Pegenlic or flæsclīc: The Old English Prose Legends of Saint Andrew', *Journal of English and German Philology* 102:4 (2003), 449-64.

¹⁷⁰ Crowley suggests that the additions 'are mostly without connection to the main texts on the same page, and without much connection between different pages of additions'. Furthermore, the addition of doodles and drawings (such as the smiley-faced *O* in the margin of f. 14r, and the sketches of imaginary animals on ff. 15r and 40v) suggests that the owner of the manuscript in the period when the additions were carried out (in the tenth century) was possibly young and without much respect for the manuscript; s/he is using Royal as no more than a copybook (Crowley, 'Latin Prayers', 251). All of this evidence, combined with the error-ridden Latin of the additions, suggests a context very different from the original ownership and composition context of Royal, which produced a manuscript intensely focused on moments of personal devotion and educated scholarship.

¹⁷¹ Crowley, 'Latin Prayers', 275.

¹⁷² Walsh, 'St. Andrew', 104.

¹⁷³ See Patrick W. Conner, 'The Ruthwell Monument Runic Poem in a Tenth-Century Context', *The Review of English Studies* 59 (2008), 25-51 (45).

¹⁷⁴ See A. B. Kuypers (ed.), *The Prayer Book of Aedelwald the Bishop, Commonly Called the Book of Cerne* (Cambridge, 1902). For more on Cerne, see Michelle P. Brown, *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage, and Power in Ninth-Century England* (London: The British Library, 1996).

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Domine iesu christe adoro te in sepulchre positum Lord Jesus Christ I adore you laid in the tomb: I
depraecor te ut tua mors fiat mini uita entreat you that your death will be my life.

Following C and D is *Oratio Sancti Hugbaldi abbatis*. Hygebald composed this Latin prayer in the eighth century (or before), and it also appears in the ninth-century Book of Cerne (Cambridge, University Library, MS Ll. 1. 10) on fol. 67r-v.¹⁷⁵ As described by Birch, this is a 'long prayer of invocation and confession... [concluding] with a "deprecatio" or "desire for a blessing"'.¹⁷⁶ The prayer fits neatly into the context of the manuscript as a whole, as it invokes various saints. Little else is said about St. Hygebald in Anglo-Saxon sources, except for a very brief mention by Bede:

*Conuenit autem reuelationi et relationi praefati fratris de obitu huius antistitis etiam sermo reuerentissimi patris Ecgbercti, de quo supra diximus, qui dudum cum eodem Ceadda adulescente, et ipse adulescens in Hibernia monachicam in orationibus et continentia, et meditatione diuinarum scripturarum uitam sedulus agebat. Sed illo postmodum patriam reuerso, ipse peregrinus pro Domino usque ad finem uitae permansit. Cum ergo ueniret ad eum longo post tempore gratia uisitationis de Brittaina uir sanctissimus et continentissimus, uocabulo Hygbald, qui erat abbas in prouincia Lindissi, et ut sanctos decebat, de uita priorum patrum sermonem facerent, atque hanc aemulari gauderent, interuenit mentio reuerentissimi antistitis Ceadda, dixitque Ecgberct...*¹⁷⁷

This brother's account of the bishop's death also agrees with the story of a vision related by the most reverend father Egbert already mentioned, who had lived the monastic life with Chad, when they were both youths in Ireland, diligently engaged in prayer and fasting and meditating on the divine Scriptures. But while Chad returned to his native land, Egbert remained there until the end of his life, an exile for the Lord's sake. A long time afterwards, a very holy and abstemious man named Higeald, who was abbot in the province of Lindsey, came to visit him. As was fitting for holy men they were talking about the lives of the early fathers and saying how gladly they would imitate them, when mention was made of the reverend Bishop Chad: whereupon Egbert said...¹⁷⁸

There does not seem to be any particular reason why Hygebald's prayers were more suitable for Royal than any other prayer, but the invocation of many Biblical figures is congruent with the prayer to St. Andrew on f. 16b, and the uses of Veronica in the charms.

Charms E and G: Oratio sancti Augustini and the Carmen Sedulii

Folio 49a
Oratio sancti Augustini
Charms E and G
Carmen Sedulii de natale domini nostri Iesu Christi

¹⁷⁵ 'Hygebald 1', *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* <<http://www.pase.ac.uk>> [accessed 18/3/09].

¹⁷⁶ Birch, *A Manuscript*, p. 104.

¹⁷⁷ See *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), Book 4 Chapter 3, p. 344.

¹⁷⁸ See *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), Book 4 Chapter 3, p. 345.

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Charms E and G are to be found on f. 49a. They are preceded by a text entitled *Oratio sancti Augustini*, and are followed by the *Carmen Sedulii de natale domini nostri Iesu Christi*, beginning *A solis ortus cardine*. This is the hymn from which the *rivos* element is taken, retelling the life of Christ in alphabetical verses. As in the case of C and D, a link can be seen between E and G and *Carmen Sedulii* by virtue of their focus on the power of Christ. However, it is not only the contents of E and G that link the charms to their surrounding texts. Another link can be seen in the *type* of texts surrounding the charms. When used in ecclesiastical Latin, the word *oratio* generally refers to a prayer or address to the Deity. However, in other contexts *oratio* can also mean ‘a speech’ or ‘an utterance’. Any of these meanings indicate a spoken or somehow oral existence. Similarly, a *carmen* can mean ‘a tune, song; poem, verse; an oracular response, a prophecy; a form of incantation’.¹⁷⁹ In terms of the *Carmen Sedulii*, the most likely meaning is ‘song’: this meaning, and any of the other possible meanings, indicates that the text is intended to be vocalised in some way. That the texts immediately surrounding the charm require some kind of verbal performance suggests that the charms must also fit into this context. Thus, a link between the charms and the *oratio* and *carmen* is that they all engage with the sphere of performance, but, as suggested earlier, it might be more appropriate to imagine the scribe/compiler of Royal as not drawing a distinction between these two genres at all.¹⁸⁰

Charm B: The Seven Sleepers, St. Blasius, St. Cassianus and Cotton Vitellius

C.iii

Folio 52

Seven Sleepers I: *In Epheso civitate in monte Celion*

Seven Sleepers II: *Dominē Ihu [Iesu] xpe [Christe] qui sono dedītus*

Charm against sore throats: *Dominē ihu [Iesu] xpē [Christe] uere deus*

Charm against the pox: *Sanctus cassius minutam habuit*

Charm B: *In p̄ncipio erat verbūm*

Charm B is the final charm in the manuscript, on f. 52. Apart from B, there are several charms on this page, two mentioning the Seven Sleepers, one mentioning St. Blasius, and one beginning *S<an>c<tu>s cassius*. These charms are all in a twelfth-century hand.¹⁸¹ It is difficult to know where to separate the Seven Sleepers charms, as

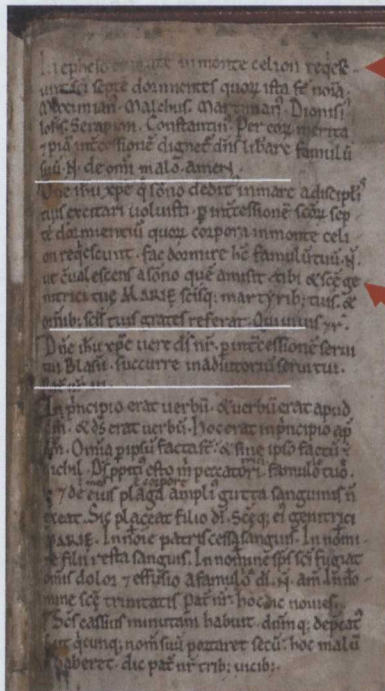
¹⁷⁹ Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

¹⁸⁰ See the earlier discussion of prayer/charm, the etymology of ‘charm’ and the introduction to the Royal manuscript in 1. Introduction to the Thesis and 3.1 Introduction to the Manuscripts.

¹⁸¹ *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile*, ed. P. Pulsiano, vol. 1.9 (Binghamton, N. Y.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), pp. 52-59.

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according to Wilfrid Bonser they make one long charm, intended to remedy sleeplessness. However, the repeated mention of *Monte Celion* (on lines 1 and 9 of the folio) and the concluding unit *Amen* (line 6) suggests that there are two separate Seven Sleepers-type charms:



*In Epheso civitate in monte Celion requie
sunt sancti septem dormientes,
quorum ista sunt nomina
Maximianus . Malchus.
Martinianus . Dionisus Ihos
[Iohannes]. Serapion .
Constantinaus . Per eor merita
7 piam intercessionem dignetur
dominu liberare famulum suum. N.
de omni malo. amen.*

*Domine Ihu [Iesu] xpe [Christe] qui sono
deditus in mare a discipulis tuis excitari
voluisti per intercessionem sanctorum
septem dormientum quorum corpora in
monte Celion requiescunt, fac domire hunc
famulum tuum . N. ut conualescens a sono
que amisit tibi 7 sancte genetrici tue MARIE
sanctisque : martyribus : tuis & omnibus
sanctis tuis grates referat. Qui vivis—*

Figure 8: Charms on f. 52b

Furthermore, the first charm appears to have a more general purpose against *omni malo*, whereas the second charm is directed more specifically to help the charmer *ut conualescens a sono que amisit*.

The legend of the Seven Sleepers was appears to have been well known in Anglo-Saxon England, appearing in no less than four Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, including the *Lacnunga*.¹⁸² Their purposes vary, including those which are intended to

¹⁸² See Wilfrid Bonser, 'The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in Anglo-Saxon and Later Recipes', *Folklore* 56 (1945), 254-56.

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bring sleep, those that prevent nightmares, and two to cure fever. In each of the charms, the central element is the writing or reciting of the names of the sleepers. In the charms recorded in Royal, two main elements are apparent. The first charm appears to be constructed of four units, although these units are not as clearly separated as in other charms. The first unit is a sympathetic narrative, outlining the legend of the Seven Sleepers, relating the place and state of the seven figures. Presumably, the sympathetic force behind invoking seven *sleepers* is intended to bring sleep to the charmer. The second part of the charm is a naming unit, in which the seven sleepers are invoked by name. Invoking Biblical or apocryphal figures by name is common in Anglo-Saxon charms (as can be seen in the ‘Veronica’ charms in the Royal manuscript). Thirdly, a request unit asks God to free the charmer from evil, through the virtues of the Seven Sleepers: request units are often used in charms, as they allow the charmer to directly access the healing power of God, and echo the mood and semantics of prayer. Here, the request is also combined with the opportunity to name the sufferer, which is less common, but by no means rare in charms. Finally, the charm ends with ‘Amen’, echoing the devotional mood of the other charms in Royal.

The second charm is similar in that it echoes the worshipful tone of prayer, and is difficult to divide into separate elements. Perhaps the most interesting part of the second charm is its unfinished nature: the phrase *qui vivis* ends with an extended horizontal line, suggesting that the user and/or scribe of the charm would be able to complete the rest of the phrase without the need to record it. In addition, both charms are recorded neatly and clearly, and it would therefore seem that these charms, though recorded much later than the rest of the charms in the manuscript, would have been in active use, perhaps as part of an oral performance. Indeed, the creating of a gap to name the sufferer implies that the charm would be so altered with each use, meaning that the charm would have to be performed orally in order to allow this change to be made. Of course, it is possible that the scribe recorded the charms as s/he knew them to be performed, without any intention to perform them again.

The charm invoking ‘Blasus’ relates to the fourth-century Saint Blaise:

*Domine ihu [Iesu] xpē [Christe] uere deus
noster intercessionem serui
tui Blasūs. succurre in adiutoriūm serui tui
pāter noster̄ iii.*

Lord Jesus Christ, true God, through the intercession of your servant Blasus, hasten to the aid of your servant. [Say the] *Pater Noster* three [times].

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St. Blaise was a physician renowned for miraculously curing a boy who was choking on a fish bone and later associated with cures for sore throats (indeed, Storms appends the title 'For a Sore Throat' to his edition of the charm¹⁸³). Whilst he was associated with these very specific illnesses, his life as a physician would make him an appropriate saint for charming, as he could be expected to use his healing powers on the sick.¹⁸⁴ This charm is similar in tone to the Seven Sleepers charms, in that it is couched in the language of prayer, and requests help from God via a saint. It is also similar in that it uses abbreviations, indicating the reciting of the *pater noster* three times with the brief phrase *pater noster iii*. In the same way as the first two charms, then, it appears that this charm was familiar enough to the scribe and/ or user that s/he was comfortable with using abbreviations.

The final charm on f. 52r also appeals to a saint for relief from illness. It would appear that 'Saint Cassius' is a variant of St. Nicasius, a figure regarded as being efficacious against small-pox thanks to his miraculous recovery from the disease.¹⁸⁵ Saint Cassius, Saint Nicasius and Saint Cassianus all appear in Anglo-Saxon medicine, invoked for the purpose of curing and protecting against smallpox:

Royal 2.A.xx, f. 52r

*Sanctus cassius minutam habuit. dum que :
depeat[ut] quicumque : nomine suum portaret
setum : hoc malum habaret. dic pater noster
tribus : uicibus :*

Royal 2.A.xx, f. 52r.

Saint Cassius has the smallpox. When he prayed that whoever bears this name himself has this evil. Say Our Father three times.

London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.xv, f. 125.

For poccas. Sanctus Nicasius habuit minutam et rogavit Dominum et quicumque nomen suum portaret scriptum... Sancte Nicasi persul et martyr egregie ora pro me N. Peccatore et ab hoc morbo tua intercessione me defende.

For Pox. Saint Nicasius had the smallpox and he asked the Lord and whomsoever bears his name written... Saint Nicasius, bishop and distinguished martyr, pray for me N a sinner, and by thy intercession defend me from this disease.¹⁸⁶

London, British Library, Harley 585, f. 191v.

...Sancte Rehoc et Sancte Ehwalde et Sancte Cassiane et Sancte Germane et Sancte Sigismundi

London, British Library, Harley 585, f. 191v.

... Saint Rioc [Riaghail/ Regulus] and St. Ehwald and St. Cassianus and Saint Germanus and Saint Sigmundus shield be from loathsome pocks and

¹⁸³ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 317.

¹⁸⁴ See Guillem Til-Perez, Manuel Tomas-Barberan, Carlos Magri-Ruiz, 'Saint Blaise, Patron Saint of Otorhinolaryngology', *Journal of Laryngology and Otology* 115 (2001), 267-69 <
http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FJLO%2FJLO115_04%2FS0022215101000743a.pdf&code=c528c4dbaf87a28eead73b8e039e5e6c, accessed 18/3/09.

¹⁸⁵ Donald R. Hopkins, *The Greatest Killer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 100-2.

¹⁸⁶ O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms III*, p. 295. Translation from Joseph Payne, *English Medicine in the Anglo-Saxon Times* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), p. 130, and corrected by Adlai Lang.

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regis gescylað me wið ða laþan poccas and wið ealle yfelu. Amen. from all evil. Amen.¹⁸⁷

According to Pettit, this Saint Cassian invoked in the *Lacnunga* charm could be a reference to three possible figures: Saint Cassian, c. 360-430, associated with Saint Germanus, one of the founders of Western monasticism; St. Cassianus, named in Anglo-Saxon litanies; or the Saint Cassian mentioned in the Old English Martyrology.¹⁸⁸ It is clearly of the same type as the other charms on Royal f. 52r, using sympathetic narratives, invocations to saints and requests for intercession for protection from and curing of various ailments, framed by the language of prayer. It also seems that the Blasus and Nicasius charms are related in some other way, as they appear together on f. 125 of Cotton Caligula A.xv, though in slightly different forms.¹⁸⁹

Whilst being unrelated to the Seven Sleepers charms, the blood-staunching charm or the Blasus charm in terms of content, the Cassius charm clearly completes a collection of useful charms. All of the charms in Royal which invoke either the *rivos* unit, *Veronica*, or any other Biblical or apocryphal figures do so because of the relevance of the saint to the situation. The charmer hopes that the condition of the patient will mirror that of the figure invoked, moving from bleeding, sleeplessness or small-pox to the state of being free of their illness. The mere act of mentioning the name of the saintly sufferer is enough to create a connection between the saint and the patient, allowing the patient to access the saint's power (or, if they were healed through an action of Christ, Christ's power: ultimately, of course, a saint's power is really God's power). As Olsan says, 'the act of naming or calling carries with it a constellation of associations', so that all one need do is invoke the saint to access either their power, their intercessory assistance, or the healing power of God reflected in the life of the saint.¹⁹⁰ By using only her name, the charmer is keying into a 'matrix' of 'associations', alluding to the Biblical, apocryphal and charming uses of *Veronica's* name and story. In this way, a single word can come to represent a host of meanings, all of which allow the

¹⁸⁷ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 315-16.

¹⁸⁸ See Edward Pettit *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms and Prayers from British Library MS Harley 585: The Lacnunga*, vol. II (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), p. 364.

¹⁸⁹ In Caligula, the Blasus charm appears thus:

Domine ihu xpe deus noster per orationem serui tui blasu festina in adiutorium meum.

Lord Jesus Christ, our God, through the prayer of your servant Blasus hurry to my aid.

From Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, p. 295. My translation.

¹⁹⁰ Lea Olsan, 'Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in a Christian Oral Tradition', *Oral Tradition* 7 (1992), 116-42 (130-31).

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charmer to access the healing power of God as exemplified by Veronica, with only one word.¹⁹¹

The grouping of these charms seems to adhere to a logical set of organisational principles also exhibited by the main scribe. The charms in Royal that are collected by the main scribe are for similar complaints, and share some of the same motifs. Those collected on the flyleaf vary more widely in their precise purpose and wording, but are alike in terms of their general purpose and style. They are grouped together, as are the charms in the main text of Royal, and echo the main text charms thematically (through the appeals to saints and Biblical figures), and make use of Biblical material (the Gospel of John, for example). Thus, we can see that as the charms in the main text are related by purpose and content, so are the flyleaf charms: furthermore, the two stints of recording are linked by shared themes and general purposes, and it seems quite probable that the f. 52r scribe knew of the charms in the main text: his/her recording of the flyleaf charms might have been prompted by those in the main text.

It is not clear how the flyleaf charms in Royal are linked, other than by their general healing purpose and use of the language of prayer. However, other scribes clearly perceived a link, as other witnesses of charm B and the first Seven Sleepers charm from f. 52r can be found grouped together in London, British Library Cotton Vitellius C.iii, offering another context for these charms. This manuscript is dated to the middle of the first half of the eleventh century and is an exclusively medical manuscript (containing the Old English translations of the *Herbarium of Apuleius* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*). Vitellius C.iii demonstrates that these charms were known from 1025 (the earliest date for Vitellius) until the end of the twelfth century (the date of the hand on f. 52r of Royal), in the context of practical medicine, rather than that of the more explicitly spiritual healing seen in Royal.

The blood charm and Seven Sleepers charm can be found together on f. 83v, in an Anglo-Caroline hand. Preceding the charms, on f. 82r, is a collection of remedies: the page is divided into two columns, with two remedies for eye pain on the left hand side, continued from the previous folio, and a remedy for *lungen adle*, presumably some sort of lung disease. A different hand continues at the top of the right hand column with a remedy for *fot adle*. Yet another hand completes the column, the same hand as writes f. 83v. The final four texts on f. 82r are for *ad corruptionem corporis*, *ad vocan ualidificantam*, *ad fluxum sanguinis*, and *ad recipendam menstruam*. The two final

¹⁹¹ Lea Olsan, 'Latin Charms', 116-42 (132-33).

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texts (*ad fluxum sanguinis* and *ad recipiendam menstruam*), although related to the *In principio* charm recorded on f. 83v by their purpose, do not share any similarity of content.¹⁹²

The overall sense of the two charms is the same: the Seven Sleepers charm is extended by around 16 lines, and then finishes with a more specific purpose than that of the Royal charm (against *febres*, *ardores* and *frigores*):¹⁹³

Royal

In Epheso civitate in monte Celion requiesunt sancti septem dormientes, quorum ista sunt nominā dormientes

Maximianus . Malchus . Martinianus . Dionisus Ihos [Iohannes] . Serapion . Constantin^{us} .

Per eorum merita 7 piām intercessionēm digneſur dominuſ liberare famuluſ ſuūm . N . de omni malo . amen .

Dominē Ihu [Iesu] xpe [Christe] qui ſono dediſus in mare a diſcipuliſ tuiſ excitari voluiſti per intercessionēm ſanctorū ſep tēm dormientūm quorūm corpora in monte Celion requieſcunt, fac domire hunc famuluſ tuūm . N . ut comualeſcens a ſono que amiſit tibi 7 ſanctē

Vitellius

In nomine patris. & filii & spiritus sancti.

In monte Epheso civitata te celio ibi requieſcunt .vii.

Malchus . Martinianūſ . maximianūſ . dionisiuſ s . Iohs . Seraphion . 7 Constantinūſ .

Requieſcit ſuper illoſ deūſ . 7 hunc requieſcit ſuper illoſ deūſ ac requieſcere digneſur ſuper famuliſ imiſtiūm . N ac liberare digneſur de febris cunctiſ . ſiue cotidianiſ . ſiue biduanis . ſiue tiduanis . ſiue quartaniſ . ſiue nortiniſ . Ante porta galalee iacebat Petre , uenit dominuſ [inavgauit] eūm . Quid hic iaceſ petre . reſpondit Domine . plenuſ ſūo febris . Dominuſ duie tui gebat . Petruſque : ſan fiebat . 7 dix petra . domine que iſta uerba poterit tenere aut ſuper ſe habuerit ſcripta . nōn debet febreſ haberet . 7 dix dominuſ . fiat petre ſic petiſti . amēn amēn amēn Angeliſ domine ueniat liberanſ famuluſ hunc . N . ut nōn habeat febreſ . nec ardoreſ . nec frigoreſ . ſed ſaniuſ fiat te uibente domino noſtro iheſu criſto quicuſum patre . 7 . ſpirituſ ſanctō . uiuiſ . 7 regnat deūſ per oſ ſ .

¹⁹² These texts (for eye pain, lung disease, *foſ adle*, *ad corruptionem corporiſ*, *ad uocan ualidificantam*, *ad fluxum ſanguiniſ*, and *ad recipiendam menstruam*) are edited by Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, vol. I, p. 374-77.

¹⁹³ Transcriptions my own.

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*gentrici tue MARIE sanctisque : martyribus : tuis
& omnibus sanctis tuis grates referat. Qui vivis.*

As the above quotations show, the texts differ slightly, but are similar enough to be recognised as witnesses to the same tradition: both relate the narrative of the Seven Sleepers, and both contain a lengthy passage which allows the performer to insert their own name into the unit. The blood staunching charms, however, diverge much more: the Vitellius charm makes use of the units in the Royal charm (*In principio, Deus propitius, sanguinis amplius and sic placeat*), leaving out only the final unit (*in nomine*):

Royal

Vitellius

*Carmen cant^a sanguinis fluxum
sive de naribus sive de plaga vel
de omnibus locis.*

*In principio erat verbum. & verbum erat apud deum
& deus erat verbum. Hoc erat in
principio apud deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt: &
sine ipso factum ~ [est] nichil.*

*In principio erat verbum .ix.
uicibus.*

*Deus p[ro]p[ri]i [propitius] esto m[er]i peccatori (^{trici})
famulo (^{la}) tuo (^e)*

*Deus p[ro]p[ri]i [propitius] esto huic
peccatori famulo tuo. N.*

*vel peccatri famule tue. N. 7 de
suis vel de quicunque*

*N. 7 de eius plaga (^{corpore}) amplius gutta sanguinis
non exeat.*

*corporis membra. sive de plaga
gutta sanguinis amplius non
exeat.*

*Sic placeat filio dei sancteque: eius gentrici
MARIE.*

*Sic placeat filio dei sancteque:
gentrici marie*

*+ in nomine patris cessa sanguis. in nomi
ne filii resta sanguis. + in nomine spiritus sancti
fugiat
omnis dolor 7 effusio a famulo (^{la}) deus. N. Amen.
In no⁺.
mine sancte trinitatis, pater noster.
Hoc dic novies.*

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The most interesting difference is the initial unit of the Vitellius charm, which is not included in the Royal witness. The Vitellius charm specifies a purpose (for curing bleeding *de naribus*—from the nose—or *de omnibus locis*—from every place), whereas the Royal charm launches straight into *In principio*, and the Vitellius charm also adds that the text can be used by men or women (shown in the two grammatical genders provided in the *Deus propitius* unit). If either men or women could use this charm, this suggests that the charm was truly appropriate for bleeding *de omnibus locis*, rather than for the more specific purpose of the Royal charms.¹⁹⁴ This deliberate attitude towards gender is not characteristic of Anglo-Saxon charms as a whole, which tend to ignore gender,¹⁹⁵ suggesting that the Vitellius scribe/user was perhaps aware that it was possible for this charm to be used for the specific purpose of stopping excessive menstrual bleeding. The scribe/user of the blood-staunching charm in Royal—recorded much later than the main text and on a flyleaf—could also have been aware of this, and therefore included this charm as an addition to the *rivos*-type charms recorded in the main text. The gender of the user of the charm, therefore, is implicit and not required to be made explicit. Also possible, of course, is that the flyleaf-scribe was not aware of the original ownership/user context of Royal and was either unaware of the nature of the specific complaint concerned, or ascribed to the more general attitude of gender being unimportant in charming.¹⁹⁶

Thus, the Seven Sleepers and *in principio* charms that occur in both Royal and Vitellius are interesting in that in both instances they are recorded together, but in differing manuscript contexts: the Vitellius manuscript context is that of medicinal, herbal healing, whereas in Royal the contents are concerned with spiritual wellbeing as well as physical ailments. It is difficult to identify a textual relationship between the two sets of charms: the differences between them are large-scale (involving the adding and dropping of whole units), and the sections of text which are similar do not have features which are strongly indicative of textual transmission (evidence of eye-skip, for example); it is not possible to suggest that the Vitellius scribe copied directly from

¹⁹⁴ Against excessive menstrual bleeding, as suggested by the invocation of Veronica and the manuscript context, discussed at length in 4.iii. Cælius Sedulius and Saint Veronica and 4.iv. Agenda and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

¹⁹⁵ As argued in 4.iv. Agenda and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

¹⁹⁶ For a discussion of the ownership and scribe/compiler of Royal, see Michelle P. Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Lexis and Texts in Early England: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. C. J. Kay and L. M. Sylvester, Costerus n.s. 133 (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2001), pp. 45-67 and P. Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', in *Religion and Literature*, p. 274. Also, see 4.iii.c Ownership and Context for an assessment of Brown and Sims-Williams' work.

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Royal. It is possible that there is an intermediary text, bridging the gap between the two manuscripts, which is now lost. On the basis of the evidence we have, it is only possible to say that the two scribes certainly knew similar groups of charms that travelled together, and that s/he altered these charms to fit in with his/her particular needs (thereby creating two different groups of surface texts from one deep text, according to their circumstances). This is not unlikely, as it also appears that the theft charms in CCCC 383 and the *TR* travelled together with two legal texts.¹⁹⁷

The Theft Charms: Interaction Between the Laity and the Clergy

The theft charms represent a wider variation of surrounding texts, due to the appearance of the witnesses in several different manuscripts. The charm S 11a appears on f. 106 of London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii, a manuscript dated to 1050, originating from Christ Church Canterbury. Peter Dendle describes Tiberius as a ‘scattered collection’, so varied that it is difficult draw any conclusions about what the inclusion of the theft charm means to the rest of the text.¹⁹⁸ However, it is fair to say that the liturgical and devotional context of many of the items provides a broad sense of coherence which links together all the individual entries. Alongside various prayers and homilies, Tiberius also includes a wide variety of items, such as prognostics, a lapidary, notes on the dimensions of Noah’s Ark and the names of the thieves hanged with Christ. The charm appears among ethical guidelines for monastics: it is preceded by a rule entitled ‘one must end life well’, and followed by Ælfric’s letter on how to administer holy oil to the sick. The texts that surround the charm might contain clues as to how S 11a was read by its Anglo-Saxon audience.

In previous years, it has been assumed that charms, with their ‘magical’ framework of powerful words and arcane references, must lie outside of the Christian sphere and therefore be treated with suspicion by the clergy. While it is true that ‘witchcraft’ is commented on in a negative way in some writings from the Anglo-Saxon period, charms do not necessarily receive the same treatment.¹⁹⁹ After all, the idea of

¹⁹⁷ Dendle, ‘Textual Transmission’, p. 538, n. 55.

¹⁹⁸ Peter Dendle, ‘Textual Transmission’, 533.

¹⁹⁹ For more on the relationship between charms, prayers and the Church, see Jolly, *Popular Religion*, pp. 96-132. For the response to ‘witchcraft’ in the Anglo-Saxon period, see Meaney ‘The Practice of Medicine in England about the Year 1000’, *Social History of Medicine* 13 (2000), 221-37 and ‘Women, Witchcraft and Magic in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Superstition and Popular Medicine in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. D. Scragg (Manchester: Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 1989), pp. 9-41, in which Meaney discusses laws regarding healing practices.

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words having the power to bring about change is not so dissimilar from the process of praying: and indeed, in S 11a the charmer is appealing directly to God for help. Were it the case that the Anglo-Saxon church completely forbade the use of charms, it would be unlikely that they would be accorded space in their manuscripts: indeed, as S 11a follows ethical rules for monastics in Tiberius A.iii, it seems logical to assume that the charm was accepted by the Church community. Of course, one must take into account the fact that the users of the charms, whether from the laity or clergy, would each have their own opinions. A charm which was accepted by one member of the clergy might be deemed inappropriate by another: that the theft charms have developed over time is testament to the fact that people have shaped the charms to agree with their own sensibilities.

The text that follows the charm, Ælfric's letter on how to administer holy oil to the sick, is perhaps even more telling. The relationship between the clergy and the laity is not only restricted to performing and attending Church services: members of the Church ministered pastoral care to the laity, going out into the community and dealing with sick people. Whilst religious writings might do much to heal spiritual sickness, the Bible does not provide much in the way of a cure for toothache or finding lost cows for example. Thus, it is possible that the members of the priesthood accepted and adapted charms for their pastoral responsibilities, re-shaping the charms if they saw fit.

Indeed, the charms, by their very structure, might have required a member of the clergy to perform them. The charms that appeal directly to God, such as S 11a, might have required a clergyman to perform them as they were ideally placed to engage with God. That the charms might have required interaction between lay and ecclesiastical communities is significant, because this fact breaks down the image of the charms as relics of lay folklore, frowned on by the Church as a whole. If we accept that the Church engaged with the laity in order to provide them with assistance, both spiritual and practical, it makes sense that the charms operate on both a spiritual and practical level. For example, the performance instruction of the Type One charms, with the dripping of the wax, seems to be based more on sympathetic principles than on religious concepts. However, it is then combined, in S 11a, with a focus on the power of God to punish crimes, and also with a religious, Latin unit.

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Accepting that lay and ecclesiastical practices could be integrated, along with the communities, breaks down the idea of the monolithic Church as either accepting or rejecting the folkloric practices of the lay people. It is possible that a lay person could learn the sections of Latin required by the charms by heart, and perform them without the assistance of the clergy: it is also possible that the clergy could construct charms in an ecclesiastical vacuum away from the realities of lay beliefs and practices. However, it is more sensible to perceive the charms as evidence of lay and clerical interaction, and avoid the temptation to search for either 'clerical' or 'lay' sections of the charms, and try to consider them as artefacts composed of congruent pieces that need not be picked apart.

The charms in CCC 41 seem to support this theory of clerical and lay interaction: S15, 13 and 12. According to Gneuss, this manuscript dates from around 1025 and originates from somewhere in the south of England. The main part of this manuscript consists of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, but also includes mass sets, office chants, an Old English martyrology and the poetic *Solomon and Saturn*. The additions to the manuscript, of which there are many, include other charms. The Old English charms added to the manuscript range from the theft charms, to a charm to settle a swarm of bees, to a remedy for painful eyes. The addition of a charm for a woman in childbirth is particularly interesting as it would obviously not have been necessary for a monastic community itself, and so seems to support the theory the clergy would record and use charms on the behalf of the laity.²⁰⁰ Peter Dendle summarises the relationship between clerical and lay uses of charms by saying that '...popular devotional responses are not so different from more theologically mainstream expressions such as prayer or liturgical worship', neatly avoiding the use of unhelpful, reductive terminology (such as recourse to what is 'orthodox' or 'accepted' in the Anglo-Saxon period).²⁰¹

Finally, Harley 585 is the only manuscript in this collection in which the charm is recorded in a manuscript exclusively for medical and charm texts. Immediately preceding the theft charm is a recipe for insomnia, requiring the use of plant materials. Following the theft charm is a text which reads more like a prayer, appealing to God to heal pain in the eyes (interestingly, the additions in CCC 41 also include a charm and

²⁰⁰ Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms"', 152-55, 153.

²⁰¹ Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', 516.

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a recipe for painful eyes, on f. 326 and 208 respectively).²⁰² Just these three texts—a recipe, a charm and a prayer—demonstrate that the scribe had a keen interest in many different kinds of remedies. Presumably copied by a person who was interested in the charms and used them frequently, the manuscript represents one of the largest collections of Anglo-Saxon charms. That the theft charm is found among these goes some way towards confirming that the charm was well-used, and perceived to be as useful as charms for common physical afflictions. The practical nature of the texts surrounding the theft charm is unlike the other manuscripts, suggesting that charms are of a fluid nature: it is possible to adapt them for different purposes and thus they are recorded in a variety of different manuscripts.

Conclusion

The importance of the manuscript context of a charm should not be underestimated: firstly, the texts that surround the charms reveal how the scribe ordered his/her manuscript, and the organisational principle to which they were adhering. It is clear that, in the case of the Royal texts in particular, performance is a vital aspect of the texts. Many of them specify some sort of performance through the nature of the text (a *canticum* or an *oratio* for example), and thus echo the performative nature of the blood-staunching charms.²⁰³ The scribe also appears to be selecting texts due to their thematic similarities: the charms find their place among the other prayers and Biblical texts in Royal as part of a scheme of texts that focus on the might of God and the healing power of faith. Secondly, the surrounding texts reveal more about the processes that are included in the charms: it is clear that Veronica is invoked only by a brief mention in order to summon her own healing abilities (thanks to her status as saint) and also to call upon the power of Christ through his healing of Veronica's bleeding. This technique of invoking a multitude of meanings through one name is echoed in the texts surrounding the charms, and demonstrates that the users and scribes of this manuscript regarded this technique as valid and effective. Finally, a study of the manuscript context reveals that binary oppositions often imposed on Anglo-Saxon society by a modern audience (such as lay vs. clergy) are in fact inaccurate. This allows the modern scholar to move beyond boundaries imposed by stereotypical models, and attempt to encounter the text in its

²⁰² Grant, Raymond J. S., *Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41: The Loricis and the Missal*, Costerus: Essays in English and American Language and Literature, n.s., vol. 17 (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1979), p. 3.

²⁰³ Discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.i. Orality.

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original context, much as the Anglo-Saxon audience would have done.²⁰⁴ The outcome of this encounter—of a text embedded in its textual, social and cultural context—would be to enable the removal of modern understandings of charming, and to replace as much as is possible of the matrix of allusions and connections surrounding the Anglo-Saxon charmer.

²⁰⁴The discussion of stereotypical theoretical perspectives is continued in 4.iv Agenda and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Charms.

4.i. Orality: The Orality of the Charms

4. Agency and Performance

4.i. Orality: The Orality of the Charms

a. Introduction

In *i. Orality and Literacy: Some Definitions* this chapter will examine the ways in which the charms relate to oral and literate culture, and consider how far the charms can be regarded as records of active practices, alive in Anglo-Saxon England at the time of the charms' recording. There has been an astonishing amount of work done on oral and literate culture, undergoing a major shift since its inception, heralded by the seminal work of Parry and Lord in which the Oral-Formulaic Theory was created. Within this study, I refer to the blocks of texts within the charms as 'units' rather than 'formulas' due to the potentially misleading connotations of 'formula'.²⁰⁵ Another reason thus far unmentioned is that the Oral-Formulaic theory of Parry and Lord is not as sensitive to the complex relationship between oral and written culture in Anglo-Saxon England as it could be, imagining texts containing formulas to have closer relationship to oral culture through the nature of their composition. Therefore, it is important to review developments in the field of Anglo-Saxon orality, in order to define where this study situates itself in relation to previous and current scholarship. This chapter will consider the appropriateness of the oral/written binary, and the way in which previous scholars have tackled the relationship between speaking, listening, reading and writing in Anglo-Saxon England.

One such scholar is Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, who coined the phrase 'transitional literacy' to refer to the fluid and permeable boundaries that separate 'oral' from 'written' in Anglo-Saxon England, without relying on invoking binary opposites.²⁰⁶ The term 'transitional literacy' embodies the spirit of the most recent scholarship, in that it takes into account the intermingling of oral and literate traits in texts, and recognises that these traits are interrelated rather than mutually exclusive. O'Brien O'Keefe's term is produced by a reaction to the problematic binary set up by

²⁰⁵ See discussion of the Parry-Lord formula on p. 36, 2.1 Defining a Unit.

²⁰⁶ Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), ix-x. O'Keefe gives an interesting, concise and useful definition of the terms 'orality' and 'literacy', describing the interaction between reading, writing and speaking in the Anglo-Saxon period by contrasting the 'oral-formulaic' style of Old English poetry with its actual uses and origins, and examining the concept of 'fixing' texts by writing: see pp. 1-22.

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the Oral-Formulaic Theory between written and oral culture, relying as it does on written and oral being mutually exclusive. Indeed, even as early as the 1960s objections were being formed to the concept of all Anglo-Saxon poetry being constructed of set formulaic phrases as an aid to memory. An example is Marcia Bullard's article, 'Some Objections to the Formulaic Theory of the Composition of Anglo-Saxon Verse'.²⁰⁷ Her objections centre around the lack of a published list of formulas (which she suggests indicates a flaw in the theory of formulaic composition itself), and, more convincingly, that the definition of 'formula' used by Parry-Lord does not account for the dual meanings of the word (as a crystallisation of an idea, and a block fulfilling a metrical requirement). If, she argues, repeated phrases that fulfil metrical requirements are formulas, there exists a great number of 'formulas' which are really just common words that often appear together, such as 'over the earth'.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, she argues that the theory does not allow for poetry to be composed by any other method.²⁰⁹ Bullard concludes by saying that the Oral-Formulaic theory can account for the repetition of lines and phrases, but not other recurring items such as 'topics' and 'ideas', which are not subject to the same rules as oral-formulaic constructions.

This suspicion of a simple relationship between poetry and oral culture has been continued in later works, such as G. I. Berlin's 'Memorisation in Anglo-Saxon England: Some Case Studies'.²¹⁰ Berlin demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between a text and its written and oral witnesses by examining the use of vocalisation to memorise written and oral texts. For Berlin, Anglo-Saxon texts (not only poems, but also well-known prayers like the *Pater noster*) are products of and participants in both oral and literate culture, and cannot be regarded as allied with only one or the other.

The place that the charms occupy in the scholarly response to the Oral-Formulaic Theory can be exemplified by the work of critics such as Lori Ann Garner, who demonstrates that charms are the products of a culture entrenched in both oral and literate transmission and composition.²¹¹ Charms use units, these formula-like constructions, because they are easily remembered and become associated with

²⁰⁷ Marcia Bullard, 'Some Objections to the Formulaic Theory of the Composition of Anglo-Saxon Verse', *The Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association* 21 (1967), 11-16.

²⁰⁸ Marcia Bullard, 'Some Objections to the Formulaic Theory of the Composition of Anglo-Saxon Verse', *The Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association* 21 (1967), 11-16.

²⁰⁹ Bullard, 'Some Objections', 13.

²¹⁰ G. I. Berlin, 'Memorisation in Anglo-Saxon England: Some Case Studies', in *Oral Tradition in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 112 (Binghamton: New York, 1995), pp. 97-113.

²¹¹ L. A. Garner 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in Performance', *Oral Tradition* 19 (2004), 20-42.

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particular functions (for example, in the case of the recurrence of John 1:1 being used an apotropaic defence against harm), but not necessarily because of the oral nature of their composition.

Thus, the works of Bullard, Berlin and Garner illustrate three different positions taken by scholars in response to the Parry-Lord Oral-Formulaic theory. Firstly, as Bullard argues, texts might be composed orally, but not necessarily by the method described by Parry-Lord; secondly, Berlin demonstrates that texts can be recorded and composed in writing but related to oral culture by the process of vocalisation for memorising; and thirdly, a society which invests importance in both oral and written texts will require texts to retain an air of formulaic oral composition and performance, even though, as Garner shows, their composition and recording might be entirely literate.

It is certainly the case that charms recorded in writing—like the ones discussed in this study—engage with oral culture. The transmission process of a charm can be connected with oral culture: the manuscript witness may have been recorded directly from experience of a live performance, or may be intended to make further performances possible. A charm might use markers of oral culture—such as markers of speech, like exclamatory statements or imperatives directed to the disease—in order to function more smoothly as a script providing the words to be spoken by the performer. Markers of speech which frame the charm as part of retelling of a narrative intended to echo the process of infection and healing—such ‘I stood’, seen in the *Wið færstice* charm, discussed below—also allow the charm to reach into the storytelling aspect of oral culture, giving the charm a sense of authority through its connection with the traditions of the past. The performance of a charm is directly connected to oral culture, containing instructions which indicate a practical relationship with oral culture, specifying whether the text should be said or sung. In other examples, the charm might not provide explicit instructions for an oral performance, but the processes of the charm might imply that a public oral performance is necessary in order for the charm to work (for example, charms to be used in a legal context would be more efficacious if performed to the community as a whole: this will be discussed at length below).

After outlining the key terminology to be used in the discussion and summarising the major theories in the study of orality, I will carry out an exploration of the relationship of the written witnesses of charms to oral performance, and will investigate the evidence for the oral/written transmission of the charms encoded in the

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texts, always keeping in mind the deconstruction of the binary opposition between literate and oral.

The Orality of Charms: 'Orality' and 'Literacy': Some Definitions

Cultures which have no contact with writing create texts by committing basic narrative frameworks to memory, and then creating a new version of each text in each performance. These non-chirographic cultures represent primary orality, in that they rely entirely on oral processes for the composition and transmission of texts.²¹² Cultures displaying primary orality accord each version of a text the same importance, regarding it as complete and authoritative. In contrast, chirographic societies—like modern England, for example—regard the written text as the only authoritative version of a text.²¹³ For instance, the modern reader would regard a retelling of *Jane Eyre* which renamed characters and rearranged the storyline as un-official in comparison to the 'original', written text; in contrast, a culture relying on oral means of composition and transmission would regard this retelling as valid as any other, due to the impact of oral composition and transmission upon the final text.²¹⁴ As we shall see as we progress through this chapter, Anglo-Saxon society is best described as displaying secondary orality, combining oral and literate processes in the production and transmission of texts.

However, the term 'secondary orality' for Anglo-Saxon England seems to be inappropriate when one refers to the Parry-Lord Oral-Formulaic Theory. This theory states that a high frequency of repeated set phrases (or formulas) is the defining characteristic of the method of composition used by these cultures which rely on orality. The text is built from various units or 'group[s] of words which [are] regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea'.²¹⁵ A more helpful definition of 'formula' has been offered by Anita Reidinger, who suggests 'a given idea in a given metrical form that helped the poet make the poem'.²¹⁶ Thus,

²¹² 'Primary orality' is R. Graeme Dunphy's phrase: see R. Graeme Dunphy, 'Oral Traditions', in *Early Germanic Literature and Culture*, ed. B. Murdoch and M. Read (Rochester, NY: Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), pp. 103-121. Further helpful definitions and summaries of the important issues surrounding orality are provided by Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, in her articles 'Oral-Formulaic Research in Old English Studies I', *Oral Tradition* 1 (1986), 543-606 and 'Oral-Formulaic Research in Old English Studies II', *Oral Tradition* 3 (1988), 138-90.

²¹³ See Gail Ivy Berlin, 'Memorisation in Anglo-Saxon England: Some Case Studies', in *Oral Tradition in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 112 (Binghamton, NY: 1995).

²¹⁴ This does not mean that a chirographic culture cannot place importance on oral texts such as song, speeches and interviews.

²¹⁵ Anita Reidinger, 'The Old English Unit in Context', *Speculum* 60 (1985), 294-317 (295).

²¹⁶ Reidinger, 'Units in Context', 305.

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Parry-Lord's Oral-Formulaic Theory understands Anglo-Saxon England as a culture in which performers use a bank of memorised set phrases and set pieces to allow them to compose on the spot. Parry-Lord would seem to be suggesting that Anglo-Saxon poets engage with primary orality, relying only on units held in collective oral memory from which to compose poetry: this would seem to ignore the fact that the very witnesses extant from the Anglo-Saxon period are written, and so by necessity engage with literate culture. Indeed, it could be suggested that Old English poems such as *Beowulf*, used by Parry-Lord as an example of a formulaic text, might in fact be purposefully imitating traits of oral culture in a text created and transmitted in a written form. By positioning the reader as a listener and evoking the formulaic composition style, the author of *Beowulf* links the text to the traditions of the past, but uses a range of formulas that would be prohibited by oral composition and delivery. This connection between oral performance and written composition and transmission is characteristic not of primary orality but of secondary orality: throughout this chapter, we will see that Anglo-Saxon texts consistently display traits typical of secondary orality, being rooted in both oral and literate culture.

The ultimate conclusion to be drawn from a study of Parry-Lord's theories and terminology is that work done on verbal performances and poetry does not necessarily provide a viable framework for consideration of the charms. Furthermore, since the Parry-Lord theory of Oral-Formulaic composition was created, further studies have been undertaken which rebut both the usefulness and the reliability of this framework. Indeed, Mark C. Amodio argues convincingly that Old English texts that use formulas are not necessarily restricted to oral performance, suggesting that some features of written Old English poetry were almost certainly once part of an oral culture, and were not necessarily incongruent with composing and preserving texts in writing.²¹⁷ He considers the evidence for literate composers of texts, who create and record texts by writing them down, whilst still participating in oral tradition by recalling or echoing oral performances. The repetition of formulas does not have to have a mnemonic or compositional function: formulas can be used by the composer in order to adhere to a particular style, or to convince his/her audience of the accessible (i.e. not in a language they cannot read or understand), oral nature of his/her text. Applying this theory to the

²¹⁷ Mark C. Amodio, 'Resi(s)ting the Singer: Towards a Non-Performative Anglo-Saxon Oral Poetics', *New Directions In Oral Theory, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 287 (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), pp. 179-208.

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charms is illuminating. According to Amodio's approach, the charms that contain formula-like sections—units—exist as part of two possible scenarios. On one hand, units appear in written witnesses because the scribe was keen to record accurately an oral performance. No longer required by the mode of composition, units are retained as part of the body of the charm, required as an integral part of the text. For example, there is evidence that GS 13 and GS 14 both record the same charm in two different oral performances (that is, they are 'surface texts' of one 'deep text'²¹⁸): units are visible in the written record because they are present in the oral performance. It is impossible to say whether the units in the oral performance were used in order to make the charm memorable or make it easy to compose in the first place: but it is always the case that the units are chosen because of their specific function in that particular circumstance. In this scenario, a literate scribe is recording a charm that has existed in oral tradition, and may continue to do so after the written recording.

On the other hand, a literate scribe composing a charm may choose to echo a current or past oral tradition in order to make it acceptable to the users and audience of the charm: the unit is not needed in order to compose the charm, but is included in order to create a sense of cohesion between the newly composed charm and the existing body of oral charms. It could also be argued that a unit is used or retained because it is associated with success, or because it is an element that has lodged in the memory of the charmer. For example, the *Wið færstice* charm uses units which invoke the language of oral performance in order to make further performances possible. It could also be the case that the scribe chose to emphasise elements of Germanic legend in order to make the charm appealing to as diverse an audience as possible, or that s/he felt the visualisation of the pain in 'layman's' terms made the charm most effective for the patient.²¹⁹

Although the charm is framed by performance instructions which are related in a terse, matter-of-fact style, the body of the charm is suffused with the language of battle and conflict. The initial instructions (*Wið færstice feferfuige and seo reade netele, ðe þurh ærn inwyxð, and wegbrade; wyll in buteran*) contrast with the final instructions, in which the performer is told *nim þonne þæt seax, ado on wætan*. This final instruction

²¹⁸ Jonathan Roper's theory of deep/surface texts is introduced and explained in detail in 1. Introduction to the Thesis and discussed elsewhere in this chapter. For the evidence concerning the relationships between GS 13 and 14, see p. 57-60: the two charms relate the same actions in different words, whereas charms which share a closer textual—rather than oral—connection will share the same words, but differ in smaller ways (such as spelling and lineation).

²¹⁹ For an edition of the charm, see Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 140-50.

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echoes the various weapons mentioned in the body of the charm, and allows the performer to create a link between the world of the charm—the *seax* and *wælspera* made by the smiths—and the real world, through the *seax* which forms part of the ritual activity carried out by the performer. The *seax* might have been placed on the point of pain after being heated in the *buteran*, as a way of providing comforting heat and reducing the pain. The *seax* also neatly echoes the warlike attack of the *mihitgan wif* and retaliation of the charmer related in the narrative of the charm:

*Hlude wæran hy, la, hlude, ða hy ofer þone hlæw ridan,
wæran anmode, a hy ofer land ridan...
... Stod under linde, under leohtum scylde,
þær ða mihitgan wif hyra mægen beræddon
and hy gyllende garas sændan;
ic him oðerne eft wille sændan, fleogende flane forane togeanes.
... Sæt smið, sloh seax,
lytel iserna, wund swiðe.
... Syx smiðas sætan, wælspera worhtan.*

These narrative units all share the semantic field of battle, and are also framed as direct speech: they work as a script, to be recited by the performer in order to create the right conditions for the ritual activity detailed in the performance instructions to be carried out. The performer and patient access a world of legend and battle, transporting the everyday ingredients and actions in the performance instructions into a world of heroes. In a similar way, several instruction units are addressed to the pain and to the charmer, reinforcing the sense of immediacy seen in the narrative units: the patient is instructed to avoid the *spere* of the *mihitgan wif*, and the pain is ordered out of the patient in the use of the preposition *ut* as an understood imperative:

*Scyld ðu ðe nu, þu ðysne nið genesan mote.
Ut, lytel spere, gif her inne sie!*

In the instruction addressed to the pain, the elision of the verb reflects the informality of speech, and uses an exclamatory structure typical of speaking: in this way, these instruction units echo the language of the narrative units in their close relationship to speech. The charm launches straight into a narrative unit which recounts a previous attack, relating the event in aural and visual terms by describing both the sound and appearance of the attack. Thus, we can see the charm engaging with oral and heroic culture, perhaps deliberately using markers of oral culture (direct speech, imperatives, the present tense) to make the charm function effectively as an oral performance, but

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perhaps also to lend a sense of history to the charm in its connection to an oral and heroic culture not necessarily current at the time of performance, but still imbued with a sense of authority and importance. It is not a sense of heroic culture alone that is important here—indeed, ideas about heroism are relevant to societies after Anglo-Saxon England—but the *style* of the charm. The way in which the charmer relates a situation with elements familiar to an Anglo-Saxon audience—not a later audience—allows the charmer to access to the weight and authority of a previous culture. The charm exhibits oral characteristics not only because of a direct connection with performance, but also because of a consciously created connection with an oral culture of the past: thus, as Amodio argues, charm units relate more closely to past and future performances than the process of *composition-in-performance*.




Clearly, the relationship between written and oral in charming cannot be based on a simple binary opposition between literate and oral: the charm unit is not necessarily a marker of orality, and is not a good candidate for the application of Oral-Formulaic theory. Neither is it easy to divide those charmers actively participating in oral composition from those echoing or mirroring this practice: Thus, we can see that whilst performance, orality and the existence of a formulaic structure in charming are all related and define the nature of a charm, they do not necessarily preclude the existence of a living literate charming tradition—in which charms are composed in writing—or the possibility of performance from a written text.

Other Anglo-Saxon texts also exhibit this complex relationship between speaking, writing and reading: Anglo-Saxon wills provide a meeting point for both oral and written culture, linking together an oral ceremony of bequeathing with a written text. The relationship between the ceremony and the written text is fraught with confusion: is the written text a simply a record of the oral ceremony or is it something more? In their article 'Orality, Literacy and Performativity in Anglo-Saxon Wills' Danet and Bogoch compare Anglo-Saxon wills to modern wills, comparing the various degrees of autonomy of the texts. The existence of an oral ceremony of bequeathing in Anglo-Saxon England is evidenced in the written will by explicit references to the procedure of oral bequeathing and various markers of speech: in this way, oral culture makes an impression on the written text. However, the written text is more than a narrative report of an oral ceremony: Danet and Bogoch prove that the Anglo-Saxon wills are struggling towards the same level of autonomy exemplified by modern wills. That is, that the Anglo-Saxons were attempting to invest the written text with the same performative

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authority as the oral ceremony: therefore, the wills demonstrate the attempts of the Anglo-Saxons to negotiate the tensions between oral and written culture, and bear witness to the shifts in orality and literacy occurring in this period.²²⁰

The charms also represent a complex link between text and action, written and spoken. The written text of a charm represents both the crystallisation of a preceding oral culture, and the future performances of the text. The textualisation of a charm simultaneously removes the charm from oral culture and makes it possible for the charm to be performed at a later date. This means that although a charm can be textualised, it always retains markers of performance (such as lists of ingredients, clear presentation and references to speaking, saying or performing some sort of physical action), and (generally speaking) evidence of its previous life in oral culture (such as differences in articulation between manuscript witnesses of the 'same' charm). The charms differ from the wills in that a charm text can never operate away from its performance context: a charm cannot be just a text. If it is not performed, it cannot achieve its goal. This is not to say that charms recorded in the Anglo-Saxon period for purposes other than performance are not genuine charms: but these texts lose their relationship to further oral performances, as they will no longer be performed.²²¹ The relationships between text and orality in the charms and Anglo-Saxon wills can be represented as follows:

Wills	Charms
<p><u>Oral ceremony:</u></p> <p>Spoken performance of bequeathing</p>	<p><u>Oral circulation of charm:</u></p> <p>The creation and transmission of a wholly oral charm in oral culture</p>
	
<p><u>Text:</u></p> <p>Strengthens and supports oral ceremony Forms a record of bequeathing procedure Begins to succeed oral performance as authoritative procedure</p>	<p><u>Text:</u></p> <p>Records oral charm, in some cases fossilising its form and creating an authoritative charm-text Provides a basis for further oral performances Charms which are written do not necessarily become wholly textualised, and may still circulate as oral, fluid texts Charms do not necessarily pass through the <u>Text</u> stage: they can exist as wholly oral texts</p>
	

²²⁰ Brenda Danet and Bryna Bogoch, 'Orality, Literacy and Performativity in Anglo-Saxon Wills', in *Language and the Law*, ed. J. Gibbons (Essex: Longman Group, 1994), pp. 100-36.

²²¹ For example, it could be argued that the charm for theft in CCC 41 still includes performance instructions but is presented in a way that would be prohibitive to future performances.

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	Oral performance: The performing and reciting of a written (or oral) charm text in an oral performance

The way in which wills move from an oral ceremony to the medium of writing results in ‘oral residue’: markers of the will’s existence in spoken culture.²²² Due to the charms’ similarly complex relationship with oral and literate culture, some of these features also appear in the charms.²²³ Firstly, wills often contain meta-comments about writing, in which overt references to the act of writing self-consciously link the creation of the text to both the *action* of disposal of property and the *written text* that records it. For example, in the example below, the will refers directly to the process of the writing of the will in relation to the actual carrying out of the legal action:

*Ic abba geroefa cuðe 7 writan hate hu min willa is
þæt mon ymb min ærfe gedeo æfter minu dæge*

I, Reeve Abba, declare and command to be written
what are my wishes as to the disposal of my
property after my time.²²⁴

The blood charms demonstrate that Anglo-Saxon charms share this self-referential relationship—though realised in a slightly different way—to writing in that written units can hold a power of their own:

*+in nomine sanctae trinitatis atque omnium
sanctorum ad
sanguinem restringendum scribis hoc :
COMAPTA OCOΓMA CTYΓONTOEMA
EKYTOII
+Beronice*

Through our Lord Jesus Christ your son who lives
and reigns in unity with God the Holy Spirit for
ever and ever+ In the name of the Holy Trinity
and all the saints to stop blood write this:
Stop the blood from the place
+ Veronica

In this example, the performer is instructed to use the act of writing to bring about a change in the patient’s situation: a written object comes to hold power of its own, channeling the power of the religious personages invoked and bringing about a change in the world of the patient. The creation of the written text, as instructed in the charm, is

²²² They provide Ong’s definition of oral residue: ‘...habits of thought and expression tracing back to pre-literate structures or practices or deriving from the dominance of the oral as a medium in a given culture, or indicating a reluctance or inability to dissociate the written medium from the spoken’. Danet and Bogoch, ‘Orality’, p. 107, quoting Walter J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (London: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 146.

²²³ See Danet and Bogoch, ‘Orality’, p. 107 for a full list of the features of ‘oral residue’ in the wills.

²²⁴ Will of Abba, 835 AD: Earle 1888: 109-110; trans. Whitelock 1979: 40; see Danet and Bogoch, ‘Orality’, p. 108.

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an integral part of the effectiveness of the charm, thus linking the charm to literate culture.

In a similar way, the words of wills are framed in such a way as to link the action described to the language of the text. For example, the phrase 'I hereby will and bequeath' used in modern wills is described by Danet and Bogoch as a speech act intended to function as a 'declaration': words intended to bring about a change in the world simply by virtue of their being performed. In contrast, an 'assertive' statement would simply record what has happened: 's/he made a will'. Danet and Bogoch claim that Anglo-Saxon wills contain a high incidence of declarations, indicating that the oral ceremony is realised in the language of the will. Thus, the written will is not sufficient in itself, and must be linked with an oral ceremony in order to be authoritative.²²⁵

Similarly, Anglo-Saxon charms contain declarations which by simple virtue of their being spoken will bring about the desired effect. An example of this is the *Crux Christi reducat* unit in the theft charms: the performer is instructed to *sing on ðæt hof rec*, giving voice to the written text, and in doing so releasing the power of the words so that they may take effect. Like the wills, without the oral ceremony the text is powerless, and can only be activated through performance.

A third feature shared by both wills and charms is the tendency to refer to people and places without identification: due to the knowledge shared by the testator and his/her community, the wills are highly context-dependent, referring to people, possessions and places without providing any specific identifying information. For example, it is possible for a testator to refer to

I... tua hund marcas arede goldes and tua cuppes siluerene, and four hors so ic best habbe, and to suerde so ic best habbe...

... Two hundred marks of red gold, and two silver cups and four horses, the best that I have, and two swords, the best that I have.²²⁶

expecting the witness to be aware which of his/her horses would qualify as the best. in the same way, the highly allusive nature of the charms, created by a matrix of cultural associations, means that a charm text can refer to a person with only a single word, confident that the performer/patient will be able to connect the name to a set of circumstances. For example, in Royal G refers to *Beronice* with only one word,

²²⁵ See Danet and Bogoch, 'Orality', pp. 109-10.

²²⁶ Will of Bishop Theodred, 942-951 AD; Whitelock 1986 [1930]: 2-3. See Danet and Bogoch, 'Orality', pp. 119-20.

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expecting that Veronica's narrative and the role it plays in the charm will be understood, emphasizing the connection between the charm text and the social and cultural knowledge of the performer/patient. The theft charm GS 11b also makes use of allusion: the performer expects that the audience will understand what the *wite swa strangum* was that befell the Jews as a result of the Crucifixion. Importantly, without an adequate understanding of the severity of the punishment, the charm would lose some of its power: if the thief does not grasp this, s/he would not be affected by witnessing the performance of the charm, being unaware of the harsh punishment s/he will incur by committing the crime of theft. Evidence for the public and community-based performance of the charm is encoded in the allusiveness of the *hit becweð* unit, in which *he*, *Ic* and *þu* are referred to throughout without any context to indicate who this person might be. As a script for a performance, this allows for multiple performances of the charm without being restricted by the identification of a particular individual, and also suggests that by the time the performance took place, the people witnessing it would be aware who was the victim (*Ic*), and might also be able to suspect who *þu* the perpetrator, was as well. If the thief were absent at the time of performance, one might expect that other members of the community might be prompted to turn him/her in, or would draw together as a community against the thief. Therefore, upon his/her re-entering the community after the performance, s/he would know that something was different, and that alone might prompt him/her to confess or return the goods.

Allusiveness is a key feature of Old English literature as a whole: for example, the poet of *Beowulf* alludes to events and characters not included in the main narrative, but expects that the audience will be able to make the necessary connections by virtue of shared knowledge. In the example below, Grendel is introduced to the audience:

Swa ða drihtguman dreamum lifdon
eadiglice, oððæt an ongan
fyrene fremman feond on helle.
Wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten,
mære mearcstapa, se þe moras heold,
fen ond fæsten; fifelcynnes eard
wonsæli wer weardode hwile,
sifðan him scyppend forscrifen hæfde
in Caines cynne. þone cwealm gewræc
ece drihten, þæs þe he Abel slog;
ne gefeah he þære fæhðe, ac he hine feor
forwræc,
metod for þy mane, mancynne fram.
þanon untydras ealle onwocon,
eotenas ond ylfe ond orcneas,
swylce gigantas, þa wið gode wunnon

So the lord's men lived with joys
happily, until one began
to perform wicked deeds, an enemy in hell.
The grim creature was called Grendel,
famed wanderer of the borderlands, who
occupied the moors,
fen and stronghold: this dwelling-place of
monsters
the unblest creature occupied for a while,
since the Creator had proscribed him
to Cain's kin. The Lord avenged the killing,
because he slew Abel.
Nor did he gain joy from the hostile act, for
He, the Creator, banished him far away
from mankind for this crime. From him evil
progeny all arose,

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lange þrage; he him ðæs lean forgeald.

giants and elves and evil spirits,
also giants, who against God contended
for a long time: He repaid them a reward
for that.²²⁷

The poet tells us explicitly that Grendel is *mære*, and therefore we should expect to be able to equate the description of the *moras* and *wonsæli wer* with a place known to both the poet and ourselves as the audience. The Biblical story of Cain and Abel is also invoked as a shorthand way of expressing Grendel's condemned status, and other characters from non-Biblical narratives (the *eotenas*, *ylfe* and *orcneas*) are referred to in a similarly brief manner. Much like the invocation of Veronica in the charms, this system of allusive references relies on knowledge shared by the poet/performer and audience/patient, anchoring the narrative in shared knowledge (whether this shared knowledge comes from oral or literate traditions is unimportant, but it is true to say that this ability to refer to commonly-known people, places and events without a large amount of exposition probably originates in oral composition and performance). Aside from the usefulness of Danet and Bogoch's term 'context-dependent' when discussing the allusive nature of the charms, Lea Olsan's phrase 'traditional referentiality'²²⁸ also neatly describes the ability of the charms to reach out to events, people and narratives without lengthy exposition. Also described as a 'constellation of associations',²²⁹ this network of shared knowledge makes it possible for the performer and audience of a charm to access the full significance of a charm through one single word or briefly recounted narrative. Not only limited to knowledge of traditional or Biblical personages and narratives, this technique is also used in conjunction with liturgical texts: frequently the phrase *pater noster* stands as a representation of the whole text. In this way then, we see that the charms are capable of referring to what Olsan calls 'untexualised common traditions'²³⁰ (those legends and stories not recorded in texts—perhaps, for example, there is an unrecorded narrative related to the *Wið Færstice* charm—and knowledge about the performer's/audience's community—for example, who might be the most likely to be a thief) and to other texts, such as the *Pater noster*.²³¹

²²⁷ See Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf*, ll. 99-135. Translation my own.

²²⁸ Olsan, 'Latin Charms', 116-42 (130-31).

²²⁹ Olsan, 'Latin Charms', 121-22.

²³⁰ Olsan, 'Latin Charms', 121-22.

²³¹ Indeed, the *Pater noster* has an interesting relationship with oral and literate culture in its own right: although the *Pater noster* exists as a written text, the requirement of all Christians to learn the *Pater noster* implies that some people learned the prayer as an oral text no longer dependent on its written text. See Berlin, 'Memorization', p. 103-4.

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Thus, these examples of three features of Anglo-Saxon wills (references to the act of writing; linking the text to the ceremony performed; referring to people and places without providing context) demonstrate how charms also echo this close relationship seen in wills between action/speaking and the text. In each genre, the physical ritual enacted requires the text connected with it, and the text also depends on the performance for it to be successful. In the wills, the act of bequeathing *precedes* the text, with the text acting as both a record and means of strengthening the act of bequeathing. Without the oral performance, the text of a will cannot exist: and, as time progressed, the written texts came to acquire more autonomy from the performance, acquiring an importance of their own. It might be that we can see this happening in examples from Anglo-Saxon wills in which witnesses mark their signatures with the symbol of the Cross. Although it is possible to argue that in wills this symbol is the way in which scribes recorded in writing the action of self-signing, as a textual representation of a ritual action, it is also possible that the very writing of this symbol imbued the text itself with power and significance.²³² In a similar way, the act of performing a charm can precede the relevant text, with the text functioning as a record of the performance. However, the text of a charm also looks forward to future performances, providing a script, instructions and lists of equipment required for further enactments of the textual record. In this way, then, the relevant points of Danet and Bogoch's approach to wills are useful in illuminating the relationship between a charm's text(s) and performance(s), and supports the theory of deep/surface texts seen at work elsewhere: the texts of charms do not represent points on a journey back to a desirable, lost 'original', but rather are the unique expressions of deep texts which relate to multiple potential performances and other related surface texts.

Conclusions

We began this discussion of orality, literacy and definitions with Dunphy's phrase primary orality, used to indicate non-literate societies which compose and transmit texts orally, without recording these texts in writing. The texts concerned in this study tell us that at least 750-1050, in terms of charms and their users, Anglo-Saxon society was moving beyond primary orality into secondary orality, in which texts inhabited both oral and literate culture. Thus, written texts exhibit features attributed to oral culture (such as an awareness of the need for oral performance, or markers of speech such as incomplete

²³² This is discussed at more length in 4.ii. Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms.
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phrases, exclamations and imperatives), showing evidence that although living in a chirographic society, Anglo-Saxons still felt the need for oral delivery in certain contexts.²³³ We have seen that in the wills and charms alike, literate and oral registers were free to mix without the audience regarding this as problematic.

b. 'Orality' and 'Literacy': Transmission, Performance, Ownership and Context

Transmission

In his article 'The Textual Transmission of the Old English "Loss of Cattle" Charms', Peter Dendle provides an interesting and persuasive case study of the theft charms which argues that two of the charms (GS 13 and GS 14) are independently recorded witnesses of actual practice, whereas other charms (GS 11a, all the witnesses of GS 11a and GS 12) represent more verbal, static texts.²³⁴ Dendle performs a close orthographic study of the variances between the charms, suggesting, for example, that the multiformity of the Type Two charms (GS 13 and 14) should not be ascribed to scribal corruption, but to the fact that the scribes recorded two different performances of the same charm: they are 'two alternate articulations of a similar conceptualisation of the charm'.²³⁵ Figure 1 below contains the first few lines of charms 13 and 14, the charms' performance instruction. The figure illustrates how these two charms describe the actions required of the charmer: s/he must say the rest of the charm upon discovering the theft of their livestock, before they do anything else:

²³³ Dunphy, 'Oral Traditions', p. 110.

²³⁴ Peter Dendle, 'The Textual Transmission of the Old English "Loss of Cattle" Charms', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 105 (2006), 514-39. Perhaps, however, these two charms are evidence of scribal recomposition (that is, that the scribes rewrote the charms they had heard performed as they saw fit) or of independent translations of Latin (that is, that the scribes had read the charm in Latin and translated it in two different ways). However, the scale of the difference between the two texts suggests to me that the two charms are actually evidence of different expressions of the ideas within the charms.

²³⁵ Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', p. 522.

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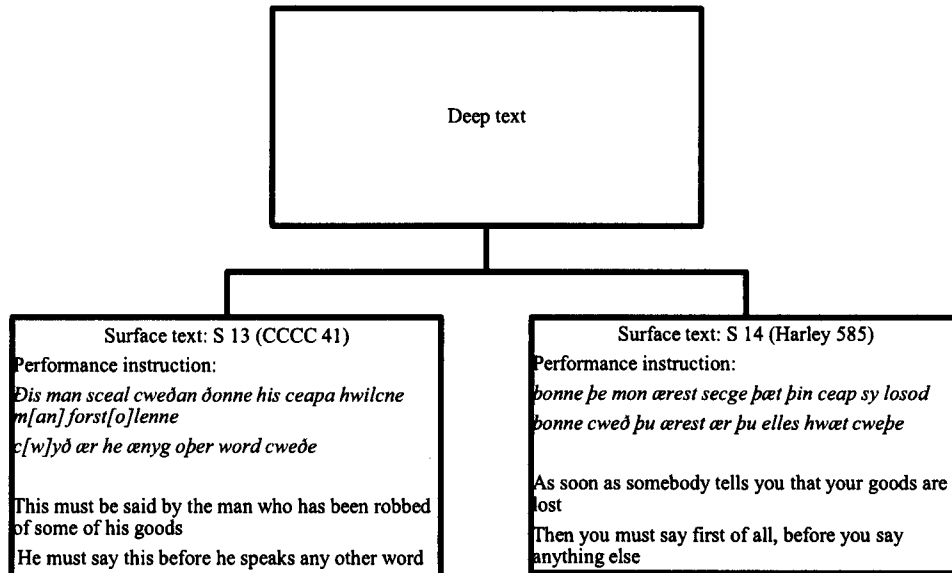


Figure 1: Relationship Between GS 13 and GS 14

Both scribes regard their version as complete, recording it unselfconsciously, and yet they each have a slightly different version as a result of the variances introduced by oral performance. Dendle is arguing, therefore, that GS 13 and GS 14 exhibit a strong relation with orality via their transmission: each witness is regarded by its user as correct and complete, as it adequately expresses the shared deep text.²³⁶

However, GS 13 and GS 14's orality in terms of their performance is less certain. GS 14 appears in the *Lacnunga*, a medical compilation. The practical purpose of the manuscript and its easily portable size suggests that the charm would be looked up by the performer when confronted with theft and then performed at the appropriate location. It is written neatly into the main body of the manuscript, and shows signs of being

²³⁶ See Jonathan Roper, 'Towards a Poetics', 18.

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corrected.²³⁷ This attention to detail and level of respect given to the text is in marked contrast to the appearance of GS 13, which is squashed into the margins of CCCC 41. The cramped, almost illegible appearance of the charm would not make an oral performance easy, even for the scribe's own use: it is illogical to expect someone to give the amount of attention needed to re-read the charm whilst simultaneously performing it. However, it is possible that the person who recorded the charm would be so familiar with the text and with his/her own handwriting that future performances would not be hampered. Dendle suggests that the margins of CCCC 41—unlike Harley 585, which was used to record actively used texts—were used as an archive for compiling related materials for eventual recopying in a more readable form. This is in direct contrast to the interpretation of Stephanie Hollis, who suggests that the marginal charms in CCCC 41 are united by their usefulness to pastoral worker, and would therefore be in frequent and regular use.²³⁸

In comparison to GS 13 and GS 14, the Type One charms feature much less variation between the witnesses: what variation does appear is much more easily to

²³⁷ Corrections might usually suggest written rather than oral transmission, as the scribe would be more likely to perceive spelling mistakes in a text known as written, in which words have settled into their authoritative forms. A scribe copying a written exemplar would therefore correct his/her copy to reflect accurately the spellings of the exemplar. If a scribe had only heard a charm and was recording this purely oral text, s/he would be less likely to make corrections as there is no standard form for a word that is heard rather than seen: the scribe would record what s/he hears and regard that as needing no correction.

In this particular charm, there are two corrections. The first of these is an *i* inserted over *halgan*, to make *haligan*. It is unusual to see the re-insertion of *i* in syncopated forms, which begs the question of why the *i* has been inserted at all (the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* finds 3292 instances of *halgan*, whereas *haligan* appears only 157 times (of course, 157 instances are not negligible: clearly it's a viable variant in some varieties). Perhaps the scribe heard the charm in a dialect different to their own, transcribing their own dialect, then adding in the more unusual *i* later. This is a more likely explanation than the scribe copying *halgan* where *haligan* is in an exemplar, as the form with the *i* is the more unusual. It is possible that one person could use both forms: thus, the correction could represent confusion experienced by the scribe and possibly the performer regarding which form is the 'correct' form. Perhaps the performer corrected themselves, saying first *halgan* but correcting it to *haligan*: perhaps the scribe was unsure what s/he heard. The nature of this correction is unusual in that it provides evidence for oral transmission, rather than disproving it: but there is no way to discount the suggestion that the scribe was simply copying verbatim from an exemplar with *haligan*.

The second correction is an *a* inserted over the final *o* in *gemærsod*. These two sounds are easily confused in performance, but it would be unusual for a scribe to confuse these letters when copying from an exemplar. The form *gemærsod* appears 43 times in the texts searched via the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (two of these instances are in GS 13 and GS 14, in the category of verse: of the 43 instances, 21 appear in prose, 4 in verse, and 18 in glosses): the form *gemærsad* appears only seven times (four instances occur in prose, none in verse, and three in glosses). From this evidence, it is clear that *gemærsod* is the most common, but the *-ad* form is also in use; furthermore, Grattan and Singer tell us that the *-ad* form is the most common in the *Lacnunga* (Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 224). Thus, it is possible that the scribe had heard the charm using both forms, or was confused as to which form s/he had heard.

It seems, therefore, that this evidence supports rather than contradicts Dendle's assessment of GS 14 as a text heard performed by the scribe.

²³⁸ Hollis, 'Cattle-Theft Charms', p. 154, n. 28.

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attributed to scribal error than to the characteristic variations introduced by oral performance. Dendle provides several persuasive examples for his argument. In GS 11a in CCCC 190 the abbreviation *xpi* is used to represent *Christi*. As a common abbreviation in the Anglo-Saxon period, the use of *xpi* in itself is not unusual. However, in GS 11a in Tiberius A.iii and GS 11b in the *TR* and CCCC 383, the scribes do some quite unusual things with *xpi*. For instance, in Tiberius *xpi* is placed in the middle of an Old English phrase, in a grammatically incorrect context: *Judeas xpi ahengon*.²³⁹ Furthermore, in both the *TR* and CCCC 383 the scribes copy *xpi crist*, rather than just *xpi* or *crist*. He explains this by suggesting that either the scribes regard the repeating of a holy name to be beneficial to the charm, even if it makes no sense: or the scribes are duplicating from an exemplar without understanding the text.²⁴⁰ Were they recording a live oral performance, instances where the text does not make sense would be unlikely.²⁴¹ A further example of loss of sense is the use of the word *sanitas* in the *TR*. A misreading of the three minims in the middle of *semitas*, this is an easy mistake to make for a scribe mechanically copying from a written exemplar. Thus, Dendle argues, the Type One charms are characterised by scribal, written features, and cannot be regarded as transcripts of different oral performances. The differences between the charms are not due to oral performance, but to scribal error.²⁴² These charms are related not by the shared knowledge of the same deep text, but by the fixing of a written

²³⁹ *xpi* [*Christi*] is understood to be the genitive here. As Dendle explains, ‘the abbreviation is inappropriate in its new grammatical context: *ahon* takes the accusative, not the genitive’. Dendle, ‘Textual Transmission’, 531.

²⁴⁰ Dendle, ‘Textual Transmission’, 531-32. Andrew Rabin attributes the presence of both *xpi* and *crist* to ‘scribal error or eccentricity’. See Andrew Rabin, ‘Hypermetric Verse in an Old English Charm Against Theft’, *Notes and Queries* 2009 (56), 482-485 (438).

²⁴¹ Examples of nonsense folk-songs abound, with perhaps the most famous being ‘Wildwood Flower’. The opening lines appear to be nonsense: ‘Oh I’ll twine with my mingles and raven black hair/ With the roses so red and the lilies so fair’. There are variations on this line such ‘oh I’ll twine and mingle my raven black hair’, or the replacing of ‘mingle’ with ‘ringlets of’: there seems to be no “official” version of the lyrics, with many examples making little sense. However, it must be acknowledged that while ‘mingles’ used as a noun does not make sense in any orthodox way, it is understandable in a poetic sense, free from the rules of grammar.

Furthermore, it would seem to be more likely that a folk-song, a text created for entertainment, might be so altered that it would eventually lose sense and not suffer for it: whereas a charm, with a concrete purpose and internal logic must keep its sense in order to work. The instances of nonsense in the charms (such as pseudo-Irish gibberish) are included for a specific purpose (most often, a sense of magic and mystery), and are not made nonsensical by alteration or corruption.

The purpose of this digression is to make clear that a charm is unlikely to result in alterations in transmission that result in nonsense if the performer or scribe is using the charm for its intended purpose: any nonsense would render the charm useless. A scribe unaware of the meaning of the charm, or careless about its usage, would be more likely to accept nonsense or not even realise they are recording nonsense.

²⁴² Dendle, ‘Textual Transmission’, pp. 531-33.

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version so that that witness becomes *the* text: Roper calls this phenomenon ‘text fixation’.²⁴³

Performance

Texts recorded in the Anglo-Saxon period could be related to oral performance in a variety of ways. For instance, some texts could be circulated orally but based on a written text,²⁴⁴ or recorded from memory of a live memorised performance.²⁴⁵ Some texts could be designed for reading aloud to a group (sermons) or aloud to oneself (prayers). Dunphy’s view of the place of charms in this complex continuum of orality is brief and succinct:

Some works are designed for oral use because of the nature of the form. Some unequivocal examples of this are charms and magic spells, which have power only when the user claims them by the process of enunciation.²⁴⁶

Here Dunphy is implying that all the charms recorded in early Germanic manuscripts are intended for performing aloud, and are composed to be suitable for such a purpose. There are charms of which this is a fair description: for example, it could be suggested that the command units of the wen charm lend themselves to direct oral delivery due to their imperative mood:

*Wenne, wenne, wenchichenne,
her ne scealt þu timbrien, ne nenne tun
habben,
ac þu scealt north eonene to þan nihgan
berhge,
þer þu hauest, ermig, enne broþer.
...
Clinge þu alswa col on heorþe,
scing þu alswa scerne awage,
...
and weorne alswa weter on anbre.*

Wen, wen, wen-chick,
Here you shall not build, nor have any
habitation,
But you shall go north, hence to the
neighbouring hill,
Where you, wretch, have a brother...

May you be consumed as coal upon the hearth,
May you shrink as dung upon a wall,

And may you dry up as water in a pail...²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Roper, ‘Towards a Poetics...’, 19.

²⁴⁴ For example, Berlin suggests the *Pater Noster* as an example of an orally circulated text based on a written exemplar. Taught by either one’s parents or through the learning of catechumens, the *Pater Noster* was a text all Christians were expected to know by heart. Thus, the text is based on written material, but is not dependent on it for transmission (Berlin, ‘Memorisation’, p. 104).

²⁴⁵ Evidence of this practice is given by Olsan, who suggests that errors in Latin in a written charm could be as a result of a scribe inexperienced in Latin attempting to record words he has heard but not seen written down, for example *speritus* for *spiritus* (Olsan, ‘Latin Charms’, 121). Although this is a persuasive argument for the inexperience of the scribe, it is true that *e* and *i* are frequently confused in Anglo-Saxon Latin texts.

²⁴⁶ Dunphy, ‘Oral Traditions’, p. 115.

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Some charms include instructions which specifically require the reciting of given lines of text: for example, GS 11a, GS 11b and GS 12 of the theft charms all feature the performance instruction *Gif feoh sy under numen gif hit sy hors sing on his feotere*; GS 13 and 14 also specify the need for oral delivery with the instruction *Dis man sceal cweðan ðonne his ceapa hwilcne man forstolenne* (GS 13) and *þonne cweð þu ærest ær þu elles hwæt cweþe* (GS 14): both Type One and Type Two charms require some sort of verbal delivery, whether ‘singing’ or ‘speaking’. Whilst the GS 15 charm does not have any explicit performance instructions, the use of the personal pronoun ‘I’ suggests that the charm is intended to be spoken, the ‘I’ being the charmer and person whose cattle have been stolen. Those charms which do not include instructions are harder to decipher in terms of their orality.²⁴⁸

Determining whether charms were performed privately or publicly, and deciding therefore whether they had a wider social function beyond the remedying of the problem in hand is difficult: there is not a great deal of evidence extant from the period about to whom the charms were performed, or whether illness was regarded as a personal matter by the average Anglo-Saxon. However, there are Anglo-Saxon accounts of medical conditions that were well known to the community as a whole: for example, Bede relates how Æthelthryth suffered from a tumour and was quite happy to discuss her condition:

Ferunt autem, quia, cum praefato tumore ac dolore maxillae siue colli premeretur, multum delectata sit hoc genere infirmitatis, ac solita dicere: ‘Scio certissime, quia merito in collo pondus langoris porto, in quo iuenculam me memini superuacua moniliorum pondera portare: et credo, quod ideo me superna pietas dolore colli uoluit grauari, ut sic absoluar reatu superuacuae leuitatis: dum mihi nunc pro auro et margaritis, de collo rubor tumoris ardorque promineat.’

It is also related that when she was afflicted with this tumour and by the pain in her neck and jaw, she gladly welcomed this sort of pain and used to say, ‘I know well enough that I deserve to bear the weight of this affliction in my neck, for I remember that when I was a young girl I used to wear an unnecessary weight of necklaces: I believe that God in His goodness would have me endure this pain in my neck in order that I may thus be absolved from the guilt of my needless vanity. So instead of gold and pearls, a fiery red tumour now stands out upon my neck.’²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ This charm appears in Royal MS 4A.xiv, f. 106b, dated to the twelfth century. See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 154-58.

²⁴⁸ For example, without studying the manuscript context of the blood-staunching charms, it is impossible to know whether they should be said, sung, read to oneself, or to an audience because there are no performance instructions.

²⁴⁹ Bertram Colgrave (ed.), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) Book IV, chapter XIX, pp. 396-97..

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However, to read this sort of example as evidence for the perception of medical conditions as a whole in Anglo-Saxon England would be a mistake. Both Æthelthryth's and Bede's didactic motivations for recounting the story of the tumour mean that this sort of situation might be less typical of the ordinary person and more indicative of the need for the characters and the narrator to reinforce the suffering and righteousness of the person afflicted by the tumour. Unfortunately, there just isn't enough evidence of the opinions of the ordinary Anglo-Saxon to fully reconstruct how s/he might have felt about the need for privacy in the process of his/her healing.

What evidence we do have for the relative privacy of the performance of charms lies in the nature of the charms themselves. For instance, it is feasible that a charm for a nosebleed could be performed in private or in public: the relative privacy of the charm would not affect its efficacy, and a public performance would not be likely to make the patient uncomfortable. However, at the risk of applying modern social mores to an Anglo-Saxon text, it is possible that a charm for excessive menstrual bleeding might be considered a more private matter, due to the personal content of the ailment to be remedied. Regardless of the patient's feelings about her condition, the manuscript context of the blood charms considered in this study suggests that the charm is to be performed in a moment of private devotion, rather than in the course of public worship.²⁵⁰ No audience is called for, as the charm performs no social function beyond the healing of the condition suffered by the individual. Some charms, however, perform a wider social function and thus might require a public performance in order to be effective: a legal theft charm might require witnesses, and a public declaration of theft is practically more likely to prompt the thief to return the goods out of guilt than a private performance that the thief is unlikely to hear.

Ownership and Context

The blood-staunching charms represent a different set of problems and questions related to the charms' relationship with oral culture. Three separate strands combine and interlace to form a whole idea of the charms' orality (or otherwise): the potential owners of the manuscript, and how they might have regarded the charms and the surrounding texts: how the owners might have understood the manuscript in its material context as a physical object: and the clues within the texts themselves as to how they might have been performed (or not).

²⁵⁰ Discussed at more length in 3.ii. Manuscript Context.

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The owner of Royal has generally been characterised as a female healer, concerned with health issues pertaining to women alone, such as problems with menstruation. An initial reading of the manuscript does indeed reveal a focus on healing, identified by Michelle P. Brown and Patrick Sims-Williams, who both discuss the categorising of the manuscript as a book of healing. Commonly called the *Royal Prayerbook*, it might at first seem illogical to refer to a manuscript full of prayers and liturgical material as a book of healing. However, on close inspection, many of the texts therein—not just the charms—indicate a scribe and a user preoccupied with health and healing. Indeed, both Brown and Sims-Williams identify Christ as healer as a central theme of the manuscript.²⁵¹ Sims-Williams notes that the abbreviated gospels which form the first part of the manuscript function as symbols for the whole gospel and, crucially, apotropaic amulets against harm: this use of the Gospels is common in Anglo-Saxon charming, where the first few lines of the Gospel of John often appear in charm texts.²⁵² Brown expands on this statement, commenting on the fact that the excerpts focus on the commission to evangelise and heal in both spiritual and corporeal senses.²⁵³ Thus, the owner of the manuscript is clearly someone concerned with healing both the spirit and the body, through prayer and medicine.

It is possible to be even more specific about the owner of the manuscript. Indeed, in the case of the charms in Royal, Sims-Williams suggests that the ‘prominence of charms to ease bleeding that refer to Christ’s healing of Beronice... suggests that some of its material was drawn from a compilation made for female use’.²⁵⁴ Sims-Williams’ suggestion that the miracle stories recounted in Royal prefigure the charms and tie together the charms and the other texts in the manuscript is made more specific by Brown, who comments that the miracle stories are mostly related to healing and include stories of ministrations to women. The claims for female ownership (as described by Brown) centre around three facts: the miracles quoted involve ministrations to women (Peter’s mother-in-law, Jairus’ daughter and Veronica²⁵⁵): the focus on hæmorrhage

²⁵¹ Michelle P. Brown, ‘Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Lexis and Texts in Early England: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. C. J. Kay and L. M. Sylvester, Costerus n.s. 133 (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2001), pp. 45-67.

²⁵² Brown, ‘Female Book-Ownership’, p. 56.

²⁵³ Brown, ‘Female Book-Ownership’, p. 56.

²⁵⁴ P. Sims-Williams, ‘Prayer and Magic’, in *Religion and Literature in Western England 600-800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 273-327 (p. 274).

²⁵⁵ For example, this extract from Matthew on f. 9r recounts the healing of the bleeding woman and the dead girl:

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indicated by the relating of the story of the woman cured of the flux of blood and charms relating to bleeding: and the female content in the litany.²⁵⁶ However, each of these facts must be qualified. The miracles related in Royal are not exclusively composed of those relating to women, perhaps because the inclusion of miracles does not reveal a specifically female user, but potentially a reader concerned with the healing power of Christ and someone of strong faith. The focus on hæmorrhage is perhaps the strongest indication of female ownership, with the obvious link to excessive bleeding suffered by women, menorrhagia (typified by Veronica, and included in the Royal charms either directly, as in the charm on f. 52r, or indirectly, as in the *rivos* unit on ff. 16v and 49r). However, the name 'Beronicè' does not necessarily indicate the Biblical figure of the woman in Matthew: the name also has something of a talismanic quality, appearing in charms unrelated to bleeding (for example, in charms for fever in Royal 12.Dxvii), and therefore is not to be exclusively regarded as a symbol of excessive bleeding suffered by women.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, bleeding from a wound or a nosebleed could be a concern in a monastic setting, for which charms such as these were required. Thus, the charms in Royal cannot definitively imply a female reader/user, but as Brown points out, the appearance of Veronica and her connections with menorrhagia cannot be ignored, and such charms would have been unlikely to have been the focus for a male audience, 'with its overtones of uncleanliness'.²⁵⁸ Finally, the female content in the litany, with its list of female saints, does not necessarily indicate that the text was

Hæc illo loquente ad eos, ecce princeps unuc accessit, et adorabat eum, dicens: Domine, filia mea modo defunct est sed veni, impone manum tuam super eam, et vivet. Et surgens Jesus sequebatur eum, et discipuli ejus. Et ecce mulier, quæ sanguinis fluxum patiebur duodecim annia, accessit retri, at tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus. Dicebat enim intra se: Si tetigero tantum vestimentum ejus, salva ero. At Jesus, converses, et videns eam dixit: Conifde filia, fides tua te salvam fecit. Et salva facta est mulier ex illa hora. Et cum venisset Jesus in domum principis, et vidisset tibicines et turbam tumultuantem, dicebat: Recedite: non est enim mortua puella, sed dormit. Et deridebant eum. Et cum ejecta esset turba, intravit, et tenuit manum ejus. Et surrexit puella. Et exiit fama hæc in univeram terram illam.

18 While he was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." 19 Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples. 20 Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." 22 Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment. 23 When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, 24 he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. 25 After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. 26 News of this spread through all that region.

See *Biblia Sacra, Vulgatæ Editionis* (Tournai: Soc. S. Johannis Evang., 1894).

²⁵⁶ Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership', pp. 56-7

²⁵⁷ Discussed in Chapter 4.iii. *Cælius Sedulius and Saint Veronica*.

²⁵⁸ Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership', p. 57

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tailored to the female owner, but is present due to reliance on the exemplar. That is, that the scribe of Royal copied the litany not for any personal reason, but simply because it was present in the exemplar. On balance, therefore, it seems plausible that the owner and user of Royal could have been a woman, well-versed in liturgical and Biblical material, concerned with physical and spiritual healing: Brown's methodology is well-balanced and considers both the content of the charm and its place in the manuscript as a whole.

The question remains, however, as to how this woman might have used the manuscript itself: for private or public healing, for silent reading or oral performance. Interestingly, Sims-Williams, along with identifying the pervading theme of protection against illness, death and supernatural adversity within the texts themselves, looks outwards to the material context of the manuscript, suggesting that the manuscript itself might have had an amuletic function.²⁵⁹ The use of the manuscript as a physical object of healing is not untenable: as previously mentioned, the abbreviated gospels seen in Royal are used in insular pocket books as protective amulets, and as Sims-Williams notes, the miracle stories related in Royal focus on healing miracles and thus anticipate the charms, creating a mood of healing and protection which encompasses the whole manuscript. The gospel extracts, when read as a whole, consist of stories of Jesus' healing the sick, His endowing of the saints with power, and a range of phrases describing the comforting, uplifting message of Christianity. These excerpts, when combined, create a group of texts given cohesion by the common message of spiritual and bodily healing. It is no great leap to imagine that, at least in the opinion of the owner, the text (as a physical object) is imbued with the mood of miraculous healing and faith.

Indeed, Brown summarises the characteristics of Royal 2.A.xx as a devotional and practical tool for a physician: perhaps a male healer tending to women, or even a female owner and healer.²⁶⁰ The notion of the manuscript as a 'practical' tool as well as a 'devotional' tool suggests that the texts might have had some engagement with oral performance. Indeed, perhaps another way of providing an overarching similarity or thematic link to connect all the texts within Royal would be to move away from the gender of the user or owner, and focus more specifically on the nature of the texts. All of the texts seem to require some sort of recitation, action, or speaking: prayers, hymns,

²⁵⁹ Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', p. 285

²⁶⁰ Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership', p. 58.

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charms, an exorcism, all texts with some dimension of performance. The immediate context of the charms makes more sense when viewed in this way: the *canticum* to be sung, the prayers to be recited and hymns to be used in liturgy are comfortable companions for charms which require recitation of quotations, the motion of signing the Cross and repeated recitals of the *Pater noster*. Even the charms added on the twelfth century flyleaf fit seamlessly into the manuscript as a collection of texts concerned with similar thematic ideas (healing, the power of various intercessionary figures) and similar requirements of genre (they all ask for some sort of performance).

The idea of *Royal* as a book of performances, intended for oral recitation, does not exclude the possibility of female ownership: in fact, the notion of performance reinforces the notion of a physician as the owner. Combined with the marked emphasis on feminine issues, it would not be unreasonable to characterise the manuscript as a functional tool, meant to be used for the purposes of healing spiritual and physical complaints. This neatly places the charms into a context well-suited to their combined medical and religious/liturgical contents. Furthermore, the physical dimensions and neat, clear appearance of the manuscript would lend it to being carried to the place where a performance is required, and the necessary text read directly from the page. Whilst, as Dendle quite rightly says, 'it is by no means certain that all the charms preserved in medieval manuscripts were in fact performed',²⁶¹ there is no reason to disregard the idea of performance in the face of the evidence provided in *Royal*.

Conclusions

Thus we see that the orality of charms, both in terms of their transmission and performance, is an issue inextricably connected with orthography, the users and owners of the manuscripts and the positioning of the charms on the page. The charms are not easy to characterise, and certainly we will never be able to reach a definite conclusion about the nature of performance, as the written evidence does not seem to have been intended to record the charms as a modern day folklore scholar would create a transcript. In order to draw the most accurate and logical conclusions about the orality of the charms, the scholar has to be prepared to abandon any opposing of oral and literate texts, and to entertain the idea of written text as performance, and oral text as an enactment of written record, and any permutation in between.

²⁶¹ Dendle, 'Textual Transmission', 1.

4.ii Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms

a. Introduction

The Cross is a prevalent symbol in Anglo-Saxon England, appearing in legends (such as the Invention of the Cross), the liturgy, oaths, and documents such as charters; and on coins, pillar stones, and mortuary and sanctuary sculptures.²⁶² As might be expected therefore, words related to the Cross appear in many and varied Old English texts; indeed, a search of the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* and the *Thesaurus of Old English* reveals that a cross-shaped object can be referred to by many different words (*cristelmæl*, *cristesmæl*, *rod*, *beam*, *beacn*, *treow* and *wudu*, for example), illustrating the extent to which the Cross saturates Anglo-Saxon culture and language. Each of these different words can perform many different functions, occurring in many different types of text.

For example, *cristesmæl* appears in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, in which an image of the Cross, the *Cristesmæl*, functions as an omen: *Her ðpeiwde read Cristes mæl on hefenum* ('In this year a red cross appeared in the sky').²⁶³ *Cristelmæl* also appears in charters, functioning as a boundary marker or landmark: for example, one charter traces the boundaries of land...*lang weges to þam eoldan cristelmæl, of þam cristelmæle on cyr-wylle* ('...along the way to the old cross, from the cross to Cherwell').²⁶⁴ The same term appears in a charm against a nosebleed, but here *cristesmæl* is functioning as a tool of healing: *Wriht on his forheafod Cristes mel...* ('Write on his forehead Christ's mark...').²⁶⁵ The charmer is supposed to write some prescribed words (taken from the Greek Mass) in the shape of the Cross, in order to stem the bleeding. In a similar way, the charmer can be expected to write not words in the shape of the Cross but simply to draw the Cross itself (here represented by the Latin word *crux*):

²⁶² See W. O. Stevens, *The Cross in the Life and Literature of the Anglo-Saxons* (New York: H. Holt, 1904), p. 6.

²⁶³ The quotation is taken from the entry for *cristesmæl* in Joseph Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882) and according to this entry, can be found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, (MS E), under the year 963.

²⁶⁴ The quotation is taken from a bounds document, Sawyer number 911, and can be found in London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian B. xv. See also *LangScape: The Language of Landscape: Reading the Anglo-Saxon Countryside* <http://www.langscape.org.uk/descriptions/editorial/L_911.2_584.html>, version 0.9 [accessed 23/03/10].

²⁶⁵ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 291. This charm is discussed in more detail below.

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*Wæt þæt gewrit on þam drence and writ cruce[m]
mid him on ælcum lime and cweð: Signum crucis
Christi conserva te in vitam eternam. Amen.*

Wet the writing in the drink and write a cross on it
with each limb and say: The symbol of the Cross of
Christ preserve you in eternal life. Amen.²⁶⁶

Presumably the charm will be effective on the limbs that have been marked out with the Cross, bolstered by the saying of the prescribed words which also invoke the Cross.

A further example from a charm (below) shows the Cross appearing again as a tool of healing, referred to in this instance as *tacen*:

*And wyrc swyþe gelome Cristes rode tacen on
ðinum heafde and cweð þis gelome: Ecce cruce[m]
domini, and cweþ ðis þonne: Hoc signaculo sancte
cru[ci]s.*

And make very often the sign of Christ's cross on
your head and say: look, [the] lord's cross: and
then say this: this signifies the holy cross.²⁶⁷

This example is particularly interesting as it transforms the Cross from a written symbol into a performance in itself: the charmer is to self-sign, performing the shape of the Cross with two gestures to represent the intersecting lines. The performative aspect of the Cross is not confined to the charms; it can also be seen in the combination of words for 'Cross' (such as *Cristes rode tacne*) with verbs meaning 'to bless' (such as *gebletsian*) to create the act of self-signing:

*Cwæþ se halga lareow, Ne ablinnan we, manna
bearn, þæt we Gode cwemon, & deofol tynan
dæges & nihtes, & mid Cristes rode tacne us
gebletsian.*

The holy teacher said, let us not cease, children of
men, to please God, and to annoy the devil's day,
and with the sign of Christ's cross bless
ourselves.²⁶⁸

In this text, one is encouraged to perform the sign of the Cross, to please God and to protect oneself against evil.²⁶⁹

It would seem that the most multifunctional and common word for the Cross is *rod*, showing 1297 hits on the *DOEC*.²⁷⁰ This word appears in charms as a

²⁶⁶ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 226-27.

²⁶⁷ The quotation is taken from the results of a *DOEC* search for *cristes* plus *rode*: see *Dictionary of Old English*, <<http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/cgi-bin/doecorpus/oec-idx?type=bigger&byte=21835136&q1=tacen&q2=&q3=>> [accessed 23/03/10]. The *DOEC* references J. Zupitza, 'Kreuzzauber', *Archiv* 88: 364-5.

²⁶⁸ The quotation is taken from the results of a *DOEC* search for *rode* + *gebletsian*: see *DOEC*, <<http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/cgi-bin/doecorpus/oec-idx?type=bigger&byte=6413633&q1=geblet&q2=rod&q3=>> [accessed 23/03/10]. The *DOEC* references Morris, R., *The Blickling Homilies*, 3 vols., *EETS* 58, 63, 73 (London) [repr. in 1 vol. 1967].

²⁶⁹ The history of self-signing is discussed by W. O. Stevens, who mentions the sign of the Cross being upon waking to protect oneself throughout the day; on one's death-bed; for the purposes of healing, within the charms; to mark the swearing of an oath; on the occasion of being christened; and upon being baptised. See W. O. Stevens, *The Cross*, pp. 26-35.

²⁷⁰ See *Dictionary Of Old English Corpus*, <<http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/cgi-bin/doecorpus/oec-idx?index=Begin+with&type=simple&q1=rod&restrict=Cameron+number&resval=&class=All&size=First+100>> [accessed 16/02/10].

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focus for devotion and a conduit of power: for example, in closing units such as *þurh þa haligan Cristes rode* ('Through the holy Cross of Christ'),²⁷¹ and in phrases such as *...ond bebeod hit Criste and sancta Marian and þære halgan rode to lofe and to weorþinga* ('...and commend it to Christ and holy Mary and to the holy cross in praise and worship'): these phrases are presumably intended to boost the efficacy of the charms by supplying some of the miraculous power inherent in the symbol of the Resurrection.²⁷² *Rode* also appears in charters, functioning as a signature:

+ *Ic Ciolnoð mid Godes gefe ærcebiscop ðis write 7 ðeafie 7 mid Cristes rode tacne hit festniæ.* *I Ceolnoth, archbishop by God's grace, consent to this in writing and confirm it with the symbol of Christ's Cross.*²⁷³

Rode can also, of course, represent the Cross of the Crucifixion, seen most famously in the *Dream of the Rood*, but also in texts such as the riddle below:

*Ic seah in healle, þær hæleð druncon,
on flet beran feower cynna
wrætlíc wudutreow ond wunden gold
sinc searobunden, ond seolfres dæl
ond rode tacn...*

I saw in the hall where heroes drink
Carried onto the floor of four kinds
A wondrous wood-tree and wound with gold
Secretly-bound treasure and silvered in part
and a rood symbol...²⁷⁴

This text is particularly interesting in that it brings together other ways in which the Anglo-Saxons could describe the Cross: *wudutreow* and *rode tacn* both refer to the same object, but reach out to different aspects of the Cross' significance. *Wudutreow*, 'tree of the wood' emphasises the previous life of the Cross as a tree, echoed in ll. 28-29 of *Dream of the Rood*:

þæt wæs geara iu - ic þæt gyta geman þæt ic wæs aheawen holtes on ende
It was long ago - I remember it yet- that I was hewn from holt's end.²⁷⁵

This calls to mind the role of the Cross as an unwilling participant in the Crucifixion, and highlights the importance of the transformation of the Cross from a tree to the instrument of Christ's death: elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon texts, *beam*, 'tree' echoes this connection. *Rode tacn*, 'Cross symbol' accentuates the ability of every cross-shaped object to call upon the meaning of the Cross.

²⁷¹ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 08-09.

²⁷² Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 174-75.

²⁷³ See Janet Nelson and Harold Short, *ASChart*

<<http://www.aschart.kcl.ac.uk/content/charters/text/s1482.html>> [accessed 16/02/10]. See *Orality and Literacy: Performance* for a fuller discussion of the performativity of the cross in charters.

²⁷⁴ See Riddle 53 in Craig Williamson, *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1977), p. 100. Translation my own.

²⁷⁵ See 'Dream of the Rood', ll. 28-29.

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All of these examples place the charms in the context of a society which understood the power and multivalency of the Cross, using many different words to represent the Cross itself and its varying functions. The charms do not exist in a vacuum, but are of the society which produced them, and so it is natural that they echo the techniques of other Anglo-Saxon texts, making use of the Cross as an effective and efficient symbol. Indeed, the Cross appears in both families of charms discussed in this study. In the theft charms, the Cross forms the central unit of the charm around which the other units rotate; the *Crux Christi* formula is used to channel the divine order of God into the lives of the charmers and their audiences. Furthermore, the shape of the Cross (i.e. four points) is used to demarcate the special space upon which the charm is to have its effect, in terms of the household from which the goods have been stolen, and the wider world into which the thief has escaped. This image of the Cross being capable of stretching over the whole world is key to the efficacy of the charm, and can be seen elsewhere in charms and Anglo-Saxon culture. In the blood-staunching charms, the symbol of the Cross appears in the margins of the charms, marking out the central unit (the *rivos* section), and indicating that the charmer is to invoke the Cross as a weapon and a shield by signing him/herself with the sign of the Cross.

Central to this chapter is the idea that the Cross is a multi-functional symbol, capable of representing the death of Christ and his resurrection, the punishment awaiting the sinful and the salvation of the faithful. Indeed, this inscription, found on a portable cross and part of two Anglo-Saxon charms against skin disease,²⁷⁶ demonstrate the dual nature of the Cross: *Crux mihi vita est, tibi mors, inimici* ('To me the Cross be life: to you, enemy, death.'). Here, the Cross is used to bolster the power of the charms, channelling the power of the resurrected Christ to redeem and to heal; the Cross' mirror image (of justice and punishment for sin) is also invoked, so that the charmer can destroy the disease.

As a symbol of both the death and resurrection of Christ, the Cross becomes the archetype of the 'points of convergence' that give this chapter its title. Capable of symbolising life, death, sacrifice, redemption and triumph, the Cross is a point at which the central tenets of Christianity meet. This ability of the Cross to embody many different ideas makes it an ideal symbol to be invoked in charms, a multivalent symbol with the potential to bolster the efficacy of varying types of charms.

²⁷⁶ See Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Charms and Remedies*, vol. I, CLXVIII and CLII and vol. II, p. 289-90, 338-39.

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In this chapter we will explore how the Cross is used in the charms, suggesting that the Cross acts as a 'point of convergence', a moment where the charmer brings together ideas central to the charm and ensures that the charm will work. We will then contextualise these uses of the Cross by considering how the Cross is used elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon culture, focusing on the Cross in stone sculptures and on coins.

b. The Cross in the Charms

The fact that the Cross can represent so many different ideas means that it is an ideal symbol to be used in the charms. Just as in the other media which incorporate the Cross, the charms provide a point where different ideas can intersect, serving as a converging point for concepts most often perceived as dissimilar, and in some cases, mutually exclusive. For example, it could be suggested that the Cross provides a point where spiritual meets with practical: for example, stone crosses fulfil a practical role-protecting and demarcating a community's boundaries- whilst at the same time providing an opportunity for meditation on the Cross's decoration for the sculptor and viewer alike. Similarly, in the charms, devotional moments can be found even in the pragmatic processes of bodily healing. The charms often invoke thoughtful, spiritual material for the purposes of healing, a case in point being the theft charm which explicitly invokes the *Crux Christi*. This reference to the extent of God's power and His sacrifice is both a devotional moment and an opportunity for practical healing or restoring of the natural order, acting as a conduit between the body and soul. Furthermore, the blood-staunching charms invoke the Cross in such an allusive manner that the user is required to engage with Christian learning before the true subject of the charm is to be uncovered: the loss of Christ's blood on the Cross and God's power to restore Him to life.

Another commonality shared by the charms which invoke the Cross is the blurring of boundaries between medical and liturgical material. The exchange between medicine and liturgy can be seen in Cross-remedies, where liturgical material is used with a practical and medicinal goal, in turn lending a devotional air to the charms. For instance, the charms in Royal 2.a.xx, which themselves contain liturgical elements, are lent a 'quasi-liturgical legitimacy' by the more 'central' liturgical texts which surround them, sharing the common focus of devotion, worship and health.²⁷⁷ The remedies in Royal which employ the Cross exemplify the combination of authoritative, liturgical

²⁷⁷ See K. L. Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross: Who and For Whom?', in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C. E. Karkov, S. Larratt Keefer and K. L. Jolly (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 58-79 (62).

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and devotional material with more practical, everyday circumstances.²⁷⁸ Whilst Jolly's neat separation of medical from liturgical is attractive to a modern user so keen on tidy divisions, it is not necessarily true that the medical remedies in Royal achieve legitimacy through their echoing of more 'central' texts'. Her term 'quasi-liturgical' accounts for the presence of liturgical material in the charms, but for the Anglo-Saxons such a distinction might not have been required or even possible. Indeed, it could be the case that medical and liturgical material shared a far closer relationship than Jolly admits. Jolly appears to be assessing legitimacy and centrality in terms of a text's closeness to those most easily perceived as religious (i.e. prayers and other liturgical material): whilst it is possible that a hierarchy of legitimacy might have been present in Church recommendations, it is not necessarily the case that lived experience would echo these suggestions. The owner of Royal, therefore, would not necessarily be conscious of the need to legitimise medical texts by combining and surrounding them with liturgical texts: it is entirely possible that these texts had a legitimacy of their own.

This combination of medicine and liturgy brings together another pair of categories seen as opposites: the clergy and the laity. The close relationship between the clergy and the laity is evidenced in charm texts by those remedies which involve an in-depth knowledge of Latin or psalms yet are clearly intended for use in common, everyday circumstances experienced by the laity: furthermore, charms such as those in *Bald's Leechbook* use a high incidence of the vernacular, hinting at a lay rather than clerical user. The charms discussed in this study fall into the category of texts developed in an ecclesiastical environment, yet accessible by the lay community. The evidence for this is in the sign of the Cross, appearing as a grapheme amongst Latin and liturgical text, symbolising- without complex instruction- the action of self-signing. The manuscript context of many of the charms in this study (as additions to collections of liturgical material: for example the theft charms in CCC 190, 41 and Tiberius A.iii) add weight to the suggestion that the clerical community were aware of practical, bodily needs, and turned their hand to recording and developing these charms in an ecclesiastical context for the use of their own community and that of the laity. Perhaps the charms also constituted an ideal opportunity to disseminate Biblical concepts to the laity: for example, in the re-telling of Veronica's story in the blood-staunching charms.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ See Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', p. 66

²⁷⁹ It is important to realise that any terms such as 'spiritual', 'practical' and 'medical' are terms imposed upon Anglo-Saxon material by a modern audience eager to impose order upon these texts. The Anglo-Saxons would not have necessarily perceived these distinctions or felt them to be necessary.

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In terms of the charms discussed in this study, invocations of the Cross share the characteristics above, but can be further categorised according to the conditions of each invocation. Each invocation of the Cross can be defined as being part of one of three categories: **physical**: **cosmological** (to use Thomas Hill's terminology): and **sympathetic**.

The **physical** uses of the Cross, envisaged as a cruciform ritual, mark the boundaries of a place or the space in which the charm is to operate. The theft charms make use of this technique, as do field remedies such as the *Æcerbot* charm. The blood-staunching charms also perceive the Cross as an object integrated with the physical realm (as opposed to simply the spiritual), but in a different way from the theft charms. Rather than as a concept or shape of a ritual, the Cross in the blood-staunching charms appears as a grapheme inserted into the text (+) representing the **performance** of the sign of the Cross by the performer. Here, therefore, the physical enactment of the cruciform shape channels the protective and healing power of God, rather than simply indicating the area requiring His attention.

Beyond the physical stipulations implied by cruciform rituals, references to the Cross in the charms reach out beyond the material shape of the Cross to the spiritual ideas linked with the Crucifixion of Christ, invoking the universal and **cosmological** power of God. Although harnessing the same ideas as the **physical** category, the **cosmological** uses of the Cross relate more directly to Biblical and spiritual concepts which in turn relate to the ideal outcome of the performance of the charm.

Finally, linked with the **cosmological** nature of the Cross and its universal power is the **sympathetic** use of the Cross, in which certain ideas linked with the symbol of the Cross are intended to transfer into the situation addressed by the charm. For example, the loss and finding of the Cross relates to the loss and hopeful recovery of stolen goods, and the resurrection of Christ after His blood was shed on the Cross is intended to be echoed in the staunching of bleeding.

The Physical Cross

In the theft charms, the Cross is used as an effective way to mark out the area from which the item was stolen, and also to extend the power of the charm to all areas into which the thief may have escaped. The prevalence of the number four in the Christian world view is no coincidence: four evangelists, four rivers of paradise, all descendants of the four arms of the Cross. There is no doubt that pre-Christian religions were similarly interested in the number four: the four winds and the four points of the

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compass predate Christianity.²⁸⁰ However, it is exactly the directional aspect of the Cross (i.e. its encompassing of everything, whether North, South, East or West: as in the Type Two charms) that makes it an ideal symbol for the theft charms: the space contained within the performance instruction *Sing þonne on feower healfæ þæs huses . 7 æne on middan...* is contained within the field of the charm. Crosses used as boundary markers also appear in Anglo-Saxon charms such as the *Æcerbot* charm.

The *Æcerbot* charm appears in London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.vii.²⁸¹ The Cross is a vital element of the charm, manifesting as frequent mentions of the number four, first seen in the four sods of earth. The charm contains instructions to

*Genim þonne on niht ær hyt dagige feower tyrf on feower healfa þæs landes and gemearca huh hy ær stodon... and do þonne halig-wæter ðæron, and drype þonne þriwa on þone stapol þara turfa...*²⁸²

Bruce Rosenberg, in his article 'The Meaning of *Æcerbot*', assumes that the four sods of earth are intended to delimit the edges of the field to be treated, but also sympathetically represent the whole field, so that any treatment done to the four sods

²⁸⁰ A search in the Lewis and Short dictionary reveals that the four winds are named in both Greek and Roman traditions, and appear in a variety of texts. Greek authors such as Pliny, Cornelius Nepos, Vergil, Ovid, Aulus Gellius, Vitruvius Pollio, C. Valerius Flaccus, and Lucan all name *Boreas* (the north wind), *Zephyrus* (the west wind), *Notus* (the the south wind) and *Eurus* (the east wind): their Roman counterparts (*Aquilo*, *Favonius*, *Vulturnus* and *Auster*) feature in the Vulgate Bible and in works by Cicero, Horace and Lucretius. Although these names refer to the winds, they can also refer to deities by the same name, rivers (particularly in the case of *Vulturnus*) and general directions (e.g. *Auster* can also refer to a southern country), and can in some cases be used as proper names (e.g. *Favonius*). See Charlton Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879).

Ælfric also writes about the four winds in *De Temporibus Anni*, demonstrating that these views were circulating in the Anglo-Saxon period:

There are four principal winds: the first is the eastern wind, called *Subsolanus* because it blows from the place where the sun rises and is very temperate. The second principal wind is southern and is called *Auster*; it stirs up clouds and flashes of lightning and blows various kinds of pestilence throughout the earth. The third principal wind is called *Zephyrus* in the Greek language and *Favonius* in Latin; it blows from the west and through its blowing all earthly plants revive and bloom, and that wind dissipates and thaws every winter. The fourth principal wind is called *Septemtrio*; it blows from the north, cold and snowy, and it makes dry clouds.

These four principal winds have eight other winds among them in the orb of the earth, always two winds between two principal winds. We could tell their names and the way they blow if it did not seem wearisome to write it. Nevertheless, one of those eight winds is called *Aquilo*; it blows from the north and east, and it is high and cold and very dry. It is called *Boreas* by another name, and it entirely drives off and puts to flight the pestilence that *Auster*, the southern wind, engenders.

See Heinrich Henel, *Ælfric's De Temporibus Anni*, Early English Text Society 213 (1942), and < <http://faculty.virginia.edu/OldEnglish/aelfric/detemp.html> > [accessed 7/10/10 for a translation by Peter Baker].

²⁸¹ Gneuss dates the charm to the first half of the eleventh century, with the rest of the manuscript dated to the second half of the tenth century. H. Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, Medieval and Renaissance texts and studies: vol. 241 (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), p. 61.

²⁸² Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 173, ll. 4-5, 9-10.

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will happen to the field.²⁸³ This echoes the performance instruction of the Type One theft charms, in which the cruciform ritual demarcates the area concerned. Here again, the number four can be seen as representative of Christian completion and perfection, the four arms of the Cross stretching over the whole world.

Although Rosenberg makes some interesting suggestions about the charm which are congruent with the evidence in the theft charms, he also makes some less convincing claims about the Christianity (or otherwise) of the charm: for example, he suggests that delimiting the field in this way would keep 'the good mana in and the bad out', which seems to ignore the Christian context and content of the charm.²⁸⁴ It is indeed likely that the Anglo-Saxons considered the symbol of the four-pointed Christian Cross as one of protection, but Rosenberg ignores the apotropaic meaning of the Cross, preferring a "pagan" explanation, that the taking of the four sods creates a magical barrier around the field to protect it from witchcraft. He supports his argument by looking to a Roman custom, a practice that must surely be removed by such a great amount of time and space from an Anglo-Saxon charm that it is a tenuous link at best. A more balanced view comes from Thomas Hill,²⁸⁵ whose main argument rests on the premise that the number of sods used is associated with 'an elaborate system of quaternities which had been developed.... To bound and define the structure of the world'.²⁸⁶ In doing so he expands the significance of the sods out from protecting the delimited land from witchcraft to a wider context of Christian resonance.

In addition, Hill suggests that the moistening of the sods of earth is a link to Biblical concepts (as opposed to Rosenberg, who is of the opinion that moistening the sods with water dripped from the twigs is imitative magic, designed to cause the fertilisation of the earth of the field). The 'creation of Adam from four clods taken from the four regions of the world and moistened from the four rivers of paradise'²⁸⁷ not only interconnects the number of sods with the number of clods and rivers used to create Adam, but also highlights the action of moistening in relation to regenerating the life of the field. Thus, the charm attempts to re-enact the creation of Adam, which stands at the head of all 'subsequent human creation',²⁸⁸ in order to reiterate the creation of the world and in doing so bring about the "re-creation" of the field's fertility.

²⁸³ Bruce A. Rosenberg, 'The Meaning of *Æcerbot*', *The Journal of American Folklore* 79 (1966), 428-36.

²⁸⁴ Rosenberg, 'The Meaning of *Æcerbot*', 434.

²⁸⁵ Thomas Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm and its Christian User', *Anglo-Saxon England* 6 (1977), 213-23.

²⁸⁶ Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm', 215.

²⁸⁷ Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm', 218.

²⁸⁸ Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm', 218.

4.ii Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms

John Niles elaborates on Hill's "re-creating Creation" theory, suggesting that the *Crescite* prayer (lines 12-14 in *Æcerbot*) and the instruction to *wexe... and gemænigfealda*, to be said when the actions with the sods have been carried out, are connected not only to the story of Adam, but also to that of Noah.²⁸⁹ In brief, therefore, Niles suggests that the charm does not only intend to reiterate Creation, but also to 'invoke that entire process of events by which God made man a tiller of the good earth', to re-enact God's promise that Spring will follow Winter, and times of plenty will follow famine.²⁹⁰ It is clear, therefore, that the number four as exemplified in the shape of the Cross is significant in charming not only in terms of spatial boundaries, but also in terms of the wider Christian context of healing and faith.

The Cosmological Cross

The development from the physical and spatial aspect of the Cross outwards to the larger context of Christian ideology is a logical progression, with obvious links to the charms. The **cosmological** Cross is directly invoked in the *Crux Xpi* unit, in which the user calls upon the general universal power of the Cross to reinstate the natural order of the world: wrongdoing will be punished, and stolen goods returned according to God's law, in all areas covered by the four arms of the Cross, the compass and the four rivers of Paradise. That is, that God's will is spread all over the world,²⁹¹ preventing the thief from escaping with the stolen goods. That the 'Jews Hanged Christ' unit, explicitly referring to the punishment due to those responsible for the death of Christ, follows directly after the *Crux Xpi* unit is no coincidence. The charm is ensuring, in no uncertain terms, that the Cross of Christ, with its power to spread over the whole world, will ensure the return of the goods, and will balance crime with punishment:

²⁸⁹ Niles, John D., 'The *Æcerbot* Ritual in Context', in *Old English Literature in Context* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1980), pp. 44-57 (p. 54).

²⁹⁰ See *Biblia Sacra*, Genesis 8:17:

cuncta animantia quae sunt apud te ex omni carne tam in volatilibus quam in bestiis et in universis reptilibus quae reptant super terram educ tecum et ingredimini super terram crescite et multiplicamini super eam.

Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth: that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

and Genesis 8: 21:

odoratusque est Dominus odorem suavitatis et ait ad eum nequaquam ultra maledicam terrae propter homines sensus enim et cogitatio humani cordis in malum prona sunt ab adolescentia sua non igitur ultra percutiam omnem animantem sicut feci

And the Lord smelled a sweet savour: and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake: for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

²⁹¹ Hill, 'The *Æcerbot* Charm', 213-23.

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*Crux Christi reducat Crux Christi per furtum periit inuenta
est abraham tibi semitas uias montes concludat iob &
flumina adiu dicii ligatum per ducat
Iudeas crist ahengan þæt heom com to wite swa strangan ge
dydan.*

May the Cross of Christ bring it back. The cross of Christ was lost through a thief and was found. May Abraham close to you the paths, roads, and mountains, and Job also the rivers, and bring you bound to judgement. The Jews hanged Christ. That deed brought them a harsh punishment.

Secondly, the direct reference to the 'Cross of Christ' alludes to the notion of the death balanced out with rebirth seen in the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, and in turn reflects the need for balance in the return of the stolen goods to their rightful place. Indeed, biblical teachings make it clear that if you feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty, balancing need with assistance, you will be rewarded: and the converse also is true: 'And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal' (Matthew 25:46).²⁹² Thus in GS 11a, the cross shape and the *Crux Christi* also have a wider symbolism beyond demarcating of boundaries, representing both physical space and divine punishment, order and truth: the user appeals to Christ to impose these qualities on the situation, and in doing so, to solve the problem.

The Sympathetic Cross

References to situations bearing a similarity to the conditions faced by the user are not uncommon in charms, especially those which use a (frequently Biblical) narrative to represent, for example, the staunching of bleeding or stopping of pain. For example, charm LXIV in the *Lacnunga* features a brief story about Jesus, intended to sympathetically bring about the healing of the afflicted:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people: 'God the omnipotent Father heals you, who created you: your faith heals you, which has freed you from all danger': 'Christ, help us': 'My God and Father and Son and Holy Spirit'...²⁹³

This **sympathetic** "magic" is evident in the theft charms, in which the loss and finding of the Cross is intended to transfer into the situation being experienced by the user, through the finding of his stolen goods. The loss of the Cross and its finding by St.

²⁹² See *Biblia Sacra*:

Et ibunt hi in supplicium æternum : justi autem in vitam æternam.

²⁹³ Edward Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms and Prayers from British Library MS Harley 585: The Lacnunga*, vols. I and II (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), p. 37-39 (37).

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Helen was a legend known to the Anglo-Saxons, so it is not surprising that a reference to St. Helen appears in GS 15, the Type Three theft charm:

<i>Ic geþohte sancte eadelenanand ic geþohte crist on rode ahangen swa ic þence ðis feoh to findanne næs to oðfeorrganne and to witanne næs to oðwryceanne and to lufianne næs to oðlædanne.</i>	As I thought of St. Helen and I thought of Christ, hanged on the cross so I expect to find these animals, not have them gone far away and to know where they are, not have them harmed and to care for them, not have them led off.
--	--

As Storms suggests, ‘the conviction that the holy cross, itself lost for about 300 years and eventually rediscovered, will bring back the cattle’ is central to this charm.²⁹⁴ Indeed, the *Crux Christi reducat* unit refers directly to the loss and finding of the True Cross:

<i>Crux Christi reducat. Crux Christi per furtum periit inuenta est...</i>	May the cross of Christ bring it back. The cross of Christ was lost through a thief and was found
--	--

It must also be considered that the unit directly comments on the loss of the Cross through the actions of a thief, and its subsequent discovery: these aspects of the St. Helena legend, without directly invoking the saint herself, could be expected to work sympathetically and bring about the desired result for the user.

The Cross as Performance

The decoration of the charms—that is, the ways in which they are accompanied by images—is discussed above in 3.i. Manuscript Context, examining how illuminated letters and the image of the Cross help to separate the charms. Indeed, as a marker of boundaries and space, the Cross is a common symbol, seen in charms and in charters alike. Examples of crosses in charters abound, used to begin the text, to indicate signatures or participants in and confirmation of the agreement, and accompanying religious tags (which also tend to fall at the beginning of texts). For example:

+ <i>In ures dryhtnes nomen hælendes Cristes . ic Æðelbald Myrcna cincg...</i>	+ In the name of our Lord, the Saviour Christ, I, Æðelbald, King of Mercia... ²⁹⁵
--	---

Here the Cross marks the beginning of a new text, separating it from the others.

²⁹⁴ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 212

²⁹⁵ ‘Remission of Dues on Two Ships’, ll. 1-2, in A. J. Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), pp. 2-3.

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7 asyndrade nymðe heo hit her mid þingonge bote gebete. + Ic Æðelbald. Cincg mine agene sylene trymmende ic heo wrat. Mildred bisceop þare halegan rode tacen he heron gefæstnode.

...unless they make amends for it here with intercession. + I, King Æðelbald, have written this, confirming my own gift. Bishop Mildred has afverbal here the symbol of the holy cross.²⁹⁶

In this instance, the Cross functions as both a marker of a new section of the charter, highlighting the names of those involved in the agreement, and also as a seal, afverbal by a member of the clergy, affirming the legitimacy of the agreement. Here, then, the Cross is both a visual signal indicating significant parts of the agreement and a symbol of validity.

+ *In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti*

+ In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.²⁹⁷

In this final example, the Cross is used to accompany a religious tag, emphasising its importance.²⁹⁸ Whilst all these functions of the Cross are acceptable, it is also possible that there is an extra function of the Cross, requiring performance of the Sign of the Cross. Indeed, the witness lists found in wills are often punctuated by Crosses, perhaps suggesting that the scribe is not using the Cross to mark out different witnesses, but rather is recording the fact that those named self-signed as they witnessed the document.²⁹⁹ For example:

+ *Ic Ceolnoð mid Godes gefe ærcebiscop ðis write 7 ðeafie 7 mid Cristes rode tacne hit festniæ.*
+ *Ic Beagmund preost ðis ðeafie 7 write.*
+ *Ic Wærhard preost abbod ðis ðeafie 7 write.*

+ I, Ceolnoth, archbishop by God's grace, consent to this in writing and confirm it with Christ's Cross.
+ I, Priest Beagmund, consent to this in writing.
+ I, Priest and Abbot Wærhard consent to this in writing.

It is possible that the Cross represented at the beginning of each line is the *Cristes rode* to which Ceolnoth refers: but it is equally possible that the scribe is recording Ceolnoth's spoken words and actions, with the Cross being shorthand for Ceolnoth's physical action, marking himself with *Cristes rode*.

An inspection of the decoration of the Royal charms—which focuses specifically on the appearance of the Cross—reveals that the Cross fulfils, to a certain

²⁹⁶ 'Remission of Dues on Two Ships', ll. 17-20.

²⁹⁷ 'Agreement Between Ceolred, Abbot of Peterborough, and Wulfred', Robertson, *Charters*, pp. 12-13.

²⁹⁸ See Karen L. Jolly, 'Cross-Referencing Anglo-Saxon Liturgy and Remedies: The Sign of the Cross as Ritual Protection', in *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. H. Gittos, (London: Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 213-43 (p. 215).

²⁹⁹ See *Orality and Literacy: Performance* for a discussion of performativity in wills.

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extent, each of the functions seen above: marking separation: highlighting significant sections: and indicating self-signing. As a marker of beginnings and endings, the Cross is not used as consistently as decoration.³⁰⁰ thus, it might be wiser to imagine the symbol of the Cross as a marker of new sections, rather than new texts. Indeed, the Cross appears at the beginning of texts four times in Royal, but appears five times in the middle of texts. The Cross is far more consistent in marking out units and important figures, which suggests that the performer might also be required to perform this reverence with the act of self-signing.

It has been explained that the theft charms use the Cross as an allusive image which calls upon Biblical exegesis, relating to the charm through sympathetic association. Alternatively, the Cross forms the shape of the ritual, efficiently encapsulating and demarcating space. In the blood-staunching charms, there are generally no performance instructions relating to physical actions: the one charm with performance instructions requires speaking rather than doing. Therefore, the Cross is not called upon during any charming action. Similarly, a physical demarcation of the space affected by the charm is unnecessary. The most persuasive interpretation of the symbol of the Cross in Royal is not as a marker of beginnings and endings—as the use of the Cross is too inconsistent—but as an instruction to perform the Cross itself. For example, the Cross preceding the line *Crux Christ Iesu domini dei nostri ingeritur mihi* (E) with its specific reference to the Cross and to Jesus, could represent a suggestion of physical action, at which point the user is supposed to physically form the sign of the Cross over themselves. Here, the written symbol of the Cross reminds the user of the actual Cross upon which Christ was crucified, and consequently also represents the healing power symbolised by the Cross, allowing the user, through physical action, to channel the healing and protective nature of the Cross into their own situation. When the user enacts the symbol of the Cross by drawing a Cross in the air in the act of self-signing, the transfer of the defensive and protective power of the Cross from the symbol into actuality is completed. Turning to the Cross for salvation in moments of devotion can be seen in the other texts in Royal, and could even be perceived as something of a theme. The idea of the Cross as a symbol of mercy, compassion and love pervades Western Christianity, and so it is not entirely unexpected that this symbol should be turned to in times of physical need. The Cross as a weapon in the battle against sickness, physically enacted through self-signing, can be seen in hagiographical and other religious sources and is an extra tool at the disposal of the Anglo-Saxon Christian

³⁰⁰ Discussed at length in 3.i. Manuscript Context.

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concerned with bodily and spiritual healing. Self-signing was a well-known, accepted and recognised practice in Anglo-Saxon England.³⁰¹ Indeed, saint's lives refer to the defensive power of the sign of the Cross, enacted by drawing the long stroke of the Cross then the short cross-bar in the air.³⁰²

Thus, each instance of the Cross in the blood-charms can be interpreted in two complementary ways: as a marker of importance, and as an indication to perform the symbol of the Cross to boost the apotropaic power of the important phrase and the charm as a whole. For example, Charm G marks out the Greek units with extended Crosses above the words (Figures 1-6):

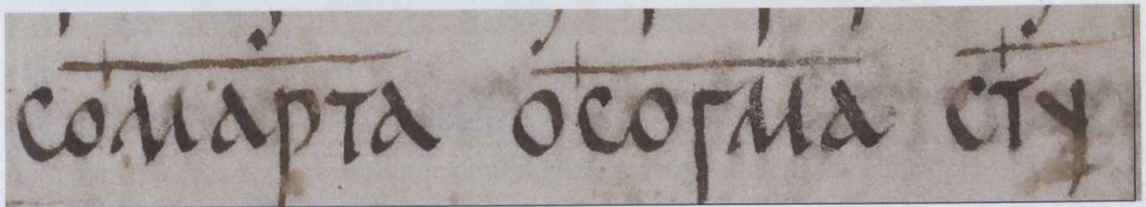


Figure 1: Charm G, Greek section [a]



Figure 2: Charm G, Greek section [b]

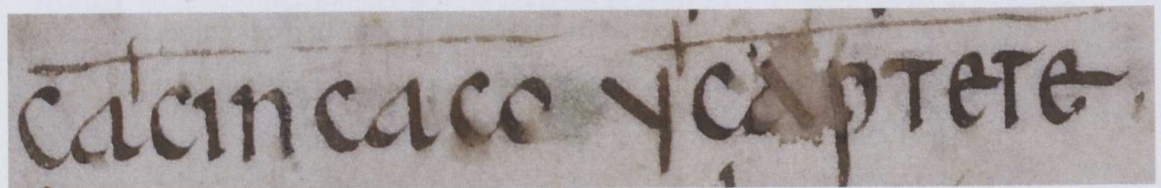


Figure 3: Charm G, Greek section [c]

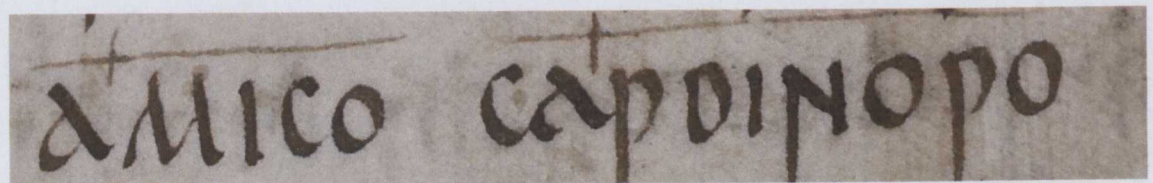


Figure 4: Charm G, Greek section [d]

³⁰¹ The practice of self-signing was well-known in Anglo-Saxon England, and is well-attested by sources both recommending the practice and showing it in action. See Jolly, 'Cross-Referencing Anglo-Saxon Liturgy', p. 218; Johnson, 'Crux', esp. p. 83; McEntire, 'The Devotional Context', esp. pp. 395-96.

³⁰² Jolly, 'Cross-Referencing Anglo-Saxon Liturgy', p. 218.

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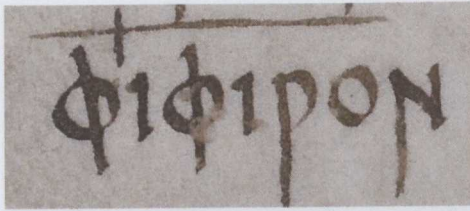


Figure 5: Charm G, Greek section [e]



Figure 6: Charm G, Greek section [f]

As the image shows, there are some faint markings above each of the Greek phrases which could be representative of the Cross. A long horizontal line which extends to the final letter of each word is crossed close to the left hand side by a single vertical line, so that the shape resembles a cross with an extended right arm. Perhaps the scribe is attempting to mark out these phrases as somehow special or significant, potentially because of the choice of language. These two interpretations are not mutually exclusive, and both support the idea that the Cross is used as a method of marking significant sections, and as an instruction to perform. Indeed, in this particular example the performance aspect is emphasised, with the Cross potentially marking the act of self-signing and aiding the performer to read the Greek sections aloud.

Thus, sections in another language can be seen to prompt the use of the Cross. Other aspects of the charms that seem to prompt the appearance of the Cross are:

- The *Rivos* unit:

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Figure 7: G, *Riuor*



Figure 8: E, *Riuor*

Charm E and F decorate the *riuor* unit *and* accompany it with a Cross: indeed, the importance of the *riuor* unit—indicated by its function as a central point around which other units orbit, to create multiple members of the charm family—is confirmed by the fact that it is decorated *and* accompanied by a Cross, even when it does not begin the charm. Every instance of *riuor* is decorated regardless of its position and so must be regarded as central to the charm in the opinion of the scribe.

Charm D, however, does not accompany *riuor* with a Cross :

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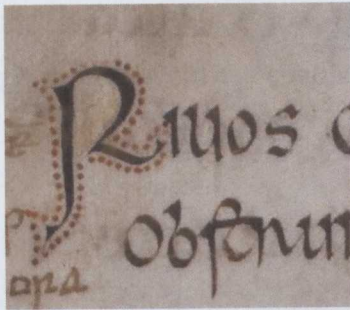


Figure 9: D, *Rivos*

The reason for the lack of a Cross in this case is not clear: but it is probably significant that no other parts of Charm D (or Charm C, which appears on the same folio) are marked by anything other than decoration. Perhaps the scribe knew a version of the charm which did not include self-signing in the ritual, and so did not feel the need to include the sign of the Cross with this witness.

- The *Criste adiuva* unit :

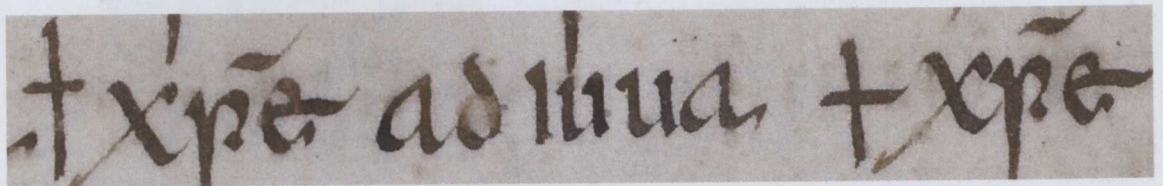


Figure 10: G, *Criste adiuva*

In Charm G, the Cross appears as a symbol no less than four times, more frequently than in any of the other blood-charms. This could be accounted for by the fact that the symbol accompanies each repetition of *Criste adiuva*, repeated three times. The repetition of the phrase lends it emphasis, which, combined with the repetition of the Cross-symbol, marks this unit out as one of the most central to the charm as a whole. That this unit asks directly for divine intervention and refers to Christ explicitly is probably a reason for its emphasis, and its repetition: but perhaps the Cross symbol also indicates the practice of self-signing, as an extra dimension of protection and healing. An alternative explanation could be that the mention of Christ's name is accompanied by the Cross symbol as an acknowledgement of His holiness and power. Counter to these arguments, however, is the fact that the Cross appears twice in the *Criste adiuva* unit to separate the first and second repetition, and the second from the third: that is, the Cross does not appear once for every mention of Christ, as one might expect. It could be

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the case, therefore, that we are simply seeing a way of separating out these repetitive phrases, to avoid any confusion.

- *Beronice*:

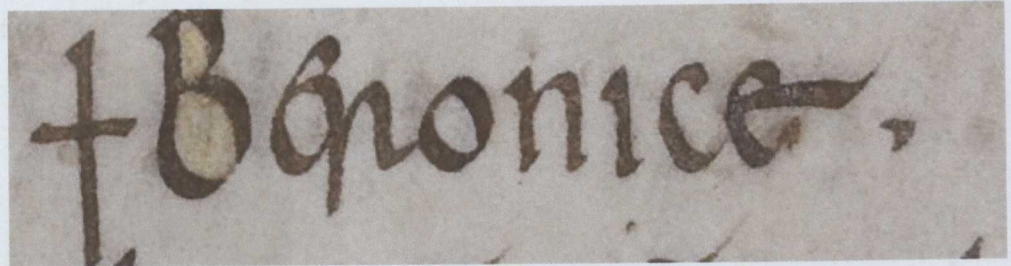


Figure 11: G, *Beronice*

The mention of Veronica is central to the charm, and so it is simple to see why this phrase is accompanied by a marker of importance, and an exhortation to self-sign. However, on the same folio, *Beronice* is unmarked.

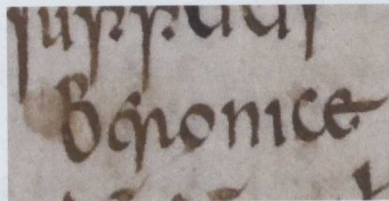


Figure 12: G, *Beronice*

It is clear that the scribe attached some importance to this phrase as the bowls of *B* appear to be filled in with yellow ink. The lack of a Cross could be due to the fact that the self-signing is not required more than once.

- The *In nomine* unit (which could also be interpreted as a reference to a religious figure, for example *In nomine sanctus sancti*):



Figure 13: B, *In Nomine*

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The looped Cross seen here also occurs on f. 16b (C and D), though it does not appear to be connected to any specific part of the text, appearing halfway down the left-hand margin: indeed, in comparison to the ink in which the main text is written, the symbol is rather more faint:

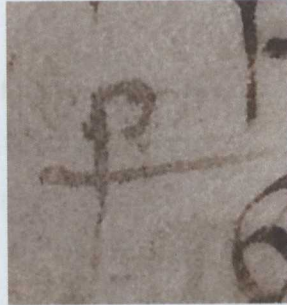


Figure 14: f. 16b, looped Cross

An examination of the manuscript shows that many of the pages of Royal are marked in the top left-hand corner with this cross with a looped top; clearly, for the scribe and owner of Royal, the Cross performed a strong protective function, perhaps imbuing each page marked with the symbol with the power of the Cross itself.³⁰³

The *In Nomine* unit seems to have retained its importance—and the requirement of being accompanied by a Cross—in the later charms recorded on f. 52 (a 12th-century flyleaf):

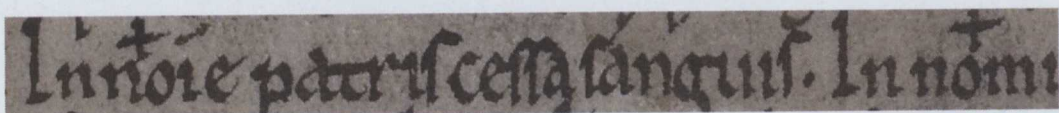


Figure 15: B, *In Nomine* [a]

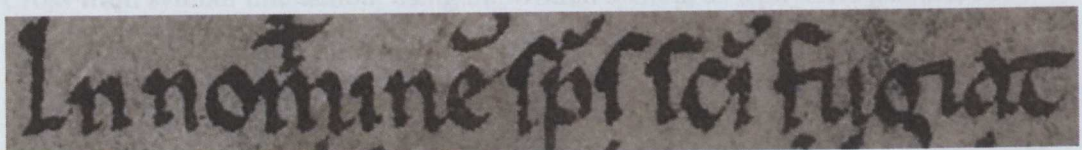


Figure 16: B, *In Nomine* [b]

³⁰³ It is possible that this looped top could be intended to create the Chi-Rho symbol; but the *chi* part is missing; therefore we can assume that the scribe wanted to use a different style, or perhaps s/he wrote these crosses as part of a different stint to the others.

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Figure 17: B, In Nomine [c]

In all of instances of the unit *In Nomine*, the unit also introduces a religious figure: it is difficult, therefore, to determine whether it is the religious figure or the *in nomine* unit that prompts the sign of the Cross. The exception to the rule of accompanying religious figures with a Cross is the phrase *per dominum nostrum*, which is never accompanied by a Cross. For example, see D):

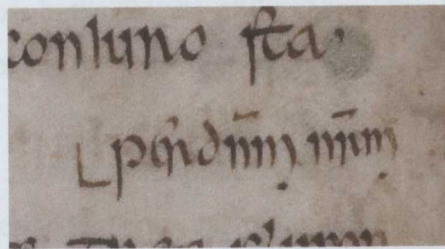


Figure 18: D, Per Dominum Nostrum

The reason for the lack of a Cross here could be that the line appears to have been added as a correction: perhaps the scribe did not think there was enough space left to mark this line.

In summary, the Royal charms use the Cross as a marker of space, and as a marker of significant units. Most importantly, though, they use the symbol of the Cross as an indication to perform an action, instructing the user without words to engage with the apotropaic, healing nature of the Cross. Unlike the theft charms, which engage with the allusive, universal, theological aspects of the Cross, the blood charms transform the Cross from symbol into action, using the written symbol as a physical gesture, and moving the blood charm from the realm of the manuscript into the physical domain of the user. In this way, the Cross in the Royal charms binds together the physical and the spiritual, and links the Cross that saves the Christian soul with the Cross that protects and heals the body. The Anglo-Saxon charms are suspended in a web of allusions, which allows the texts to anchor themselves into cultural, literary and religious focal points. This same web exerts several different forces upon the charms, compelling them to balance spiritual with the bodily, medical with liturgical and clergy with laity. In this

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way, the charms have meaning and purpose for different social groups: for instance, this is reflected in the different incarnations of the theft charms, which incorporate legal, theological and practical concerns. In order to balance these focal points, the charms require a tool which can draw them together and put them all to work in achieving the purpose of the charm.

This, then, is why the symbol of the Cross is so effective in the charms. Practically speaking, the shape of the Cross allows an engagement with physical space, marking out small areas for treatment, while the theological implications of the Cross of the Crucifixion extend the marking of space out to all of God's earth, simultaneously introducing the ideas of justice and punishment to the charm. The association of the Cross in legend and Biblical narratives with pertinent themes such as theft, healing and protection engages with current disease/cure theory by employing these associations of the Cross in the process of the charm. Finally, the performative aspect of the Cross, experienced by Anglo-Saxons in saint's lives and liturgy, allows the charm and its effects to leave the page and become part of the user's physical action.

Having examined the use of the Cross in the charms, we will now move on to considering two other examples of the use of the Cross which demonstrate that the Cross does indeed operate as a 'point of convergence', and that its uses elsewhere echo its uses in the charms.

c. Points of Convergence: Private Devotion/ Public Protection

Firstly, the Cross brings together private devotion and public protection, in the physical representations of the Cross, carved in stone. Monuments such as these (for example, the Bewcastle and Ruthwell Monuments) are notoriously difficult to interpret, as it is not clear what the function of the Cross as a whole, or of the images carved upon them, was intended to be.³⁰⁴ One suggestion is that when embodied in stone sculptures, the sign of the Cross is intended to be a tool of conversion, placed in imposing locations across the Anglo-Saxon landscape to inspire fear in those yet to be converted.³⁰⁵ However, it can also be argued that the physical manifestation of the Cross in stone performs a much more complex role than this, reminding believers of their faith and the images carved on them engage with the liturgy, creating an opportunity for worship and

³⁰⁴ Indeed, it is not certain that these monuments were crosses, though this possibility seems—at the very least—to be likely.

³⁰⁵ See Jane Hawkes, 'Sacraments in Stone: The Mysteries of Christ in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture', in *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*, ed. Martin Carver (York: York Medieval Press, 2003), pp. 351-70 (p. 365). It is also possible that these structures were erected as aristocratic displays of wealth.

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devotion. For example, in her article 'Sacraments in Stone: The Mysteries of Christ in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture',³⁰⁶ Jane Hawkes discusses the carving of the Healing of the Blind Man on the Ruthwell Cross:



Figure 19: The Healing of the Blind Man, Ruthwell.³⁰⁷

At the most basic level, the carving represents the miracle performed by Christ: but the carving would also reach out to other ideas that existed in the Anglo-Saxon cultural matrix. Hawkes' point seems to be that just as texts are suspended in a manuscript context that gives them meaning, so these articles are held in a web of allusions. Thus, lay and uneducated Anglo-Saxons viewing the Cross might take away the knowledge that Christ can perform miracles and is therefore very powerful. More educated viewers, she suggests, might perceive the connection between the renewal of sight and the enlightenment and new sight received in the process of baptism.³⁰⁸ Members of the religious community might perceive yet another layer of meaning in that the carving relates to the liturgical texts read out in Lent, which emphasised the baptism of the blind man and his entering into the community of the Church, and thence the love of Christ: thus, the images celebrate the Church's role in uniting the Christian

³⁰⁶Of the four stone crosses discussed by Jane Hawkes, two of these crosses feature healing miracles performed by Christ (the other miracles depicted are the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Miracle at Canaa). These four miracles represent the events from Christ's life that are attested to by stone crosses. This suggests, Hawkes argues, that these four miracles were specifically chosen for their ability to represent the relationship of the Church to God and the people.³⁰⁶ Hawkes proposes that each of these sculptures represents some sort of discourse on religious rituals (such as baptism) and important Christian ideologies such as the journey from sin to redemption through Christ's love.

³⁰⁷ *Documents of Ireland* <http://publish.ucc.ie/doi/tandi/Ruthwell6-N661> [accessed 7/7/10].

³⁰⁸ See Hawkes, 'Sacraments', pp. 354-55, esp. 355.

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with Christ.³⁰⁹ As a permanent and 'highly accessible' medium,³¹⁰ the stone cross was a way in which the Church could communicate both simple and highly complex religious ideologies to the community: not converting but affirming, these sculptures (both in and of themselves, and in the process of their creation and placing) provide an opportunity for different individual to have diverse and complex devotional experiences. Indeed, as a focus of private devotion, the Cross was a common symbol: writers such as Ælfric, Bede and Alcuin recommend private devotion to the Cross to encourage remembrance of Christ's sacrifice.³¹¹ Furthermore, this belief is reflected in the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, especially in *The Dream of the Rood*:

*Is me nu lifes hyht
þæt ic þone sigebeam secan mote
ana oftor þonne ealle men.
well weorþian. Me is willa to ðam
mycel on mode, and min mundbyrd is
geriht to þære rode.*

For me now life's hope:
that I may seek that victory-beam
alone more often than all men,
honour it well. My desire for that
is much in mind, and my hope of
protection_ reverts to the rood.³¹²

In this section, the dreamer confirms his desire to worship the Cross by himself, in private. S/he also refers to the protective power of the Cross, which leads neatly into the second aspect of this point of convergence: public protection, in the form of the protection of a community.

Stone crosses dotted the Anglo-Saxon landscape (many of which are still in place today), but they were not all as richly decorated as the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses. These plainer crosses marked physical boundaries, such as the limits of a cemetery or owned land.³¹³ However, these crosses were much more than just boundary markers, as their shape belies: a boundary can be marked perfectly well by a stone of any shape, thus the deliberately formed cross-shape must perform some sort of extra function. Much like the Bewcastle and Ruthwell crosses, these crosses could have been placed to remind viewers of the ideologies linked with the Cross, such as sacrifice, redemption and avoidance of sin. However, as the passage from *The Dream of the Rood* suggests, the Cross was also linked closely with the idea of protection. Making the sign

³⁰⁹ See Hawkes, 'Sacraments', pp. 354-55, esp. 355.

³¹⁰ See Hawkes, 'Sacraments', p. 351.

³¹¹ See S. McEntire, 'The Devotional Context of the Cross Before A.D. 1000', in *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. R. M. Liuzza (Yale: London: Yale University Press and New Haven London, 2002), pp. 392-403.

pp. 394-95.

³¹² 'Dream of the Rood', ll. 126a-131a, in Peter Baker, *Introduction to Old English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p. 205.

³¹³ See J. Moreland, 'The World(s) of the Cross', *World Archaeology* 31 (1999), 194-213 (196).

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of the Cross in the air upon oneself or someone else was recognised by the Anglo-Saxons as a method of protection against harm: indeed, Alcuin writes that

... He [Christ] chose the Cross, which is expressed by an easy movement of the hand, and with which we may be protected against the wiles of the enemy.³¹⁴

It is logical, therefore, to surmise that stone representations of the Cross could also possess this defensive quality, the sign of Christ's sacrifice forming a shield against the works of the devil.³¹⁵ The Cross is used as a boundary marker for two reasons: firstly, the sign of Christianity repels evil: and secondly, the very shape of the Cross makes it ideal for a marker of space. The four arms of the Cross reach to all four points of the compass, to the sky, the ends of the earth and to the bottom of whatever exists below. Thus, the Cross can extend its protection to all four corners of the land it borders. More importantly, theologically the four-armed Cross represents the endless love of Christ, and God's dominion over the whole world. Thus, boundary crosses represent an awareness of the wider theological implications of the shape of the Cross, both in terms of the protection it provides, and the more allegorical allusion to the all-embracing power of Christ.³¹⁶ Below, we will see this technique echoed in the theft charms, where the Cross is used to mark out space.

The use of the sign of the Cross as a shield and even an active weapon against harm can be seen in various Anglo-Saxon saints' lives, in which the saint makes the sign of the Cross to protect themselves against threats as diverse as hungry demons and falling trees and rocks, emerging from the threat unharmed. Indeed, David F. Johnson's article 'The *Crux Usualis* as Apotropaic Weapon in Anglo-Saxon England' discusses the protective function of the non-physical Cross (that is, those Crosses not carved in stone, metal or wood, or written on parchment), the gesture or sign of the Cross. Johnson discusses various sources, such as Wulfstan, Ælfric, Gregory the Great, *Andreas*, *Juliana*, and various saint's lives: these sources describe the Cross as effective as a shield against the devil, or as an active curative or offensive device, counteracting natural disasters and disorders such as blindness and the inability to speak. This comprehensive review of many different sources is very useful, as many investigations of the Cross in the Anglo-Saxon period focus on those most famous crosses, Bewcastle and Ruthwell, meaning that the non-physical crosses are not discussed in as much

³¹⁴ William Oliver Stevens, *The Cross in the Life and Literature of the Anglo-Saxons* (New York: H. Holt, 1904) p. 29.

³¹⁵ See Moreland, 'The World(s) of the Cross', 198.

³¹⁶ See McEntire, 'The Devotional Context', pp. 396-97.

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detail.³¹⁷ Along with Jennings, Johnson also discussed the fact that in the eighth century the Sign of the Cross became an integral part of the ritual of baptism, protecting the newly reborn Christian against any harm.³¹⁸ Again, the Cross appears frequently as a written symbol in the charm, where the user is instructed to *wriht Cristes mæl* (that is, the Cross): for example, the charm below is intended to cure a nosebleed:

Wriht on his forheafod Cristes mel:

Write on his forehead in the shape of the [mark] Cross of Christ:

<p><i>s</i> <i>t</i> <i>o</i> <i>m</i> <i>e</i> <i>n</i></p> <p><i>s t o m e n</i> <i>o s +</i></p>	<p><i>c a l c</i></p> <p><i>m</i> <i>e</i> <i>t</i> <i>a</i> <i>f</i> <i>o</i> <i>f</i> <i>u</i> <i>+</i></p>	<p><i>Stomen calcos +, stomen metafofu +</i></p>
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To the modern audience, this charm holds little efficacy: potentially, pressure upon the forehead could slow the bleeding, but it is not a proven cure.³¹⁹ For the Anglo-Saxons, these particular charms hold many layers of efficacy, all centred around the Cross: the charm is written in a Cross shape, containing the Cross symbol, and requires the user to draw the Cross on the sufferer's forehead: the charm is drawing on the healing powers inherent in the Cross as the symbol of resurrection.

All of these examples—saint's lives, the ritual of baptism, and charms which require the writing of the Cross—support the argument that a stone sculpture of the Cross could be both a provoker and focus of *private* devotion, whilst also providing *protection* for a community by marking the edge of its lands with a defensive shield.

³¹⁷ David F. Johnson, 'The *Crux Usualis* as Apotropaic Weapon in Anglo-Saxon England', *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C. E. Karkov, S. L. Keefer and K. L. Jolly (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 80-95 (84).

³¹⁸ See M. Jennings, 'Rood and Ruthwell: The Power of Paradox', *English Language Notes* 31 (1994), 6-12 (8). Also, see Johnson, 'The *Crux Usualis*', pp. 80-95 (84).

³¹⁹ A study testing the effect of ice-packs applied to the forehead during a nosebleed showed that they were ineffective in stopping the bleeding: see Martin Porter, Joe Marais and Neil Tolley, 'The Effect of Ice Packs upon Nasal Mucosal Blood Flow', *Acta Otolaryngol* 111 (1991), 1122-1125. However, alternative remedies often recommend pressure to the forehead as a cure for a nosebleed: coriander, black gram and alum salt all appears as ingredients in a paste applied to the forehead. See 'Epistaxis - Cause, Symptoms, Home Treatment and Remedy of Epistaxis', *Online Vitamins Guide* <<http://www.online-vitamins-guide.com/dietary-cure/epistaxis.htm>> [accessed 23/03/10].

d. Points of Convergence: Secular/ Sacred

The second 'point of convergence' I would like to discuss is the convergence of secular and sacred ideals: the coming together of complementary principles from both Christian and heroic spheres. Although stone crosses are perhaps the most famous and most visible reminders of the importance of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England, there is another aspect of material culture which represents the Cross to consider.³²⁰ Crosses appear on gold coinage from the first half of the seventh century, which Anna Gannon ascribes to the personal significance of the Cross to the relevant kings and the fact that the coins were minted in the 'age of the great stone crosses'.³²¹ The Cross appears next to another symbol, and while Gannon identifies several combinations, there are two combinations that are particularly interesting: the Cross with a cup: and the Cross with a plant or tree. Where the Cross is represented with a cup, Gannon notes that while the cross indicates a Christian focus, the cup could suggest a pre-Christian concern with hospitality and the political significance of passing round the cup, seen in texts such as *Beowulf*.³²²

³²⁰ Although the shape of the Cross was an important consideration for religious buildings in the Anglo-Saxon period—churches were often built in a cross-shape—for the purposes of this thesis I am concentrating on representations of the Cross itself.

³²¹ See Anna Gannon, 'Riches in Heaven and on Earth: Some Thoughts on the Iconography of Coinage at the time of Æthelbald', in *Æthelbald and Offa: Two Eighth-Century Kings of Mercia. Papers from a Conference Held in Manchester in 2000, Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies*, ed. David Hill and Margaret Worthington, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 383 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005), pp. 133-38 (133-34).

³²² Gannon might be thinking of scenes such as Wealhtheow's speech (ll. 1169-87) in which she bears a cup around the hall, whilst attempting to bring about events that suit her own political and familial agenda. Similarly, the cup is a ubiquitous feature of the mead-hall scenes, for example lines 491-98. However, Gannon appears to be interpreting *Beowulf* as a historical representation of the pre-Christian past in England, suggesting that the Anglo-Saxon viewer of the coin would be prompted to recall times in which the cup held a non-Christian significance. It is perhaps more likely that the Anglo-Saxon viewer would recall a pre-Christian past as seen through the lens of Christian interpretation, associating the cup with an idealised heroic past rather than an historical period.



Figure 20: The Cross with a Cup³²³

However, she also notes that the cup could be significant in a Christian setting, as representative of the generosity required of a good Christian as an alms-giver, and perhaps of the host who takes Christ in and takes care of him.³²⁴ The second combination links the idea of the living, reborn Christ and the tree upon which he died with the importance of plants in Anglo-Saxon healing texts.³²⁵ Both combinations juxtapose two symbols whilst providing points of connection, forming a mini-riddle and an opportunity for meditation on Christian ideologies. Perhaps, also, the representation of the Cross on the coins might charge the object itself with protective power. Much like the stone crosses, therefore, the coins seem to share their purpose of stimulating consideration of important concepts and paradoxes in Christianity, using visual

³²³ *Timeline Originals* <http://time-lines.co.uk/sceats-1848-0.html> [accessed 7/710].

³²⁴ See Gannon, 'Riches', 135 (n. 12). Also, see *Biblia Sacra, Vulgatæ Editionis* (Tournai: Soc. S. Johannis Evang., 1894), Matthew 25: 34-40:

tunc dicet rex his qui a dextris eius erunt venite benedicti Patris mei possidete paratum vobis regnum a constitutione mundi. esurivi enim et dedistis mihi manducare sitiivi et dedistis mihi bibere hospes eram et collexistis me: nudus et operuistis me infirmus et visitastis me in carcere eram et venistis ad me. tunc respondebunt ei iusti dicentes Domine quando te vidimus esurientem et pavimus sitientem et dedimus tibi potum? quando autem te vidimus hospitem et colleximus te aut nudum et cooperuimus? aut quando te vidimus infirmum aut in carcere et venimus ad te? et respondens rex dicet illis amen dico vobis quamdiu fecistis uni de his fratribus meis minimis mihi fecistis.

Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: Naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. Then shall the just answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry and fed thee: thirsty and gave thee drink? Or when did we see thee a stranger and took thee in? Or naked and covered thee? Or when did we see thee sick or in prison and came to thee? And the king answering shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.

³²⁵ See Gannon, 'Riches', 135 (n. 15).

4.ii Points of Convergence: The Cross in Anglo-Saxon Charms

shorthand for heroic and Christian ideas to compare and contrast the secular and sacred, and allow these two spheres to converge.³²⁶

c. Conclusions

The charms are suspended in a web of allusions, held in place in Anglo-Saxon culture by references to sympathetic narratives (such as those of the Crucifixion and St. Helen) and the invocation of larger ideas (such as the divine order of God). Both of these types of allusion are represented in the charms by the Cross, either in shape, name or performance; the charms are evidence of the multivalency of the Cross and the potency of its shape and associations, and ability of the symbol of the Cross to reach out from the charms to Biblical narrative, hagiographical accounts and material culture. Elsewhere in the textual and material lives of the Anglo-Saxons, the Cross is shorthand for many different functions: a boundary marker; a shield; a weapon. The Cross is a symbol which can be interpreted as any one of many Christian values, standing for whatever meaning is required in a particular situation, whether that is judgement, salvation, contemplation or hospitality.

Finally, to return to the words with which this chapter began: *Crux mihi vita est, tibi mors, inimici*. These words, found on a portable cross and part of two Anglo-Saxon charms against skin disease,³²⁷ neatly sum up the Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards the image, symbol and action of the Cross. A weapon to defend against sickness, a focus of devotion as the symbol of resurrection and life, and an active part of charming and everyday life, the Cross becomes more than two intersecting lines, representing the love of God for His Son and His people, everlasting life, the divine order and spiritual and physical healing. No other symbol is represented either verbally or visually in as many of the charm texts, or employed as often as part of the arsenal available to the users and creators of charms. The Cross is at once a metaphorical symbol, standing for the Christian story, and an active, tangible act easily integrated into the divine and secular aspects of charming.

³²⁶ See Gannon, 'Riches', 135.

³²⁷ See Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Charms and Remedies*, vol. I, CLXVIII and CLII and vol. II, p. 289-90, 338-39.

4.iii Cælius Sedulius and Saint Veronica

The blood-staunching charms could each be described as a set of sub-units orbiting one central unit: the *rivos* unit. Consistently highlighted by decoration, the *rivos* unit is a constant feature of the blood-charms, and is the most significant element. Thus, the origin of this unit, and the way in which the unit interacts with the rest of the charms, other texts and Anglo-Saxon society as a whole is key to an understanding of the composition of the charm and the reason for the recording of this collection of *rivos*-charms.

Implied by the *rivos* unit is the story of Veronica, the woman cured of bleeding by Christ. The accepted Biblical account of the story of Veronica makes her an obvious choice for the charms' composer: she is healed of bleeding by Christ, and is thus a natural choice for a charm against bleeding. Although the bleeding woman healed by Christ in the Biblical stories (Matthew 9: 18-22, Mark 5:20-22, Luke 8:39-41), in Sedulius' paraphrase, and in the *rivos* unit remains unnamed, she has long been associated with Saint Veronica.³²⁸ The *Encyclopaedia of Saints* describes Veronica thus:

...one of the weeping women on Jesus' Way of the Cross, by the name of V., gives Jesus a cloth to dry his face. J presses his face on it so that an imprint remained on it. Later V is identified with the woman with the flow of blood, or with Martha of Bethany.³²⁹

She is said to be a 'helper with serious wounds and bleeding'.³³⁰ The earliest association of Veronica with bleeding is in *The Gospel of Nicodemus* (found in both Latin and Old English):

And a woman called Bernice crying out from a distance said: 'I had an issue of blood and I touched the hem of his garment, and the issue of blood, which had lasted twelve years, ceased.'³³¹

However, this woman, Bernice/Veronica, also plays other roles in Biblical and apocryphal tradition: the progression of this woman from an unnamed Biblical figure to a saint, patron of serious wounds and bleeding and owner of the miraculous image of Christ is traced by Mary Swan thus:

³²⁸ Daly (Lloyd W. Daly, 'A Greek Palindrome in Eighth-Century England', *The American Journal of Philology* 103:1 (1982), 95-97 (95) establishes a link between this woman and Veronica: 'The suppliant is clearly the woman with an issue of blood, although the next word in the text is *Bernice*, showing the common confusion of the saint with her prototype'.

³²⁹ Clemens Jockle, *Encyclopaedia of Saints* (London: Parkgate Books, 1997), p. 450-51.

³³⁰ Jockle, *Encyclopaedia of Saints*, 450-51.

³³¹ Felix Scheidweiler, 'The Work and Sufferings of Jesus: The Gospel of Nicodemus, Acts of Pilate and Christ's Descent into Hell' in *New Testament Apocrypha: Volume One: Gospels and Related Writings*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (London: SCM Press, 1973), p. 511.

...The first appearance of the woman [who later became known as Veronica] is a princess called Berenice who receives the image of Christ, and gradually Berenice gets identified with the woman in the gospels who is cured of bleeding by Christ after she touches the hem of his garment.³³²

Swan also comments on Veronica being the woman who wipes Jesus' face on his way to the Crucifixion.³³³ The text which preserves the legend of Veronica most fully is the *Vindicta Salvatoris*, recorded in the same manuscripts as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*.³³⁴ The Old English witnesses of the text are very similar, but when collated, it is clear that there is some variation from the Latin witness.³³⁵ Generally, whenever Veronica is mentioned a phrase such as 'the woman healed of an issue of bleeding by Christ' is tagged on to her name: this reinforces the suggestion that Veronica was well known to be the woman described in Matthew 9. So, Veronica is a natural choice for a blood-staunching charm: having been healed by Christ of the very ailment for which the charm is intended would be qualification enough, but her further apocryphal adventures as a healer in her own right increases her relevance to healing charms (she reportedly healed the Emperor Tiberius).³³⁶

Outside of Royal, Veronica is invoked by name in other blood charms, and beyond the use of Veronica in blood charms, the development of the legend of Veronica in apocryphal texts demonstrates how she might also be a useful figure in charms intended for other ailments than bleeding.

This chapter will also consider why a hymn was selected to be a part of a blood staunching charm, and what impact this has on our reading of the charms. Furthermore, we will explore other uses of this same hymn in other Anglo-Saxon texts, investigating its various roles in other contexts.

a. Sedulius: The Origins of *Rivos* and the Usage of Hymns in Charms

³³² For a fuller discussion, see Mary Swan, 'Remembering Veronica in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Writing Gender and Genre and Medieval Literature: Approaches to Old and Middle English Texts*, Essays and Studies v. 55, ed. E. Treharne (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), pp. 19-41 (23).

³³³ Swan, 'Remembering Veronica', p. 24.

³³⁴ In Latin: Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque Municipale, 202: in Old English: Cambridge University Library li. 2 11: Cambridge, Corpus Christ College 196: and London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A.xv.

³³⁵ See Swan, 'Remembering Veronica', pp. 19-41 (esp. 25-36) and Thomas N. Hall, 'The *Euangelium Nichodemi* and *Vindicta saluatoris* in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Two Old English Apocrypha and Their Manuscript Source*, ed. J. E. Cross (CUP: Cambridge, 1996), pp. 36-82.

³³⁶ Veronica cured the Emperor Tiberius by the presence of the miraculous cloth in her possession (Scheidweiler, *New Testament Apocrypha*, p. 533).

4.iii Cælius Sedulius and Saint Veronica

The *rivos* unit, which appears in charms D, E and G, is taken directly from a hymn (known as *A solis ortus cardine*) composed by Cælius Sedulius, a Christian poet writing in the fifth century.³³⁷ The hymn is abecedarian: that is, each verse begins with the next letter of the alphabet, so that the poem progresses from A to Z as it retells the events of Christ's life, from his birth to the ascension. The verse appearing in the charms is the 'R' verse, lines 65-68:

*Rivos cruoris torridi
Contacta vestis obstruit:
Fletu rigante supplicis
Arent fluenta sanguinis.*³³⁸

The hymn itself enjoyed popularity with Anglo-Saxon authors such as Bede and Alcuin.³³⁹ Sedulius' other works, such as the *Carmen Paschale*, are known to have been used as part of the Anglo-Saxon curriculum: the learning of Latin was the backbone upon which education was supported, with the focus tending towards linguistic rather than thematic study.³⁴⁰ Thus, Sedulius was probably a familiar figure to the original owner and scribe of Royal, who was clearly concerned with education and scholarly works.³⁴¹

A solis ortus cardine is recorded in a variety of ways: as in Royal, the hymn can be found in its complete form, recorded from A-Z: however, frequently the hymn is broken down into two sections, generally with verses A-G as one section, and verses H-N as another section. This second section is known as *Hostis Herodis in pie*. The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in which the hymn appears are various: indeed, the hymn in either full or broken down form appears in over 143 manuscripts,³⁴² ranging from the ninth to sixteenth centuries, from scriptoria all over Europe. It seems logical to narrow the field of enquiry and briefly examine those manuscripts close in time and space to that of Royal: that is, those that are from England, and were written around the same date (the early ninth century: probably around 818-30).³⁴³

³³⁷ Carl P. E. Springer, *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity* (Brill: London, 1988), p. 5.

³³⁸ Cælius Sedulius, *A Solis Ortus Cardine*, in Timothy R. Carnahan, *Academy for Ancient Texts* <<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/latinlibrary/sedulius.solis.html>> [accessed 4/2/09] (lines 65-68 of 92).

³³⁹ Carl P. E. Springer, 'The Manuscripts of Sedulius: A Provisional Handlist', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 85 (1995), p. 2.

³⁴⁰ See Patrizia Lendinara, 'The World of Anglo-Saxon Learning' in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

³⁴¹ Springer, 'The Manuscripts of Sedulius', p. 14.

³⁴² See Springer, 'The Manuscripts of Sedulius', 117-209 for a list of all these manuscripts.

³⁴³ See *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile*, ed. P. Pulsiano, vol. 1 (Binghamton, N.Y. : Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1994).

4.iii Cælius Sedulius and Saint Veronica

The first of the three manuscripts to correspond most closely to Royal in terms of its date and location is Manchester, John Rylands University Library Lat. 116, which is dated to some time after 814 (s.ix).³⁴⁴ This manuscript contains hymns, among which *O solis ortus cardine* is recorded as a complete text. In a similar fashion, the hymn appears in its separated form in the ‘Bosworth Psalter’ (London, British Library, Additional Manuscripts 37517), a manuscript dated to 855-899, which includes hymns, canticles, a litany and a calendar. Finally, London, British Library, Cotton Vespanasian D.xiii, described as a ‘*Hymnarium Latine*’³⁴⁵ and dated to 840-860, has the hymn in two parts recorded among other hymns and canticles. Thus, we can see that in roughly the same period as Royal, *A solis...* is being used as a hymn, and is incorporated into other liturgical and religious collections of texts. Compare the usage of the hymn in Royal to that of the three manuscripts above: Royal is a private prayerbook, intended for moments of personal devotion and spiritual and physical healing, but the other manuscripts include the hymn as part of a collection of liturgical texts. In Royal, the hymn is not used in the context of public devotion, but as a way of accessing and requesting the healing power of God.

The insertion of parts of hymns into charms is not unknown in the Anglo-Saxon period: as we have seen, GS 12 makes use of a hymn associated with personal protection from disease. The hymn used in the blood charms, however, does not appear to have any other connection to protection or healing: there is no evidence for the ‘R’ verse being used in blood-staunching charms, or other charms, in the Anglo-Saxon corpus or elsewhere: unlike the hymn in GS 12, it does not lead another life as an apotropaic defence against illness or spiritual attack.³⁴⁶ It seems that the reason for the choosing of the *rivos* verse for use in the blood charms is not because of any qualities associated with the text as a whole, but for the ability of the content to be used as a sympathetic narrative. The verse is directly related to the purpose of the charm, as it retells the healing of the bleeding woman, cured by touching Jesus’ robe. This story is found in Matthew 9: 18-22.³⁴⁷ Although there is no evidence of the *rivos* verse being used in any other charms than those in Royal, it is possible to find other instances of

³⁴⁴ Springer, ‘The Manuscripts of Sedulius’, p. 152.

³⁴⁵ British Library Online Catalogue <

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts/HITS0001.ASP?VPPath=html/65655.htm&Search=vespanasian+d.xii&Highlight=F>>, accessed 24/3/09.

³⁴⁶ Stephanie Hollis, ‘Old English “Cattle-Theft Charms”: Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses’, *Anglia* 115 (1997), 147 (fn. 15).

³⁴⁷ See *Biblia Sacra, Vulgatæ Editionis* (Tournai: Soc. S. Johannis Evang., 1894):

Et ecce mulier, quæ sanguinis fluxum patiebur duodecim annia, accessit retri, at tetigit fimbriam vestimenti ejus. Dicebat enim intra se: Si tetigero tantum vestimentum ejus, salva ero.

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Sedulius' works being used in Anglo-Saxon charms (though there are no examples as substantially represented as the *rivos* charms). For instance, the charm below—Charm (i)—makes use of an excerpt from another hymn by Sedulius, the *Carmen Paschale*:

*Inde salutiferis incendens gressibus urbes.
oppida rura vicos castra castella peragrans.
Omnia depulsis sanabat corpora morbis.*³⁴⁸

Thence salvation moves forward into the world
Wandering through the open country, cottages,
streets, villages and castles.
All sickness it heals, driven out of bodies.

Much like the *rivos* excerpt, this collection of lines from the *Carmen Paschale* clearly lends itself to the context of a charm, as it is concerned with healing and mentions directly the idea of sickness.³⁴⁹ I label it as a 'charm' because, as the first two charms given in this section state, it is intended to deal with *fefer adle*, and contains ritual action (writing on the paten dish) and words that are to be sung (the beginning of the Gospel of John).

Charm (i), Royal 12.D.xvii

Pis man sceal wrtian on husldisce 7 on þone
Drenc mid halig wætere þwean 7 singan o[n]

+
+++++
+A ++ ω+
+++++

In principio erat verbu[m] et verbu[m]
erat apud d[eu]m et d[eu]s erat verbum.
Hoc erat In principio apud d[eu]m omnia
per ipsum fact sunt. Þweah þonne
þ gewrit mid halig wætere of þam disce o[n]
þone drenc. sing. þonne credo 7 pat[er] n[oste]r

³⁴⁸ Cælius Sedulius, *Carmen Paschale*, in J. Heumer (ed.), *Sedulii opera omnia, accedunt excerpta ex Remigii Expositione in Sedulii Paschale carmen* (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 10: Wien 1885), available online at < <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/sedulius3.html> > [accessed 4/3/09] (lines 23-25 of 360).

³⁴⁹ The second line of the verse is closely mirrored in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book Three, chapter 28:

Consecratus ergo in episcopum Ceadda maximam mox coepit ecclesiasticae ueritati et castitati curam inpendere: humilitati, continentiae, lectioni operam dare: oppida, rura, casas, uicos, castella propter euangelizandum, non equitando, sed apostolorum more pedibus incedendo peragrarē...

Chad, being thus consecrated bishop, began immediately to devote himself to ecclesiastical truth and to chastity: to apply himself to humility, continence, and study: to travel about, not on horseback, but after the manner of the apostles, on foot, to preach the Gospel in towns, the open country, cottages, villages, and castles...

Here the phrase *oppida rura vicos castra castella peragrans* from the *Carmen* is echoed in Bede almost word for word, affirming that Sedulius' hymns were well known in Anglo-Saxon England.

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7 þis leoþ. beati immaculate þone fealm
mid ad dominum þam .xii. gebed gealmum.
Adiuo uos frigores [frigora] et febres. per d[eu]m
patrem omnipotentem et per eius filiu[m]
.ihm [iesum] xpm [christum] per arcensum at discensum [descensum] saluto
ris n[ost]ri ut recedans de hoc famulo d[e]i. et de cor
pusculo euis qua[m] [quem] d[omi]n[u]s n[oste]r Inluminore Insitiuit.
vincit vos leo de tribu ruda radix david. Vin
cit vos qui vinci non potest. + xps natus + xps pas
sus + xps venturus. + auis . + auis . + auis . + scs . + scs .
+ scs. In die [inde] salutiferis incendens gressibus urbes.
oppida rura vicos castra castella peragrans. Omnia
depulsis sanabat corpora morbis. 7 þriwa þonne
onsupe þær wæteres swelces gehwæþer þara
manna.³⁵⁰

Quoting a verse of a hymn because of its thematic relevance to the illness concerned is one thing: quoting from a source because it is perceived to have some sort of apotropaic power regardless of its content is quite another. This charm makes use of Sedulius' hymn as a *leoþ* to be sung along with the Creed, the Pater Noster and the psalm 'Beati immaculati': clearly, in order to be ranked along with these other text, Sedulius' hymn is regarded with no small amount of respect. Although the section of Sedulius' hymn quoted in the charm does have some relationship to physical illness—mentioning the healing of sickness—the other texts required by the charm (the Gospel of John, the Creed, the Pater Noster and the psalm) do not. Perhaps the charmer is relying on these texts' general protective properties; Sims-Williams notes that 'as is well known, the opening of John or *In principio* was held to have protective powers and was used in benedictions throughout the Middle Ages and beyond...'.³⁵¹ Indeed, in the *Lacnunga* the Gospel of John is perceived as having healing and protective qualities:³⁵² Sims-

³⁵⁰ Oswald Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*, 3 vols, (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), vol. II: Leechbook I, lxii (3).

³⁵¹ P. Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', in *Religion and Literature in Western England 600-800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 273-327 (p. 292).

³⁵² Other charms which make use of the Gospel of John exist in Anglo-Saxon charming. One such charm is XXIX in the *Lacnunga*:

Þis is se halga drænc wið ælfsidene 7 wið eallum feondes costungum:

Writ on huslisce: 'In principio erat verbum usque 'no conperherderunt'...

This is the holy drink for elfish magic and for all the temptations of the Devil:

Write on a paten: 'In the beginning was the Word' as far as 'comprehended it not'...

See Edward Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Charms and Remedies from British Library MS Harley 585: The Lacnunga*, vols. I and II (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), vol I., p. 17)

This charm requires the first 15 verses of John to be written on a paten, which is then used in the rest of the actions prescribed. Verses of John are also used in the blood-staunching charm from Vitellius, C.iii, discussed elsewhere:

Carmen canit sanguinis fluxum sive de naribus sive de plaga vel de omnibus locis.

In principio erat verbum .ix. uicibus.

Deus p[ro]p[ri]i [propitius] esto huic peccatori famulo tuo. N.

vel peccatri famule tue. N. 7 de suis vel de quicunque

corporis mebra. sive de plaga gutta sanguinis amplius non exeat.

Sic placeat filio dei sancteque: genetrici marie

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Williams comments that the beginning and end of the gospel can stand for the whole, and there was a trend in insular pocket books for these symbols of the gospels to be used as apotropaic or healing amulets. To return to our blood-staunching charms for a moment, Charm B (on the flyleaf) makes use of the Gospel of John, and the manuscript itself begins with a section containing only the beginning and endings of the four Gospels. Here, then, perhaps we are seeing the Gospels being recorded because the owner believe they will imbue the manuscript and the texts within with this apotropaic force; indeed, this is entirely appropriate for a manuscript of healing and protection.

b. Rivos and Veronica: The Healer and The Healed

Although the *rivos* verse is not evidenced elsewhere as having apotropaic qualities (unlike the hymn in GS 12 or John 1:1), we have seen that the fact that the verse can function as a sympathetic narrative is significant. The quotation from the *Carmen Paschale* discussed above has a similar role, allowing the charmer to channel the healing related in the text to his/her own situation. In terms of the Royal charms, the charmer has chosen the *rivos* verse because it recounts the healing of an issue of blood, and is thus intended to bring about the healing of the patient by sympathetically echoing the events in the hymn. Invoking the sympathetic power of a narrative can be seen elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon charms: in GS 13 and 14, the *Bethlehem is the Name* unit is intended to make the location of the thief and the stolen goods as well known as the birthplace of Jesus. The invocation of Biblical narratives which enact the desired result of the charm is relatively common, becoming more so in later charms (for example, in the large body of 'Flum Jordan' blood staunching charms).

The question, therefore, is this: exactly whose story is being recounted in the 'R' verse of *O solis...*, and the *rivos* unit in the Royal charms? For it is true that Veronica is not the only figure invoked in charms against excessive menstrual flow. For example, a charm intended for this purpose is cited by Lea Olsan.³⁵³ Found on ff. 32v-33r of MS Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Add. 9308 (dated to c. 1400), this charm does not invoke Veronica, but does invoke Mary. The invoking of a female Biblical figure seems to be regarded as being just as efficient as invoking a Biblical figure directly associated with excessive bleeding. Olsan does not quote the whole charm, but rather lists the major 'semantic motifs' (a term seemingly interfunctional with the

The passage of John most commonly required in the charms (*In principio*) is used towards the end of the Ordinary of Mass: the efficacy of this passage was remarked upon by Reginald Scott in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* in 1584 (See Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Charms and Remedies*, vol. II, p. 38-39).

³⁵³ Lea Olsan, 'Charms in Medieval Memory', in *Charms and Charming in Europe*, ed. J. Roper (Houndsmills, Hampshire, Basingstoke, England: NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 59-88 (pp. 65-68).

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notion of ‘units’) which make up the charm: *stabat Jesus contra fluminum Jordanis: Longinus miles: in nomine patris restet sanguis: sicut credimus quod sancta Maria virga [sic] mater*. The first two of these motifs are common to later blood-staunching charms, but are not seen in the group studied here. However, the third unit, *in nomine patris*, can also be seen in B in Royal. Olsan does not specify what element of the charm confirms it as being a charm intended specifically for excessive menstrual bleeding, but perhaps the invocation of Mary in the final unit indicates a connection with female issues.

In the same article, Olsan identifies a charm found in MS London, British Library, Harley 2558 (dated to the fifteenth century) on f. 115v, again intended to cure excessive menstrual flow. The part of the manuscript where the charms are found is made up of recipes and charms, written by Thomas Fayreford, an English physician. The two ‘semantic motifs’ Olsan cites here are *Sancta Vetonica [sic] fluxum sanguinis* and *Agios. Agios. Agios*. The invocation of Veronica indicates a strong link between charm, menstrual bleeding and the story of Veronica. The second unit, *agios*, also appears in a charm from Royal 12.D.xvii (Charm (i), cited above: the characters *aius* are identified by Cockayne as ἀγίος, *agios*) which means ‘holy in Greek’. This word also appears elsewhere in the corpus of Anglo-Saxon charms, in Cotton Vitellius E.xviii on f. 13b, in a charm to protect cattle, and is clearly regarded as being efficacious in terms of healing and protection.³⁵⁴

In his article ‘St. Zacharias the Prophet and Martyr’, A. A. Barb identifies three non-Anglo-Saxon charms featuring Veronica. The first is dated to the end of the Middle Ages, and is written in the margins of ‘a Vatican manuscript of the *Medicinalia* by the sixth century physician Aetius of Amida’.³⁵⁵ The charm is in Greek, but in translation it reads:

Another exorcism for hæmorrhage of the nose: By the great name of the almighty God. The prophet Zacharias was slaughtered in the temple to the Lord and his blood solidified in the middle of sanctuary like a stone. So thou too stop the blood of the servant of God N. N., congeal disease, as that one and as a stone, may it be annulled. I exorcise thee by the faith of Veronica, blood, that you may not drip further: let us stay good, let us stay in fear: amen. Jesus Christ conquers.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 287.

³⁵⁵ A. A. Barb, ‘St. Zacharias the Prophet and Martyr: A Study in Charms and Incantations’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948), 35-67 (41).

³⁵⁶ This charm, interestingly, uses a section of the Greek Mass of St John of Chrysostom, also to be found in an Anglo-Saxon charm against nose-bleeds: *stomen calcos, stomen metafofu*, ‘let us stay good, let us stay in fear (of God)’.

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This charm is not against menstrual bleeding, yet it invokes Veronica as a figure capable of influencing the flow of blood. The invocation of Veronica's faith makes sense, as her faith is a central part of her healing as related by the Gospels.³⁵⁷

20: Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21: She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.' 22: Jesus turned and saw her. 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith has healed you.' And the woman was healed from that moment.

Matthew 9:20-22

32: But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33: Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34: He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'

Mark 5:32-34

47: Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48: Then he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.'

Luke 8:47-48

Barb cites a medieval Latin charm which invokes 'Beronicae', again for nose-bleeds:

For stopping blood from the nose. In the name of Christ write on the forehead with the own blood of the same the name of Veronica. The same it is who said: If I touch the fringe of the garment of my Lord I shall be healed.

Finally, he cites a charm taken from a text written by the thirteenth-century physician Nicolaus Myrepsus, in which the faith of Veronica is invoked as in the first example, again against nosebleeds. Barb notes that it is likely that these three charms, in each of their separate witnesses, all come from texts written by Myrepsus.³⁵⁸ Thus, it is clear that the belief in Veronica's power to effect healing and affect the flow of blood extends beyond the geographical, linguistic and temporal boundaries of Anglo-Saxon England, and that the *rivos* charms in Royal 2.A.xx (and to a lesser extent, Royal 12.D.xvii) belong to a larger tradition of blood-staunching charms.

However, it must be said that not all the charms which invoke Veronica are intended to heal problems of bleeding in women. Although they are not found in Royal with the other Veronica charms, it is important to consider the evidence of other uses of her name in the Anglo-Saxon charming tradition. There are three other Anglo-Saxon charms in existence which invoke Veronica, but they are not intended to cure menstrual

³⁵⁷ See Barb, 'St. Zacharias', 43

³⁵⁸ Barb, 'St. Zacharias', 43

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or any other kind of bleeding. The first of these charms is intended to work against ‘every evil witch³⁵⁹ and elvish tricks’:

Charm (ii), f. 52b of MS Royal 12.D.xvii

Wip ælcra yfelre leodrunan 7 wið ælf
sidenne þis gewrit writ him þis greciscu[m]
stafum ++A++O+ŷ+iFByM+++++BeppN
NIKNETTANI Eft ofer dust 7 drenc wip leod
runan. Genim brembelæppel 7 elehtran 7
pollegian, gecnua, sift þon[ne], do on pohhan, lege
under weofod, sing nigon mæssan ofer. Do on
meoloc þ[æt] dust, dryp þriwa on haligwæteres.
Sele drincan on þreo tida: on undern, on mid
dæg, on non. Gif sio adl netnu[m] sie, geot mid halig
wætere on muð þæt ilce dust.³⁶⁰

The charm is recorded on f. 52b of MS Royal 12.D.xvii, which Storms dates to the tenth century. This manuscript is otherwise known as *Bald's Leechbook*, and is a collection of many recipes and charms for healing.

As for the relation to Veronica, Storms identifies the Greek lettering *BeppNNIKNETTANI* as ‘Veronica (?)’, the woman who dried Christ’s face on His way to Calvary’, as does Cockayne, who explains that the charm is ‘invoking the miraculous

³⁵⁹ Storms translates *leodrunan* as ‘witch’; Cockayne opts for ‘rune lay’, which he clarifies in a footnote as ‘heathen charm’. See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 268-69 and Cockayne, *Leechdoms* II, p. 138-139.

³⁶⁰

Against every evil witch and against elvish tricks write this writing
in Greek letters:

++A++O+ŷ+iFByM+++++BeppNIKNETTANI

Again another powder and a drink against witches.

Take a blackberry and lupine and pennyroyal, pound them together, sift them, then put them in a bag, lay them under the altar, sing nine Masses over them. Put the powder in milk and drip some holy water into it,

Give to drink at three times of the day: at nine a.m., at midday, at three p.m.

If animals have the disease, pour the same powder into their mouth together with the holy water.

I have followed Storms’ translation: Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 268-69.

The Greek characters on the third line are identified by Storms as Alpha, Omega, υίος and ιχθύς (Storms, p. 268). Karen Louise Jolly identifies the third and fourth as ‘possibly huiois, ichthus’ (Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 147-50. Huiois is defined as son or child, and is used in the Bible of Jesus. Ichthus is defined as fish, the sign used by early Christians. Both of these terms could be useful in the charm in their status as generally important religious words, in the same way, presumably, that Alpha and Omega are intended to function. See Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon A Greek-English Lexicon* revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie (*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940*) <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3D%23106567>> [accessed 13/01/09].

Cockayne (*Leechdoms*, vol. II, p. 139, n. 4) identifies the symbols as Alpha, Omega, IESVM and Bernikh, ‘invoking the miraculous portrait of Christ on the kerchief of Veronica’.

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portrait of Christ on the kerchief of St. Veronica'.³⁶¹ Indeed, the first few letters do suggest the 'Bernice' of the Greek Veronica legend. It is interesting to note that both Storms and Cockayne identify the woman who dried Christ's face with the figure of Veronica, but does not mention the woman cured of menstrual bleeding by Christ in the Gospel of Matthew, who, in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, is named Veronica. Indeed, in his description of the Royal 2.A.xx charms for staunching bleeding, Storms mentions 'Veronica' and 'the woman mentioned in Matthew 9, 20-22' as two discrete entities. In the second charm invoking Veronica, he neglects to interrogate her appearance at all, describing the names in the charm as 'Hebrew names'.³⁶² The identification of *BeppNIKNETTANI* with Veronica (as the woman who dried Christ's face) does seem a little bit of a stretch; although there is some similarity in the letters in *Bernice* and the letters in the line of the charm, the woman who dried Christ's face would seem to have no real use in the context of a charm against various magical afflictions. Perhaps, if these letter do indicate Veronica, the miraculous nature of the cloth is intended to transfer to the charm; or perhaps for some reason Storms and Cockayne do not identify these two aspects of Veronica's Biblical and apocryphal story with the same woman. If we imagine that the charmer knew of Veronica's healing by Christ as well as her drying Christ's face, the connection between this charm and Veronica is much clearer: whilst the charm does not involve her specific illness (i.e. bleeding), it could be making use of her connection to the idea of healing: her name, therefore, is invoked as a kind of shorthand for a sympathetic narrative. The mysterious connotations of the Greek lettering could further enhance the power inherent in a mention of Veronica.

The second charm to invoke Veronica is to be used against typhoid fever.³⁶³

Charm (iii), Royal 12.D.xvii, f. 53a

Eft drenc wið lenctenadle. Feferfuge, hram
gealla, finul, wegbræde. Gesinge mon fela mæssan
ofer þære wyrta, ofgeot mid ealað, do hálig wæter on.
Wyl swiðe wel.
Drince þon[ne] swa he hatost mæge micel
ne scenc fulne, ær þon sio adl to wille. Feower
godspellare naman 7 gealdor 7 gebed: +++
Matheus+++Marcus+++Lucas +++
Iohannes+ +++ Intercedite + pro me. Tiecon,

³⁶¹ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 268; Cockayne, *Leechdoms* II, p. p. 138-39.

³⁶² Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 268

³⁶³ This identification of *lentenadle* with typhoid fever is not necessarily correct. In fact, a quick check in the Clark Hall *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* suggests that spring fever, tertian ague or dysentery are all more readily associated with this illness: J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th edn., (Toronto: Buffalo: London: University of Toronto Press, 1960). Bosworth-Toller suggests a fever, typhus fever and tertian fever: Joseph Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882).

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leleloth, patron, adiuro vos. Eft godcund
gebed. In nomine d[omi]ni sit benedictu[m].
Beronice,
Beronicen. et habet in vestimento et in femore
suo. Scriptu[m] rex regu[m] et d[omi]n[u]s dominantium. Eft godcund gebed: In
nomine d[e]i summi sit benedictu[m].
|X| MMRMþ. N 7. PTX |X| MRFPN 7. PTX
Eft sceal mon swigende þis writan 7 don þas word
Swigende on þa winstran breost, and ne ga he in on
þ[æt] gewrit, ne in on ber. 7 eac swigende þis on don:
HAMMANYEL. BPONICE. NOYePTAYer.³⁶⁴

Veronica appears at two points in this charm: the first appearance is at line 12, where she is invoked twice by name. The lines immediately following *Beronice*, *Beronicen* are from Revelation 19:16: ‘On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS’.³⁶⁵ This would solve Storms’ confusion over ‘what *femur*, ‘hip, thigh’, has to do with it’,³⁶⁶ although the connection between

³⁶⁴

Again a drink against typhoid fever. Feferfew, ram-gall, fennel,
waybread. Let somebody sing many Masses over them, pour ale over
them, add holy water. Boil them very well.
Let the patient drink a large cupful as hot as he can, before the
fever attacks him.
Say the name of the four evangelists, a charm and a prayer:
++++Matheus++++Marcus++++Lucas
++++Iohannes++++intercede++++for me.
Ticcon leleloth patron, I conjure you.
Then a divine prayer:
In the name of the Lord be blessed.
Veronica, Veronica. He has on his clothes and on his thigh
Written the king of kings and lord of lords.
Again a divine prayer:
In the name of the most high Lord be blessed.
|X| MMRMþ. N 7. PTX |X| MRFPN 7. PTX
Afterwards you must write this in silence and silently put the
words on the right breast, and you must not go indoors with the
writing, nor carry it in. And you must also put this on in silence:
EMMANUEL. BERONICE. NOYePTAYer

Storms, p. 271. I have followed his translation, but have translated the Latin sections myself.

Cockayne glosses ‘|X| MMRMþ. N 7. PTX |X| MRFPN 7. PTX’ as ‘DEEREþ HAND þIN DEREþ HAND þIN’, ‘thine hand vexeth, thine hand vexeth’.³⁶⁴ Storms dismisses this on the grounds that 7 (represented in Storms by a zigzag line) ‘always stands for *and* in the manuscript, and it is not a runic symbol’ (Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 270-71). He argues that if it is a rune, it probably stands for *s*, and that *F* does indeed represent a modern *F*, and not *E*, which is represented by *M*. Even more confusingly, Storms does not offer another interpretation of this line.

It is true that this collection of Roman letters are intended to represent runic letters: for example, |X| could be intended to represent *ᛞ*, the runic letter D. The phrase ‘thine hand vexeth, thine hand vexeth’ recalls the Biblical phrase ‘If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out’ (Mark 9:43) and ‘If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire’ (Matthew 18:18). However, this does not seem to have any direct connection with the purpose or context of the charm itself: perhaps this line of mysterious letter is present simply by virtue of its mystery.

³⁶⁵ *Biblia Sacra*:

Et habet in vestimento et in femore suo scriptum: Rez regum, et Dominus dominantium.

³⁶⁶ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 271.

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Veronica and this particular Biblical verse is unclear. Here again, it seems that Veronica is invoked as a general defence against harm, rather than as an example of a woman healed of a very specific ailment. In a similarly vague invocation, Veronica also seems to appear in the final line of the charm, described by Storms as simply a list of 'Hebrew names'.³⁶⁷ It is possible that again Veronica is invoked on the strength of the mystical power of foreign characters and names, rather than due to any knowledge of her background or role in Biblical or apocryphal events.

However, this charm (in section 65 of the *Leechbook*) follows directly after Charm (ii) above (in section 64). Perhaps the scribe who collated these charms drew charms containing Veronica together, in a similar way to the scribe of Royal; perhaps, also, these charms are evidence not for Veronica being used as a general link to the idea of healing, but for a different strand in the Veronica tradition, in which she can combat different illnesses in a specific way. That these two charms are recorded together suggests that they are being used or recorded by someone who is conscious of the Veronica narrative, and potentially is aware of a different way of using Veronica's story in charms.

The third charm appears in the *Lacnunga*, and features Veronica as a single name, invoked for her healing and intercessory powers:

*Eysne pistol se ængel brohte to Rome þa hy wæran
mid utsiht micclum geswæncte. Writ þis on swa
langum bocfelle þæt hit mæge befon utan þæt
heafod, and hoh on þæs mannes sweoran þe
him þearf sy.
Him bið sona sel.*

*Ranmigan. adonai. eltheos. mur. O ineffabile.
Omiginan. midanmian. misane. dimas. mode. mida.
memagartem. Orta min. sigmone. beronice. irritas.
venas. quasi dula þ. fervor. fruxantix. sanguinis.
siccatur. sla. fracta. frigula. mirgui. etsihdon.
segulta. frautantur. in arno. midoninis. abar vetho.
sydone multo. saccula. pp pppp sother sother.
Miserere mei deus deus mini deus mi.*

ΑΩΝΥ Alleluiah. Alleluiah.³⁶⁸

This letter was brought by an angel to Rome, when they were sorely afflicted with dysentery. Write this on a parchment so long that it can go round the head, and hang it on the neck of the man who is in need of it.
He will soon be better.

Shout, my shield is the Lord God. *theos. mur.* The ineffable [name]. *Omiginan. midanmian. misane. dimas. mode. mida. memagartem. Orta min. sigmone.* O Veronica, thou irritatest the veins like a burning fever. The flood of blood is dried up. Stop.³⁶⁹ *fracta. frigula. mirgui. etsihdon. segulta. frautantur. in arno. midoninis. abar vetho. sydone multo. saccula. pp pppp sother sother. Miserere mei deus deus mini deus mi.*

ΑΩΝΥ Alleluiah. Alleluiah.

³⁶⁷ Cockayne identifies this final invocation as 'the image on the kerchief', rather than Veronica herself; perhaps Cockayne is imagining the charmer using the miraculous power of the image—rather than that of the woman herself—to make his charm more effective. See Cockayne, *Leechdoms II*, pp. 140–41.

³⁶⁸ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 275–75. Storms identifies *irritas venas quasi dula þ* as 'a burning fever'; *siccatur* is to stop the dysentery; and *sother* is Greek for 'saviour'. *Miserere mei* is Psalm 50. This is Storm's translation.

³⁶⁹ Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 189, n. 2.

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Again, Veronica need only appear as a single word in order to be effective. It is interesting to note that the reference to Veronica appears within a phrase concerning preventing blood-flow; perhaps this is some kind of hangover from her Biblical career and her part in the blood-staunching charms. Even though she is invoked here against dysentery, her blood-staunching powers are related, perhaps as a way to close the blood vessels and so cool the patient's fever. Indeed, Charm (ii) and (ii) suggest that she can deal with magical afflictions, fever and the Royal charms make clear her connection with healing; this *Lacnunga* charm is another piece of evidence for the argument that a separate strand of the Veronica tradition existed as well as the healing of bleeding. More generally, Veronica's participation in the healing of Tiberius and in her own healing by Christ lends a dual purpose to her appearances in charms, as the woman healed, and also as the woman who heals.

c. Conclusions

The relationship between the blood-staunching charms and liturgical and Biblical material is key to the understanding of charms as integrated into non-charming aspects of Anglo-Saxon society. To put it another way, the charms reveal how the Anglo-Saxons adapted texts to perform various different functions and demonstrate the engagement of charming with the wider context of Anglo-Saxon religion and literature. This allows a hymn—which in content and theme does not necessarily have an overtly obvious relationship to the purpose or content of a charm—to support the efficacy of a charm and encode a less visible meaning. The hymn retains its function as a text to praise God but also takes on an extra layer of significance as a sympathetic narrative or an apotropaic symbol.

The choices that the users of the charms make when constructing the charms can reveal much about them as readers and users. Thus, the inclusion of a hymn and a mention of Veronica reveals that the user of the blood charms was probably from a religious, learned environment, and had a vested interest in the healing of women. The appearance of Veronica supports this argument, but is not the firmest piece of evidence for the female ownership of Royal: this is shown by the fact that Veronica can appear in texts and manuscripts that do not have an overtly female context.³⁷⁰ These charms also illustrate the ability of one single figure, represented only by a name, to represent healing of the body and the soul: in this way, Veronica reminds us that the Anglo-Saxon

³⁷⁰ See 4.i. Orality, b. The Orality of Charms, vi. Ownership and Context for a discussion of the more convincing evidence for the female ownership of Royal, including the preponderance of miracle stories centred around women, and the grammatically female forms used in some of the texts.

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charms were very much a part of the society that created them, and were able to reach out to the different aspects of that society (religion, folk belief, physical needs) through the relationship of allusions between a name and a story

Indeed, the relationship between a charm and its users, constructed by the allusions present in the charms, is not always a simple one for modern readers to understand. It is tempting to ally charms which mention Veronica with a female context because of the nature of Veronica's healing miracle: but without an understanding of the manuscript and social context of the charm, it is impossible to create an accurate representation of the identity of the user of the charm. The next chapter, therefore, will move on from the discussion of the internal characteristics of the blood charms and the ways in which Veronica's appearance can be understood as a charming technique, considering how an exploration of a set of charms must always employ a methodology which combines internal evidence with the reality of the charm's position in the wider context of its manuscript.

4.iv Agenda and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Charms

a. Introduction

The theoretical perspective which informs this thesis rests on the importance of manuscript context: the information encoded in the context of a text can reveal much more about the text's users and audience than the text alone. Therefore, my methodology involves the close study of manuscript context, and regards each text as part of larger schemes of organisation within the text (in terms of the choice and arrangement of units), outside the text (in terms of the surrounding texts and the text's place in Anglo-Saxon society as a whole) and in the relationship between the text and its audience (in terms of the 'web of allusions' and the different threads that hold the charm in its place in the audience's mind). This chapter takes its place in the description and exploration of this methodology by showing the theory at work: this chapter will demonstrate the effects of close examination of manuscript context with particular consideration of the issue of gender, providing new knowledge by moving beyond the stereotypical models provided by other theoretical perspectives.

In this chapter, I intend to demonstrate that investigating the manuscript context of charms reveals that that charms have a genderless approach to both patient and practitioner, allowing the body to dictate the treatment required, rather than the gender identity of the patient. We will focus on one charm in particular, showing that charms do not support the idea of gendered medicine, but rather that Anglo-Saxon medical practice is collaborative across genders. This theoretical perspective is in direct contrast to that expounded in recent literature, which applies a culturally-bound perspective, attempting to recover female voices from among the patriarchal texts in which they are buried: this chapter will show that whilst that perspective is persuasive and appealing, a consideration of manuscript context makes this content-based reading of the charms less compelling. Specifically, we will demonstrate that the methodology propounded in this thesis can problematise the application of a theoretical approach which is based on modern perspectives to an Anglo-Saxon childbirth charm, particularly in terms of the concept of women's medicine and gendered healing. An example of recent literature which shows this kind of perspective at work is L. M. C. Weston's, 'Women's Magic, Women's Medicine: The Old English Metrical Childbirth Charms'.³⁷¹ In this article,

³⁷¹ L. M. C. Weston, 'Women's Magic, Women's Medicine: The Old English Metrical Childbirth Charms', *Modern Philology* 92 (1995), 279-93 (291).

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Weston suggests that the childbirth charm represents part of a strand of women's medicine, written by and for women alone, which proves that Anglo-Saxon charms took account of the gender identity of the patient and practitioner, and could be used as part of an agenda intended to relocate medicine in the female sphere, and allow the woman in question to regain ownership of her own healing. In this way, her methodology is tightly woven in to the modern struggle against the masculine/feminine boundary; she overlays the Anglo-Saxon texts with a gender structure that is not necessarily evidenced in the texts. The second problem with this article is that Weston's methodology is based on an investigation of the evidence *within* the text: its content, purpose and language, with a particular focus on the user as a woman. This perspective renders Weston unable to separate the user's gender identity from their biological sex, due to the lack of context: were Weston to examine the texts surrounding the childbirth charm, and look outside the confines of the charm, she would experience an altogether different reading of the childbirth charm.

In order to briefly demonstrate the importance of manuscript context, we will consider two contrasting theoretical perspectives and resulting methodologies represented in recent literature, in Weston's article, and in Michelle P. Brown's article 'Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England'.³⁷² The blood staunching charms have been much discussed in this thesis, particularly in terms of their connection to female culture: Brown proposes that the content of the charms, their purpose and their manuscript context all point to the existence of a female user and owner. It is not my intention here to dispute the existence of the female ownership of Royal—on the contrary, I find the evidence persuasive—but rather to examine the *methodology* used to identify this female context, in contrast with the methodology used by Weston to evidence the exclusively female context of the childbirth charm.

Firstly, then, let us review the main points of evidence provided by Weston for the female context of the childbirth charm:

- The charm's purpose: for an exclusively female experience, i.e. childbirth.
- The charm's content: the ritual activity prescribed refers explicitly to actions carried out by a woman, and suggest that the ritual is of a private and unofficial nature
- The charm's lexis: the instruction that a *wifman* must speak the words.

³⁷² Michelle P. Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Lexis and Texts in Early England: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. C. J. Kay and L. M. Sylvester, Costerus n.s. 133 (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2001), pp. 45-67.

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One can identify certain parallels in Michelle Brown's argument for the female context of Royal: she comments on the charm's purpose, as potentially intended to remedy excessive menstrual bleeding, and the charm's lexis, in terms of the mentions of Veronica as a particularly relevant female saint.³⁷³

However, the difference between these two methodologies lies in the way in which they treat (or not) the manuscript context of the charms. Weston neglects to comment on the manuscript context of the childbirth charm in its place in the *Lacnunga*, assuming that the male scribes/editors/owners of *Bald's Leechbook* constitute the archetypal gender of charm collections. Weston does not examine the potential scribes/editors/owners of Harley 585, nor does she consider the ways in which the surrounding texts might enhance her argument (possibly because they would not support her argument). In contrast, Brown carries out a thorough examination of the potential owners of the Royal manuscript by comparing Royal to similar manuscripts, and considering marginalia and surrounding texts, as well as the overarching theme of the manuscript.³⁷⁴ Although Brown is considering the owner and user of a whole manuscript, and Weston is focusing on a single charm, it is still reasonable to expect an in-depth discussion of a charm to explore the charm's manuscript context, as its relationship to the surrounding texts and the themes of the manuscript as a whole affect the potential users of the charm.

Brown examines the content of related and similar manuscripts, comparing them to Royal and describing the evidence within the *Harleian* (London, British Library, Harley 7653), *Cerne* (Cambridge, University Library, Ll. 10), *Nunnaminster* (London, British Library, Harley 2965) and Royal (London, British Library, Royal 2.a.xx) *Prayerbooks* for female ownership. She begins by discussing the various dates and provenances of the manuscripts in relation to nunneries and centres of female religious learning. The textual evidence she presents centres around the content and theme of the texts within the manuscripts, and instances of feminine grammar: for example, the evidence from the Nunnaminster manuscript is a passage relating to land owned by Ealhswith (King Alfred's wife), and the use of the feminine form in a prayer beginning *ora pro me peccatrice*, which Brown interprets as a result of the adaptation of the prayer from the exemplar for a female user. Similar examples—which Brown also identifies as adaptation for female use—also occur in the Harleian manuscript, and are supported by textual content: in the case of the Harleian manuscript, this takes the form of a list of

³⁷³ See Michelle P. Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership', p. 57.

³⁷⁴ Examined in *Orality: The Orality of the Charms: Ownership and Context*.

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female virgins in the litany. Thus, she ascertains that the provenance and content of manuscripts closely related to Royal could point to female owners/users at some point in the manuscripts' creation.

The evidence for the female ownership of Royal is, in Brown's words, 'slight', but is perhaps the most interesting of all the four prayerbooks. The manuscript context is particularly useful: the words *Ædulf ælteow* and *mære Berthelm, Ælfwynne ond Brynhild his dohtor* have been added into the margins of the manuscript, although Brown concedes that these people could have been 'benefactors of a community, remembered in the devotions' rather than actual owners or users of the manuscripts. The most persuasive evidence given by Brown for the female ownership of Royal is the theme of healing (particularly because of the healing miracles related in the manuscript, the majority of which centre around women), the focus on hæmorrhage and the appearance of Veronica. Ultimately, Brown concludes that the likely owner of Royal was either a male doctor with female patients, or a female medical practitioner, a physician-nun.

Thus, Brown's methodology (examining related manuscripts, manuscript context and charm content) is preferable to Weston's in that she considers a wider range of evidence, and does not ascribe any particular attributes to the female gender. Furthermore, whereas Weston reads a female context into the metrical childbirth charm as a result of her unsupported association of the feminine with the private and personal process of childbirth, Brown identifies a female context on the grounds of textual and contextual evidence which does not rest on any assumed connection between a particular gender and a set of attributes.

In line with the theme of this thesis, this chapter reveals that a reassessment of the methodologies applied to the charms is necessary: one must not neglect the manuscript context of the charm, as this approach situates the charm in the environment in which the Anglo-Saxon audience would have experienced it. In order to fully understand a charm, one must attempt to read the charm in its place in the 'web of allusion's and influences that were in place in Anglo-Saxon England. In this way, therefore, the childbirth charm must be considered as part of a collection of texts which treats gender as of minor importance, privileging the ungendered body as an organisational principle. The texts which surround the childbirth charm do not suggest that the charm is placed with other charms that might be considered to be intended for one gender or another. The charm preceding it is *wið utrihte þyrne*:

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*Pysne pistol se ængel brohte to Rome þa hy wæran mid utsihte micclum geswæncte. Writ þis on swa langum bocfelle þæt hit mæge befon utan þæt heafod, and hoh on þæs mannes sweoran þe him þearf sy.
Him bið sona sel.*

Ranmigan. adonai. eltheos. mur. O ineffabile. Omiginan. midanmian. misane. dimas. mode. mida. memagartem. Orta min. sigmone. beronice. irritas. venas. quasi dula þ. fervor. fruxantix. sanguinis. siccatur. fla. fracta. frigula. mirgui. etsihdon. segulta. frautantur. in arno. midoninis. abar vetho. sydone multo. saccula. pp pppp sother sother. Miserere mei deus deus mini deus mi.

*AΩNY Alleluiah. Alleluiah.*³⁷⁵

This letter was brought by an angel to Rome, when they were sorely afflicted with dysentery. Write this on a parchment so long that it can go round the head, and hang it on the neck of the man who is in need of it.
He will soon be better.

Ranmigan. adonai. eltheos. mur. O ineffabile. Omiginan. midanmian. misane. dimas. mode. mida. memagartem. Orta min. sigmone. beronice. irritas. venas. quasi dula þ. fervor. fruxantix. sanguinis. siccatur. fla. fracta. frigula. mirgui. etsihdon. segulta. frautantur. in arno. midoninis. abar vetho. sydone multo. saccula. pp pppp sother sother. Miserere mei deus deus mini deus mi.

AΩNY Alleluiah. Alleluiah.

Although this charm uses *mann* and *him* to refer to the patient, it is not necessarily the case that the patient should be understood as male: rather, as has been argued, *mann* can refer to a person of any gender, and the grammatical gender of *him* does not necessarily imply that the patient must be male.³⁷⁶ Furthermore, the charm recasts Veronica in a different context: here she is invoked not for her relevance as the woman cured of bleeding, but as a more general intercessor thanks to her relationship with the idea of healing.

The charm following the childbirth charm does not have a heading, but runs:

Ecce dolgula medit dudum beðegunda breðe gunda elecunda eleuachia mottem mee renum orþa fueþa letaues noeues terre dolge drore uhic. alleluiah. singe man þis gebed on þæt se man drincan wille nigan siþan. 7 oater noster nigan siþan.

*Ecce dolgula medit dudum beðegunda breðe gunda elecunda eleuachia mottem mee renum orþa fueþa letaues noeues terre dolge drore uhic. alleluiah. Let one sing this prayer over that of which a person is about to drink, nine times, and the Paternoster nine times.*³⁷⁷

Grendon considers the text following this to be part of the charm, but Cockayne considers it to be a separate text entitled *wið cyrnla*:

³⁷⁵ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, (p. 275-75. Storms identifies *irritas venas quasi dula þ* as 'a burning fever': *siccatur* is to stop the dysentery: and *sother* is Greek for 'saviour'. *Miserere mei* is Psalm 50. This is Storm's translation.

³⁷⁶ See Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), ch1. para. 28-30, accessed online at < <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;cc=acls;view=text;idno=heb94183.0001.001;rgn=div1;node=heb94183.0001.001%3A6>> [07/12/2010].

³⁷⁷ See O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*, 3 vols, (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), III, p. 68-69. See also Felix Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', *The Journal of American Folklore* 22 (1909), 105-237 (195-96), for alternative spacing.

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Arcus supeð assedit virgo cana bið lux et ure cana bið. *Arcus supeð assedit virgo cana bið lux et ure cana bið.*

Singon ðis nigon siþan and Paternoster VIII on anum berenan hlafē, and syle þan horse etan. Sing this nine times, and the Paternoster nine times over a barley loaf, and give it to the horse to eat.³⁷⁸

If the *Arcus* charm is considered to be a charm intended for a pregnant horse,³⁷⁹ then there could be a link perceived between the metrical charm and the childbirth charm: but this link is not constructed through gender, but by the requirements of the body, transcending even species. This stands as evidence that the childbirth charm is not recorded as part of a tradition of female medicine, and proves that the scribe, users and collectors of the charms in *Lacnunga* were concerned with healing as an ungendered process.³⁸⁰

Thus, the benefit of a more open-minded approach to gender is clear: the modern reader is freed from the constraints of understanding gender as a binary construct, and so can read the charm as an Anglo-Saxon might.³⁸¹ The charms are about agency in healing for any person regardless of their gender: the charms capture the moment in which a person takes action in curing process, whether that action is of a devotional and spiritual nature (as in the blood-staunching charms) or of a more physically connected type (as in the childbirth charm). Charms are texts borne out of necessity, which arise from many different social contexts: the field (as in the *Æcerbot* charm), the sickroom, the religious house, and the lawcourt (for example, GS 11b). These different social contexts result in charms appearing in different types of manuscripts: the Royal charms are needed by someone, probably a woman, who understands the condition of menorrhagia and wishes to tackle it with spiritual methods; the childbirth charm is required to be part of a compendium of everyday recipes for common problems, and is recorded for that purpose.

³⁷⁸ See Cockayne, *Leechdoms III*, p. 68-69, and Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 195-96.

³⁷⁹ Lea Olsan comments that the title *wið cyrnla* actually appears on the last line of the preceding text, and that the *Arcus* charm is intended for a pregnant horse: she provides later examples of the *Arcus* charm in which the birth context is more obvious. See Lea Olsan, 'The Arcus Charms and Christian Magic', *Neophilologus* 73 (1989), 438-47. See also Willy L. Brækman, 'Notes on Old English Charms II', *Neophilologus* 70 (1986), 605-10, for later examples of the charm.

³⁸⁰ On the other hand, Grattan and Singer comment that that charm is intended for a 'man with a barren wife', intended for 'the male member of the partnership'. They do not provide any evidence for their assumption of a male audience, although they do refer to the imagined leech as a man throughout. Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 191 and p. 191, n. 4.

³⁸¹ Insofar as is possible: see p. 25, and Aaron Gurevich, 'Historical anthropology and the science of history' in *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, ed. Jana Howlett (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 2-31 (14, 17).

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The first section of this chapter, Themes, will examine two different thematic strands presented in Weston's article: firstly, we will explore the idea of finding the female voice in the charms, considering whether this is possible or desirable: secondly, we will move on to the related idea of liminality, investigating whether women were excluded and marginalised in Anglo-Saxon charming, as Weston suggests. The second section of the chapter, Methodology, will take the shape of an in-depth assessment of the application of a culturally-bound and content-based perspective to the charms, evaluating the type of evidence used, the nature of the theoretical approach and finally presenting other methodological and theoretical options.

b. Themes: Women's Medicine

The Female Voice

This section will explore the extent to which women's voices can be heard in the charms, reassessing the assumption that the metrical childbirth charm was created as part of a conscious agenda by Anglo-Saxon women to claim their independence from the male-dominated culture of medicine, and to create a space in which they could retain agency and responsibility for their own healing. This culturally-bound desire to search for the female voice can be seen developing in previous scholarship which centres on the metrical childbirth charm: the theoretical perspectives of the scholars create a clear arc in the ways in which one particular line is translated:

Ponne ic me will habban, and ham gan
Ponne ic me will habban, and ham gan
Ponne ic me will habban, and ham gan

Ponne ic me will habban, and ham gan

'Then I wish to have it and go home.'³⁸²
'Him I will hold for me and go home.'³⁸³
'Then I want to possess myself and go home.'³⁸⁴
'Then I wish to own myself [have control of my body] and go home.'³⁸⁵

Earlier scholarship stands in stark contrast to later scholarship, eliding (or not perceiving) the emphasis on agency and independence which is stressed in later scholarship. The popularity of an approach centred on the independence and agency of the woman pervades the later translations, in which the authors seek to draw out the voice of the woman imagined as the creator, performer and patient, whereas earlier

³⁸² Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', 209.

³⁸³ Grattan, J. H. G. and C. Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine: Illustrated Specifically from the Semi-Pagan Text Lacnunga* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 191.

³⁸⁴ Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 291.

³⁸⁵ M. Nelson, 'A Woman's Charm', *Studia Neophilologica* 57 (1985), 3-8 (5). My own translation would probably run, 'then I wish to have [it for] myself, and go home', with the 'it' referring to the child, and *me* translated as the reflexive.

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authors understand this line as an expression of finality and possession over the healthy child.³⁸⁶ This willingness to perceive the female voice might be said to simplify the process by which Anglo-Saxon charms were created, by imagining a binary gender model in which women design their own medicine as a reaction to the dominance of 'male' medicine.

In fact, the relationship between biological sex and gender might have been more fluid: it could be suggested—and evidenced, as this chapter will show—that the Anglo-Saxon charms place the *body* in a position of utmost importance, relying on *biological sex* as an organisational factor rather than the construct of *gender*. The idea of 'male' and 'female' charms is not strongly evidenced: the majority of charms are gender-neutral unless they are for ailments which involve secondary sexual characteristics. Therefore, the metrical childbirth charm cannot represent 'women's medicine', as it is created out of biological necessity rather than out of a desire for agency. In order to examine the construction of gender in the charms and more widely in Anglo-Saxon society, it is important to remember that

Ethnicity, gender and mythology may all have been more complex than previously supposed [in prehistory and protohistory]. Firm cultural boundaries may not have existed, humanity and its gods may have been viewed as having more than simply male and female genders, and religious beliefs may have been flexible and multifaceted.³⁸⁷

The Anglo-Saxon charms show more than just 'flexib[ility]'; they show that the body, regardless of its gender, is the focus, with charms aimed at biological (rather than societal and ideological) gender.

This, then, is an appropriate juncture to return to the metaphor of a web of cultural resonances, in which the charms are held suspended, each thread of which pulls a charm into its final shape: medicine and religion, physicality and spirituality, and domesticity and the divine exert their influences on a charm and produce a text which fits the needs of its users. Thus, the texts do not exist on linear continua, frozen at some point between one binary opposite or another; they exist in multi-directional structures which depend on many different aspects for their shape which are not based on binary tensions. This idea is key to the discussion of gender, which may not have existed in the same male/female binary opposition for the Anglo-Saxons as it may do for the modern

³⁸⁶ Nelson comments that her translation 'may sound outrageously feminist. Nevertheless [she thinks] that it fairly represents the words of the charm': see Nelson, 'A Woman's Charm', 5.

³⁸⁷ See Christopher Knusel and Kathryn Ripley, 'The *Berdache* or Man-woman in Anglo-Saxon England and Early Medieval Europe', in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 157-191, p. 187, quoting Timothy Taylor, 'The Gundesrup Cauldron', p. 84.

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audience (as demonstrated below). In contrast, in her article Weston identifies ‘contrasting influences’³⁸⁸ (specifically, ‘pagan’ and Christian, and Germanic and Greco-Roman) that act upon the charms: in doing so, Weston sets up an opposition which might not have existed in the lived experience of the Anglo-Saxon charm user. Furthermore, she identifies an additional ‘contrasting influence’: that of gender. Weston proposes that the majority of the manuscripts which preserve Anglo-Saxon medicine ‘encode a male textual tradition’, recording charms by and for men in manuscripts written and owned by men. She refers to *Bald’s Leechbook*, with its named owner, its scribe *Cild* and its editors *Oxa* and *Dun* as an example of this male tradition, and suggests that even without a named author, the *Lacnunga* too ‘invokes the male as the normative voice’.³⁸⁹ Although she supplies no evidence for this suggestion, her argument may rest on the assumption that the noun *mon/ man*, used throughout the charm collections, refers to a male. For example, the theft charms refer to a *man* on multiple occasions:

Ne mæg hit þe nan mann forhelan.

No one/ man will be able to hide it from you.

Ne mæg hit ðe manna forhelan

No one/ man will be able to hide it from you.

Þonne þe mon ærest secge þæt þin ceap sy losod, þonne cweð þu ærest ær þu elles hwæt cweþe...

When a person/ man first tells you that your goods are lost, then you must say this first before you say anything else.

All of these examples (from GS 11a, b and GS 13 respectively) are ambiguous: *mann/manna* could refer to either a male or a non-gender specific person.

Dis man sceal cwedan ðonne his ceape hwilcne man forstolenne. Cwyð ær he ænyg oþer word cweðe...

This a person/man shall say when some of his goods are stolen by someone/ a man, before he says any other word.

This example is less ambiguous: the male pronoun suggests that the performer of the charm is gendered male. However, this may only suggest that the scribe/user of this particular charm was male: in fact, that another version of this charm exists in a different manuscript with a non-gendered performer suggests that the charm has been adapted for use by a male: this is quite different than the suggestion that all charms are gendered male by default. A study of the pronouns used in Anglo-Saxon charms can

³⁸⁸ Weston, ‘Women’s Medicine’, 280.

³⁸⁹ Weston, ‘Women’s Medicine’, 280.

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reveal much about the gender of its audiences. Indeed, in the article 'Women and Language in the Anglo-Saxon Leechbooks', R. A. Buck makes several important points:

- The owner of *Bald's Leechbook* uses the pronoun *se* to refer to himself, suggesting that he is male: *þonne cwæþ se þe þas boc wrat þæt hio wære torbegete* ('then said he that wrote this book that the rind was hard gotten').³⁹⁰
- The other instances where the author(s) refer to themselves indicate plurality through the form of the verb, and do not specify any gender.³⁹¹
- Though the owner and other persons mentioned in the manuscript (Bald, Oxa and Dun) were male, the user is most often referred to in the third person or as *þu*, suggesting that the gender of the user is unimportant. This would also suggest that although the scribes were male, they did not express any preconceptions that they may have had about the gender of the users.³⁹²
- Although *mon* can be translated as 'man', it can be gender-neutral and inclusive: similarly, although *monn* 'carries masculine grammatical gender, it often semantically refers to the female'³⁹³. For example:

*Gif wife to swiðe offlowe sio monaþ gecynd.
Genim niwe horses tord lege on hate glæda læt
reocan swiþe betweoh þa þeoh up under þæt
hrægl þæt se mon swæte swiþe.*

If a woman's menses flow too much: take a
fresh horse's tord, lay it on hot gledes, make it
reek strongly between the thighs, up under the
raiment, that the woman may sweat much.³⁹⁴

In this charm, *se mon* clearly refers to a woman.

- The use of *mon*, 'one' indicates that the leechbooks record cures for people in general, not just for men.³⁹⁵
- The word *cild* is used to describe a young person of any gender: this suggests that the Anglo-Saxons were comfortable with the idea of fluid gender, at the very least in the case of children.³⁹⁶

Thus, we are forced to question Weston's confidence in the 'male normative voice' of the charm collections: although the owners/scribes may be male, this does not mean that their voice precludes any other gender from the charms.

³⁹⁰ See R. A. Buck, 'Women and Language in the Anglo-Saxon Leechbooks', *Women and Language* 23 (2000), 41-50 (2).

³⁹¹ R. A. Buck, 'Women and Language', 3.

³⁹² R. A. Buck, 'Women and Language', 3.

³⁹³ R. A. Buck, 'Women and Language', 4.

³⁹⁴ Cockayne, *Leechdoms III*, xxxviii, pp. 331-333.

³⁹⁵ R. A. Buck, 'Women and Language', 4.

³⁹⁶ R. A. Buck, 'Women and Language', 7.

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The only exception to this 'male normative voice' identified by Weston is the metrical childbirth charm, which she categorises as a text which reveals a woman speaking on her own behalf. Although Weston does not explicitly define what she means by the term 'women's medicine' used in the title of her article, it appears that the metrical charm fits into this category. In order for a charm to be classed as 'women's medicine', it seems that it must be for the purpose of healing a female complaint, and is part of the non-professional, domestic, empirical, private and unofficial sphere inhabited by Anglo-Saxon women.³⁹⁷ Weston asserts that '... female healing practices constituted less a professional speciality than an inseparable part of everyday domestic duties and participation in the community of women': and that '... the third and final part of this charm reinforces the ritual's private, unofficial character even as it places the women within a larger (and explicitly Christian) community'.

In other words, women healed other women as a part of their everyday lives because of their exclusive involvement within the domestic sphere, and existed as private, unauthorised people separate from the religious, central community. Here Weston contrasts 'women's medicine'—and the women themselves—with the professional, learned, central and official sphere of medicine in general (that is, male medicine). This stereotypical attitude is shared by Godfrid Storms, who refers to the line *Criste, ic sæde, þis gecyþed* in the childbirth charm as the work of a 'Christian interpolator';³⁹⁸ Storms prefers to ally a mention of a religious procedure³⁹⁹ with an interpolator keen to render to charm acceptable, without entertaining the notion that a woman may have written these words herself. Nor does he consider that the charm itself might be the work of a Christian. Although Meaney asserts that medics in the Anglo-Saxon period were usually male,⁴⁰⁰ there is no reason that the female/male be should opposites, or that gender differences should be aligned with other cultural and societal boundaries.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁷ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', p. 281 and 289.

³⁹⁸ Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 200. Sarah Larratt Keefer also associates this problematic line with the 'compiler or interpolator', suggesting that the line is an echo of a 'monastic reference to scripture', and an instruction to recite a specific prayer. The problem with this suggestion is that it allies Christianity with masculinity (Keefer refers to the 'interpolator' as 'he' throughout): however, the idea that monks would be familiar enough with this charm to have an effect on its structure suggests that the monks themselves were involved with the process of the charm. See Sarah Larratt Keefer, 'A Monastic Echo in an Old English Charm', *Leeds Studies in English* 21 (1990), 71-80 (74-80).

³⁹⁹ That is, 'churcing', the process of attending church to be cleansed after childbirth.

⁴⁰⁰ Audrey Meaney, 'The Practice of Medicine in England about the Year 1000', *The Society for the Social History of Medicine* 13 (2000), 221-37 (224).

⁴⁰¹ Indeed, the regular appearance of priests and clerics in the charms shows that they were actively involved with healing, without causing any consternation. See, for example, the *Æcerbot* charm and the

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Regardless, Weston asserts that an 'identifiable female medical tradition' exists, and can be defined according to the characteristics listed above and by its roots in both aspects of the supernatural and 'commonsense rationality'.⁴⁰² She argues that Anglo-Saxon women recognised their liminality and the dominance of the male textual tradition, and thus felt the need to create their own charms exclusively for women as a way of regaining control of their own healing. She suggests that the reason only a few of these charms exist is either because the male scribes did not recognise the need for this type of charm, or they did not allow them in their manuscripts: indeed, the lack of other charms for women (such as contraceptives or cosmetic treatments, which are common in later medical treatises such as that written by the female medic Trotula⁴⁰³) suggests that the scribes engage in some sort of censorship. An alternative suggestion would be that women's medicine remained in the oral realm: Weston suggests that women circulated with other women in the domestic sphere, and perhaps would not have had easy access to the written tradition. However, the fact remains that there are other charms for women in Anglo-Saxon medical collections, such as the *Lacnunga*, the *Leechbook* and the *Herbarium*, as well as odd charms collected in non-medical manuscripts: this evidence seems to suggest that charms for people whose biological sex is female certainly exist, but charms that require the performer to have a specific gender identity are few. It would seem that Weston places too much importance on the gender identity of the performer, rather than recognising that is the biological sex of the performer that is key element of the charm. The other charms, which take on a slightly different shape to the one Weston chooses to explore—due to their emphasis on prescriptions or rituals involving writing rather than speaking—privilege biological sex over gender, and therefore do not fit into Weston's concept of a 'woman's charm' being private, domestic and unofficial, and invested in the empowerment of the woman.

Weston's evidence for the existence of 'women's medicine', as she defines it, consists of the childbirth charm, scant laws and entries in penitentials that deal with women engaging in supernatural activities,⁴⁰⁴ and on the relationship between women in

Junius charm below which requires a male priest to be present in the process of childbirth. See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 283

⁴⁰² Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 281.

⁴⁰³ See Monica Green, 'Bodies, Gender, Health, Disease: Recent Work on Medieval Women's Medicine', *Sexuality and Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, ed. P. M. Soergel, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History vol. II, series III (New York: AMS Press, 2005), pp. 4, 6.

⁴⁰⁴ Mainly healing their children through magic: see Meaney, 'The Practice of Medicine', 235 and Audrey Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Superstition and Popular Medicine in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. D. Scragg (Manchester: Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 1989), pp. 9-41 (21).

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Anglo-Saxon England and the 'shamanising' of women in saga lore.⁴⁰⁵ She also argues that a woman's activities around the home would force her to be aware of chemical reactions that are central in 'empirical' remedies.⁴⁰⁶ The term 'empirical' is unhelpful here, suggesting that these types of remedies are more easily verified than those that contain ritual action and/or speech. I prefer the term 'herbal remedy'; these texts are different to those I call 'charms' as they consist of a non-performative text without prescribed ritual action beyond preparing a recipe, whereas a 'charm' involves speech and action. I draw a line between herbal remedies and charms because of this significant difference. For example, compare the two texts below:

Si muliebria nimis fluunt [if a woman's flux is too much]: take a fresh horse's tord, lay it on hot gledes, make it reek strongly between the thighs, up under the raiment, that the woman may sweat much.⁴⁰⁷

Let the woman who cannot bring her child to maturity go to the barrow of a deceased man, and step thrice over the barrow, and then thrice say these words:

May this be my boot
Of the loathsome late birth.
May this be my boot
Of the heavy swart birth.
May this be my boot
Of the loathsome lame birth.⁴⁰⁸

The first text introduces the ailment and prescribes a recipe: some empirical remedies also specify the result of the treatment. The second excerpt introduces the ailment but instead prescribes ritual action and speech. However, in terms of Weston's article, it makes sense to compare these different approaches to medicine: the division of domestic labour perceived by Weston means that empirical remedies must have had female creators, and thus must at some point in their creation have been part of women's medicine. Weston suggests that empirical remedies as recorded in manuscripts lack a gendered voice because they do not require a specific performer: this idea is logical. However, she also suggests that even if the gender of the creator were female, this ownership is subsumed by the male textual tradition which records the charm, preventing the charm from having any overt associations with a female voice. Thus, she posits that charms with a female voice must be originally the work of a female scribe or originate from a double monastery (not entertaining the notion that a male scribe would create/ record a childbirth charm on behalf of women in his care or his home).⁴⁰⁹ Thus, a charm falls into the category of 'women's medicine' if it is non-professional, domestic,

⁴⁰⁵ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 281, quoting Stephen Glousecki, *Shamanism and Old English Poetry* (New York, 1989), p. 100.

⁴⁰⁶ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 281-82.

⁴⁰⁷ See Cockayne, *Leechdoms* II, p. 331.

⁴⁰⁸ See Cockayne, *Leechdoms* III, p. 67.

⁴⁰⁹ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 282.

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empirical, private and unofficial, intended for a woman's health complaint, and with a female performer and gendered voice: the metrical childbirth charm is a perfect fit, allowing the modern audience to 'hear a woman's voice behind the words the charm records'.⁴¹⁰ The childbirth charm is, in fact, the only Anglo-Saxon charm that fits exactly into the terms outlined by Weston. Other charms (for example, the charm from Junius 85 below) feature the woman as a passive patient and are in Latin (which, according to Weston, would preclude women from reading/performing them):

*Maria virgo peperit Christum, Elisabet sterelis
peperit Iohannem baptisam.
Adiuro te infans, si es masculus an femina, per
Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum, ut exeas e
recedas, et ultra ei non noceas neque insipientiam
illi facias. Amen.
Viden dominus flentes sorores Lazari ad
monumentum lacrimatus est coram Iudeis et
clamabat:
Lazare veni foras.
Et prodiit ligatis minibus et pedibus qui fuerat
quatruiduanus mortuus.*

*Writ ðis on wece ðe næfre ne com to nanen wyrce,
and bind under hire swiðran fot.*

Mary, virgin, brought forth Christ: Elizabeth, sterile, brought forth John the Baptist. I adjure you, infant, whether you be masculine or feminine, by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that you awaken and move, and no longer do any injury or foolishness. Amen. The Lord, seeing the sister of Lazarus weeping at the tomb, wept in the presence of the Jews and cried out: Lazarus come forth. And he came forth with hands and feet bound who had been four days dead.

Write this on a wax tablet which has never been used and bind under her right foot.⁴¹¹

Indeed, the majority of what would constitute an 'identifiable female medical tradition' appears to have been lost: the Leechbook provides a chapter heading for a collection of remedies which does not appear in the manuscript:

*Læcedomas wif wifa gecyndum forsetenum 7
eallum wifa tydernssum gif wif bearn ne mæge
geberan oþþe gif bearn weorþe dead on wifes
Innoþe oððe gif hio cenna ne mæge do on hire
gyrdels þas gebedo swa on wifum læce bocum segb
7 manigfeald tacn þæt mon mæge ongitan hwæþer
hit hyre cild þe mæden cild beon wille . 7 wuf wufa
adle . 7 gif wif migan ne mæge . 7 gif wif ne mæge
raðe beon geclænsod 7 wif wifa blodrihtan . 7 gif
wif of gemyndum sie 7 gif þu wille þæt wif cild
hæbbe oþþe tife hwelp oþþe gif men cwið sie
forweaxen . oþþe gif man Semninga swigie . an 7
feowertig cræfta.*

Leechdoms for the obstruction of the naturalia of women and for all tendernesses of women: if a woman may not bear a bairn, or if a bairn become dead in a woman's inwards, or if she may not kindle or bring it into the light, put upon her girdle these prayers, according as it saith in these leechbooks: and a manifold token that a person/man may understand whether it will be a boy child or a maiden child, and for disease of women, and if a woman may not mie, and if a woman may not easily be cleansed, and for hæmorrhage of women, and if a woman be out of her mind, and if thou will that a woman have a child, or a bitch a whelp, or if matrix in a woman be overgrown, or if a woman should suddenly grow silent: one and forty crafts.⁴¹²

⁴¹⁰ Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 282. The childbirth charm is, in fact, the only AS charm that fits exactly into the terms outlined by Weston..

⁴¹¹ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 283.

⁴¹² See Cockayne, *Leechdoms II*, p. 173.

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Weston regards this conflation of remedies as a marker that these charms are beyond the male domain, and so must be separated from the rest of the remedies in the *Leechbook*. Interestingly, Weston does not comment on the mention of *mon* in the passage (which, heretofore, she might have used as evidence for the 'male normative voice'): nor does she comment on the fact that a remedy for animals is collected in this section, which would seem to suggest that the charms privilege biological sex over species as well gender.

Liminality

The separation of male from female and man from woman is understood by Weston as a result of the liminality of women. She regards Anglo-Saxon society as one which required boundaries and the punishment of transgression⁴¹³ in order to impose order on the experience of life, quoting a maxim as proof of separation of categories:

Ellen sceal on eorle, ecg sceal wið hellme hilde gebidan.
Courage shall be in the warrior, edge shall against helmet experience battle.⁴¹⁴

It is true that Old English texts present a range of responses to transgression. For example, the monstrous Grendel meets his end at the hands of the hero, Beowulf, who in his turn is brought down by the dragon (and indirectly but appropriately, his pride).⁴¹⁵ In the legal sphere, law codes exist to record specific punishments for crimes:⁴¹⁶

Gif mon on folces gemote cyninges gerefan geyppe eofot, 7 his eft geswican wille, gestæle on ryhtran hand, gif he mæge: gif he ne mæge, ðolie his angyldeð

If a man in the meeting of people disclose a debt to the king's stewards and he again will not desist, declare on the right hand, if he may; if he may not, suffer his compensation.

Furthermore, writers such as Wulfstan interpret events as punishments for an entire nation's wrongdoings.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹³ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 283.

⁴¹⁴ Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 283,

⁴¹⁵ We learn at the end of *Beowulf* that the protagonist is *leofgeornost*, 'most eager for fame' (*Beowulf*, line 3182b). It must be significant that the final word of the poem, the last word on the matter, is one that describes Beowulf in ambiguous terms; indeed, critics have long wrangled over whether Beowulf is to be admired for his quest for lasting fame, or whether it was his pride, that forced him to fight the dragon alone, that brought about his death and the suffering of the Geatish people. See *Beowulf*, ed. Frederick Klaeber, 3rd edn. (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1950). See also *A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. R. Bjork and D. Niles (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), pp. 227 and 244 for a summary of the scholars commenting on Beowulf's pride, in 'Myth and History' and 'Symbolism and Allegory' respectively.

⁴¹⁶ *Laws of Alfred and Ine, The Labyrinth* <<http://www8.georgetown.edu/departments/medieval/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/prose/laws.html#cap42>> [accessed 17/03/2010] (para. 20 of 43).

⁴¹⁷ *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, in Dorothy Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).

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Nis eac nan wundor þeah us mislimpe, for þam we witan ful georne þæt nu fela geara menn na ne rohtan foroft hwæt hy worhtan wordes oððe dæde, ac wearð þes þeodscipe, swa hit þincan mæg, swyþe forsyngod þurh mænigfealde synna and þurh fela misdæda...

Also it is no wonder that it has gone badly for us, because we know very well that for many years have not cared at all very often for what they have performed in words or deeds, but this nation became, as it may seem, very burdened by sins as a result of manifold sins and as a result of many misdeeds...

However, it is also true that ambiguity is courted in Old English texts. For example, the *Dream of the Rood* blends heroic imagery with Christian events, interweaving an imagined heroic past with the Christian story and using the riddling technique of anthropomorphic personification to blur the boundaries between human and non-human: and Beowulf himself, often regarded as the archetypal hero, treads a fine line between human and monster, a technique echoed by the sympathetic portrayal of Grendel.⁴¹⁸ Furthermore, some of the Exeter Book riddles court uncertainty in order to create humour, blending the boundaries between the right and wrong answer, and in some cases, gender roles: for instance, the churn riddle has a man performing a task which might (in Weston's terms) be regarded as wholly within the female sphere. The man 'churning the butter' is performing a domestic task: for the humour to work, both the suggested and the actual task he is performing must have been a familiar one to the riddle's audience.⁴¹⁹

*Hyse cwom gangan, þær he hie wisse
stondan in wincsele, stop feorran to,
hror hægstaldmon, hof his agen
hrægl hondum up, hrand under gyrdels
hyre stondendre stipes nathwæt,
worhte his willan: wagedan buta.
þegn onnette, wæs þragum nyt
tillic esne, teorode hwæpre
æt stunda gehwam strong ær þon hio,
werig þæs weorces. Hyre weaxan ongon
under gyrdelse þæt oft gode men
ferðpum freogað ond mid feo bicgað.*

A young man came to where he knew her
to stand in the corner, stepped from far to [her]
strong bachelor, lifted his own
garment with hands up, thrust under girdle
Of the standing one something stiff
worked his will: both moved.
The thane hastened, was sometimes useful
goodly servant, tired however
at a certain time the strong one before she did
weary from work. There began to grow
under the girdle that which often good men
love and with money acquire.

The uncertainty here is in the identity of *he* and *hie*: the audience can perceive two scenarios being enacted, each shifting into the other. The riddle blends a woman with a butter churn, butter with a child, and a simple domestic task with a sexual act. The

⁴¹⁸ See, for example, 'Psychology and Physicality: The Monsters of *Beowulf*', in which Andy Orchard explores the sympathetic portrayal of Grendel (as a *rinc... dreamum bedæled* (ll. 720-1)) and Beowulf as the strikingly similar *angenga* (l. 165 and 449): these characters are linked by many similar incidents and terms, most notably *aglæca*. See Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 32-33.

⁴¹⁹ See Riddle 52 in Craig Williamson, *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1977), p. 100. Translation my own.

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humour is only evident—and the mechanics of the riddle effective—if the audience discerns the similarities and differences between the characters and actions presented. The entire corpus of riddles—whether based on sexual double entendre or not—relies on the language of the riddle providing a gateway from the riddler to the object or scene, and then producing a hall of mirrors, a multiplicity of images from which the audience must select the correct option. This ambiguity is created as a didactic method but also as entertainment: the transgression of boundaries provides the riddles with content, and is certainly not regarded as cause for punishment. Thus, if one extends this cultural understanding to gender, it is logical to surmise that the genders might not have been as rigidly divided—and the boundary as strictly policed—as Weston suggests.

Although Weston does not provide evidence for the liminality of Anglo-Saxon women beyond the maxim, and does not support her assertion that the ‘logical oppositions male/female and human/nonhuman’, and the ‘norm for human is male’, Weston imagines Anglo-Saxon women as occupying a place on the borders of Anglo-Saxon England. She describes women as inhabiting physical space that is unavailable to men in the form of the domestic sphere, an actual rather than figurative liminality. A woman’s liminality is also represented in her psychological distance from men, in that she has an intimate knowledge and experience of a woman’s body. Indeed, Meaney states that the childbirth charm is so bound up with female experience, helping the woman to turn away from her grief, that ‘there is no way it could have originated with celibate monks and nuns’.⁴²⁰ The idea that the charm represents a process which would heal the patient both physically and mentally following a miscarriage, by requiring them to go through a long and complex process which removes both the sorrow and the physical ailment of the patient, neither Weston or Meaney entertain the notion that Anglo-Saxon men could have been stricken by grief at the death of a child, and that the men could participate in the ritual with the woman as a way to recover together. Nor do either of them imagine that a celibate monk or nun could empathise and sympathise with a layperson/woman suffering a miscarriage: these attitudes support and highlight the categories that might be perceived by a modern scholar keen to impose order on Anglo-Saxon society, but would not have existed for the Anglo-Saxons themselves. Although Meaney falls short of declaring the existence of Anglo-Saxon witches, she does argue that women have responsibility for the healing of the family, and were often regarded as wise women, and respected by the community as a healer: Weston supports this claim by asserting a separation between men and women on the basis of a woman’s

⁴²⁰ Meaney, ‘The Practice of Medicine’, 234.

connection to the supernatural, represented by the words that exist for female supernatural figures: *burgrune*, *wælcyrge*, *wicce* and *mihtigan wif/ hægtesse*.⁴²¹

Conclusion

This concept of gender separation is the reason for Weston's identification of a female medical tradition, and the article as a whole: she wishes to examine the extent to which 'the words of women not only express female experience but also recognise (and perhaps use or even subvert) women's images in the men's hall'.⁴²² In other words, she wishes to explore the theme of ambiguity and boundaries in the childbirth charm, arguing that this imagery counteracts the disempowerment of a woman inherent in her distance from male power, and in fact restores her to agency and independence. Weston asserts (without further evidence) that childbirth was an exclusively female ceremony,⁴²³ and suggests that the line *Criste, ic sæde, þis gecyþed* represents the desire of the church to control the dangerous—and therefore powerful—process of childbirth through the ritual of churching (here Weston echoes Storms' logic that the Church must represent all things male, ordered and suppressing, opposing all that is female, natural and religion-less).⁴²⁴ The crux of Weston's argument is that the charm uses the imagery of boundaries (a grave, the womb, the woman herself, a stream, and the re-entry into community at the end of the charm) to negotiate the progression from grief to recovery, and from death to life, placing the power of recovery with the woman. The line *Þonne ic me wille habban, and ham gan* can be read as a statement of this power, translated as 'Then I wish to have/ possess myself, and go home'.⁴²⁵ She also asserts that throughout the charm, the passages to be spoken aloud represent the woman having 'bespoken herself potent and fertile'.⁴²⁶ Weston contrasts this charm with various other childbirth charms: for example, the charm from Junius 85:

⁴²¹ Meaney discusses the basic vocabulary available in Old English to discuss these supernatural women. She identifies several terms as significant: *burgrune* (a rough equivalent to the Icelandic *disir*, as both words gloss *Furiae* and *Parcae*); *hægtesse* (as a gloss for the Furies or the Fates, a malevolent spirit, or witch); *wælcyrige* (a gloss for Venus, Bellona, or the Furies, and listed in *Sermo Lupi* as part of a list of human sinners); *wicce* (a term for human, female persons connected with supernatural activity). Meaney's focus is to search for the existence of witches and witchcraft in Anglo-Saxon England. See Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic', pp. 14-19.

⁴²² Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 284. However, Weston does not mention the idea of 'women's images in the men's hall' in the rest of the article.

⁴²³ Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 287. The only article she references to support her discussion of the exclusively female ritual of birth is an article which discusses seventeenth-century practices: Adrian Wilson, 'Patient or Participant? Seventeenth Century Childbirth from the Mother's Point of View', in *Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Preindustrial Society*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 129-44 (133).

⁴²⁴ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 287-88 and Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 200.

⁴²⁵ Nelson, 'A Woman's Charm', 5.

⁴²⁶ Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 289.

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Maria virgo peperit Christum, Elisabet sterelis peperit Iohannem baptismam.

Adiuvo te infans, si es masculus an femina, per Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum, ut exeas e recedas, et ultra ei non noceas neque insipientiam illi facias. Amen.

Viden dominus flentes sorores Lazari ad monumentum lacrimatus est coram Iudeis et clamabat:

Lazare veni foras.

Et prodiit ligatis minibus et pedibus qui fuerat quadriduanus mortuus.

Writ ðis on wece ðe næfre ne com to nanen wyrce, and bind under hire swiðran fot.

Mary, virgin, brought forth Christ: Elizabeth, sterile, brought forth John the Baptist.

I adjure you, infant, whether you be masculine or feminine, by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that you awaken and move, and no longer do any injury or foolishness. Amen.

The Lord, seeing the sister of Lazarus weeping at the tomb, wept in the presence of the Jews and cried out: Lazarus come forth.

And he came forth with hands and feet bound who had been four days dead.

Write this on a wax tablet which has never been used and bind under her right foot.⁴²⁷

Weston notes that the women in this charm are either vessels for their children (rather than active participants in their creation) or are passive observers.⁴²⁸ Furthermore, a priest or other literate intermediary is to bind the tablet onto the woman's foot for her. Weston interprets this act as both reinforcing the power of the male realm—in that he is required to make the charm work—and removing his power, in that he is only allowed to enter into this female ritual space by virtue of his literacy, and may only interact with her at this time through the amulet.⁴²⁹

c. Methodology

Evidence

There is no doubt that the core of Weston's argument—that the theme of boundaries reverses a woman's societal and cultural liminality from a disadvantage to a tool of empowerment—is attractive. However, there are several problems with the understanding upon which she bases her argument.

Firstly, one charm cannot represent an entire tradition: it is unrealistic of Weston to use one charm as a basis for her theory of an entire strand of women's medicine, excluding all other women's charms on the basis that the performer is not specified as a woman. The childbirth charm has as its performer a woman by necessity: she is the one who carries and delivers the child. The other women's charms do not gender the

⁴²⁷ See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, p. 283.

⁴²⁸ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 292, for charm and translation (Old English translation my own). Weston does not take account of the fact that the humanity of Christ—so vital for the medieval empathy and sympathy for Christ's suffering, and the significance of His death—relies on His nature as of man (i.e. Mary) and of God. See Vern L. Bullough, 'Medieval Medical and Scientific Views of Women', *Viator* 4 (1973), 485-501.

⁴²⁹ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 292.

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performer. This suggests that the childbirth charm genders its performer out of necessity: the woman must carry out these actions because the charm uses different tactics than the others. The childbirth charm relies on physical ritual and spoken word, whereas the other charms rely on the written word. Perhaps the writing can be carried out by a person of any gender, but the speaking and action must be carried out by the woman herself. This does not necessarily imply that the charm represents a challenge to patriarchal authority or an awareness of the woman's own liminality: rather, the charm shows an awareness of practicality, that the woman herself is the one best placed to carry out the charm's requirements. Binding a woman's thigh, on the other hand, can be carried out by anyone. It is the *biological sex* of the performer that is important in the charm, not the gender: that is to say, it is the woman's physical body that requires her to be the performer, rather than her identity as a woman.⁴³⁰

Theoretical Approach: Feminism

Secondly, Weston attaches too much significance to the idea that women are liminalised psychologically, physically and figuratively. Other scholars have supported this theory of the woman as somehow singled out for special respect in Anglo-Saxon communities, due to her connection with supernatural forces: for example, Meaney asserts that the finding of herbs in grave goods indicates a connection with healing, representative of the woman's role as healer.⁴³¹ Indeed, this theory carries across disciplines into archaeology: Tania M. Dickinson's article 'An Anglo-Saxon "Cunning Woman" from Bidford-on-Avon' comments on burial findings that seem to associate a woman's jewellery with her special status in the community.⁴³² This idea of a woman connected with healing and magic is supported by Meaney, who comments that women's magic is condemned in ecclesiastical sources because of the political need to repress women: she concludes, therefore, that there was no such thing as an Anglo-Saxon witch, but that the textual sources provide a 'masculine' view that seems to respond to the existence of

⁴³⁰ See Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic', p. 23. She appears to state the obvious when she comments: 'among the Anglo-Saxon records which help confirm the connection between women and magic are the several charms which specifically refer to women, most of which are obstetric or gynaecological'. Charms which are for women must refer to their biological make-up, otherwise there would be no way to tell for which sex the charm was intended. The gender identity of the patient is irrelevant.

⁴³¹ See Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic', p. 9-10.

⁴³² See Tania M. Dickinson, 'An Anglo-Saxon "Cunning Woman" from Bidford-on-Avon', in *In Search of Cult: Archaeological Investigations in Honour of Philip Rahtz*, ed. M. Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1993), pp. 45-55. Dickinson comments that these women, accompanied by unusual grave goods, generally only appear once per grave site, thus suggesting their special status. She relies heavily on Meaney to connect these grave goods to magic: see A. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones* (Oxford: British Archaeological Society, 1981).

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such a woman.⁴³³ She comments that Anglo-Saxon men may have been intimidated by the unfamiliarity of a woman's experience of the 'essential role of women' in her 'basic feminine roles as wife and lover, housekeeper and mother, and as guardian of her family's health', and her higher degree of connectedness with her physical body.⁴³⁴ She also suggests that as there are no laws against men using magic, that men were not subject to the same sort of political suppression: but just as Meaney argues that the opinions represented in law-codes and penitentials are not accurate as they only represent the male view, these sources are similarly weighted towards the "official" perspective: that is to say, that these texts do not necessarily represent the lived experience of Anglo-Saxon women in the same way as the charms do. On the subject of the ungendered nature of the charms, these arguments are silent, preferring instead to imagine the charms as having a male voice by default.

Other Options

Meaney supports Dickinson's and Weston's idea of the liminalised woman by arguing for the politicisation of the suppression of female power and agency, and herself uses 'male-centric' terminology: one must question if the 'essential' and 'basic feminine roles' can be defined, and if they can be applied to the Anglo-Saxon woman. None of these arguments allow for the existence of powerful women,⁴³⁵ instead allying women with sly means to gain power: furthermore, they ignore that fact that Anglo-Saxon society may have been more integrated in terms of gender roles, or that women might use magic/medicine without being aware of its potential connection to politics or the concept of womanhood. The question remains whether the notion of the Anglo-Saxon woman as liminalised and suppressed is as a result of the modern understanding of gender, and the desire to locate female voices: Weston's argument, that the images of liminality in the charm 'contrarily empower'⁴³⁶ a woman, creates a false divide between male and female gender that might not have been as defined for the Anglo-Saxons, at the very least in terms of charming and medicine. Indeed, there is evidence for the argument that gender roles might not have been as defined as moderns suppose them to be: women might not have been equated with the inside (i.e. the house), and men with the outside (i.e. the land). Archaeological findings that have uncovered the remains of

⁴³³ See Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic', p. 29.

⁴³⁴ See Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft and Magic', p. 29.

⁴³⁵ Powerful women no doubt existed in Anglo-Saxon England: wills from the period show that women could possess large amounts of property and land, and women such as Hild, abbess of Whitby, played a large role in events such as the Synod at Whitby.

⁴³⁶ See Weston, 'Women's Medicine', 287.

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Anglo-Saxon dwellings suggest that the assumption that women are connected to the private dark areas of the house and the preparation of food (i.e. negative things) and men are connected to the public, light areas and cooked food (i.e. positive things) is in fact inaccurate. In her article 'Ambivalent Bodies: Gender and Medieval Archaeology', Roberta Gilchrist argues that there is another alternative, evidenced by physical findings: that asymmetrical gender roles existed that allowed the mistress of the house to move through both the domestic and "other" spheres, the spaces occupied by men.⁴³⁷ However, Gilchrist perceptively points out that this argument privileges male experience, using the feminine category as a counter-balance to the masculine.⁴³⁸ The argument that Gilchrist favours is that gendered spaces could fluctuate: her argument is supported by the archaeological evidence that women died in "men's" spaces (for example, in the fields) and that men died in "women's" spaces (for example, in the home). The deaths that Gilchrist relies on were likely to have been the result of an accident: this circumvents the objection that male bodies might be found in domestic spaces due simply to the fact that they were being cared for at the time of their deaths. The evidence that Gilchrist presents suggests that either gender could occupy either space, and that gender did not necessarily define how a person could move from space to space.⁴³⁹

Therefore, it might not be possible to perceive a 'static bi-polar' opposition between male and female medicine, except for where biological sex creates a purely practical division.⁴⁴⁰ Childbirth charms must relate to the female experience, but are not necessarily 'women's magic': they do not necessarily exclude men from their processes and rituals except where biological sex prevents it. Women require medical care that is specific to their biology, but the division of labour where that medical care is concerned is not necessarily absolute or inspired by gender.⁴⁴¹ Although Green concentrates on mostly later Continental sources, some of her points relate to Anglo-Saxon England: for example, the Anglo-Saxon word for 'midwife' (variously *byrpinenu*, *byrpinene*,

⁴³⁷ See Roberta Gilchrist, 'Ambivalent Bodies: Gender and Medieval Archaeology' in *Invisible People and Processes: Writing Gender and Childhood into European Archaeology*, ed. Jenny Moore and Eleanor Scott (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), pp. 42-59 (52-55).

⁴³⁸ Gilchrist, 'Ambivalent Bodies', p. 54.

⁴³⁹ Indeed, there is evidence that the Anglo-Saxons perceived gender as a multifaceted construct in areas beyond that of the charms. For evidence that a holy woman could be considered as having masculine gender, see Verne Bullough, 'Medieval Medical and Scientific Views of Women', *Viator* 4 (1973), 499: and see Gilchrist, 'Ambivalent Bodies', 51 for a discussion of the 'third gender' in Anglo-Saxon England.

⁴⁴⁰ S. J. Lucy, 'Housewives, Warriors and Slaves? Sex and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Burials', *Invisible People and Processes: Writing Gender and Childhood into European Archaeology*, ed. Jenny Moore and Eleanor Scott (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1997), pp. 150-68 (151).

⁴⁴¹ See Monica Green, 'Women's Medical Practice and Health Care in Medieval Europe', in *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 39-79(40).

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beorþorþinen, byrþerþinenu, byþerþinenu, broþorþinenu) appears as infrequently as in later sources, suggesting that no official category of a healer for women existed in the period.⁴⁴² This suggests that men could have been involved in women's healing, and also that the idea of a specifically female practitioner to oversee a birth was not necessarily current in Anglo-Saxon England. Thus, the existence of an exclusively female medical tradition becomes less likely.

Indeed, Gilchrist's suggestion of a more fluid approach to gendered spaces is supported by other archaeological theories that update previous assumptions about the relationship between biological sex, gender and grave goods. In her article 'Housewives, Warriors and Slaves? Sex and Gender in Anglo-Saxon burials', S. J. Lucy outlines the now outdated archaeological approach to grave goods: if a weapon was found with a skeleton, the skeleton was assumed to be male: if jewellery was found, the skeleton was assumed to be female. In previous years, archaeologists did not confirm their ideas by testing the biological sex of the skeletons. Lucy suggests that this attitude has consolidated the idea that males are associated with weaponry, and females with jewellery of a magical or amuletic nature.⁴⁴³ Lucy provides a definition of the ideal approach to gender—which intends to update 'entrenched nineteenth century gender roles' and avoid replacing these values with equally unhelpful modern mores—and is worth quoting at length:

This engendered perspective (i.e. literally produced 'by union of the sexes'... can contribute to the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon burials, by seeing gender as something:

- which is not 'given', nor even necessarily rigidly tied to biological sex:
- which is actively created, both by an individual and a society:
- which can change throughout an individual's lifetime:
- which can vary from society to society and over time:
- which is intimately involved in the construction and maintenance of social relations:
- and as something which pertains to males as much to females.

Lucy rejects the links between gender and grave goods on the grounds that people are buried with goods according to their age and social status as well as their gender: a powerful woman may well have been buried with a weapon, regardless of her gender.⁴⁴⁴ Lucy also suggests that the graves examined cannot be divided into 'male' and 'female' with none left over: this suggests that a person can be accompanied with grave goods according to factors other than their gender, and that there is a potential for a plurality of

⁴⁴² For a summary of the instances of the words for 'midwife' in Old English sources (mostly glosses of Latin *obstetrix* and Biblical sources), see Michael J. Wright, 'Anglo-Saxon Midwives', *ANQ* 11 (1998), 3-5.

⁴⁴³ Lucy, 'Housewives', 150, 154-55.

⁴⁴⁴ Lucy, 'Housewives', pp. 155, 163.

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genders beyond the binary of biological sex.⁴⁴⁵ Furthermore, she suggests that jewellery can be used to signify other cultural markers than gender, as much of the jewellery in Anglo-Saxon graves has no practical function.⁴⁴⁶ The reality, therefore, is that other factors than gender played a part in organising society, even—or especially—in death.

Thus, the women in the charms are not necessarily the only caregivers in society: a person who is biologically female is not intrinsically tied to domesticity: and a person who is gendered female is also not necessarily tied to domesticity. The roles of gender and the connection of gender to biological sex are not static, and can be modified by a person as they choose: men's and women's bodies could be said to exist on a 'single morphological continuum' which precludes a male/female, weapons/jewellery dichotomy.⁴⁴⁷ It is therefore very difficult to argue that a strand of female medicine exists in the Anglo-Saxon charms, as much of this argument rests on the association of the female gender with caregiving and healing.

d. Conclusions

The new knowledge presented in this chapter consists of the advancement of entrenched social stereotypes in Anglo-Saxon study. Much has been made of the role of women in Anglo-Saxon society, but the work done on charms has tended towards the stereotypical, figuring women as domestic, private and unofficial. Even without consideration of other types of Anglo-Saxon texts (such as the wills of women, or their representation in poetry and religious prose texts), the evidence from the charms shows that it was possible in Anglo-Saxon England for gender to be a secondary consideration.

Furthermore, we have seen that for any methodology to be effective (i.e. in recreating, insofar as is possible, a neutral, non-culturally bound reading of the texts), it must take account of the wider context of the text: it must make use of all evidence available in order to recreate as far as is possible the wealth of data available to the Anglo-Saxon reader. Secondly, an approach which is culturally-bound can be interesting and productive, as long as one recognises that if the methodology and perspectives underlying the approach as culturally-bound, then so too will the results be.

This chapter has demonstrated the difference between two theoretical perspectives and two methodologies: one, a culturally-bound and content-based approach, based on the desire to uncover female agency, is based on a study of the internal evidence of the text and an unshakeable model of an Anglo-Saxon woman as

⁴⁴⁵ Lucy, 'Housewives', p. 162.

⁴⁴⁶ Lucy, 'Housewives', p. 163.

⁴⁴⁷ See Monica Green, 'Recent Work', 1-46 (8).

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marginalised: the other combines internal and external evidence, and approaches the user of the text as neutral and without any gender-specific connotations. The former approach results in a narrow reading of the text, which, although attractive, does not take into account the experience than the Anglo-Saxon audience would have when using the text. The charm is part of a manuscript, and cannot be experienced in a vacuum: therefore, the modern reader must recreate the experience of the Anglo-Saxon user by seeing the charm as a part of the manuscript's organisational scheme. The second approach does just that, considering how the charm relates to the surrounding texts, and attempting to follow the reasoning of the scribe and user that led to the charm being recorded in that context. By connecting the charm to its context, the second approach results in a reading that does not require models (such as binary gender roles) to lend meaning to the text: the meaning is encoded both within the text itself and in the ways in which it engages with its context.

Appendix

Childbirth charm:

*Se wifman, se hire cild afedan ne mæg, gange to gewitenes
mannes birgenne and stæppe þonne þriwa ofer þa byrgenne
and cweþe þonne þriwa þas word:
þis me to bote þære laþan lætbyrde,*
5
*þis me to bote þære swæran swærbyrde,
þis me to bote þære laðan lambyrde.
And þonne þæt wif seo mid bearne and heo to hyre hlaforde
on reste ga, þonne cweþe heo:
Up ic gonge, ofer þe stæppe*
10
*mid cwican cilde, nalæs mid cwellendum,
mid fulborenum, nalæs mid fægan.
And þonne seo modor gefele þæt þæt bearn si cwic, ga
þonne to cyrican, and þonne heo toforan þan weofode cume,
cweþe þonne:*
15
*Criste, ic sæde, þis gecyþed!
Se wifmon, se hyre bearn afedan ne mæge, genime heo
sylf hyre agenes cildes gebyrgenne dæl, wry æfter þonne on
blace wulle and bebiçge to cepemannum and cweþe þonne:
Ic hit bebiçge, ge hit bebiçgan,*
20
*þas sweartan wulle and þysse sorge corn.
Se wifman, se ne mæge bearn afedan, nime þonne anes
bleos cu meoluc on hyre handæ and gesupe þonne mid hyre
muþe and gange þonne to yrnendum wætere and spiwe þær
in þa meolc and hlade þonne mid þære ylcan hand þæs*
25
*wæteres muð fulne and forswelge. Cweþe þonne þas word:
Gehwer ferde ic me þone mæran maga þihtan,
mid þysse mæran mete þihtan:*

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*þonne ic me wille habban and ham gan.
þonne heo to þan broce ga, þonne ne beseo heo, no ne eft*

30

*þonne heo þanan ga, and þonne ga heo in oþer hus oþer heo
ut ofeode and þær gebyrge metes.*

**5. Conclusions: Writing Charms: The Transmission and Performance of Charms
in Anglo-Saxon England and Beyond**

The aim of this study was to reconstruct the ways in which an Anglo-Saxon might record, transmit and perform charms, with the specific goal of reconstructing the life of a group of theft charms and a group of blood-staunching charms. The charms within each family are interrelated in such a way that it is possible to compare the details of the changes in content and manuscript context as they are transmitted from one manuscript witness to another.

The need for this study arises from the methodology used to approach the charms by previous scholars. Previous scholarship used traditional textual criticism to place charms on a hierarchy according to their relationship to the 'original' text: the older a charm—and often, the higher its degree of 'pagan-ness'—the higher it places on the hierarchy, closer to the lost original. In doing so, they obscured the oral relationships that can exist between these texts, and importantly, they also failed to grasp that transmission is both oral and textual, and therefore it is very difficult to construct an accurate manuscript stemma. Much scholarship used the extant Anglo-Saxon charms to rebuild these lost original texts, and in doing so, to access the older, more pagan beliefs that presumably preceded the younger, 'Christianised' charms. Any discussion of this particular approach involves the copious use of inverted commas: it will be clear to the reader that this study attempts to avoid the use of such loaded terms as 'original', 'Christian' and 'pagan', instead preferring to analyse the charms in terms of their significance as a unique witness to a tradition, un-obscured by modern sensibilities.⁴⁴⁸ Thus, this study has shown that, in order for charm studies to reconstruct accurately the transmission, use and performance of charms, one must privilege the existing witness over a lost original: for the Anglo-Saxon charmer (although s/he might be aware of other witnesses to the tradition) the important text was the one in hand, rather than any connections to texts at a spatial and temporal remove. Furthermore, in order to make this reconstruction of Anglo-Saxon charming as accurate as possible, this study resisted applying anachronistic dichotomies to the texts. For the Anglo-Saxon charmer, such a clear distinction between terms such as 'pagan' and 'Christian' may not have been

⁴⁴⁸ See the earlier discussion of culturally-bound scholarship on p. 26.

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apparent, or carried the same connotations as for the modern reader: thus, the language of binaries is both inappropriate and unhelpful in terms of the charms.

In addition, this study has shown that while historically charm studies has been focused on the content of charms—examining them for evidence of ‘pagan’ practices and beliefs, and for instances of syncretisation of these beliefs into a ‘Christian’ worldview—in order to read the charms as an Anglo-Saxon would, one must take note of the manuscripts in which the charms are recorded. Therefore, this study analysed the contents of the charms, comparing the witnesses and plotting the changes that occur in transmission. By mapping the changes that each different user makes to a charm in each witness, it is possible to reconstruct the conditions in which the charms were recorded, transmitted and used. It is a central tenet of this study that the contents of a charm reflect the requirements of each user, as s/he modifies a charm to fit his/her needs and worldview. Equally central is the need to contextualise these modifications in relation to the manuscript context of the charms. The texts recorded alongside a charm reveal what the scribe thought to be complementary to the charm, and can also reveal implicit information about the performance of a charm and the situations in which it might be used.

These aspects of methodology—that the examination of a unique witness by its very nature reveals more about the moment of recording and performance than a search for a lost original; that modern dichotomies disguise the beliefs of an Anglo-Saxon user; and that an investigation of the content of a charm must be combined with an understanding of manuscript context—lead to the reconstruction of the use, transmission and performance of a charm. This study has demonstrated that not only does this study’s methodology have a place in the field of scholarship by advancing on previous work, but it also logically and reliably reconstructs the use, transmission and performance of the charms therein. This study, therefore, is important because it constructs a methodology that could conceivably be applied to other charms, and perhaps to texts which have also been the subject of content-based study: for example, the riddles—which have long been discussed mostly in terms of their solutions—could be approached by this methodology, avoiding forcing modern understandings of sexuality and humour onto the texts, and looking outwards from the content of the riddle to the manuscript context for evidence of performance context. This study, therefore, opens up possibilities not only in the field of charm studies, but also beyond, in the study of Anglo-Saxon literature in general.

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7. Appendix

7. Appendix

i: Images

GS 11a (CCCC 190)¹

GS 12 (CCCC 41)²

GS 11b (CCCC 383)³

GS 11b (TR)⁴

Royal, 2.a.xx: Charms C and D⁵

Royal 2.a.xx: Charm E

Royal 2.a.xx: Charm G

Royal 2.a.xx: Charm B

¹ *Parker Library on the Web* <http://parkerweb.stanford.edu/parker/actions/page_turner.do?ms_no=4> [accessed 27/07/2010].

² *Parker Library on the Web* <http://parkerweb.stanford.edu/parker/actions/page_turner.do?ms_no=4> [accessed 27/07/2010].

³ *Parker Library on the Web* <http://parkerweb.stanford.edu/parker/actions/page_turner.do?ms_no=4> [accessed 27/07/2010].

⁴ *CityArk: Medway Council Archives Service* <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk/query/results/?Mode=Search;PathList=%2FZ4_Imagebase%2F%0A;SearchWords=;DateList=>> [accessed 27/10/2010].

⁵ Images purchased from the British Library.

In hof itaq; p̄p̄nquitatē gradus ad conuigalem
 copulā nemini accedere conuenit. nec eam quā
 aliquis ex propria consanguinitate t̄ingē habuit
 inconuigum ducere nulli p̄fecto xp̄ianoy liceat
 & licebit. quia incestuosus talis cotus abhominā-
 bilis ē dō. Incestuosos ū nullo conuigis nomine
 deputandos. alicis patrib; dudū statutū. ēē. legim̄.

Ex decretis s̄c̄i GELASII PAPAE

Qd̄ in unaq; eccl̄a. cui ep̄s p̄est tam de redi-
 t̄ib; q̄m de fidelū oblationib; q̄rtuos debeant

fieri portiones. ut una sit ep̄i. alia clericoy.
 t̄cia paup̄ū. q̄rta eccl̄e fabricis applicetur.

Ut p̄ter paschale temp̄ & penitē nemo bap-
 tizare p̄sumat. nisi col̄i tantū q̄s egritudo
 extrema cōpulerit. Ut nemo licet nesciens
 t̄ aliq; parte corporis uniuersū p̄moueat ad
 clerū. Ut uiduē n̄ uelent ab ep̄is.

Gyf feoh s̄ynden fangen. Gyf hit s̄yhons. s̄inz on his
 petenan. dde on his brudele. Gyf hit s̄y dden feoh. s̄inz
 on s̄poc s̄por. 7 ontens. iii. candela. 7 d̄p̄p on s̄hoppes s̄pex
 s̄p̄ipa. Ne m̄g hit be nan man posselan. Gyf hit s̄y m̄nonf.
 S̄m̄z s̄on on peoper healpe h̄as h̄uses. 7 d̄ne on middan. Crux
 xp̄i redudaw. Crux xp̄i p̄p̄urtū p̄to inuenta. Abrahā t̄ semet
 uas montes t̄cludas iob s̄ flumina ad iudien ligatū p̄ducw.

Iudeas cruce ahengan. s̄heo cō to p̄te s̄p̄strangan. ge dydan
 heo d̄ada s̄p̄p̄nesan. h̄y s̄ drope on guldōn h̄e lan hit heo
 to heap me micclum. for s̄ū luh̄yt for helan ne m̄h̄tan.

fýrste deþitan ze næddan · fýddan man mor
mid lufe ofgan · gif man wille fulle freond
næddene habban.

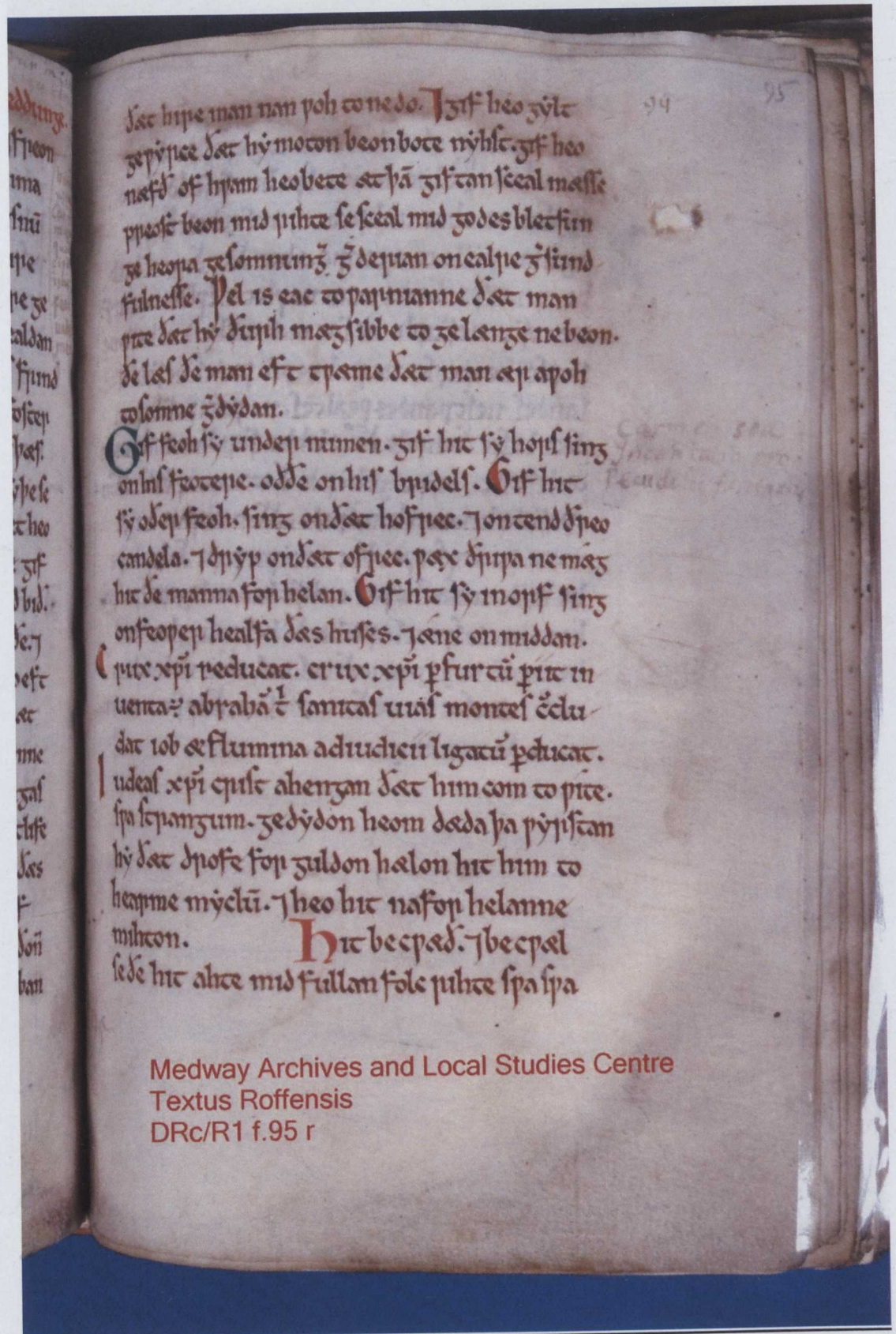
Eal man sceal æt eýnlicū þene be deþne mæ
de don de him to gebýped swa þe be tpeþ
lundū tealdan. Gýf feoh fý under
numen gif hit fý hoþf fing on luf feoþene
odde on luf bꝛudelf. Gýf hit fý oðer feoh
fing on þ' hoþ feo 7 on tene dꝛeo candelā 7
dꝛýp on þ' hoþ feo þe dꝛýpa nemæz hit de
mān na þoþ helan. Gýf hit fý moþf fing
on feoþer healfā dæf hufes 7 æne on middan
rux xꝑi reducat crux xꝑi

þfurcū þit inuenta ÷ abraham t̄ sanctas
mas montes concludat iob c̄ flumma adiu
dieu ligatū pducatur. Iudeas xꝑi epistē ah
lienzon þ' him com to þite · swa swanzum ·
ze dýdon heom dæda da þýrftan hý þ' dꝛo
þe þoþ zuldōn hælōn hit him to heapne
muelum 7 heo hit na þoþ helanne mihton.

Hit becwæð 7 be cwæð se de hit
ahre mid fullan þoleþhte swa swa hit is
ýldran mid feo 7 mid feoþe þilte be gea
tan · 7 letan 7 læpðan ðam to ze þe alþe
de hý þel uðan · 7 swa ic hit hæbbe swa hit
se sealde ðe fe fýllanne ahre unbýde

7unþonboden 7ie agnan wille to agenne
 ælre þæt ic hæbbe 7noþre demýntan ne
 plot ne ploh. ne tuff ne toft. ne fuph ne
 þot mæl. neland nelæsse. ne þeþse. ne moþse.
 ne wuh ne wū. wudeþ ne wudeþ. landeþ ne fpan
 deþ pealtes ne þeþeþes butan þæt læfse ða hwi-
 le ðe ic libbe. þon ðam miþ ættan onliffe
 ðe æþre ze hýnde þæt man cþýdde oddon cþa
 þode hme onhunnæde oddon alþan onze
 mote onceap fcepe ode oncþne þane ða
 hwiþe þe helifeþe unfahe þeþ onliffe beo
 onleþeþe fpa fpa he mote. do fpa ic læþe
 beode be ðinum. 7læt me be mýnū ne gýp
 ne ic ðineþ nelædeþ nelandef. ne faceþ. ne
 foene ne ðumneþ ne ðeapþe ne mýnre ic
 ðe nan ðing.

ÐIS SYND WAFKIA mal 7 ða þon þon ð
 ðe æthelred cýng 7ealle hwiþan
 wíð ðone heþe ze ðon habbað ðe anlaf
 7uifin 7gudmund fcegan funu mid þe
 þon. ðæt æþofe þæt þonold fþið ftrande be
 tpeax æthelrede cýngze 7eallū hwiþ leod
 fceþe 7eallū ðam heþe ðe fe cýng þæt þeoh
 fealde æþeþ ðam þonmalin ðe fizeþe
 aþceþifceþ. 7ædeþeþeþ caldon man. 7
 ælþne caldon man þonþton. ða hu abe -



Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre
 Textus Roffensis
 DRc/R1 f.95 r

hit hit witan mid seo 7 mid seope githra be
 cam. 7 lecan. 7 lafdan ðam to zepealde de hy
 sel uðan. 7 ic hit habbe swa hit sefealde de to
 syllanne ahte unbryde. 7 unforbode. 7 ic
 aginan wille to agenie ahte ðæt ðæt ic hab
 be. 7 næfre ðæt yncan neplot. neplot. ne canf.
 ne cofc. ne fuph. ne fot mæl. ne land. ne lafe. ne
 fepic. ne mepfe. ne wuhnepū. pudel. ne feldes.
 landes. ne fpandes pealtes. ne petepes. butan
 ðæt lafte ða hwile de ic libbe. for ðam in se
 onlufe de. æfre zehwude ðæt man epydde oðon
 epafode hinc on hincwede oðon ahwar on ze
 mote on ceapstope oðre on cypre pape ða hwile
 he lifde unlac he wæs onlufe beo onlezene swa swa
 he mote. do swa ic lafe beo de be hinc. 7 lac in
 be hinc ne zypne ic dines ne lafes. ne landes.
 ne face ne soe ne. ne ðu mines ne ðeapfe ne mæn
 ce ic de nan ðing.

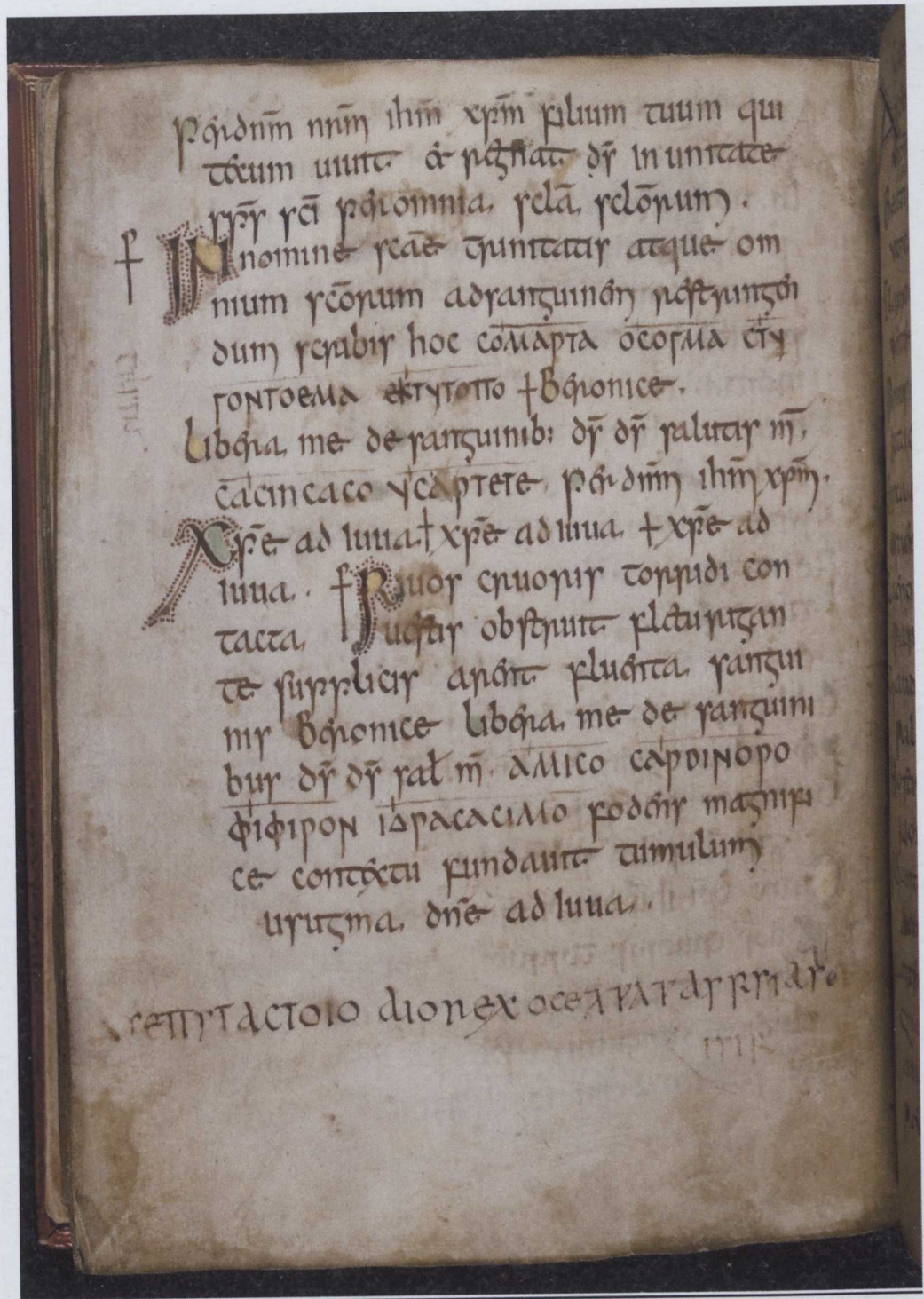
A m
 c
 sin w
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 m com
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 rat m
 camox
 mpm
 adfm
 epō. su
 che uel
 cōmgre
 quib; re
 mde auf
 yor te h
Siquil
 de me ter
 in achme
 frif mei.
 releuabit
 iustice le
 terral su
 liquil

7. Appendix

Royal, 2.a.xx: Charms C and D

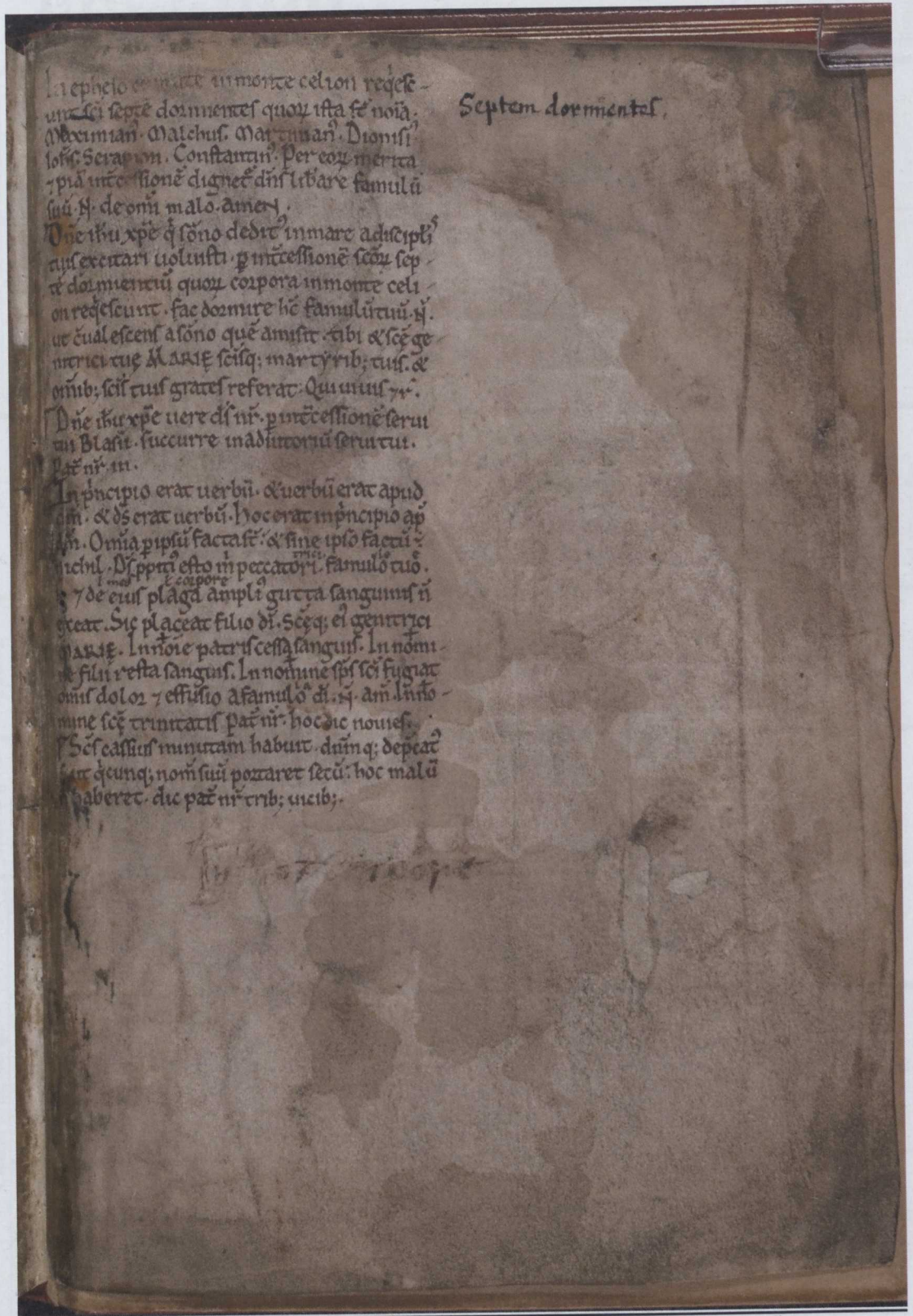
Naifora **R**iuos cruonij toridi . contacta uisij
ua dne sp **O**bscuro plectu mltante supplicij . an dno
uicere exopa **F**luanta sanguinis . pda illorum quae
uifit ficut rdo **P**eccata dominea labante conluno fca .
que beatus an **O**ciam lita ea motur Lp dnm m m
ocaf apofalu **S**idra motur uirtate nqnta tua plunij
to qre ppedi **F**lumai anidum uiquonij flumai pallidum
apud pno **P**anai flumai nubnum acnta dcoyone
st p pccuifin **S**ciai nqnta tua flumma flumai
stet **C**ruonai nqnta nca nauos limatam
Cicatquei concupifante tumonij pnta
Pardim m m ihu xpi .

Dne ihu xpe aduore me pccis . ascedent rudo rudo
 ut ipa opus libetame ab angela poutente . **D**ne ihu xpi aduore
 meque uulneratum . **D**e pccis ut ipa uulnera remedium
 anime me . **D**ne ihu xpe aduore me pccis . **D**ne ihu xpe aduore
 me pccis . **D**ne ihu xpe aduore me pccis .



7. Appendix

Royal 2.a.xx: Charm B



Septem dormientes.

**PAGE
MISSING
IN
ORIGINAL**

ii. Tabular Survey of the Charms

Charm Title	Charm Manuscript		Charm Date (if different to main text)	Family	Purpose	Formulas		Notes
	Title	Contents				Date	Name	
S 11a	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 190, f. 130.	Described as a penitential; includes <i>Poenitentiale pseudo-Theodori</i> and <i>Poenitentiale pseudo-Egberti</i> . Also includes a miscellany of other texts such as laws, homilies and ecclesiastical texts, among which are Wulfstan's Canon Law Collection and various writings by Aelfric and Alcuin.	s. xi med., xi ²	Theft charms	Punishment of the thieves: the punishment suffered by the Jews for the Crucifixion of Christ is emphasised.	<i>Gif feoh</i>	Performance instruction	The AS witnesses of these charms display a wide variety of MS contexts: CCCC 190 gives the charm legal weightings, whereas Tiberius A.iii emphasises the inevitability of divine punishment.
	London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii, f. 106	Religious manuscript, consisting of prayers and homilies.	s. xi med			<i>Cruz Christi redudat</i>	Invoking the cosmological Cross	
S 11b	London, British Library Harley 438	Transcript of CCCC 190	1656	xiv	Legal declaration of ownership and procedure whereby theft is reported. It is expected that the thief would witness the performance and return the goods out of fear of the consequences threatened.	The Jews hanged Christ (English)	Sympathetic narrative	In the TR, the charm is recorded and decorated in the same way as the other texts: conversely, the illuminator of CCCC 383 has not only left the charm
	<i>Textus Roffensis</i> , f. 95	Legal: grants and charters.	s.xii			<i>Gif feoh</i>	Performance instruction	
	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383, f. 59r	Legal: grants and charters.	s.xi/xii			The Jews hanged Christ (English)	Invoking the cosmological Cross	
	London, British Library Cotton Julius C.ii	Transcript of CCCC 383.	1550-1575			<i>Htt becwed</i>	Sympathetic narrative	
							Declaration of	

							ownership	undecorated, but excised it entirely with three strokes of red ink.	
S 12	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41, f. 206	Bedē's <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> (in Old English). Also includes mass sets, office chants, an Old English martyrology and the poetic <i>Solomon and Saturn</i> .	s.xi ¹	s.xi ¹	Charm is an addition of the same date as the main hand.	Reveal the theft: the <i>Jews Hanged Christ</i> formula emphasises the impossibility of concealing the crime of the Crucifixion, intending that the theft will be similarly impossible to hide.	<i>Gif/feoh</i> <i>Crux Christi redicat</i> The Jews hanged Christ (Latin) Peter, Paul... <i>Qui querit</i> Hymn	Performance instruction Invoking the cosmological Cross Sympathetic narrative Invocation of saints Statement of charmer's power Verses charged with apotropaic power	Focuses on return of goods rather than punishment of thief, and channels the power of the charmer, rather than appealing to God for assistance. The hymn is associated with warding off disease, and, being unrelated textually to the charm, is used for this reason rather than its content.
S 13	CCCC 41, f. 206	[As above]	s.xi ¹	s.xi ¹	The charm is an addition of the same date.	Discovery and recovery of goods: uses the Cosmological Cross to extend the power of the charm to the four corners of the earth, with the intention of rendering the theft visible, thus encouraging the thief to return the goods.	<i>Cweðan/ secge</i> Bethlehem is the name... North, East, South, West The Jews hanged Christ (English) Through the Cross of Christ	Performance instruction Sympathetic narrative Invoking the cosmological Cross Sympathetic narrative Religious concluding formula	An addition to the manuscript, it seems that this charm (like S 12) was recorded for frequent use by someone who was familiar with the text.
S 14	London, British Library, Harley	Recipes and charms:	990-1050			Discovery and recovery of goods:	<i>Cweðan/ secge</i>	Performance instruction	The small number of

	585, f. 180v	otherwise known as the <i>Lacnunga</i> .				13. closely related to S	Bethlehem is the name... North, East, South, West The Jews hanged Christ (English) Through the Cross of Christ	Sympathetic narrative Invoking the cosmological Cross Sympathetic narrative Religious concluding formula	differences between S 13 and 14 suggests that the two scribes were aware of the same tradition, recording the same essential text—retaining the same sense and giving the same instructions—in different words.
S 15	London, British Library, Harley 585, f. 180v	Recipes and charms; otherwise known as the <i>Lacnunga</i>	990-1050			Threat to thief: the charmer threatens the thief with a curse. The charm also seems to be intended to remedy lost as well as stolen livestock, reminding the livestock how well the charmer has treated them, and that he expects them to reciprocate by returning. The charm uses sympathetic narratives to encourage the finding of the lost cows (invoking St. Helena).	Helena, Garmund, Herod and Christ on the Cross 'May he wither...'	Invocation Threat/ curse	Recorded alongside other practical, everyday remedies, it seems that this charm was accepted by the charmer and was used frequently.
B	Royal 2.a.xx, f. 52 r	Flyleaf; several other charms	C12	Blood-staunching charms			<i>In principio</i> Name <i>In nomine... cessa</i> <i>In nomine</i>	Apotropaic narrative Personalising Command Religious	Like many other charms, B uses <i>in principio</i> as an apotropaic defence against harm. The charmer can

					presumably intended to remedy <i>menorrhagia</i> .
G v	Royal 2.a.xx, f. 49		Per dominum nostrum	Religious concluding formula	A combination of two charms into one, G is the longest of the <i>rvos</i> charms. It invokes
			In nomine	Appeal to God	Veronica by name, and employs Greek formulas to bolster the power of the charm.
			Greek I	"magical"	
			Veronica	Invocation/sympathetic	
			Liberate me	Command	
			Greek II	"magical"	
			Per dominum nostrum	Religious concluding formula	
			Criste adiuva	Command	
			Rivos	Sympathetic narrative	
			Veronica	Invocation/sympathetic	
			Liberate me	Command	
			Greek III + Latin transliteration	"Magical"	