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The Inscription of Charms in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts

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Anglo-Saxon charms constitute a definable oral genre that may be distinguished from other kinds of traditionally oral materials such as epic poetry because texts of charms include explicit directions for performance. Scribes often specify that a charm be spoken (*cweðan*) or sung (*singan*). In some cases a charm is to be written on some object. But inscribing an incantation on an object does not necessarily diminish or contradict the orality of the genre. An incantation written on an amulet manifests the appropriation of the technology of writing for the purposes of a traditionally oral activity.[1] Unlike epic poetry, riddles, or lyrics, charms are performed toward specific practical ends and their mode of operation is performative, so that uttering the incantation accomplishes a purpose. The stated purpose of an incantation also determines when and under what circumstances a charm will be performed. Charms inscribed in manuscripts are tagged according to the needs they answer-whether eye pain, insomnia, childbirth, theft of property, or whatever. Some charms ward off troubles (toothache, bees swarming); others, such as those for bleeding or swellings, relieve physical troubles. This specificity of purpose markedly distinguishes the genre from other traditional oral genres that are less specifically utilitarian. Given the specific circumstances of need that call for their performance, the social contexts in which charms are performed create the conditions felicitous for performative speech acts in Austin's sense (1975:6-7, 12-15). The assumption underlying charms is that the incantations (whether words or symbols or phonetic patterns) of a charm can effect a change in the state of the person or persons or inanimate object (a salve, for example, or a field for crops). The performer, the beneficiary, and the community of hearers or believers affirm the power of the words to create a new, hoped-for reality among them. The efficacy of the speech-act

[1] See, for example, Foley 1999: 1-5 on the scratching on Bellerophon's tablet.

that is a charm depends on formulaic language and the rightness (or felicitousness) of the performance situation.

From a broader perspective, charms can be viewed as ritual acts because they incorporate conventional beliefs and actions of the society as well as the words of the incantation. It is the ritual aspect of charms that manifests the cosmological beliefs and the traditional practices of the society.[2] Also, rituals, like the performative speech-acts that they may include, are by definition repeatable. In the Anglo-Saxon medical recipe books, recipes for herbal cures are combined with charms to form remedies that differ from purely herbal recipes without verbal incantations only in the aspect of ritual.[3] Ritual in this sense also links the texts that we commonly call charms and those that have the same functions as charms but do not involve words at all, such as the use of amulets, which in Anglo-Saxon remedy books may consist of plants hung or put in some special place—under the milk pail or on the left thigh of a woman in labor. [4]

Ritual also manifests itself in Christian terms: it is likely that one of the reasons that Anglo-Saxon charms are inscribed by Christian scribes among religious materials, as in the Cambridge Manuscript (Corpus Christi College 41), is that they had been performed as rituals that eventually amalgamated with other rituals developed from Christian lore toward similar purposes (Jolly 1996:115-24). Where religious devotion directly addressed the practical aspects of community life or individual well-being involving health, property, and safety, the Christian ritual acts dealing with these circumstances were likely to mesh with ritual acts involving charms. For example, the recipe for a salve in Harley 585 (fols. 146r-49r) includes writing the names of the evangelists on the sticks with which it is stirred, then reciting pieces from Latin liturgy and a vernacular (perhaps Irish) incantation; the herbalist then adds his spittle and blows on it. Here as

[2] S. J. Tambiah (1984) defines ritual as a socially construed event that brings together words and acts under the order of the cosmological beliefs of a society. Especially useful in regard to Anglo-Saxon charms are his discussions of how rituals combine a variety of verbal genres and "media" and how they may incorporate a large practical component. See espec. chapter 4, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," pp. 12366; and chapter 2, "Form and Meaning in Magical Acts," pp. 60-86.

[3] About 69 Anglo-Saxon charms are recorded in the medical recipe books (Lindinara 1978). These books are found in British Museum Library Manuscripts, Royal 12.D.VII and Harley 585.

[4] For a survey of Anglo-Saxon vegetable amulets, see Meaney 1981:38-65.

elsewhere in the Anglo-Saxon materials, "magic" and "religion" have coalesced into one rite. In the history of Anglo-Saxon scholarship considerable effort has been expended to extricate the pagan from the Christian with some interesting results.[5] On the other hand, I propose that we accept the mostly late Anglo-Saxon documentation of charms just as it presents itself in the manuscripts; then, with careful attention to manuscript enviornments, inquire how Anglo-Saxons may have understood and performed the incantations.

Finally, the defining characteristics of the genre mentioned above—oral performance to accomplish a purpose by means of performative speech in a ritual context—are typically represented in the formal structure of the written texts, which consists of the following parts:

(a) A heading naming the purpose of the charm: in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, the heading is often in the form "against something" (e.g., *Wiþ færstic*, or "Against a Sudden Stitch"), although a charm may begin with a statement such as "A man should say this when someone tells him his cattle have been stolen."

(b) Directions for performance ("say," "sing three times," "first take barley bread and write"). The directions for the acts associated with a verbal formula may constitute the longest part of the charm and entail ritual as well as practical acts.

(c) The words of an incantation or chant. The content varies from pagan or apocryphal narrative to magical words or letters to saints' or evangelists' names, and so on.

(d) A concluding formula that may vary from a statement such as "he will soon be well" to more directions for application, such as "Say this three times and three *pater nosters* and three *aves*."[6]

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[5] See, for example, Glosecki 1989; Jolly discusses the bias toward paganism in early editors (1996:100-2). Valerie Flint (1991) has argued that bishops and others in the early Christian church deliberately accommodated pagan magic; Stephanie Hollis (1997) has applied Flint's idea to the cattle theft charms. It seems to me that Flint's model subtly reinstates the dichotomies of pagan versus Christian and magic versus religion, although the evidence of the charms will support a different model: that Anglo-Saxon possessed a tradition of verbal rituals for protection and healing before the conversion that also continued afterward. And in time, as recorded texts reveal, this tradition both absorbed Christian motifs and rituals and became a part of Christian practices.

[6] These formal components parallel in part those commonly found in medical recipes, on whose form see Hunt 1990:16-24. For more on medieval Latin charms as an oral genre, see Olsan 1992.

The inscription of charms in Bede's Old English *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* found in Cambridge Manuscript, Corpus Christi College 41 is part of a variety of materials systematically copied into the margins by one scribe, who may have owned this text (Pfaff 1995 :25). The scribe copied onto specially ruled lines six homilies in Old English, Latin liturgical formulas from masses and daily offices, the dialogue known as *Solomon and Saturn* (see O'Keeffe 1990:47-76), antiphons, prayers, and charms.[7] In order to open the question of how charms, as traditional oral texts with the features I have described above, are textualized, I put three questions to a string of charms that occur in the bottom margin of three folios in this manuscript on what are now numbered pages 206-8: (1) How do charms for the same purpose differ, specifically in structure and motif? (2) How do formulas circulating in Latin differ in manuscript contextualization from those circulating in Old English, and, (3) How do charms differ in the kind of authorization they acquire from being written in the gaps or margins of manuscripts as opposed to those written seamlessly as part of a text?

With regard to the question of how charms for the same purpose differ, no fewer than four formulas to be used in case of the theft of livestock can be identified at the foot of pages 206-8. The first (see Appendix: 1), recorded on three unused lines drawn for the Bede text, begins without a space after the last word of the Bede on the page. This charm has no heading, but the reduced size of the script and its rounded forms, as opposed to the large angular forms of the Anglo-Saxon insular miniscule script of the Bede, signals at a glance that this text is not the Old English Bede. After three widely spaced lines using the Bede lineation, the spacing changes to one that allows six lines of writing within one inch of vertical space. The second charm (Appendix: 2) begins with a capital eth, "Ðis man sceal cweðan" ("This a man must say"). The third charm, "Gif feoh sy undernumen" (see Appendix: 3A), begins at the left margin with a capital. It opens with elaborate Old English directions, followed by an incantation beginning with a string of saints' names and two short phrases in Latin. The *crux christi* formula, to recover something stolen, begins with

[7] Ten charms appear on pages 182 (*Wiþ ymbe*, "For Bees"); 206-8 (*Ne forstolen*, "Neither stolen"; *Ðis man sceal cweðan*, "This one must say"; *Gif feoh sy undernumen*, "If livestock is stolen"); 272 (*Wiþ ealra feo[n]da grimnessum*, "Against the fierceness of all fiends"); 326 (*Wiþ sarum eagum*, "For eye pains"; *Wiþ sarum earum*, "For earache"; *Wiþ magan seocnesse*, "Against great sickness"); 329 (*Creator et sanctificator pater. . . Sator*, "Creator and sanctifying father. . .Sator"); 350-53 (*Ic me on þisse gyrde beluce*, "I enclose myself with this rood [cross]").

a capital C in *Crux* on the last line on folio 207 following some verses praising St. Patrick and invoking God's protection. At this point we are faced with a problem: is the familiar Latin formula beginning "May the cross of Christ bring [it] back" (*crux christi reducat*)[8] inserted here as an independent charm? Is it part of a ritual that begins with the hanging indentation on folio 207? Or is it part of a longer ritual begun with the elaborate directions on the previous folio?[9] Immediately following the *crux christi* formulas on folio 208 is a heading for eye pain (*Wið eahwærce*) with directions for a treatment of wringing salt in the eyes;[10] no charm formula is attached to it.

Besides noting that the charms to recover missing livestock or stolen property occur in three forms—Old English, Latin, and combined Old English and Latin—another observation we can make is that the language of the charms exhibits specific oral features. Although the first Old English charm (Appendix: 1) is without directions to "say" or "sing," it has been categorized as a "metrical charm" by Dobbie (1942: 125-26) on the basis of the alliteration and stress patterns coming after the opening directions. Storms (1948:208-11) sets out the whole charm in verse form. Repetitions and near repetitions of sounds in the stressed syllables and the opening correlative negatives plus rhyme words make its opening aurally memorable:

> *Ne* for*stolen ne* for*holen* nanuht
> pæs ðe Ic age þe ma ðe mihte Herod urne drihten
>
> Neither stolen nor hidden may be anything I own, any more than Herod could hide our Lord

Only the lines containing imperatives alliterating with *feoh* (cattle) following the words "Garmund God's thane" (*Garmund godes þegen*) have been generally treated as metrical. Yet the whole charm presents us with

[8] Macbryde (1906) prints a seventeenth-century version in English from Oxford (Bodleian MS e Mus. 243, fol. 34).

[9] Ker (1957 :44) treats the *crux christi* formula on pages 207-8 as part of the third charm on page 206 (*Gif feoh sy undernumen*); see Appendix: 3A and B. Hollis (1997:147-48) argues that the scribe mistakenly inserted the hymn to St. Patrick before the *crux christi* formulas because the leaf containing these texts was reversed in his exemplar.

[10] "Wið eahwærce: geni[m] læfre neoðewearðe cnuwa and wring ðurh harenne clað and do sealt to wring þonne in þa eagan" ("take a lower part of a reed, pound it and wring it through hair cloth and put salt in and wring it into the eyes").

explicitly oral patterns. In addition, the use of *þence* ("would think" or "plan"), in the closing line of the charm and as the final word in a curse, echoes the two lines beginning *Ic geþohte* and argues against editors printing these opening lines separately from the rest of the text as introductory prose. The strong opening "Neither stolen nor concealed. . .anything I own" and the closing curse "May he wither. . ." together create a situation quite different from the one in which a property owner has been victimized by a thief. Through the charm's power as perfofmative speech, the owner is not at a loss but in control, while the thief is the one in danger of withering.

Of the two other charms for missing livestock squeezed into the bottom margin of page 206 of the Bede manuscript, the first contains the vernacular Bethlehem formula, which was widely known in English from Anglo-Saxon times to the seventeenth century,[11] It has warranted this charm's also being included in Dobbie's collection of "metrical charms" (1942: 126). Combined with this Anglo-Saxon metrical formula is a ritual for turning to the compass directions and reciting in each direction the Latin formula, "May the cross of Christ bring it back from the east" (*crux christi reducat ab oriente*. . .). In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the cross has the power to reveal what has been illicitly hidden (as God had made known to St. Helen where the cross was buried),[12] Fortunately, this charm is also inscribed in British Library MS, Harley 585, in the section referred to as the *Lacnunga*. There too the English Bethlehem formula is linked with the same Latin Christian ritual, so we may conclude that the Anglo-Saxons considered the two parts—English and Latin—a linked pair. Moreover, the directions for when to perform this charm in both the Harley and the Corpus manuscripts mark the opening recitation of the Old English Bethlehem formula as a ritual act: "this a man must say when one tells him that any of his cattle have been lost (*losod* in Harley) or stolen

[11] On the circulation of this charm in medieval manuscripts, see Smallwood 1989.

[12] The story of St. Helen (Elena) finding Christ's cross along with those of the two thieves was part of the hagiographical tradition, retold in Ælfric's homily on the "Invention of the Cross" (Thorpe 1844-46, ii:306) and recounted in the Old English poem *Elene* (Krapp 1932:66-102). Besides having the power to reveal the hidden, the cross also appears in a Latin charm invoking the apotropaic power to ward off spiritual and earthly enemies (Pulsiano 1991). On the cross's power in the four quarters of the world, see Hill 1978.

(*forst[o]lenne* in Corpus). He [must] speak it before he says any other word."[13]

We also find this kind of ritual that includes both English and Latin formulas in other charms, such as the field ritual called the *Æcerbot* charm, a much more elaborate public ritual to insure the fertility of crop land (Dobbie 1942: 116-18). Although these charms could have been copied from earlier manuscripts without any expectation that they would be performed, I suggest that here they were recorded, as recipes and prayers usually are, to make them accessible for use, with the explicit intention that they might be put into practice.[14]

In addition, the two inscriptions of the same charm in Corpus 41 and Harley 585 give us the opportunity to observe it in two versions or multiforms. These charms for missing cattle are not identical: comparing them line-by-line yields the following observations regarding their structure and their textualization.

On the whole, the Harley charm presents us with a more complete text. The Latin *crux christi* incantation that we expect as the fourth in a string of identical incantations spoken toward the east, west, south, and north appears in the Harley text on cue, but it is omitted from the Corpus Bede manuscript. The Corpus text also collapses or abbreviates the directions in this *crux christi* ritual after giving the full version at its first occurrence. The English instructions, "And turn yourself then three times eastward and say three times" ("And gebide þe þonne þriwa east and cwæð þriwa") is reduced to "And to the west and say" ("And in west and cweþ").[15] This version may imply a reader who does not need every word and action exactly scripted, but rather a reader-performer who understands that the ritual actions will be performed the same way in all four compass directions. Further evidence that the Corpus charm is a less scripted and less textualized version of the charm is the absence of the *Amens* that

[13] See Appendix: 2 for both the Corpus and Harley versions.

[14] We have clear examples of theft charms copied solely for antiquarian interests into seventeenth century miscellanies (see note 17 below). Where the same charm appears in the twelfth-century compilations of Anglo-Saxon laws (Textus Roffiensis and Corpus Christi College 383), the problem is more complex.

[15] Editions since Grendon 1909 and including Dobbie 1942 emend "in" to the Roman numeral III, The Corpus scribe may have copied the minims for three as "in" or "in" may have existed in his original manuscript. The line "And in west cweð" is explicable if "and to the west" indicates by its "and" that the charm speaker is directed to do as he has done before—"gebide þe þonne þriwa" ("turn yourself then three times").

punctuate the charm in two places in the Harley Manuscript. Also, the Corpus charm scribe once uses a small cross as shorthand for the word *crux*. He uses the Latin phrase *per crucem Christi* in two places, once immediately after the vernacular Bethlehem formula and again at the end of the *crux christi* ritual. The Harley version translates the words *per crucem Christi* out of Latin into English and adds *Amen* after them. In the translation of this phrase, we can see the vernacularization of the Latin formula emerging in the Harley charm, which is more deliberately and carefully textualized. Finally, the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary of the two versions sometimes differs: *forst[o]lenne/losod, geboren/acænned, ofer/geond,* and *swa næfre þeos dæd/swa þeos dæd nænige þinga*. The incantations to the south and north show variations. Corpus has a *meridie* where Harley reads *ab austro*, both meaning "from the south." Corpus gives one line, *crux christi abscondita sunt* [for *est*] *et inuenta est* ("the cross of Christ was hidden and was found") for Harley's two: *crux christi ab aquilone reducat/crux christi abscondita est et inuenta* ("may the cross of Christ bring [it] back from the north / the cross of Christ was hidden and found").

One conclusion we might draw from these differences is that the form of this charm was not fixed, so that, as with other oral traditional genres, charms manifest a flexibility in performance. Another conclusion is that language barriers are rather porous: where Latin occurs for *per crucem christi* in Corpus, English (þurh þa haligan cristes rode) occurs in Harley. The less carefully scripted Corpus charm may have been recorded as part of a living tradition, if not in the life of the scribe who wrote it in the Bede Manuscript, then in his source. The abbreviated nature of the text does not appear to be a function of lack of space. To understand the Corpus charm (as a performable text), the reader must be familiar with how the charm works, whereas in the Harley manuscript every repetition is carefully spelled out. The Harley version is more explicit and more readable and presents itself as a rhythmical, recitable text. The Corpus version in contrast presents itself as less fixed, perhaps as having been passed on mostly by word of mouth, a heard text, rather than one to be read directly from the book.

But the English Bethlehem formula combined with the *crux christi reducat* ritual is not the last charm on page 206 of the Corpus Bede manuscript. In the next charm, the incantation, which invokes saints, is part of an elaborate ritual to be performed when a horse or other livestock goes missing (*Gyf feoh sy undernumen*). The Latin is to be sung (*sing* occurs three times) over the horse's fetters or bridle. Alternatively, if the animal is not a horse, one is to drip wax from three lighted candles in the hoof tracks. The formula will also work for other missing goods if it is sung in the four

directions "but first upright," that is, in the middle of a house and up. The incantatory formula itself begins with a string of saints' names and a Latin sentence: "And Peter, Paul, Patrick, Phillip, Marie, Brigid, Felix. In the name of God and Christ, he who seeks, finds." The word *chiric*, which I have translated "Christ," may derive from the name of St. Cyriac (Cyriacus),[16] as James thought (1912:83; also Grant 1979:9), but in its present form may be a confused form of *christi.*

This charm occurs in four other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts;[17] the manuscript contexts vary. If it was not a commonly performed charm, it was at least a familiar one. It appears, for example, between an Anglo-Saxon law on wergild and an elaborate bequest formula asserting ownership of lands in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 383 and again precedes the bequest formula in Textus Roffensis. In Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 190, also a compilation of laws, it is added after a Latin church injunction against incest and a decretal of Pope Gelasius. In the British Library manuscript Cotton Tiberius A. iii, the ritual appears among ethical rules for monastics, falling between a rule that one must end life well and Alfric' s letter on how to administer holy oil to the sick. So this charm circulates with lists of legal customs as well as liturgical rites like those in Corpus 41.

The Latin formulaic string of saints' names that follows the opening ritual in Corpus 41 is an unusual formula for this charm. Its customary Latin formula appears on the following page in the Bede manuscript (Appendix: 3B). This formula opens with the *crux christi reducat* motif, which we have already encountered in the Bethlehem charm elaborated as a ritual. But in this charm this one line is immediately followed by lines invoking Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (or Abraham and Job), who will close the paths of escape to the potential thief. In the semantics of the charm, the Old Testament figures of Abraham and Isaac, who have the power to close off paths of escape, are the same figures who according to Biblical narrative made their way up a mountain. The last formula, "Jews crucified Christ," appears in Latin here in the Bede manuscript, though in English in Corpus Christi College MS 190 (Appendix: 4). These two versions are further

[16] There are two saints named Cyriacus, one who traveled to Persia and was martyred in Rome, and the other a Pope from Britain who was martyred with Ursula and the virgins at Cologne.

[17] Consider MS Corpus Christi College 190, British Library (hereafter BL) MS Cotton Tiberius A.iii, Rochester Cathedral Library MS Textus Roffensis, and Cambridge MS Corpus Christi College 383. Two seventeenth-century copies survive in BL MS Harley 438 and BL MS Cotton Julius C. ii.

evidence of how easily formulas are transformed from one language to another. On one level the problem of whether or not this set of formulas beginning with the *crux christi reducat* on page 208 belongs to the ritual of singing over the fetters is solved by the existence of the other versions of the ritual containing the lines. Should that lead us to decide that the incantation of saints' names and St. Patrick's hymn were copied here erroneously as Hollis has suggested? The spacing and punctuation in the Corpus manuscript do not offer a conclusive answer, although the layout of Corpus 41 clearly introduces the names of saints as the incantation. The Latin stanzas to the hymn then follow naturally as an extension of the saints motif. If so, the ritual to be sung over the fetters has been significantly augmented by the inclusion of the verses of the Latin hymn. The inclusion of the hymn verses would not be not entirely surprising, since it has been shown that the last three verses of this Hymn were recommended as an apotropaic against demons and the yellow plague (Grant 1979:12-13), and formulas are sometimes used for more than one purpose. Nevertheless, the charm closes with the *crux christi* and *Judei Christum* formulas, versions of which we find in the other records of this ritual to be chanted over the animal's tracks.

If we return to the questions put to the charms at the bottom of pages 206 to 208 in Corpus Christi College 41, we can conclude first that we have three charms for loss of livestock and other property and that the Corpus versions of the Bethlehem *crux christi* charm and the *Gif feoh sy undernumen* ritual differ from versions found in other manuscripts in ways that are predictable for oral materials. We have seen how the first charm, *Ne forst[o]lenne. . .Garmund*, reverses a loss and curses a thief through a strong vernacular speech-act, while the second joins the vernacular Bethlehem formula to the expanded *crux christi* ritual then closes with a vernacular version of the "Jews-hanged-Christ" formula. In the third charm, *Gif feoh sy undernumen*, we found a widely recorded vernacular ritual to be performed over fetters, hoof tracks, or a house that introduces Latin incantations, which in turn include verses from the alphabetic hymn to St. Patrick. A religious person might have performed this charm as formal liturgy, whereas property owners evidently used the vernacularized versions preserved in the legal collections to strengthen their claims for punishment against thieves (Hollis 1997: 163). Sometimes the same formulas (e.g., *per crucem Christi* and *Iudei Christum crucifixerunt*) circulated in both Latin and English, and they may occur in different charms. Finally, when we look at the work of this scribe who wrote so much in the margins of Corpus 41 and beyond him to the book or books he copied from, we can conclude that his work authorizes performance of all

of these three and other charms as Christian rituals. But this statement speaks only for Corpus 41. Each manuscript merely glanced at here—the collection of medical remedies in Harley 585, the religious lore and devotions in Cotton Tiberius, the lists of laws in Textus Roffensis and Corpus 190—contextualizes the theft charms differently. It appears, then, that we must attend closely to manuscripts if we want to explore further the oral tradition of charms.

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Appendix[18]

1. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41, p. 206

Ne forstolen ne forholen nanuht
þæs ðe Ic age þe ma ðe mihte herod urne drihten
Ic geþohte sancte eadelenan
and 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.
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 healde
Gyf hyt hwa gedo ne gedige hit him næfre.
Binnan þrym nihtum cunne ic his mihta
his mægen and his mihta and his mundcræftas.
eal he weornige swa syre wudu weornie

[18] In the texts below, abbreviations are expanded silently; emendations appear in brackets; capitalization follows that of the manuscripts. I have not attempted to represent manuscript punctuation although it serves as a cue for spacing. The spacing is editorial and intended to emphasize oral patterns in alliteration, syntax, and stress (cp. Doane 1994). The translations are mine.

swa breðel seo swa þystel
se ðe ðis feoh oðfergean þence
oððe ðis orf oðehtian ðence Amen.[19]

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 [and also] he who intends to carry off these goods or drive away these animals.

2. MS CCC 41, p. 206 and British Library, MS Harley 585, fol. 180v.

Corpus: Ðis man sceal cweðan ðonne his ceapa hwilcne m[an] forst[o]lenne
Harley: þonne þe mon ærest secge þæt þin ceap sy losod
Corpus: c[w]yð ær he ænyg oþer word cweðe:
Harley: þonne cweð þu ærest ær þu elles hwæt cweþe:
Corpus: Bethlem hattæ seo burh ðe Crist on geboren wes
Harley: bædleem hatte seo buruh þe Crist on acænned wæs
Corpus: seo is gemærsod ofer ealne middan geard
Harley: seo is gemærsod geond ealne middangeard
Corpus: swa ðeos dæd wyrþe for monnum mære
Harley: swa þyos dæd for monnum mære gewurþe
Corpus: per crucem christi
Harley: þurh þa haligan cristes rode amen.

Corpus: and gebide þe ðonne þriwa east and cweð þriwa
Harley: gebide þe þonne þriwa east and cweð þonne þriwa
Corpus: + christi ab orient[e] reducat
Harley: crux christi ab oriente reduca[t]
Corpus: and in [for iii?] west and cweð
crux christi ab occidente reducat

[19] Cf. "Charms," no. 9 (Dobbie 1942:125-26).

Harley: gebide þe þonne priwa west and cweð þonne þriwa
crux christi ab occidente reducat
Corpus: and in [for iii?] suð and cweð
crux christi a meridie reduca[t]
Harley: gebide þe þonne þriwa suð and cweð þriwa
crux christi ab austro reducat
Corpus: and in [for iii?] norð and cweð
crux christi abscondita sunt [sic] et inuenta est
Harley: gebide þonne þriwa norð and cweð [fol. 181r] þriwa
crux christi ab aquilone reduca[t]
crux christi abscondita est et inuenta est

Corpus: Iudeas crist ahengon gedidon him dæda þa wyrstan
Harley: iudeas crist ahengon dydon dæda þa wyrrestan
Corpus: hælon pæt hi forhelan ne mihton
Harley: hælon pæt hy forhelan ne mihtan
Corpus: swa næfre ðeos dæd forholen ne wyrðe
Harley: swa þeos dæd nænige þinga f[o]rholen ne wurþe
Corpus: per crucem christi.[20]
Harley: þurh þa haligan cristes rode amen.[21]

[Corpus] This one must say, when someone steals some of his cattle. He says before he may speak any other word: "Bethlehem is the name of the city where Christ was born. It is famous throughout the world. So may this deed be famous among the people, through the cross of Christ." And then pray three times to the east and say three times, "May the cross of Christ bring it back from the east." And pray to the west and say, "May the cross of Christ bring it back from the west." And to the south and say, "May the cross of Christ bring it back from the south." And to the north and say, "The cross of Christ was hidden and was 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.

3A. MS CCC 41, p. 206.

Gif feoh sy undernumen.

[20] Cf. "Charms," no. 10 (Dobbie 1942: 126).

[21] See Grattan and Singer 1952:182 and "Charms," no. 5 (Dobbie 1942:123).

Gif hit sy hors sing þis on his fetera 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 iiii healfa ðin
and sing ærest up rihte hit:

and petur pol patric pilip marie brigit felic
in nomine dei and ch[risti] qui quer[it] inu[e]nit.

3B. [p. 207]

Christus illum si[bi] elegit in terris [u]icarium
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[22] domine precintus diebus ac noc/tibus
[sine?] intermissione deum oret dominum
cuius ingentes laboris percepturis percepturis [sic] premium/
cum apostoli[s] regnauit sanctus super israel.

Audite omnes amantes Deum sancta merita
uiri in christo/ beati patricii episcopi
quomodo bonum ab actum simulatur angelis
perfectumque est propter uitam/ equatur apostolis.[23]

[22] *Sona* substitutes for *zona*. The hymn is alphabetic: *Christus* above expands the manuscript reading *xps*.

[23] These lines beginning *Christus illum* derive from the last three and first stanzas (in that order) of the hymn of St. Sechnall (or Secundus) in honor of St. Patrick. See Raby 1959:34 and 37.

patricii laudes semper dicamus ut nos cum illo defendat deus.[24]

Crux christi reducat
crux christi perriit et inuenta est
habraeham tibi uias montes/
[p. 208] silua[s] semitas fluminas andronas [con]cludat.
isaac tibi tenebras inducat
Crux iacob te ad iudicium ligatum perducat

iudei christum crucifixerunt
pe[s]simum sibimet ipsum perpetrauerunt
opus celauerunt quod non potuerunt celare
sic nec hoc furtum celatur nec celare possit
per dominum nostrum.[25]

If livestock is stolen. If it is a horse, sing this over his fetters or his bridle. If it is another animal, sing it over the hoof tracks and light three candles and drip wax three times over them so. No one will be able to hide it. If it is other property, then sing it toward the four sides of the house, and sing it first 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

[24] This line occurs in the antiphons that accompany the hymn in four manuscripts: Dublin, Franciscan Convent, *Liber Hymnorum*; Milan, Ambrosian Library, *Antiphonary of Bangor*; Dublin, Trinity College, MS E.4.2 *Liber Hymnorum*; Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, *Leabhar Breac*. For antiphons in the Franciscan ms., see Stokes 1887:pt. ii, 389; for antiphons in the other mss., see Bernard and Atkinson 1898, i:x-xvi and 13; ii:105-6.

[25] Cf. McBryde 1906: 181.

Christ was lost and is found. May Abraham close to you the roads, mountains, woods, paths, rivers, passages. May Isaac lead you into the darkness. The cross [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.

4. Cambridge, MS Corpus Christi College 190, p. 130.

Gyf feoh sy underfangen.
Gyf hit sy hors sing on his feteran oðde on his bridele.
Gyf hit sy oðer feoh sing on þæt fotspor
and ontend .iii. candela and dryp on þæt hofrec þæt wex þriwa.
Ne mæg hit þe nan man forhelan.
Gif hit sy innorf
Sing þonne on feower healfe pæs huses and æne on middan:

Crux christi reducat
Crux christi per furtum periit inuenta est
abraham tibi semitas uias montes concludat
iob et flumina ad iudici[um] ligatum perducat.

Judeas Crist ahengan þæt heom com to wite swa strangan
gedydan heom dæda þa wyrrestan hy þæt drofe on guldon
hælan hit heom to hearme micclum
for þam hi hyt forhelan ne mihtan.[26]

If livestock is stolen. If it is a horse, sing over his fetters or his bridle. If it is other animals, sing over the tracks and light three candles and drip the wax on the hoof tracks three times. 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 off to you the paths, roads, and mountains. May Job also close the rivers, bring you bound to judgment. The Jews hanged Christ. That deed brought them a harsh punishment. They did to him the worst of deeds. They paid severely

[26] Cf. Wanley, as quoted in McBryde 1906:181.

for that. They hid it to their own great harm, because they could not hide it completely.

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