

**“And straightway the fountain of her blood dried up”
(Mark 5:29): constructing a template for late medieval
Irish obstetric charms**

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RMA thesis Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies

Medieval Celtic Studies

Utrecht University

August 2019

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I. Introduction

*Hik spik spouw,
ik geef de hik aan jou
ik geef de hik aan anderman
die de hik verdragen kan,
hik spik spouw,
ik geef de hik aan jou.*¹

This little verse above is familiar to many Dutch people as a remedy for the hiccups. It is regarded by most as nothing more than a piece of folklore, something your mother or grandmother would tell you to say if you had the hiccups as a child. Although I never thought twice about this remedy, soon after starting to read about charms the realisation struck that it actually has all the hallmarks of a charm: obscure words, rhyme and alliteration, instructions for ritual actions to be performed (during the second “*ik geef de hik aan jou*”, the user has to spin around, pointing their finger outwards. The person the user is pointing to when they stop will get the hiccups instead of them),² and the supposed ability to affect a situation with words alone.

Just as the origins and power of this charm are little understood by those who know it, so too are medieval Irish charms still little understood, or even known at all. This thesis aims to be a contribution to the study of Irish charms and how they may have worked. The whole genre of medieval Irish charms is much too large to be able to be examined in an MA thesis; instead, I will look specifically at Irish obstetric charms found in 15th to 17th century manuscripts. The main question asked within this thesis is: “Is it possible to construct a template for a late medieval Irish obstetric charm, and if so, what would such a template look like?” To attempt to create this

1 “Hik spik spouw,
I give the hiccups to you.
I give the hiccups to someone else
who can handle them.
Hik spik spouw,
I give the hiccups to you.”

2 The presence of instructions for ritual actions depends on the variation used: from the small, informal sample I took among a group of Dutch people in their early to mid-twenties, there are at least five different variations, some with and some without actions to be performed. In some cases, it is only used as a counting-out rhyme rather than as a cure for the hiccups.

template, fifteen obstetric charms will be edited, translated, analysed and compared. Before it is possible to compare the charms with each other, however, it is necessary to know more about the workings of charms in general, and medieval Irish charms specifically. To that end, the concept of ‘charms’ will be examined in depth in the first part of this thesis: the terminology that should be used, the characteristics of charms, the origins of the power of charms and the sections a medieval Irish charm may be divided into will be discussed. An index of Irish charms from 8th to 19th century manuscripts, alphabetized by function, is attached as “Appendix II”, in the hope that this index makes it easier for others to find and thus study Irish charms.³

3 See Appendix II: Index of Irish Charms.

Research question and selection of primary sources

Little attention has been given to charms within the field of Celtic Studies: there is no overview of all the charms that can be found in the manuscripts, nor are there many collections of edited and/or translated charms.⁴ Because of this, it can be difficult to find charms and thus to do any type of research on them, as the first step necessarily becomes the time-consuming task of tracking them down. There are two possible ways of doing this: looking through different manuscripts themselves or looking through manuscript catalogues and other secondary literature. The first approach would be too labour-intensive to be a viable option here, so taking the second approach, I examined all available manuscript catalogues, secondary literature on charms and any other possible sources. The collected information was then organized into an index of Irish charms from the 8th to 19th centuries, sorted by function of the charm and date of the manuscript.⁵ Having done this, I had to decide on the charms to be treated within this thesis, as looking at all of the charms collected in the index would be much too large an undertaking for an MA thesis. The selection was made by filtering the index by date to include charms in manuscripts from the 9th to the 17th centuries. The charms that have been looked at extensively already were filtered out; these turned out to be mostly the earlier ones, such as the St. Gall incantations and the Stowe Missal Spells.⁶ There were 94 charms in the selection that remained; of these, 59 were medical charms. Out of these 59 medical charms, the largest subcategory was obstetric charms (15), followed by charms for sleep (9), charms against fever (7), charms for staunching blood (5) and charms against toothache (4). The rest were for various other ailments and afflictions.

The charms treated in this thesis will be the obstetric charms, both because it is a fairly sizeable collection, and because there has been next to no research on medieval Irish obstetric

4 Two partial collections that I am aware of are by Carney and Carney (1960) and by Best (1952). Carney and Carney mention at the end of their article that they are working on a more exhaustive collection, but thus far this has not been published.

5 See Appendix II: Index of Irish Charms

6 See Appendix II: Index of Irish Charms for details on these charms.

charms, leaving much room for new insights. The charms are found in six Irish manuscripts from the 15th to the 17th centuries,⁷ all of which are available online on *Irish Scripts on Screen*.⁸ They can be further divided into three categories: charms for delivery (5), charms against excessive menstrual flow (6) and charms for fertility (4). These charms will be used to gain a better insight into medieval Irish medical charms in general, by using them to put together a template for Irish obstetric charms found in 15th to 17th century manuscripts.

This template will be constructed through thorough comparison of both the language and the content of the charms in general, and by comparing the different types of words of power and the instructions for the placement of the different charms. Since none of the charms used to create the template has been edited or translated before, this has to be done before it is possible to compare them. They will be edited, translated and analysed in order to provide the information needed to carry out the comparison. The edition, translation and analysis will be presented in this thesis as well, to add a few medieval Irish charms to those available in edition and translation.

To be able to compare the content of the charms, it is important to first define various aspects of charms in general, and medieval Irish charms specifically. To do this, I will examine the following questions:

1. What terminology should be used to discuss charms?
2. What are the characteristics of the language and ritual of charms?
3. What are the origins of the power of charms?
4. Into what sections can charms be divided?

Together, the answers to these questions will constitute a definition of the concept of ‘charms’. The questions and their answers are applicable to charms in general, though they will be answered with a focus on medieval Irish charms, as those are the focus of this thesis. Additionally,

⁷The manuscripts are NLI MS G11, RIA MS 24B3, RIA MS 23N29, RIA MS 23F19, NLS Adv. MS 72.1.2 and NLS Adv. MS 72.1.3. For a short introduction to each manuscript, see “The manuscripts”.

⁸<<http://www.isos.dias.ie>>; ISOS contains downloadable high resolution images of many medieval Irish manuscripts.

to better situate the charms in their context, a brief look at the historical use of charms in Ireland will be given, looking at the earliest attested charms and at how long they continued to be used, or if they are perhaps still in use today.

Historical context: the use of charms in Ireland through the ages

The earliest attested Irish charms are the St. Gall incantations⁹ and the Stowe Missal spells,¹⁰ which are found in manuscripts from the 8th to the 9th centuries. This does not mean that before this time charms were not used in Ireland: Mees sees the use of charms as a continuation of Old Celtic magical practice.¹¹ A continuation necessitates that that which is continued has been kept in at least limited use. Indeed, John Carey speaks of a survival of “native Irish magic” among all classes of the population during precisely the period that the earliest attested charms are from.¹² Medieval Irish medical charms, then, may stand in direct continuation to older Celtic healing spells, such as Gaulish charms.¹³ There are virtually no charms recorded between the 9th and the 14th centuries, however.¹⁴ One possible reason for this lack of written charms during those centuries could be that they were primarily transmitted orally. Another reason could be that the manuscripts simply did not survive. Regardless of the exact reasons for this void in the historical record of Irish charms, more and more of them are found in manuscripts dating from the 14th century onwards.

Charms were kept in use throughout the early modern and modern period: out of the 296 charms in the index of charms attached to this thesis, 126 date from the 9th to 17th centuries. The remaining 170 date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Additionally, folklorists have collected charms directly from people who still knew and occasionally used them in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Dúchas project, which aims to digitize the entire National Folklore Collection, has over a hundred charms available on their website.¹⁵ Charms are still used in parts of Ireland even nowadays: on 26 October 2013, the *Irish Times* posted an article on their website about this.¹⁶

9 St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1395 p.419.

10 Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS D ii 3, f.64v.

11 Mees 2009: 180.

12 Carey 2000: 4. Unpublished English version, kindly sent to me by John Carey.

13 Mees 2009: 169.

14 I found only two, one against toothache (Rawl. B485 f1v *infra*), and a litany used as a charm to cure illness (RIA D ii 1 f. 54 (110) b m), both found in 14th century manuscripts.

15 <<https://www.duchas.ie/en>>, the charms can be found under Topics > Genre > charms.

16 McGuire, Peter, ‘Magical mystery cures’ in: *The Irish Times* (26-10-2013) <<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/magical-mystery-cures-1.1573266>>.

It is thus clear that charms have been used for a long time in Ireland, and have not stopped being used since the medieval period. Rather, they became even more widespread in the 18th and 19th centuries. They may be in decline in the current scientific climate, but the art is not yet lost completely.

Historiographical overview

Sources for the charms

The specific charms I will be looking in this thesis at have thus far not attracted much attention. Dennis King has edited one of the charms (charm 3.1) with a modern Irish translation on his blogspot *Nótaí Imill*,¹⁷ and given a transcription with a few sparse comments for another (charm 3.4), also in modern Irish.¹⁸ These are the only editions and translations, however, and they are neither complete nor done in an academic context. The only other sources there are for information on the obstetric charms are the manuscript catalogues. They differ, of course, in how elaborate the information is that they give, but without them there would be none at all. Because the entries for the charms edited in this thesis are given with each edition, I will not give those here as well; rather, I will give a short overview of the thoroughness and type of information that can be expected from the three main catalogues, i.e. the *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*,¹⁹ the *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*,²⁰ and the *Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland*.²¹ Note will also be made of other catalogues that are available for any of the manuscripts.

The only catalogue available for Irish manuscripts from the National Library of Ireland is the *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*, edited by Nessa Ní Shéaghdha and Pádraig Ó Macháin. It consists of 13 fasciculi, published between 1961 and 1996, in which the 699 Gaelic manuscripts held by the National Library of Ireland are described, and their contents listed. The first nine fasciculi have been made available online by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, though with a disclaimer that they can be incomplete and in need of corrections.²² For this thesis the first fascicle, for manuscripts G1 to G12, is the most important,

17 King, Dennis, “ortha scríofa” in: *Nótaí Imill* (30-07-2011). <nimill.blogspot.com/2011/07/ortha-scriofa.html>.

18 King, Dennis, “bandacht” in: *Nótaí Imill* (13-02-2016). <<https://nimill.blogspot.com/2016/02/bandacht.html>>.

19 Ní Shéaghdha and Ó Macháin 1961-1996.

20 Mulchrone, O’Rahilly, FitzPatrick and Pearson 1926-1970.

21 Black 2011.

22 Available at <<http://www.celt.dias.ie/publications/online/nli/>>.

though for the index of charms all fasciculi have been consulted. The information in this catalogue is fairly extensive: the manuscripts themselves, their provenance and their history are described in detail. The description of the contents is not always as extensive, though usually at least the subject is given, as well as the opening line(s), and often also the final line(s). Where the editors are aware of them, related texts in other manuscripts are also mentioned.

The *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, edited by Kathleen Mulchrone, Thomas O’Rahilly, Elizabeth FitzPatrick and A.I. Pearson, consists of 28 fasciculi in seven volumes, as well as two indexes, and was published between 1926 and 1970. It is the only catalogue available for Irish manuscripts from the Royal Irish Academy, and its contents have been reproduced on *Irish Script on Screen*. The indexes are very much needed in order to navigate the catalogue, as all the manuscript have a catalogue number that differs from their shelf number. The first index (“Index I”) contains two lists with the catalogue numbers and the corresponding shelf number, the fascicle of the catalogue in which the manuscript can be found, and the page number. One of the lists is sorted by shelf number and the other by catalogue number of the manuscripts. It also contains an index of first lines of verse. The second index (“general index”) is an index by name or subject. This index refers to the manuscripts by their catalogue number, and gives the page of the catalogue where the text in question can be found. The information given about the manuscripts is not extremely extensive, but rather confined to some information about the provenance, as well as information about the foliation, etc. The entries themselves are also fairly short, but they do generally include the first lines and the type of text.

The *Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland*, edited by Ronald Black, is not the first catalogue to describe the Irish manuscripts in this library: in 1912, Donald Mackinnon published a catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in Scotland.²³ However, this catalogue is not ordered by manuscript, but by subject. As a result, it is only useful to find out which manuscripts contain texts on a given subject, rather than what texts a given manuscript contains. It

²³Mackinnon 1912.

also uses the old shelfmarks, though the National Library of Scotland gives a *Gaelic reference number concordance* on their website, which can be used to convert these to the modern shelfmarks. For these reasons, Black's *Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts* is more useful for this thesis. The information given in this catalogue is fairly extensive: the manuscripts themselves and their provenance are described, and the hands present in the manuscript are described in detail. The contents are also described in some detail: the subject is given for all texts, as well as the first line(s), and for longer texts also the last line(s). The hand that wrote the text is also given for each text. It can also be used to navigate Mackinnon's catalogue, as the page numbers in Mackinnon's catalogue for each manuscript, as well as the old shelfmarks are given. Black's catalogue is only available online, on the *Irish Script on Screen* website. The downside to this is that only descriptions of the manuscripts digitized on ISOS are available. On the other hand, the digital format makes it possible to link directly to the pages in the manuscripts from the catalogue entries.

Overall, the manuscript catalogues are an invaluable source of information, not least because they are often the *only* source of information, apart from the manuscripts themselves. However, not all of them are always as helpful as they could be: often the information that is given on a charm is just "a charm", without any further indication of the function or even the language. Since many 17th and 18th century Irish manuscripts contain a mix of Irish, English and Latin, the language of a given text would be useful information to include in a catalogue. At other times, the information given in an entry is "a compilation of treatments, cures and charms against [...]", without any indication of how many different cures or charms there are, so that it might turn out that the compilation only includes one charm. It might also be mentioned that there are multiple charms against a certain ailment, but not how many. Of course, this is when it becomes pertinent to consult the manuscripts themselves, but it can nevertheless be frustrating, for example when a manuscript is difficult to access. The index of charms attached to this thesis will help alleviate at least some of these problems. Firstly, all the information found in the manuscript catalogues is now available in one

place, making it easier to access. Secondly, the index includes references to the editions and/or translations of charms, in so far as they exist. Thirdly, any additional information about the charms (e.g. about the exact function, or its place in the manuscript) that has been uncovered during the making of the index has been included. More work is still needed to make a fully exhaustive index of charms, but this index is a step in the right direction.

Performativity applied to charms

It is important not only to look into the sources we have for information on the charms themselves, but also to look at the origins of one of the key concepts used in this thesis, i.e. “words of power”. The concept of words having intrinsic power reaches back to the theory of performativity, which was first introduced as such by J.L. Austin in a series of Harvard Lectures, later edited and collected in a book.²⁴ In these lectures, Austin described the idea of ‘performative utterances’, which have the power to accomplish a socially effective (speech) act, and ‘constative utterances’, which do not have this power. Velten states that “performativity stresses the notion of executing, accomplishing an action”,²⁵ which becomes clear when Austin says that “to utter the sentence is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it.”²⁶ After introducing the difference between performatives and constatives, Austin goes on to introduce conditions for ‘happy performatives’, to explain various types of infelicities, to describe possible criteria of performatives, and to further demarcate different classes of illocutionary force. These further explorations are less important here, as the important part of Austin’s work for us is the idea that utterances can have the power to accomplish an action, that they can do something real in the world, something that does not happen as a *consequence* of the utterance, but *in* the uttering itself.

This concept of words enacting change in the world was taken on by scholars of rituals, and hence scholars of charms. David Frankfurter used it in his 1995 article on *historiolae*, in which he

24 Austin 1975.

25 Velten 2012: 251.

26 Austin 1975: 6.

looked at the origins of the power of *historiolae* as used in ritual spells.²⁷ He made the point that “the very words of magical spells—and ritual speech in general—are meant to be efficacious, and are in fact efficacious in the social context of ritual,”²⁸ going so far as to say that “the magical spell becomes a performative utterance.”²⁹ Referring to Austin, he went on to state that “the uttering of the words is ... usually a, or even *the* leading incident in the performance of the act ... the performance of which is also the object of the utterance.”³⁰ He thus took the theory of the power that can be enacted by words and applied it to words that were concretely supposed to have power: words used for spells. In being uttered the words of power become performative and by becoming so, can execute or accomplish an action, i.e. the intended apotropaic or curative function of the spell. Frankfurter specifically looked at *historiolae*, but this can apply to all types of words of power.

Jacqueline Borsje also explores this performative dimension of words of power,³¹ saying that “the aim of the performer of verbal power is to influence or transform reality”.³² To study the performative dimension of words of power, Borsje proposes a model that describes the performance of words of power as a communicative process. In this model, the performer of the words of power is the sender of a message (in the form of the words of power), which is sent to the reality that is to be transformed, also known as the addressee. The addressee can be human, but can also be an object designated to be imbued with power. The message has some supernatural power, either originating from a supernatural entity that is invoked, or from the intrinsic power of the words.³³ The origin of the power of the words is one point where Borsje deviates from Frankfurter, who explained the power of *historiolae* as coming from either the performer of the ritual or from the myth underlying the *historiola*. Borsje on the other hand ascribes the supernatural power of the words to either some

27 Frankfurter 1995: 457-476.

28 Frankfurter 1995: 466.

29 *ibid.*

30 Austin 1975: 8, cited in Frankfurter 1995: 466.

31 For example in Borsje 2010, 2013 and 2016.

32 Borsje 2016: 37.

33 Borsje 2016: 38.

supernatural entity (that may or may not be explicitly invoked in the words of power) or to the intrinsic power of the words, and she does not differentiate between the levels on which the different powers should be accommodated.³⁴

Borsje also brings forward the idea of a text as a powerful object, whether physical or not, giving three categories for the role texts can play in rituals as material objects: (1) something is done with a piece of manuscript on which the words are written; (2) words themselves are treated as objects that should be applied to the addressee that is to be affected by them; (3) an ambiguous class, caused by the multiple meanings some Irish verbs have, where it is not clear whether a piece of manuscript is to be put down or whether a spell should be recited over an object.³⁵

Borsje is, as far as I know, the only researcher to apply the concept of performativity specifically to Irish charms. It has been applied to charms from other places and in other languages, though the concept of performativity is not made as explicit as Borsje does for Irish charms. It has been applied more implicitly to German charms. For example, Murdoch refers to the concept of words having the power to effect change in the world in his definition of charms: “short texts, the earliest of them oral in origin, in verse or prose, designed in their original form to effect—to conjure, in fact—some sort of cure or change **by the power of the word alone**, often assisted by the invocation of deities.”³⁶ The idea that words can be intrinsically powerful has also been mentioned in connection with German charms: “the instinctive metaphysics of *Segenspruch* rested on the belief that some words simply *contained* spiritual power through the mere fact of being uttered or written down.”³⁷

34 Borsje 2016: 38-39.

35 Borsje 2016: 50-51; the categories have been re-ordered for improved clarity.

36 Murdoch 2004: 57; emphasis my own.

37 Cameron 2010: 55.

A note on the relevance of this project

As with a lot of research done on topics in the humanities, and in medieval history in particular, it can be hard to find a way in which said research is directly relevant to today's society. The study of obstetric charms, however, is directly relevant to recent developments in reproductive health. Maternal mortality is on the rise even in such developed countries as the United States, with women being twice as likely to die of pregnancy-related causes in 2019 compared to 1987.³⁸ In an article posted on the website of *The Washington Post*, Melissa Reynolds states that this rise in maternal mortality is directly related to the shift of focus from the health and safety of the mother to foetal health and development.³⁹ In contrast, medieval Irish charms seem to be focused primarily on the mother as the patient. This is especially visible in charms for safe delivery: even in the heading, such charms say “**For the woman** to safely deliver a child.”⁴⁰ Renewed attention to this medieval paradigm of reproductive health can offer alternative ways of looking at the relative importance given to the health of the mother and of the foetus.

Academically, the research done in this thesis is relevant in at least five different ways. Firstly, it makes a collection of medieval Irish texts available, both the Irish text and an English translation, that have never been edited or studied before. A great number of medieval Irish texts currently do not get any attention, because they are only available in the manuscripts, and not everyone who would want to study the texts has the necessary skill-set to transcribe, edit and translate them. This has unfortunately been the case with charms as well. By making at least a number of charms more readily available to those for whom the manuscripts are not easily accessible as sources, more opportunity is created for the study of these texts, and through them the study of the whole genre of charms. Secondly, some of the charms presented in this thesis are

38Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System*.

<<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pregnancy-mortality-surveillance-system.htm>>

39Reynolds, Melissa, ‘The key to lowering America’s high rates of maternal mortality’, in: *The Washington Post* (09-05-2019). <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/05/09/key-lowering-americas-high-rates-maternal-mortality/>>

40e.g. charms 1.1 (NLI G11 p.268b30) and 1.2 (NLS Adv. MS 72.1.2 f.80r4).

evidence of an intersection of medieval cultures that may not be fully understood yet. Particularly the charms that use Latin texts as words of power can be used to study aspects of intercultural transmission. Thirdly, the manuscript context of the charms, though not looked at in depth in this thesis, can give information about the perception of medical knowledge: healing charms often occurred in medical compilations, so they were clearly thought of as primarily medical in nature.⁴¹ This can offer important insights into the medieval perception of medicine in general, and its differences from today's overwhelmingly scientific perception of medical knowledge. Fourthly, this thesis adds to the understanding of how charms function, by examining the nucleus of the charm, i.e. the words of power, in depth. Fifthly, the structure of medieval Irish charms is still not fully known or understood. By thoroughly examining the structure of a subset of medieval Irish charms, a start is made with the study of the structural elements of medieval Irish charms in general.

41 Murdoch 2004: 65.

Defining a “charm”

The concept of ‘charms’ is hard to define, and various terms have been used in the secondary literature. ‘Charm’, ‘incantation’ and ‘spell’ are used more or less interchangeably,⁴² and ‘charm-prayer’ is used for charms that have Christian components such as saints’ names, especially in manuscript catalogues. There have also been attempts to introduce neutral or broadly descriptive terminology, such as ‘ritual verbal formula’⁴³ and the concept of ‘words of power’.⁴⁴ In this section, the concept of ‘charms’ will be defined by looking at the terminology, the characteristics of charms, and the origins of their power. Additionally, the sections present specifically in medieval Irish charms will be discussed.

Terminology

I have just briefly touched upon the many different terms that have in the past been used in the study of charms. Not only is there a wide variety of terms, these terms have also been used differently by different people. The lack of consensus on the terminology available for the study of charms makes it necessary to examine and explain which terms are used and the exact way in which they are used.

The two most important terms used in this thesis are ‘charm(s)’ and ‘words of power’. But what exactly is meant by these terms, and why are these the terms used? The Oxford English Dictionary gives the following definition for the word ‘charm’:⁴⁵

- a. *orig.* The chanting or recitation of a verse supposed to possess magic power or occult influence; incantation, enchantment; hence, any action, process, verse, sentence, word, or material thing, credited with such properties; a magic spell; a talisman etc.
- b. Anything worn about the person to avert evil or ensure prosperity; an amulet.

42 For example by Best (1916, 1952).

43 Cameron 2010: 51.

44 Chiefly by Borsje (2010; 2013; 2016).

45 OED s.v. 1. *charm*.

According to this definition, a charm is either verbal or physical, and the word specifically denotes powerful words or a powerful object. This definition already makes it clear that the concepts of charms and words of power cannot be defined completely separately. To come closer to a definition of ‘charm’, the concept of words of power will thus first be examined.

The concept of ‘words of power’ encompasses all different types of words that carry power. It is strongly linked to the concept of performativity, which says that actions can, in the right circumstances be performed by nothing more than the uttering of words.⁴⁶ The utterance does not necessarily have to be verbal: it can also be written, or communicated in another way. Thus, if an action is performed by the pronouncement of words, the words that are being said have to carry some sort of power to induce change in the world, hence “words of power”. The concept of words of power can be used very broadly, for all different types of words that have the power to induce change in the world. Words of power can be divided into three categories: secular words of power, magical words of power and religious words of power. The words of power found within these categories can overlap considerably; especially the layers of meaning given to magical and religious words of power through the times can be impossible to completely separate. Examples of secular words of power are orders given by rulers to their subordinates, pronouncements of law, and, more specifically Irish, satires given by poets.⁴⁷

As just mentioned, magical and religious words of power can often overlap, and are perhaps more correctly described as two ends of a spectrum of supernatural words of power. On that spectrum, different texts that contain words of power can be distinguished, some completely religious, some completely magical, and others falling within the intersection of magic and religion. The four main texts that contain words of power in this spectrum, from religious to magical, are prayers, blessings and curses, charms, and spells. Prayers are fully religious texts, and spells are fully magical texts. Blessings and curses can be either religious or magical, or even a combination

46 cf. Austin 1975: 6.

47 cf. Stacy 2007, especially chapter 3, for secular words of power in Ireland, specifically pronouncements of law and satires.

of the two, depending on the powers that are invoked or used. Charms are magical texts, originally synonymous with spells, that have acquired a religious layer, specifically Christian in the case of Irish charms, because of having been produced and/or used in a religious environment. This is already visible in the Old Irish word *ortha*, which can mean both ‘prayer’ and ‘charm’,⁴⁸ and is still visible today in the term ‘charm-prayer’.

‘Words of power’ is thus nothing more than the concept that there are words that have the power to enact change in the world. There are multiple different types of texts that include words of power, among which charms. Since medieval Irish charms are necessarily found as written texts in manuscripts, that is exactly what is meant with the term ‘charm’ in this thesis: the whole text as found in the manuscript, including all its sections.⁴⁹ The specific type of charms looked at are medical charms, which means that they have the general function of offering help with an ailment. ‘Words of power’ is used more specifically for the section of the charm that includes the words that carry the power of the charm.

The characteristics of charms

Charms can have extremely varied functions, from simple charms against toothaches to charms against “demons of the air”.⁵⁰ There is nevertheless one element that all charms have in common: the inclusion of some manner of words of power. The main characteristic of charms is thus inevitably that they include words of power. Another characteristic is the specific place charms occupy on the spectrum of texts with supernatural words of power: they are magical texts that have acquired a religious layer. Since there is such a wide variety of charms, from such a great time range, it is impossible to say much more about their characteristics without looking at more specific subsets of charms. Since this thesis works with late medieval Irish obstetric charms, the more specific subset used here will be medieval Irish medical charms.⁵¹

48 eDIL s.v. 1 *ortha*.

49 As described in “The sections of a charm”.

50 NLS Adv. MS 72.1.2 f130r, “against violent death, poisons and demons of the air”.

51 Medical charms in general, rather than obstetric charms, because there is no secondary literature on Irish obstetric charms. Since medical charms in general are one degree less specific than obstetric charms, it would make sense for

When looking at the characteristics of charms, they can be separated into the characteristics of their language and their ritual characteristics. Most of the time when secondary literature discussed the language of charms, however, what is really meant is the language of the words of power specifically, rather than of the whole text. This makes sense, since the language of the other sections of the charm varies heavily based on when the charm was written down. The language of words of power, on the other hand, is relatively stable, and constitutes “a literary genre that is creatively constructed in a *bricolage*-like manner.”⁵² There are verbal and stylistic elements that are characteristic of the words of power used in charms. These elements are invariably connected to the source of power that is used to power the words of power. Some important elements, often used in different combinations, are the use of powerful names, the use of obscure or non-lexical words, the use of repetition, alliteration and rhythm and the use of analogies and parallels, both narrative analogies and analogies of power.

Powerful names could be used to invoke the power behind those names. By using a powerful name, for example of saints or even Christ or God Himself,⁵³ the power of the one to whom the name belongs would be invoked and so the written or spoken words themselves would be filled with that power and could then be used to carry out the function of the charm. Charms could also use meaningless or obscure words as their words of power. Some of these obscure words would have had semantic content at some point in the history of the charm, but were corrupted through time, and, since garbled or obscure text was not unexpected for charms, subsequently were not corrected back to their original state. Others were deliberately void of semantic content. These non-lexical vocables were not meant to be understood,⁵⁴ rather giving the charm power through their incomprehensibility. Meaningless words in charms are often highly alliterative, rhythmic and repetitive, both individual sounds and entire words. All of these elements can be used as analogies

information on medical charms in general to apply to a more specific subset of medical charms as well.

52Borsje 2016: 39.

53For example using the titles used for God in the Trisagion (God, Mighty, Immortal) or Hebrew kabbalistic acronyms such as AGLA (You, oh Lord, are mighty forever) (Tomíček 2017: 601).

54cf. Borsje 2016: 41; Murdoch 2004: 61, 63; Cameron 2010: 54; Tuomi 2013: 64.

or parallels of power in order to bring power into the charm, in the same way that narrative analogies can draw the power exerted in that narrative into the charm.⁵⁵

The ritual characteristics of charms are concerned with actions that have to be performed to augment the efficiency of the charm. For charms that have to be written down and used as textual amulets, the ritual prescriptions given are usually instructions for writing the words of power down and placing them somewhere on the body. For both verbal and written charms, the actions prescribed were varied, and could range from having to pray additional prayers⁵⁶ to instructions for the use of specific objects or substances, or instructions for the period during which or the number of times that the charm had to be performed.

The power of charms

A ‘charm’ was very broadly defined above as “a type of text that includes words of power”. To further define how a charm is different from other types of texts that include words of power, we have to look at the origins of the power of the charm’s words of power. Power in this context can be alternatively described as metaphysical energy, that is, energy that transcends the physical world and exists in the spiritual realm, but can still enact change in the physical world.⁵⁷ Words of power can either channel the metaphysical energy themselves, or they can be the means by which someone or something else is requested to channel the power.⁵⁸

There are two different ways in which the words themselves can channel power. For the first, the words themselves are intrinsically powerful, and can enact change in the world just by the act of being uttered or written down.⁵⁹ The theory of performativity is concerned with this exact idea: words can have the power to accomplish an action, not as a *consequence* of the utterance, but by and in being uttered.⁶⁰ The words thus channel metaphysical energy or power by their very

55 See “The power of charms”. Cf. also Frankfurter 1995, especially p. 464, 469.

56 Most commonly the paternoster, though occasionally charms called for litanies or even whole liturgies.

57 cf. Frankfurter 1995: 461 “the speech act (...) draws from the mythic dimension to apply to the human dimension.”

58 cf. Borsje 2016: 36-7 “A believer supposedly prays piously in order to supplicate a deity to grant a wish, whereas a sorcerer utters a spell and thereby constrains a demon to comply with the command, or the sorcerer’s words would “automatically” or “mechanically” have a supernatural effect.”

59 Borsje 2016: 52-3; Frankfurter 1995:462-3; Kieckhefer 2014: 74-5.

60 Austin 1975: 6, 8.

existence, and they exist for that precise purpose. There is no reason for the words to exist without the power that they are imbued with, and they are imbued with power precisely because they exist to hold power. The (verbal or written) uttering of the words of power is the cue for metaphysical energy to flow through the words, in order to be used to fulfill the function of the charm.

The second way in which the words themselves can channel power is through magic. Magical power is metaphysical energy channeled directly by the rituals and words used. Channeling the energy through the words is akin to calling upon the energy to come reside in the words, so that the words, and thus the power in them, can be used for whatever purpose the user has in mind.⁶¹ The difference between magic and the intrinsic power of words is that magic has to have an active component. The power does not automatically come to reside in the words, but someone has to call upon the energy to come reside in the words.

There are also two different ways words of power can be the means by which someone or something else is requested to channel metaphysical energy. The first of these involves the charm working through a kind of placebo effect: the expected outcome of the charm is realised not through an external power, but through the power of one's own belief, however unconsciously. For this to happen, the charm has to be able to inspire a strong belief in its effectivity. The words of power function as an anchor to the belief that the patient has in the charm, which allows their belief to grow stronger. Because the words are used as an anchor to the belief, they are unconsciously used also to request of the belief to give power to the words, because the patient believes that the words are what fulfills the function of the charm. The words can thus be a conduit for the power of belief, which in turn increases the power of the belief itself.

The second way is through religion. Religious power is the metaphysical energy of a deity or deities, or other supernatural entities associated with that deity or those deities, that is used on behalf of someone who uses rituals and words to request of the deity to channel this power for a specific purpose. In late medieval Ireland, this deity was most often the Christian God, since Ireland

61 cf. Frankfurter 1995: 457 “[W]hen one “narrates” or utters a spell, the words uttered draw power into the world.”

was at that point a firmly Christian society. Religious power thus differs from magical power in that it is God who is called upon to use the metaphysical energy, rather than the metaphysical energy itself.⁶² Earlier, however, we saw that the words of power used in charms, specifically, straddle the line between magical and religious. In what way can the two be reconciled, other than by using powerful Christian names and invocations?

Charms work through their words of power. There are two possibilities when using words of power in a Christian framework: either the words of power only exist to petition God to use His power, or the words of power are somehow still imbued with power. In the second case, the words of power are used to call upon God, but the power exerted is channeled through and thus into the words of power, rather than the words existing only as a petition. When the metaphysical energy is thus channeled into the words, they are imbued with power, and can be used to fulfill the function of the charm. One of the important elements of charms as opposed to other types of words of power is the fact that the power is always worked by the words themselves, rather than that the working of the power is just requested by using the words.⁶³ The words of power have to be imbued with power in order for them to be able to be part of a charm.

Most charms invite power to imbue the words through the use of analogies and parallels. This can be deliberate, as when using a narrative analogy that parallels the situation that needs to be remedied, e.g. references to pieces of scripture. The scriptures, as sacred texts, are assumed to contain intrinsic power.⁶⁴ By equating the situation that needs to be remedied by use of a charm with the scriptural situation referenced, the power exerted in the narrative would be mirrored in the use of the charm. The use of power in the charm had to mirror the use of power in the narrative, just as the circumstances of the use of the charm mirrored the circumstances of the narrative.⁶⁵ Words of power can also unconsciously form analogies, which work in the same way, except that the situation

62 cf. Kieckhefer 2014: 15 “the central feature of religion is that it *supplicates* God or the gods, and the main characteristic of magic is that it *coerces* spiritual beings or forces. Religion treats the gods as free agents, whose good will must be won through submission and ongoing veneration.”

63 Murdoch 2004: 57.

64 Frankfurter 1995: 465; Cameron 2010: 53.

65 Frankfurter 1995: 457, 462, 464; Tuomi 2013: 64.

that is mirrored is not a specific instance of the use of power, but the power itself. This is clear in the use of powerful names, since they can take over the potential of the bearer of that name.⁶⁶ In the case of meaningless or obscure words, however, the analogy is precisely to the obscurity itself. In a Christian framework, the obscurity that is paralleled by the obscurity of the words is the obscurity of God.⁶⁷

Charm vs. prayer?

I briefly touched upon magical and religious power, and the ways in which they differ from each other. Because charms are uniquely situated on the intersection between magic and religion, it is valuable to look more closely at the difference between fully religious words of power, i.e. prayers, and charms. Both prayers and charms are texts that exist and are used to induce change in the world. The difference between the two lies mainly in what actually causes the change. With charms, the words of the charm themselves are powerful and effect change, whereas with prayers, the change is *requested* of a deity by the power of the word, but is *effected* by the power of the deity that is invoked.⁶⁸ The prayer itself does not induce the change, but it petitions for a change. That petition can either be fulfilled or not by the petitioned deity, but the words of the prayer themselves have little influence on that. With charms, on the other hand, the words themselves are imbued with power and can thus induce change themselves.⁶⁹ In short, a prayer and a charm can have the same outcome, but by different means: a prayer is a request for a deity to make something happen, and a charm makes something happen itself.

The sections of a charm

As has just been explained, in this thesis “charm” is used to refer to the whole text, while “words of power” is used to refer to the section of the charm that the power is concentrated in. The rest of the charm, however, is not always one coherent section, but can also be divided into different sections.

66 Cameron 2010: 53-4.

67 See “Non-lexical vocables”

68 Murdoch 2004: 57; Kieckhefer 2014: 15

69 Kieckhefer 2014: 74-5

Just as for the definition of the term “charm”, there is no consensus on the terminology that should be used for the different individual sections of a charm, or even on the division of a charm into sections. It is important, however, to have clearly defined sections to divide the charms into, not only precisely because charms consist of different sections, but also because defining these sections and so being able to divide the charms into these sections makes it possible to compare the charms to each other on a closer level. For that reason, the sections I will use to divide the charms are described here.

Six sections are distinguished: the heading, the method of preparation, the instructions for use, the indication, the statement or check of efficacy, and the words of power. Not all the sections have to be present in each charm, though it is only possible to find out which, if any, sections are mandatory through a thorough comparison of the charms. The first section, the heading, is also the easiest to define. The heading has the purpose of stating the function of the charm. It usually consists of a preposition (*ar* or *do*) and the ailment for which the charm is a remedy, which can be just one word, or be further defined.⁷⁰ It is occasionally preceded by the word *obaidh* “charm”. It is also possible that there are two headings, in which case one is a shorter, marginal version, usually consisting of just the ailment. The method of preparation, or the preparation for short, is the section in which instructions are given for the preparation of the words of power prior to their use.⁷¹ This is the section that specifies whether the words of power have to be written down, and if so, onto what medium, or spoken or chanted, etc. It does not include the instructions for what has to be done with the prepared charm; that falls under the next section, the instructions for use. In this section, instructions are given for the placement of the charm on the body, any rituals or actions that have to be performed to ensure the efficacy of the charm, and the length of time for which the charm has to be used.⁷² The indication reiterates the aim of the charm, and at the same time assures the user of the

⁷⁰This has also been noted in Borsje 2013: 6 and Borsje 2016: 40.

⁷¹Adapted from Tony Hunt’s definition of the section ‘preparation’ in medical recipes (Hunt 1990: 20).

⁷²cf. Roper’s “instructions” (Roper 2005: 69), Hunt’s “application” (Hunt 1990: 20) and Borsje’s “ritual prescriptions” (Borsje 2016: 52).

outcome.⁷³ It is usually a short sentence, consisting of a verb in the present indicative or the future, and optionally something that defines it further, like an object, prepositional phrase or adverbial phrase. Charms occasionally include either a method of checking the efficacy of the charm, for those who do not immediately believe that it would work as indicated, or a statement of its efficacy, giving assurance of the efficacy and thus of the value of the charm. The final section is the words of power. This is the most important section of a charm, as it is in this section that its power is concentrated in.⁷⁴ The term “words of power” does not mean that this section necessarily has to contain lexical words: it can also contain strings of letters or non-lexical vocables (syllables or words without semantic content).⁷⁵

The sections can occur in various orders, although the heading, if it is included, has a fixed position as the first section. The other sections, with exception of the words of power, usually occur in the order discussed, but this is not fixed.⁷⁶

73 The indication and the heading are similar sections, but in Irish charms are two differences: the heading always is always the first section of the charm, and the indication has a twofold function, reiterating the aim of the charm and giving an assurance of the outcome of the charm. cf. Hunt 1990: 17-18 for a discussion on the similarity and confusion of the rubric, indication and heading in thirteenth-century medical recipes.

74 cf. Stifter’s use of “der eigentliche Zauberspruch” (the actual charm) for the words of power (Stifter 2005: 53).

75 Chambers 1980: 1.

76 See “A template for obstetric charms” for a slightly longer discussion on the order of the sections.

II. Edition

Editorial practice

Edition

There are many different ways to edit texts from medieval manuscripts, with varying degrees of editorial intervention.⁷⁷ Different types of editions suit different types of texts best, depending on the number of manuscript witnesses that have survived, on the genre of the text, and on the purpose and the audience of the edition. The charms presented in this thesis are sufficiently different for each to be regarded as a different text, rather than some of them being taken as different manuscript witnesses of the same text. Each charm has thus been edited and analysed separately, resulting in fifteen individual small editions. The charms are grouped together in three functional categories: the first contains charms for delivery, the second charms against excessive menstrual flow, and the third charms for fertility. Within the categories, similar charms are presented following each other.

The charms are all edited according to the semi-diplomatic method, as described by Murray:⁷⁸ manuscript contractions are expanded in italics, and modern punctuation and capitalization are added. Apart from this, the following editorial measures are taken:

- All lenition marks (punctum delens, breve and spiritus asper) are expanded as *h*.
- For purposes of legibility, superscript and subscript letters have silently been raised or lowered to the baseline, except when they occur in strings of letters used as words of power.
- Length marks are applied as follows: acute accents are used as in the manuscripts, except in cases where they are clearly only used to distinguish between minims, rather than to serve as length marks; in these cases, they are left out. Macrons are used to indicate long vowels that are not marked as such in the manuscript.

⁷⁷ Kevin Murray has very clearly outlined the different types of editions that are commonly used for Medieval Irish texts in his 2009 article “Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts” (*CMCS* 57) 51-70.

⁷⁸ Murray 2009: 56.

- Line breaks have been added between words of power and other sections of the charms.
- The heading of the charms (if present) is printed in bold, even if no difference is indicated in the manuscript between the heading and the following sections of the charm.
- Additions of letters not represented by contractions in the manuscript are given in square brackets; suggested alternate readings are given in footnotes.

Translation

In translation, we have to make a distinction between the different sections of the charms, namely the words of power on the one hand, and the other sections on the other hand. The words of power are not always translated, for the simple reason that they are not always translatable. Words of power can consist of meaningful text, consisting of words with semantic content, but they can also consist of strings of letters, or of non-lexical vocables. In the latter two cases, translating the words of power is not possible. Strings of letters obviously cannot be translated, since a “translation” would just yield the same letters; non-lexical vocables can in some cases be made up out of phonetic combinations that correspond to words with semantic meaning. Attempting a translation would in these cases end up to be nothing more than trying to assign disjointed meanings to singular words, that do not work together to form a sentence, while other non-lexical vocables that do not share the form of words with semantic content would remain untranslatable and thus untranslated. As such, it is better to preserve the original state of the words of power in those cases where the entirety of them does not yield any meaningful text, and indeed is not meant to yield meaningful text. Words of power that do yield meaningful text have been translated just as the other sections of the charms.

The sections of the charms other than the words of power have always been translated. Because an extensive linguistic analysis is provided, I am more concerned with presenting a translation that is reader-friendly than with strictly following the Irish grammar. However, care has

been taken to not change the meaning of the text, and where translations are used that might be influenced by interpretation more than by the Irish text, explanatory notes have been added.

Analysis

All of the charms are analysed separately, using categories based on those of the Virtual Research Environment as presented by Jacqueline Borsje in her 2011 article “Digitizing Irish and Dutch Charms”.⁷⁹ Nine different categories are used for the analysis of the charms:

1. **function:** the precise function of the charm, i.e. the ailment it is meant to cure or the situation it is meant to remedy;
2. **a. edition:** an edition of the Irish (and/or Latin) text of the charm from the manuscript, as described above;
b. translation: an English translation of the charm, as described above;
3. **linguistic analysis:** a morphological and syntactic parsing of the charm, with notes on noteworthy morphological and/or syntactic features. The dictionary headword is given for all words, unless the form used in the text is identical to it. Latin words are indicated by “(LA)” following the headword. The *electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* is used for Old Irish text,⁸⁰ and the *Database of Latin Dictionaries* (DLD) is used for Latin text.⁸¹ Noun classes and grammatical gender are indicated as well, for Irish words as [stem, gender], following the notation in eDIL, and for Latin words as [gender, declension]. Any mutations or cases that should follow a word are indicated with +[mutation/case]. Although the language of the charms is generally Middle or Early Modern Irish (though it is of course variable from charm to charm, and even within charms there is considerable variation of forms), I am basing the morphological analysis on Old Irish stem classes, genders etc. This also means that some of the notes may seem superfluous from a Middle or Modern Irish

79 Borsje 2011: 134-136.

80 eDIL <<http://www.dil.ie>>; if a different dictionary is used this has been indicated as well.

81 DLD is hosted by Brepols Publishers on their database platform BREPOLiS. It is only accessible through subscription. For more information about DLD, see <<https://about.brepolis.net/database-of-latin-dictionaries/>>.

standpoint, since they concern regular changes in the language, though changes that are markedly different from Old Irish. The main reason for this approach is that I expect that most readers of this thesis will have a background in Old Irish grammar, rather than Middle or Modern Irish. Noting where the language of the charms departs from Old Irish makes it easier to follow along with the Irish itself and with the choices made in the translation. Another reason is that the programme this thesis is written for is focused on Medieval Celtic Studies, where Old Irish is thus given preference over Middle Irish. The following abbreviations are used for the morphological analysis:

ADJ – adjective

ADV – adverb

ART – article

CONJ – conjunction

COP – copula

DEM – demonstrative

N – noun

NEG – negation

NUM – numeral

PREP – preposition

PRN – personal pronoun

P PRN – possessive pronoun

REL PRN – relative pronoun

REL PRT – relative particle

V – verb

VN – verbal noun

VOC PRT – vocative particle

4. **manuscript context:** where in the manuscript the charm is found (main text, margins, etc.) and what texts are found around it;
5. **ritual context:** prayers, rituals or other religious, magical or otherwise supernatural applications that are to be performed to make the charm work;
6. **literary context:** references to other texts that can be connected with the charm, Biblical or otherwise;
7. **sections:** a precise division of the charms into sections: heading, preparation, instructions, indication, efficacy check or statement, and words of power.⁸²
8. **catalogue information:** the entry on the charm from the manuscript catalogue;
9. **bibliography:** references to any existing previous scholarship on the charm (transcription, edition, translation, secondary literature).

82 See “The sections of a charm”.

The manuscripts

Some brief background information on the manuscripts from which charms are edited in this thesis will be given here. The manuscripts are presented in alphabetical order.

National Library of Ireland, MS G11⁸³

NLI MS G11 is a 15th century vellum manuscript; with its 456 pages, it is one of the largest compendia of Irish medical manuscripts. It contains “texts dealing with most of the known branches of medicine, as well as materia medica, medical glossaries, medico-philosophical, medico-legal and alchemical texts,”⁸⁴ as well as several medical (and some less obviously medical) charms. The charms in this manuscript are part of the main text, and they occur mainly on pp. 393-396. Two of the charms in this manuscript are obstetrical in nature, both against excessive menstrual flow (found on p. 393b and 394b).

National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library, MS 72.1.2⁸⁵

Adv. MS 72.1.2 (formerly Gaelic MS II) is a 16th-17th century vellum manuscript that consists of approximately thirteen separate sections of manuscript that have been bound together. It contains mainly medical texts and material from fields auxiliary to medicine, such as astrology and astronomy, botany and the Brehon law on sick-maintenance. Many charms and prayers have been added, mostly in later hands, some in the margins and some as part of the main text. At least seven of the charms in this manuscript fall within the field of obstetrics.

National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library, MS 72.1.3⁸⁶

Adv. MS 72.1.3 (formerly Gaelic MS III) is a vellum manuscript, likely from the 15th century. It is a medical manuscript, containing medical theory, cures and treatments for various diseases and afflictions, and some charms. Two of them are obstetrical: one for safe childbirth and one against

83 Ní Shéaghdha 1967: 65-93.

84 Ní Shéaghdha 1967: 65-70

85 Black 2011: “Adv. MS 72.1.2”.

86 Black 2011: “Adv. MS 72.1.3”.

menstruation, the latter of which occurs twice on the same page, the second time copied by a later hand.

Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 F 19 (473)⁸⁷

RIA MS 23 F 19 is a 15th century vellum manuscript with many later marginal notes in Irish, English and Latin. It contains mostly medical tracts, treatments and cures, and a few charms. The charms it contains are part of the main text. The obstetrical charms in this manuscript are contained in treatises on gynecology and obstetrics.

Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 N 29 (467)⁸⁸

RIA MS 23 N 29 is a composite manuscript, consisting of 23 fragments, all on paper, dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries. All fragments originate from medical manuscripts, and so the content is mainly medical. The only charms found in this manuscript are found in the first fragment, which consist of a mixture of medical texts and metrical verse. The charms are part of a text containing remedies and charms against impotence.

Royal Irish Academy, MS 24 B 3 (445)⁸⁹

RIA MS 24 B 3 is another composite manuscript, consisting of various 15th and 16th century fragments, all on vellum. It contains a number of charms for various afflictions, written as part of the main text. One of these is a charm for safe delivery.

87 Mulchrone et al 1926-1970: fasc. x, p. 1235-1237.

88 Mulchrone et al 1926-1970: fasc. x, p. 1220-1224.

89 Mulchrone et al 1926-1970: fasc. x, p. 1183-1186.

Category 1: Delivery

1.1 National Library of Ireland, MS G11 f. 268b30-36

1.1.1 *function* Safe delivery of a child

1.1.2 *edition and translation*

Do breith leinimh

Maria peperit *Christum*, Anna Mariam,
Elisabet Iohannem, Celina Regium.⁹⁰

Sator arepo tenet opera rotas.⁹¹ Amen.

Scrībh sin 7 cuir ar meadhōn na mnā 7 beraidh
gan cunntabart.

To deliver a child

Mary delivered Christ, Anne delivered Mary,
Elisabeth delivered John, Celina delivered
Re[mi]gius.

sator arepo tenet opera rotas. Amen.

Write that down and put it on the abdomen of
the woman and she will deliver safely.

1.1.3 *linguistic analysis*

do

PREP “to, for”
+dative, +lenition

breith – eDIL s.v. *breth*

ā, f. VN of *beirid* “bear, bring forth, deliver”
dative singular

leinimh – eDIL s.v. *lenab*

N, o,m. “infant, child”
genitive singular

peperit (LA)

V *pario* “bear, bring forth, give birth”
3 singular perfect indicative

scrībh – eDIL s.v. *scrībaid*

V “write”
2 singular imperative

sin

DEM “that”

cuir – eDIL s.v. *fo-ceird*

V “put”
2 singular imperative

ar – eDIL s.v. *for*

PREP “on”
+accusative/dative, +lenition

90 See “Peperit”.

91 See “Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas”.

	the prepositions <i>ar</i> and <i>for</i> fell together in the Middle Irish period through lenition of the initial consonant of <i>for</i> .
<i>meadhōn</i> – eDIL s.v. medón	N, o,m. “middle; abdomen, womb” accusative singular
<i>na</i>	ART genitive singular feminine
<i>mnā</i> – eDIL s.v. ben	N, ā, f. “woman” genitive singular
<i>beraidh</i> – eDIL s.v. beirid	V “bear, bring forth” 3 singular future
<i>gan</i> – eDIL s.v. cen	PREP “without” +accusative, +lenition
<i>cunntabart</i> – eDIL s.v. cuntabart	N, ā, f. “doubt; danger” accusative singular
1.1.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	Part of the main text; in a compilation of obstetrical and gynaecological cures, charms and prayers.
1.1.5 <i>ritual context</i>	Instructions are given for making a textual amulet with two sets of words of power, the <i>peperit</i> -formula and the <i>sator</i> -formula. This textual amulet is to be put onto the patient’s abdomen.
1.1.6 <i>literary context</i>	Biblical texts on the conception and birth of Christ and John the Baptist: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:12-38, 57-66. Hagiography of St. Remi of Reims: <i>Vita Remigii episcopi Remensis auctore Hincmaro</i>
1.1.7 <i>sections</i>	Heading (<i>do breith leinimh</i>); words of power (<i>Maria ... Regium; sator...rotas</i>); preparation (<i>scríbh sin</i>); instructions (<i>cuir ar meadhón na mná</i>); indication (<i>beraidh gan cunntabart</i>).
1.1.8 <i>catalogue information</i>	“A compilation of cures, charms, and prayers against obstetrical and gynaecological problems. Many of these problems and their cure are included in another compilation of the same nature in RIA 24B3 pp. 75-78. The charm on p. 77 of that ms. (printed RIA Cat. Ir. MSS., p. 1184) is included in present ms., p. 268b30.”
1.1.9 <i>bibliography</i>	Ní Shéaghdha, Nessa, and Pádraig Ó Macháin, <i>Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland</i> , fasc. 1,

(Dublin 1967): 77.

1.2 National Library of Scotland, Advocates' Library, MS 72.1.3, f. 80r4-7

1.2.1 *function* Safe delivery of a child

1.2.2 *edition and translation*

Ar breth leinibh do mnaī gan ghūasacht, na brīat[h]ra so do scrībad a nduilleōig ⁊ a cengal fó bróinn na mná, .i.

Maria peiperid *Christum*, Anna Maria[m], Elestabet Iohannim, Celina Remisium^{92 93}

+ sator + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas +⁹⁴

For a woman to deliver a child without danger, write these words on a page and tie it around the abdomen of the woman:

Mary delivered Christ, Anne delivered Mary, Elisabeth delivered John, Celina delivered Remigius.

+ sator + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas +

1.2.3 *linguistic analysis*

ar

PREP “for”
+accusative/dative, +lenition

breth

ā,f. VN of *beirid* “bear, bring forth, deliver”
accusative singular

leinibh – eDIL s.v. lenab

N, o,m. “child”
genitive singular

objective genitive with *breth*

do

PREP “to, for; by”
+dative, +lenition

do introduces the agent of the verbal noun *breth*, cf. GOI §250.1, §720.

mnaī – eDIL s.v. ben

N, ā,f. “woman”
dative singular

gan – eDIL s.v. cen

PREP “without”
+lenition, +accusative

92 leg. *Remigium*

93 See “Peperit”.

94 See “Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas”.

<i>ghūasacht</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>gúasacht</i>	N, ā,f. “danger, difficulty” accusative singular
<i>na</i>	ART nominative plural feminine
<i>brīat[h]ra</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>bríathar</i>	N, ā,f. “word” nominative plural
<i>so</i>	DEM “this”
<i>do</i>	PREP “to, for” +dative, +lenition
<i>scrībad</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>scrībend</i>	o,n. VN of <i>scrībaid</i> “write” dative singular
	The usual form of the verbal noun is <i>scrībend</i> . <i>Scrībad</i> is a Middle Irish form.
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>i</i>	PREP “in, into” +accusative/dative, +nasalisation
<i>nduilleōig</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>duilleóg</i>	N, ā,f. “leaf (of a book)” accusative singular
<i>a</i>	P PRN 3 singular feminine
<i>cengal</i>	o,m. VN of <i>cenglaid</i> “bind, tie” nominative singular
<i>fó</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>fo, fa, fá</i>	PREP “under; around” +dative/accusative, + lenition
<i>bróinn</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>1 brú</i>	N, n,f. “abdomen, belly” accusative singular
<i>na</i>	ART genitive singular feminine
<i>mná</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>ben</i>	N, ā,f. “woman” genitive singular

- 1.2.4 *manuscript context* Part of the main text. The charm is found in a compilation of various treatments, cures and charms. Other charms include one for sleep and one against all evil.
- 1.2.5 *ritual context* Instructions for making a textual amulet with the *sator*-formula and the *peperit*-charm: the words of the charm have to be written on a piece of paper and have to be tied to the abdomen of the patient.
- 1.2.6 *literary context* Biblical texts on the conception and birth of Christ and John the Baptist: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:12-38, 57-66.
Hagiography of St. Remi of Reims: *Vita Remigii episcopi Remensis auctore Hincmaro*
- 1.2.7 *sections* Heading (*ar breith leinibh do mnaí gan ghúasacht*); preparation (*na bríathra...a nduilleóig*); instructions (*a cengal fó bróinn na mná*); words of power (*Maria... Remisium; sator...rotas*).
- 1.2.8 *catalogue information* "79 r17. (Hand 3.) TREATMENTS, including charms, for various conditions: colic, wounds, burns, felon, insanity, loss of speech, lack of sleep, and after letting a vein; **charm for safe childbirth**; epilepsy, erysipelas, sterility; to ensure the birth of a male child; to abort a dead foetus; menstruation; to stem the flow of blood from a vein; charm against all evil, etc. Beg. Artregaid .i. glas duilleog oghruighi docoimilt ar uisgi. Ends 80v10: 'Ar rith fuail .i. luaith chongn fuar do chumasc arcoirm 7aol 7icaid acédóir. F.i.n.i.t.' Hand 9 adds 'te???:'."
- 1.2.9 *bibliography* Black, Ronald, "Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.3", Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), *Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire* (Dublin 2011).

1.3 Royal Irish Academy, MS 24 B 3, p.77 28-31

1.3.1 *function* Safe delivery of a child

1.3.2 *edition and translation*

Ar breith leinim do mnaī gan gūasacht
na brīathra so sīs do scrībaid a membrum ⁊ a
cengul ma broind

For a woman to deliver a child safely, write
these words below on parchment and tie it
around her abdomen:

.i. M[a]ria peperit Christum, Anna peperit
Mariam, Elizabet ⁊ Iohannem, Celina
Remegium⁹⁵

Mary delivered Christ, Anna delivered Mary,
Elisabeth delivered John, Celina delivered
Remegius.

+ satur + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas⁹⁶

+ satur + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas

Nō dī tānti oc tabhairt ardig dī ⁊ bēraid gan
gūasacht.

Or drive [it] out of her by giving her a cup, and
she will deliver safely.

1.3.3 *linguistic analysis*

ar – eDIL s.v. for

PREP “on”
+accusative/dative

breith – eDIL s.v. breth

ā,f. VN of *beirid* “bear, bring forth, deliver”
dative singular

leinim – eDIL s.v. lenab

N, o,m. “child”
genitive singular

objective genitive with *breith*

do

PREP “to, for; by”
+dative, +lenition

do introduces the agent of the verbal noun *breith*, c.f. GOI
§250.1, §720.

mnaī – eDIL s.v. ben

N, ā,f. “woman”
dative singular

⁹⁵See “Peperit”.

⁹⁶See “Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas”.

<i>gan</i> – eDIL s.v. cen	PREP “without” +accusative, +lenition
<i>gūasacht</i>	N, ā,f. “danger, difficulty” accusative singular
<i>na</i>	ART nominative plural feminine
<i>brīathra</i> – eDIL s.v. bríathar	N, ā,f. “word” nominative plural
<i>so</i>	DEM “these”
<i>sīs</i>	ADV “down, below”
<i>do</i>	PREP “to, for” +dative, +lenition
<i>scrībaid</i> – eDIL s.v. scríbend	ā,f. VN of <i>scrībaid</i> “write” dative singular
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. i	PREP “in, into” +dative/accusative, +nasalisation
<i>membrum</i> – eDIL s.v. mem(m)rum(m)	N, o,m. “parchment” dative singular
	From Latin <i>membrum</i> “skin”. The usual form is <i>memrum</i> , without the ‘b’, though there are occasions when the ‘b’ does appear, likely through Latin influence.
<i>a</i>	P PRN 3 singular masculine
<i>cengul</i> – eDIL s.v. cengal	o,m. VN of <i>cenglaid</i> “bind, tie” dative singular
<i>ma</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 imm, imb	PREP “around” +P PRN 3 singular feminine
	<i>ma</i> is a shortened form of <i>imma</i> .

<i>broind</i> – eDIL s.v. brú	N, n,f. “abdomen” accusative singular
<i>nō</i>	CONJ “or”
<i>dī</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 de, di	PREP “from” + PRN 3 singular feminine
<i>tānnti</i> – eDIL s.v. táin	t,f. VN of <i>do-aig</i> “drive out” nominative plural
<i>oc</i>	PREP “at” +dative
	<i>oc</i> introduces the complement of the verbal noun <i>táin</i> . Usually the preposition <i>do</i> is used for this purpose, but when <i>do</i> is already present in the sentence in another sense, <i>oc</i> can be used instead.
<i>tabhairt</i> – eDIL s.v. tabairt	ā,f. VN of <i>do-beir</i> “give” dative singular
<i>ardig</i> – eDIL s.v. airdech	N, ā,f. “cup, vessel” accusative singular
	As object of the verbal noun, a genitive rather than an accusative would be expected.
<i>dī</i> – eDIL s.v. do	PREP “to, for” + PRN 3 singular feminine
<i>bēraid</i> – eDIL s.v. beirid	V “bear, bring forth, deliver” 3 singular future
<i>gan</i> – eDIL s.v. cen	PREP “without” +accusative, + lenition
<i>gūasacht</i>	N, ā,f. “danger, difficulty” accusative singular

- 1.3.4 *manuscript context* Part of the main text; in a treatise on obstetrical matters, e.g. sterility, childbirth etc.
- 1.3.5 *ritual context* Instructions for making a textual amulet using the *peperit*-formula and the *sator*-formula, which then has to be tied around the patient's abdomen. There are also instructions for an alternate method if the charms do not work, in which case one should give the patient a cup, presumably with an herbal draught, to induce labour.
- 1.3.6 *literary context* Biblical texts on the conception and birth of Christ and John the Baptist: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:12-38, 57-66.
Hagiography of St. Remi of Reims: *Vita Remigii episcopi Remensis auctore Hincmaro*
- 1.3.7 *sections* Heading (*ar breith ...gúasacht*); preparation (*na bríathra... membrum*); instructions (*a cengul...broind*); words of power (*Maria...Remegium; satur...rotas*); efficacy (*nó dí...ardig dí*); indication (of efficacy) (*béraid...gúasacht*).
- 1.3.8 *catalogue information* “Three lines from below. *Ar breith leinim do mnai gan guasacht na briathra so sis do scribad a membrum ⁊ a cengul ma broind .i. Maria peperit Christum Anna peperit Mariam Elizabet, ⁊ Ioannem, etc., satur + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas + etc., cf. no 473, f. 89 v, l.19.*”
- 1.3.9 *bibliography* Mulchrone, Kathleen, Thomas F. O'Rahilly, Elizabeth FitzPatrick, and A. I. Pearson (eds.), *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, fasc. x, p. 1183-1184.

1.4 Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 F 19, f.89vb18-20

1.4.1 function

Delivery of a dead foetus

1.4.2 edition and translation

Nō dno scrīb na hanmanna so a cāisi nō a n-im Or⁹⁸ write these names on cheese or butter:

+ *sator + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas* + ⁹⁷ + *sator + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas* +

7 *tabair int im nō in cāisi da caithem dī 7 ferid.* and give the butter or the cheese to her to be eaten and she will shed [it].

1.4.3 linguistic analysis

nō CONJ “or”

dno – eDIL s.v. *danó, dano* ADV “also”

dno is a syncopated form of *dano*, syncopated forms of which already occurred in the Old Irish period. In the Middle Irish period the usual forms found are *dā, dno, dna* and *no*.

dno following *nó* “or” emphasizes *nó*, though it is often used interchangeably with *nó* on its own. Here it introduces a new and different cure in a compilation of various cures, which are introduced with *vel* in the Latin text.

scrīb – eDIL s.v. *scrībaid* V “write”
2 singular imperative

na ART accusative plural masculine

hanmanna – eDIL s.v. *ainm* N, n,n. “name; noun”
accusative plural

The final *-a* shows that *ainm* is treated as a masculine noun here.

so DEM “these”

97 See “Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas”.

98 It is odd for a text to begin with ‘or’, but it can here be explained by the fact that this text is an entry in a compilation of cures. See under *dno* in the linguistic analysis for more detail.

<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>i</i>	PREP "in, into" +dative/accusative, +nasaliation
<i>cāisi</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>cáise</i>	N, io,m. "cheese" accusative singular eDIL gives this as an adjective, but it is clearly a noun.
<i>nō</i>	CONJ "or"
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>i</i>	PREP "in, into" +dative/accusative, +nasaliation
<i>n-im</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>imb, imm</i>	N, n,n. "butter" accusative singular
<i>tabair</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>do-beir</i>	V "give" 2 singular imperative
<i>int</i>	ART accusative singular masculine <i>int</i> is morphologically nominative singular/plural or genitive singular, but it is clear from the syntax that it has to be used as the accusative singular form here. The forms of the article were already used irregularly in the Old Irish period, and over the course of the Middle Irish period most of them fell out of use, leaving only two different forms, <i>an</i> and <i>na</i> .
<i>im</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>imb, imm</i>	N, n,n. "butter" accusative singular
<i>nō</i>	CONJ "or"
<i>in</i>	ART accusative singular masculine
<i>cāisi</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>cáise</i>	N, io,m. "cheese" accusative singular
<i>da</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>do</i>	PREP "to, for" + P PRN 3 singular masculine
<i>caithim</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>caithem</i>	ā,f. VN of <i>caithid</i> "consume"

	dative singular
<i>dī</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>do</i>	PREP "to, for" + PRN 3 singular feminine
	<i>do</i> introduces the agent of the verbal noun <i>caithem</i> , here a pronominal form affixed to the preposition, c.f. GOI §250.1, §720.
<i>ferid</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>feraid</i>	V "shed; bring forth" 3 singular present indicative
1.4.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	Part of the main text; in a treatise on gynaecology and obstetrics, among other remedies for stillbirth. (The section heading is ' <i>De fetu mortuo egrediendo</i> '.)
1.4.5 <i>ritual context</i>	The words of the <i>sator</i> -formula are to be written on either a piece of butter or a piece of cheese, which has to be eaten by the patient.
1.4.6 <i>literary context</i>	This charm is a translation from one found in <i>The Trotula</i> , a Latin compendium of women's medicine, §98 (in Green's edition and translation) of the <i>Liber Sinthomatibus Mulierum</i> .
1.4.7 <i>sections</i>	Preparation (<i>nó dno...a n-im</i>); words of power (<i>sator...rotas</i>); instructions (<i>tabair...caithem dí</i>); indication (<i>ferid</i>).
1.4.8 <i>catalogue information</i>	"f. 88 , r. 1. Another hand. Treatise on gynæcology and obstetrics, beg. acephalous: <i>idir na cichib 7 is urcoidech doib cuisle na lam</i> . Ed. W. Wulff, Fraser and Grosjean's Irish Texts, fasc. 5. On 89, v. 2, l. 19, as a charm, the words " + sator + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas"; cf. 445, 77 z."
1.4.9 <i>bibliography</i>	Mulchrone, Kathleen, Thomas F. O'Rahilly, Elizabeth FitzPatrick, and A. I. Pearson (eds.), <i>Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy</i> , fasc. x, p. 1235-1237. Green, Monica H. (ed. and trans.), <i>The Trotula: a Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine</i> (Philadelphia, PA 2001): 100-101 [§98].

1.5 National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library MS 72.1.2, f.130r19-24

1.5.1 *function* Induce labour

1.5.2 *edition and translation*

O gloriosa domina qui filiam⁹⁹ Dei portasti,
uirgo eum concepisti, uirgo peperisti ⁊ uircinali
lacti¹⁰⁰ uircinaliter eum lactasti, o domina, sicut
hoc ueram est, ego beni¹⁰¹ ⁊ firmiter credo quod
tu abes¹⁰² in custodia corpus meum ⁊ ani[m]am
meam in uitam eternam. amen.¹⁰³

*Paiteir roimhe ⁊ a cur a cris mnā torrca*¹⁰⁴ ⁊
beraidh an lenam a cētōir.

Oh glorious mistress, who has borne the son of
God, a virgin you conceived him, a virgin you
delivered him and with milk of a virgin you
suckled him virginally, oh mistress, just as this is
true, I truly and strongly believe that you hold
my body and my soul in protection into the
eternal life. Amen.

A paternoster before it and put it in the girdle of
a pregnant woman and she will bear the child at
once.

1.5.3 *linguistic analysis*

<i>o</i> (LA)	VOC PRT
<i>gloriosa</i> – <i>gloriosus</i> (LA)	ADJ, 1. “glorious” vocative singular feminine
<i>domina</i> (LA)	N, f1. “mistress” vocative singular
<i>qui</i> (LA)	REL PRN “who” nominative singular masculine
<i>filium</i> – <i>filius</i> (LA)	N, m2. “son” accusative singular
<i>dei</i> – <i>deus</i> (LA)	N, m2. “God” genitive singular
<i>portasti</i> – <i>porto</i> (LA)	V “bear”

99 leg. *filium*.

100 leg. *lacte*

101 leg. *bene*.

102 leg. *habes*.

103 See “Latin texts and phrases”.

104 leg. *torrach*

	2 singular perfect indicative
<i>uirgo</i> (LA)	N, f3. “virgin” nominative singular
<i>eum – is</i> (LA)	PRN 3 singular masculine accusative
<i>concepisti – concipio</i> (LA)	V “conceive” 2 singular perfect indicative
<i>uirgo</i> (LA)	N, f3. “virgin” nominative singular
<i>peperisti – pario</i> (LA)	V “deliver” 2 singular perfect indicative
<i>uirginali – virginalis</i> (LA)	ADJ, 3. “virginal” ablative singular
<i>lacte – lac</i> (LA)	N, n3. “milk” ablative singular
<i>uirginaliter – virginaliter</i> (LA)	ADV “virginally”
<i>eum – is</i> (LA)	PRN 3 singular masculine accusative
<i>lactasti – lacto</i> (LA)	V “suckle, give milk” 2 singular perfect indicative
<i>o</i> (LA)	VOC PRT
<i>domina</i> (LA)	N, f1. “mistress” vocative singular
<i>sicut</i> (LA)	CONJ “as”
<i>hoc – hic</i> (LA)	D PRN “this” nominative singular neuter
<i>ueram – verus</i> (LA)	ADJ, 1/2. “true, right”

	accusative singular feminine
<i>est – sum</i> (LA)	V “be” 3 singular present indicative
<i>ego</i> (LA)	PRN 1 singular nominative
<i>bene</i> (LA)	ADV “truly”
<i>firmiter</i> (LA)	ADV “strongly”
<i>credo</i> (LA)	V “believe” 1 singular present indicative
<i>quod</i> (LA)	CONJ “that”
<i>tu</i> (LA)	PRN 2 singular nominative
<i>habes – habeo</i> (LA)	V “have, hold” 2 singular present indicative
<i>in</i> (LA)	PREP “in, into” +accusative/ablative
<i>custodia</i> (LA)	N, f1. “protection” ablative singular
<i>corpus</i> (LA)	N, n3. “body” accusative singular
<i>meum – meus</i> (LA)	P PRN 1 singular accusative neuter
<i>animam – anima</i> (LA)	N, f1. “soul” accusative singular
<i>meam – meus</i> (LA)	P PRN 1 singular accusative feminine
<i>in</i> (LA)	PREP “in, into”

	+accusative/ablative
<i>uitam</i> – <i>vita</i> (LA)	N, f1. “life” accusative singular
<i>eternam</i> – <i>aeternus</i> (LA)	ADJ, 1/2. “eternal” accusative singular feminine
<i>paiter</i>	N, ā,f. “a paternoster” nominative singular
<i>roimhe</i> – eDIL s.v. 6 ré, ría	PREP “before” + PRN 3 singular neuter
<i>a</i>	P PRN 3 singular masculine/neuter
<i>cur</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 cor	o,m. VN of <i>fo-ceird</i> “put” nominative singular
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v i	PREP “in, into” +accusative/dative, +nasalisation
<i>cris</i>	N, u,m. “girdle, belt” accusative singular
<i>mnā</i> – eDIL 1 ben	N, ā,f. “woman” genitive singular
<i>torrach</i>	ADJ, o,ā. “pregnant” genitive singular
<i>beraidh</i> – eDIL s.v. beirid	V “bear, bring forth” future 3 singular
<i>an</i>	ART accusative singular masculine
<i>lenam</i> – eDIL s.v. lenab	N, o,m. “child” accusative singular
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v i	PREP “in, into” +dative/accusative, +nasalisation

cētóir

N, ā,f. “the first time”

1.5.4 *manuscript context*

The original contents of the page are four concentric circles drawn as a *rota* for calculating golden numbers, with a few figures entered. The remaining space has been utilised for various charms, written on all sides of the circles, as well as inside of them. The charms written on the right and left side of the circles are written using the curve of the circles as ruling. This charm is written below the circles, occupying almost the entire lower half of the page. It is immediately preceded by a charm against bone failure.

1.5.5 *ritual context*

Though there are no instructions for it, the words of power apparently have to be written down, as they are to be placed into the birth girdle of the patient. A paternoster has to be said before writing the words of power down or written down preceding the words of power.

1.5.6 *literary context*

Biblical texts on the conception and birth of Christ: Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-21.

1.5.7 *sections*

Words of power (*o gloriosa...amen*); instructions (*paiter...torrca*); indication (*béraidh...cétóir*).

1.5.8 *catalogue information*

"Charm to induce parturition. Beg *Onklinosa(?) domina qui filiam Dei portasti*. Subscribed by hand 25 'ata annsa leabarsa .6. as 7 8 xx duilog'."

1.5.9 *bibliography*

Black, Ronald, “Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.2”, Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), *Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire* (Dublin 2011).

Category 2: Menstruation

2.1 National Library of Ireland, MS G11 f. 393b12-18

2.1.1 *function* Curing excessive menstrual flow

2.1.2 *edition and translation*

Cox na fola mīsta

Restraining the monthly blood

Do cosc robair na fola mīsta, scrīb na litri so 7 cuir ar ucht na mnā 7 coiscid an fuil.

To restrain the copious flow of the monthly blood, write these letters down and place them on the woman's lap, and it will restrain the blood.

.p.x.b.c.p.c.a.n.o.x.x.x.x.x.p.r.d.d.i.d.i.p.m.
i.i.i.s.¹⁰⁵

.p.x.b.c.p.c.a.n.o.x.x.x.x.x.p.r.d.d.i.d.i.p.m.i.i.
i.s.

7 muna craide sin scrīb a neimh sceine 7 marbh ainmidhi 7 ní tiucfad fuil as.

and if you do not believe that, write [it] on the blade of a knife and kill an animal [with it] and no blood will come out of it.

2.1.3 linguistic analysis

cox – eDIL s.v. *cosc*

o,n. VN of *coiscid* “correct, restrain”
nominative singular

The ‘x’ stands for ‘cs’, metathesized from ‘sc’. Another example of sc-cs metathesis in Irish is found in the word *foxal* “abduction”, though in the reverse direction: *foxal* > *foscúl* (eDIL s.v. *fochsal*, *foxal*).

na

ART genitive singular feminine

folā – eDIL s.v. *fuil*

N, i.f. “blood”
genitive singular

mīsta

ADJ, io/iā. “monthly”
genitive singular feminine

do

PREP “to, for”

¹⁰⁵ See “Strings of letters”.

	+ dative, +lenition
<i>cosc</i>	o,n. VN of <i>coiscid</i> “correct, restrain” dative singular
<i>robair</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>robor</i>	N, o,m. “copious flow” genitive singular
<i>na</i>	ART genitive singular feminine
<i>folā</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>fuil</i>	N, i,f. “blood” genitive singular
<i>mīsta</i>	ADJ, io/iā. “monthly” genitive singular feminine
<i>scrīb</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>scrībaid</i>	V “write” 2 singular imperative
<i>na</i>	ART accusative plural feminine
<i>litri</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>liter</i>	N, i/k,f. “letter (of the alphabet)” accusative plural
<i>so</i>	DEM “this”
<i>cuir</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>fo-ceird</i>	V “put, place” 2 singular imperative
<i>ar</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>for</i>	PREP “on” +accusative/dative +lenition
<i>ucht</i>	N, u,n “breast; lap” accusative singular
<i>na</i>	ART genitive singular feminine
<i>mnā</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>ben</i>	N, ā,f. “woman” genitive singular
<i>coiscid</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>con-secha</i>	V “correct; restrain” 3 singular present indicative

coiscid is a simple verb based on *con-secha*, with the same meanings.

an ART accusative singular feminine

fuil N, i,f. "blood"
accusative singular

muna – eDIL s.v. *má* CONJ “if...not”

Muna is a combination of the conjunction *ma* and a negation. This form is still used in modern Irish. *Ma* introduces a conditional statement.

craide – eDIL s.v. *creitid* V "believe"
2 singular present subjunctive

The conjunction *má* is followed by the present subjunctive when the condition is future or indefinite as to time (in generalizing clauses) (GOI §902), the last of which is the case here.

sin DEM “that”

scrīb V “write”
2 singular imperative

a – eDIL s.v. *i* PREP "in, into"
+accusative/dative, +nasalisation

neimh – eDIL s.v. *neim* N, n,n. "poison; sharpness" [hence: “blade”]
accusative singular

Neim is inflected in the plural as a masculine or feminine *i*-stem, rather than an *n*-stem, which is the stem class Thurneysen assigns it to (GOI §333.3). In Middle Irish it is regularly treated as feminine.

sceine – s.v eDIL *scían* N, ā,f. “knife”
genitive singular

<i>marbh</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>marbaid</i>	V "kill" 2 singular imperative
<i>ainmidhi</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 <i>ainmide</i>	N, io,m. "living creature, animal" accusative singular
<i>ní</i>	NEG
<i>tiucfad</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>do-icc</i>	V "come" 3 singular future
<i>fuil</i>	N i,f. "blood" nominative singular
<i>as</i> – eDIL s.v. 7 a	PREP "out of, from" + PRN 3 singular masculine
2.1.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	Part of the main text, in a compilation of cures, charms and prayers against various ailments. A different charm against excessive menstrual flow appears in the same compilation on f. 394b24-30.
2.1.5 <i>ritual context</i>	Instructions are given for making a textual amulet, which has to be laid on the patient's lap.
2.1.6 <i>literary context</i>	–
2.1.7 <i>sections</i>	Heading (<i>cox na fola místa</i> (marginal); <i>do cosc...fola místa</i>); preparation (<i>scríb...so</i>); instructions (<i>cuir...mná</i>); indication (<i>coiscid an fuil</i>); words of power (letters); efficacy (<i>muna craide...fuil as</i>).
2.1.8 <i>catalogue information</i>	“A compilation of cures, charms and prayers (several of which appear to be of native origin) against various ailments. (3) 393 b Charm against excessive menstrual flow. Beg. Do c[h]osc robair na fola mista scrib na litri so 7 cuir ar ucht na mna. Ends ní tiucfaid fuil as. Cf. NLScot II, 63a for a similar charm.”
2.1.9 <i>bibliography</i>	Ní Shéaghdha, Nessa, and Pádraig Ó Macháin, <i>Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland</i> , fasc. 1

(Dublin 1967): p. 85.

2.2 National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library MS 72.1.2 f.33v5-8

2.2.1 function

Curing excessive menstrual flow

2.2.2 edition and translation

Do toirmeasc na fola mīsta

.i. min conngna fīadhha do cumusc air cuirm 7 aol 7 inc 7 sgrībh na litrae so a ndā sdēill memruim 7 cen [...] ¹⁰⁶ 7 cenguill sdīal fo grē slīasuid dī 7 coisidh ¹⁰⁷ an fola mīsta

.p.x.b.c.p.e.n.g.a.g.h.e.ad.x. ¹⁰⁸

da derbad sin sgrībhter a maidí sgíne iad 7 marb_muc dí 7 ní tiucfa fuil aisti.

To restrain the monthly blood

Mix powdered deer horn with beer and chalk and ink, and write these letters on two strips of parchment and without [...] and tie the strips under the hair of her thigh and it will restrain the monthly blood:

.p.x.b.c.p.e.n.g.a.g.h.e.ad.x.

To prove that, let them be written on the handle of a knife and kill a pig with it, and no blood will come out of it.

2.2.3 linguistic analysis

do

PREP “to, for”
+dative, +lenition

toirmeasc – eDIL s.v. tairmesc

o,m. VN of *do-airmesca* “restrain, prevent”
dative singular

na

ART genitive singular feminine

folā – eDIL s.v. fuil

N, i.f. “blood”
genitive singular

mīsta

ADJ, io/iā. “monthly”
genitive singular feminine

min – eDIL s.v. men, min

N, ?. “fine powder; meal”
nominative singular

106 There is an empty space here, big enough for five or six letters.

107 leg. *coscidh*

108 See “Strings of letters”.

<i>conngna</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>congna</i>	N, io,m. “horn” genitive singular
<i>fīadha</i> – eDIL s.v. 2 <i>fíad</i>	N, u,m. “wild animals, deer” genitive singular
<i>do</i>	PREP “to, for” +dative, +lenition
<i>cumusc</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>cumasc</i>	o,m. VN of <i>con-mesca</i> “mix together” dative singular
<i>air</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 <i>ar</i>	PREP “for; on”
<i>cuirm</i>	N, n,n. “beer, ale” dative singular
<i>aol</i> – s.v. eDIL1 <i>áel</i>	N, o,m. “lime, chalk”
<i>inc</i>	N, ?,m/f. “ink”
	Loanword from English, particular to Scotland, c.f. Watson 2001 s.v. <i>inc</i> , Dwelly's s.v. <i>inc</i> .
<i>sgribh</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>scríbaid</i>	V “write” 2 singular imperative
<i>na</i>	ART accusative plural feminine
<i>litrae</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>liter</i>	N, i/k,f. “letter (of the alphabet)” accusative plural
<i>so</i>	DEM “this”
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>i</i>	PREP “in, into” +accusative/dative, +nasalisation
<i>ndā</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>dá</i>	NUM “two”
<i>sdēill</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>stíall</i>	N, ā,f. “strip” accusative dual

<i>memruim</i> – eDIL s.v. mem(m)rum(m)	N, o,m. “parchment” genitive singular
<i>cen</i>	PREP “without”
<i>cenguill</i> – eDIL s.v. cenglaid	V “tie, bind” 2 singular imperative
<i>sdīal</i> – eDIL s.v. stīall	N, ā,f. "strip" accusative singular
<i>fo</i>	PREP “under” +accusative/dative, +lenition
<i>grē</i>	N, n,?. “hair” accusative/dative singular
	<i>Gré</i> is otherwise only attested as the first part of a compound with <i>liath</i> "grey". Breatnach suggests that it is consonant stem, and that the word <i>grena</i> (eDIL s.v. 1 grend) is in fact the genitive singular of that consonant stem. ¹⁰⁹
<i>slīasuid</i> – s.v. eDIL slīasait	N, i,f. “thigh” genitive singular
<i>dī</i> – eDIL s.v. do	PREP “to, for” + PRN 3 singular feminine
<i>coisidh</i> – eDIL s.v. con-secha	V “correct, restrain” 3 singular present indicative
<i>an</i>	ART genitive singular feminine
<i>folā</i> – eDIL s.v. fuil	N, i,f. “blood” genitive singular
<i>mīsta</i>	ADJ, io/iā. “monthly” genitive singular feminine
<i>da</i> – eDIL s.v. do	PREP “to, for” +dative, + lenition

109 Breatnach 1981: 77.

	+ P PRN 3 singular masculine
<i>derbad</i>	u,m. VN of <i>derbaid</i> “prove” dative singular
<i>sin</i>	DEM “that”
<i>sgribhter</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>scríbaid</i>	V “write” imperative passive singular
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>i</i>	PREP “in, into” +dative/accusative, +lenition
<i>maidí</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>maide</i>	N, io,m. “stick; wood” accusative singular
<i>sgine</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>scían</i>	N, ā,f. “knife” genitive singular
<i>iad</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>iat</i>	PRN 3 plural accusative
<i>marb</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>marbaid</i>	V “kill” 2 singular imperative
<i>muc</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>muc(c)</i>	N, u/ā,f. “pig” accusative singular
<i>dí</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>di</i>	PREP “from” +PRN 3 singular feminine (i.e. <i>scían</i>)
<i>ní</i>	NEG
<i>tiucfa</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>do-icc</i>	V “come” 3 singular future
<i>fuil</i>	N, i,f. “blood” nominative singular
<i>aisti</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>7 a</i>	PREP “out of, from” + PRN 3 singular feminine (i.e. <i>muc</i>)
2.2.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	Part of the main text; found among other cures, charms and

recipes. Immediately preceding is a charm against web in the eye, immediately following a recipe for dying the hair golden or yellow.

2.2.5 *ritual context*

The letters of the charm have to be written down as a textual amulet and tied to the woman's thigh. A way of testing the efficacy of the charm is also given.

2.2.6 *literary context*

–

2.2.7 *sections*

Heading (*do toirmeasc...místa*); preparation (*min...memruim*); instructions (*cenguill...slíasuid dí*); indication (*coisidh...místa*); words of power (letters); efficacy (*da derbad...aisti*).

2.2.8 *catalogue information*

"Cure for, and charm against, excessive menstrual flow. Beg. *Do toirmeasc na fola místa*. Ends 'Da derbad sin sgríbhter a maidi sgine iad 7 marb muc di 7 ni tiucfa fuil aisti'. Cf. NLI ms G 11, p. 393b."

2.2.9 *bibliography*

Black, Ronald, "Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.2", Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), *Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire* (Dublin 2011).

2.3 National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library MS 72.1.2, f.130r (left)

2.3.1 *function* Curing excessive menstrual flow

2.3.2 *edition and translation*

Do cosg fola na mban so do sgríbad a ndā
duilleōig 7 duilleōg um gach slīasaid dī

.p.s.c.p.a.¹¹⁰

To restrain the blood of women, write this onto
two pages and [put] a page around each of her
thighs.

.p.s.c.p.a.

2.3.3 *linguistic analysis*

<i>do</i>	PREP “to, for” +accusative, +lenition
<i>cosg</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>cosc</i>	o,n. VN of <i>coiscid</i> “correct, restrain” accusative singular
<i>fola</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>fuil</i>	N, i,f. “blood” genitive singular
<i>na</i>	ART genitive plural feminine
<i>mban</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>ben</i>	N, ā,f. “woman” genitive plural
<i>so</i>	DEM
<i>do</i>	PREP “to, for” + dative, +lenition
<i>sgríbad</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>scribend</i>	VN of <i>scríbaid</i> dative singular
	<i>scríbad</i> is a late verbal noun of <i>scríbaid</i> , the Old and Middle Irish form would be <i>scríbend</i> .
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>i</i>	PREP “in, into” +accusative/dative, +nasalisation

110 See “Strings of letters”.

<i>ndā</i> – eDIL s.v. dá	NUM "two" accusative feminine
<i>duilleōig</i> – eDIL s.v. duilleóg	N, ā,f. "leaf, page" accusative dual
<i>duilleōg</i>	N, ā,f. "leaf, page" nominative singular
<i>um</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 imm, imb	PREP "around" +accusative/dative, +nasalisation
<i>gach</i> – eDIL s.v. cach, cech	ADJ "each"
<i>slīasaid</i> – eDIL s.v. slíasait	N, i,f. "thigh" accusative singular
<i>dī</i> – eDIL s.v. do	PREP "to, for" +3 singular feminine
2.3.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	The original contents of the page are four concentric circles drawn as a <i>rota</i> for calculating golden numbers, with a few figures entered. The remaining space has been utilised for various charms, written on all sides of the circles, as well as inside of them. The charms written on the right and left side of the circles are written using the curve of the circles as ruling. This particular charm is written on the left side of the circles. Immediately following it is a charm to obtain a chief's love. Inside of the circle, starting approximately in the middle, is another charm against excessive menstrual flow (i.e. charm 2.5).
2.3.5 <i>ritual context</i>	Instructions to make a textual amulet, which is to be placed around the patient's thighs.
2.3.6 <i>literary context</i>	–
2.3.7 <i>sections</i>	Heading (<i>do cosg...mban</i>); preparation (<i>so do...duilleóig</i>); instructions (<i>duilleóg...dī</i>); words of power (letters).
2.3.8 <i>catalogue information</i>	"130 r m. Four concentric circles are here drawn as a <i>rota</i> for reckoning golden numbers, etc., and a few figures have been

entered. (See Innes Review 19, p. 172). Hand 54 has utilised the spaces for the following CHARMS. At left and right he uses the circles as ruling, adding some crude curved lines of his own. (...) (b) Left: against menstruation, beg. Do cosg fola na mban. So do sgribad a nduilleoig 7 duilleog um gach sliasaid di; (...)."

2.3.9 *bibliography*

Black, Ronald, "Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.2", Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), *Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire* (Dublin 2011).

2.4 National Library of Scotland, Advocates' Library, MS. 72.1.3, f.80v7-9

2.4.1 *function* Curing excessive menstrual flow

2.4.2 *edition and translation*

Do chosc fhola na mban so do sgrībad a
nduilleōig 7 duilleōg fá gach slīasaid dī

To restrain the blood of women, write this on a
page and [put] a page under each of her thighs

+ p + c + p + e + u + o + 7 + p f + 7 + a u u + ¹¹¹

+ p + c + p + e + u + o + 7 + p f + 7 + a u u +

2.4.3 *linguistic analysis*

do

PREP "to, for"
+dative, +lenition

chosc – eDIL s.v. *cosc*

o,n. VN of *coiscid* "correct; restrain"
dative singular

fhola – eDIL s.v. *fuil*

N, i,f. "blood"
genitive singular

na

ART genitive plural feminine

mban – eDIL s.v. *ben*

N, ā,f. "woman"
genitive plural

so

DEM "this"

do

PREP "to, for"
+dative, +lenition

sgrībad – eDIL s.v. *scrībend*

ā,f. VN of *scrībaid* "write"
dative singular

scrībad is a later verbal noun for *scrībaid*, the earlier being *scrībend*.

a – eDIL s.v. *i*

PREP "in, into"
+dative/accusative, +nasalisation

nduilleōig – eDIL s.v. *duilleóg*

N, ā,f. "leaf; page"

¹¹¹See "Strings of letters".

	accusative singular
<i>duilleōg</i>	N, ā.f. "leaf, page" nominative singular
<i>fá</i> – eDIL s.v. fo, fa, fá	PREP "under" +accusative/dative, +lenition
<i>gach</i> – eDIL s.v. cach	ADJ "each"
<i>slīasaid</i> – eDIL s.v. slīasait	N, i.f. "thigh" accusative singular
<i>dī</i> – eDIL s.v. do	PREP "to, for" + PRN 3 singular feminine
2.4.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	At the end of a compilation of treatments and charms for various illnesses. The words of power (string of letters) are rewritten in a later hand at l.14 on the same page.
2.4.5 <i>ritual context</i>	Instructions to make a textual amulet, and to put this amulet underneath the patient's thighs.
2.4.6 <i>literary context</i>	–
2.4.7 <i>sections</i>	Heading (<i>do chosc...mban</i>); preparation (<i>so do...a nduilleóig</i>); instructions (<i>duilleóg...dí</i>); words of power (letters).
2.4.8 <i>catalogue information</i>	"79r17. (Hand 3.) TREATMENTS, including charms, for various conditions: (...) menstruation."
2.4.9 <i>bibliography</i>	Black, Ronald, "Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.3", Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), <i>Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire</i> (Dublin 2011).

2.5 National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library MS 72.1.2, f. 130r9

2.5.1 *function* Curing excessive menstrual flow

2.5.2 *edition and translation*

Sgrīb an fighair so air cīch des na mnā ⁊ coisgid Write this figure on the right breast of the
a fuil: woman and it will restrain her blood:

+ppp.c.p.a.q.a.d.x.x.p.x.7.h.7.d.b.i.p.¹¹² +ppp.c.p.a.q.a.d.x.x.p.x.7.h.7.d.b.i.p.

2.5.3 *linguistic analysis*

sgrīb – eDIL s.v. scríbaid V “write”
2 singular imperative

an ART accusative singular feminine

fighair – eDIL s.v. 2 figa(i)r N, ā,f. “figure, symbol”
accusative singular

so DEM

air – eDIL s.v. for PREP “on”

the prepositions *ar* and *for* fell together in the Middle Irish period through lenition of the initial consonant of *for*.

cīch N, s?,f/m. “breast”

des – eDIL s.v. dess ADJ, o,ā. “right”

na ART genitive singular feminine

mnā – eDIL s.v. ben N, ā,f. “woman”
genitive singular

coisgid – eDIL s.v. coiscid V “correct, restrain”
3 singular present indicative

a P PRN 3 singular feminine

112 See “Strings of letters”.

<i>fuil</i>	N, i.f. “blood” accusative singular
2.5.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	The original contents of the page are four concentric circles drawn as a <i>rota</i> for calculating golden numbers, with a few figures entered. The remaining space has been utilised for various charms, written on all sides of the circles, as well as inside of them. The charms written on the right and left side of the circles are written using the curve of the circles as ruling. This particular charm is written inside of the inner circle, starting approximately in the middle. The charms preceding and following it are, respectively, for a successful errand and against violent death, poisons and demons of the air. To the left is another charm against excessive menstrual flow (i.e. charm 2.4) and a charm to obtain a chief’s love. To the right is a charm against fever.
2.5.5 <i>ritual context</i>	The words of power (in the form of a string of letters) have to be written on the left breast of the patient.
2.5.6 <i>literary context</i>	–
2.5.7 <i>sections</i>	Preparation and instructions (<i>sgríb...na mná</i>); indication (<i>coisgid a fuil</i>); words of power (letters).
2.5.8 <i>catalogue information</i>	"130 r m. Four concentric circles are here drawn as a <i>rota</i> for reckoning golden numbers, etc., and a few figures have been entered. (See Innes Review 19, p. 172). Hand 54 has utilised the spaces for the following CHARMS. (...) against menstruation, beg. Sgríb an fighair so air cich des na mna”
2.5.9 <i>bibliography</i>	Black, Ronald, “Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.2”, Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), <i>Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire</i> (Dublin 2011).

2.6 National Library of Ireland, MS G11 f. 394b24-31

2.6.1 *function* Curing excessive menstrual flow

2.6.2 *edition and translation*

Flux

Obaidh do toirmusc retha fola na mban.

Riuos cruoris torridos

contaxda uestis abruit

fletus gementis sublis

clausit fluenta sanguines.¹¹³

Libera me Domine N[omen].

Mateus Marcus Lucas Iohannes

Ebistil tuccaid dō iar sin ⁊ a gabail a cris na

mnā ⁊ icaid

Flow

A charm to prevent the women's blood from running.

The touching of [his] garment

overwhelmed hot streams of blood.

the tears of the suppressed lamenter

closed the flows of blood.

Release me, [name], Lord.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

The letter [is] the reason for what follows, and take it into the girdle of the woman and it will cure [her].

2.6.3 *linguistic analysis*

flux

N. "flux, flow"
nominative singular

Flux is a loanword from Latin *fluxus*.

obaidh – eDIL s.v. *epaid*, *aupaid*

N, i.f. "spell, charm"
nominative singular

do

PREP "to, for"
+ PRN 3 singular masculine

toirmusc – eDIL s.v. *tairmesc*

o,m. VN of *do-airmesca* "restrain, prevent"
dative singular

retha – eDIL s.v. *rith*

u,m. VN of *reithid* "run"
genitive singular

fola – eDIL s.v. *fuil*

N, i.f. "blood"

113 See "Latin texts and phrases".

	genitive singular
<i>na</i>	ART genitive plural feminine +nasalisation
<i>mban</i> – eDIL s.v ben	N, ā,f. “woman” genitive plural
<i>riuos</i> – rivus (LA)	N, m2. “stream” accusative plural
<i>cruoris</i> – cruor (LA)	N, m3. “blood” genitive singular
<i>torridos</i> – torridus (LA)	ADJ, 1. “hot, dry” accusative plural masculine
<i>contaxda</i> – contingo (LA)	V “touch” perfect passive participle, nominative singular feminine
	<i>Contaxda</i> is here used for <i>contaxta</i> , which is used for <i>contacta</i> . The use of -d- after -s- rather than -t- could indicate non-aspiration of the -t-, cf. Scottish Gaelic and Modern Welsh use of <sg> for [sk].
<i>uestis</i> (LA)	N, f3. “garment” genitive singular feminine
<i>abruit</i> – obruo (LA)	V “overwhelm, cover” 3 singular perfect indicative
<i>fletus</i> (LA)	N, m4. “crying, tears” nominative singular
<i>gementis</i> – gemo (LA)	V “sigh, lament” present participle, genitive singular feminine
<i>sublisis</i> – sublido (LA)	V “press out, suppress” perfect passive participle, genitive singular feminine
<i>clausit</i> – claudo (LA)	V “close”

	3 singular perfect active indicative
<i>fluenta</i> – <i>fluentum</i> (LA)	N, n2. “flow, flood” accusative plural
<i>sangines</i> – <i>sanguis</i> (LA)	N, m3. “blood” genitive singular
	<i>Sangines</i> is an alternate spelling of <i>sanguines</i> .
<i>libera</i> – <i>libero</i> (LA)	V “free, release” 2 plural present imperative
<i>me</i> – <i>ego</i> (LA)	PRN 1 singular accusative
<i>domine</i> – <i>dominus</i> (LA)	N, m2. “lord” vocative singular
<i>ebistil</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>epistil</i>	N, i,f. “epistle; letter (used as a charm or spell)” nominative singular
<i>tuccaid</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>tucair</i>	N, i,f. “cause, reason” nominative singular
<i>dō</i>	PREP “to, for” + PRN 3 singular neuter
<i>īar sin</i>	ADV “then, thereafter”
	<i>dó iar sin</i> is translated together as “what follows”. Literally it would be “for it then”, so for what happens when the charm is used.
<i>a</i>	P PRN 3 singular feminine (i.e. <i>ebistil</i>)
<i>gabāil</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>gabāl</i>	ā,f. VN of <i>gaibid</i> “take, receive” nominative singular
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>i</i>	PREP “in, into” +accusative/dative, +nasalisation

<i>cris</i>	N, u,m. “girdle, belt” accusative singular
<i>na</i>	ART genitive singular feminine
<i>mnā</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>ben</i>	N, ā,f. “woman” genitive singular
<i>īcaid</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 <i>íccaid</i>	V “heal, cure” 3 singular present indicative
2.6.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	Part of the main text. In a compilation of cures, charms and prayers against various ailments. A different charm against excessive menstrual flow appears in the same compilation on f. 393b12-18.
2.6.5 <i>ritual context</i>	Though there are no instructions for it, the words of power presumably have to be written down, after which they have to be placed into the girdle of the patient.
2.6.6 <i>literary context</i>	Sedulius, <i>A solis ortus cardine</i> (verse 17). Biblical texts about the woman with an issue of blood: Matthew 9:20-22, Mark 5:21-34, Luke 8:43-48.
2.6.7 <i>sections</i>	Heading (<i>flux</i> (margin); <i>obaidh...mban</i>); words of power (<i>riuos...nomen</i> ; <i>Mateus...Iohannes</i>); efficacy (<i>ebistil...sin</i>); instructions (<i>a gabail...mná</i>); indication (<i>ícaid</i>).
2.6.8 <i>catalogue information</i>	“A compilation of cures, charms and prayers (several of which appear to be of native origin) against various ailments. 13) Charm against excessive menstrual flow. Beg. <i>Obaidh do t[h]oirmisc reatha fola na mban. Riuos cruoris torritos.</i> Ends <i>a cris na mna 7 icaid.</i> ”
2.6.9 <i>bibliography</i>	Ní Shéaghda, Nessa, and Pádraig Ó Macháin, <i>Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland</i> , fasc. 1 (Dublin 1967): p. 86.

Category 3: fertility

3.1 National Library of Scotland, Advocates' Library MS 72.1.2, f.33r1-7

3.1.1 *function* Fertility for women and trees

3.1.2 *edition and translation*

Item an fighair so do scrībad ⁊ a cur fo brāidhid na mna gan fis da fir ⁊ bēirigh sī clann mad aimrid

Write this figure down and put it under the woman's body without the knowledge of her husband, and she will bear children if she is childless:

.i. x.o.p.esse.ee.et.y.x.q.s.[esu].s.co.cm.c.ccont
e.x. [ape]. coce. to. q.s.[x].o.o.o.n.e.b-o.p.o.
[+].q.com.cac.c.l.[x]. [x].cd.h.y.anuen.[x].
[x].cp.[+].o.pm.x.p.q.x.portare.y.m.u.f.
huci.nux.¹¹⁴

.i.x.o.p.esse.ee.et.y.x.q.s.[esu].s.co.cm.c.ccont
e.x. [ape]. coce. to. q.s.[x].o.o.o.n.e.b-o.p.o.
[+].q.com.cac.c.l.[x]. [x].cd.h.y.anuen.[x].
[x].cp.[+].o.pm.x.p.q.x.portare.y.m.u.f.
huci.nux.

christus.uincit.christus.regnat.e[t].christus.
det.felitem¹¹⁵.uisa.uol[untate].mihi.¹¹⁶

Christ conquers, Christ reigns and may Christ grant me fertility, having seen [my] desire.

⁊ [...]¹¹⁷ a cur fa braighid croinn nach tic toradh air roime sin rīam, ticfaidh toradh maith air ō sin amach go bās an croinn cetna sin.

and put it under a tree on which fruit never came before and good fruits will come on it from that time on until the death of that same tree.

3.1.3 *linguistic analysis*

item (LA)

ADV “also”

Item is unexpected here, since this charm is not one in a list where the other entries are also preceded by *item*. One possible explanation could be that the charm was copied from a list, but the others on that list were not copied as well. I have chosen not to include *item* in the translation, as it would not add anything meaningful.

114 See “Strings of letters”.

115 leg. *felicitem*

116 See “Latin texts and phrases”.

117 There is a lacuna in the text here, and there are traces of ink and scratches that indicate that a number of letters have been erased. The lacuna is big enough for six or seven letters.

<i>an</i>	ART nominative singular feminine
<i>fighair</i> – eDIL s.v. 2 figa(i)r	N, ā,f. “figure, symbol” nominative singular
<i>so</i>	DEM “this”
<i>do</i>	PREP “to, for” +dative, +lenition
<i>scrībad</i> – eDIL s.v. scrībend	VN of <i>scrībaid</i> dative singular
	<i>Scrībad</i> is a late verbal noun of <i>scrībaid</i> , the Old and Middle Irish form would be <i>scrībend</i> .
<i>a</i>	P PRN 3 singular feminine
<i>cur</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 cor	o,m. VN of <i>fo-ceird</i> “put, place” nominative singular
<i>fo</i> – eDIL s.v. fo, fa, fá	PREP “under” +accusative/dative, +lenition
<i>brāidhid</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 brága	N, t,f. “neck; body” dative singular
	Interchangeability of palatal <dh> and <gh> is often found in Early Modern Irish, because the sounds had merged. cf. <i>fa braighid</i> later in the same charm. <i>fo brāidhid</i> has become <i>faoi bhráid</i> in Modern Irish, a prepositional phrase meaning “before, in front of”. Here it is better translated as “under the body” or “underneath”, however.
<i>na</i>	ART genitive plural singular
<i>mna</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 ben	N, ā,f. “woman” genitive singular
<i>gan</i> – eDIL s.v. cen	PREP “without”

	+accusative, +lenition
<i>fis</i>	N, u/o,m. “knowledge” accusative singular
<i>da</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 do	PREP “to, for” + P PRN 3 singular feminine
<i>fir</i>	N, o,m. “man; husband” dative singular
<i>bēirigh</i> – eDIL s.v. beirid	V “bear” 3 singular future
	As mentioned above, palatal <dh> and <gh> were used interchangeably in Early Modern Irish.
<i>sī</i>	PRN 3 singular feminine
<i>clann</i>	N, ā,f. “children” accusative singular
	<i>Clann</i> is a collective noun, loaned from Welsh <i>plant</i> “children” (sg. <i>plenty</i>), which is a loanword from Latin <i>planta</i> “shoot”, so this is a very fitting word to use for ‘children’ in a charm for fertility for both women and trees.
<i>mad</i> – eDIL s.v. 3 má, ma	CONJ “if”. + COP 3 singular present indicative
<i>aimrid</i> – eDIL s.v. aimbrit	ADJ, i. “barren, childless” nominative singular
<i>vincit</i> – vincio (LA)	V “conquer” 3 singular present indicative
<i>regnat</i> – regno (LA)	V “reign” 3 singular present indicative
<i>det</i> – do (LA)	V “give” 3 singular present subjunctive

<i>felicitatem</i> – felicitas (LA)	N, f3. “fertility” accusative singular
<i>visa</i> – viso (LA)	V “see” passive perfect participle, ablative singular feminine
<i>voluntate</i> – voluntas (LA)	N, f3. “will; desire” ablative singular
<i>mihi</i> – ego (LA)	PRN 1 singular dative
<i>a</i>	P PRN 3 singular feminine
<i>cur</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 cor	o,m. VN of <i>fo-ceird</i> “put, place” nominative singular
<i>fa</i> – eDIL s.v. fo, fa, fá	PREP “under” + accusative/dative, +lenition
<i>brāighid</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 brága	N, t,f. “neck; body” dative singular
	<i>fo bráighid</i> has become <i>faoi bhráid</i> in Modern Irish, a prepositional phrase meaning “before, in front of”. Here it is better translated as “underneath”, assuming that this means among the tree roots.
<i>croinn</i> – eDIL s.v. crann	N, o,m. “tree” genitive singular
<i>nach</i>	NEG REL PRT “that ... not”
<i>tic</i> – eDIL s.v. do-icc	V “come” present indicative 3 singular
<i>toradh</i> – eDIL s.v. torad	N, o,n. “fruit” nominative singular
<i>air</i> – eDIL s.v. for	PREP “on” + PRN 3 singular masculine

<i>roime</i> – eDIL s.v. 6 ré, ría	PREP “before” + PRN 3 singular neuter
<i>sin</i>	DEM “that”
<i>rīam</i>	ADV “before, previously; ever”
<i>ticfaidh</i> – eDIL s.v. do-icc	V “come” future 3 plural
<i>toradh</i> – eDIL s.v. torad	N, o,n. “fruit” nominative plural
<i>maith</i>	ADJ, i. “good” nominative plural neuter
<i>air</i> – eDIL s.v. for	PREP “on” + PRN 3 singular masculine
<i>ō sin amach</i> – eDIL s.v. immach	ADV “henceforth” adverbial phrase made up of preposition <i>ó</i> “from”, demonstrative <i>sin</i> “that” (in temporal meaning) and adverb <i>ammach</i> “outwards”, so “from that time on”.
<i>go</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 co	PREP “until” +accusative
<i>bās</i>	N, o,n. “death” accusative singular
<i>an</i>	ART genitive singular masculine
<i>croinn</i> – eDIL s.v. crann	N, o,m. “tree” genitive singular
<i>cētna</i> – eDIL s.v. cétnae	ADJ io, iā. "same"
<i>sin</i>	DEM “that”
3.1.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	Part of the main text; followed by love charms and various other charms, including a charm against excessive menstrual

flow (i.e. charm 2.2).

3.1.5 *ritual context*

Instructions are given for making a textual amulet and putting it underneath a woman (presumably during intercourse, as it specifies “without knowledge of her husband”) and a tree, for fertility where there previously was none.

3.1.6 *literary context*

–

3.1.7 *sections*

Preparation (*item...scribad*); instructions (*a cur...da fir; a cur...sin ríam*); indication (*béirigh...aimrid; ticfaidh...cetna sin*); words of power (letters; *christus...mihi*).

3.1.8 *catalogue information*

“33 r(58v)1. Fertility charm for women and trees. Beg. *Item an fighair so do scribad*. ‘In nomini patris’ (upper margin).”

3.1.9 *bibliography*

Black, Ronald, “Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.2”, Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), *Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire* (Dublin 2011).
King, Dennis, “ortha scríofa” in: *Nótaí Imill* (30-07-2011).
<nimill.blogspot.com/2011/07/ortha-scriofa.html> (Edition + Modern Irish translation)

3.2 National Library of Scotland, Advocates Library, MS 72.1.2, f.133v25-27

3.2.1 *function* Against sterility

3.2.2 *edition and translation*

Do mnāi aimrit

.i. scrībh na fidracha so a nduilleōig fo na brāighit .i.

[+] e.c.c.d.n.e.dex.c.x. [x] [+] .s.ip.an.ne.pⁱ.¹¹⁸

For a barren woman

i.e. write these letters on a page under the neck
i.e.

[+].c.c.d.n.e.dex.c.x.[x] [+] .s.ip.an.ne.pⁱ.

3.2.3 *linguistic analysis*

<i>do</i>	PREP "to, for" +dative, +lenition
<i>mnāi</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 ben	N, ā,f. "woman" dative singular
<i>aimrit</i> – eDIL s.v. aimbrit	ADJ, i. "barren, childless" dative singular feminine
<i>scrībh</i> – eDIL s.v. scrībaid	V "write" 2 singular imperative
<i>na</i>	ART accusative plural neuter
<i>fidracha</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 fidrad	N, o,n. "letters" accusative plural
<i>so</i>	DEM "this"
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. i	PREP "in, into" +accusative/dative, +nasalisation
<i>nduilleōig</i> – eDIL s.v. duilleóg	N, ā,f. "leaf, page" accusative singular
<i>fo</i>	PREP "under" +accusative

118 See "Strings of letters".

<i>na</i>	ART accusative singular feminine
<i>bráighit</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 brága	N, t.f. "neck" accusative singular
3.2.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	Part of the main text; at the end of a compilation of obstetrical remedies. Immediately followed by a woman's prayer for health, in a different ink and hand.
3.2.5 <i>ritual context</i>	Instructions for making a textual amulet, which has to be placed under the neck of the patient.
3.2.6 <i>literary context</i>	–
3.2.7 <i>sections</i>	Heading (<i>do mnái aimrit</i>); preparation (<i>scríbh...a nduilleóig</i>); instructions (<i>fo na bráighit</i>); words of power (letters).
3.2.8 <i>catalogue information</i>	"133 r6. Hands 74, 75.) Obstetrical remedies. Beg. <i>Do thoghairim na fola mista in tan nach tic mar dha ordaiged ig Sailearna</i> . Hand 76 adds marginal sub-headings. Ends ' <i>7 a cur 'na feli 7 coimpeoraidh</i> ', followed by charm against sterility beg. <i>Do mnai aimrit</i> ."
3.2.9 <i>bibliography</i>	Black, Ronald, "Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.2", Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), <i>Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire</i> (Dublin 2011).

3.3 Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 N 29, f. 9r12-15

3.3.1 *function* Impotence

3.3.2 *edition and translation*

Obaid ar leme ann so

Here is a charm against impotence:

tonn tonn tuinde.

fonn fonn fuinde.

grian grian uime

sced ted led

tim tim tinde

terad rinde

*fit fit fiat funde*¹¹⁹

tonn tonn tuinde

fonn fonn fuinde.

grian grian uime

sceo teo leo

tim tim tinde

terad rinde

fit fit fiat funde

A cantain a n-uisce foi, .i. Fírthipra, 7 a cur a soitex ibhair 7 a crathad air in duine ara mbī in dochnach maiden 7 fescur gu cend nōmaide.

Chant it downward over water, i.e. [water from] Fírthipra, and put it into a yew vessel and sprinkle it on the man on whom the misfortune is, in the morning and at night, until the end of a period of three days.

3.3.3 *linguistic analysis*

obaid – eDIL s.v. epaid

N, i.f. “charm”
nominative singular

ar

PREP “for; against”
+lenition, +dative/accusative

leme – eDIL s.v. leime

N, iā,f. “impotence”
accusative singular

ann – eDIL s.v. i

PREP “in, into”
+ PRN 3 singular neuter

so

DEM “this”

a

P PRN 3 singular feminine (i.e. *obaid*)

cantain

i,f. VN of *canaid* “sing, chant”
nominative singular

¹¹⁹ See “Non-lexical vocables”.

	<i>Cantain</i> is a late verbal noun of <i>canaid</i> ; the older form is <i>cétal</i> .
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. i	PREP “in, into” +accusative/dative, +nasalisation
<i>n-uisce</i> – eDIL s.v. uisce	N, io,m "water" accusative singular
<i>foi</i> – eDIL s.v. fo	PREP “under” +P PRN 3 singular neuter
<i>fírthipra</i>	Probably the name of a well, cf. <i>Notable Places of Temrach</i> (LL p.30a1: Nemnach .i. fírthipra) <i>Fírthipra</i> seems to be a compound out of <i>fír</i> (ADJ, o/ā "true", also as a noun "truth") and <i>tipra</i> (N, nt,m/f "well), which would mean something like "well of truth".
<i>a</i>	P PRN 3 singular masculine (i.e. <i>uisce</i>)
<i>cur</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 cor	o,m. VN of <i>fo-ceird</i> “put, place” nominative singular
<i>a</i> – eDIL s.v. i	PREP “in, into” +accusative/dative, +nasalisation
<i>soitex</i> – eDIL s.v. soithech	N, o,m. “vessel” accusative singular
<i>ibhair</i> – eDIL s.v. ibar	N, o,m. “yew-wood” genitive singular
<i>a</i>	P PRN 3 singular masculine (i.e. <i>uisce</i>)
<i>crathad</i> – eDIL s.v. crothad	u,m. VN of <i>crothaid</i> “shake; sprinkle” nominative singular
<i>air</i> – eDIL s.v. for	PREP “on” +accusative/dative
<i>in</i>	ART accusative singular masculine

<i>duine</i>	N, io,m. “person; man” accusative singular
<i>ara</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 for	PREP “on” + REL PRT
<i>mbī</i> – eDIL s.v. attá	V “is” 3 singular consuetudinal present
<i>in</i>	ART nominative singular masculine
<i>dochnach</i>	N, o,m. “misfortune” nominative singular
<i>maiden</i> – eDIL s.v. matan, maiten	N, ā,f. “morning” dative singular

It is somewhat rare for the dative to be used without a preposition; it is here used as a temporal adverb, "in the morning". For the dative, a palatal final consonant would be expected, which calls into question whether it is indeed the dative that is used here. Another option would be an accusative of time, but the accusative would also have a palatal final consonant. Since the following word, *fescur*, seems to be a dative form, it is likely that *maiden* is also a dative.

<i>fescur</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 fescor	N, o,m. “evening” dative singular
	Also used as a temporal adverb, "at night".
<i>gu</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 co	PREP “to, till” +accusative
<i>cend</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 cenn	N, o,n. “end” accusative singular
<i>nōmaide</i> – eDIL s.v. 2 nómad	N, iā,f. "period of three days" genitive singular

A *nómad* is usually loosely a period of three days, made up of nine periods of eight hours. eDIL specifically mentions that it is frequently used as "the time within which a cure is effected".

3.3.4 *manuscript context*

Part of the main text; in a compilation of remedies against impotence.

3.3.5 *ritual context*

The words of power have to be sung or chanted over a bowl of water, which then has to be sprinkled over the patient.

3.3.6 *literary context*

–

3.3.7 *sections*

Heading (*obaid...ann so*); words of power (*tonn...funde*); preparation (*a cantain...firthipra*); instructions (*a cur...nómaide*).

3.3.8 *catalogue information*

"Remedies and charms against impotence, e.g. (l.12), "*Obaid ar leme annso*": *tonn tonn tuinde fonn fonn fuinde Grian grian uime Sce te le tim tim tinde Terad rinde Fit fit fiat funde. A cantain a nuisgi fo 7 .i. firtopraid 7 a cur a soithech ibhair 7 a crathad arin duine ara mbi in dochnach maiden 7 fescur gu cend nómaide.*"

3.3.9 *bibliography*

Mulchrone, Kathleen, Thomas F. O'Rahilly, Elizabeth FitzPatrick, and A. I. Pearson (eds.), *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, fasc. x, p. 1220-1222.

3.4 National Library of Scotland, Advocates' Library MS 72.1.2 f.129v (lower margin)

3.4.1 *function* Conception

3.4.2 *edition and translation*

bir x bran x ar x leor x meor x¹²⁰

bir x bran x ar x leor x meor x

Sgrībh so an slait cāothrainn¹²¹ 7 cuir fo cosibh
mnā 7 nī fāth ar banndacht adil[...]g[...]rl[.]¹²²

Write this on the branch of a rowan-tree, and put
[it] under [the] feet of [the] woman and [...] is
not a covering on womanhood.

3.4.3 *linguistic analysis*

sgrībh – eDIL s.v. *scríbaid*

V “write”
2 singular imperative

so

DEM “this”

an – eDIL s.v. *i*

PREP “in, into”
+nasalisation, +accusative/dative

slait – eDIL s.v. *slat*

N, ā,f. “rod; branch”
accusative singular

cāorthainn – eDIL s.v. *cáerthann*

N, o,m. “rowan-tree”
genitive singular

Cāothrainn is most likely a scribal error for *cáerthainn* “rowan tree”. The word is written over two lines (*caoth/rainn*), making it less likely that a scribal error would occur at such a place, but not impossible. The use of a branch of the rowan tree for a charm involving the vagina makes sense, since the bark of the rowan tree can be used to treat vaginal discharge.¹²³

cuir – eDIL s.v. *fo-ceird*

V “put, place”
2 singular imperative

¹²⁰See “Non-lexical vocables”.

¹²¹leg. *cāorthainn*.

¹²²Due to the position of the writing, the last few words are not legible enough to parse or translate.

¹²³Grieve 1931: “Ash, mountain”.

<i>fo</i>	PREP “under” +accusative/dative, +lenition
<i>cosibh</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>cos</i>	N, ā,f. “foot, leg” dative plural
<i>mnā</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>ben</i>	N, ā,f. “woman” genitive singular
<i>ní</i>	NEG
<i>fath</i> – eDIL s.v. 1 <i>fath</i> , <i>fáth</i>	N, ?. “covering” nominative singular
<i>ar</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>for</i>	PREP “on” +accusative/dative, +lenition
<i>bandacht</i> – eDIL s.v. <i>bandacht</i>	N, ā,f. “womanhood; female genitals” accusative singular
3.4.4 <i>manuscript context</i>	In the lower margin. Texts on the same page are on poison; on the corruption of the humours; on appetite; on smells and how yew and holly retain their foliage.
3.4.5 <i>ritual context</i>	The words of power have to be written onto a rowan branch, which then has to be placed under the feet of the patient.
3.4.6 <i>literary context</i>	–
3.4.7 <i>sections</i>	Words of power (<i>bir...meor</i>); preparation (<i>sgríbh... cáothrainn</i>); instructions (<i>cuir...mná</i>); indication (<i>ní fáth... adil[...]g[...]rl[.]</i>).
3.4.8 catalogue information	“Lower margin (hand 70): charm to protect the vulva, beg. <i>Bir Bran ar leor meor.</i> ”
3.4.9 <i>bibliography</i>	Black, Ronald, “Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland: Adv. MS 72.1.2”, Ó Macháin, Pádraig (director), <i>Irish Script on Screen – Meamráim Páipéar Ríomhaire</i> (Dublin 2011). King, Dennis, “bandacht” in: <i>Nótaí Imill</i> (13-02-2016). < https://nimill.blogspot.com/2016/02/bandacht.html >

(Transcription, some comments in Modern Irish)

III. Comparison

In the previous chapter, all charms used in this thesis were edited, translated and analysed, so that the information needed to compare the charms is available. I will now briefly explain what exactly is going to be compared, in what way this comparison is carried out and why it has to be carried out. The fifteen charms presented in the previous chapter can be divided into three categories based on their function: delivery, menstruation and fertility. All fifteen charms have also been divided into sections. There are six possible sections: heading, method of preparation, instructions for use, indication, efficacy check or statement, and words of power. Not all of the sections necessarily have to be present in a charm, as will be seen in more depth during their comparison. The comparison will be carried out per functional category. Within each category, first the various sections as present in the charms of that category will be examined, to find out how a typical example of each section would have looked. Using this information, I will put a template together for each functional category. The resulting templates for the different categories will be used to create a more general template for Irish obstetric charms from 15th to 17th century manuscripts. This is also the reason for carrying out the comparison, as such a template would contribute to the knowledge about Irish charms in general. If a template exists for one specific type of charm, researchers working on other types of charms can adapt it to use for those. In this way, it can be used to gain information on the construction of charms in general.

The words of power are the most important section of any charm, so it is valuable to give additional attention to this section. For this reason, the origin and functionality of the different types of words of power found in the fifteen obstetric charms treated here will be further examined. The placement of the charms on the body will also be examined in more detail outside of the comparison. All of the charms give instructions for the placement of the charm on the body, and the details of this placement overlap between the categories. As such, it is necessary to look at the instructions for the placement given in all of the charms at once, rather than per category. These two

examinations will be presented before the actual comparison, as they will add information that is important for the creation of the template.

Words of power

Peperit

The *peperit*-formula was a very popular medieval childbirth charm, which was used from the early Middle Ages onwards, all over Europe.¹²⁴ It refers to biblical or hagiographical accounts of miraculous conceptions and births, which function in the context of the charm as a narrative analogy for the delivery that the parturient woman is about to undergo. By remembering and calling upon stories of established miraculous births, a physical analogy in the form of another miraculous (or in the least, miraculously safe for both mother and child) birth was requested. In this way, the *peperit*-formula very much conforms to Larson's definition of charms, which is focused on the achievement of healing (or protection, or the opposite) by use of "a parallel story told in potent words".¹²⁵ The power of the *peperit*-formula comes from precisely this use of analogies: by referring to established miracles of birth, they are invoked, and the miraculous power can be carried over to the current childbirth, to lead it in the right direction.¹²⁶ In addition to forming an analogy between the biblical and hagiographical miraculous childbirths and the childbirth in progress, the *peperit*-formula uses various powerful names to add to its power.¹²⁷

Due to the widespread and long-lasting popularity of the formula, many different versions are found all over medieval Europe. The core of the formula, consisting of the miraculous births that are called upon, remains mostly unchanged, as the formula almost always includes the three standard childbirth precedents from the New Testament: Mary, Anne and Elisabeth. Other scriptural or hagiographical births can be added: some that come up in several versions are Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who was barren; St. Celina, the mother of St. Remigius (or Rémi) of Reims, who

124Elsackers 2003: 180.

125Larson 1998/1999: 145.

126cf. Cameron 2010: 53: "many of the charms made reference to, or quoted from, some particularly potent or memorable piece of scripture. (...) Even where no text was cited verbatim, often spells would make allusions to some event (...). The implication was fairly clear: the stories, texts and events of scripture were assumed in some sense to contain palpable and negotiable spiritual potency. Their 'power' could be applied at need to the particular intention stated in the charm."

127See "The power of charms " for an explanation of the power that holy names were perceived to carry and supply.

begat Remigius at an old age; or St. Alheidis (or Alhaidis?), the mother of Elysa.¹²⁸ The *peperit*-formula was often used in conjunction with other words of power, prayers and liturgical elements. It could be used in different ways, the two of which that are most apparent (as there are instructions for these specific uses given in various charms) are spoken over the woman in labour, or written down as a textual amulet and placed on or tied around the abdomen of the patient. It could also be written down on an edible substance and ingested by the patient.¹²⁹ Elsackers suggests that the formula could also have had a more practical use as a rhythmic guide for breathing techniques to help with contractions.¹³⁰

The *peperit*-formula is used in three charms of our selection, namely 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, all of which are meant to facilitate the safe delivery of a child. In all three charms the *peperit*-formula is used in conjunction with the *sator*-formula.¹³¹ All three use a variation of the formula with Mary, Anne and Elisabeth, with the addition of St. Celina and Remigius:

1.1: Maria peperit Christum, Anna Mariam, Elisabet Iohannem, Celina Regium

1.2: Maria peiperid Christum, Anna Maria, Elestabet Iohannim, Celina Remisium

1.3.: Maria peperit Christum, Anna peperit Maria, Elizabet ⁊ Iohannem, Celina Remegium

The variations are minor, mostly concerning spelling. The greatest difficulty clearly lay in the name of St. Remigius, as it is spelled differently in all three charms.

As mentioned above, the inclusion of the conceptions and births of Christ, the virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist was standard in the *peperit*-formula, as these well-known stories were seen as “Christian models of successful childbirth.”¹³² All these births were in one way or another miraculous: Mary begot Christ through the Holy Spirit, so that she conceived and gave birth while remaining a virgin;¹³³ depending on the traditions, Anne either begot Mary through immaculate conception, or Anne and Joachim begot Mary in old age, while they previously had not been able to

128 It is not clear who exactly is meant with this last addition.

129 Elsackers 2003: 194.

130 Elsackers 2003: 205.

131 See “Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas“.

132 Skerner 2006: 236.

133 Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35.

conceive; Elisabeth also begot John at an advanced age, while she and Zacharias had not been able to conceive before.¹³⁴

The inclusion of the birth of St. Remigius is not an Irish innovation,¹³⁵ but it still is not the most obvious choice, and the various ways his name are misspelled indicates that he was not a very well-known saint in Ireland at the time. However, the story of his conception and birth closely match those already present in the *peperit*-formula. St. Remigius was a fifth century Gallo-Roman saint, who was also called the ‘Apostle of the Franks’, because he baptised the Frankish king Clovis I.¹³⁶ His *vita*, written in the ninth century by Hincmar, archbishop of Reims,¹³⁷ clearly shows how his conception and birth fit into the list of miraculous conceptions and births usually included in the *peperit*-formula. Remigius’ conception was foretold by an angel to the hermit Montanus, who was told that *Celinia in utero concipiens filium pariet nomine Remigium, cui a me salvandus populus committetur*.¹³⁸ This announcement of Remigius’ birth has parallels to the birth of both Christ, about which Mary was told by the archangel Gabriel,¹³⁹ and st. John the Baptist, about whose birth Zachariah was told in the temple by an angel. After being told about the birth of Remigius, Montanus immediately goes to Celina to tell her. She is skeptical, however, because both she and her husband are already very old:

*At illa dixit ad Montanum: ‘Quomodo fieri potest, ut anus lactem filium, cum michi a temporibus diu transactis muliebria defecerint, et vir meus Emilius vetulus sit, ac in aevoso eius corpore frigidus extet circum precordia sanguis, et voluptatis opera in eo penitus emarcuerint?’*¹⁴⁰

134 The conception and nativity of John the Baptist is included only in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:12-25; 36; 57-66. This account is entwined with the conception and nativity of Christ, signifying that John the Baptist was the one who was sent to bear witness of the light of Christ (John 1:6-8).

135 For examples of charms where the birth of St. Remigius is included in the *peperit*-formula from France and England, see Skerner 2006: 239, 239n13 and 239n14.

136 Farmer 2011: “Remigius (Remi)”.

137 Isaïa 2015. (Page 3 of 12 in the version available on HAL archive.)

138 Krush 1896: 260, l.10-12; “Celina will bear a son named Remigius who is conceived in her uterus, to whom the nation that is to be saved will be sent by me.”

139 Luke 1:26-38.

140 Krush 1896: 260, l.19-22.

And she said to Montanus: “How would that be done, that I, an old woman, would suckle a son, when the womanly things have abandoned me a long time ago, and when my husband Emilius is old, and when the blood around his heart is cold in his old body, and deeds of pleasure have disappeared from within him?”

This explains why the birth of St. Remigius would be added to the *peperit*-formula in general, but not why this is the variant of the formula that was used in Ireland specifically. There are no indications that St. Remigius of Reims was well-known in Ireland at all. It is probably the case, then, that the Irish version of the *peperit*-formula was taken over from the continent, or from England in this form, as we have seen that there are French and English versions that include the birth of St. Remigius, predating the Irish manuscripts with the *peperit*-formula.¹⁴¹

Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas

The *sator*-formula, “*sator arepo tenet opera rotas*”, is used in childbirth charms in western Europe from the ninth century onwards.¹⁴² Although that became its primary function in the later Middle Ages, the *sator*-formula probably was not originally connected to childbirth at all. The exact origins of the formula are still debated, but its first attestation is in a house in Pompeii,¹⁴³ so it was known already in the first century CE, though then written in a square as a four-way palindrome. Its long history have led to many different interpretations of both its origins and the words themselves. Although the literal translation of the words, “Arepo the sower guides the wheels by his work”, technically results in a meaningful sentence, the formula probably does not hold any real semantic meaning. Rather, as Fishwick argues, its power originally came from the perfect symmetry of its palindromic form.¹⁴⁴ Apart from being a perfect palindrome, the *sator*-formula can also be

141 See note 135.

142 Olsan 2013: 143.

143 Fishwick 1956: 30.

144 Fishwick 1956: 40-41.

rearranged to spell out “*pater noster*” in cruciform, with the letters A and O (for *alpha* and *omega*) added to the arms of the cross in reference to Christ.¹⁴⁵

The power of the *sator*-formula in medieval manuscripts thus has two sources: the first is the possibility of calling upon both God the father and Christ; the second is the semantic impenetrability of the words themselves.¹⁴⁶ The *sator*-formula would most likely have functioned best when written in its original configuration as a four-way palindrome, but was still a source of power when written in a single line,¹⁴⁷ which is how the formula is found in most medieval manuscripts. So, too, is it written in our Irish charms.

The *sator*-formula is found in four of the charms in category 1 of the selection edited here, i.e. in charms 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4. Charms 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are to facilitate a safe delivery, and charm 1.4 is meant to help deliver a dead foetus. The compilation this last one is found in is a translation of the Latin *Trotula*, a twelfth-century compendium of women’s medicine.¹⁴⁸

Charm 1.4 differs from the others in one other aspect, namely that it uses *anmanna* “names” to refer to the words of the *sator*-formula. It follows the Latin text in doing so, but it is still noteworthy. Though it is more likely that the Latin text uses *nomina* to mean “nouns; words” here, rather than “names”, it is still interesting, as this is not the only instance where the words of the *sator*-formula are labeled as names. They are found in Coptic sources as the names of the nails used to crucify Christ, and in Ethiopian sources as the names of the crucifixion wounds of Christ.¹⁴⁹

Charms 1.1-1.3 instruct for the words of the *sator*-formula to be combined with the *peperit*-formula, which is also used for safe delivery. The two sets of words of power have to be written down and placed on or tied to the abdomen of the parturient woman, which ensures the safety of mother and child. Charm 1.4 instructs for the *sator*-formula to be written on cheese or butter, after

145 Skerner 2006: 116-7.

146 See “The power of charms”.

147 Skerner 2006: 117n23, 134.

148 For a more extensive introduction to the *Trotula* and the context in which it was written and disseminated, see Green 2001: 1-62; for a brief note on in which manuscripts the Irish translation is found, see Green 1997: 99.

149 Fishwick 1956: 31.

which it has to be ingested by the patient, to ensure that the power of the words is truly internalised, that is, metaphorically internalised by the physical internalisation.¹⁵⁰

Non-lexical vocables

Some charms use non-lexical vocables as words of power, that is, syllables or words without semantic content.¹⁵¹ Though some of the non-lexical vocables used as words of power may appear to have semantic meaning on their own, they do not yield any meaningful translation in combination with the other words used. They were probably deliberately obscure,¹⁵² which gave the charms a certain authority that they would not have had if the words of power were completely transparent. By being incomprehensible the words can be a clean vessel for the power that they are imbued with, with which they are imbued precisely because of their meaninglessness.

Non-lexical vocables are also imbued with power by becoming in some way an analogy for the mysteries of God: their incomprehensibility parallels the incomprehensibility of the mysteries of faith, of those aspects of God's creation and being that cannot be explained by reason, and that humans thus cannot fully understand, nor are meant to understand. By calling upon the obscurity of the words of power, the user of the charm could call upon the obscurity of God, and the power that is in the mysteries of God could work in the charm as well.¹⁵³

When non-lexical vocables are used as words of power, they are often auditorily rhythmic, using repetition of sounds, syllables or words. This has two reasons: the first is practical, namely that a text using repetitions of words or alliteration is easier to remember; the second reason is that repetitive sounds, syllables and words sound more powerful. Power begets power; by sounding powerful the words could take more power in, and thus have more power to put towards fulfilling the function of the charm.

¹⁵⁰See "Placement of charms".

¹⁵¹Chambers 1980: 1.

¹⁵²Murdoch 2004: 61, 65.

¹⁵³I am referring to the Christian God, because the Irish charms were written and used in a Christian context. However, the same premise can apply to a non-Christian religious obscurity of the world and its processes.

There are two charms among the selection in this thesis that use non-lexical vocables, both of which fall into the third functional category: charm 3.3, against impotence in men, and charm 3.4, for conception. They use the following non-lexical vocables:

3.3: *tonn tonn tuinde*
 fonn fonn fuinde.
 grian grian uime
 sceo teo leo
 tim tim tinde
 terad rinde
 fit fit fiat funde

3.4: *bir x bran x ar x leor x meor x*

Some of the words can in theory be translated: for example, *tonn* can mean ‘wave’, and *bran* can mean ‘raven’. Based on the incomprehensibility of other words, of the sentence if the words that can be translated are translated, and based on the use of alliteration and repetition of sounds, it is very unlikely that the words of power ever were supposed to carry semantic meaning.

Charm 3.3 is the only one in our selection that is accompanied by instructions to “chant it into water”, rather than to write it down for use as a textual amulet. That it is also one of two charms to make use of non-lexical vocables is probably not a coincidence, especially since the words are particularly rhythmic and rhyming.

Strings of letters

The most common words of power used in the charms in this thesis are strings of letters. Seven out of the fifteen charms use strings of letters as their words of power: charms 2.1-2.5, against excessive menstrual flow; charm 3.1, for fertility; and charm 3.2, against sterility in women. Only one of these (3.1) uses the string of letters in conjunction with other words of power, namely a Latin invocation of Christ. The strings of letters used are:

- 2.1: .p.x.b.c.p.c.a.n.o.x.x.x.x.x.p.r.d.d.i.d.i.p.m.i.i.i.s.
- 2.2: .p.x.b.c.p.e.n.g.a.g.h.e.ad.x.
- 2.3: + p + c + p + e + u + o + 7 + pf + 7 + auu +
- 2.4: .p.s.c.p.a.
- 2.5: +ppp.c.p.a.q.a.d.x.x.p.x.7.h.7.d.b.i.p.
- 3.1: .i.x.o.p.esse.ee.et.y.x.q.s.[esu].s.co.cm.c.ccont e.x. [ape]. coce. to. q.s. [x]
 .o.o.o.n.e.b-.o.p.o. [+] .q.com.cac.c.l.[x]. [x].cd.h.y.anuen.[x].[x].cp
 [+] .o.pm.x.p.q.x.portare.y.m.u.f. huci.nux.
- 3.2: [+] .c.c.d.n.e.dex.c.x.[x] [+] .s.ip.an.ne.pi.

The letters are most often separated by full stops, though sometimes by crosses (2.3, at times in 3.1 and 3.2). There is no apparent semantic meaning that can be connected to the letters, although letters that do not occur often in Irish words, such as ‘p’ and ‘x’ are used more extensively than letters that occur more commonly. It is entirely possible that the strings of letters originally did refer to something with semantic meaning, but as it is now that meaning is no longer present, if it ever was. It is more likely that the strings of letters were never meant to have any meaning of their own; rather, they function as a solely written version of non-lexical vocables. As with non-lexical vocables,¹⁵⁴ the strings of letters were not meant to have any actual meaning, but only served as a vessel for power. The strings of letters and the power they are imbued with are thus stuck in a feedback loop: the letters are meaningless so that they may be a vessel for power, but the power that they are a vessel for arises through the opacity of the string of letters. The letters cannot exist as they are without the power that they are imbued with, because their only purpose is to hold power. That power can then be applied to the patient in the form of a written amulet, which has power because it is made by writing down the letters that are imbued with power.¹⁵⁵

154 See also “Non-lexical vocables”, but cf. for example Cameron 2010: 52, 54; Murdoch 2004: 65; Tuomi 2013: 64.

155 cf. Cameron 2010: 55, where he mentions that “the instinctive metaphysics of *Segenspruch* rested on the belief that some words simply *contained* spiritual power through the mere fact of being uttered or written down”, and also Tuomi 2013: 75 “charms were given physical permanence in the form of writing, a means which functioned to ‘lock in’ the power of the uttered words for ongoing effect.” The letters are imbued with power *through* the act of being written down, but the power that the letters are imbued with arises because of the meaninglessness of the letters, which get meaning, in the form of power, through being written down, *ad perpetuum*.

Latin texts and phrases

For some charms, parts of Latin prayers, hymns or other liturgical texts are used as words of power. These texts were considered powerful because of their language, and because of their use in a religious and ritual context. As Elsackers explains, "because of its semi-intelligibility Latin was enigmatic and therefore eminently suited for magical and ritual purposes. The liturgical context in which it was used must have reinforced the idea that Latin was a ritualistic language, and the language of ritual is powerful (...). It looks like the language of prayer was considered magical and sacrosanct."¹⁵⁶ Using these Latin texts that are either taken from the liturgy or at least connected to the church in some way, would give the charms the power to fulfill their functions. In this case, the words of power do not gain their power through the obscurity of the words, as strings of letters and non-lexical vocables, but through the power that Latin had as a religious language, and its connection to God in this way.

There are three charms among those edited in this thesis that use Latin texts as their words of power, one from each functional category: 1.5, 2.6 and 3.1.¹⁵⁷ Because each of these is completely different from the others, they will be discussed in turn.

Charm 1.5 is a charm for delivery, specifically to induce labour. It uses a Latin prayer to the Virgin Mary as its words of power, which has to be put into the girdle of the parturient woman:

O gloriosa domina qui filium Dei portasti,
uirgo eum concepisti, uirgo peperisti 7
uircinali lacte uircinaliter eum lactasti, o
domina, sicut hoc ueram est, ego bene 7
firmiter credo quod tu habes in custodia corpus
meum 7 animam meam in uitam eternam.
Amen.¹⁵⁸

Oh glorious mistress, who has borne the son of
God, a virgin you conceived him, a virgin you
delivered him and with milk of a virgin you
suckled him virginally, oh mistress, just as this
is true, I fully and strongly believe that you hold
my body and my soul in protection into the
eternal life. Amen.

¹⁵⁶ Elsackers 2003: 198.

¹⁵⁷ Although the *peperit*-formula and the *sator*-formula are technically also Latin, I am not counting them here, for two reasons: firstly, the origins of neither of the two can be traced back to liturgical texts; and secondly, these formulas have such a rich history of use that it would sell them short to group them with the words of power discussed here, which each occur in only one charm.

The Virgin Mary is an obvious choice for a scriptural example of a miraculous conception, and thus of miraculous childbirth. As the birthgiver of God, she is venerated as the foremost of the saints,¹⁵⁹ and as the one who is "blessed among women"¹⁶⁰ it is no wonder that women would call upon her for gynaecological help. Though the prayer in this charm has been largely superseded by another hymn starting with "*O gloriosa domina*",¹⁶¹ I have found one other example of it, as a 15th century addition in a 14th/15th century German prayer book.¹⁶² The text there is slightly different, with notable differences being the use of *peperisti* in charm 1.5, where the German prayer book uses *genuisti*, and that the German prayer book has a much more elaborate termination.

Charm 2.6 is a charm against excessive menstrual flow, which has to be written down and put into the girdle of the patient as well. It is a corrupted version of verse 17 of Sedulius' hymn *A solis ortus cardine*. Though corrupted, the text carries most of the same meaning. This verse refers to Jesus' healing of the woman with an issue of blood, who had suffered for 12 years and was healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment.¹⁶³ The verse has also been used as a charm against bloodletting.¹⁶⁴ Below is first the text as found in charm 2.6, followed by the text as in Sedulius' hymn:

Charm 2.6	Riuos cruoris torridos contaxda uestis abruit fletus gementis sublis clausit fluenta sanguines.	The touching of [his] garment overwhelmed hot streams of blood. the tears of the suppressed lamenter closed the flows of blood.
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158 In this and the following charms, the suggested readings given in the edition have been used rather than the manuscript readings.

159 As indicated by the use of the term *hyperdulia* "above veneration" for the type of veneration specifically paid to the virgin Mary, where for the veneration paid to other saints the term *dulia* is used.

160 As in the Hail Mary or the *Bogoroditse*.

161 i.e. the second half of Venantius Fortunatus' *Quem terra, pontus, aethera*, which is still used in the Roman liturgy.

162 Aarau, Aargauer Kantonsbibliothek MsBN 49, f.168v: *O gloriosa domina que filium dei portasti virgo eum concepisti, virgo eum genuisti. Et virginali lacte virginaliter eum lactasti. O domina sicut hoc verum est et ego bene et firmiter hoc credo. Habeas in custodia animam meam et corpus meum. Et in omnibus petitionibus et orationibus meis dulcissima domina michi succurre. Et omnibus illis per quibus tibi supplicare debeo. Amen.*

163 Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:21-34; Luke 8:43-48.

164 Springer 2013: xxii; cf. London, British Library, Royal 2 A. XX, f.16v.

<i>A solis ortus</i>	Riuos cruoris torridi	Rivers of hot gore were stopped
<i>cardine</i>	contacta uestis obstruit	by the touch of his garment.
	fletu rigante supplicis	the flowing tears of the suppliant
	arent fluenta sanguinis ¹⁶⁵	dried up the torrent of blood. ¹⁶⁶

The healing of the woman with an issue of blood is a particularly suitable biblical miracle to serve as a narrative analogy for the healing of someone suffering from excessive menstrual flow. This charm calls upon this biblical miracle not through citing the gospel text itself, but by alluding to it by using the verse of *a solis ortus cardine* inspired by the gospel text. The power inherent in this healing event in the gospels could be applied here as well, by equating the patient with the woman who is healed by touching Christ's garment.¹⁶⁷ The power by which the woman in the gospels was healed, is called upon to also heal the woman using the charm, who suffers from the same affliction.

Charm 3.1 is a charm for fertility for women and trees, and the words of power used in it consist partly of strings of letters, and partly of a Latin invocation of Christ:

Christus uincit, Christus regnat e[t] Christus det felicitatem uisa uol[untate] mihi.
 "Christ conquers, Christ reigns and may Christ grant me fertility, having seen [my] desire."

The beginning of it brings to mind the *Laudes Regiae*, which begins with and repeats multiple times "*Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.*" Charm 3.1 diverges after *Christus regnat*, instead continuing to call upon Christ to grant the user fertility. Calling upon Christ in charms is quite common, imbuing the charm with power by using his name; after all, what name can be more powerful than that of God? Using the name of Christ and calling upon him in this way would give the charm power through the power of the name, but would also give it power as a prayer, which Christ would hopefully answer by granting the fertility the patient asks for.

165Springer 2013: 200, 1.65-69.

166Springer 2013: 201, 1.65-69.

167cf. Cameron 2010: 53: "many of the charms made reference to, or quoted from, some particularly potent or memorable piece of scripture. (...) Even where no text was cited verbatim, often spells would make allusions to some event (...). The implication was fairly clear: the stories, texts and events of scripture were assumed in some sense to contain palpable and negotiable spiritual potency. Their 'power' could be applied at need to the particular intention stated in the charm."

Placement of charms

The section with instructions for the use of the prepared charm usually includes instructions for its placement on the body. The possibility of placing the words of power on the body is one of the reasons for making textual amulets out of charms. By placing it on the body, the power imbued in the words of power of the charm could be directly applied to the patient, giving them a tangible representation of the power that was being worked.

The body part to which the charm was applied varied according to the function of the charm. For general protection, the charms would be applied as close to the heart as possible, as the heart was the most important organ. According to medieval medicine, it served as the gateway to the soul and played a central role in memory,¹⁶⁸ so by guarding the heart, one could guard their whole being. Charms for afflictions that affected more specific body parts, however, would generally be applied as close to the site of the affliction as possible. This also led to words of power being written directly onto the body, or onto edible substances.¹⁶⁹

The following table shows the instructed placement of the charms edited in this thesis:

placement	charm	function
on or around the abdomen/middle	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	delivery
in the girdle	1.5	delivery
	2.6	menstruation
on or under the lap or thighs, or tied around the thighs	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4	menstruation
on the right breast	2.5	menstruation
under the neck	3.2	sterility
under the feet/legs	3.4	conception

168 Skerner 2006: 135.

169 For an example of a combination of the two, see Olsan, Lea, 'Writing on the hand in ink: a late medieval innovation in fever charms in England', in: *Incantatio* 7 (2018) 9-45, in which she discusses fever charms written on various edible substances to then be consumed, and a fever charm that was to be written onto the hand in ink and subsequently washed off in a bowl of water, which would then be drunk.

placement	charm	function
under the body	3.1	fertility
written on an edible substance and ingested	1.4	delivery (of a dead foetus)
chanted over water and sprinkled onto the patient	3.3	impotence

Table 1: placement of charms

Most of the charms are indeed to be placed nearest to the site of the affliction: on the lap or thighs for menstruation, which makes sense since the lap and thighs are in the general area where menstrual blood is most obviously present; and on the abdomen for delivery, which also makes sense, for obvious reasons. There are a few divergent placements, though, which I will go through one by one.

The first placement that stands out is “in the girdle”. There are two charms with instructions to place it into the girdle, charms 1.5 and 2.6. The girdle is still a place near where the charm has to work its power, for both charms for delivery and against excessive menstruation. When a childbirth charm instructs for it to be placed in the girdle, however, we have to think about whether this means that the charm would indeed just be put in the girdle, or that the charm would be used as or put into the *birth* girdle.¹⁷⁰ Birth girdles were long strips of parchment inscribed with texts that were thought to facilitate the delivery.¹⁷¹ A charm that has instructions to be placed in the girdle, could thus be meant to be used as a birth girdle, that is, placed around the abdomen during the delivery, so that the working power of the charms could directly affect the pertinent area. The charms that instruct the user to tie them around the abdomen (charms 1.2 and 1.3) could be meant to be used as a birth girdle in the same way.

170 Although there is no information to be found about the use of birth girdles in Ireland, there is evidence for their use in England. There is even an example of a surviving birth girdle from the late 15th century (Wellcome MS. 632), and there is evidence that the use of birth girdles during childbirth continued into the 19th century. (LaPratt 2010: 84). It is thus very likely that the practice was also known in Ireland from at least the late medieval period.

171 Olsan 2006: 505; Skerner 2006: 237.

One of the charms against excessive menstrual flow, charm 2.5, specifically tells the user to write the words of power (a string of letters in this case) directly onto the right breast of the patient. The choice of the right breast in particular is difficult to explain, but the connection of the breast to menstruation is less obscure. From late antiquity onwards, the breasts and the uterus were seen as connected: menstrual blood and breast milk were seen as the same liquid, though changed by exposure to heat inside the body.¹⁷² An excess of menstrual blood may have meant that there was too little liquid flowing to the breasts; a charm applied to the breast may thus have been intended to attract liquid to the breast, and so lessen the flow of liquid to the uterus, resulting in a reduced menstrual flow. It is also interesting that this is the only charm that instructs the user to write it on the patient's skin, rather than onto an independent medium.¹⁷³ Another charm against excessive menstrual flow, charm 2.1, has instructions to place the written words of power "*ar ucht*". *Ucht* can mean either "lap" or "breast",¹⁷⁴ making the placement of the charm ambiguous. As seen above, both the lap and the breast are connected to the place of the affliction, so it can be assumed that it would not make too much of a difference whether the charm was placed onto the breast or the lap.

Charm 3.2, against sterility in women, instructs the user to write it down "under the neck" (*fo na bráighit*). Under the neck is practically on the breast, except that it could indicate that the charm has to be hung on a cord around the neck, so that the parchment rests on the breasts. This could be another instance of influencing the uterus by applying a charm to the breast. Alternatively, "under the neck" could mean on or near the heart, so that the charm would work as a general protection against sterility.

Two charms, 3.1 and 3.4, give instructions to place the medium on which the words of power are written underneath (a part of) the body. Charm 3.1, for fertility, specifies that it has to be placed underneath the body of the woman, "without the knowledge of her husband." Charm 3.4, for

172 Tuten 2014: 165-167.

173 For other examples of charms written directly onto the skin, see Skerner 2006: 127n4; Olsan 2018.

174 eDII s.v. ucht.

conception, has to be written on a rowan branch and placed under the feet or legs of the woman.¹⁷⁵ That the charms have to be placed underneath (a part of) the body indicates that they would probably have to be used during intercourse, when the woman would already be lying down. The function of the charms and the fact that charm 3.1 specifies that it has to be used without the husband being aware of it, further strengthens that conclusion.

The last of the charms for which the words of power have to be written down is charm 1.4, for delivery of a dead foetus. It is part of a translation of the Latin compendium of women's medicine, the *Trotula*.¹⁷⁶ This charm instructs the user to write the words of power onto butter or cheese, and to give that butter or cheese to the patient to be eaten. Ingesting the words of power meant that the power could truly become part of the body, and work its magic from within. Ingesting the words of power also makes sense for the function of this charm: taking something in from the top of the body, to expel something at the bottom of the body, gives a parallelism that is often sought after in the use of charms, though usually by means of narrative analogies.

The final charm, 3.3, against impotence in men, is the only one here that does not have to be written down; instead, the words of power have to be chanted into water, which then has to be sprinkled onto the patient. The power of the charm could enter the water through the chanter's breath, which carried the words so that they could touch the water and transfer their power into it.¹⁷⁷ The thus empowered water then had to be sprinkled onto the patient. The charm does not specify that the water has to be sprinkled on a specific part of the body, so presumably the whole body is meant. The use of empowered water to treat impotence mirrors the use of holy water for blessings and the healing of minor illnesses.

As we have seen, there were various different possible placements of charms on the body. The placement of the charm is usually connected to the site of the affliction that it is meant to cure,

175 The word used is *cos*, which can mean both "foot" and "leg" (eDIL s.v. *cos*). Ultimately, the feet are just a continuation of the legs, so the exact placement may not be of the utmost importance.

176 See note 148.

177 Borsje 2016, 37, 52.

even when this does not seem immediately apparent. Placing the charm onto the body in written form had a twofold purpose: on the one hand it brought the words of power in closer contact with the site of the affliction, making it easier for the power to effect the illness. On the other hand, the use of a textual amulet served as a tangible representation of the power that was being worked, and could strengthen the belief of the patient in that power, thereby strengthening the power itself.

Category 1: Delivery

The first functional category consists of charms connected to delivery, all five of which are found in different manuscripts. The different sections present in the charms have been indicated in Table 1 below, as well as their precise function and where exactly they can be found (manuscript and folio). It immediately stands out when looking at the table that only two of the sections are present in all five charms: the instructions for use and the words of power. However, since words of power are one of the mandatory elements, as seen in the definition of a charm, all charms necessarily include them. Only one charm (1.3) gives an efficacy check or statement, making that the only charm in this category that includes all possible sections.

	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
manuscript	NLI G11 268b30	NLS 72.1.3 80r4	RIA 24B3 77 1.28	RIA 23F19 89vb18	NLS 72.1.2 130r19
precise function	safe delivery	safe delivery	safe delivery	delivery of a dead foetus	inducing labour
heading	x	x	x		
preparation	x	x	x	x	
instructions	x	x	x	x	x
indication	x		x	x	x
efficacy			x		
words of power	peperit + sator	peperit + sator	peperit + sator	sator	Latin

Table 2: sections present in charms in category 1: delivery

Three out of the five charms in category one, 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, have a heading. Charm 1.4, while it does not have its own heading, is part of a section that does have one: “*De fetu mortuo egrediendo.*”¹⁷⁸ The headings of charms 1.1-1.3 are:

1.1: do breith leinimh (to deliver a child)

¹⁷⁸ “about the dead foetus that is to come out”

- 1.2: ar breith leinibh do mnaí gan ghúasacht (for a woman to safely deliver a child)
- 1.3: ar breith leinim do mnaí gan gúasacht (for a woman to safely deliver a child)

The headings are fairly similar, but they are not identical. The first difference between them is the amount of detail given: charms 1.2 and 1.3 specify the safety of the delivery (*gan g(h)úasacht* “without danger”). The second difference is the preposition used to introduce the heading: in charm 1.1 *do* is used, whereas in charm 1.2 and 1.3 *ar* is used. The preposition *do* is used in the heading of charms 1.2 and 1.3 in another capacity, so that may explain the choice of *ar*. The last difference is the various spellings of the word *leinimh* “child”. Lenited *m* and *b* were used interchangeably in the early modern Irish period, so the variation between *leinimh* in charm 1.1 and *leinibh* in charm 1.2 is not problematic. The lack of lenition in charm 1.3 is slightly surprising, but since *gúasacht* is not lenited either, it could very well be the case that this particular scribe was less conscientious about writing lenition in general. Taking these differences into account, a typical heading used in a charm for delivery would have consisted of a preposition (*ar* or *do*) introducing a verbal noun construction (*breith leinimh*), optionally followed by additional information about the exact type of delivery that the charm is to realise. It is slightly more common for there to be a heading than not.

The method of preparation is specified in four out of the five charms of this category, i.e. charms 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4. They prescribe the following preparations:

- 1.1: scríbh sin (write that [down])
- 1.2: na bríathra so do scríbad a nduilleóg (write these words on a page)
- 1.3: na bríathra so síis do scríbaid a membrum (write these words below on parchment)
- 1.4: scríbh na hanmanna so a cáisi nó a n-im (write these names on cheese or butter)

All four charms give instructions to write the words of power down, though onto different materials: charm 1.2 and 1.3 onto paper or parchment, charm 1.4 on cheese or butter, and charm 1.1 does not specify the medium. Grammatically, this section is constructed in one of two ways: either with an imperative (*scríbh(h)* “write”), as in 1.1 and 1.4, or with a verbal noun construction (*do scríbad* “to

write”), as in 1.2 and 1.3. The method of preparation is usually included in a charm for delivery, and it invariably involves writing the words of power down, though on various materials.

The next section, the instructions for use, is present in all five charms in this category:

- 1.1: cuir ar meadhón na mná (put it on the abdomen of the woman)
- 1.2: a cengal fó bróinn na mná (tie it around the abdomen of the woman)
- 1.3: a cengul ma broind (tie it around her abdomen)
- 1.4: tabair int im nó in cáisi da caithem dí (give the butter or the cheese to her to be eaten)
- 1.5: paiter roimhe 7 a cur a cris mná torrach (a paternoster before it and put it in the girdle of a pregnant woman)

The instructions for charms 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are very similar: for all three, the instructions specify that the charm has to be applied to the abdomen of the patient, either by putting it on them or by tying it around them. Charm 1.5 has to be put into the girdle of the patient, which is worn around the abdomen.¹⁷⁹ For charm 1.4, instructions are given to ingest the butter or cheese the words of power have been written on. This section also has two grammatical variations: either an imperative is used (*cuir, tabair*) or a verbal noun construction is used (*cengal, cur*), both of which are followed by a prepositional phrase indicating the placement of the charm. The exception is charm 1.4: the imperative is followed by its object and an embedded clause with a verbal noun construction, since there are two actions involved (giving and eating).

Four out of the five charms in this category include an indication, i.e. charms 1.1, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5, which assure the user of the following:

- 1.1: beraidh gan cunntabart (she will deliver safely)
- 1.3: beraid gan gúasacht (she will deliver safely)
- 1.4: ferid (she will shed [it])
- 1.5: beraidh an lenam a cétóir (she will deliver the child at once)

¹⁷⁹ Or perhaps into the birth girdle, cf. “placement”, though that would still be on the abdomen.

In all four charms, a future or a present indicative with future meaning (1.4) is used. In charms 1.1 and 1.3 the verb is further specified with a prepositional phrase, assuring that the patient will deliver without danger, though with different words for “danger”. Charm 1.5 adds both an object (*an lenam*) and a prepositional phrase (*a cétoir*). The indication in charm 1.4 consists of just the verbal form.

The only charm in category 1 to include an efficacy check or statement is charm 1.3, which offers an alternate method to accomplish the function of the charm in the case that it did not have the desired effect:

1.3: nó dí tánnti oc tabhairt ardig dí (or drive [it] out of her by giving her a cup)

The fact that only one of the five charms in this category includes an efficacy check or statement, seems to indicate that it was often not thought to be needed, and would thus not be present in a typical charm for delivery.

There is quite some overlap between the words of power used: four out of five charms make use of the *sator*-formula, and three out of those four combine this with the *peperit*-formula. The remaining charm (1.5) uses a Latin charm-prayer to the virgin Mary. Since the *peperit*-formula also invokes the virgin Mary, all but one of the charms in this category call upon her for help with delivery.¹⁸⁰ There are minor differences between the *peperit* and *sator*-formulas in these charms, but these are mainly concerned with spelling.¹⁸¹

Taking the information gathered, we can put together the following template for a charm for delivery:

1. Heading: a preposition (*ar/do*) + *breith leinimh* (+ additional information).
2. Preparation: imperative or verbal noun construction with instructions to write the words of power down.

180 See “Peperit”.

181 See “Peperit” and “Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas”.

3. Instructions: imperative or verbal noun construction giving instructions to place the written charm onto the abdomen of the patient.
4. Indication: verb in the future reiterating the aim of the charm + prepositional phrase giving additional information on the manner in which the function of the charm will be fulfilled.
5. Words of power invoking the virgin Mary.

The sections usually occur in the order given above, with the exception of the words of power: their position varies, and they can occur at the beginning of the charm (if there is no heading present), in between the preparation and instructions, or at the end.

Category 2: Menstruation

The second functional category, charms connected to menstruation, includes six charms, from three different manuscripts in total. All of the charms in this category have a more specific function against excessive menstrual flow. The different sections that are present in the charms have been indicated in Table 3 below, as well as where they can be found (manuscript and folio). The same two sections as for the previous category are present in all the charms, namely the instructions for use and the words of power. Two of the charms, 2.1 and 2.2, include all the possible sections.

	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
manuscript	NLI G11 393b12	NLS 72.1.2 33v5	NLS 72.1.3 80v7	NLS 72.1.2 130r left	NLS 72.1.2 130r9	NLI G11 394b24
precise function	curing excessive menstrual flow					
heading	x x	x	x	x		x x
preparation	x	x	x	x	x	
instructions	x	x	x	x	x	x
indication	x	x			x	x
efficacy	x	x				x
words of power	letters	letters	letters	letters	letters	Latin

Table 3: sections present in charms in category 2: menstruation

Five out of the six charms in this category, charms 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.6, include a heading. Two of them, charms 2.1 and 2.6, even include two headings, one of which is a shorter, marginal heading, here presented between brackets:

- (2.1: cox na fola místa (restraining the monthly blood))
- 2.1: do cosc robair na fola místa (to restrain the copious flow of the monthly blood)
- 2.2: do toirmeasc na fola místa (to restrain the monthly blood)
- 2.3: do chosc fhola na mban (to restrain the blood of women)
- 2.4: do cosg fola na mban (to restrain the blood of women)
- (2.6: flux (flow))

- 2.6: obaid do toirmusc retha fola na mban (a charm to prevent the women’s blood from running)

The two charms with a marginal heading are both found in the same manuscript, NLI MS G11. Since other texts in the compilation that both charms are part of also have marginal headings, it is most likely manuscript-specific and will not be looked at further here. All of the headings found here follow the same basic pattern as the headings in the previous category: a preposition followed by a verbal noun construction. The preposition *do* is used in all of the headings here. Two different verbal nouns are used, though both have the same meaning: *cosc* is used in three of the headings, of charms 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4, and *toirmesc* in the remaining two, 2.2 and 2.6. All five headings specify what is restrained using *folá* “blood”, specified further with either *místa* “monthly” or *na mban* “of the women”. *Na mban* is used for three out of the five charms, and is thus slightly more common than *místa*. There does not seem to be a preference to use either of the two with a specific verbal noun. Two of the charms have additional elements: charm 2.1 uses *robair* “copious flow” as the object of the verbal noun *cosc*, and charm 2.6 uses *retha* “running” as the object of the verbal noun *toirmesc*. This does not change the meaning of the heading, however, only adding more information as to the state of the blood flow. In addition to this, the heading of charm 2.6 begins with the word *obaid* “charm”.¹⁸²

The method of preparation is specified in five out of the six charms, i.e. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5. It is not specified for charm 2.6, but since the instructions that are given do involve using a written charm, presumably it either did have to be written down, or the leaf of the manuscript had to be used itself. The method of preparation is given in the other charms as follows:

- 2.1: scríb na litri so (write these letters [down])

¹⁸² It is possible that all in charm headings *obaid* is understood, but not explicitly written. Since it is not common word, however, information about this is not findable on eDIL by searching for *obaid* there and looking at the context of the attestations, as there are only two results for “obaid”, ten for “epaid” and three for “aupaid”, of which various are just redirections to other headwords. To determine whether it is the case that *obaid* is understood in all charm headings, one thus has to do corpus research, which does not fall within the scope of this MA thesis.

- 2.2: min conngna fiadh do cumusc air cuirm 7 aol 7 inc 7 sgríbh na litrae so a ndá sdéill memruim (mix powdered deer horn with beer and chalk and ink, and write these letters on two strips of parchment)
- 2.3: so do sgríbad a nduilleóig (write this on a page)
- 2.4: so do sgríbad a ndá duilleóig (write this onto two pages)
- 2.5: sgríb an fighair so (write this figure [down])

For all five charms, the method of preparation indicates that the words of power have to be written down. Not all charms specify on what, however: charm 2.1 does not have any information on the material that the words of power have to be written onto. For charm 2.5 the words of power have to be written directly onto the breast of the patient, and for charms 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 they have to be written down onto paper or parchment. Charm 2.2 is the only one that also specifies the writing medium that has to be used, and gives a recipe for it. Again, there are two different grammatical structures that can be used: an imperative followed by a noun in the nominative, or a verbal noun construction (*so do scríbad*). The latter of these constructions is slightly more common, being used in three of the five charms. Either can be followed by additional information about the material that the words of power have to be written on.

As mentioned above, all of the charms in this category include instructions for their use. The following instructions are given:

- 2.1: cuir ar ucht na mná (place them on the woman's lap)
- 2.2: cenguill sdíal fo gré slíasuid dí (tie the strips under the hair of her thigh)
- 2.3: duilleóg fá gach slíasaid dí ([put] a page under each of her thighs)
- 2.4: duilleóg an gach slíasaid dí ([put] a page on each of her thighs)
- 2.5: air cích des na mná (on the right breast of the woman)
- 2.6: a gabail a cris na mná (take it into the girdle of the woman)

There is considerable variation in the instructions, both in content and in language, though all agree that the charm has to be applied somewhere on the body of the patient. Two charms (2.1 and 2.4)

have to be placed on the lap (or thighs) of the woman, one (2.3) has to be placed underneath the thighs, one (2.2) has to be tied “under the hair of the thigh”, one (2.5) has to be written onto the right breast of the patient, and the last (2.6) has to be put into the girdle of the patient. Only two out of the six charms use a verb, specifically an imperative, and one uses a verbal noun construction. In two charms (2.3 and 2.4) the verb is left out completely, and for charm 2.5 the verb is part of the previous section, as the two sections break up the sentence. The instructions further specify the recipient of the charm with *na mná* “the woman” or *dí* “to her”.

An indication is present in four out of the six charms, namely in charms 2.1, 2.2, 2.5 and 2.6, which give the following assurance:

- 2.1: *coiscid an fuil* (it will restrain the blood)
- 2.2: *cois[c]idh an fola místa* (it will restrain the monthly blood back)
- 2.5: *coisgid a fuil* (it will restrain her blood)
- 2.6: *ícaid* (it will cure [her])

The indications used in charms 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5 are very similar: all use the verb *coiscid* with *fuil* “blood” as its object. Charm 2.2 further specifies the type of blood that is held back with *místa* “monthly”. In charm 2.6, only a verb is used, without an object. All of the verbal forms used are present indicatives with future meaning.

Three out of the six charms in this category include a efficacy check or statement, two of which are a way to check the efficacy of the charm (2.1 and 2.2) and one is a statement of the efficacy of the charm (2.6):

- 2.1: *muna craide sin, scríb a neimh sceine 7 marbh ainmidhi 7 ní tiucfad fuil as* (and if you don’t believe this, write it on the blade of a knife and kill an animal [with it] and no blood will come out of it.)
- 2.2: *da derbad sin sgríbther amaidí sgíne iad 7 marb muc dí 7 ní tiucfa fuil aisti* (to prove this, let it be written on the handle of a knife and kill a pig with it, and no blood will come out of it.)
- 2.6: *ebistil tuccaid dó íar sin* (the letter [is] the reason for what follows)

Charms 2.1 and 2.2 are clearly related, at least in this section, as they prescribe the same way to check the efficacy of the charm: writing the letters of the charm onto a knife and killing an animal with it. The fact that the animal that is stabbed will not bleed is proof that the charm will keep the patient from bleeding as well. They differ on the details and the language, however. Charm 2.6 gives a true statement of efficacy, stating that the words of power are the cause of what happens when they are used, i.e. that the patient is cured of their excessive menstrual flow. Because the statements are so different, not much can be said about their language. What can be said is that it is slightly more common to have a way to check the efficacy of the charm than a statement of its efficacy, but it is as common to have either as it is to have neither.

The words of power used in most of the charms in this category are strings of letters.¹⁸³ Charm 2.6 is the only one that has different words of power, namely a Latin text. The Latin text used here is a corrupted version of verse 17 of Sedulius' *A solis ortus cardine*.¹⁸⁴ Charm 2.6 also includes an invocation to God and the names of the four evangelists.

Taking the information gathered, we can put together the following template for a charm against excessive menstrual flow:

1. Heading consisting of the preposition *do* + VN (*cosc/toirmesc*) + *na fola místa / fola na mban*.
2. Preparation: imperative or verbal noun construction with instructions to write the words of power down.
3. Instructions: imperative or verbal noun construction with instructions to place the written charm onto or near the lap of the patient.
4. Indication: verb in the 3 sg present indicative (with future meaning), reiterating the aim of the charm and reassuring the patient of the result.
5. Words of power, in the form of a string of letters.

¹⁸³See "Strings of letters".

¹⁸⁴See "Latin texts and phrases".

The charms are generally presented in the order given above. If there is a statement of efficacy or an efficacy check, it usually comes at the end, following the words of power.

Category 3: Fertility

The third and final functional category is the most varied of the three, since all of the charms in it have a different precise function, though all are ultimately intended to improve fertility. There are four charms in this category: one for fertility for women and trees, one against sterility (in women), one against impotence (in men) and one for conception.¹⁸⁵ The different sections that are present in the charms have been indicated in Table 4 below, as well where they are found (manuscript and folio). Three of the sections are present in all four charms: the method of preparation, the instructions for use and the words of power. There are no charms that have all of the sections.

	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4
manuscript	NLS 72.1.2 33r1	NLS 72.1.2 133v25	RIA 23N29 9r12	NLS 72.1.2 129v lower margin
precise function	fertility for women and trees	against sterility in women	against impotence in men	conception
heading		x	x	
preparation	x	x	x	x
instructions	x x	x	x	x
indication	x x			x
efficacy				
words of power	letters + Latin	letters	non-lexical vocables	non-lexical vocables

Table 4: sections present in charms in category 3: fertility

Only two of the four charms in this category, 3.2 and 3.3, have a heading:

3.2: do mnái aimrit (for a barren woman)

3.3: obaid ar leme ann so (here is a charm against impotence)

¹⁸⁵ Black assigns this charm the function of “protection of the vulva” in his catalogue on ISOS. Based on the legible parts of the text of the charm I disagree, and think it fits better if its function is to improve the chances of conception.

At first glance these two headings are not very similar, but they do share the same basic structure. Both use a prepositional phrase to indicate the function of the charm: charm 3.2 uses the preposition *do*, and charm 3.3 uses the preposition *ar*. Charm 3.3 also has *obaid* “charm” preceding the prepositional phrase.¹⁸⁶ Since two out of four charms include a heading, and two do not, it is as common for charms in this category to have a heading as to not have one.

The method of preparation is specified in all four charms in this category, making this category the only one of the three where this is the case. The following methods of preparation are given:

- 3.1: an fighair so do scríbad (write this figure down)
- 3.2: scríbh na fidracha so a nduilleóg (write these letters on a page)
- 3.3: a cantain a n-uisce foi (chant it downward over water)
- 3.4: sgríbh so an slait cáothrainn (write this on the branch of a rowan-tree)

The instructions for three of the charms, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4, specify that the words of power have to be written down. The material on which they have to be written differs: it is not specified for charm 3.1, a piece of paper or parchment for charm 3.2, and a rowan branch for charm 3.4. Charm 3.3 is the only charm out of all three categories that does not have to be written down to prepare it for use. Even the charms that do not have specify that the words of power have to be written down, make it clear in the instructions for use that it is used in written form. Charm 3.4, in contrast, has to be chanted over water. The two different grammatical constructions that can be used are either an imperative or a verbal noun construction, both of which are used in two charms each.

The instructions for the use of the prepared charm are also present in all four charms in this category. Charm 3.1 has two sets of instructions: one for use with a woman, and one for use with trees, here designated a and b respectively. The instructions given are:

- 3.1a: a cur fo bráidhid na mna gan fis da fir (put it under the woman’s body without the knowledge of her husband)

¹⁸⁶ See note 182.

- 3.1b: a cur fa braighid croinn nach tic toradh air roime sin ríam (put it under a tree on which fruit never came before)
- 3.2: fo na bráighit (under the neck)
- 3.3: a cur a soitex ibhair 7 a crathad air in duine ara mbí in dochnach maiden 7 fescur gu cend nómaide (and put it into a yew vessel and sprinkle it on the man on whom the misfortune is, in the morning and at night, until the end of a period of three days)
- 3.4: cuir fo cosibh mná (put [it] under the feet of the woman)

There is considerable overlap between the instructions for use: for three out of the four charms, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4, the written words of power have to be placed underneath a part of the body, or underneath the body as a whole. Charm 3.1 does not specify a specific part of the body, but does give further instructions that the patient's husband should not know that the charm is being used. The instructions use with trees are fairly similar, only indicating that the charm has to be put beneath the tree. Here, too, the additional specifications apply to factors other than the placement of the charm. Charm 3.2 and 3.4 do mention the specific body part the charm has to be placed under: charm 3.2 under the neck, and charm 3.4 under the feet or legs of the patient. Charm 3.3 gives extensive instructions, including the length of time over which the charm has to be applied, making it the only one out of all three categories that does so. Grammatically, the instructions are quite similar. All of the charms that use a verb (all except 3.2) use imperatives followed by a prepositional phrase indicating the placement of the written words of power.

Two out of the four charms in this category, charms 3.1 and 3.4, include an indication. Interestingly, these are also the two charms that do not include a heading. Charm 3.1 includes two indications, one for women and one for trees:

- 3.1a: béirigh sí clann mad aimrid (she will bear children if she is childless)
- 3.1b: ticfaidh toradh maith air í sin amach go bás an croinn cetna sin (good fruits will come on it from that time on until the death of that tree)
- 3.4: ní fáth ar banndacht adil[...]g[...]rl[.] ([...] is not a covering on womanhood)

Unfortunately, the indication of charm 3.4 is partly illegible. Since the illegible part is the subject of the copular sentence, the indication is not much help in deciphering the exact function of the charm. This charm is the only one in of all the categories that uses a copular sentence in the indication. Both of the indications in charm 3.1 include a verbal form in the future tense, followed by an object and additional information.

A variety of types of words of power is used in the charms in this category: charm 3.1 uses strings of letters and a Latin invocation of Christ, charm 3.2 uses a string of letters and charms 3.3 and 3.4 use non-lexical vocables.

Taking the information gathered, we can put together the following template for a charm to improve fertility:

1. Either a heading consisting of prepositional phrase or an indication to specify the aim of the charm.
2. Preparation: imperative or verbal noun construction with instructions to write the words of power down.
3. Instructions: imperative sentence giving instructions to place the written charm underneath (a part of) the patient's body.
4. Words of power, in the form of either strings of letters or non-lexical vocables.

As with the previous two categories, the sections are generally present in the order given here, with the exception of the words of power, which are more movable.

A template for obstetric charms

Having compared the charms within the various categories, and having made a template for each category, I will combine the three different partial templates, to create one complete template for a typical Irish obstetric charm as found in 15th to 17th century manuscripts.

Looking at the presence of the different sections in all the charms, there are only two sections that are included in all fifteen charms: the instructions for use and the words of power.¹⁸⁷ The method of preparation is included in all but two charms, namely charms 1.5 and 2.6. These are also the two charms that use Latin texts as words of power. The heading and the indication are both included in ten charms each, and as a rule the charms include at least one of the two. Only four charms include an efficacy check or statement.

Bringing this information and the conclusions from the previous comparison together, the following template can be created:

[Heading] — Preparation — Instructions — [Indication] — Words of power

At least one of the sections in square brackets is present, after which the other is optional. More detail about the contents and grammatical components of the various sections follows:

- Heading: (obaid followed by) a preposition (*do/ar*), followed by a verbal noun with a noun describing the affliction as its object.
- Preparation: imperative or verbal noun construction with instructions to write the words of power down.
- Instructions: imperative or verbal noun construction giving instruction to place the written words of power somewhere on the body of the patient. The exact location differs based on the place of the affliction.¹⁸⁸

187 See “Appendix Ia: sections present in the charms” for a table showing which sections are included in which charms.

188 See “Placement of charms”.

- Indication: a third person singular verb in the future or in the present indicative followed by a verbal complement, reiterating the aim of the charm and/or reassuring the user of the result.
- Words of power. The type of words of power depends on the function of the charm, but the most common words of power are either strings of letters or words of power invoking the virgin Mary.

Though not a lot can be said about the order of the sections, since there is considerable variation, and most charms do not include all the different sections, a few observations can be made. If the position of the words of power is not taken into account, the sections generally appear in the order given in the template above, as is the case in 13 out of the 15 charms here examined (all except for 1.3 and 2.6).¹⁸⁹ The words of power are the most variable section, but there is a slight tendency for them to stand at either the beginning or the end of the charm, the latter of which is more common. In addition, the relative order of the preparation and the instructions for use is fairly fixed, as in 12 out of the 13 cases where both are present, the instructions immediately follow the preparation. It make practical sense for the instructions to follow the preparation, as the instructions usually give information about what to do with the prepared charm.

¹⁸⁹ See “Appendix Ib: order of the sections present in the charms” for a table showing the order in which the sections occur in the charms.

IV. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to construct a template for late medieval Irish obstetric charms. To accomplish this, first the concept of charms was defined: the terminology that should be used, the characteristics of charms, the origins of the power of charms and the sections a medieval Irish charm can include were discussed and established. Following that, the fifteen charms that form the basis for the construction of the template were edited, translated and analysed. Finally, these charms were grammatically and structurally compared.

It has become clear that a template for Irish obstetric charms cannot consist of sample sentences in which only some information has to be filled in; there are too many variations that depend on the precise function of the particular charm. Additionally, there are lexical and grammatical variations that seem to be used without a preference for one or the other. On the other hand, it has proven possible to draw enough conclusions about the typical structure of late medieval Irish obstetric charms to create a structural template. This template includes five sections that are typically present in an obstetric charm: the heading, the method of preparation, the instructions for use, the indication and the words of power. Of these five sections, two must always be present in a charm: the instructions for use and the words of power. Additionally, either a heading or an indication must also be included. Without the instructions for use and either a heading or an indication, the charm cannot function based on only its written form, as the user must then have previous knowledge about its application and function to be able to use it. The broad definition given of a charm as “a type of text that includes words of power” shows that this section is an integral part of a charm, without which it would not be one. Additionally, the type of words of power and the origins of their power are what determines whether a text is a charm or not. An examination of the types of words of power found in the obstetric charms has been able to shed some light on the origins of their power: the use of analogies and parallels, which can be applied

either explicitly or implicitly and either deliberately or subconsciously, is a key aspect of the ways that words of power can be empowered.

Regardless of how much I would want to, it is impossible to examine all the aspects of medieval Irish charms in one MA thesis. The index of Irish charms compiled for this thesis, attached as Appendix II, will hopefully make future work easier by giving an overview of many of the charms that can be found in Irish manuscripts. This index can thus be used as the first step in various endeavours into the study of Irish charms, as there is still a considerable amount of work that has to be done on the subject. Unfortunately, many of the extant Irish charms still need to be transcribed, edited and translated, which in and of itself is a sizable task. One possible avenue of research into Irish charms is to look more closely into their structure, for which the methods introduced in this thesis can be used, or the template given can be applied. Another avenue of research is analysing the ways that religion, magic and medicine intersect in medical charms. This thesis alluded to that intersection, but more thorough research would undoubtedly uncover interesting information. There are currently multiple projects underway that aim to further develop the knowledge we have of medieval Insular medicine, to which a continued and amplified study of charms would offer valuable contributions.¹⁹⁰

190 Queen's University Belfast has a project called *Science and Medicine in the Insular Middle Ages* (SMIMA) that traces the reception and transmission of scientific and medical knowledge in the Insular Middle Ages: <<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/ael/Research/English/CurrentResearchProjects-ENGLISH/SMIMA/>>. Additionally, Deborah Hayden is the principal investigator of a project focused specifically on medieval Irish medicine, *Medieval Irish medicine in its north-western European context*, for which the contents and context of two medical texts are examined closely.

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Appendix Ia: sections present in the charms

Charm	manuscript	function	heading	preparation	instructions	indication	efficacy	words of power
1.1	NLI G11 268b30	delivery	x	x	x	x		peperit + sator
1.2	NLS 72.1.3 80r4	delivery	x	x	x			peperit + sator
1.3	RIA 24B3 77.28	delivery	x	x	x	x	x	peperit + sator
1.4	RIA 23F19 89vb18	delivery		x	x	x		sator
1.5	NLS 72.1.2 130r19	delivery			x	x		Latin
2.1	NLI G11 393b12	menstruation	x x	x	x	x	x	letters
2.2	NLS 72.1.2 33v5	menstruation	x	x	x	x	x	letters
2.3	NLS 72.1.3 80v7	menstruation	x	x	x			letters
2.4	NLS 72.1.2 130rl	menstruation	x	x	x			letters
2.5	NLS 72.1.2 130r9	menstruation		x	x	x		letters
2.6	NLI G11 394b24	menstruation	x x		x	x	x	Latin
3.1	NLS 72.1.2 33r1	fertility		x	x x	x x		letters + Latin
3.2	NLS 72.1.2 133v25	sterility	x	x	x			letters
3.3	RIA 23N29 9r12	impotence	x	x	x			non-lexical vocables
3.4	NLS 72.1.2 129vm	conception		x	x	x		non-lexical vocables

Appendix Ib: order of the sections present in the charms

Charm	manuscript	function	heading	preparation	instructions	indication	efficacy	words of power
1.1	NLI G11 268b30	delivery	1	3	4	5		2
1.2	NLS 72.1.3 80r4	delivery	1	2	3			4
1.3	RIA 24B3 77.28	delivery	1	2	3	6	5	4
1.4	RIA 23F19 89vb18	delivery		1	3	4		2
1.5	NLS 72.1.2 130r19	delivery			2	3		1
2.1	NLI G11 393b12	menstruation	1	2	3	4	6	5
2.2	NLS 72.1.2 33v5	menstruation	1	2	3	4	6	5
2.3	NLS 72.1.3 80v7	menstruation		1	2	3		4
2.4	NLS 72.1.2 130rl	menstruation	1	2	3			4
2.5	NLS 72.1.2 130r9	menstruation	1	2	3			4
2.6	NLI G11 394b24	menstruation	1		4	5	3	2
3.1	NLS 72.1.2 33r1	fertility		1	2	3		4
3.2	NLS 72.1.2 133v25	sterility	1	2	3			4
3.3	RIA 23N29 9r12	impotence	1	3	4	5		2
3.4	NLS 72.1.2 129vm	conception		2	3	4		1

Appendix II: Index of Irish Charms

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
afternoon fever	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p.93	19th century	charms: for the Afternoon Fever		
afternoon fever	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 28	19th century	charms against "Afternoon Fever" and worms		
ague	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41 III	p. [115]	1818	Charm for ague, followed by scribal signatures dated 1818.		
ague	National Library of Ireland	G140	p. 563	18th century	The following: 'And when Jesus saw the Cross he trembled and shook and the Jews said to him what ailest thou hast thou and Ague, and he said Nay but whosoever keepeth this in his mind or about him shall never be troubled with ague or fever So Lord Jesus help thy servant Mathew Troy. Amen.'		
ague	University Library Cambridge	Add. 3085	101 r	18th-19th century	(a) charm for ague, in English		
ague	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 29 i.	19th century	charm-cure of ague, followed by scribal signature		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
ague	National Library of Ireland	G491	p. 31	19th century	(ii) 'A charm for the favour. / IHS. When Jesus saw the Cross that he was to be crusified he shook the Jeus [<i>sic</i> ']'. Breaks off middle of page.		
ague	Mount Melleray Abbey	MS 7	p. 299	19th century	In the name of the Father and of the Son & of the Holy Ghost Amen / When Jesus saw the Cross whereon his Body was Crucified he trembled and he [<i>shook cancelled</i>] shaked, the Jews said unto him why do you tremble or shake, or have you [<i>favour or ague cancelled</i>] ague or favor I have neither the ague or favor nor neither do I feat them, but whos[o]ever beareth those words [<i>in honour of me cancelled</i>] shall never be troubled withe [<i>sic</i>] the ague or favor through the pittty of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Blessed be his holy name Amen / Pennd by John Buckly.'		
ague (in humans and animals)	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 45	19th century	Charm-cure for ague in humans and animals		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
all evil	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.3 (=Gaelic MS III)	f.79r17	15th century	charm against all evil, etc.		
awareness	Royal Irish Academy	12 E 20	p.4	18th century	Artha an Mhothaighthe. Beg. <i>Trí bréithe fionna geala chuir Muire dá mac.</i>		
baldness	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.33r (58v) 22	16th-17th century	Charm against baldness. Beg. <i>Doirter fuil filid.</i>		
bite of mad dog	Royal Irish Academy	23 E 7	p. 117 (134)	18th century	Charm-prayer, beg. <i>Orrta (no eirce) chuir Collim-cille re cneadh.</i> ("Orrtha a n-aghaidh greim na con gconnfach (no grim bó maoile)". With instructions (in English) regarding use of the prayer and a marginal note " <i>per Jas Gyraghty, 1781.</i> "		
bite of mad dog	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p. 193 l. 29	18th century	Charm-prayer against the bite of a mad dog ("Orrtha a n-aghaidh greim na ccon confach". Beg. <i>Orrta (no eirce) chuir cullumcille re cneadh lionta lum lán do nimh.</i> Directions in English regarding the application of the charm follow.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
bite of mad dog	Royal Irish Academy	23 Q 18	p. 391	18th-19th century	Charm prayer, to be said over a person bitten by a mad dog; followed by some calculations		
bleeding, hiccough and vomiting	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 55	15th century	–	Carney and Carney 1960: 152	Carney and Carney 1960: 152
blindness	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 112r8	16th-17th century	Hand 64. Charm against blindness. Beg. <i>Ihesus cum visu sanct.</i> Headed ‘in no(m)ine patris e filii et spiritus sancti amen’. Below this further hands have written ‘293456’, etc., and ‘amen’.		
blood	Royal Irish Academy	12 E 20	p.5	18th century	Artha na Folla. Beg. <i>Do sgolt ar thaibh an dalaruig.</i>		
blood in urine	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 43	19th century	Charms for hæmorrhage, fever, blood in urine; (p. 42), wounds, sore eye, liver trouble.		
blood loss	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 111v7	16th-17th century	Hand 63. Charm against loss of blood. Beg. <i>Aluta abanis tota.</i> Headed ‘Obad ann so eir cosc fola et cetera’.		
blood loss	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 99r28	16th-17th century	Hand 54. Charm against loss of blood. Beg <i>Obaid do cosg gach fola .i. ueron ixo.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
blood loss	Royal Irish Academy	23 Q 18	p. 391 <i>i</i> .	18th-19th century	Charm-prayer for blood shedding; note on tree planting		
blood royal	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 99	19th century	for the blood royal		
bloodletting, the danger following	National Library of Ireland	G1	f. 41v10	16th century	Charms: against (1) danger following the letting of a vein (2) burning of one's house. Beg. <i>Cuimngh ar an mairtír n-uassal .i. Mena mairtír an uair leigfidhear cuisle dhuid. Ends ní loiscthear é.</i>		
boils, erysipelas and breast cancer	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(b) 36	16th century	P.36, against boils, erysipelas and breast cancer, beg. <i>An fheighle a chuir Muire re a mac.</i>		
bone failure	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130r <i>m</i>	16th-17th century	(d) Below, and extending up right margin: against bone failure, beg. <i>Singnum per Dei dignum</i> . Ends 'foiridh tuitim na cnam'.		
burning of one's house	National Library of Ireland	G1	f. 41v10	16th century	Charms: against (1) danger following the letting of a vein (2) burning of one's house. Beg. <i>Cuimngh ar an mairtír n-uassal .i. Mena mairtír an uair leigfidhear cuisle dhuid. Ends ní loiscthear é.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
burning, drowning, wounding	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.113 v1	16th-17th century	Charm against burning, drowning and wounding. Beg. <i>Romasma orma immaculata</i> . Above, hand 65 writes 'a n-ainm trír an tinnsgetal aoinf er a(?)aid. In Dei noimean'. Hand 16 mimics: 'in dei noimean', 'amen'.		
burns	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 116	19th century	(xv) for burn		
butter	Royal Irish Academy	12 E 20	p.5	18th century	Artha an Ime. Beg. <i>A bhanriogan Mhuire, chuir coingeal na Soillse</i> . Ends p. 6 <i>m.</i> , where instructions for proper use of charms are added.		
butter	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 33 <i>i</i>	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stoping blood," fiabhrus cionleacht; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribblings.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
butter, protection from witches	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 46	19th century	A charm, part English, part Latin, to protect butter from witches. Beg. <i>May the witch of Ender with all her arts.</i> Followed by some lines on the child Jesus beg. <i>There was a child born in Bethlehem...</i>		
butter, protection of (?)	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 34	19th century	Latin charm "for the use of Honour Driney's butter." Arranged in a cruciform pattern.		
butter, protection of (?)	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 44	19th century	The same charm as on p. 46. "For the use of Honour D[riney's] butter" (cf. p. 34). The Latin incantation is written 4 times, forming a cruciform pattern around the English verse		
cancer	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p.120	19th century	charm for cancer		
conception	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.129v22	16th-17th century	Lower margin (hand 70): charm to protect the vulva, beg. <i>Bir Bran ar leor meor</i>		
conception (cow)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 115	19th century	(xix) after a cow is bulled		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
conception of a boy	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1336 = H. 3. 17	column 672b	15th - 16th century	is on a slip between 672 and 673. It contains a charm to produce male children. Begins: ben beres ingena ... Maria peperit xpm anna Maria elisabeth ihoandem	Best 1952 p. 30	Best 1952 p. 30
cough	Royal Irish Academy	24 A 31	p. [64]	19th (?) century	charm prayer against cough. This and the following entry are by a later hand.		
cough and asthma	Royal Irish Academy	24 C 16	p. 343 m, 356	19th century	Charm-prayer in Latin, against cough and asthma. Probably written later. This charm appears again at p. 356, written lengthwise in the inner margin.		
cough and asthma	National Library of Ireland	G93	p.278	19th century	Charm prayer in Latin against cough and asthma followed by cure (in Irish) beg.: <i>In nomine Patris et Christe ... tussus et asthma ... uigh ceirce bhruith bog 7 lán spúine bige fo raibh thalmhan.</i> 'As ceann do leabhruibh Eóin Uí Challanáin an liaig aseadh fríth an cúnntas beag sin'.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
cure illness	Royal Irish Academy	23 I 22	p. 124 <i>m</i>	18th century	A folk-cure, guaranteed to cure any ailment. Beg. <i>Cros Mhuire shamn, cros Dé bhí.</i>		
cure illness	Royal Irish Academy	D ii 1	f. 54 (110) <i>b m</i>	14th century (late)	A similar type of Litany, the number seven being standardized throughout. Beg. <i>Seacht n-eáspoig Droma Hurchailli.</i> Ends with his direction for a charm-cure: "Can so .iii. n-easpaig for uisci arin mbolgaig arin mbuideachais 7 ar gach teidm 7 doberar in t-uisce darsin nduine. Finit. Amen. Finit."		
cure illness	Royal Irish Academy	23 D 9	p. 398	18th century	Litany beg. <i>Seacht naoimheaspog déug ar seacht gceudaibh do sruithibh in choimhdhia hi Corcaich le Baire 7 Neasain.</i> Cf. LL, <i>facs.</i> , p. 373, col. b. Ends (p. 407) with the words <i>Can so .i. vii n-easpuig for usci ar an mbolgaich 7 ar an buidheachair 7 air an plaith 7 ar gach teidhm air cheana 7 doberar in t-uisce tar sin duine easlán bén sanatt etc.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
cure illness	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 18	p. 388	18th century	Litany beg. <i>Seacht naoimheaspuig deag ar sheacht ccéaduibh la Bairre ⁊ Neasan quorum nimona sgribta sunt in celis hos omnes invoco in auxilium meum.</i> Cf. LL, <i>fac.</i> , p. 373, col. b. Our text is an abbreviated version of the LL text. Ends (p. 392) with the words <i>Can so .i. vii n-easpuig for uisci ar an mbolgaich ⁊ ar an mbuidheacair ⁊ ar an bplaigh, ⁊ ar gach teidhm ar cheana ⁊ doberar an t-uisce tair sin duine easlán b́en sanat etc.</i>		
defend G. Fitzgerald from harm	Royal Irish Academy	23 A 20	p. 76	19th century	Three charms to defend G. Fitzgerald from harm, the third being cancelled. Beg. <i>Crux bona, crux digna, crux super omnia</i>		
defend G. fitzgerald from harm	Royal Irish Academy	23 A 20	p. 77 m.	19th century	A charm similar to those on the preceding page		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
delirium	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 394b	15th century	(14) Charm against delirium: <i>Obaid do ordaig Ri nimi a n-aigid rabuile: Imad c[h]liabh is imad chorp / ar teitheadh an asain dod lot / Muire ⁊ Bridid na tri freat / co tigid dod c[h]bair anoucht. paider roime ⁊ na diaid ⁊ a c[h]ur a .ix. snait[h]e lachtna ⁊ a gabail fo. 3 i ngach snait[h]e dibh ⁊ icaid.</i>		
delivery	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.3 (=Gaelic MS III)	f. 80r4	15th century	charm for safe childbirth		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
delivery	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 268b-169q	15th century	A compilation of cures, charms and prayers against obstetrical and gynaecological problems. Many of these problems and their cure are included in another compilation of the same nature in RIA 24B3 pp. 75-78. The charm on p. 77 of that ms. (printed RIA Cat. Ir. MSS., p. 1184) is included in present ms., p. 268b30. For a full tract on these matters see RIA 23F19 ff. 88-94, TCD E.4.1, pp. 101-107 (ed. from this ms. W. Wulff, Irish Texts v 12).		
delivery	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 77	15th-16th century	Three lines from below. <i>Ar breith leinim do mnai gan guasacht na briathra so sis do scribad a membrum ⁊ a cengul ma broind .i. Maria peperit Christum Anna peperit Mariam Elizabet, ⁊ Ioannem, etc., satur + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas + etx., cf. no 473, f. 89 v, l.19.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
delivery	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130r i.	16th-17th century	Charm to induce parturition. Beg <i>Onglinosa(?) domina qui filiam Dei portasti</i> . Subscribed by hand 25 'ata annsa lebarsa6/ as 7 8 cc duilog'.		
delivery	Royal Irish Academy	12 E 20	p.3	18th century	Artha mná a tteinios chloinne. Beg. <i>Do dhá gheal chíoch, a Mhuire mhathair</i> .		
delivery	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 38	p. 58 margin	18th century	lower margin, in tabular form <i>Sator arepo</i> , etc., as in 473 f. 88. More recipes and cures		
delivery	Mount Melleray Abbey	MS 1	p. 162.13	18th century	square-word charm <i>Sator / arepo / tenet / opera / rotas</i> .		
delivery	University Library Cambridge	Add. 3085	101 r	18th-19th century	(c) '(ortha do mnaoí attinis linnibh)'		
delivery (cow)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 115	19th century	(xx) when a cow is going to calf		
delivery of a dead fetus	Royal Irish Academy	23 F 19	f. 89, v. 2, l.19	15th century	As a charm, the words "+sator + arepo + tenet +opera + rotas"; cf. 445, 77 z.		
delivery(?)	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.2.4 (=Gaelic MSLIV)	p.59.18	18th century	"Square-word" charm		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
determining guilt or innocence of party accused of sexual misdemeanour	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.2.2 (=Gaelic MS LII)	p.44	17th-18th century	Hand D. Charms, superstitions (acephalous). (a) aphrodisiac; (b) on unluckiness of Monday; (c) fertility charm; (d) charm against impotence; (e) charm for determining guilt or innocence of party accused of sexual misdemeanour; (f) aphrodisiac.		
disease	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1336 = H. 3. 17	column 672b	15th - 16th century	ibid. against disease: buidi P'etair im Isu Crist, etc.	Best 1952 p. 30	Best 1952 p. 31
dislocating bones	National Library of Ireland	G473	P. 113	19th century	Charms written by William Hession.' Beg. <i>Go manee Dia yuth a Veeheel Ardangle.</i> 'Against dislocating of bones.' Beg. <i>Christa ce crigh y lonave cosh.</i> Ends <i>Amane 'Wm. Hession Ballynacrg.'</i>		
dogs	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 91	19th century	Charm against a dog.		
dream of a future wife or husband	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 103	19th century	to dream of a future wife or husband		
dreams	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 92 v1	16th-17th century	Hand 51. Charm against dreams. Beg. <i>Procul racedant sumnia.</i> Cf. 130v i.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
dreams	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130v i.	16th-17th century	Hand 54 resumes. Charm against dreams (<i>na bringloidi</i>). Beg. <i>Procul racedant somnia</i> . Copied at 92v1. Also at John Rylands ms Ir. 35, f. 34r29.		
drowning	National Library of Ireland	G1	f. 42r15	16th century	Couplet to be recited against drowning while in a vessel: <i>Curach Abáin ar an linn is muintir fhionn Abáin ind</i> followed by <i>Ni báit <...> an t-ethar a n-aibérthar sin.</i>		
drowning	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.98r29	16th-17th century	Hand 56. Charm against drowning, etc. Beg. <i>Heli helo adonahi</i> . Hand 55 adds 'Ni olc dho'.		
dumlishmore(?)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 118	19th century	Recipes and charms: (vi) 'for the dumlishmore...'		
dysentery	University Library Cambridge	Add. 4207	56 r	18th-19th century	(trans.; outer column left blank originally). 'A Charm for The Bloody Flux &c.' <i>In the Blood of Adam Death was taken</i> . 2 couplets, foll. by: 'The Above will take ye Desird Effect with ye help of God / Amen Con[chubhar] dl [= Ó] Mullain cct'.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
eczema	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p. 195 l.31	18th century	Charm agaisnt eczema ("Orrtha na h-achma"). Beg. <i>Orrtha shaimh sheimh orrtha d;folladh Chriosd</i> . Directions (in English) for its use follow).		
epilepsy	Royal Irish Academy	23 N 17	p. 79	16th century (1582?)	A charm for epilepsy, beg. <i>Iaspar fert myrrham, Melchior thus, Balthasar aurum...</i> Written by a later hand, perhaps by the scribe of pt. i		
epilepsy	Royal Irish Academy	23 A 20	p. 74	19th century	A charm against falling sickness: <i>Tres Reges Regi Regum tria Dona optulerunt</i> . Half the page is blank		
erysipelas/ergotism/singles	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 30	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stopping blood," <i>fiabhruis cionleacht</i> ; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribbles.		
erysipelas/ergotism/singles	National Library of Ireland	G473	p.37	19th century	charm for St. Anthony's fire: <i>Thinny fiagh tinny gheadh hor tinny halloona</i> . 3 lines '... bea bisac hort yon teamshe'		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
evil eye	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.117v7	16th-17th century	Charm against the evil eye. Beg. <i>Ar bheim sula elabia diabalo</i>		
evil eye	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 100	19th century	for evil eye ("a tender one it is")		
evil eye	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 32	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stopping blood," fiabhrus cionleacht; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribblings.		
excessive menstrual flow	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.3 (=Gaelic MS III)	f.80v14	15th century	charm against menstruation copied from lines 8-9		
excessive menstrual flow	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.3 (=Gaelic MS III)	f.80v8	15th century	TREATMENTS, including charms, for various conditions: (...) menstruation		
excessive menstrual flow	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 393b	15th century	(3) Charm against excessive menstrual flow. Beg. <i>Do c[h]osc robair na fola mista scrib na litri so 7 cuir ar uch na mna.</i> Ends. <i>ní tiucfaid fuil as.</i> Cf. NLScot II, 63a for a similar charm.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
excessive menstrual flow	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 394b	15th century	(13) Charm against excessive menstrual flow. Beg. <i>Obaidh do t[h]oirmiusc reatha fola na mban. Riuos cruoris torritos. Ends a cris na mna 7 icaid.</i>		
excessive menstrual flow	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130r m	16th-17th century	against menstruation, beg. <i>Sgrib an fighair so air cich des na mna</i>		
excessive menstrual flow	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130r m	16th-17th century	(b) Left: against menstruation, beg. <i>Do cosg fola na mban. So do sgribad a nduilleog 7 duilleog um gach sliasaid di</i>		
excessive menstrual flow	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.33v (58r) 5.	16th-17th century	Cure for, and charm against, excessive menstrual flow. Beg. <i>Do toirmeasc na fola mista. Ends 'Da derbad sin sgribhter a maidi sgine iad 7 marb muc di 7 ni tiucfa fuil aisti'. Cf. National Library of Ireland MS G 11, p.393b.</i>		

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eye ailment	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 394b	15th century	(12) charm against eye ailment: Obaid ar galar sul ann so : A C[h]olluim Cille, a Brigid, a Padraicc / A Muiri, a Ri na ndula / dingaibh in galar n-inglan / fuil ac innrad do sula. .N. a cantain fo tri 7 paider roimhe 7 na diaid. For a slightly different rendering of this quatrain cf. 24B3, 53r (end). For other charms containing invocations to Irish saints etc. see NLScot XXXIII, pp. 31-36.	Carney and Carney 1960: 148-149	Carney and Carney 1960:149
eye ailment	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 53 w.	15th-16th century	"Obaid ar galur sula": A Coluim Cille a Padruig a Muire, etc.	Carney and Carney 1960: 148-9	Carney and Carney 1960: 149
eye ailment	Royal Irish Academy	12 E 20	p.3	18th century	Artha na Súil. Beg. Artha do chuir Muire air shuilibh an doill.		
eye ailment	Royal Irish Academy	23 D 5	p. 175	18th century	Charm-cure for diseases of the eyes, beg. Caith biadha teodha san abhrán.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
eye ailment	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 17	p. 8	18th century	Note of folk beliefs, beg. <i>Sathairn, Domhnach, Lúan, Mairt, meic is gnáth do geineamuin ionnta</i> . Includes a charm cure for diseases of the eyes, beg. <i>Caith biadha teódha san Abraon</i> .		
eye ailment	National Library of Ireland	G473	p.37	19th century	Charm for eye ailment: 'Ouerey cuir Muire yo hool Colomkilla E ra 3 hourea agus sedoag ... bay bischeach hont gon thoole'		
eye ailment	Mount Melleray Abbey	Ms 7	p. 353	19th century	'Artha na súl mar leannas.' <i>Artha chuir Muire Fhinn</i> . 2 qq. 'Pater Noster quee [sic] 7 cré chuireas brídigh fé mhile na súl, A Mhuire mhuar fóir an tsúil, nimh aisde 7 fóirithinnt / An Ainim an Athar 7 An Mhic 7 An sprid naomhtha.'		
eye ailment	Royal Irish Academy	D ii 3 (Stowe Missal)	f. 67 v	8th-9th centuries	Spells against injury to the eye, thorns, and disease of the urine. <i>Pr. Thes. Pal.</i> ii, 250	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 250; Mees 2009: 176.	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 250; Mees 2009: 176

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
eye, speck in the	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 53	15th century	–	Carney and Carney 1960: 148	Carney and Carney 1960: 148
eye, speck in the		Egerton 155	f. 61 b	1790-1796	"Óthra an Dúradan mar leanas," beg. "Othra chuir Muire le súil Choluim Chille": charm against a speck in the eye, cf. <i>op. cit.</i> , p.380, though the charm differs		
eye, speck in the	Royal Irish Academy	3 B 39	p. 184 i.	19th century	Charm prayer against motes in the eye, beg. <i>Órrtha chuir Muire le súil Cholumcille</i> . "Orrtha an Dúbh-ragain"		
eyes, sore	Royal Irish Academy	23 F 19	f. 103 r.1 l.40	15th century	Space of some 7 lines, followed by a charm for sore eyes, beg. <i>Sele Muire seile De</i> , ends <i>ni fuil lium locht leighis roíc</i> .	Carney and Carney 1960: 146-147	Carney and Carney 1960: 147
eyes, sore	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 115	19th century	for sore eyes		
eyes, sore	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 42	19th century	Charms for hæmorrhage, fever, blood in urine; (p. 42), wounds, sore eye, liver trouble.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
fairies	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 394b	15th century	(15) charm against the fairies. <i>Obaid a n-aigid áesais: Ort[h]a Meic Dé / ortha is fearr ar bith che / orthu mara shuighius ret ucht / slan gac[h] ucht fa téid</i> 8 lines, followed by <i>7 paider roime 7 na diaid 7 a gabail rena ucht.</i>		
fear	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 368b	15th century	Charms are given (1) to obtain a most difficult thing from a king or noble (2) to make friendship (3) to induce love (4) against fear, etc.		
felon	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 33r (58v) 18	16th-17th century	charm against felon. Beg. <i>Icut cru icut fuil.</i> '		
fertility	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.2.2 (=Gaelic MS LII)	p.44	17th-18th century	Hand D. Charms, superstitions (acephalous). (a) aphrodisiac; (b) on unluckiness of Monday; (c) fertility charm; (d) charm against impotence; (e) charm for determining guilt or innocence of party accused of sexual misdemeanour; (f) aphrodisiac.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
fertility for women and trees	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.33r (58v) 1	16th-17th century	Fertility charm for women and trees. Beg. <i>Item an fighair so do scribad</i> . 'In nomine patris' (upper margin).		
fever	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 96v-97 r upper margin	16th-17th century	At 96v-97r, upper margin, hand 55 notes a charm against fever; the beginning is lost through trimming, but it reappears at 102v16.		
fever	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 98r26	16th-17th century	Hand 55. Charm against fever. Beg. <i>Elfanus beuatus prifatus altus</i> .		
fever	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 98r8	16th-17th century	Hand 54. Two charms against fever. Beg. <i>Ar fhiabhirus foir on ovis on arcis on aghnis</i> .		
fever	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.102v16	16th-17th century	Charm against fever. Beg. <i>Arad ar fiabhirus ann so 7 sgribadh a tri hablannaibh</i> . Also at 96v (upper margin), see 96r15.		
fever	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.102v20	16th-17th century	Charm against fever Beg. <i>Christus factus est pro nobis</i> .		
fever	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130r m	16th-17th century	Right: against fever, beg. <i>Sgrib so a n-ubail arrna roinn air tri</i> .		
fever	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 24	19th century	charms for malice (?), rash, fiabhirus cionleacht		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
fever	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 43	19th century	Charms for hæmorrhage, fever, blood in urine; (p. 42), wounds, sore eye, liver trouble.		
fever	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 31	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stoping blood," fiabhrus cionleacht; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribblings.		
fever(?)	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.139v/140r	16th-17th century	Charm beg. <i>Frange ferre febrem</i> (hand 79).		
friendship	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 368b	15th century	Charms are given (1) to obtain a most difficult thing from a king or noble (2) to make friendship (3) to induce love (4) against fear, etc.		
glanders (horse)	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 393b	15th century	(4) charms against farcy. Beg. <i>Ar echmaig an araid so do scriba ⁊ a c[h]eangal don inad a mbia in peist ⁊ innarbaid fa cedioir. no a gabail ria + in [n]omine Patris et filii. Ends Colum Cille do rinne so.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
glanders (horse)	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p.196 l.6	18th century	Charm-prayer. An infallible cure for the farsy ("achma no borpheist"). Beg. <i>Marbhaim aspuidhan, marbhaim achmuidh úr</i> . Directions (In English) for its use are in r. marg. Flower, art 37 (f). A speial herb cure, applicable only to diseased beasts, followes, beg. <i>Naoi naireamh don bfearban firionn agus a buaint oidhche Dhomhnaigh</i> . With directions (in English) for its use.		
glanders (horse)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 118	19th century	Recipes and charms: (v) 'if a horse has got glanders...'		
gravel (pig)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p.117	19th century	(ix) for pigs having gravel;		
haemorrhage	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 25	p. 185 l.27	18th century	A charm-cure for hæmorrhage ("dorta folladh") by use of the words <i>Consummatum est</i> .		
haemorrhage	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p. 383	18th century	In O'Fearghail's hand are the following: (...) (2) cure for hæmorrhage ("leighios ar dhorta folla"), p.185 <i>sup</i> .		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
hæmorrhage	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 43	19th century	Charms for hæmorrhage, fever, blood in urine; (p. 42), wounds, sore eye, liver trouble.		
hæmorrhoids	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 114	19th century	for piles		
harsh torment (?)	National Library of Ireland	G200	p. 173	1824-1839	Órrtha an chrádh croídhe. Órrtha chuir Críosa le croidhe Mhuire. 7 lines. 'Órrtha na fola in English'. From Adam's sins all things were taken. 1 st. 'Say 3 Paters and 3 Aves after each of the above charms .+. Gloria etc.'		
headache	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(a) f.8v9	1583	Hans S. Charm beg. <i>Ebar chuir Colum Kille re suilibh a ghille</i> , headed "Orra an chinn".		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
headache	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1336 = H. 3. 17	column 658b infra	15th - 16th century	caput xpi oculus isaie frons helie nassus noe labia iob lingua salamonis cullum Mathei mens beniamin pectus paulai gratia iohandis fides abraꝑe sangis abel santus sanctus sanctus dns. ds sabaot, amen. See Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus, vol. ii, p. 248, where this is given from Cod. S. Galli, No. 1395, as a charm against headache. This copy is more correctly written.	Best 1916	Best 1916 (only the application, not the charm itself)
headache	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 23	19th century	charm: "Orrtha Eoin Baise as bheul Iosa Críost a d'fuig ar cruibh 7 air phiastabh an chinn ..."		
headache	St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek	Cod. Sang. 1395	419	8th century	Auf der Rückseite p. 419: 23 Zeilen irischer Schrift von dreifacher Hand, unverständlichen Inhalts (vielleicht ein Zauberspruch); die Sprache ist weder die irische noch sonst eine bekannte. Einzelne lat. Wörter sind eingemischt.	Gaidoz 1890; Stokes and Strachan 1903: 248; Mees 2009: 174	Gaidoz 1890 (French); Stokes and Strachan 1903: 248; Mees 2009: 174

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
healing	Royal Irish Academy	23 P 16	99	1408-11	-	Borsje 2009: 199-200; Mees 2009: 181	Borsje 2009: 199-200; Mees 2009: 181
impotence	Royal Irish Academy	23 N 29	f. 9r	16th to 18th century	Remedies and charms against impotence, e.g. (l.12), " Obaid ar leme annso": <i>tonn tonn tuinde fonn fonn duinde Grian grian uime Sce te le tim tim tinde Terad rinde Fit fit fiat funde. A cantain a nuisgi do 7 .i. firtopraid 7 a cur a soithech ibhair 7 a crathad arin duine ara mbi in dochnach maiden 7 fescur gu cend nómaide.</i>		
impotence	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.2.2 (=Gaelic MS LII)	p.44	17th-18th century	Hand D. Charms, superstitions (acephalous). (d) charm against impotence		
impotence in a man	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1336 = H. 3. 17	column 672d, verso	15th - 16th century	Another slip, L-shaped. Against impotence in a man: <i>Eolas do leamad fír, fdriug doluť .ii. f. dolath....</i>	Best 1952 p.32	Best 1952 p.32
injury	Royal Irish Academy	12 E 20	p.1	18th century	<i>Artha na Leona. Beg Feirdhris air mo chlídh.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
injury	Royal Irish Academy	24 L 22	p. 22	19th century	(a mere slip). Charm-prayer ("Orrtha cum leona do leighios"). Beg. <i>Goradhريس ar do clodh ar an bhfin do bhí.</i>		
invisibility	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 38	p. 9, 10	18th century	Cures for scurvy and for a sick cow; charms for success in fishing, to stop blood, to go invisible		
king's illness (scrofula/gout?)	Royal Irish Academy	3 C 8 III	p. (5)	19th century	"Orrtha air thinneas na Roigh"		
leakage	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 55	15th century	-	Carney and Carney 1960: 151 (VII)	Carney and Carney 1960: 151 (VII)
liver trouble	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 30	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stopping blood," fiabhрус cionleacht; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribblings.		
liver trouble	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 42	19th century	Charms for hæmorrhage, fever, blood in urine; (p. 42), wounds, sore eye, liver trouble.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
liver trouble	Royal Irish Academy	24 C 16	p. 135	19th century	Scribal colophon dated 1815. This is followed by two charm prayers, against liver trouble, written by our scribe at a later date. Beg. + <i>Orrtha do chuir Collom Cille ...</i> , "Orrtha na nn-ae"		
liver trouble	Royal Irish Academy	24 C 16	p.135	19th century	(2) + <i>Ortha na nn-ae re t'ucht et re'd thaobh</i> . 6 ll. of verse. "Ortha na nn-ae a ndán." Preceded and followed by some lines of prose		
love	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.21 (=Gaelic MS I / XXI)	f.5v (marg)	15th century	The marginalia include three love-charms, all beginning <i>Bran ber</i> . 5v " <i>Bran ber breas eo erobi</i> . Cur a slait cháorthainn 7 da ndeca pher tairrs ni fuidhther pit aici."		
love	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.21 (=Gaelic MS I / XXI)	f.6rc (marg)	15th century	" <i>Bran ber bera ears earb</i> . Cur a slait chaorthainn 7 da ndecha fer thairsi ni eirgheann air."		
love	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.21 (=Gaelic MS I / XXI)	f.6v (marg)	15th century	" <i>Bran ber ar thelar ibe</i> . A cur a slait chuill 7 púail tri builli ar mhnaoi dhe. 7 carfuidh thú."		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
love	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 368b	15th century	Charms are given (1) to obtain a most difficult thing from a king or noble (2) to make friendship (3) to induce love (4) against fear, etc.		
love	National Library of Ireland	G1	f. 91r1	16th century	Charm for love: <i>Aingili Dei qui meus est cusdos piataite presperna die tibe qui mi isus salbha me defindere gratia amen.</i> Followed by <i>Sin do chur a sgathán 7 an l<án> shamain fhéachus ann carfuid aroile.</i>		
love	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 33r (58v)8	16th-17th century	Love charms. Beg. <i>Ataid ann so .4. litreca.</i> Part erased		
love	British Museum	Add. 25586	f. 179	18th century	a collection of miscellaneous recipes, among them the following charm to win a woman's love: "Can in bricht so a slait cuill 7 buail in bean bus ail let 7 carfaid tu .i. bran. ber. her. he lar, ibe." another similar charm follows.		
love of a chief	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130r m	16th-17th century	to obtain a chief's love, <i>beg. Mad ailt tigerna dad gragugud, sgrib na litri so 7 bid agad.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
love of Husband and Wife	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 108	19th century	"for love of Husband and Wife"		
love potion	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 102	19th century	a love potion (from the works of Saor Mór, "It might be tender it may not")		
love(?)	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 4	p. 69 m	18th century	(transverse) <i>Tugam suadh 7 seirc dod dha ghruaidh, delaradh Mhuire leat gach áen úair</i> . A charm.		
malice	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 24	19th century	charms for malice (?), rash, fiabhrus cionleacht		
memory (?)	Royal Irish Academy	23 E 7	p. 199 l.8	18th century	Charm-prayer, beg. <i>Tumpoidhim an ghin re do chumhnamh, a Chriost</i> . Directions (in English) regarding the charm precede (5 ll.).		
nosebleed	National Library of Ireland	G498	p. 183	19th century	(i) For stopping a flow of blood from the nose say Our Father ... so sure shall the blood of (A) stand still. In the name of Our Father ... Amen.'		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
obtain a most difficult thing from a king or noble	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 368b	15th century	Charms are given (1) to obtain a most difficult thing from a king or noble (2) to make friendship (3) to induce love (4) against fear, etc.		
overeating (cow)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 118	19th century	Recipes and charms: (ii) if a cow overgorge herself...'		
pain in limbs	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 115	19th century	(xvii) if you have pains in your limbs		
pain in the back	British Museum	Egerton 178	f. 41 b	1782	"Orrtha tinnios an drama," beg. "Go dtogaigh Peadar, go dtogaig Pol": charm against pains in the back. With a direction for its use in English	Hyde, Rel. Songs, ii p.388	
pain in the back	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p. 196, l.1	18th century	Charm against pains in the back ("Orrtha thinnios an drama"). Beg. <i>Go dtogaigh Peadar go dtogaigh Pol</i> . Directions (in English) for its use follow. Flower, art. 37 (e).		
pearsels(?) (horse)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p.117	19th century	(vii) for pearsels or bats in the belly of horses		
plague (horse)	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1336 = H. 3. 17	column 652 <i>infra</i>	15th - 16th century	In nomine patris, etc. A charm to put on the forehead of a horse	Best 1952 p.28	Best 1952 p.28

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
possession(?)	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.10 (=Gaelic MS X)	f.9v	?15th century	At f.9v, in a hand akin to one at Adv.MS.72.1.13, f.28, is a charm consisting of symbols in three short lines with the words "Denamh croinnoghim ann so 7 a dhenamh ar seilbh in duine"		
protection	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 109	19th century	A "protector" to be worn about the person		
protection	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 110	19th century	"The Hope Shield"		
protection	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p.116	19th century	a hymn composed by Saint Thomas Aquinas, to be used as a shield		
protection against demons	British Museum	Add. 15,582	f.61	1563		charm printed (with MS readings corrected) in catalogue	translation follows in catalogue

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
protection against sin	British Museum	Egerton 178	f.6	1782	Na seacht bpecaidh marbtha a ndán," beg. "A Chrisda fuair pianta peannaid is lot": prayer (8 stanzas) for protection against the seven deadly sins. At the end is the common accompaniment of an <i>orrtha</i> , or charm: "Nil aenneach adearfais do mheabhar san oidhche / no leighfeas an meid sin air maidin aris / shilfeas dearadh da eis sin tre peannaid an Rí / gan bhreig air bith a mbearfar breith dhamanta air chaoiche."		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
protection against sin and death	British Museum	Sloane 3567	f. 35	1664-5	revelation of the suffering of Christ in His passion, made to SS. Elizabeth (? of Hungary), Malachi (?Matilda) and Bridget (of Sweden), with a long indulgence attached. (...) The prayer is still in circulation (cf. and article by H. Thurston in <i>The Month</i> , Jan 1919, p.56: "Uses that are really superstitious", where a versio is printed). The original was no doubt a variant on the late medieval theme of the revelation of the number of Christ's wounds to an anchoress (named S. Bride of Sweden in an English version in Harley MS. 2869, f.204).		
protection against sin and death	British Museum	Egerton 158	f. 145b	1736-1743	the revelation of the number of Christ's wounds. See Sloane 3567, art. 14. The conclusion here differs from that in the Sloane MS. (...)		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
protection against sin and death	British Museum	Add. 18,951	f.191	1799-1801	Curious misscellaneous entries and scribblings, in english which often adheres closely to Irish idiom		
protection in battle	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1336 = H. 3. 17	column 660 infra	15th - 16th century	O lux nostra in tenibris saluus nostra 7 uita nostra agnus meus deus meus uerus eternus respice in me aidiuua salua me, libera me dne sicut liberasti susannam a falsis tertibus, etc. A charm for protection in battle, etc. (A "coimge conaire." See Plummer, Vitae SS.clxxix)	Best 1952 p.28-29	Best 1952 p.29
protection on the road	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1336 = H. 3. 17	column 672c	15th - 16th century	(reverse of the slip) Angelus dni dictauit haec Gregorio pape pre uice celebrationis horarum omnium Gloria tibi Deus pater, amen, etc.	Best 1952 p.31	Best 1952 p.32

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
protection on the road	British Museum	Add. 30512	f. 33	15th-16th century	"Sed notiagh (.i. co ti) teiti Crist": prayer (9 couplets) to be used as a roadcharm. At the end is the direction: "Coimigi Coluim Cille annsin 7 a gabail ac loigi 7 hic ergi 7 ac dul for sed 7 is adamhra 7rel. For another Irish roadcharm in verse cf. <i>Ériu</i> vi. p. 112.		
rabies	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1375 = H. 5. 3.	p.8	1696-8	Contra rabiem (a charm)		
rash	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 24	19th century	charms for malice (?), rash, fiabhrus cionleacht		
rash	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 32	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stoping blood," fiabhrus cionleacht; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribblings.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
rats	National Library of Ireland	G96	p. 76	19th century	Charm prayer against rats. Beg. <i>In anaim an Athar ... sgríobhim an tadhruibh so le beinibh is diomas do sgata francuig a deanamh dioltuis.</i> 'Peadar Longain'.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
replenish an empty larder	British Museum	Egerton 161	f.123	1778-1788	<p>Charm to replenish an empty larder: "<i>Bennachadh cuile Bhrigde naomtha. agus atá do bhuadaib orra gidbé cuile nó lanntaoir i naibeoraidh duine bhíos ar degstaid iad i nonóir do dhia is do Bhrigid go bfuighidh a riachtain a les leo agus cosc a náire uada. Do bhennaig sí roimpe + ina diaid + agus ar gach + taobh di + le comartha na croise + agus adubairt na ranna so síos:—Mo chuilesi + an chuile so + cuile fiadh fionn + cuile ro bhennaig an rí + cuile gan ni ann + tigidh mac Muire mo chara do bhennachad na cuile so + flaith in domain go himel ronbe [immed] la suide + a choimde mo ruiresi + conic na huilese + bennaig a dhia nuall gan gheis + dot láim dheis + mo chuilesi"</i> (...)</p> <p>For the story of S. Bridget's triumph over the wizard and his wife that came to trap her see Whitley Stokes' Irish lives of Saints pp. 186 sq., and Three</p>		Translation follows in catalogue

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
rickets(?)	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(b) f.7 i	16th century	Hand K. Charm beg. <i>Ex tnwm pladus ma megus</i> with instructions for use. Hand S makes additions and concludes "7 is maith so ar glaic cléibh, no chil .i. ar muin teinn .i. est rickets." P.8 blank		
safe journey	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 102v1	16th-17th century	Hand 54 resumes. Charm for safe journey. Beg. <i>Teachta righ nimhe lium.</i>		
scalp disease	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 27	15th century	–	Carney and Carney 1960: 145; Stifter 2005: 174	Carney and Carney 1960: 145; Stifter 2005: 174 (German)
scrofula	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 105	19th century	King's evil		
scrofula	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 116	19th century	(xiv) for the king's evil		
shame(?)	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p.69 r. margin	18th century	(lengthwise and backwards, i.e. facing towards beg. of MS.). A charm-prayer (" <i>Orrtha a n-aghaidh airrinneacha</i> "). Beg. <i>Ta fear an tighe doirb.</i> Explanatory note in Irish follows. Cf. p. 185 of this MS.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
show a thief or an evil person up	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 111 & 113	19th century	"To show a thief or an evil person up" ("found in a very old book" and " <i>proved</i> "), continued on p. 113, followed by a note: "The person must have a real cause beore he tampers. <i>Tender</i> "		
sleep	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(a) f.8v7	1583	Hand 14 of Adv.MS.72.1.2. Charm beg. Elsealus comedius.		
sleep	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 6	p. 13	1400? (cat. "undated")	List of doctors, Maximianus, etc. Ends: <i>Da bliadan ⁊ tri xx it ⁊ tri ced dobadar lucht na nanmann so ina collad. A cribhadh ⁊ a cur fo chluais duine ⁊ togairmidi in collad ⁊ aincidh duine ar cach urcoid da ticc a collad gan amarus. Sella.</i>		
sleep	National Library of Scoland	Adv. MS 72.1.3 (=Gaelic MS III)	f. 79v21	15th century			

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
sleep	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 338b	15th century	Cures and charms. (2) Charm to induce sleep. Beg <i>Obaid ar collad ann so .i. na hanmunna s do c[h]ur a nduilleoig 7 a cur fa braidid an easlain 7 coidleochaid muna fogus bas dó + Aselaus + Comedius. Ends 7 is minic ro firadh sin.</i>		
sleep	National Library of Ireland	G1	f. 90r3	16th century	Charm to induce sleep. Headed <i>Anmanna na manac[h] nEiphghiteac[h] sunn. Beg. Maximianus+Malcus+ Marsinianus+Dionisius. Ends tig a codlad dhó. On the manner in which the names of these monks will induce sleep. For another copy see RIA 23 O 6, p. 13. Cf. NLScot LX, p.57.</i>		
sleep	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.102v3	16th-17th century	Charms for sleep. Beg. <i>Obaid ar codladh ann so .i. do biu a suan suan subach</i>		
sleep	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.141v/142 r margin	16th-17th century	charm for sleep beg. <i>Ar collad do duine galair</i> (hand 79), entitled by hand 52 'orra in <i>chodla</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
small fever (?)	University Library Cambridge	Add. 3085	100 r	18th-19th century	Foll. by 'Orta eile air an nfhiabhrais bheg', signed 'M M:'		
sore breast	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 30	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stoping blood," fiabhrus cionleacht; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribblings.		
sore breasts	British Museum	Egerton 161	f. 167	1778-1788	A charm, headed " <i>Ortha do leighes chíoch mná do bhiadh teinn</i> " i.e. "An 'Oration' to heal any woman's breasts that might be sore"; beg. <i>Och och a Iosa nach bfaicenn tu a cíoch ar nat</i>	charm printed in catalogue	translation follows in catalogue
sore udders (cow)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 118	19th century	Recipes and charms: (iii) if a cows udder be sore...'		
spleen, disease of	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 56r (35v) y.	16th-17th century	Charm against disease of the spleen. Beg. <i>Pater est salfa.</i>		
sprain	Royal Irish Academy	23 N 20	p. 55	18th century	Charm for sprain; p. 56, more remedies.		
staggers (horse)	National Library of Ireland	G473	p.117	19th century	(viii) if a horse has staggers		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
sterility	Royal Irish Academy	23 F 19	f. 93, r.1	15th century	Obstetrics continued: charms against sterility		
sterility	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.133v25?	16th-17th century	followed by a charm against sterility beg. Do mnai aimrait		
stomach sickness	National Library of Ireland	G473	p. 116	19th century	(xiii) flourihy or belly sickness		
stopping blood	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 55	15th century	–	Carney and Carney 1960: 150; Stifter 2007: 252	Carney and Carney 1960: 150; Stifter 2007: 253
stopping blood	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 55	15th century	–	Carney and Carney 1960: 151 (VIII)	Carney and Carney 1960: 151 (VIII)
stopping blood	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 36	p. 19 l.18	15th/16th century	"Dona sronaib annso sis" .i. da mbrenuid no da roibh aillsi srona forra. Charm: "Egor, egor, memor, memor, tap, tap, cep, cep," ⁊ a cur isin ordoig ... fo tri risin duil ⁊ coisgid. Ends: ⁊ a cur arin fuil.	Carney and Carney 1960: 151	Carney and Carney 1960: 151
stopping blood	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 56r (35v) i.	16th-17th century	Charm beg. Egor egor memeor		
stopping blood	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.115v6	16th-17th century	Charms to arrest bleeding. Beg. Egor egor memor.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
stopping blood	Royal Irish Academy	C iii 3	f. 507v (marginal)	17th century	<i>Lion do mhíosa ón Márta mháir</i> , 1 q. Followed by a charm-prayer ("Ortha coisgthe fola") beg. <i>Sanguis mane in te</i> . To be written on the forehead of the patient. p. 520v. Cure for toothache. This and items noted on ff. 507v, 508 are not signed, but appear to be in Henry Burke's hand.		
stopping blood	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 38	p. 9, 10	18th century	Cures for scurvy and for a sick cow; charms for success in fishing, to stop blood, to go invisible		
stopping blood	National Library of Ireland	G447	p.87	18th century	charms for 'cosc na fola' and 'an treadhait'.		
stopping blood	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 31	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stoping blood," fiabhrus cionleacht; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribblings.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
success in fishing	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 38	p. 9, 10	18th century	Cures for scurvy and for a sick cow; charms for success in fishing, to stop blood, to go invisible		
successful errand	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130r m	16th-17th century	Four concentric circles are here drawn as a <i>rota</i> for reckoning golden numbers, etc., and a few figures have been entered. Hand 54 has utilised the spaces for the following CHARMS. At left and right he uses the circles as ruling, adding some crude curved lines of his own. (a) Centre: for successful errand, beg. <i>Do gnogug aneithe fo reacha duine</i>		
tetanus	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 112	19th century	charm for lock-jaw		
the rose		Egerton 178	f.42	1782	"Orrta air an ruadh-the Rose," beg. "Ruadh, ruaidhe, galar nimhneach." With direction in English		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
the rose	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p.196, l.18	18th century	Charm-prayer "Orrta air an Ruadh—the Rose." Beg. <i>Ruadh ruaidhe galar nimhneach</i> . Directions (in English) follow. Flower, art. 37 (g).		
thorn	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p.12 col.b	18th century	A charm-prayer ("Orrtha an deilg"). Beg. <i>Orrtha cuir Muirre ré glun Collumcille ar dhealg ur</i> . Does not appear to be complete.		
thorn	St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek	Cod. Sang. 1395	419	8th century	Auf der Rückseite p. 419: 23 Zeilen irischer Schrift von dreifacher Hand, unverständlichen Inhalts (vielleicht ein Zauberspruch); die Sprache ist weder die irische noch sonst eine bekannte. Einzelne lat. Wörter sind eingemischt.	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 248; Mees 2009: 174-5	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 248; Mees 2009: 175
thorn	Royal Irish Academy	D ii 3 (Stowe Missal)	f. 67 v	8th-9th centuries	Spells against injury to the eye, thorns, and disease of the urine. Pr. <i>Thes. Pal.</i> ii, 250	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 250	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 250
tillage	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 107	19th century	"for the Tillage"		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
tooth decay	Royal Irish Academy	24 B 3	p. 55	15th century	-	Carney and Carney 1960: 152	Carney and Carney 1960: 152
toothache	Royal Irish Academy	23 P 16	177	1408-11	-	Stokes 1883: 392; Meyer 1896: 116; Borsje 2011: 131; Mees 2009:180	Meyer 1896: 116; Borsje 2011: 131; Mees 2009: 180
toothache	Bodleian Library	MS Rawl. B. 485	f 1v <i>infra</i>	14th century	Charm-prayer to cure toothache; four lines in Latin beg. <i>Ex digito Thome contacta vullnera Christi</i> ; followed by note in Irish <i>sin do cur an ordoig deis doine ⁊ a tubha ris an fiacail ⁊ Paider ⁊ Aue ruimpi ⁊ na diaidh ⁊ biaidh slan do toil De</i>		
toothache	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(b) 36 <i>i</i>	16th century	P.36 <i>i</i> , against toothache, beg. An ebar a chuir Dia is Muire is Brighid. Cf. Ní Shéaghda, Cat. of Ir. MSS. in National Library of Ireland 1, p.86		
toothache	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(b) 36 <i>m</i>	16th century	P.36 <i>m</i> , cure for toothache, beg. <i>Dean caoinnil do meacurig eigin.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
toothache	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 102v10	16th-17th century	Charm against toothache called 'leabhar Eoin dheidid'. Beg. <i>I(n) nomine Dei micoli mei.</i>		
toothache	British Museum	Egerton 155	f. 61 b	1790-1796	"As Peter sat on a marble stone bewailing his tooth": toothache charm in English and Irish. Cf. Hyde, <i>Rel. Songs</i> , ii. pp.58, 411.		
toothache	British Museum	Egerton 155	f.86.	1790-1796	A variant of the toothache charm in art. 17 (c) above, in Irish and English, beg. "Do shoith Peadar as comhair ghataidh Ierúsalem."		
toothache	Royal Irish Academy	12 E 20	p.2	18th century	Artha na bhFiacail. Beg. <i>Artha do chuir Naomh Pátrúig a bhfiacail choin.</i>		
toothache	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p. 195 l.22	18th century	Charm against toothache ("Orrtha na bfiacal"). Beg. <i>Orrtha chuir Collumcille re fiacail Ui Fhluinn.</i>		
toothache	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p. 195, l.27	18th century	Another charm against toothache ("Orrtha eile na bfiacal"). Beg <i>Do suidh Peadair air leic adhbhra.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
toothache	Royal Irish Academy	24 C 57	f. 155vo	18th century	"A charm for Toothache." In English, Irish and Latin. Beg.: (1) <i>As Peeter sat at the gate of Jerusalem ...</i> (2) <i>Iar suighe do Pheadar ag geata Ierusalem ...</i> (3) <i>Dum Petrus ad portam Hierosolome sedebat ...</i>		
toothache	Mount Melleray Abbey	MS 1	p. 344 a 28-33	18th century	(28-30 cancelled) charm for toothache. '[Jes]us Sedebat Supra lap / [ide]m u[...]m epe[.]it Dei / [...]it Petre quid dolis Domine dentes / [...] Surge hiis Salus a dolore / [...] Solus sed ominos que / [...]n portabunt.'		
toothache	National Library of Ireland	G70	p. 51 (53) i	18th-19th century	Charm against tooth-ache. Beg. <i>So shuig Peadar er chloith mharbil as cuine ghataoidh Ierusalem</i>		
toothache	Royal Irish Academy	23 K 27	p. 3 a m.	19th century	Charm prayer against toothache ("Artha na fiacuile"). Beg. <i>Artha thog Tomas abstal as bheal Iosa Chriost.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
toothache	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 29	19th century	Charms for butter; p. 32 malicious harm or evil eye (? Cf. p. 24); p. 31 "stoping blood," fiabhrus cionleacht; p. 30 sore breast, liver trouble, St. Anthony's fire (English); p. 29 toothache (English), followed by some scribblings.		
toothache	Royal Irish Academy	3 B 39	p. 184 m.	19th century	Charm prayer against toothache, beg. <i>Bhí Peadar aig Sruth Iórdan</i> . "Orrtha an Déidigh".		
toothache	National Library of Ireland	G101	p.12	19th century	charm against toothache beg. <i>St. Peter sitting on a marble stone upon the gate of Jerusalem</i> .		
toothache and headache	Royal Irish Academy	23 I 48	p. 1a	19th century	(Page is written in a triangular form.) Charm-prayer against toothache and headache, with introduction beg. <i>An uair do bhí Peadar apstol na luídhe ansan tstuith</i> .		
urinary disease	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130v m.	16th-17th century	Hand 63. Written sideways up the page, chiefly in the space to the left of the volvelle, is what appears to be a charm against urinary disease, beg. <i>Trí cnoca corra, trí sele Muire</i> .		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
urinary disease	St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek	Cod. Sang. 1395	419	8th century	Auf der Rückseite p. 419: 23 Zeilen irischer Schrift von dreifacher Hand, unverständlichen Inhalts (vielleicht ein Zauberspruch); die Sprache ist weder die irische noch sonst eine bekannte. Einzelne lat. Wörter sind eingemischt.	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 248	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 248
urinary disease	Royal Irish Academy	D ii 3 (Stowe Missal)	f. 67 v	8th-9th centuries	Spells against injury to the eye, thorns, and disease of the urine. <i>Pr. Thes. Pal.</i> ii, 250	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 250	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 250
violent death, poisons and demons of the air	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130r <i>m</i>	16th-17th century	against violent death, poisons and demons of the air, beg. <i>Aircter leat na litri so.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
web in the eye	National Library of Ireland	G11	f. 395a	15th century	(21) Charm against web in the eye. <i>Ortha ar finn .i. ortha do gab Moling re suilib a mathar. Ar bordh ar bruinni ar cuilgnin ar torb ar toirbeim ar coilgbeim a crand ar daig idhan a cinn ar borbgalar sula tuccad rúna Moling cros do cuir Moling ar in da shuil fuil id chinn gen beas tú beo can ceo can ainimh gan fhinn.</i> For a variant of this charm see NLScot II, 63 (Cat. Gaelic MSS. Scot., p. 9; the proper name 'Fionn' is a misreading by Mackinnon for 'finn' [web]).	Carney and Carney 1960: 149	Carney and Carney 1960: 150
web in the eye	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.33v (58r) 1	16th-17th century	Charm against web in the eye. Beg. <i>Araid do cuir finn re suil Moling.</i> Cf. National Library of Ireland ms G 11 p.396a	Carney and Carney 1960: 149	Carney and Carney 1960: 150
whooping cough	Royal Irish Academy	23 I 36	p.167	18th century	Latin charm-prayer against whooping-cough. Beg. <i>Christe, tuum plasma me torquet tusse.</i> Unfinished. Written lengthwise		
whooping cough	Bodleian Library	MS Ir. f. 2	p. 355 <i>infra</i>	18th-19th century	(Inverted). A charm prayer in 'Latin' 'for the chin cough'. Beg. <i>Crese Bona crese Contra.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
whooping cough	National Library of Ireland	G491	p. 1	19th century	Chinchof sharm.' Beg. <i>IHS + crux bona + crux digina + crux super omnia ligna</i> . Very faded at end. Cf. p.66 for another copy		
whooping cough	National Library of Ireland	G491	p. 66	19th century	Charm. beg. <i>IHS + crux bona + crux digna + crux super omnia ligna</i> . 'Finished C. Crowley. Chinchoff sharm.' Cf. p. 1 above.		
wild warts	Royal Irish Academy	23 N 20	p. 12	18th century	On scabies, charm for wild warts		
wolves	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.102v22	16th-17th century	Charm against wolves. Beg. <i>Artha in tsnaiti dheirg</i> .		
worms	Royal Irish Academy	23 E 7	p. 199 1.20	18th century	Charm-prayer, entitled "Orrtha mharbus achma asbuin, no peiste a bfeoil". Beg. <i>Marbhuim thú a pheist ruadh, marbhuim thú a pheist ceannruadh</i> . Directions in English regarding the charm stand in the marg.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
worms	Royal Irish Academy	23 E 7	p. 199 l.27	18th century	charm-prayer, headed "The other oration I use for the same." Beg. <i>Marbhuim asbuin marbhum achma úr, marbhuim cnu an fheir marbuim an peist úr.</i> Directions in English (3 ll.) regarding the charm follow.		
worms	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 20	p. 249 m.	18th century	Charm. [Ortha na Péiste.] Beg. <i>Glaodhaim ar Dhia 7 glaodhaim ar Mhuire.</i>		
worms	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 95	19th century	against worms		
worms	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	p. 97	19th century	against the same [worms] ("the Irish of this charm is very difficult and perhaps <i>tender</i> ")		
worms	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 28	19th century	charms against "Afternoon Fever" and worms		
worms	National Library of Ireland	G473	p.37	19th century	For worms. Sparlus repus takedius lapedium snarulp Jesus veniet... amen et futurias amen.'		
worms in the head (headache?)	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 III	p. 100b.	19th century	on verso a charm "ar phiastaiba an chinn". This charm is written twice, the second time some words are in cryptic writing. Cf. p. 23		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
worms(?)	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f.130vv.	16th-17th century	Charm(s) against ?worms. Beg. <i>Ar cruim .i. in cruim a cind.</i> Also at John Rylands ms Ir. 35, f. 34r32. Also on this page are traces of hand 8: 'a', 'cinnus', etc.		
wound	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1336 = H. 3. 17	column 661 infra	15th - 16th century	Pater noster 7 aue maria 7 credo 7 ibant tres boni fratres ad montem Oliueti bonas herbas querentes omnia uulnera sanantes, etc. To heal a wound.	Best 1952 p. 29-30; Tuomi 2016: 72 (=Best 1952)	Best 1952 p.30; Tuomi 2016 (=Best 1952)
wounds	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	p. 42	19th century	Charms for hæmorrhage, fever, blood in urine; (p. 42), wounds, sore eye, liver trouble.		
various	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(b) 33	16th century	Hand D. Charms and cures, mainly for uncertain purposes (some re-inked). "Misi Niall", p.33.8; "Mise Niall", p.34.9. The last item, beg. <i>(E)baidh cuir Die chugam</i> (p.34.10), is repeated twice by hand K and subscribed "Jesus". It is headed "Ar deidigh" by hand S.		
various	Royal Irish Academy	C iv 2	f. 19r.	16th century	Charms, beg. <i>Can in bricht so a slait cuill 7 buail in ben bus ail let 7 carfaidh thu.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
various	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1317 = H. 2. 15b	p. 7	17th century	Several charms in a hand of the seventeenth century; p.7 (headed l. Ei) is continuous		
various	National Library of Ireland	G200	p. 181 [5]	1824-1839	There follows a collection of charms which is expected to be of the greatest use imaginable to those who believe in them' and (pp.182[6] -194[8]) the charms headed 'Órtha', 'Órtha fheóla', 'Órtha an fhinn', 'Órtha an lachtain leacht. Órtha an trodáin turais', 'Órtha an fhearsaidhe', 'Órtha na náodh', 'Órtha na fola', 'Órtha na péisde', 'Órtha an treatha, 'Órtha', 'Órtha an ghreama'. 'Órtha an dúbhragáin', 'Órrtha an déidigh'.		
various	Trinity College Dublin	MS 1414 = H. 6. 10	p. 89-90	18th century	Seems to contain charms (Latin and Irish) written by P. Guerin		
various	Royal Irish Academy	23 Q 18	323 <i>i</i> - 325 <i>m</i> .	18th-19th century	charm-prayers; cures for toothache, pains in the back, farcy, rash, etc.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
various	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 41	pp. 91-120	19th century	Charms and charm-cures in Irish or Latin, directions for use being in English. Pp. 94, 96, 104, 106 are blank. p. 92: A note stating that these charms were correctly copied, "but foolish is he who will practice them. Yes, useful as they may be."		
various	Royal Irish Academy	23 L 40 I	pp. 46-21	19th century	46-21, reversed. These pages, together with the excised leaf between pp. 20, 21, appear to have been separate, at one time, from the remainder I; they contain an interesting collection of charm-cures.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
various	Royal Irish Academy	24 C 16	p.136	19th century	Further charm-prayers: (1) "Orrtha an fhearsaighe," beg. + <i>Le naoi n-ainim na naomh ...</i> ; (2) "Orrtha an Ghreamadh," beg. <i>Go mbeannuighe Dia dhíbh a thriur bráthar matha ...</i> (3) "Orrtha an Thinnis Cinn, beg. + <i>Orrtha Pheadair, orrtha Phóil...</i> ; (4) "Orrtha an Lis," beg. + <i>Abair seach bpaidir</i> ; (5) "Orrtha na Peiste," beg. + <i>Orrtha do chuir dá ttrian abstal...</i>		
various	University Library Cambridge	Add. 4206	143 r	19th century	Charm-prayer(s). Beg. <i>Artha chur dhá dtrian asbal agluais deas Mhuire Mháithir</i> . Words 'De Ceadinn De hIne De Luain' in upper margin. Breaks off (f. 144 r m) with <i>Muire et mac na hó dóirint ar do thúil ainm anathir an mic</i> .		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
various ailments	St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek	Cod. Sang. 1395	419	8th century	Auf der Rückseite p. 419: 23 Zeilen irischer Schrift von dreifacher Hand, unverständlichen Inhalts (vielleicht ein Zauberspruch); die Sprache ist weder die irische noch sonst eine bekannte. Einzelne lat. Wörter sind eingemischt.	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 249; Mees 2009: 177	Stokes and Strachan 1903: 249; Mees 2009: 177
various: urinary and menstrual diseases	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(b) 35	16th century	Hand S. Charms, etc. P.35 agianst urinary and menstrual diseases, beg. <i>Triur a dh'iath man obir.</i>		
[unclear]	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(a) f.8r	1583	Hand A. Tabular concordance of astronomical and astrological information, with notes and a charm(?) beg. <i>Ab dota bocardo</i>		
[unclear]	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.33 (=Gaelic MS XXXIII)	(a) f.8v	1583	(Material on this page appears in places to be palimpsest.) Hands T M. Charm beg. <i>Bono diang b.....(?)</i>		
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	24 P 26	p. 332	15th century	A small strip of vellum: on the verso (p.332) a charm, beg. <i>Fidh dula fidh dala</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
[unclear]	British Museum	Add. 30512	f. 72	15th-16th century 200	"Figell U Shuanaigh so. Corpus Christi oculus Iasæ frons Eliæ nasus Noe lingua Salamonis collum Tmothæi mens Benjamin pectus Pauli virtus Johannis fides Abrahæ snaguis Abel Sanctus Sanctus Sanctus dominus deus Sabaoth fiat pax mecum Amen." This "enumerative charms" appears in a somewhat similar uncorrupted form in TCD H 3.17, a MS. of the MAc Aodhagáin family, from which it is printed by R.I. Best in <i>Ériu</i> , viii. p.100 A corrupted form appears in two 8th-9th cent. MSS.: St. Gall MS 1395, pp. 418, 419 (a single leaf in an Irish hand, 8th-9th cent., containing charms printed in the <i>Thes. Pal.</i> ii. p.248), and Harley MS. 2965, f. 40b (?written in England in the 8th cent.; it was at Winchester in the 10th cent. (...)). The version in these two MSS. must derive from a source already corrupt. In the St. Gall MS. it is a spell against		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	C i 3 A	p. 9 col. B l. 26	16th century	Here are five lines in a rude style of writing (less rude, however, than that of 'the very rudely scribbled worde' on the lower margins of pp. 8 and 9 already mentioned). The first two lines are <i>chamat amath-Tílon-teclar // Tílon tecla teclup teclaar te.</i>		
[unclear]	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 102v14	16th-17th century	Charm beg. <i>Per sighnum cuisis tactum</i>		
[unclear]	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 56v (35r)1	16th-17th century	Charm beg. <i>God spidit trigid Sancta Mari as Golmand.</i> Beginning repeated below. Above are "amen dico vobis" (hand ?14, repeated by hand 16), 'in nom(in)i patris am', 'Comorus and so sis a' (hand 16).		
[unclear]	National Library of Scotland	Adv. MS 72.1.2 (=Gaelic MS II)	f. 99v7	16th-17th century	Charms. Beg <i>Cara caduca veni.</i> Ends 'primus est Gabriel et cetera Amen.'		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
[unclear]	University Library Cambridge	Add. 3084	106-7 lower margins	17th century	106-7, lower margins (some of writing trimmed away). 'Maille ris sin gach ben tarrach [?] ar a mbiadh dograing / [...] tinnios leinmh 7 anortha do chur tri huaire natimcell no alegadh dh[i] / [...] gidh be iomcrus no leighfios no eistfios anorthasa [...] / a nonoir a hoigh [...] // Ar tomba Muire frith anorthasa sgriobhtha. 7 ata do buaidhibh / uirre gidh be fear. no bean leighfios no eistfios no iomcharus í gach / [...] ar uisge areasgar.'		
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	23 E 18	p. 167	18th century	(reversed) (1) A medical note on stomach complaints. (2) Further notes, difficult to decipher, partly in Latin. They appear to be charms, and were perhaps written by another hand than that responsible for (1).		
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	23 E 7	p. 86 (103) ll. 1-19	18th century	Charm-prayer, entitled "Orrtha na h-Oighe Muire Mathair oirdheirc ar Slanaightheoir.". Beg. <i>A Thiagharna romhillis, a Iosa Christ aonmhic De Athair.</i>		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	23 G 20	p. 249 m.	18th century	A Latin charm Beg. <i>Signum Dei patris, signum Domini nostri</i>		
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	23 M 4	p.69	18th century	(transverse) <i>Benedic Domine hanc quam in hoc peto, sicut Benedixit Elisheus</i> . A charm.		
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p. 185 l.29	18th century	Charm-prayer ("Orrtha ar airinneach–nó ar ní tobban ar mbith"). Beg. <i>Ta fear an tigh doirbh</i> . With explanatory note (in Irish). Cf. p. 69, r. marg. of this MS.		
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	23 O 35	p. 353	18th century	Charm-prayer, beg. <i>A Thiagharna romhillis a Iosa Chríost</i> . "Orrtha na Miaghaine Muire, mathar ar Slannaightheoir." Flower, art. 33.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
[unclear]	National Library of Ireland	G 95	p. 81	18th-19th century	Lists of texts, lives of saints, initial lines of poems and a prayer-charm. 'As dóith lion nách beag sin am[en]'. 'mar sin beatha a bhfaghuinn do náomhuibh do chur le chéile maile ris an tteagasg c[ríosdaidhe] úd rin Donlevi 129 ps. a ng[...] 7 mar sin bheith dá líona go mbeidh 'na leabhar mhór [...] tumpchioll 6 no 7 do qhuiriv p[áipéir]'. 		
[unclear]	Royal Irish Academy	24 C 26	p. 448	19th century	A charm beg. <i>Gaibh maide soilighe déin 4 bheannach air luighe an díslé.</i>		
[unclear]	Killiney	A 40 (b)	p. 98	19th century	Orha an Duradain'. Beg. <i>Ortha chuir Muire le suil Cholumcille.</i> 5 ll. Cf. <i>BM Cat.</i> ii, 80. Rest of page and all of pp. 99-100 blank.		

Function	Repository	Manuscript	Page/folio	Date of MS	Catalogue comments	Edition	Translation
[unclear]	University Library Cambridge	Add. 6467	47 r	19th century	Et verbum Caro factum Est / Et Habitavit in nobis Caro + Caro ' (4 times, each as arm of a cross, dividing page into quarters; text of right arm reads with manuscript in normal position, others by rotating page anti-clockwise).		
[unclear]	National Library of Ireland	G491	p. 2	19th century	Charm. Headed 'S[...]'. Beg. <i>Sho[...] (d)huit (h)adavig a viacuil ... ashe duirt angil o neav. Ends a nanim an Athar... agus an Sprid Neav Amen.</i>		
[unclear]	National Library of Ireland	G96	p. 47	19th century	Charm prayer. Beg. <i>Alas air neamh alas mar is math.</i> Incomplete as most of this page has been cut away.		