

Doctoral Dissertation

**Charms, Amulets, and Crisis Rites:
Verbal Magic in Daily Life in Medieval and Early Modern Bulgaria**

By: Svetlana Tsonkova

Supervisor(s):

Gerhard Jaritz
Gábor Klaniczay

Submitted to the Medieval Studies Department
Central European University, Budapest

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Medieval Studies,

Budapest, Hungary
2015



Lead amulet against the *nezhit*, tenth-eleventh century, excavated in the medieval fortress of Odŭrtsi, northeastern Bulgaria.

(After [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов. “Заклинателни молитви върху оловни амулети от средновековна България и паралелите им в требници от средновековна Сърбия” (Conjuration prayers on lead amulets from medieval Bulgaria and their parallels in euchologia form Medieval Serbia). *Зборник радова Византолошког института/Recueil des travaux de l’Institut d’études byzantines* 46 (2009): 341-351.)

Contents

Introduction.....	5
I. Framework.....	7
1. 1. Magic in everyday life	7
1. 2. Verbal charms	14
1. 3. Amulets	27
1. 4. Crisis rites	30
2. Sources.....	36
2. 1. Description.....	37
2. 2. Influences	54
2. 3. State of scholarship.....	56
3. Features	61
3. 1. Elements, structures and forms	61
3. 2. Stability and variation.....	67
3. 3. Transmission	69
4. Functions.....	71
4. 1. Health.....	75
4. 2. Protection	77
4. 3. Success	79
5. In the Other world – supernatural powers.....	80
5. 1. Typology.....	80
5. 2. The evil ones	84
5. 2. 1. The illness	85
5. 2. 2. The witch	107
5. 2. 3. The snake	129
5. 3. The good ones	142
5. 3. 1. The saint.....	143
5. 3. 2. The shepherds	150
5. 3. 3. The sisters	160
5. 4. Good vs. Evil	168
6. In Our World – human processes.....	180
6. 1. Ritual performance.....	183
6. 2. Amulets in action	196
6. 3. Practitioners	203
7. Outcome.....	211
8. Catalogue	216
9. Bibliography	246

“A shaman and a researcher, therefore, do not seem to fundamentally differ from one another. In order to achieve a viable result, they both have to act as good translators or interpreters.”

(Anzori Barkalaja, “Some Personal Notes about the Fieldwork”¹)

Introduction

Among its many treasures, the Rila Monastery preserves a source on Bulgarian magic. It is a colorful mural painting on the external wall of the main church². The image represents cunning women, curing a line of ill people, with the help of devils and evil spirits. The accompanying Old Church Slavonic inscription says:

The [female] magicians and the [female] charmers are servants of the Devil. That is why the Devil is very glad, jumps around and dances in front of those who come to them. What the charmers give them to drink and eat is Devil’s filth. Those who abandon God, the laws and the church, and go to the charmers, are servants not of God, but of the Devil.

Does this fresco represent a fact or a stereotype? Is this painting only a visual expression of ideologically charged artistic program? Is this a real magical or curative practice, which the image employs for didactic purposes? Are there other sources, providing some kind of reference point? Is it methodologically possible and acceptable to use this nineteenth-century fresco as a source on medieval Bulgarian magic? Is it a single exotic and problematic specimen, unsusceptible of comparison and interpretation?

The fresco and the questions around it are good illustrations of the general difficulties in the research of the medieval and early modern Bulgarian magic. Its

¹ Anzori Barkalaja, “Some Personal Notes about the Fieldwork (On the Examples of the Eastern Khantys)”, in *Rethinking Ethnology and Folkloristics*, ed. Pille Runnel, (Tartu: NEFA Rühm 2001, pp. 144-158), p. 157.

² The Rila Monastery was founded in the tenth century, with a number of subsequent enlargements and reconstructions. Built on the foundations of a demolished medieval church, the current main church was finished in 1837. The frescoes, including the quoted mural painting were finished in 1846.

existence is hinted and its nature seems to be an alloy of aboriginal and borrowed, of canonical and non-canonical, of stereotypes and realities. However, the authentic information is fragmentary, insufficient and often non-contemporary to the original phenomenon. There are a few primary textual and visual sources to rely on, among which the proper medieval material is even scarcer. There are no magical treatises; no witch trials documents nor images of wizards and their rituals. The archeological findings are relatively more abundant, but not systematized. As a whole, the medieval and early modern Bulgarian magic remains an intriguing, but enigmatic and elusive phenomenon.

However, there is one kind of magic, which is much more accessible for an examination. This is the verbal magic, documented in a relatively large number of extant verbal charms, preserved in manuscripts and on amulets, and dated from the tenth to the nineteenth century. Although less spectacular than the colorful mural painting from the Rila Monastery, these verbal charms are crucial primary sources. Consenting with or contradicting to the fresco, the charms and their material carriers definitely show a much broader and richer picture. If the painting provides a problematic glimpse through a thin crack, the charms open a window and let us have a proper and clearer look. They give a relatively stable reference point: authentic information on the verbal magic and its continuity of motives, beliefs and practices. And while in the supernatural sphere, the verbal charms actually offer a view into the ordinary everyday human life.

My thesis takes up this rare opportunity. It looks at the verbal charms with a particular focus on their supernatural figures and quotidian roles. The Other world and Our World are taken separately, but also in constant contact. Up to my knowledge, no such study has been conducted so far in the field of medieval and early modern Bulgarian

magic. The source material is examined in the context of power, rite and crisis management. The approach is comparative and interdisciplinary. While the analysis and the conclusions reflect my own scholarly opinion, they are open for new discoveries, perspectives and alternative interpretations.

I. Framework

Verbal charms “are a cultural near-universal (perhaps, even a universal) way of coping with ill health, with misfortune, and with anxiety about success in fields from agriculture to love. This is a fair claim to their significance.”³ Verbal charms and verbal magic are part of the larger context of magic and ritual, which offers a number of terminological challenges and contested definitions.

1. 1. Magic in everyday life

In her monograph *The Genre of Trolls*, Camilla Asplund Ingemark aptly concludes: “So how is a troll to be defined? The best answer to that question might be that it cannot be defined, but this has not stopped scholars from trying.”⁴ This is valid not only for a particular supernatural phenomenon (like the troll), but also for the general term “magic” itself. Both as term and as phenomenon, magic has been many times discussed, defined and redefined by a number of researchers.⁵ While for the ancient

³ Jonathan Roper, “Introduction”, in Jonathan Roper, ed., *Charms, Charmers and Charming. International Research in Verbal Magic*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. xiv-xxvii), p. xiv.

⁴ Camilla Asplund Ingemark, *The Genre of Trolls: The Case of a Finland-Swedish Folk Belief Tradition* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2004), p. 7

⁵ For example, see James Frazer, *The Golden Bough: a Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1992), Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), Bronislaw Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and Their Magic: a Study of the Methods of Tilling the Soil and of Agricultural Rites in the Trobriand Islands* (London, New York: Routledge, 2005), Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies of Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Penguin Press, 1971), and Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991). For a detailed historical presentation

Greeks magic is simply the art of the magi (the Persian priests), according to James Frazer the phenomenon is more complex:

Magic is a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as abortive art. Regarded as a system of natural law, that is, as a statement of the rules which determine the sequence of events throughout the world, it may be called Theoretical magic. Regarded as a set of precepts, which human beings observe in order to compass their ends, it may be called Practical magic.⁶

According to Frazer, magic is based on two principles: the law of similarity (“like produces like”), which is the basis of homeopathic or imitative magic; and the law of contagion (“things that have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed”), which is the basis for contagious magic.

Later, Mauss defines magic as a vague power, the art of changing, aimed exclusively at producing results, and also a practical idea, concerned with understanding nature. “A magical rite is any rite which does not play a part in organized cults – it is private, secret, mysterious and approaches the limit of a prohibited rite.”⁷ According to Malinowski, magic is “a traditionally established power of man over certain natural processes, over some human activities or over other human beings” and “the expression of human hope and confidence, of the need of a morally integrated attitude towards the future.”⁸

The contested nature of magic is exemplified by one ardent scholarly debate. It starts with the definition of magic, given by Keith Thomas in *Religion and the Decline of*

of the development of magic, see Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923-1958).

⁶ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 11.

⁷ Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, p. 30.

⁸ Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*, pp. 244-245.

Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England.⁹ The American anthropologist Hildred Geertz finds Thomas' approach and definitions to be problematic¹⁰. Specifically, Geertz criticizes Thomas' sets of oppositions. One of them is between magic ("primitive", "incoherent", "specific", "advancing mundane personal fortunes", "promoting matters of immediate solid everyday physical and social well-being" and "primarily oriented toward providing practical solutions to immediate problems and not referable to any coherent scheme of ideas") and religion ("comprehensive, organized, and concerned with providing general symbols of life"). The other opposition is between magic, which is "ineffective", and technology, which is rational and empirical. Geertz's main objection is that Thomas uses the categories "magic" and "religion" in the same way as they were used in the medieval and early modern English religious rhetoric. In this rhetoric, "magical" is always a negative label, loaded with disapproval. Geertz states that

the categories which he [Thomas] uses when attempting to develop causal hypotheses are those of some of the subjects themselves. In doing so, the researcher takes part in the cultural process that he is studying. What is perhaps even more important, this particular way of labeling beliefs carries with it a whole philosophy, a point of view toward the nature of man and workings of society which influences Thomas' sense of what seems obvious and what seems puzzling in his data.¹¹

In his answer, Keith Thomas rejects Geertz's criticism.¹² He states that he "described the individual practices and beliefs in sufficient particularity for any serious confusion to have been avoided"¹³. He also points out that the discussion of magic as

⁹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 25.

¹⁰ Hildred Geertz, "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic," I, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 6, 1 (1975): pp. 71-89.

¹¹ Geertz, "An Anthropology", p. 76-77.

¹² Keith Thomas, "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II", *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 6, 1 (1975): pp. 91-109.

¹³ Thomas, "An Anthropology", p. 95.

ineffective technique comes at the very end of his book, and that actually “ineffectiveness was not part of my definition of it [magic].” According to Thomas, in his book he observed and clearly stated that the line between magic and religion is “impossible to draw”. Methodologically, he admits that his book lacks a broader discussion on the shift of the semantics of the terms “religion”, “magic” and “science”. However, Thomas insists that the facts are the important ones, and they will be the same, regardless of labels. On the opposition between magic and technology, he points that in the book he presented and discussed not an opposition between the two, but the doctrinal changes that lead to rejection of magic “long before the practical needs for which it catered had received any alternative technological solution.” Finally, Thomas agrees with Geertz that any “attempt to treat popular beliefs as simple defenses against anxiety, vain compensations for technological inadequacies.”¹⁴ is shallow. However, he insists, “magical rites may have also had their expressive aspects, but in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England their purposes were usually strictly practical... Counter-witchcraft, magical healing, exorcism, were not just expressive or symbolic rites; they were meant to *work*.”¹⁵

Valerie Flint’s book *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* is also a response of Thomas’s book. Flint gives the following definition of magic:

Magic may be said to be the exercise of a preternatural control over nature by human beings, with the assistance of forces more powerful than they. This combination of human and superhuman power will sometimes employ strange instruments and is always liable to produce remarkable and unaccustomed results. Thus we may expect an element of the irrational and of the mysterious too, in a process that deserves to be called magical.¹⁶

¹⁴ Thomas, “An Anthropology”, p. 101.

¹⁵ Thomas, “An Anthropology”, p. 101.

¹⁶ Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, p. 3.

Flint puts the emphasis on the irrational aspect of magic, and on the acceptance and continuation of magical practices in the new Christian religion and culture. The theme that early medieval Christian authorities deliberately and purposely accepted, tolerated and even encouraged magic is central for Flint's book. She regards the Christian miracles, mysteries and rituals to be approved forms of magic.

In its own turn, Valerie Flint's study and opinions are critically reviewed by Richard Kieckhefer¹⁷. He points that Flint

Sees the landscape of medieval culture as a land of grace, filled with diverse manifestations of extraordinary power. The historians she criticizes argue in effect that irrational medieval Christian rituals were equivalent to magic and just as bad; Flint revises this judgment, maintaining that nonrational medieval Christian rituals were equivalent to magic and just as good.¹⁸

According to Kieckhefer, Flint "insists repeatedly that many approved rituals were magical, even if churchmen said otherwise." She uses the term magic ahistorically and thus "blurs distinctions vitally important to those who made them." Finally, Kieckhefer points that "Flint sees the mainstream ecclesiastical policy (after the initial wave of conversion) as one of benign toleration, even encouragement, of pre-Christian ritual," which is often an overstatement. She provides an "extremely broad definition of magic to highlight what she sees as the unacknowledged similarity, indeed, the functional equivalence, between magic and much Christian ritual." However, for the Christian authorities and for the medieval contemporaries, these two things "would have been grounded in fundamentally distinct rational assumptions."¹⁹

¹⁷ Richard Kieckhefer, "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic", *The American Historical Review* 99, 3 (1994): pp. 813-836.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 822.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

This clash of definitions is aptly summarized by Michael Bailey:

Magic is a difficult and contested category, often understood quite differently in varying contexts and certainly in different historical periods, and use of the term inevitably obscures as much as it illuminates unless it is defined very precisely each time it is deployed.²⁰

In the same line, Fritz Graf concludes:

Instead of creating a rigid and artificial terminology, thus it will be necessary for us to consider and analyze the ancient use of the term *magic* as it constitutes an element of the indigenous discourse on the relationship between the human and the supernatural.²¹

Graf indeed turns to the roots and examines magic in a context, where an indigenous terminology is available, as the very word “magic” comes from Greek and Latin languages.²²

Indeed, magic proves to be something that cannot be defined precisely. Still, for me it is clear that it positions the interactions between humans and their environment in the context of a relationship between the natural and the supernatural worlds. It is also clear for me that the idea of influence, control and power is central for magic.

In my opinion, it is more productive to leave aside the definitions, and to look at two particular features, which I regard important for this study. One such aspect is magic’s mixed syncretic nature, observed by Richard Kieckhefer: magic should be regarded “as a kind of crossroads where different pathways in medieval culture converge.”²³ Magic is a point of intersection between religion and science, between popular culture and learned culture, between fiction and reality, between the exploration

²⁰ Michael D. Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies. The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2013), p. 26.

²¹ Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 19. The book covers the period from the end of the sixth century BCE to the end of the Antiquity.

²² Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, p. 18.

²³ Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 1.

of natural forces and the invocations of demonic powers. “In short, magic is a crossing-point where religion converges with science, popular beliefs intersect with those of the educated classes, and the conventions of fiction meet with the realities of daily life.”²⁴ This point is also very much discussed by another scholar, Stephen Wilson, who states that “magic is eclectic to an extraordinary degree, taking components from many different cultural levels and locations.”²⁵

The other important feature is the explanatory function. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, discussed by Keith Thomas, there is a “preoccupation with the explanation and relief of human misfortune. There can be no doubt that this concern reflected the hazards of an intensely insecure environment.”²⁶ Although the beliefs in magic are inherited from the past, they are strongly influenced by the harsh conditions of everyday life,²⁷ especially in the case of health issues: “But this was above all a time when medicine began at home. Every housewife had her repertoire of private remedies.”²⁸ As a result, “many unorthodox methods of healing enjoyed prestige. ...helplessness in the face of disease was an essential element in the background”, where the beliefs in magic flourished. Vulnerability to other kinds of misfortune (for instance plague or fire), particularly when it came suddenly, also gave ground for the employment

²⁴ Ibidem: “Indeed, magic is worth studying largely because it serves as a starting-point for excursions into so many areas of medieval culture. Exploration of this sort can reveal the complexity and interrelatedness of different strands in that culture.”

²⁵ Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-modern Europe* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), pp. xxvi.

²⁶ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 5. For comparison, Evans-Pritchard in *Witchcraft, Oracles* demonstrates the mechanism of explaining all kind of unfortunate events and troubles through the notions of witchcraft and magic.

²⁷ According to Thomas, these are low expectation of life, shortage of food supply, starvation, improper and insufficient nutrition, illnesses and infections, a low number of trained physicians and the low level of their competence, high prices of their services. Because of these factors, the lower and the poorer strata of the society preferred to consult practitioners like herbalists, cunning folk, etc. See Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 5-12.

²⁸ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 12. This was especially valid for the cases of childbirth, when it was almost always a midwife, and not a physician employed.

of magic. The same phenomenon is demonstrated by Evans-Pritchard's analysis of the Azande's misfortune-explanation system, based on sorcery and witchcraft²⁹.

1. 2. Verbal charms

Verbal magic functions and operates through spoken or written words, and relies on the supernatural power and effect of these words³⁰. My source material consists of such special powerful words, namely Bulgarian verbal charms. The relevant Bulgarian scholarship calls these texts “апокрифни молитви” (literally “apocryphal prayers”). This terminology is established and broadly used, but its exactness, appropriateness and adequacy are rarely discussed. The Russian scholar Almazov attempts for such a discussion, pointing out that the indexes of prohibited books speak about “false or untrue prayers,” found in the prayer books of the village priests and aimed at curing diseases.³¹ Thus, the “false of untrue prayers” are connected with curative magical practices. Later, the researchers designated these “false or untrue prayers” with the term “apocryphal prayers”. Almazov admits that the category “apocryphal prayers” is rather broad and stretched, comprising various texts, which are not accepted by the official church due to their content, form or purpose. These texts are not admitted in the official religious

²⁹ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles*, pp. 18-32.

³⁰ Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*, gives an abundant examples and extensive discussion of a well-developed practice of verbal magic. On p. 444 he states that in the Trobriands “every magical act consists of a spell and of manual or bodily behaviour.” He adds: “The spell is an essential ingredient in Trobriand magic. The spell is the most esoteric part of magic. The effective use of spells always constitutes the exclusive prerogative of the magician, whether the words are secret or not. ... The magical power is acquired primarily by learning the spell”, where the extreme accuracy of memorization of the exact text is of crucial importance.

³¹ [A. I. Almazov] А. И. Алмазов, *Апокрифические молитвы, заклинания и заговоры* (Apocryphal prayers, incantations and spells) (Odessa: Летопис Новоросс. университета, 1901, pp. 221-340).

service books, and are spread and used secretly outside of the control of the church authorities.

Later, the Bulgarian scholar Donka Petkanova addresses the question about the relations between “canonical prayers”, “apocryphal prayers” and “folk charms”. Petkanova states that “apocryphal prayers” differ from “canonical prayers” in their form and content. At the same time, there is a significant number of similarities between “apocryphal prayers” and “folk charms” in terms of “ritual, ideology, composition, motives, views and style.” According to Petkanova, the main cause for these similarities is that the authors of the apocryphal prayers experienced influence from folklore:

There is no doubt that folk charms are much older than the apocryphal prayers. The authors of false prayers are borrowing forms, ideas and stylistic elements from the folklore. In a number of cases the whole content and form of the apocryphal prayers is so close to the folk charms, that they can be regarded as adaptations or even as records of folklore texts.

Finally, Petkanova concludes: “It is obvious, that in the Middle Ages both the apocryphal prayers and the folk charms fulfilled the same functions and they both were spread in the same context and milieu.”³²

The Bulgarian scholar Maria Shniter makes a relatively detailed discussion on the terminology. According to her, Christian prayers and folk charms are closely related variants of the accomplishment of the medieval people’s desire to change nature. This closeness generates different mixed borderline cases, positioned between the two main genres “prayer” and “charm”.³³ Shniter describes the process of intermingling of folklore

³² [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, “Фолклорът в апокрифните молитви” (Folklore in the apocryphal prayers), *Български фолклор*, 2 (1976): pp. 28-40.

³³ [Maria Shniter] Мария Шнитер, *Молитва и Магия* (Prayer and magic), (Sofia: Университетско издателство "Св. Климент Охридски", 2001), p. 27.

and Christian prayers. The aspects of this process are introduction of Biblical characters, motives and phrases in the texts of folk charms, and introduction of folk elements, motives and characters in the texts of Christian prayer. This second aspect leads to the appearance of texts, which the medieval indexes call “false or untrue prayers” and modern scholars label as “apocryphal prayers”. Shniter points out that these terms cover a large number of texts with heterogeneous form and content. The medieval term “false or untrue prayers” covers the narrative magical formulae, functioning as prayers. The term “apocryphal prayers” is rather inadequate, as its definition depends on the scholar’s vaguely determined personal criteria about what is “canonical”, “apocryphal”, etc.

Additionally, Shniter lists three borderline cases. These are:

- “charms” – formulae, containing unintelligible words, letters and symbols, used as amulets;
- “narrative charms” (“charms with a purpose of a prayer”) – texts, containing a narrative, close to the folk charms in its form, and to the canonical prayer in its function;
- “euchemically organized non-canonical texts” – texts which may or may not contain apocryphal or folk elements.

Finally, Shniter concludes:

the term ‘apocryphal prayer’ can only be applied to the prayers, containing apocryphal or folk elements. We have the full reason for calling all the other non-canonical devotional or prayer-type texts “quasi-canonical.”³⁴

The transition between the different borderline cases depends on the formal specifics and on the ways of diffusion, circulation and existence of the texts.

³⁴ Shniter, *Prayer and Magic*, p. 58.

In sum, the relevant Bulgarian scholarship suggests two ways to define the source material. The first one sees a binary opposition between “canonical” and “apocryphal” texts. This type of approach is precisely described and summarized by James Kapaló:

The definition of the ‘idiosyncratic’ or ‘deviant’ type of prayer, in relation to the ideal type of prayer, encompasses a whole range of binary positions, such as canon versus apocryphal, prayer versus incantation, orthodox versus heterodox, that constitute and construct the discourse that has evolved around these inherited ‘texts’.³⁵

The second way sees the source material as a multitude of different degrees of canonicity or non-canonicity, grouped under different labels. This way can be more productive, but only if accompanied by detailed explanations about the meaningful distinctions between the labels .

Clearly, the term “апокрифни молитви”/“apocryphal prayers” is inadequate and misleading. According to the Bulgarian scholarly tradition, the term “apocryphal” (“апокрифен”) refers to non-canonical Christian texts. In order to be defined as apocryphal, a text has to have functional and genre parallel in the Bible. While many of the texts examined in this thesis contain Christian motives and characters, managed in a non-canonical way, others de facto lack Christian elements in their content. While some of the materials represent borderline cases, most of the texts in this research cannot be defined as “prayers”, as they have completely different form, content and purpose. And finally: the translation of the Bulgarian term “апокрифни молитви” in other languages leads to further complications and confusions, caused by the different nuances of meaning of these two words.

³⁵ James Kapaló, *Text, Context and Performance: Gagauz Folk Religion in Discourse and Practice* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), p. 261.

In order to work with clear and adequate English terminology, I prefer to call my source material simply “charms”. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a “charm” is “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.” In a subsection of this definition one finds: “Anything worn about the person to avert evil or ensure prosperity; an amulet.”

In his article on charms in the *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, the Danish scholar Ferdinand Ohrt describes charms in the following way: “es bedeutet nämlich auch einen fest formulierten Spruch oder Text (gesprochen oder geschrieben), dem eine übernatürliche Kraft beigelegt wird.”³⁶ Further on in the same article, Ohrt relates to the older definition of charm, given by the Grimm brothers:

Formeln im außerkirchlichen Gebrauch, christlicher und nicht-christlicher Art, denen eine übernatürliche Wirkung und zwar meist schützender, heilsamer Art zugeschrieben wird. (verbal formulas, of Christian and non-Christian form, used outside of a Church context, and to which a supernatural effect is attributed, mostly of a protective, healing kind)³⁷

Based on these classic definitions, Jonathan Roper suggests “a more concise definition might simply be that charms are the verbal element of vernacular magic practice”.³⁸ In his book on English verbal charms, he defines “verbal charm” as “a traditional form of words thought to have a direct effect in the world, usually of a protecting, healing kind. These forms of words are often formulaic in character and

³⁶ *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, vol. 7 (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1935/1936), col. 1583

³⁷ Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1854-1971, sv. ‘SEGEN’, § 6).

³⁸ Jonathan Roper, “Introduction”, in Jonathan Roper, ed., *Charms, Charmers and Charming. International Research in Verbal Magic*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 1-70), p. 1.

repetitive in structure, possessing a high degree of sound-patterning.”³⁹ The purpose of a verbal charm is to bring change in the world we live in (to heal an illness, to make somebody to fall in love, to cause rain), or to fulfill an apotropaic function (to protect somebody or something, to prevent bad things from happening), or to help in discovering information (where a certain object is or whom a person will fall in love with). Verbal charms can be oral (delivered orally) or written (presented in a written form on an object, which can be worn as an amulet). Concerning the non-verbal charms, these are “a traditional series of wordless actions, often the same or similar to those actions which accompany verbal charms, intended to have similar effects.”⁴⁰

Edina Bozóky provides terminological and conceptual definition of the medieval European charms: “les charmes et les prières apotropaiques constituent un ensemble de sons ou de lettres, censé produire un effet physique ou matériel bénéfique.”⁴¹ The utilitarian purpose of the texts is fundamental for the genre, and the domestic use by lay people separates the charms from the benedictions and exorcisms. However, the charms and the apotropaic prayers share many features with the liturgical prayers, the benedictions and the exorcisms, and it is difficult to establish a clear-cut borderline. According to Bozóky, the charms contain a number of characteristic constructive elements: naming of the evil, conjuration, naming of the helping figures, actualization⁴²,

³⁹ Roper, *English Verbal Charms*, p. 15.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Edina Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaiques* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 31.

⁴² Also called ratification. It relates the current action or situation to a mythical action or situation, in which the problem was solved successfully. The ratification’s aim is to transmit the positive effect of the mythical event into the current situation. Often, the ratification is provided by the *historiola* (the narrative) of the charm.

list of impossibilia, dialogue, crystallized motives and formulae, backward counting, various sound effects and rhyming, finalizing formulae.⁴³

In relation with Lithuanian material, Daiva Vaitkevičienė gives the following definition:⁴⁴ “Verbal charms are verbal formulas that are believed to possess magical powers that can be used to alter both physical and psychological reality. Charms can be used to heal illnesses, inspire love, improve crops, call in rain, and so on.” In Lithuanian tradition, the verbal charms are closely related with prayers and divination formulae. The prayers are “formulaic texts spoken either out loud or in one’s thoughts and directed towards a god or another object of worship.” Vaitkevičienė points out: “... prayers differ from charms in that they clearly express a religious relationship between the individual who is saying them and the individual they are addressed to, whereas charms are dominated by the individual power of the person saying them.” At the same time, the Lithuanian charms that plead or ask, are very similar to prayers.⁴⁵

On the other hand, the Lithuanian charms are quite distinguishable from the divination formulae, which are “verbal formulas, provoking symbols, dreams, and visions, in an attempt to learn about the future (more rarely, to learn about the past or the present.)” The most common use of the Lithuanian divination formulae is to predict the weather or the future. What divide these three genres are their functions:

Charms are used to strive to change an unpleasant situation or to maintain the order that has been disturbed. Divination is used to acquire knowledge. Prayers are used for sacred communication and are oriented towards the

⁴³ Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques*, p. 36

⁴⁴ The Lithuanian material, as presented in Daiva Vaitkevičienė, ed. *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai: gydymo formulės/Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms*, (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2008) shows a number of similarities with the Bulgarian material.

⁴⁵ For example, the charms against snake bite, where the charmer prays to the snake to take back its venom, and to the earth to destroy the snake’s poison. Vaitkevičienė, *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai*, p. 68.

relationship between man and God, and not only towards practical results.⁴⁶

In addition, there are also other Lithuanian magical formulae: ritual formulae, well-wishing texts, toasts, curses, shepherds' cries (rhymes, partly spoken like charms, partly sung like songs, and appealing to the sun, the clouds, the rain, the wind, the snow.) Finally, charms appear as formulaic or song interludes in Lithuanian oral folk tales.

Vaitkevičienė's discussion on Lithuanian material brings up the question of differences and similarities between a prayer and a charm. Prayers are traditional formulaic form of words, thought to have an effect on the world, and have many analogies with charms. As Smallwood writes about English verbal charms: "... they may on occasion come close to being a prayer"⁴⁷. The major difference is that prayers do not work directly, but rely on a supernatural intervention, or in other words "prayers petition, charms command."⁴⁸ The major similarity is that both charms and prayers (and everything between them) are words of power and this characteristic is of major importance. As Jacqueline Borsje puts it, the words of power are

believed to be capable of influencing reality in a material sense, although not through empirically verifiable methods. These words are believed to have the power to transform reality either through some intrinsic power they possess or through the agency of a supernatural entity.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ T. M Smallwood, "The Transmission of Charms in English, Medieval and Modern", in Jonathan Roper, ed., *Charms and Charming in Europe*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 11-31), p. 11.

⁴⁸ Roper, *English Verbal Charms*, p. 16. See also Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 8, where the author distinguishes between direct and indirect rites. Van Gennep places curses and spells in the first category (as they are "designed to produce results immediately, without intervention by any outside agent") and vows, prayers and religious services in the second category (as they work with the intervention of supernatural agent). Thus, "the effect of a direct rite is automatic; that of an indirect rite comes as a repercussion."

⁴⁹ Jacqueline Borsje, "Druid, Deer and "Words of Power": Coming to Terms with Evil in Medieval Ireland", in Katja Ritari & Alexandra Bergholm, ed., *Approaches to Religion and Mythology in Celtic Studies*, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, pp. 122-149).

Therefore, when speaking about charms and their connections with prayers, the term “words of power” is very exact and appropriate. It encompasses charms, prayers, curses, blessings, incantations, spells and borderline cases.

The charms, the non-canonical prayers, the magic formulae, the borderline cases – they often originate

in the grey area between what is considered folklore proper and the official church benediction and exorcism texts...these texts further illustrate the complexity of the relationship between canon and apocrypha, oral and literary and religion and magic.⁵⁰

The binary opposition between prayer and charm has its deep ideological implications.

Distinctions between prayer and ‘charm’ based on propositional context and semantic interpretations, themselves the product of the competition between ideological systems of folklore and sociological discourse of the one hand and the Christian Church on the other, often become blurred, especially when ‘charm’ text formulae appear to be deprecatory in nature, calling on the intercession of superhuman powers in much the same way as official prayers of the Church.⁵¹

This is connected with the *modus operandi* of the religious field: it is “a struggle between the body of priests, who seek to monopolize the means of salvation by maintaining control of secret religious knowledge, and those excluded from secret religious knowledge, the laity.” Thus, prayer and charm can be seen as “Christian constructs in so far as they emerged out of the struggle for power over access to the divine realm and they are the continuing site of this linguistic struggle.”⁵²

This bipolar model was used already by Frazer, who defines “spell” as mechanical manipulation and “prayer” as supplication of divine or supernatural beings; ergo they are

⁵⁰ Kapaló, *Text, Context and Performance*, p. 221.

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 190.

⁵² Ibidem, p. 191.

radically different kinds of communication with the supernatural. The examination of charms in cultural context offers alternative means of overcoming this binary construction. If magic and religion are to be regarded as separate fields, then the words of power are a crossing-point for their interaction. As Éva Pócs summarizes, “Religion fought using the weapons of magic, and magic too placed in its armory tools with a similar function to those of religion.”⁵³

In the field of verbal magic, Tambiah points out that “most ‘magical rites’ (as indeed most rituals) combine word and deed and that the rite is devoted to a ‘imperative transfer’ of effects”⁵⁴. The force of the words in ‘magical rites’ does not rely on the distinction between true and false, but on the validity of the act of pronouncing the words. Thus all forms of ritual (including magical and religious) can be addressed and studied without fixed categorization.⁵⁵

Éva Pócs writes that when a charm is used in attempts to influence something and to reach a specific goal, this is a “magic relationship”. When a charm refers to some intermediary agent to achieve influence or a goal, this is “religious relationship”; when the charm refers to a third party, while also acting to influence directly, this is “magico-religious relationship”⁵⁶. Later James Kapaló refers to this intermingling between religion and magic, when analyzing Gagauz healing rituals and charms. There he demonstrates how in a living verbal magic tradition these rituals and texts combine the two distinct

⁵³ Éva Pócs, “Én vagyok mindennél nagyobb orvos, te vagy mindennél nagyobb bájos”: egyházi benedikció-paraszti ráolvasás” (“I am the greatest doctor of all, you are the greatest charmer of all”: church benedictions – peasants’ charms), In Éva Pócs, *Magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán* (Hungarian folk-beliefs on the border between Central and Eastern Europe) (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002, pp. 173-211), p. 175.

⁵⁴ Stanley Tambiah, *Culture, Thought and Social Action: an Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 60.

⁵⁵ Kapaló, *Text, Context and Performance*, p. 186.

⁵⁶ Éva Pócs, *Magyar ráolvasások* (Hungarian Charms), vol. 2 (Budapest: MTA Könyvtára, 1986), pp. 705-706.

spheres of action. “The healing system of the Gagauz likewise challenges bipolar distinctions of magic and religion and charm and prayer.”⁵⁷ Kapaló establishes “the link between the dichotomous categories of elite discourse – magic and religion and prayer and incantation – and the performative linguistic practices of lay agents that undermine them.” What is important here is “the power of performance, through speech and action, to construct and inscribe realities by means of reference to supernatural realities.”⁵⁸

Regardless of the label, it is crucial to recognize and understand the role of the words of power in the context of the ritual. Tambiah emphasizes how much the effectiveness of the ritual is depending on the power of words⁵⁹. On the other hand, according to Bourdieu “authority comes to language from the outside”⁶⁰, therefore “the force represented or manifested within the words of the speech act resides outside the text.”⁶¹ Therefore, the words of power, the ritual, the human and the supernatural agents, and the dynamics of authority and power between them constitute a complex network. It requires nuanced and differentiated approaches, going beyond the clear-cut categorization of text and beyond the binary opposition between “magic” and “religion”. The Coptic examples demonstrate that there is a “vast borderland between formal liturgy (“prayer“) and independent, practical (“magic“):

Like those spells and rituals devoted to physical afflictions in other cultures, the Coptic spells demonstrate that the lines between „magic“, medicine, and religion that are customarily assumed in modern conversation simply did not exist for the clients and purveyors of these texts.⁶²

⁵⁷ Kapaló, *Text, Context and Performance*, pp. 180-181.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 44.

⁵⁹ Tambiah, *Culture, Thought and Social Action*, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994), p. 109.

⁶¹ Kapaló, *Text, Context and Performance*, p. 190.

⁶² Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, ed., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), p. 228.

As there is a large number of borderline cases between charms and prayers⁶³, in numerous occasions it is difficult or impossible to make a clear-cut distinction if a text is a charm or a prayer. As Lauri Honko writes,

The poems and songs composed and performed by shamans are generally classified as charms and prayers. They are, in fact, much more than this. The term ‘charm’ is an inadequate description of long epic poems and detailed myth narratives which should not be regarded as a single genre but rather as various forms of performance.⁶⁴

According to Honko, the fundamental purpose of charm performance is “the maximization and direction of spiritual tension. In effect, the charm became the instrument for the transfer of power rather than meaning.”

I use the term “charm” as it was defined and characterized by Ohrt, Roper, Pócs and Bozóky. However, I recognize and realize the limitations and the problems of every terminology, especially in connection with mixed, borderline or unclear cases. In such situations, I find the term “words of power” very helpful. It is clear, simple and comprehensive. “Words of power” encompasses all clear-cut cases and all borderline cases, representing their nature and emphasizing their essence. It successfully complements and expands the term “charms”.

In the last two centuries, a large amount of studies on charms were done and published. The research spreads all the way from general theoretical issues to specific cases and problems and from extensive panoramic studies to restricted research of a

⁶³ For a detailed discussion on such cases, see Roper, *English Verbal Charms*, pp. 17-19 and David Elton Gay “On the Christianity of Incantations”, in Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms and Charming in Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 32-46), p. 37, where the author analyses texts which are partly charm, partly prayer. Also Owen Davies, “French Charmers and Their Healing Charms”, in Jonathan Roper, ed., *Charms and Charming in Europe*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 91-112), pp. 91-92, where the author discusses the on terminology issues around the French *charme, secret, prière*.

⁶⁴ Lauri Honko, „Healing: Introduction“, in *The Great Bear: A Thematic Anthology of Oral Poetry in the Finno-Ugrian Languages*, ed. Lauri Honko, Senni Timonen, Michael Branch, (New York: Oxford University Press for the Finnish Literature Society, 1994), p. 524.

particular text, tradition or period. In order to mention but a few pieces from the most recent secondary literature on verbal magic and charms, there the collected volumes *Charms and Charming in Europe* and *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic* and *The Power of Words: Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe*.⁶⁵ National traditions are presented by, for instance, *English Verbal Charms*,⁶⁶ *Ráolvasások* (Hungarian charms),⁶⁷ *Hiedelemszövegek* (Belief narratives)⁶⁸, *Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms*, *East Slavic Healing Charms from the Comparative Point of View: Motif and Worldview*,⁶⁹ *Eesti loitsud*⁷⁰ (Estonian charms), *Text, Context and Performance: Gagauz Folk Religion in Discourse and Practice*, etc.

The *Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming* at the *International Society for Folk Narrative Research* (ISFRN)⁷¹ plays a central role in the research of verbal magic. The committee is an active initiator and accomplisher of various successful scholarly initiatives. It publishes online an *International Annotated Bibliography on Charms*, a list of the recent scholarship pieces on charms and the newest documents and discussion papers. The committee also publishes online *Incantatio: An International*

⁶⁵ James Kapaló, Éva Pócs and William Ryan, ed., *The Power of Words. Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe*, (Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2013).

⁶⁶ Jonathan Roper, *English Verbal Charms* (Folklore Fellows Communications, vol. CXXXVI, no. 288, (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia / Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2005).

⁶⁷ Éva Pócs. *Ráolvasások. Gyűjtemény a legújabb korból (1851-2012)* (Verbal charms. Collection from the modern period), (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2014).

⁶⁸ Éva Pócs, *Hiedelemszövegek* (Belief narratives), (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2012).

⁶⁹ [T. A. Agarkina] Т. А. Агаркина, *Восточнославянские лечебные заговоры в сравнительном освещении: Сюжетика и образ мира. (East Slavic healing charms from the comparative point of view: motif and worldview)*, (Moscow: Indrek, 2010).

⁷⁰ Mare Kõiva, *Eesti Loitsud (Estonian Charms)*, (Tallinn: Pegasus, 2011).

⁷¹ For more information about ISFRN, see <http://isfnr.org/> and <http://isfnr.org/index2.html> (last accessed in the beginning of May, 2015).

*Journal on Charms, Charmers and Charming*⁷², and organizes annual scholarly meetings and conferences on a variety of verbal magic topics.

1. 3. Amulets

The source material consists of texts, which are closely related with various material supports. In a number of cases, there are explicit instructions about the charms to be written down on such supports. Part of the source material is preserved on material objects (pieces of lead), used as amulets.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* an amulet is “Anything worn about the person as a charm or preventive against evil, mischief, disease, witchcraft, etc.” As this definition shows, the amulet is an exclusively apotropaic magical object. It can also be regarded as material charm. More specifically, the amulet can be a non-verbal (without texts, phrases, words or letters included in it) or a verbal material charm (containing texts, phrases, words or letters). Dan Skemer clarifies the etymology of the word:

The English word amulet comes from the Latin *amuletum*, whose etymology has been traced back to the Arabic noun *hamalet*, meaning an object, not necessarily textual, worn on the body, especially around the neck, as a “preservative” against a host of afflictions.⁷³

According to the above-mentioned dictionary, a talisman is:

A stone, ring, or other object engraven with figures or characters, to which are attributed the occult powers of the planetary influences and celestial configurations, under which it was made; usually worn as an amulet to avert evil from or bring fortune to the wearer; also medicinally used to impart healing virtue; hence, any object held to be endowed with magic virtue; a charm.

⁷² For more information about *Incantatio*, see <http://www.folklore.ee/incantatio/01.html> (last accessed in the beginning of May, 2015).

⁷³ Dan C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), p. 6.

A talisman is also “anything that acts as a charm, or by which extraordinary results are achieved.” Skemer writes “The word *talisman*, sometimes used loosely as a synonym for *amulet*, comes from the Greek word *τέλεσμα* (that is, *telesma*, a religious rite or ceremony), which became the loan word *tilsām* in Arabic.”⁷⁴

The essential difference between the amulet and the talisman is that the latter relies primarily on the power of images, especially on images of heavenly bodies, signs of the zodiac, symbols of the constellations, etc. It is not necessary to wear a talisman on or close to the body, in order to be effective, neither has it needed a text. Also, its production requires a specialized knowledge on astrology, high ritual magic and other elaborated arts, usually of ancient or Eastern origin and accessible through specialized books. “A recent distinction between an amulet and a talisman is that the former protects and the latter brings good luck.”⁷⁵

The employment of amulets seems to be as a universal phenomenon as the usage of verbal magic. For instance, in the Western medieval amulet traditions and practices:

Textual amulets, as the term is employed in this book, were generally brief apotropaic texts, handwritten or mechanically printed on separate sheets, rolls, and scraps of parchment, paper, or other flexible writing supports of varying dimensions. When worn around the neck or placed elsewhere on the body, they were thought to protect the bearer against known and unknown enemies, to drive away or exorcise evil spirits, to heal specific afflictions caused by demonic invasions of the unprotected self, and to bring people good fortune, even at the expense of others. As a renewable source of Christian empowerment, textual amulets promised safe passage through a precarious world by means of an ever-changing potpourri of scriptural quotations, divine names, common prayers, liturgical formulas, Christian legends and apocrypha, narrative charms, magical seals and symbols, and

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 8.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 9; Felicitas H. Nelson, *Talismans and Amulets of the World* (New York: Sterling, 2000), p. 7.

other textual elements that were assembled materially and used physically to exploit and enhance the magical efficacy of words.⁷⁶

In the medieval period, the usage of apotropaic and curative amulets was omnipresent in both the East and the West.⁷⁷ Most often, these are called *phylacteria*. This term is the Latin version of the Greek word *φυλακτήριον*, which literary means “safeguard” and “protection”. Etymologically, it comes from the Greek word *φύλαξ*, meaning “watcher, guard, sentinel”. Concerning the medieval Bulgarian amulets, the Bulgarian researchers use the terms “амулет” (amulet) and “оловна пластина” (lead lamella),⁷⁸ the later one because the medieval Bulgarian amulets are small lead sheets or pieces. They possess apotropaic functions and properties (due to the apotropaic charms, written on them), and actually correspond to Skemer’s definition.

The definitions confirm the general interconnection between verbal and non-verbal magic, and between charms as texts and charms as objects. Verbal charms can be written on some material support, which thus becomes an amulet and is worn close to the body. Amulets can be used as material or non-verbal charm. However, “charm” and “amulet” are not the same thing. There are verbal charms that have never been applied as amulets, and there are amulets, which do not contain any verbal element⁷⁹. Don Skemer points also out “that some textual elements found in amulets had never functioned as

⁷⁶ Skemer, *Binding Words*, p. 1. Although focused on the amulet tradition in Western Europe from thirteenth to fifteenth century, the book discusses the use of verbal charms too. Also, the author often refers to the function, the usage and the different contexts of medieval verbal magic in general. He does not miss the verbal magic rituals, and the power of words in the Middle Ages either. The introduction of Skemer’s book contains an overview of relevant scholarship on late antique and medieval textual amulets.

⁷⁷ Athanasius Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina. Pars prior*, (Moscow: Universitas Caesareae, 1893), LXIX-LXXII

⁷⁸ For example, see [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, “Заклинателни молитви върху оловни амулети от средновековна България и паралелите им втрѣбници от средновековна Сърбия” (Conjuration prayers on lead amulets from medieval Bulgaria and their parallels in euchologia form Medieval Serbia). *Зборник радова Византолошког института* 44 (2009): 341-351.

⁷⁹ For example, a canine fang, a rabbit’s paw or a stone with peculiar shape.

verbal charms or “speech acts”. Still, “it can be difficult to draw clear distinctions between amulets (with or without texts) and charms (oral or written).”⁸⁰

1. 4. Crisis rites

Magic is often employed in the case of an accident, abnormality, misfortune, collapse, or threat of any kind. In other words, when there is a crisis. By “crisis”, I mean an unstable or dangerous situation,⁸¹ seriously threatening and damaging the well-being and the existence of an individual or a community.⁸² A crisis requires fast decisions and effective measures, in order to eliminate its harmful impact, to improve the situation and to restore the balance. Thus, crisis management is the process of mastering, controlling and eliminating the crisis and its negative consequences. When done through magical or supernatural means, crisis management involves crisis rites.⁸³ Verbal magic and the words of power (charms, prayers, magic formulae, etc.) are a key part of these rites.⁸⁴

Arnold van Gennep makes a detailed classification of rites⁸⁵, without mentioning or defining a separate category of “crisis rites”.⁸⁶ Victor Turner, however, presents two

⁸⁰ Skemer, *Binding Words*, p. 10. Also see on the same page, footnote no. 19, with a good quotation on the complexity of the matter in Greek, Roman and Jewish tradition.

⁸¹ Often, it is also a sudden and unexpected situation.

⁸² The notion of crisis is very broad and complex. Also, it is culturally defined and dependent. However, there are certain situations, which universally appear as critical for humans, for example illnesses and natural disasters.

⁸³ Together with the term “ritual”, the term “rite” is an object of extensive scholarly definitions and research. It is worth noting its etymological roots. The English word “rite” comes from the Latin “ritus”, which means “religious observance, ceremony, usage, custom”. The Latin word itself is of unknown etymology, but probably related with the Greek adjective “ῥητός”, which means “stated, specified, agreed on”.

⁸⁴ Lauri Honko, “Types of Comparison and Forms of Variation”, *Journal of Folklore Research* 23, 2/3, Special Double Issue: The Comparative Method in Folklore (1986): pp. 105-124. On p. 108 the author discusses the environment in which a folk poem was used and performed. He gives three main categories of ritual poems: songs connected with crisis rites, songs connected with rites of passage and songs connected with calendrical rites. He adds “The poetry of the crisis rites is represented by the incantations and prayers recited in the curing of diseases.”

⁸⁵ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, pp. 1-15.

⁸⁶ Ibidem. For example, the author only discusses a ceremony designed to transfer an illness in the framework of animism or dynamism.

types of rituals: life-crisis rituals and rituals of affliction.⁸⁷ The first type is connected with important points in the physical and social development of an individual (birth, puberty, marriage, death, entrance upon office, etc.). The second type of rites are related to

the major theme of Ndembu religious life. For some reason, Ndembu have come to associate misfortune in hunting, women's reproductive disorders, and various forms of illness with the action of the spirits of the dead. Furthermore, whenever an individual has been divined to have been "caught" by such a spirit, he or she becomes the subject of an elaborate ritual, which many people from far and near attend, devised at once to propitiate and to get rid of the spirit that is thought to be causing the trouble.⁸⁸

Later, Turner analyses two crisis rites par excellence: *Isoma*, dealing with female reproductive problems, and meant to remedy a deficiency, to restore the balance and to bring back fertility,⁸⁹ and *Wubwang'u*, meant to strengthen a woman who has borne twins or is pregnant with twins. As the existence of human twinship is rather problematic in a number of African cultures,⁹⁰ the birth of twins is de facto a social crisis, and the rite deals with it. Comparing the life-crisis rites and the calendric rites, Turner claims that the *rites de passage* can sometimes be also rites of group crisis, aimed at status reversal. They "accompany any change of a collective sort from one state to another, as when a whole tribe goes to war, or a large local community performs ritual to reverse the effects of famine, drought, or plague."⁹¹

⁸⁷ Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press,), pp. 6-16. The examples are from the ritual life of the Ndembu of Zambia.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, 9-15.

⁸⁹ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press), pp. 18-20.

⁹⁰ The twinship is problematic in terms of physiology, economics, social order and hierarchy. See Turner, *The Ritual Process*, pp. 44-50.

⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 169.

Catherine Bell calls the crisis rites “rites of affliction”, and discusses them as a separate type of ritual: “rites of affliction seek to mitigate the influence of spirits thought to be afflicting human beings with misfortune.”⁹² According to Bell, “rituals of affliction attempt to rectify a state of affairs that has been disturbed or disordered; they heal, exorcise, protect, and purify. The type of ritual and ritual expert used will depend completely on the way in which a culture interprets the problematic state of affairs.”⁹³

Fritz Graf discusses the connections between magic and crisis in the particular and well-documented context of the Ancient World. He aptly points out the role of the magical crisis management in a highly agonistic cultural model, characterized by competition and jealousy. In the Antiquity, the ritual binding is very often “performed in the context of a crisis.”⁹⁴ The crisis can be a trial, a risky commercial enterprise, a professional difficulty or a sport competition. According to Graf,

It is always a situation in which a great uncertainty predominates, one that will be resolved by a future decision, while the ways to influence the results are very limited.... As a competitor in an agonistic struggle, an individual needed a strategy for overcoming a feeling of uncertainty increased by that of a certain powerlessness. The performance (or commission) of a spell made it possible to regain the initiative and the hope that one could affect the outcome. The ritual thus offered both the community and the individual a means to master emotionally an otherwise difficult crisis.”⁹⁵

Lauri Honko provides three categories: rites of passage, calendric rites and crisis rites⁹⁶. The last ones are performed in cases like various disasters (drought, fire, flood, famine, calamities, epidemics, etc.), illnesses, demonic possessions, bewitchments,

⁹² Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 115-120.

⁹³ Ibidem.

⁹⁴ Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, pp. 157-159.

⁹⁵ Ibidem.

⁹⁶ Lauri Honko, *Geisterglaube in Ingermanland*, (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Folklore Fellows' Communications, 1962), passim, but especially 185.

misfortunes, bad luck, etc. In the volume *Science of Religion*, Honko gave a detailed definition of crisis rites. The crisis rites are

Occasional rituals in unexpected situations of crisis. They are organized by an individual or a community, in situations that upset the normal world order and threaten the life of the individual or the community, or the achievement of their immediate aims. The rites organized to channel the anxiety and uncertainty caused by these crises vary greatly, from limited but rapid actions or reactive rites, to wider, collective rituals in which the whole group involved in the crisis takes part.”⁹⁷

The examples are curing an illness, prevention of fire, rainmaking rites to prevent drought, reparation of bewitched tool, prevention rites against theft, envy and malice, etc.

The long list of crisis rites

takes its shape on the basis of major catastrophes and minor accidents in life. The aim of the rites is to indicate the cause of the accident, to reveal the guilty person, and to ease the problematical nature of an unexpected incident by means of explanations and counter-action.

This happens through finding a mythical primordial precedent for a new phenomenon:

For example, an illness is cured by recalling a myth which tells about the first occurrence of the illness and its cure. The event of the myth is brought into the present, the cure is re-enacted here and now, and the illness is reassigned to its own place in the world order, just as in primordial times; the disorder is eliminated.”⁹⁸

Every crisis management is a result of a certain frame of mind and a certain cultural context, which defines the crisis and recognizes it as such. The effectiveness of the anti-crisis measures is evaluated within this frame of mind. This mentality decides on the elaboration, preservation and transmission of certain types and ways of crisis management. The key requirements for the crisis management are its promptness,

⁹⁷ Lauri Honko, ed., *Science of Religion: Studies in Methodology*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), 377.

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

reliability and effectiveness. It must be with a high degree of functionality, concrete and adequate in “real-time problem solving”.⁹⁹ As Bell writes,

Rites of affliction demonstrate what has been called the “all too human” side of religion, namely, people’s persistent efforts to redress wrongs, alleviate sufferings, and ensure well-being. Yet these rites also illustrate complex cultural interpretations of the human condition and its relation to a cosmos of benign and malevolent forces.¹⁰⁰

Bell concludes, “These rites open up opportunities for redefining the cosmological order in response to new challenges and new formulations of human needs.”¹⁰¹ However, rituals do not solve the problem, but give “a resolution without ever defining one.”¹⁰² The problem is defined in new terms, and the crisis is postponed. “There is no point of arrival but a constant invocation of new terms to continue the validation and coherence of the older terms.”¹⁰³

The attempt to manage and counter the crisis via magic is de facto an act of communication with the supernatural world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century

Orthodox Karelian

folk religion, rites in which humans communicated or interacted with supernatural agents ultimately dealt with the question of *disorder*, in other words, they mediated between ‘pure’ or ‘impure’ categories of phenomena. In some cases these rituals could be classified as *crisis rituals* because they were carried out in response to some unforeseen event requiring immediate remedy, such as illness or the disappearance of a child or farm animal in the forest. Other such rituals could be designated *calendric rituals* because they were carried out on a particular day or at a particular point in the annual agrarian cycle.

From the folk’s point of view, however,

⁹⁹ Laura Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises: Ritual and the Supernatural in Orthodox Karelian Folk Religion* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2002), p. 32.

¹⁰⁰ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, p. 119.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, p. 120.

¹⁰² Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 106.

¹⁰³ Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises*, p. 123.

calendric rites were in many cases carried out not simply in order to follow a time-honored tradition or celebrate a good harvest, mark the passage of time in the annual cycle, etc., but in order to stave off some possible, or even likely, misfortune.¹⁰⁴

In Orthodox Karelian folk religion, the purpose of traditional rites and cults is not so much to “ensure material prosperity” in various activities¹⁰⁵. Most often, these rituals were a “direct response to disorder or the threat of disorder in individual and communal life.”¹⁰⁶ They were motivated by events, which

diminished a sense of order and equilibrium (illness, attack on cattle by forest predators, cattle lost in the forest, deaths in the community). The desired outcome of ritual responses to disorder was thus the restoration of health, the return of lost cattle, and the maintenance of relations with the dead (which preserved their membership in the community).

The purpose of the sacrificial festivals is to “draw a boundary between the human and the threatening wilderness.”¹⁰⁷ According to the legends and the folk beliefs, the original events, which led to the first celebration of the festival, are usually attacks by forest predators. Thus, the ritual sacrifices are crisis rituals rather than calendric rituals.

Honko and Stark clarify the specific nature of crisis rites and give a very clear theoretical frame. For Honko, the crisis rites are in the center of his studies and he provides a working definition. Laura Stark’s book about Orthodox Karelia places this working definition in a particular cultural context, which actually carries many resemblances to the medieval and early modern Bulgarian culture.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, p. 69. Laura Stark groups the disorders of individual and social life in three categories: “disorder of the human body” (especially an unexplained illness); “disorder in the resource spaces shared by humans and the wilderness” (attacks on cattle by predators and entrapment of farm animals and children by the „forest cover“); “disorder threatening internal communal cohesion” (death and socio-economic inequality).

¹⁰⁵ I think that in the Bulgarian source material (charms, amulets, rites) there is no opposition or distinction between the provision of material prosperity, and the management and elimination of disorder. The restoration of health, the achievement of material prosperity, etc., are all expressions of successful coping strategy and effective crisis management.

¹⁰⁶ Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises*, p. 75.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem, p. 118.

2. Sources

The sources of this study are medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms. In order to select them, first I consulted the more general studies on medieval and early modern Bulgarian literature and culture.¹⁰⁸ Then, I became familiar with the scholarly works particularly on medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic.¹⁰⁹ Based on this specialized secondary literature, I consulted the available editions of medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms.¹¹⁰ As a result, I use and rely on 180 published verbal charms. However, the most interesting and peculiar examples are either understudied or unstudied. In my research, I am mainly focused on these charms, while at the same time I take into consideration all the surviving and known source material.

The aim of the selection is to bring together and group verbal charms from manuscripts and amulets in a way, which has not been done so far. This grouping is the basis for the analysis. The aim of the analysis is to look at the verbal charms from a perspective, which so far has been neglected – the power interactions between humans and the supernatural, placed in the context of everyday life.

This source material is rarely discussed in a language other than Bulgarian. Up to my knowledge, none of these charms has been ever translated into English language. In

¹⁰⁸ For a good starting point, introduction and basics, see [B. Angelov] Б. Ангелов and [M. Genov] М. Генов, *Стара българска литература (IX-XVIIIв.) в примери, преводи и библиография*. (Old Bulgarian Literature (Ninth-Eighteenth Century) with Examples, Translations and Bibliography), (Sofia: Български писател, 1922); [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, *Стара българска литература в седем тома. Том I: Апокрифи* (Old Bulgarian Literature in Seven Volumes. Vol. I Апокрифа) (Sofia: Издателство на Българската Академия на Науките, 1981); [B. St. Angelov] Б. Ст. Ангелов, *Из старата българска, руска и сръбска литература* (Examples from the Old Bulgarian, Russian and Serbian Literature), (Sofia: БАН, 1958 (part one), 1967 (part two), 1978 (part three).

¹⁰⁹ For a good starting point and introduction, see [Donka Petkanova], Донка Петканова, ed., *Старобългарска литература. Енциклопедичен речник* (Old Bulgarian Literature. Encyclopaedia), София: Петър Берон, 1992, 39-40; [N. Tihonravov] Н. Тихонравов. *Памятники отреченной русской литературы*. Moscow: 1863, [A. I Yatsimirskii] А. И. Яцимирский, “К истории ложных молитв в южнославянской письменности” *Изв. ОРЯС*. 18, 3 (1913): pp. 1-102 and *Изв. ОРЯС*. 18, 4 (1913): pp. 16-126.

¹¹⁰ On the editions of the charms, see below in this chapter.

this thesis, all translations of Bulgarian charms into English are mine. The texts of selected charms in the original language are given in the catalogue, which is at the end of the thesis.

2. 1. Description

The source material consists of 180 verbal charms. The verbal charms are clearly distinguishable from the other types of medieval and early modern Bulgarian non-canonical and magical texts¹¹¹. The verbal charms are texts with variable length - the shortest ones only consist of two lines, while the longest one takes approximately a page.¹¹² The majority of them are of a length between a few lines and a paragraph. Here is a typical example, a charm against water retention from a fourteenth century manuscript¹¹³:

On the banks of the river Jordan three angels stand. One ties, one unties, and one sings: "Holy, Holy, Holy God Sabbath, the heaven and the earth is full with his glory. Hinen, igis, mantis. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Goly Ghost.

The verbal charms are written in Old Church Slavonic language, with Cyrillic and Glagolitic alphabets used. They are preserved in manuscripts and on amulets. In my selection, there are 7 charms preserved on seven amulets, and 173 charms preserved in 59 manuscripts. The amulets are small pieces of lead with the texts of the charms inscribed on them, and are dated between the tenth and fourteenth century.¹¹⁴ The manuscripts are dated between the thirteenth and the nineteenth century.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Like for example, apocryphal and heretical texts, prognostication and divination books, and lists of divine names, medical recipes and magical drawings.

¹¹² See Yatsimirskii, "К истории ложных молитв", passim and the catalogue at the end of the thesis.

¹¹³ *Требник (Веркович)*, fourteenth century, sine № et loco. Yatsimirskii, "К истории ложных молитв", p. 33 and Kovačević, "Nekoliko priloga". p. 282. See no. 22 in the Catalogue.

¹¹⁴ On the physical parameters and the dating of the amulets with charms, see [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, "Оловни пластини с надписи" (Lead Lamellae with Inscriptions), in [Petar Dinekov] Петър Динеков, ed., *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия* (Cyrillo-

There is no full comprehensive collection or catalogue of the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms. So far, nobody has constituted a real corpus of these charms. They are published in several scholarly works, usually in combination with an analysis.

Chronologically, the oldest editions are made at the end of the nineteenth century by the Croatian scholar Jagić,¹¹⁶ the Serbian Kovačević,¹¹⁷ and the Ukrainian Kačanovskij.¹¹⁸ These works are short unsystematic anthologies containing the original texts of the charms, in combination with introductory words and some basic explanations. The main imperfection of these publications is the chaotic and insufficient information about the dating and the location of the manuscripts, where the charms and other texts were taken from. This defect has an enduring negative impact on the subsequent works on charms (including this thesis), as the quotations from Jagić, Kovačević, Kačanovskij are by necessity incomplete.

In 1910, the Bulgarian scholar Benyo Tsonev published the first volume of the catalogue of the Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia.¹¹⁹ Together with the information about the manuscripts, the catalogue also includes text of charms. Only a couple of years later, in 1913, the Russian scholar Yatsimirskii published his study on the

Methodian Encyclopedia, vol.2), (Sofia: БАН, Институт за литература, акад. издателство “Марин Дринов”, 1995), pp. 850–853;

¹¹⁵ On the physical parameters and the dating of the manuscripts, see below the catalogues by Tsonev and the study by Yatsimirskii.

¹¹⁶ Vatroslav Jagić, “Sredovječni liekovi, gatanja i vračanja: opisi i izvodi iz nekoliko južnoslovenskih rukopisa” (Medieval Remedies, Divinations and Charms), *Starine* 10 (1878): pp. 81-126.

¹¹⁷ Ljub. Kovačević, “Nekoliko priloga staroj srpskoj književnosti” (Some Examples from the Old Serbian Literature), *Starine* 10 (1878): pp. 274-284.

¹¹⁸ Vladimir Kačanovskij, “Apokrifne molitve, gatanja i priče” (Apocryphal Prayers, Divinations and Fabulae), *Starine* 13 (1881): pp. 150-163.

¹¹⁹ [Benyo Tsonev] Беньо Цонев, *Опис на ръкописите и старопечатните книги на Народната библиотека в София, том I* (Catalogue and Description of the Manuscripts and the Early Printed Books in the National Library in Sofia, vol. I), (Sofia: Edition of the National Library, 1910).

South Slavic false prayers.¹²⁰ This work combines the analysis and the commentary of the charms with the publication of their texts in original. Yatsimirskii grouped the charms according to their theme or aim. These groups are: invocations of divine names, invocations to the Holy Cross, protective charms of Archangel Michael, charms against snakebite, charms against dogbite, bloodstaunching charms, charms against water retention, charms against toothache, charms against thunder and lightning, and charms for traveling and going to the court. The study quotes approximately 200 full original texts of charms, together with a large number of fragments. Detailed bibliographical information is available at almost every case. Yatsimirskii's work is the closest to a comprehensive catalogue or a corpus of the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms. It is of a big importance for the research of Bulgarian verbal magic.

Benyo Tsonev continued publishing verbal charms in the catalogues from the library in Plovdiv in 1920¹²¹ and in Sofia in 1923.¹²² After a pause of few decades, in 1954 Tsvetan Kristanov and Ivan Duychev published a volume on knowledge in natural sciences in medieval Bulgaria.¹²³ This work has a section on charms and prayers, which contains the original texts of approximately twenty charms. In the subsequent years, the publication of charms in library catalogues was continued by Manyo Stoyanov and Hristo

¹²⁰ Yatsimirskii, "К истории ложных молитв."

¹²¹ [Benyo Tsonev] Беньо Цонев, *Славянски ръкописи и старопечатни книги на Народната библиотека в Пловдив* (The Slavic Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in the National Library in Plovdiv), (Sofia: Edition of the Plovdiv Library, 1920).

¹²² [Benyo Tsonev] Беньо Цонев, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в софийската народна библиотека, том II* (Catalogue and Descripton of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia, vol. II), (Sofia: Edition of the National Library, 1923).

¹²³ [Tsvetan Kristanov] Цветан Кристанов and [Ivan Duychev] Иван Дуйчев. *Естествознанието в средновековна България. Сборник от исторически извори* (The Natural Sciences in Medieval Bulgaria - A Collection of Historical Sources), (Sofia: Българска Академия на науките, 1954). This is a source collection of medieval Bulgarian knowledge on nature. The authors Kristanov and Duychev also point out the connections and the fields of interaction between the "apocryphal prayers", the healing spells and practices, and different popular beliefs. Their study, however, is focused on the role of the magical texts as containers of natural scientific knowledge. See pp. 536-543.

Kodov in 1964¹²⁴ and 1971.¹²⁵ This series was completed with the fifth volume, published in 1996 by Boryana Hristova, Darinka Karadzova and Nina Vutova.¹²⁶ Usually, the catalogue editors regarded the charms to be the most remarkable and interesting parts of the manuscripts, and therefore their entire texts are published in the catalogues.

Similarly to the charms from manuscripts, the medieval Bulgarian amulets with charms have not been published in a comprehensive collection, catalogue or corpus editions. The verbal charms from amulets are published in several scholarly works, in combination with analysis. I use the verbal charms from amulets from the publications, most often made by archeologists and paleographers.

Chronologically, the first such publication is an article by the Bulgarians Lidia Kvinto and Boris Drangov.¹²⁷ They presented a lead amulet from thirteenth/fourteenth century, found in Veliko Tŭrnovo and containing a charm for protection and well-being of the bees, and another one for protection and good luck.

Significant contribution is made by the prominent Bulgarian archeologist Kazimir Popkonstantinov¹²⁸, who published and analyzed a number of amulets with charms¹²⁹. In

¹²⁴ [Manyo Stoyanov] Маньо Стоянов and [Hristo Kodov] Христо Кодов, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в софийската народна библиотека, том III* (Catalogue and Description of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia, vol. III), (Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1964).

¹²⁵ [Manyo Stoyanov] Маньо Стоянов and [Hristo Kodov] Христо Кодов, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в софийската народна библиотека, том VI* (Catalogue and Description of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia, vol. VI), (Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1971).

¹²⁶ [Boryana Hristova] Боряна Христова, [Darinka Karadzova] Даринка Караджова and [Nina Vutova] Нина Вутова, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в софийската народна библиотека, том V* (Catalogue and Description of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia, vol. V), (Sofia: Edition of the National Library, 1996).

¹²⁷ [Lidia Kvinto] Лидия Квинто and [Boris Drangov] Борис Дрангов, “Оловна пластинка с молитва и заклинание от Търновград (XIV век)” (Lead Lamella with Prayer and Charm from Tŭrnovo, fourteenth century), in *Сборник в чест на проф. Станчо Ваклинов* (Collection of Essays in Honour of Prof. Stancho Vaklinov), Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1984), pp. 239-245.

¹²⁸ For a full bibliography of Kazimir Popkonstantinov, see the collected volume *Културните текстове на миналото: носители, символи и идеи. Книга I: Текстове на историята, история на*

his relatively short articles, Popkonstantinov focuses on the description of the amulets and their archeological environment, transcription of the texts, and paleographical and philological commentaries. Popkonstantinov wrote on medieval lead amulets found in various medieval archeological sites: the Bulgarian Pet Mogili¹³⁰, Odürtsi,¹³¹ Varna,¹³² Păcuiul lui Soare (today's Romania)¹³³. He also published an article on parallels between

текстовете. Материали от Юбилейната международна научна конференция в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д. и н. Казимир Попконстантинов, ВеликоТърново, 29-31 октомври 2003 (The Cultural Texts of the Past: Carriers, Symbols and Ideas. Book I: The Texts of History, the History of Texts. Materials from the Jubilean International Scholarly Conference in Honour of the 60th anniversary of Prof. Dr. Hab. Kazimir Popkonstantinov. Veliko Tŭrnovo, October 29-30, 2003), (Sofia: Университетско издателство "Св. Климент Охридски", 2005), pp. 9-12.

¹²⁹ [Velichka Konstantinova] Величка Константинова and [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, „Апокрифна молитва от X век върху оловна пластина” (An Aposcraphal Prayer on a Lead Lamella from the Tenth Century), *Die Slawischen Sprachen*, 13 (1987): pp. 45-54. [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов and [Georgy Atanassov] Георги Атанасов, “Оловна пластинка с надпис от X век” (A Lead Lamella with Inscription from Tenth Century), in *Плиска-Преслав, том 6* (Pliska-Preslav, vol. 6), (Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1993), pp. 149-151. [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, “Кирилица и глаголица срещу Дявола, или още един оловен амулет от X век” (Cyrillic and Glagolitic Letters against the Devil, or One More Lead amulet from Tenth Century), *Palaeobulgarica/Старобългаристика* 28, 4 (2004): pp. 69-75.

¹³⁰ [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов and [Georgy Atanassov] Георги Атанасов, “Оловна пластинка с надпис от X век” (A Lead Lamella with Inscription from Tenth Century), in *Плиска-Преслав, том 6* (Pliska-Preslav, vol. 6), (Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1993), pp. 149-151. [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, “Кирилица и глаголица срещу Дявола, или още един оловен амулет от X век” (Cyrillic and Glagolitic Letters against the Devil, or One More Lead amulet from Tenth Century), *Palaeobulgarica/Старобългаристика* 28, 4 (2004): pp. 69-75.

¹³¹ [Lyudmila Doncheva] Людмила Дончева and [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, “Апокрифна молитва от X-XI век върху оловен амулет от с. Одърци, Толбухинско” (An Aposcraphal Prayer from Tenth-Eleventh Century on a Lead Amulet from the Village of Odürtsi, Tolbuhin Region), in *Сборник в чест на акад. Димитър Ангелов* (Collecton of Essays in Honour of Acad. Dimitŭr Angelov), (Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1994), pp. 288-292.

¹³² [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, “Оловен амулет с апокрифен текст от Варненския музей” (A Lead Amulet with Aposcraphal Text from the Museum in Varna), in *Търновската книжовна школа и християнската култура в източна Европа* (The Literary School in Tŭrnovo and the Christian Culture in Eastern Europe), (Veliko Tŭrnovo: Университетско издателство „Св. Св. Кирил и Методий“, 2002), pp. 283-286.

¹³³ [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, “Молитва против нежит върху амулет от X век от Пъкуйул луй Соаре” (A Prayer against the Nezhit on a Tenth Century Amulet from Păcuiul lui Soare), in *Българите в северното причерноморие, том 6* (The Bulgarians on the Northern Shores of the Black Sea), (Veliko Tŭrnovo: Университетско издателство “Св. Св. Кирил и Методий”, 1997), pp. 123-129;

the medieval Bulgarian charms from amulets and the charms from medieval Serbian books of occasional prayers.¹³⁴

The archeological line was continued by Krasimira Stefanova-Georgieva, writing on an amulet from eleventh century,¹³⁵ by Petür Garena and Ivan Iliev, who described in details a lead amulet from tenth-eleventh century with a charm against *nezhit*.¹³⁶ The archeologist Nikolay Ovcharov contributed too, publishing two articles focused on the charms against the *nezhit*, where he discusses the connections between archeological, textual and folklore source material¹³⁷. Ovcharov provided a short anthropological discussion, and gave some medical information about the symptoms, related to the *nezhit*,

¹³⁴ [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, “Заклинателни молитви върху оловни амулети от средновековна България и паралелите им втребници от средновековна Сърбия” (“The Conjunctive Charms from Lead Amulets from Medieval Bulgaria and Their Parallels in Books of Occasional Prayers from Medieval Serbia), *Зборник радова Византолошког института* 44 (2009): pp. 341-351.

¹³⁵ [Krasimira Stefanova-Georgieva] Красимира Стефанова-Георгиева “Оловна пластинка с надпис на старобългарски език от средновековното селище при с. Крън, Казанлъшко” (A Lead Lamella with Inscription in Old Church Slavonic from the Medieval Settlement near the village of Krün, region of Kazanlük), in *Културните текстове на миналото: носители, символи и идеи. Материали от Юбилейната международна научна конференция в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д. и. н. Казимир Попконстантинов, ВеликоТърново, 29-31 октомври 2003* (The Cultural Texts of the Past: Carriers, Symbols and Ideas. Materials from the Jubilean International Scholarly Conference in Honour of the 60th Anniversary of Prof. Dr. Hab. Kazimir Popkonstantinov. Veliko Tŭrnovo, October 29-30, 2003), (Sofia: Университетско издателство “Св. Климент Охридски”, 2005), pp. 148-149.

¹³⁶ [Petür Garena] Петър Гарена and [Ivan Iliev] Иван Илиев, “Новооткрит старобългарски надпис-заклинание от Кърджалийско” (A Newly Discovered Old Church Slavonic Inscription-Charm from the Region of Kürdzhalı), in *Културните текстове на миналото: носители, символи и идеи. Материали от Юбилейната международна научна конференция в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д. и. н. Казимир Попконстантинов, ВеликоТърново, 29-31 октомври 2003* (The Cultural Texts of the Past: Carriers, Symbols and Ideas. Materials from the Jubilean International Scholarly Conference in Honour of the 60th Anniversary of Prof. Dr. Hab. Kazimir Popkonstantinov. Veliko Tŭrnovo, October 29-30, 2003), (Sofia: Университетско издателство “Св. Климент Охридски”, 2005), pp. 150-157.

¹³⁷ [Nikolay Ovcharov] Николай Овчаров, “Проклетият нежит. Между археологията и етнологията” (The Cursed Nezhit. Between Archeology and Ethnology, *Българска етнология* 1-2 (1997): pp. 104-106. [Nikolay Ovcharov] Николай Овчаров, “Няколко слабо известни апокрифни молитви от 1497/1498г.” (Some Little-Known Apocryphal Prayers from 1497/1498), *Българска етнология* 3-4 (1998): pp. 81-88.

which is a rarity in the scholarly tradition. The archeologist Nikos Čausidis made similar analysis of an amulet with charm, discovered in today's Macedonia¹³⁸.

The charms editions vary in terms of exactness of the publishing method. For example, Tsonev, Yatsimirskii and the archeologists provide all the technical, chronological and bibliographical details about the charms. On the contrary, almost all of the charms published by Jagič, Kačanovskij, Kovačević, and Kristanov and Duychev lack essential information like, for example, date and place. Despite these problematic points, the authenticity of the published charms has not been doubted or contested, and the previous scholars used these editions too.

The information about some of the locations of the manuscripts is obscure from today's perspective. It is not very clear if these collections, libraries and institutions still exist today, and what is their current name. In addition, it is unclear if the respective manuscripts are still kept in these places. For example, such cases appear in the editions of Jagič, Kačanovskij and Kovačević, which are rather old. Actually, it is not guaranteed that the manuscripts physically exist today.

The manuscripts containing verbal charms are of the following types:

Type of manuscript	Number of manuscripts containing charms:
<i>Сборник</i> (miscellany)	22
<i>Требник</i> (book of occasional prayers)	21
<i>Служебник</i> (priest's service book)	5
<i>Псалтир</i> (psalter)	4
<i>Часослов</i> (book of hours)	3

¹³⁸ [Nikos Čausidis] Никос Чаусидис, "Оловен амулет со испишана молитва против "нежит" од градот Чрешче" (Lead Amulet with an Inscribed Prayer against "Nezhit" from the City of Cresce), *Зборник на Музеите на Македонија (Археологија) new series* 1 (1995): pp. 153-166.

<i>Лечебник</i> (healer's book)	2
<i>Празничен миней</i> (festal mention)	1
<i>Молитвеник</i> (prayer book)	1

From the manuscripts, containing verbal charms, the most important ones are the *сборник* (miscellany) and the *требник* (book of occasional prayers or book of needs). In the medieval and early modern period, verbal magic is most often found in these types of books.

The *сборник* (miscellany) is the main form of medieval and early modern Bulgarian literature. This type of manuscript consists of texts, whose genre and content can be related or not.¹³⁹ The *сборник* may contain only liturgical and religious texts, or a mixture of religious and non-religious texts, or the content can be entirely secular. The *сборник* appeared in Bulgaria in the ninth-tenth century and was written by members of the clergy. The content is varied: historical, didactic, religious, juridical, divination books, popular novel-type fiction, entertaining fabulae, sententiae, recipes, lives of saints. It is characteristic for the miscellany that the texts inside are grouped according to their theme or topic¹⁴⁰. In the Ottoman period, this type of manuscript dominated the Bulgarian literature. Composed, compiled, copied and spread by members of the low levels of the

¹³⁹ [Petar Dinekov] Петър Динеков, *Стара българска литература* (Old Bulgarian Literature), (София: 1953).

¹⁴⁰ [Anisava Miltenova] Анисава Милтенова, “Към литературната история и типология на сборниците със смесено съдържание” (On the Literary History and typology of the Miscellanies), *Старобългарска литература* (1980): pp. 22-36. [Anisava Miltenova] Анисава Милтенова, “Към въпроса за сборниците със смесено съдържание в българската книжнина от XV-XVII век” (On the Question about the Miscellanies in Bulgarian Literature fifteenth-seventeenth century), *Литература, общество, идеи* (1986): pp. 66-87.

clergy, the miscellany is significantly influenced by popular beliefs, tastes and attitudes. Most of all, the miscellanies from after the Ottoman invasion contain Apocrypha.¹⁴¹

The *требник* (book of occasional prayers or book of needs) is one of the main Eastern Orthodox Christian religious and liturgical books.¹⁴² It contains rituals and prayers for private religious services and for various private occasions. The book covers the services that commonly appear in a parish. The *требници* are compiled by monks and priests, and used mainly by parish priests as their practical professional manuals. In the core of the book are various prayers, corresponding to the needs of the Christian community or of some of its members.

The oldest Bulgarian example of a *требник* is the *Euchologion Synaiticum* (the Prayer book from Mount Sinai) from eleventh century,¹⁴³ written in Glagolitic alphabet. This is the most archaic variant of this liturgical book, and contains liturgical texts and prayers for various occasions. Among them, there are also non-canonical texts (verbal charms) against water retention. The *Euchologion Synaiticum* is an early example of a manuscript, where texts of verbal magic made their way among the canonical texts.

Less often or occasionally, verbal charms can be found in other types of manuscripts. Most of them are Eastern Orthodox Christian religious and liturgical books.

¹⁴¹ [B. Penev] Б. Пенев, *История на новата българска литература* (History of the New Bulgarian Literature) (София: 1976), pp. 304-356.

¹⁴² Petkanova, *Encyclopaedia*, pp. 468-469. [Petar Dinekov] Петър Динеков, ed., *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия, том I*. (Cyrillic-Methodian Encyclopaedia, vol.1), (Sofia: Издателство на Българската Академия на Науките, 1985).

¹⁴³ Rajko Nahtigal, *Euchologium Sinaiticum. Starocerkevno-slavanski glagolski spomenik. I del. fotografski postenek* (Euchologium Sinaiticum. Old Church Slavonic Glagolitic Manuscript. Part I. Photographs). Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1941; Rajko Nahtigal, *Euchologium Sinaiticum. Starocerkevno-slavanski glagolski spomenik. II del. Tekst s komentarjem* (Euchologium Sinaiticum. Old Church Slavonic Glagolitic Manuscript. Part II. Text with Commentary). Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1942, and Ioannis C. Tarnanidis, *The Slavonic Manuscripts Discovered in 1975 at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai*. (Thessaloniki: St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai and the Hellenic Association for Slavic Studies, 1988), pp. 65-86, and pp. 219-248.

Verbal charms may appear in the *служебник* (priest's service book), which contains the liturgical texts, pronounced by the deacons and priests during the liturgy, and also in the *псалтир* (psalter), which contains the psalms, the biblical songs and other texts with liturgical and practical functions (prayers, divinations books, didactic texts, commentaries, etc.). One can find charms also in the *часослов* (book of hours), containing the prayers for the services in the 24-hour liturgical cycle, and used by the church singers,¹⁴⁴ and also in the *празничен минеѝ* (festal *menaion*), which contains the services for the big feasts (Christmas, Candlemass, Annunciation, Palm Sunday, etc.). In the books of this type, the texts are in calendric order, starting from September 1 (the beginning of the Church Year). In addition, verbal charms may turn up in the *молитвеник* (prayer book), which contains the parts of the services, which the priests read during the liturgy.

Among the manuscripts with verbal charms, there is a peculiar case. These are the books of the type of the *лечебник/лековник* (healer's book), which are handwritten collections of medical recipes and curative instructions.¹⁴⁵ The oldest manuscript of this type in Old Church Slavonic is from around the seventeenth century. The manuscripts of the *лечебник/лековник* type present a syncretic approach towards the health problems. They combine empirical medical knowledge, usage of herbs, substances and tools, surgical and physiotherapeutic manipulations and procedures, with mythical worldview,

¹⁴⁴ The oldest *часослов* in Old Church Slavonic is from the thirteenth century.

¹⁴⁵ [A. Miltenova] А. Милтенова, [A Kirilova] А. Кирилова, *Средновековни лековници и амулети* (Medieval Healer's Books and Amulets), (Sofia: Анубис, 1994); [Svetla Petkova] Светла Петкова, "Неволите на тялото в средновековните лековници" (The Afflictions of the Body in the Medieval Healer's Books) *Електронно списание LiterNet 2* (2009). The article is only available on the internet, no pagination; [Svetla Petkova] Светла Петкова, "Средновековните лековници. Специфика на културното изразяване" (The Medieval Healer's Books. Specifics of the Cultural Expression), *Старобългарска литература* 37-38 (2007): 208-227; [E. Sprostranov] Е. Спространов, "Народни лековници" (Folk Healer's Books), *Сборник с Народни Умотворения*, 22-23 (1906-1907).

magical beliefs, ritual actions and supernatural elements. The patient is regarded to be under the influence of supernatural powers. The illness is often personified as demonic being.¹⁴⁶ The preparation and employment of amulets is quite usual. The practical medical procedures are often required to be done at certain time and on a certain place.

Logically, one would expect to find plenty of verbal magic in such books. This type of magic is present indeed, under the general term *баене* (verbal charming) and *да се пребае* (to do verbal charming).¹⁴⁷ However, concrete texts of verbal charms rarely appear in Bulgarian healer's books. I could only find two such cases: a charm against the *nezhit*¹⁴⁸ from a *лечебник* from 1800¹⁴⁹ and a charm against snakebite from a *лечебник* from sixteenth-seventeenth century¹⁵⁰. In other words, it is clear that there is verbal charming practice and ritual, but it is not clear what particular texts are used. It seems that the healer's books contain information on the curative procedure, including the magical ritual, while the books of occasional prayers and the miscellanies contain the texts of the curative verbal charms. So far, this fact has no satisfactory interpretation and explanation.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Петкова, "Неволите на тялото".

¹⁴⁷ For example, in the case of pregnancy complications, certain substances should be taken, a verbal charm should be uttered over them, and then should be applied on the woman. See Петкова, "Неволите на тялото"; [Hristo Kodov] Христо Кодов, "Един ръкописен лекарственик от миналия век" (A Handwritten Healer's Book from the Last Century), *Известия на Народния етнографски музей в София* 8-9 (1929).

¹⁴⁸ The *nezhit* is a personification of headache and main antagonist in a number of Bulgarian verbal charms. See below the chapter on evil supernatural beings.

¹⁴⁹ Sofia, National Library, № 799, fol. 15v. See Tsonev, *Catalogue* vol.2, p. 493.

¹⁵⁰ Belgrade, National Library, № 321, fol. 75. See Yatsimirskii, "К истории ложных молитв," p. 66.

¹⁵¹ The medieval and early modern Bulgarian healer's books are not very well studied. The possible connections between these manuscripts and other medieval and early modern books with curative magical content are da facto untouched by researchers. See Петкова, "Неволите на тялото".

In my material, there are six manuscripts, which are of bigger importance, as they contain a larger number of charms. They are presented in the table below. The other 63 manuscripts contain less than five charms each.

Manuscript	Number of charms
<i>Требник</i> , seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622 ¹⁵²	21
<i>Часослов</i> , 1498, Jerusalem, Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate, LGOPI № 22 ¹⁵³	15
<i>Требник</i> , sixteenth century, Savina monastery, sine №. ¹⁵⁴	13
<i>Никетово молитвениче</i> , 1787, Sofia, National Library, № 646 ¹⁵⁵	10
<i>Требник</i> , unknown location, fourteenth century, sine №. ¹⁵⁶	8
<i>Сборник</i> , seventeenth century, Belgrade, National Library, № 555 ¹⁵⁷	5

The *Требник* № 622 from the seventeenth century is the manuscript with the largest number of verbal charms. The book has 165 folios, with missing beginning and end and a number of lacunae inside the volume. Until fol. 133v, the content is completely canonical: akathist and parts of the services at various occasions (baptism, wedding, confession, blessings, etc.). On fol. 133v, there is the title *Prayers against the Cursed Nezhit*. This is followed by twelve verbal charms against the *nezhit*. They continue until fol. 137, followed there by canonical prayers and blessings until fol. 144v, where there is one charm against illness and two charms against complications at delivery. On fol. 145

¹⁵² Detailed description of the manuscript and publication of its charms in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 132-138.

¹⁵³ Charms from the manuscript are published in Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, pp. 17-18, 23-24, 34, 37-38, 43-44, 66, 74-76, 82, 89, 93.

¹⁵⁴ Charms from the manuscript are published in Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, pp. 33 and in Kačanovskij, “Апокрифне molitve”, pp. 154-157 and 159-160.

¹⁵⁵ Detailed description of the manuscript and publication of its charms in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 161-166.

¹⁵⁶ Charms from the manuscript are published in Kačanovskij, “Апокрифне molitve”, pp. 153-154

¹⁵⁷ Charms from the manuscript are published in Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, pp. 28, 33, 65 and 100.

and 146, there are a charm against a rival, a charm for going to the court of law, a charm for staunching blood, one against sudden pain and a charm against illness. On fol. 147, there is a part of a canonical exorcism, followed on fol. 147v by a charm against insomnia. On fol. 148, there is the fragment of a charm against the Devil. On fol. 149v, there are a charm against draught and two charms for rain. From fol. 157 until the end of the book, there is a canonical service with missing end¹⁵⁸.

The content of *Требник* № 622 is coherent and there are no marginalia. The canonical and the non-canonical texts follow each other. There is a completely merging between the official normative Christian prayers and the verbal charms.

The *Никетово молитвениче* № 646 from 1787 is another very important manuscript. It not only contains a number of verbal charms, but the name of the user (Niketa) appears throughout the book. The manuscript has 80 folios. On the cover, there is the drawing of a cross and the inscription *holy righteous cross...help your servant Niketa*. On fol. 1-3, there are protective charms against fright and desperation. On fol. 3, there is a list of the names of Virgin Mary. On fol. 8v, there is a list of the name of the archangels. On fol. 9-31, there are charms against fright. On fol. 31v, there is a charm for the protection of the whole body. On fol. 33v, there is a charm for the health of all joints. On fol. 37, there is a charm against unclean spirit, and on fol. 46 a charm against the Devil, followed by a charm against fright and by 17 names of the archangels. On fol. 51, there is a charm against the *nezhit*, followed by a charm against storm and wind. On fol. 53v, there is a charm against thunder and lightning. On fol. 55v, there is a charm against wind and storm. On fol. 57v, there is a charm against fright. On fol. 58v, there is a charm against spasms. On fol. 60, there is a charm against the cursed Devil, which has to be

¹⁵⁸ Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, pp. 132-138.

worn on the person. On fol. 61, there is another charm against the Devil. On fol. 63, there is a charm for going to the court of law. On fol. 64v, there is a charm for a good journey. On fol. 65v, there is a list of God's names. On fol. 67, there is a charm for killing an enemy. On fol. 69, there is a charm against illness. On fol. 69, there is a charm for going to the court of law. On fol. 75v, there is a charm against the devil. On fol. 77, there are five partially erased amuletic drawings (against night fright, wind, evil beings, and for a good journey and when going to a superior). From fol. 77v until the end of the book, there is a part of an apocryphal narrative. At the very end of the manuscript, there is a note that this prayer book is written on December 4, 1787.¹⁵⁹

There is no general information available about the *Часослов* LGOPI № 22 from 1498 and the *Сборник* № 555 from the seventeenth century, apart from the fact that these manuscripts contain verbal charms. They are published and quoted by Yatsimirskii¹⁶⁰. The general information about the *Требник* sine № from the sixteenth century and the *Требник* sine № from the fourteenth century is even scarcer. Jagić, Kovačević and Kačanovskij quote verbal charms from these books¹⁶¹.

The verbal charms are part of the medieval Bulgarian literature. This literature (also called Old Bulgarian) is manuscript literature¹⁶², written in Old Church Slavonic language. Its beginnings are at the end of the ninth century, after the acceptance and the spread of the Glagolitic and Cyrillic alphabets. Based on the Christian worldview and the Byzantine models and experience, this literature is predominantly religious. Its main

¹⁵⁹ Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, pp.161-166.

¹⁶⁰ Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, passim.

¹⁶¹ Jagić, “Sredovječni liekovi, gatanja i vračanja”, passim, Kovačević, “Nekoliko priloga”, passim and Kačanovskij, “Апокрифне молитве, gatanja i priče”, passim.

¹⁶² In the late medieval and early modern Bulgarian literature, there are also a few printed books. However, these are exceptions from the manuscript tradition. See [Petar Atanasov] Петър Атанасов, *Начало на българското книгопечатане* (The beginnings of the Bulgarian Printing), (Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1959).

characteristics are canonicity and normativity. The canons and the norms are defined according to the Christian ethical and esthetical values and views.¹⁶³

The medieval Bulgarian literature exists through the medieval and the early modern period, which in Bulgaria continues until the end of the seventeenth century. The majority of the medieval Bulgarian manuscripts do not contain data about their author and place of production.¹⁶⁴ However, the available sources show that most of the books were written and copied by members of the clergy (monks and priests).¹⁶⁵ This tradition begins with Cyril, Method, and their disciples, all of which were clerics. As a result, the manuscripts were produced mainly in clerical environment. The authors and the copyists work in various cultural centers, which can be urban (especially the capital cities) and monastic. After the Ottoman invasion, the literature was created mainly in monastic milieu.¹⁶⁶

In terms of genres, models, motives and ideas, the medieval Bulgarian literature is under strong Byzantine influence. The first books are translations from Byzantine originals. Via Byzantium, the Bulgarian literary production experienced Mediterranean, Coptic, Jewish and Eastern influences. The Byzantine tradition brought not only the official, but also a number of apocryphal, non-canonical and pre-Christian notions,

¹⁶³ [Petar Dinekov] Петър Динеков, *Похвала на старата българска литература* (Laudation for the Old Bulgarian Literature), (Sofia: Български писател, 1979); [Petar Dinekov] Петър Динеков, *Стара българска литература* (Old Bulgarian Literature), (Sofia: Български писател, 1953); [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, *Стара българска литература в седем тома, том I. Апокрифи* (Old Bulgarian Literature in Seven Volumes. Vol. I Apocrypha), (Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1981).

¹⁶⁴ [К. Кувев] К. Кувев, *Съдбата на старобългарската ръкописна книга през вековете* (The Fate of the Old Bulgarian Hand-Written Book through the Centuries), София: 1986.

¹⁶⁵ Petkanova, *Encyclopaedia*, pp. 468-469.

¹⁶⁶ Ibidem.

elements and texts. The majority of the medieval Bulgarian verbal charms came from Byzantium already in the tenth century and in large numbers.¹⁶⁷

This Byzantine influence is present through the entire period. However, there were other powerful factors, which shaped the medieval Bulgarian literature. One of these is the pre-Slavic (Balkan) and Slavic archaic pre-Christian mythologies, belief systems and worldviews. They had a serious impact, especially visible in the Apocrypha and the non-canonical texts, like the verbal charms.¹⁶⁸ This influence is probably facilitated by the fact that the medieval and early modern Bulgarian literature was written in Old Church Slavonic (the vernacular language of the local population), and the writers (although members of the clergy) came from this same population.

Another powerful factor is the dualistic Bogomil heresy, which appears in the tenth century.¹⁶⁹ Its impact is visible in a number of medieval Bulgarian Apocrypha. Bogomilism and its dualism are definitely connected with the verbal charms. In the second half of the tenth century, the official church authors accused the Bogomil priest Jeremy (поп Йеремя) of “telling lies” and “practicing verbal charming”. Among other literary works, priest Jeremy wrote also “false prayers against fever”. These are de facto verbal charms from the so-called Sisinnius-type, where the personified fevers and encountered and defeated by the legendary saint Sisinnius¹⁷⁰. It also seems quite possible that the Bogomilism and its dualism interacted with the archaic pre-Christian dualistic worldview and cosmology. This interaction is visible in the encounters, the dialogues and

¹⁶⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁸ [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, “Фолклорът в апокрифните молитви” (The Folklore in the Apocryphal Prayers), *Български фолклор* 2 (1976): pp. 28-40.

¹⁶⁹ [B. St. Angelov] Б.Ст. Ангелов, Апокрифи (Апокрыфа), in *История на българската литература. I.* (History of the Bulgarian Literature, I) (Sofia: БАН 1962, pp. 178-192). [E. Georgiev] Е. Георгиев, *Литература на изострени борби в средновековна България* (Literature of Religious Struggles in Medieval Bulgaria), (Sofia: БАН, 1966), pp. 233-304.

¹⁷⁰ See below the chapter on good supernatural figures.

the struggles between negative and positive supernatural powers, which are central elements for many of the verbal charms.¹⁷¹

The third important factor is the Ottoman invasion. As a result, the urban cultural and literary centers disappeared. The Bulgarian Orthodox church lost its autonomy. Either the monastic centers disappeared or their literary production decreased significantly. The educational levels of the clergy dropped significantly. De facto, there were no official church authorities and no official church control on the content of the manuscripts, produced and used by the monks and the priests.¹⁷²

From the table above, it is visible that the verbal charms appear in certain types of manuscripts, in particular in miscellanies and in books of occasional prayers. It seems that these types of manuscripts are naturally predisposed to deviation from the canonical norm.¹⁷³ In the case of miscellanies, the varied mixed content naturally allows the inclusion of all kind of texts. In the case of the books of occasional prayers, the non-canonical texts (like verbal charms) crept in, probably due to the practical focus of this type of book¹⁷⁴. This process is even easier, when the charms have the formal characteristics of a Christian prayer, and when there is not enough control and knowledge about the canonicity of the manuscript. The *требници* more or less reflect the popular

¹⁷¹ Petkanova, *Апоскрифа*, passim; [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, “Богомилството и апокрифната литература” (Bogomilism and the Apocryphal Literature), *Palaeobulgarica* 3 (1982): pp. 143-153.

¹⁷² [Petar Dinekov] Петър Динеков, *Стара българска литература* (Old Bulgarian Literature), (София: Български писател, 1953).

¹⁷³ Shniter, *Молитва и Магия*, passim.

¹⁷⁴ [Mariyana Tsibranska-Kostova] Марияна Цибранска-Костова, [Elka Mircheva] Елка Мирчева, *Зайковски требник от XIV век. Изследване и текст* (The Zaykovski Book of Occasional Prayers from the Forteenth Century. Text and Analysis), (Sofia: Валентин Траянов, 2012); [G. Minchev] Г. Минчев, “Мястото на новооткритите листове от Синайския евхологий сред другите текстове от ръкописа. Филологически и литургически анализ на молитвите от денонощния богослужебен цикъл (asmatike akolouthia)” (The Place of the Newly Discovered Folios from the Euchologion Synaiticum among the Other Texts in the Manuscript. Philological and Liturgical Analysis of the Prayers from the Twenty-Four Hour Service), *Palaeobulgarica/ Старобългаристика* XVII, 1 (1993): pp. 12-36.

religion and the popular religious needs and beliefs with their syncretism, and the verbal charms fit well in this framework.¹⁷⁵

2. 2. Influences

Medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms are highly syncretic, which is typical for verbal magic in general. The Bulgarian verbal charms appear as a product of the merging between Pre-Christian folklore magical texts and Christian texts.¹⁷⁶ They are “part of the twilight zone between the pre-Christian and the Christian worldviews.”¹⁷⁷ Due to the heterogeneity and syncretism, it is difficult to trace back the origins of the charms. The picture, however, has some clear components.

On the one hand, the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms have elements and features, which come from the pre-Christian South-Slavic magical tradition. This is an old, intricate and to some degree enigmatic phenomenon, which is part of the pre-Christian South-Slavic religion and culture. The pre-Christian South-Slavic magic probably contained both Slavic and non-Slavic elements, motives and ideas.¹⁷⁸ In the medieval Bulgarian verbal charms, the pre-Christian South-Slavic influence can be seen

¹⁷⁵ [V. Panayotov] В. Панайотов, “Системността в славянските богомилски текстове”, in *Преславска книжовна школа. Т.7.* (Preslav Literary School), (Sofia: Научен Център “Преславска книжовна школа”, 2004, pp. 308-315).

¹⁷⁶ Shniter, *Молитва и Магия*, p. 49.

¹⁷⁷ Borsje, “Druid, Deer and “Words of Power,” p. 34, where the author refers to the genre of medieval Irish *lorica*.

¹⁷⁸ [M. Arnaudov] М. Арнаудов, *Студии върху българските обреди и легенди*, т. 1-2 (Studies on Bulgarian Rituals and Legends, vol. 1-2), (София: БАН, 1971-1972), Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, passim. [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, “Фолклорът в апокрифните молитви” (The Folklore in the Aposyphal Prayers), *Български фолклор* 2 (1976): pp. 28-40; [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, *Апокрифна литература и фолклор* (Aposyphal Literature and Folklore), (Sofia: Българска Академия на Науките, 1987). Such non-Slavic elements come, for example, from the Thracian, the Dacian and the ancient Greek and Roman cultures. For comparison, the pre-Christian Eastern-Slavic magic experienced strong Ugro-Finnic and Central Asian influence. See Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, passim, especially pp. 9-30. The focus of the author is mainly on Russian texts, but he also discusses questions concerning the Slavic tradition in general.

for instance on the lexical level¹⁷⁹ (realia, names, specific vocabulary and terminology) and on the mythological level (characteristics of supernatural beings and locations, cosmological notions, worldviews and magical beliefs).¹⁸⁰

On the other hand, a major impact on Bulgarian verbal magic is given by the cultural contacts between Bulgaria and Byzantium, reaching various levels and affecting various spheres. Especially from ninth century onwards, in the course of the official Christianization of medieval Bulgaria, Byzantine tradition provided important models, notions and motives. A number of Christian apocryphal and heretical ideas and writings reached medieval Bulgaria via the mediation of the Byzantine tradition. Through Byzantium, also a great deal of verbal magic, charm-types and amulets reached the Bulgarian lands. The Byzantine connection is very strong – the Bulgarian verbal charms have very close parallels in Byzantine non-canonical prayers of the same content and function.¹⁸¹

The Byzantine charming and amulet tradition is a complex successor of late antique and early medieval pagan and Christian Mediterranean and Eastern verbal magic.¹⁸² Via the contact zone between Byzantium and Bulgaria, the Bulgarian charming and amulet tradition came into touch with these influences. As a result, some general origins of the Bulgarian charms can also be traced from ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian prototypes. These models were adopted and adapted in late antique milieu,

¹⁷⁹ The language is the most accessible entrance point for the South-Slavic elements, as the charms were translated into the vernacular.

¹⁸⁰ [Ivanichka Georgieva] Иваничка Георгиева, *Българска народна митология* (Bulgarian Folk Mythology), (Sofia: Наука и Изкуство, 1993), pp. 5-14.

¹⁸¹ Henry Maguire, “Introduction”, in Henry Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Magic* (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995), pp. 1-8, Robert Mathiesen, “Magic in Slavia Orthodoxa: The Written Tradition” in Henry Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Magic*, pp. 155-178.

¹⁸² Hans-Georg Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur*, (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1971).

especially by the Coptic tradition. From there, they entered the Byzantine culture, which in turn influenced the medieval Bulgarian verbal magic.¹⁸³

Formed in such a way, the medieval Bulgarian verbal magic kept developing, and on its own turn influenced other Balkan traditions. For example, the charms against the *nezhit*¹⁸⁴ clearly point to a contact zone between Bulgarian and Romanian medieval verbal magic.¹⁸⁵ In the late medieval and early modern period, another contact zone appeared where Bulgarian Christian verbal magic interacted with Ottoman Turkish Muslim influences. The Christian-Muslim contact zone exists also today.¹⁸⁶

Due to the two main factors (the pre-Christian South Slavic and Balkan traditions, and the Christian Byzantine tradition), the comparison with corresponding South Slavic, Balkan and Byzantine parallels proves to be the most productive. However, the comparison with Late Antique Mediterranean, Coptic, Eastern Slavic (Russian), Baltic and Ugro-Finnic (Hungarian and Estonian) examples is useful too.

2. 3. State of scholarship

The Bulgarian scholar Donka Petkanova has a major contribution in the philological and literary study of charms. She examines the charms as literary phenomena, closely related with the apocryphal literature, especially with the Biblical Apocrypha.¹⁸⁷ To a certain degree, she goes beyond pure literary analysis, and places the

¹⁸³ Petkanova, *Encyclopedia*, p. 40.

¹⁸⁴ Personified headache, see below the chapter on evil supernatural beings.

¹⁸⁵ Emanuela Timotin, “*Ieși, năjite, pricăjite... de la molitvele mincinoase le descântece.*” (*Get out, nezhit, cursed one... from False Prayers to Verbal Charms*). *Limba română* 55 (2006): 72-83.

¹⁸⁶ For example, some charms collected in twentieth century show clear traces of Islamic influences. See [Iveta Todorova-Pirgova] Ивета Тодорова-Пиргова, *Баяния и магии* (Charms and Magic), (Sofia: Академично издателство "Марин Дринов", 2004).

¹⁸⁷ Petkanova, *Apocrypha*. This book contains Modern Bulgarian translations of selected charms, accompanied by an introduction on medieval apocryphal literature and on “apocryphal prayers” in particular.

charms in the context of mythology and popular belief,¹⁸⁸ and studies in more details the links between the medieval “apocryphal prayers” and the folklore.¹⁸⁹ By comparing examples from manuscripts, and the charms and songs from folklore collections, she points out the similarities in their narrative structures, stylistic figures, ritual practices and mentality models.¹⁹⁰ Petkanova’s view is that the medieval “apocryphal prayers” are strongly influenced by folklore, and vice versa. This is, because the authors of the “apocryphal prayers” borrowed forms, ideas and expression models from the folklore.¹⁹¹ Petkanova however, regards the medieval and early modern charms from manuscripts to be different from the charms from the later folklore collections¹⁹². Her approach is mainly a comparative one¹⁹³.

In her book *Молитва и магия* (Prayer and Magic)¹⁹⁴ Maria Shniter makes a detailed analysis of the linguistic, stylistic and formal structures found in the verbal charms. Her attention is on the structural and formal similarities and differences between the canonical and non-canonical texts. Shniter compares and juxtaposes folklore magical

¹⁸⁸ [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, “Апокрифните лечебни молитви” (Apocryphal Healing Prayers), *Palaeobulgarica/Старобългаристика* XXV, 3 (2001): pp. 62-85. Here, the author briefly discusses the terminological issues of the field.

¹⁸⁹ [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, “Фолклорът в апокрифните молитви” (Folklore in the Apocryphal Prayers), *Български фолклор* 2 (1976): 28-40; [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, *Апокрифна литература и фолклор* (Apocryphal Literature and Folklore), (Sofia: Българска Академия на Науките, 1987).

¹⁹⁰ Петканова, “Фолклорът”, pp. 28-40; [Donka Petkanova] Донка Петканова, *Апокрифна литература и фолклор* (Apocryphal Literature and Folklore), (Sofia: Българска Академия на Науките, 1987).

¹⁹¹ Петканова, “Фолклорът”, p. 39. However, the author does not elaborate on the matter, and does not explain the routes of borrowing and influence.

¹⁹² Through all her publication, Petkanova calls the former “апокрифни молитви” (“apocryphal prayers”), and the later “баяния” (“charms”).

¹⁹³ This approach can be seen in all of Petkanova’s works, for a summary, see the conclusion in Petkanova, “Апокрифните лечебни молитви”, pp. 84-85.

¹⁹⁴ Shniter, *Prayer and Magic*. For an additional discussion on the development of the medieval Bulgarian prayers and charms, see [Maria Shniter,] Мария Шнитер, “Молитвите против природни бедствия в новооткритата част на Euch. Sin. и техните късни южнославянски съответствия” (The Prayers Against Natural Disasters in the New-Found Parts of the Euch. Sin. and Their Late Slavonic Correspondences), in [Anisava Miltenova] Анисава Милтенова, ed., *Петти достойтъ. Сборник в памет на Стефан Кожухаров*, (Sofia: Издателски център „Боян Пенев“, 2003), pp. 112-124.

texts and Christian prayers based on the common causes for their origin.¹⁹⁵ On the basis of these comparisons, Shniter points out the borderline between the folklore incantation and the prayer as “the moment of the change in the human position: from equal subject, opposed to the personified Evil through the magical power of the speech, the human being becomes an object of the activity of the almighty God.”¹⁹⁶ Shniter presents the characteristics of the proper “apocryphal prayers” as a mixed genre and a field of interaction and conflict between folklore and normative religion, between the different worldviews and cultural system on the Bulgarian territory. Shniter’s book traces the processes in Bulgarian verbal magic in the Ottoman occupation: the merging between folklore and Christian texts due to the lack of a clear distinction between canonical and uncanonical, and the survival of medieval magical texts up to the eighteenth century.¹⁹⁷

[Adelina Angusheva] Аделина Ангушева and [Margaret Dimitrova] Маргарет Димитрова examine the medieval Slavic prayers, charms and recipes for childbirth,¹⁹⁸ with a focus on the lexical structures, variability of textual forms and ritual symbolism of the texts. Based on comparison with Byzantine parallels, the authors point out the ritual importance and practical flexibility of the words of power. The authors continue with the topic in another article,¹⁹⁹ where they compare the medieval Bulgarian and Byzantine

¹⁹⁵ Shniter regards both the folklore texts and the Christian prayers to be “forms of interpretation and manipulation of the world and the events in it.” See Shniter, *Prayer and Magic*, pp. 16-17

¹⁹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 19 and 33-56.

¹⁹⁷ Ibidem, pp. 22-23.

¹⁹⁸ Adelina Angusheva and Margaret Dimitrova, “Medieval Slavonic Childbirth Prayers: Sources, Context and Fuctionality“, *Scripta & e-scripta* 2 (2004): pp. 273-290.

¹⁹⁹ Margaret Dimitrova and Adelina Angusheva, “Protective Powers: Texts and Saints,” in Marija-Ana Dürriegl, Milan Mihaljević, Franjo Velčić, ed., *Glagoljica i hrvatski glagolizam. Zbornik radova s međunarodnoga znanstvenog skupa povodom 100. obljetnice Staroslavenske Akademije i 50. obljetnice staroslavenskog instituta (Zagreb-Krk 2.-6. listopada 2002)* (Glagolitic Alphabet and the Croatian Glagolitic Alphabet. Collection of papers from the International Conference on the Occasion of the Hundred Year Anniversary of the Slavic Academy and the Fifty Year Anniversary of the Institute of Old Church Slavonic (Zagreb-Krk, October 2-6, 2012), pp. 355-366.

childbirth prayers with a text preserved on a Glagolitic apotropaic amulet. The focus is again on the linguistic and literary structures and models, and the way they were employed in the construction and use of sacred and magical texts. Angusheva and Dimitrova also examine the verbal magic in the context of medieval and early modern Christian sermons against magical practices and practitioners.²⁰⁰ The lexical level is of special interest, as it gives information about popular beliefs, practices and feasts. While comparing folklore material and medieval manuscript texts, the authors conclude that the late medieval Bulgarian magic had two spheres: written and folkloric (oral, popular).²⁰¹ According to Angusheva and Dimitrova, the two spheres interact in the context of non-existing higher clerical institutions and lack of normative regulations for distinguishing the canonical from the non-canonical.

[Vasya Velinova] Вася Велинова contributes with a short, but important article on a cycle of the so-called Prayers of St. Sisinnius,²⁰² which are apotropaic charms against demonic beings and the Devil. She presents different Slavic and Greek variants of the texts, with emphasis on philological features, but also point the cultural connections and the transmission of motives. When discussing the various manuscripts, Velinova touches on the question of who the people were who wrote down and recorded the charms. The center of her analysis is a medieval manuscript from the thirteenth

²⁰⁰ [Adelina Angusheva] Аделина Ангушева and [Margaret Dimitrova] Маргарет Димитрова, “Другите авторитети: слова против магьосици и баячки в дамаскинарската традиция” (The Other Authorities: Sermons against Magicians and Charmers in the Tradition of the Damaskins), *Годишник на Софийския университет “Св. Климент Охридски”*, Център за славяно-византийски проучвания “Иван Дуйчев” 92 (11), (2002): pp. 81-99.

²⁰¹ Ibidem, pp. 90-93.

²⁰² [Vasya Velinova] Вася Велинова, “Из българо-сръбските книжовни връзки през XIII в.” (“On the Bulgarian-Serbian Literary Connections in Thirteenth Century”), (Зборник радова Византолошког института/ Recueil des travaux de l’Institut d’études byzantines XLVII, 2012, pp.162-177.

century,²⁰³ and it demonstrates the written Bulgarian tradition of verbal charms from the middle Ages proper.²⁰⁴

In her substantial volume *Баяния и магии* (Charms and Magic), the folklorist Iveta Todorova-Pirgova presents rich folklore source material, arranged according to the functions of the charms.²⁰⁵ Although this is mainly material attested and collected in nineteenth and twentieth century, the author gives some parallels with charms from medieval manuscripts. Todorova-Pirgova discusses the need to look at the verbal magic as a syncretic complex, with all its textual, material and ritual elements²⁰⁶. She refers to basic cultural paradigms and to theory of ritual in particular.²⁰⁷

In sum, the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms were studied mainly from philological and literary perspective. Often, the research is purely descriptive. If present at all, the cultural analysis and the interdisciplinarity are rather scarce and supplementary. Many interesting charms and a number of challenging problems are completely neglected. Also, the relevant scholarship is mainly done and published in modern Bulgarian language, with a few exceptions in Russian and Croatian. Hence, this thesis is aiming at a contribution in respect of these missing aspects: more cultural analysis and writing in English language.

²⁰³ *Драголов сборник* (The Miscellany of Priest Dragol), thirteenth century, Belgrade, National Library, № 651.

²⁰⁴ Much larger number of Bulgarian charms come from early modern manuscripts. The Bulgarian charms from medieval sources are valuable pieces.

²⁰⁵ Todorova-Pirgova, *Баяния и магии*, passim.

²⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 9

²⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 18-19.

3. Features

3. 1. Elements, structures and forms

Verbal charms have specific constructive components. Usually, a verbal charm (regardless of period and tradition) contains at least some of these elements. They are presented here, mainly based on Edina Bozóky's classification²⁰⁸, with additions and examples from the medieval and early modern Bulgarian material:

- naming of the evil/the illness/the problem;
- naming of the helping figures or powers;
- *historiola* (narrative);
- dialogue/dramatization;
- actualization (especially of the *as...so...*- type);
- ratification phrases (for example “*Amen*”, “*Let it be so!*” or “*Proven*”);
- *impossibilia* and *absurda*;
- reverse count;
- lists of names and titles;
- conjuration /expulsion command;
- fixed formulae;
- sound effects;
- separate symbols, letters or list of letters
- foreign, garbled or gibberish words or phrases

Among these elements, the *historiola* (literary meaning “little story”) has a special significance: “Historiola is the long-standing term for abbreviated narrative that is

²⁰⁸ Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaiques*, pp. 36-45.

incorporated into a magical spell.”²⁰⁹ The majority of the charms contain this little story or short narrative. The *historiola* describes episodes with the participation of supernatural agents, and it is often followed by a magical formula or conjuration. As Jonathan Roper aptly defines it, “The *historiola* is very much a *micro*-narrative, sometimes less even than a sentence in length.”²¹⁰

The micro-narrative is most often found in healing charms and transmits crucial information: the story of a successful healing or cure in the past. Thus, the healing narrative provides the present healing or cure with authority and proof of its effectiveness.²¹¹ The charm applies the successful precedent from the *historiola* to the present situation.²¹² For example, in Finno-Ugric tradition, the *historiola* may dominate the charm, or may function as an introductory element or core. If the *historiola* is missing, it is still marked by the use of names, epithets, etc. “Whatever structural device is used, however, the materials remain clearly rooted in a myth world.”²¹³

Thus, the *historiola* is an element, which is structurally and formally significant. It may be the central pillar of the charm or a peripheral addition to the other parts. It can be long and elaborated, or short, simple or even fragmentary. The *historiola* (and the dialogue inside it) reveals and expresses the complex relations between the supernatural figures and the intense power interactions between the human and the supernatural world.

²⁰⁹ David Frankfurter, “Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells,” in Marvin W. Meyer and Paul Mirecki, ed. *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129)*. Leiden: Brill, 1995, 451-470), p. 458.

²¹⁰ Roper, *English Verbal Charms*, pp. 90-91.

²¹¹ Frankfurter, “Narrating Power,” p. 466.

²¹² Roper, *English Verbal Charms*, p. 91.

²¹³ Honko, „Healing: Introduction“, in Lauri Honko, Senni Timonen, Michael Branch, ed., *The Great Bear: A Thematic Anthology of Oral Poetry in the Finno-Ugrian Languages*, New York: Oxford University Press for the Finnish Literature Society, 1994). p. 525.

The following three charms represent good examples for a *historiola*. The first one is the famous Second Merseburg Charm for curing the sprained leg of a horse. It contains a typical *historiola*, followed by a typical fixed magical formula:

*Phol and Wodan were riding to the woods,
And the foot of Balder's foal was sprained
So Sinthgunt, Sunna's sister, conjured it.
and Frija, Volla's sister, conjured it.
and Wodan conjured it, as well he could:
Like bone-sprain, so blood-sprain,
so joint-sprain:
Bone to bone, blood to blood,
joints to joints, so may they be glued.*²¹⁴

The second example is a Bulgarian charms against the *nezhit* (perpetrator of headache), from a seventeenth-century manuscript. Here the *historiola* tells about an encounter and a dialogue between good and evil supernatural figures.²¹⁵ It is followed by a conjuration and expulsion formula:

Jesus came down from the Seventh heaven, from his home, met the nezhit and asked it: "Where are you going?" The nezhit answered: "I am going into the human head, in order to bemuse the brain, to break the teeth and the jaws, to deafen the ears, to blind the eyes, to distort the mouth, to block up the nose, so there will be headache day and night." And Jesus said to the nezhit: "Go back into the forest and enter the deer's head and the ram's head, because they can suffer everything and can survive. And stay there until the end of Heaven and Earth. And be afraid of the Lord, who is sitting on the cherubim throne, until He will come to judge the entire universe and you too, rabid nezhit, who are the source of every infirmity. I am conjuring you, nezhit! Go away from the God's servant (say the name) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

²¹⁴ The charm is preserved in a manuscript from ninth/tenth century, found in Fulda, Germany. The English translation given here is from Benjamin W. Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture: an Introduction* (Chichester UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 368-369.

²¹⁵ See below no. 4 and no. 5 in the Catalogue and the subchapter The illness. On the encounter-charms, see the papers from the symposium *Encounter Charms*, held in Tartu, Estonia on May 9, 2008, accessible on <http://www.folklore.ee/ri/fo/konve/2008/charms/>.

The third example is a Bulgarian charm to cure a wounded horse, from a fifteenth century manuscript.²¹⁶ Here the *historiola* is combined with an encounter, a dialogue and *as...so...* – type of conjuration formula:

Find a dry bone from a horse, cast a spell with it and then return it back to the place where you took it from. Draw a line with the bone and say the following:

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost a certain person (say the name) was walking, neighing and crying. The Mother of the Lord, the healer saints Cosmas and Damian, and Cyprian, Pantaleymon, Manuel, Savel, Ismail and Roman met him and asked: “What is wrong with you (say the name), so that you are neighing and crying?” “I am crying, because a thorn hit my good horse and now the wound collects pus.” The holy healers told him: “Turn back, you (say the name), go to God’s servant (say the name), let him take a dry bone and to give the illness to the dry bone, the dry bone to give the illness to the earth, the earth to the grass, the grass to the dew, the dew to the sun, the sun to the wind. And let the illness dissipate, may it have neither a top up, nor roots down.” Say three times: “Let us stand with fear!”

Often, the *historiola* contains a dialogue between its characters: benevolent or malevolent supernatural agents, personified illnesses, forces of nature and humans. This dialogue is a key moment. Here the protagonists of the charm meet for a verbal dueling.²¹⁷ Here the malevolent agents declare their intentions and activities. The dialogue also provides the benevolent figure with an opportunity to oppose the evil threat and to exercise her or his power towards the adversary. The dialogue and the verbal dueling is where the crisis or the problem is defined, controlled and solved successfully. Through the conversation, the conflict between the malevolent and the benevolent figures starts, develops and culminates. The result of this battle depends exclusively on the

²¹⁶ See no. 25 in the catalogue.

²¹⁷ On the verbal dueling, see Alan Dundes, Jerry W. Leach and Bora Özkök, “The Strategy of Turkish Boys’ Verbal Dueling Rhymes,” *The Journal of American Folklore*, 83, 329 (1970): pp. 325-349, and Elizabeth Mathias, “La Gara Poetica: Sardinian Shepherds’ Verbal Dueling and the Expression of Male Values in an Agro-Pastoral Society,” *Ethos*, 4, 4 (1976): pp. 483-507.

power of words, and the dialogue is the key element and the crucial weapon in this verbal dueling between the protagonists.

Being such central parts of the charm, the *historiola* and the dialogue are inseparably connected with the other very important elements: the magic formulae. These can be invocations, opening commands, expulsion commands, conjurations, adjurations and ratification formulae. If the *historiola* is a story, a narrative, then the formulae are direct speech, often incorporated as part of the dialogue. They can, however, appear in charms, which lack a *historiola* or a dialogue. The magic formulae can be pronounced by the characters of the charm, by its performer or by the patient. In a certain sense, the magic formulae can be regarded as the strongest words of power, standing at the highest level of verbal magic. They represent the concentrated magical verbal energy of the charm and focus it at the target. The magic formulae are the culmination of the whole charm, the guarantee for its success.

The *historiola* is very flexible and changeable, while the healing formulae usually remain fundamentally the same²¹⁸. Good example for this is again the Second Merseburg Charm and its parallels in a number of European languages and traditions. The comparison of these parallels shows that there is a big variety of narratives and characters, but the healing formula (“bone to bone, blood to blood...”) remains more or less the same (“this part at least is extremely ancient”²¹⁹). In charms, it is possible that the

²¹⁸ Jonathan Roper, “Traditional Verbal Charms with Particular Reference to the Estonian and English Charms-Traditions”, MA thesis, University of Sheffield, 1997.

²¹⁹ J. Knight Bostock, *A Handbook in Old High German Literature*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 30.

healing formulae are much older than the medieval *historiolae*, with which they are often found²²⁰.

The medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms contain most of the elements from the list above. The *historiola* usually contains an encounter and a dialogue. There is a recurrent circle of characters and protagonists, there is the anti-world of *impossibilia*, the list of names, and also the ratifications are very characteristic. The Bulgarian tradition demonstrates a high level of flexibility: the same recurrent phrases are employed in a big variety of situations. On the one hand, the magic formulae are relatively few in number, stable, fixed, and with proven efficacy. On the other hand, they are flexible, adaptable and applicable in numerous situations. Even the most immutable and crystallized phrases are actually rather mobile and well adaptable and adapted for a variety of situations and needs. Together with variation, combination, recombination and adaptation are the most prominent characteristics of the verbal charming tradition in general.

The formulaic language is a language of power: to heal, to damage, to summon, to expel, to control and to change. Giving an example with a charm for curing a cow, Ulrika Wolf-Knuts points out: “the content of the charm was constructed in order to correspond to the needs of a certain situation in human life and the components were taken from several spheres, culturally inherited as well as self-experienced. We must assume that charms were used in critical existentially important situations where the person who utilized the text referred to his or her own environment.” A crisis could put the economic well-being and the physical existence of a rural household at a great risk. Therefore, the inhabitants had two choices: to give in, or to counteract the difficult situation. The use of

²²⁰ Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaiques*, pp. 39-40 and 42-43.

charms means, “to oppose the powers that cause the crisis and try to thwart them. Saying a charm would be one of several ways of coping with the dangerous situation.” Charms are part of the system of counteracting and coping, and “Coping is a cultural, socially anchored, repetitive activity that opens a person’s eyes to new opportunities in time of distress.”²²¹

3. 2. Stability and variation

A number of scholars has addressed the questions and issues of stability and variation of the verbal charms.²²² Verbal charms are texts, which dwell and constantly move between the oral and the written. As every oral genre, they are an object of constant change. Even when recorded and transmitted in a fixed written form, they still fluctuate and vary significantly. De facto, verbal magic and verbal charms exist and function through stability and variation. Yet, even in the midst of most radical mutations and modifications, some elements, characters and topics are preserved and stay ever constant.

The main and most common types of Eurasian verbal charms are regarded to be of rather ancient origin. Often, they can be traced back to very old basic models and types. Back in the distant past, we can see (whole or fragmented) primal narratives, pristine motives and primordial characters.²²³ These are resourceful archetypes with

²²¹ Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, “Charms as a Means of Coping”, in Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 62-70).

²²² For example, see Jonathan Roper, “Charms, Change and Memory: Some Principles Underlying Variation,” *Folklore-Electronic Journal of Folklore* 9 (1998): pp. 51-70, Anna-Leena Siikala, “Variation in the Incantation and Mythical Thinking: The Scope of Comparative Research,” *Journal of Folklore Research* 23, 2/3, special double issue: The Comparative Method in Folklore (1986): pp. 187-204, Lauri Honko, “Empty Texts, Full Meanings: On Transformal Meaning in Folklore”, *Journal of Folklore Research* 22, 1 (1985): pp. 37-44, and Honko, *Thick Corpus*, passim.

²²³ One excellent example for such a character is the child-stealing/child-killing supernatural demon/witch Gyllou (to call her by her Greek Byzantine name) and her numerous metamorphoses through the millennia. See below the chapter on evil supernatural beings. A good example for an archetypal verbal magical formula is the phrase “*Bone to bone, blood to blood...*” in the Second Merseburg Charm.

immense potential for survival and endurance. These archetypes traveled between territories and peoples, crossing temporal, special and cultural frontiers and exhibiting high levels of stability. This is clearly demonstrated by the motif-indexes of the verbal charms.²²⁴ It can also be seen in the historical parallels of a given verbal charm.

On the other hand, the ancient supernatural beings adopted new specific names, features and actions, which are characteristic for the different cultures, where they appeared. Similarly, the *historiolae*, the elements, the rituals and the aims of the charm can be changed and adapted to different new traditions, cultures and situations. In addition, the notions, the characters, the features and the images can be mixed, merged, confused and contaminated with each other and among each other. In some traditions, two, three or more separate verbal charms can be merged in one single charm.

The main contributors here are the religious and spiritual complexes, the mythology, the belief systems, the rituals, the general attitude towards magic and the state of its practice. However, factors like social structures and demographic specifics, mentality, rulership, nature and ecology, material culture, languages, existence and levels of literacy, communication routes, mobility of population, natural disasters, epidemics and wars may have significant input too.

Variation of verbal charms can also be observed within a single tradition. This can happen in a very broad range. The variants of a charm can differ in only minor details of

²²⁴ For example, see Tat'iana Agapkina and Andrei Toporkov, "Charm Indexes: Problems and Perspectives", in James Kapaló, Éva Pócs and William Ryan, ed., *The Power of Words: Studies of Charms and Charming in Europe*, (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2013), pp. 71-99; Tatyana A. Mikhailova, Jonathan Roper, Andrey L. Toporkov, Dmitry S. Nikolayev, ed., *Oral Charms in Structural and Comparative Light. Proceedings of the Conference of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research's (ISFNR) Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming. 27-29th October 2011, Moscow* (Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities, 2011), Jonathan Roper, "Typologising English Charms", in Roper, *Charms and Charming in Europe*, pp. 128-144, Sanda Golopentia, "Towards a Typology of Romanian Love Charms", in *ibidem*, pp. 145-187.

expression and style, while de facto staying essentially the same text; or the variants of a charm can significantly differ from one another, displaying big structural and semantic differences. Alternatively, the variants of a charm can be so various, so radically different, that they are actually not variants, but different charms.

Finally, the questions of stability and variation are also questions of memory and mistake. Traditions or parts of traditions can be forgotten or semi-forgotten. The same is true about verbal charms. Fusions, distortions and disappearances may happen due to oblivion, especially in a culture (or in a layer of a culture) which is predominantly oral. Defective memory, oblivion and lack of language knowledge can also lead to misunderstanding (or new understanding) of notions, symbols and names, whose original meaning is forgotten or incorrectly translated. Memory, oblivion and misunderstanding are also reflected, when a verbal charm is recorded in a fixed written form. Here, the scribal and sectorial mistakes often intervene into the picture and influence the further form and transmission of the charm.

Many charms have a number of variants within a single tradition and numerous parallels in other traditions. Yet, there are charms, which so far appeared in only one single text, in one variant. The belief in the power of words is essentially uniform and stable, while the variants and the multiplicity of the particular words of power build an immensely rich and complex picture.

3. 3. Transmission

“There is no single model of charm transmission or charm performance suitable as a description for the entire genre.”²²⁵ There can be

²²⁵ Jonathan Roper, “Traditional Verbal Charms”, p. 98.

- a tight transmission, which is the passing of an oral text from one charmer to another without changes
- a loose transmission, which allows deletions and innovations; or
- a forgetful transmission, when sections of the text can be partially or completely lost or affected by cross-contamination by parts of other charms.²²⁶

The tight transmission, however, may include auditory substitution, mishearing, misreading and miscopying.

It is always oral-and-written transmission. This transmission is shaped by several major factors, well-illustrated by two quotations from relevant Russian sources. The first chronicle goes as follows:

*And the priests have false writings in their Euchologia, like the bad Penitentials (Nomokanony) and the false Prayers for the Fevers. Heretics had distorted the traditions of the Holy Apostles, writing false words to deceive the vulgar; but the Council investigated them and cleansed them and cursed them.*²²⁷

And the second chronicle:

*And in their Euchologia, among the Divine Writ, the stupid village priests have false writings – sown by heretics for the destruction of ignorant priests and deacons – thick village manuscripts and bad Penitentials (Nomokanony) and the false healing Prayers for the Fevers and for infections and for sickness. And they write fever letters on prosphorae and on apples, because of sickness. All this I done by the ignorant, and they have it from their fathers and forefathers, and they perish in this folly. Heretics had distorted Church and the Canons of the Holy Apostles, writing false words.*²²⁸

²²⁶ Ibidem, p. 18 and [Z. Vlasova] З. Власова, “К изучению поэтики устных заговоров” (Towards the Study of the poetics of Oral Verbal Charms), in C. N. Azbelev, ed., *Русский фольклор XIII: Русская народная проза* (Russian Folklore XIII: Russian Folk Prose), (Leningrad: Наука, 1972).

²²⁷ Robert Mathiesen, “Magic in Slavia Orthodoxa: the Written Tradition”, in Henry Maguire, ed. *Byzantine Magic*, (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 1995, pp. 155-178), p. 162. Mathiesen quotes the Russian source *On the True books and the False* (О книгах истинных и ложных) from the twelfth century.

²²⁸ Ibidem, pp.162-163. This quotation is from a fourteen-fifteenth-century longer redaction of the same text.

The role of the clergy appears to be central in the charms transmission. Popkonstantinov connects the introduction of the charms in Christian religious books with the daily life needs and practice of the local priests.²²⁹ Maria Shniter shares a similar position.²³⁰ As Ryan points out, in Russia, the Church

despite its official attitudes, was certainly one route for the importation of particular kinds of charms: uncanonical prayers and practices in many cases from fairly early periods of Christianity in the late antique Mediterranean world, with apocryphal motifs and persons and intermixed with pagan elements.²³¹

Examples for this are the St. Sisinnius exorcistic charms against the twelve fevers, the St. Paul charm against snakebite, and the charms against the *nezhit*. “And it seems clear that the importers were for the most part the minor clergy, who until quite recently could be practitioners in magic and divination among the East and South Slavs, both Orthodox and Catholic, as they could in the West.”²³²

Then, the “stupid village priests” and “the minor clergy” possibly formed a real “clerical underground”, as defined by Richard Kieckhefer²³³. Judging by the large amount of Bulgarian religious manuscripts containing verbal charms, such a “clerical underground” was probably very real and active in medieval and early modern Bulgaria.

4. Functions

There are three main models of classifying verbal charms.²³⁴ The first one is according to function or aim, where the emphasis is not on the textual characteristics, but on the purpose of the charm. This is also the most traditional method of classification.

²²⁹ Popkonstantinov, “Оловна пластинка с надпис от X век”, pp. 149-150.

²³⁰ Shniter, *Prayer and Magic*, passim.

²³¹ Ibidem.

²³² W. F. Ryan, “Eclecticism in the Russian Charm Tradition”, in Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms and Charming in Europe*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 113-127), p. 121.

²³³ Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, passim.

²³⁴ Vaitkevičienė, *Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms*, p. 76.

The second model is according to structural and semantic type, where the focus is on similar motives and structural analogies between the texts. Such a classification is a result of the scholar's interpretation of the charms. The third model is according to the dominating action of the text or the plot. This model is especially applicable for healing charms, whose textual organization depends on the actions and on the healing strategies. In general, the three models of classification should be regarded side by side, because each one of them has its advantages and limitations.²³⁵

Here, I present a functional classification of the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms. Such a classification has not been done so far. The content of the charms cover three themes: health (127 charms), protection (42 charms), good luck (11 charm). The chronological distribution in the first group (health) goes as following:

Time period	Number of charms
10 c. – 12 c.	3
13 c.	1
14 c.	18
15 c.	18
16 c.	30
17 c.	40
18 c.	9
19 c.	2
undated	6
total	127

The thematic distribution in the same group goes as following:

Health issue	Number of charms
--------------	------------------

²³⁵ Jonathan Roper, "Typologising English Charms", in Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms and Charming in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 128-144), p. 140.

<i>nezhit</i>	26
water retention	25
rabies	24
snakebite	17
blood-staunching	19
toothache	5
illness	2
spasm	1
sudden pain	1
headache	1
giving birth	1
problems of the joints	1
fever	1
insomnia	1
“worm”	1
wound on horse’s leg	1
total	127

The chronological distribution in the second group (protection) goes as following:

Time period	Number of charms
10 c.	3
13 c. - 14 c.	1
14 c.	4
15 c.	4
16 c.	7
17 c.	13
18 c.	6
19 c.	2
undated	2
total	42

The thematic distribution in the same group goes as following:

Problem	Number of charms
Devil	6
general protection	6
thunder and lightning	4
enemy	4
<i>veshtitsa</i>	3
bad rain	3
<i>zhitovabets</i>	2
enchantment	2
wolf	2
mice	2
crops' infestations	1
demonic possession	1
thieves	1
fugitive slave	1
hale	1
storm and wind	1
birth problems	1
infants' mortality	1
total	42

The chronological distribution in the third group (good luck) goes as following:

Time period	Number of charms
16 c.	2
17 c.	4
18 c.	3
undated	2
total	11

The thematic distribution in the same group goes as following:

Situation	Number of charms
journey	6
court of law	6
total	12 ²³⁶

4. 1. Health

The health of humans and animals is one of the big themes in verbal magic in general.²³⁷ Prevention and healing, specific illnesses, afflictions and injuries, corporal and mental well-being, physical strength, stamina and longevity are all addressed by the charms. For example, the Lithuanian charms can be used for a variety of purposes: to provide success in agricultural activities, hunting, fishing, weaving; to inspire or discourage love; to bring or stop the rain, the snow, or storms; to protect from lightning; to put down fire.²³⁸ However, the majority of Lithuanian verbal charms are aimed at healing and preventing human and animal illnesses.²³⁹

²³⁶ One of the charms is applicable for both situations.

²³⁷ Together with bringing love and good luck, influencing the weather and cursing. The prevalence of one theme or another may vary from one tradition to another.

²³⁸ Vaitkevičienė, *Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms*, pp. 67-68.

²³⁹ Ibidem. For some good examples of living traditions, where the healing and apotropaic verbal charms is very strong or dominating, see Kapaló, *Text, Context and Peformance*, Emanuela Timotin, *Descânțelele manuscrise românești (secolele al XVII-lea – al XIX-lea)* (The Romanian Manuscript Charms (17th – 19th centuries), (Bucharest, Editura Academiei Române, 2010), Emanuela Timotin, “The *năjit* between Prayers and Charms. A Study on the Romanian Manuscript Tradition”, in Kapaló, Pócs, Ryan, *The Power of Words*, pp. 216-230; Éva Pócs, *Magyar ráolvasások*, 1–2 (Hungarian Verbal Charms), (Budapest: MTA Könyvtára, 1985–1986), Owen Davies, “French Charmers and Their Healing Charms” in Roper, *Charms and Charming in Europe*, pp. 91-112, Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, “Charms as Means of Coping”, in Roper, *Charms, Charmers and Charming*, pp. 62-70), Monika Kropiej, “Slovenian Charms Between South Slavic and Central European Tradition” in ibidem, pp. 145-162, Meri Tsiklauri and David Hunt, “The Structure and Use of Charms in Georgia, The Caucasus”, in ibidem, pp. 26-272.

The medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic follows the same tendency and the health-themes predominate. Here is a typical example: a tenth-century charm against the *nezhit*, preserved on an amulet²⁴⁰:

[Front side] *Jesus was going down from the seventh heaven, met the nezhit and asked him: "Where are you going, nezhit?" The nezhit answered: "I am going into the human's head, to suck his brain, to break his bones, to blind his eyes." And Jesus told him: "Turn around and go in the forest, in the head of the deer and [back side] of the ram, for it is patient. Now and forever and for eternity, amen! Jesus Christ wins!*

And another example: three fourteenth century charms against water retention, written together in a manuscript.²⁴¹

[I] *Prayer for water retention at a horse or a human. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Three angles were standing at the banks of river Jordan, holding copper intestines. One was tying, the other one was untying, and the third one was praying to the Lord: Holy, holy, holy Lord Sabbaoth! Fill the heaven and the earth with your glory!*
[II] *Prayer for the same. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I went out in a fiery field and I found a burning lake. Three sisters were sitting into it and holding three dishes full with crayfish intestines. The oldest one was tying, the middle one was untying, the youngest one was praying to God: O, Lord, please let the water pass through this man (the person's name) in the name of the Father.* [III] *In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, write: on the front right leg – Tigris, on the on the left rear leg – Physon, on the front left leg – Euphrates, on the left [sic!] rear leg – Gyon. All over the earth, in the name of the Father and the Son. Read each of them four times. It will relief.*

And a sixteenth century charm against rabies, preserved in a manuscript²⁴²:

Prayer against rabid dog or wolf. When someone was bitten, do this. Take wine, sour bread and your knife. Put the wine on the ground, take the bread in your hands and the knife in your right hand and say the following

²⁴⁰ Попkonstantinov, "Молитва против нежит върху амулет от X век от Пъкуйул луй Соаре", p. 124. See no. 1 in the Catalogue.

²⁴¹ *Зайковски требник*, fourteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 960, fol. 47v. Stoyanov, *Catalogue*, p. 114. See no. 22 and no 23 in the catalogue.

²⁴² *Требник*, sixteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 616, fol 10v. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol.II, pp. 123-124. See no. 21 in the catalogue.

prayer to the Holy Mother of God: O, Lord! St. Ivan was walking through the holy mountain carrying a holy axe, to cut a holy tree. Mad dogs met him, rabid wolves met him, and he heard a voice from the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost: Ivan, Ivan, turn back! Do not be scared, but give to that man the Lord's flesh and the Lord's blood, to be healed and to be smeared with it. Read this prayer nine times in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, make the sign of the cross with the knife. If the bitten person is near, give him wine and bread. If he is far away, quickly pour out of the wine, and at midnight put the knife under a big stone and say the following prayer twice: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost! St. Ivan was traveling and saw iron soldiers and rabid wolves. He got scared, started trembling and screaming. And God told him: Ivan, do not be scared! Take the Lord's flesh and the Lord's blood and give it to the man to eat and to be healed from the east to the west in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, today and forever. Amen.

4. 2. Protection

It is difficult to draw a clear-cut borderline between the healing verbal charms and the general protective verbal charms. Many of the curative charms are also apotropaic ones. In the framework of magic, the preservation of the health and the general protection against various evil powers and beings can be de facto the two sides of the same concern. The personified illnesses can be addressed and treated through the same apotropaic means, as the other malevolent spirits. This is clearly seen in the Bulgarian case, where the protective charms are focused on the Devil, the *veshtitsa* and the *mora*,²⁴³ who bring all kind of evil and trouble.

Certainly, the apotropaic verbal charms can also serve as protection against all kind of dangers, not only against the health-related ones. These are, for example, natural disasters, accidents, misfortunes, predators, thefts, war, death, etc. Depending on the tradition, such natural dangers can be more or less personified, or seen as caused directly

²⁴³ The *veshtitsa* and the *mora* are malevolent supernatural beings, which attack people. See below the chapter on evil supernatural figures.

by supernatural agents. In the Bulgarian case, the powers of nature are personified and hostile, or natural disasters are caused directly by evil beings, like the Devil.

Here follows a tenth century charm against *veshtitsa*, preserved on a lead amulet:²⁴⁴

The veshtitsa was saying: "I eradicate a fruit tree, I dry female beauty, I defeat female malice, I approach and enter into the human's place as a hen, as a dove, as a snake..." And Archangel Michael said: "Tell me your clan!" 1st name mora, 2nd veshtitsa, 3rd vizusa, 4th makarila, 5th siyana, 6th evgelusa, 7th navradulia, 8th living fire, 9th midday one, 10th strangler of children ...

Another example: a seventeenth century charm against evil supernatural beings, preserved in a manuscript:²⁴⁵

Prayer of St. Sisinnius, St. Simeon, St. Sidorius and St. Theodor. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Sisinnius was standing in front of the gates of the God's servant (say the name), leaning on a spear, with a sword on his waist, watching at the moras and the veshtitsas and at all kind a of vilas and vilitsas. Together with him, I called all the angels, and archangel Michael and Peter and Paul, the apostles of Christ. It came invisible from the sky and cast away the moras, the veshtitsas and all the evil spirits from this place: in the evening, at midnight, when the sea is resting, when the water is not flowing, when the roosters are not singing and when the dogs are not barking – then they cast away all the devils and the dark spirits from this place, from this temple, from these four directions. Here, at the God's servant (say the name), there is no place for you, here are the four evangelists, here are the twelve apostles, here are the sixteen prophets, they will guard and protect the God's servant in the name of the Father, the son and the Holy Ghost.

And another example, a seventeenth century charm for protection against the enchantment of the bees, preserved a manuscript²⁴⁶:

²⁴⁴ Lead amulet from the tenth century. Popkonstantinov, "Оловен амулет с апокрифен текст от Варненския музей", p. 283. See no. 11 in the Catalogue.

²⁴⁵ *Часослов*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 631, fol. 162. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, p. 150-151. See no. 15 in the catalogue.

²⁴⁶ *Псалтур*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 464, fol. 141v. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol.II, pp. 11-12. See no. 26 in the catalogue.

Prayer against the enchantment of the bees. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Take three sticks from pumpkin, three from vine, and three from wattle fence. With three stones on the door, fumigate three times with incense, in the month of March, on the first day.

At the dispersing of the bees: sweet and kind little bees were rattling and flying, St. Zosim met them and asked them: Where are you going, kind little bees? We are going to the Galilean mountain to build houses. St. Zosim told them: I swear you, do not go into the Galilean forest, and do not build there neither houses, nor cells. Return to the God's servant (say the name) and there you do build houses and cells! St Zosim turned my bees back to their mother.

4. 3. Success

In Bulgarian verbal magic, health issues and apotropaic matters are closely interrelated. This complex is supplemented by a third theme: the provision of good luck and success in certain activities.

One example from this group is a sixteenth century charm for a good journey, preserved in a manuscript:²⁴⁷

Prayer for the ones, setting on a journey. God, Our Lord! You accompanied your servant Jacob and you were at the side of your slave Joseph. Please, walk together with your servant (the name)! Lord, deliver him from danger and from every trouble! And give him peace and to be healthy, when on the road, and to follow the truth, according to your orders! Fulfill his life with all the heavenly and earthly goods! While being on the road, may he be back safely, praising your holy name! Because it is your kingdom, and your power, and your glory! In the name of the Father, the son and the Holy Ghost, now and forever and for eternity! Amen.

And another example: a seventeenth century charm for success at the court of law, preserved in a manuscript²⁴⁸:

²⁴⁷ *Требник*, sixteenth century, Kiev, Library of the Seminary, № 193, fol. 227-227v. Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 81. See no. 30 in the Catalogue.

²⁴⁸ *Требник*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 145-146. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, p. 136. See no. 31 in the Catalogue.

Prayer for those, who go at the court. O, God, bless me, Father! I woke up early in the morning and asked God Lord and the Holy Dennitsa [Morning star], which comes from the lap of Abraham with 327 iron, leaden and cuprous keys: Please, lock the mind and the heart of those, who think bad things about me, let them become dump, and let my tongue fly like the gospel of the priest. Please, Lord, close the mind and the heart of my rival and of all lords and judges. And me God's servant (say the name), came out from the envy and entered into the beauty, today and forever.

Again, there is no clear-cut distinction between these charms and the charms from the other two groups. For instance, the charm against enchantment of the bees is placed here in the protection-group. It can, however, also be seen as a good luck-charm, aimed to help at beekeeping and to bring success in this activity.

5. In the Other world – supernatural powers

5. 1. Typology

The extant medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic has a very clear typology. It is curative (charms for health and healing), protective and aversive, i.e., apotropaic (charms for protection), as well as preventive and beneficial (the charms for good luck and success).²⁴⁹ Such a typology has a number of parallels. Apotropaic and healing verbal magic is a universal phenomenon, and in a large number of cases, these themes are more or less dominating. Again, the Mesopotamian tradition establishes a paradigm. One significant portion of the Babylonian verbal charms belongs to the series “Evil Spirits” (*Utukki Limnûti*), which are apotropaic. Another large number of Babylonian texts are from the series “Fever sickness” (*Ašakki Maršûti*) and “Headache” (*Ṭi'i*), which are curative.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Again, it should be kept in mind that the borderline between the types is rather blurry.

²⁵⁰ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, the prefaces and the introductions of vol. I and vol. II.

In the Byzantine tradition too, there is a strong line of apotropaic magic, and a large number of such amulets with corresponding inscriptions.²⁵¹ Their main aims are to solve health problems and to protect against demonic powers. The defense against the harmful impact of the Evil Eye is an omnipresent concern too.²⁵² The apotropaic verbal magic plays a major role in the late medieval and early modern Russian tradition, together with love charms and curses.²⁵³ Written verbal charms are broadly used for protecting one's health, body and property. A large share of the early modern Hungarian verbal magic consists of healing and apotropaic charms.²⁵⁴ Here, both illnesses and bewitchments are among the main concerns. In the Romanian tradition, the charms against the *năjit* and other afflictions demonstrate close relations with the Bulgarian texts against the *nezhit*.²⁵⁵ The above-quoted Coptic,²⁵⁶ English, Lithuanian, Estonian and Gagauz verbal magical traditions are good examples too. In contrast, the Bulgarian oral folklore from twentieth and twenty-first century shows a much bigger variety of themes and a significant presence of aggressive and love magic. Still, the majority of charms are dedicated to apotropaic and healing magic.²⁵⁷

The typology of medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic can be better understood in the framework of usage and transmission of the charms. The effectiveness and the apotropaic functions can be a decisive factor for being chosen for written

²⁵¹ See a comprehensive overview in Jeffrey Spier, "Medieval Byzantine Magical Amulets and Their Tradition", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 56 (1993): pp. 25-62.

²⁵² See the volume Henry Maguire, ed. *Byzantine Magic*,

²⁵³ Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, pp. 42-45 and 217-268.

²⁵⁴ Pócs, *Magyar r olvas sok*.

²⁵⁵ Emanuela Timotin, "The *năjit* between Prayers and Charms. A Study on the Romanian Manuscript Tradition", in Kapalo, Pócs, Ryan, *The Power of Words*, pp. 216-230.

²⁵⁶ On the Coptic tradition and especially on the overlap of healing and protective in Coptic protective spells, see Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, ed. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), pp. 105-109.

²⁵⁷ Todorova-Pirgova, *Баяния и магии*, passim.

transmission. If the users of these written charms were mainly local priests, then the apotropaic and healing charms were most probably the ones they needed the most. Consequently, this type of charms was preserved in a written form. This may also explain why the manuscripts do not contain any aggressive verbal magic or love charms. Finally, it is logical that the amulets with apotropaic functions contain charms of the aversive and protective type.

Within this typological framework, the three themes represent not only spheres of human life, but also operational fields of supernatural agents. These supernatural agents occupy a specific double position. On one hand, they are representatives of the Other World; on the other hand, they operate in Our World, causing various positive and negative effects, and influencing key aspects like health and illness, success and misfortune, life and death.

Essentially, “apotropaic” means “averting evil”, “turning away harm” and “deflecting misfortune”. The evil, the harm and the misfortune can come from different sources: natural and supernatural, human and superhuman.²⁵⁸ Most often, however, the trouble is believed to be caused by a malevolent supernatural power.²⁵⁹ Evil spirits, personified illnesses, etc. are involved in harming humans and disturbing the order of everyday life. The belief in evil and harmful supernatural agents is the main reason for the existence of the apotropaic verbal magic. Because of that, the evil figures are the first ones to be discussed here.

²⁵⁸ For a general overview of supernatural powers and figures in magic, see Flint, *The Rise of Magic*.

²⁵⁹ Moses Gaster, “Two Thousand Years of a Charm against the Child-Stealing Witch”, *Folklore* (1900): 129-62; Alfons Barb, “Antaura, the Mermaid and the Devil’s Grandmother”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966): 1-24, William Francis Ryan, „Ancient Demons and Russian Fevers“, in Charles Burnett and W. F. Ryan, ed., *Magic and the Classical Tradition*, (London: Warburg Colloquia, 2005), pp. 37-58.

The medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms are inhabited by a variety of complex and syncretic supernatural figures. The religions and mythologies of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Ancient Greece and Rome, Byzantium, the Mediterranean area and the Slavic area contributed to the image and the nature of the Bulgarian supernatural beings. Acknowledging the long journey and development of these supernatural figures, it is even more important to look at their quotidian roles and functions. Being active in the daily life environment, the supernatural agents reflect the way of thinking behind the verbal magic. As the “images of invisible reality are for many periods and peoples an archaic area of common mentalities,”²⁶⁰ the bearers of supernatural power represent the crystallized attitude towards quotidian problems, fears and challenges to be coped with. The supernatural figures’ syncretic and heterogeneous character is connected with the practical bent of verbal magic, which “is eclectic to an extraordinary degree, taking components from many different cultural levels and locations.”²⁶¹

We can distinguish between the different traditions, and to determine the origin of certain elements and features. But we should also consider the supernatural agents from Bulgarian verbal magic in their cultural context. Neither the charms, nor their potential users differentiated between pre-Christian and Christian, or between Slavic and foreign supernatural figures²⁶². The distinction was seen much more along the line of good versus evil.

²⁶⁰ Seppo Knuutila, “How to Seize Mentalites,” in Runnel, *Rethinking Ethnology and Folkloristics*, p. 37.

²⁶¹ Wilson, *The Magical Universe*, p. xxvi.

²⁶² For an overview of the Bulgarian popular beliefs and demonology, see Georgieva, *Българска народна митология*, pp. 144-194 and 196-230. For an overview of the personified illnesses in Bulgarian popular demonology, see Todorova-Pirgova, *Баяния и магии*, passim. For a broader central European perspective, see Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, pp. 107-119 and 121-163. For a comparison, see also Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises*, p. 7, where the author says about supernatural powers in Karelian folklore “...to consider Christian saints separately from nature spirits was to draw an artificial

5. 2. The evil ones

Based on their functions, the supernatural figures encountered in Bulgarian verbal charms can be grouped in two categories. The first category consists of the evil ones. These are the malevolent possessors of supernatural power, whose role and intention is to bring harm, trouble, misfortune, disorder, bad luck, illness and death. In the framework of verbal magic, they are the ones, which cause problems and crisis.

The representatives of evil are the most complex and the most ancient supernatural figures in the Eurasian and the Mediterranean charming traditions and practices. The variety of religious traditions (Zoroastrian, Neo-Platonist, Jewish, Gnostic, Christian, etc.), which were in contact in the Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages, “had one strong link between them. This link is in the belief in demons as spirits of evil.”²⁶³ Thus, a complex and heterogeneous demonology emerged, developed and was transmitted and merged with the charming traditions of other cultural areas, like Northern Europe and the Slavic peoples.

In the medieval and early modern Bulgarian source material, the following evil supernatural beings appear:²⁶⁴

- *нежит* (*nezhit*) – 28 charms
- snake²⁶⁵ – 16 charms
- *дявол* (the devil) – 6 charms
- *вещица* (*veshtitsa*) – 3 charms
- demon – 1 charm

boundary where, at the lowest social levels of the semi-literate rural populace, the existence of such a boundary was questionable.”

²⁶³ Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, p. 20.

²⁶⁴ The numbers indicate the number of charms from my source material, where the supernatural agent appears as a protagonist.

²⁶⁵ The specific features of the snake as a supernatural being are discussed below.

- *ypouu* (enchanters/spellbinders)²⁶⁶ – 1 charm

Typically, these figures do not stand alone in the texts, but are opposed by good supernatural actors: for example Jesus Christ versus the *nezhit*, archangel Michael versus the *veshtitsa*, St. Sisinnius versus the unclean spirits and the Devil, etc. Thus, the protagonists and the antagonists are involved in intense confrontations and power relations.

5. 2. 1. The illness

Health is the main theme of the Bulgarian material, and the supernatural perpetrators of illnesses and injuries are the most prominent of the evil powers. Harmful and dangerous, and threatening a crucial aspect of human existence, these malevolent agents occupy a key position among supernatural beings. The counteraction to these perpetrators constitutes an important part of the magical practice.²⁶⁷ In the Bulgarian verbal charms, this is well demonstrated by the figure of the *nezhit*.

The *нежум* (*nezhit*) is a supernatural illness-perpetrator, believed to cause health problems, mainly connected with the head. In one word, the *nezhit* can be defined as “personified headache”. The actual medical diagnosis varies significantly: migraine, fever, brain tumors, teeth and gum afflictions (for instance, gingivitis), eyes and nose inflammations, contagious infections of the bones and the joints, *meningitis purulenta*, or different mental disorders.²⁶⁸ In comparison, the Romanian tradition (where the *nezhit* appears too) associates it also with afflictions like *stomatitis ulcerosa*, catarrh, various

²⁶⁶ Very tentative translation, as the Bulgarian word carries a complex of very specific notions.

²⁶⁷ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, passim; Barb, “Antaura”, pp. 1-24, Spier, “Medieval Byzantine Magical Amulets”, pp. 25-62.

²⁶⁸ Овчаров, “Проклетият нежит”, p. 107. Unfortunately, the author does not give more detailed reference to studies, dealing with the question which actual disease(s) is presented by the *nezhit*.

skin diseases or purulent wounds.²⁶⁹ The Greek and Roman equivalents of the *nezhit* are associated with headache, often combined with acute inflammations of the eyes, believed to be caused by the wind²⁷⁰. According to medieval South Italian charms, the personified headache afflicts the teeth, the face (the mouth) and the heart. It also brings hallucinations and lethargy. The overall effect is similar to that of intoxication and paralysis²⁷¹.

The medieval and early modern Bulgarian charms against the *nezhit* come from the following sources:

- amulet (lead lamella) from the tenth century, excavated in the medieval fortress on the island of Păcuil lui Soare²⁷² – one charm.
- amulet (lead lamella) from the tenth-eleventh century, excavated near the village of Odūrtsi, northeastern Bulgaria²⁷³ – one charm.
- amulet (lead lamella) from the eleventh-twelfth century excavated in 2002, in a medieval grave near the town of Kūrdjzhali, Southern Bulgaria²⁷⁴ – one charm.

The charms from these three amulets are variants of the same encounter-type of text. In the *historiola*, Jesus Christ meets the evil *nezhit*, the *nezhit* tells about his harmful activities (to bring illness to humans), and is then expelled by Christ.

²⁶⁹ Emanuela Timotin, “*Ieși, năjite, pricăjite...de la molitvele minciunoase le descăntece*” (*Get out, nezhit, cursed one... from False Prayers to Verbal Charms*). *Limba română* 55 (2006): 72-83.

²⁷⁰ Fritz Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1907), pp. 93-94.

²⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 84.

²⁷² The island is located in the Romanian part of the Danube, fifteen kilometers from the town of Silistra, northeastern Bulgaria. The fortress was Bulgarian and Byzantine, and existed between eighth and fourteenth century. The charm was published in Popkonstantinov, “Молитва против нежит върху амулет от X век от Пъкуйул луй Соаре”, p. 124.

²⁷³ The charm was published in Doncheva and Popkonstantinov, “Апокрифна молитва от X-XI век върху оловен амулет от с. Одърци, Толбухинско”, pp. 288-289.

²⁷⁴ The charm was published in original and in Modern Bulgarian translation by Garena and Iliev, “Новооткрит старобългарски надпис-заклинание”, pp. 152-153.

- amulet (lead lamella) from the thirteenth-fourteenth century, excavated in the medieval fortress Chreshche, Eastern Macedonia²⁷⁵ – one charm. The text tells that Adam was ill (had the *nezhit*) and gave him to Eve, who gave him to the wind, who transmitted him to the river, etc., until the *nezhit* disappears completely.
- *Требник*, fourteenth century, sine № et loco²⁷⁶ – seven charms. The first two texts are from the encounter-type, where Jesus Christ meets and expels the *nezhit*. The third text is from the encounter-type, where Archangel Michael meets and expels the *nezhit*. The fourth text is from the encounter-type, where Archangel Gabriel meets seven armed angels, who are going to defeat the *nezhit*. The fifth text is from the encounter-type, where the archangels Michael and Gabriel and St. Cosmas and St. Damian meet seventy armed angels and seventy armed archangels, who are going against the *nezhit*. The sixth charm's *historiola* is about Adam, who had the *nezhit* and gave him to Eve, etc. The seventh text is an expulsion formula, addressed directly to the *nezhit*.
- *Часослов* (book of hours) from 1498, LGOPI № 22, fol. 410, Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem²⁷⁷ – one charm. The text is from the type Adam giving the *nezhit* to Eve.
- *Сборник* (miscellany) from the fifteenth and sixteenth century, № 308, fol. 116r. Sofia, National Library²⁷⁸ – one charm. The text is from the as... as... – type: as

²⁷⁵ [Nikos Čausidis] Никос Чаусидис, “Оловен амулет со испишана молитва против “нежит” од градот Чрешче” (Lead Amulet With an Inscribed Prayer Against “Nezhit” from the City of Cresce), *Зборник на Музеите на Македонија (Археологија)*, н.с. бр. 1 (1995): pp. 153-166.

²⁷⁶ The charms were published by Kačanovskij, “Apokrifne molitve”, pp. 153-154. See no. 4 in the catalogue.

²⁷⁷ The charm was published in original and in Modern Bulgarian translation by Ovcharov, “Some Little Known Apocryphal Prayers”, p. 82.

Jesus once put his hand on Adam's head and cure him, so now the servant of God may be cured.

- *Требник* (book of occasional prayers) from the seventeenth century, № 622, fol. 133v-136, Sofia, National Library²⁷⁹ – twelve charms. The first text is from the encounter-type, where Jesus Christ meets and expels the *nezhit*. The second text is from the encounter-type, where Archangel Gabriel meets and expels the *nezhit*. The third text is from the as... so... – type: as Jesus once put his hand on Adam's head and cure him, so now the servant of God may be cured. The fourth text is from the encounter-type, where the archangels Gabriel and Michael meet seven armed angels, who are going against the *nezhit*. The fifth text has is from the encounter-type, where angels meet a person suffering from the *nezhit* and cure him. The sixth text is an invocation to Christ and to St. Cosmas and Damian to help and cure the *nezhit*. The seventh and the eight texts are expulsion formulae, addressed directly to the *nezhit*, which is expelled in the name of supernatural authorities (God, archangels, St. John the Baptist). The ninth text is a direct request addressed to the human body to be healthy and free from the *nezhit*. The tenth text's *historiola* tells how the *nezhit* fell from the sky and was destroyed by blind shepherds. The eleventh text is from the encounter-type, where Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist meet a person, suffering from *nezhit* and cure him. The twelfth text Adam giving the *nezhit* to Eve.

²⁷⁸ The charm was published by Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, pp. 252-253.

²⁷⁹ The charms were published by Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 132-135. See no. 5 in the catalogue.

- *Часослов* (book of hours) from 1744, № 1391, Sofia, National Library²⁸⁰ – one charm. The text is from the type Adam giving the *nezhit* to Eve.
- *Никетово молитвениче*, 1787, Sofia, National Library, № 646, fol. 51v – one charm. The text is from the type Adam giving the *nezhit* to Eve.
- *Лечебник* (healer’s book) from 1800, № 799, fol. 15v, Sofia, National Library²⁸¹ – one charm. The text is from the type Adam giving the *nezhit* to Eve.

Summarized in numbers, the extant medieval and early modern verbal charms against the *nezhit* belong to the following types:

Type of text	Number of charms
Adam transmits the <i>nezhit</i> to Eve	7
The <i>nezhit</i> meets Jesus Christ	6
The archangel(s)/the saints meet the angels/archangels, going against the <i>nezhit</i>	4
The <i>nezhit</i> meets the archangel(s)	2
Expulsion formulae, directly addressed against the <i>nezhit</i>	2
Jesus cured Adam	2
The angels meet a person suffering from the <i>nezhit</i> and cure him	1
Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist cure a person with the <i>nezhit</i>	1
Blind shepherds destroy the <i>nezhit</i>	1
Direct request the human body to be free from the <i>nezhit</i>	1
Invocation to Christ and to St. Cosmas and Damian to cure the <i>nezhit</i>	1

²⁸⁰ The charm was published by Hristova, *Catalogue*, vol. V, p. 89. See no. 8 in the catalogue.

²⁸¹ The charm was published by Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, p. 493. See no. 9 in the catalogue.

The *nezhit* is presented by a relatively large number of charms, which constitute a corpus. The texts are of different types, and recombine and re-use a variety of elements. The *nezhit* is of highly syncretic nature – an alloy between the Slavic motives and the Byzantine influence, where the later in its turn carry even older motives and elements from other traditions.

The type of story, where Adam transmits the illness to Eve, can be seen in the following charm from a manuscript from 1498²⁸²:

Prayer against nezhit. Adam had nezhit and passed it to Eve. Eve to the lead, lead to the sea, the sea to the wave, the wave to the foam, the foam to the edge, the edge to the sand, the sand to the grass, the grass to the dew, the sun rose and dried it. Thus the nezhit to disappear²⁸³ from the God's servant (say the name). In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Now and forever and for eternity. Amen.

The charms from this type is a variant of the as... so... - type of formula: as the illness is passed from one person or thing to another and eventually disappears, so it should disappear from the afflicted person. As Adam successfully got rid of the *nezhit*, so may the afflicted person get rid of it successfully too. There is no description of the problem or of the supernatural being, which causes it. Actually, the text does not say at all what a *nezhit* is. It seems to be understood that it is an issue or a being with supernatural origins. In order to cope with it, the charm employs the images of the mythical ancestors (Adam and Eve) and a metal with magical properties (lead).

It seems that this transmission-*historiola* does not have a parallel in Byzantine verbal magic.²⁸⁴ However, it is related to some other traditions. For example, a Hungarian text from 1656 tells how the joists of the house and other parts of the building's

²⁸² *Часослов*, 1498, Jerusalem, Library of the Othodox Patriarchate, LGOPI № 22, fol. 389-389v. See Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв” 23. See no. 7 in the Catalogue.

²⁸³ Literary, the Old Church Slavonic text says “to dry away” or “to dry out”.

²⁸⁴ At least, Pradel's and Vassiliev's collections do not contain any such parallels.

construction transmit the illness one to another.²⁸⁵ Going back in time, there is also a Syriac charm against lunacy,²⁸⁶ which says:

Evil Spirit of Lunacy, you will needs to go forth from the bones, from the sinews, from the flesh, from the skin, and from the hair unto the ground, and from the ground passing to iron, and from iron to stone, and from stone you will pass on to the mountain. This writing must be sealed. Amen! Amen!

Another parallel can be seen in the Babylonian *Legend of the Worm*, which explains the origins of the gum afflictions²⁸⁷:

*After Anu had created the Heavens,
The Heavens created the Earth,
The Earth created the Rivers,
The Rivers created the Canals,
The Canals created the Marshes,
The Marshes created the Worm.*

In a way, the Bulgarian charm and the Babylonian charm complement each other. The Babylonian text tells how the illness was created via transmission, while the Bulgarian charm shows the opposite process – how the illness was destroyed via transmission. The Babylonian text also provides a kind of pre-history of the *nezhit*. The *Legend of the Worm* tells that the worm was originally given dry bones and scented wood for food²⁸⁸. However, it preferred to drink among the teeth and to destroy the gums. The worm became *sickness of the head, of the teeth, of the heart, heartache/Sickness of the eye, fever, poison*.²⁸⁹ Because of this, it was cursed to be smashed by the fist of Ea.

²⁸⁵ Pócs, “Én vagyok mindennél”, p. 185.

²⁸⁶ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirit*, vol. I, p. XL.

²⁸⁷ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 161.

²⁸⁸ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, pp. 160-163.

²⁸⁹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 145.

The type of encounter-*historiola* about Jesus meeting the *nezhit* can be seen in the following text from a seventeenth-century manuscript:²⁹⁰

Jesus came down from the Seventh Heaven, from his home, met the nezhit and asked him: "Where are you going?" The nezhit answered: "I am going into the human head, in order to bemuse the brain, to break the teeth and the jaws, to deafen the ears, to blind the eyes, to distort the mouth, to block up the nose, so there will be headache day and night." Then Jesus told the nezhit: "Go back into the forest and enter the deer's head and the ram's head, because they can bear everything and still survive. And stay there until the end of Heaven and Earth. And be afraid of the Lord, who is sitting on the cherubim throne, until He comes to judge the entire universe and you too, rabid nezhit, who are the source of every infirmity. I conjure you, nezhit! Go away from God's servant (say the name) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

Another variant of this story is the narrative, where the *nezhit* meets the archangel²⁹¹:

St. Archangel Michael Gabriel was walking, carrying iron bow and iron arrows, and he wanted to shoot a deer and a stag. He did not find there a deer and a stag, but he found the nezhit, who was sitting and splitting stones. The archangel asked him: "Who are you, who is sitting and splitting stones?" He answered him: "I am the nezhit, I will split the human head and will take out the brain, will spill the blood." Michael Gabriel said: "Cursed damned nezhit, neither take out the brain, nor split the head, but go into the desert mountain, enter the head of the stag, it is patient, it can tolerate this. If I find you after seven days, I will cut you in pieces or will shoot you." The nezhit begged: "Do not cut me into pieces, do not shoot me, I will escape into the mountain and into the head of the stag."

This encounter-*historiola* has direct parallels in the medieval South Italian Greek text *Εὐχὴ ἡμικράνη εἰς πονοκεφάλι* (Migraine prayer against headache)²⁹²:

²⁹⁰ *Требник*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 133v-136. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 133-135. See no. 5 in the Catalogue.

²⁹¹ *Требник*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 133v-136. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 133-135. See no. 5 in the Catalogue.

²⁹² Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 267-268. The charm is from a South Italian Greek manuscript from the sixteenth century. English translation in Barb, "Antaura", pp. 2-3.

The migraine came out from the sea striking and roaring, and our Lord Jesus Christ met it and told it: “Where are you bringing headache and migraine and pain in the skull and pain in the eyes and inflammation and tears and leukoma and dizziness?” The headache answered to our Lord Jesus Christ: “We are going to sit down in the head of the servant of God So-and-So.” Then, our Lord Jesus Christ tells it: “Look here, do not go into my servant, but go away and go into the wild mountains and settle into the bull’s head. There you may eat flesh, there drink blood, there ruin the eyes, there darken the head, seethe and wriggle. But if you do not obey me, I shall destroy you there on the burning mountain where no dog barks and the cock does not crow. You who have set a limit to the sea, stop headache and migraine and pain in the skull and between the eyes and on the lids and from the marrow from the servant of the Lord So-and-So. To stand well, to stand with fear from God, amen.

Another parallel is to be found in the Byzantine charm *Περὶ ῥεύματος καὶ πόνου κεφαλῆς λέγε τὴν εὐχὴν ταύτην* (Say this prayer against discharge²⁹³ and headache)²⁹⁴:

Jesus Christ, our Lord, have mercy on us. Three angels were climbing the Mount Sinai, met the discharge (ῥεῦμα) and asked it: “Where are you going, discharge?” It answered: “I am going into the son of man, to freeze the hands, the feet and the flesh, to dry and to freeze the head and the body, and to make the discharge to flow. The Lord’s angels said: “We exorcise you, discharge, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, in the name of the heavenly powers, the evangelists, the twelve apostles of Christ and all the saints, so that now you will not have power to do evil or hurt the servant of God So-and-So.

On its own turn, the Byzantine narrative of the angels meeting the illness has a Bulgarian equivalent in the charm where the archangels meet the angels going against the *nezhit* (from a seventeenth century manuscript)²⁹⁵:

Seven angels, seven archangels were going, sharpening seven knives, carrying seven candles. The archangels Michael and Gabriel met them and asked them: “Where are you going, seven angels?” They answered: “We are going to cut the nezhit and to burn him with candles, and to

²⁹³ This is the literary translation of the Greek word. Probably, here the discharge (ῥεῦμα) signifies catarrh or a purulent flux.

²⁹⁴ Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, p. 331-332.

²⁹⁵ *Треѡник*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 133v-136. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 133-135. See no. 5 in the Catalogue.

remove the blood from the eyes for the servant of God (the name), now and forever and for eternity.”

This type of *historiola* has also a Medieval Latin variant:²⁹⁶

In nomine Domini nostri Ihesu Christi. Tres angeli ambulaverunt in monte Synay, quibus obviavit Nessia, Nagedo, Stechedo, Troppho, Crampho, Gigihite, Paralisis. Ad quos angeli dixerunt: quo itis? Qui dixerunt: nos imus ad famulum Dei N. caput eius vexare, venas eius enervare, medullam evacuare, ossa eius conterere et totam compaginem membrorum eius dissolvere. Quibus angeli iterum dixerunt: adiuramus te Nessia, Nagedo, Stechedo, Troppho, Crampho, Gigihite, Paralisis per patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum, per martires, per confessores, per virgines, per omnes sanctos et electos Dei, ut non noceatis huic famulo Dei N. non in capite, non in venis, non in medullis, non in ossibus suis nec in aliqua parte corporis eius. Amen.

The Byzantine and the South Italian texts are connected with verbal charms from ancient Mesopotamia. In the Mesopotamian tradition, the spread of certain diseases was attributed to certain demons, like for instance Ura (the plague-spirit) and Ashakku (the fever-spirit).²⁹⁷ There are series of charms against these supernatural perpetrators of headache and fever. Thus, in Babylonian verbal magic, the headache is personified too, and is referred to in the following way:²⁹⁸

*Headache – in its face venom putrefieth.
Headache hath come forth from the Underworld,
It hath come forth from the dwelling of Bel,
From amid the mountains it hath descended upon the land,
From the ends of the mountains it hath descended,
From the fields not to return it hath descended;
With the mountain-goat unto the fold it hath descended,
With the ibex unto the Open-horned flocks it hath descended,
With the Open-horned unto the Big-horned it hath descended.*

²⁹⁶ Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, pp. LXVII-LXVIII.

²⁹⁷ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. XLVII.

²⁹⁸ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. XL.

The Babylonian tradition connects the headache with water²⁹⁹ and this is a feature, which survived in later periods in other traditions too:

*Headache like a flood roameth loose,
Headache from Sunrise of Sunset,
Headache shrieketh and crieth.
Through the Sea – the Broad Earth –
The Little Floods – (its) flood goeth,
Its flood is (as) the Mighty Floods.*

In variants of the Bulgarian encounter-charms, the *nezhit* comes from the Red Sea. This is the case with the two charms, written on amulets from the tenth-eleventh century and from the eleventh-twelfth century, which say: “The *nezhit* was coming from the Red Sea and met Jesus Christ.”³⁰⁰

Another persistent feature is the association with deserted and remote places³⁰¹:

*Headache roameth over the desert, blowing like the wind,
Flashing like lightning, it is loosed above and below;
It cutteth off him who feareth nit his god like a reed,
Like a stalk of henna, it slitteth his thews.*

Clearly, the Babylonian personified headache is connected with the chthonic deities. One of the Babylonian charms asks directly “May Ereshkigal, the wife of Ninazu, turn her face elsewhere”, so that the “headache, shivering, heartache, cold” to be removed.³⁰² In another text the illness-perpetrator seems to be under the power of Ishtar: “Ishtar, besides whom there is none to give rest and happiness, hath let it come down from the mountains”.³⁰³

²⁹⁹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, pp. 73-75.

³⁰⁰ Doncheva and Popkonstantinov, “Апокрифна молитва от X-XI век върху оловен амулет от с. Олърци, Голбухинско”, pp. 288-289. See no. 2 and no 3 in the Catalogue.

³⁰¹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 65.

³⁰² Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 199. Ereshkigal is the goddess of Irkalla (the Mesopotamian underworld).

³⁰³ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 77. As a goddess of fertility and war, and sister of Ereshkigal, Ishtar is related to the underworld.

Although explicitly demonic, the Babylonian illness-perpetrator is also connected with the celestial realm, and it may actually appear from above, falling from heaven: “Headache, though bound in heaven, hath escaped on earth”.³⁰⁴ Employing verbal magic and rites, Marduk drives out the headache-demon and sends it away, in the sky: “The Headache may ascend to heaven like the smoke from a peaceful homestead”.³⁰⁵ This motif appears in the Bulgarian charm, where the nezhit falls from the sky and the blind shepherds.

In the Bulgarian charms, there is no a description of the physical outlook of the *nezhit*. It is described with adjectives and phrases, as “rabid”, “origin of every illness”, “cursed”, “deaf”, “unclean illness”, “menacing”. It is a single agent, unlike other malevolent figures (like, for example, the personified fevers *tresavitsi*, which most commonly appear as a group of women). The *nezhit* is referred to as “him”; therefore, it is regarded to be a male. This distinguishes him from other perpetrators of illnesses, which very often are female.³⁰⁶

The relation to water as an element of origin is clearly testified in the Bulgarian material:

Dear Lord Christ, win! The nezhit was coming from the Red Sea and met Jesus. And Jesus asked him: “Where are you going?” He answered: “I am going to the human, to drink his brain, to shed his blood, to break his bones”. Then Jesus said: “I conjure you, nezhit! Do not go to the human, but go to a deserted place...find the deer...enter their [sic!] heads, drink their brain, shed their blood, break their bones and tear their joints, because they can stand any illness. Go there and do not come back!” Now and forever, until the Judgment Day, prepared for him. Be afraid of the

³⁰⁴ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 77. The *nezhit* falls from the sky too, as it is said in the charm with the blind shepherds. This charm is discussed below, in the sub-chapter on the blind shepherds.

³⁰⁵ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirit*, vol. II, p. 73.

³⁰⁶ In the Babylonian tradition, there seems to be both female and male supernatural bringers of illnesses. However, later figures like Lilith, Gyllou and Abyzou are always female. Barb, “Antaura”, pp. 5-6; Ryan, “Ancient Demons”, pp. 44-46.

*Lord, sitting on the cherubim throne, everything visible and invisible is afraid of him. Most of all, be afraid of the Lord, the glory belongs to him forever. Amen!*³⁰⁷

The association of the *nezhit* with the human head and the senses also emphasized in the Bulgarian sources³⁰⁸:

I am going into the human head, in order to bemuse the brain, to break the teeth and the jaws, to deafen the ears, to blind the eyes, to distort the mouth, to block up the nose, so there will be headache day and night.

The Bulgarian *nezhit* is rather specialized. In this respect, it follows closely its archaic predecessors, the Mesopotamian headache demons. The comparison with parallels shows a broad range of health problems and afflictions. Alternatively, the personified illness acts in rather animalistic terms, ripping off and devouring. For instance, this is the case with a Hungarian charm, which tells about the seventy-seven and a half evils. They meet Virgin Mary and explain that they are going to a certain woman to “drink her red blood, to tear away her fresh flesh.”³⁰⁹

In the direct conjuration formulae, the *nezhit* is commanded: “do not go into the human head, do not devastate the brain, do not distort the eyes!” and a few lines later the demon himself declares: “I am the *nezhit*; I am going into the human head, in order to bemuse the brain and to drink the blood”. The same being is causing “headache all day and all night long”. The texts describe a man tortured by a severe pain in the head, and

³⁰⁷ Amulet (lead lamella) from the tenth-eleventh century. For detailed paleographical and philological discussion of the text, see Popkonstantinov and Konstantinova “За два оловни амулета с апокрифни молитви от X в.”, p. 29. See no. 2 in the Catalogue.

³⁰⁸ See no. 5 in the Catalogue.

³⁰⁹ Éva Pócs, “Nyers és főtt”: Halál és élet. A kulturális vívmányok helye az európai parasztság archaikus világmépében” (Raw and Cooked: Death and Life. The Place of Cultural Achievements in the Archaic Worldview of the European Peasantry), in Éva Pócs, *Magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán* (Hungarian Folk-beliefs on the Border between Central and Eastern Europe), (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002), pp. 41-49.

the *nezhit* is conjured to leave the head and the eyes, not to “bemuse the brain or to blind the eyes”, and not “to shed blood or to twist the joints or to collect puss”.

The expulsion of the *nezhit* in remote places and in the heads of animals are elements, which can be also seen in the expulsion formulae of the South Italian charms. There, the “wild mountain” and the “head of the bull” are stable motifs.³¹⁰ The same is true for the Babylonian texts, where the fever most often is like bull³¹¹. The remote uninhabited places and the wild undomesticated animals are not simply distant and wild. They are also supernatural, located in the Other World.³¹² The wilderness, the mountains, the rocks, the deers, etc. are not only outside of and far away from the cultivated and inhabited human sphere. They are on the Other Side, beyond the human control. The wilderness and its inhabitants are the realm of the supernatural beings and the dead³¹³.

The direct expulsion formulae have a parallel in a Byzantine charm against “worm”³¹⁴. The affliction is exorcised in the name of the Lord, the angels, and the apostles. The same type of direct expulsion appears in a Babylonian text³¹⁵:

*From the man, the son of his god,
Thou shalt have no food to eat,
Thou shalt have no water to drink,
Thou shalt not stretch forth thy hand
Unto the table of my father Bel, thy creator.
Neither with sea-water, nor with sweet water,
Nor with bad water, nor with Tigris water,
Nor with Euphrates water, nor with pond water,
Nor with river water shalt thou be covered.*

³¹⁰ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 104-107.

³¹¹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 39.

³¹² Éva Pócs, “Más világok: másvilágok. Az idegenek az újkori hiedelemrendszerekben” (Foreign Worlds: Other Worlds. The Foreigners in the Early Modern Belief-systems), in Pócs, *Magyar néphit*, pp. 50-63.

³¹³ Ibidem and Laura Stark-Arola, “Christianity and the Wilderness: Syncretisms in Karelian magic as culture-specific strategies”, in Ülo Valk, ed., *Studies in Folklore and Popular Religion vol 2*. (Tartu: University of Tartu, 1999), pp. 93-120.

³¹⁴ Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, p. 333-334.

³¹⁵ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, pp. 61-63.

*If thou wouldst fly up to heaven
Thou shalt have no wings,
If thou wouldst lurk in ambush on earth
Thou shalt secure no resting-place.
Unto the man, the son of his god,
Come not nigh,
Get thee hence!*

Clearly, the Bulgarian *nezhit* can be related to the Mesopotamian primordial malevolent elemental force Lilû (the male) and Lilîtu (the female), later known as Lilith from the Jewish tradition.³¹⁶ Originally, Lilû and Lilîtu were Mesopotamian³¹⁷ ghosts and windstorm demons. Lilîtu was associated with night, wind, illness and death. She defines a primordial paradigm and an operational field, later followed by many malevolent supernatural beings.³¹⁸ Her activities include attacking pregnant women, kidnapping children, disturbing sleeping people and (which is important here) bringing diseases in general. It was suggested that Lilîtu/Lilith causes fever, various disturbances of the senses and migraine³¹⁹, which is the exact field of the *nezhit* too. This points out towards a parallel with another Mesopotamian female demon: Lamashtu. Along with the harming of pregnant women, slaying children and drinking blood, she is responsible also for infesting the water, causing nightmares and bringing diseases, plague and death.³²⁰

³¹⁶ Barb, “Antaura”, pp. 5-8.

³¹⁷ The oldest sources about Lilû and Lilîtu are Sumerian cuneiform inscriptions, circa 4000 BCE. The first pictorial representation of Lilîtu is circa 1950 BCE. She appears also in Assyrian sources, and later in numerous Jewish texts and in the Bible. See Barb, “Antaura”, pp. 4-5, Thompson, *Babylonia, The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, pp. XXVI-XXXVIII, and Siegmund Hurwitz, *Lilith, the First Eve: Historical and Psychological Aspects of the Dark Feminine* (Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag, 1992), pp. 31-84.

³¹⁸ Parallels of Lilith can be found in numerous traditions: Assyrian, Jewish, Arabic, Byzantine, Slavic, etc. See Gaster, “200 Years of a Charm”, pp. 129-62; H. A Winkler, *Salomo und die Karīna – Eine orientalische Legende von der Bezwingung einer Kindbettdämonin durch einen heiligen Helden* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1931): passim; Éva Pócs, “Lilith és kísérete”. Gyermekágyas-démonoktól védő ráolvasások Délkelet- Európában és Közél-Keleten” (“Lilith and Her Company” (Verbal Charms against Childbed Demons from South-Eastern Europe and the Middle East), in Pócs. *Magyar néphit*, pp. 213-238.

³¹⁹ Barb, “Antaura”: passim and Hurwitz, *Lilith, the First Eve*, pp. 38-40.

³²⁰ William Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites* (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), pp. 84-139; Pócs, “Lilith és kísérete”, pp. 221-229.

In the Bulgarian encounter-type narratives, the *nezhit* shows similarities with other demons, known from the Byzantine, Jewish and Slavic traditions.³²¹ One of them is Gyllou, responsible for infertility, child mortality, sickness, demonic possession and death. Another such demon is Abyzou (responsible for strangling newborn babies, deafness, blindness, severe pain, madness).³²² Further on, the *nezhit* is clearly related to Antaura – a demon that comes out of the sea and brings migraine³²³ and to Abra – a demon that comes out of the sea, eats the bones of the afflicted person and wastes away her/his flesh³²⁴. These female demons will also be discussed in the subchapter below, in relation to the figure of the *veshtitsa*.

Clearly, the *nezhit* took many features and motifs from the Byzantine and Mesopotamian traditions. However, it is a Slavic supernatural being and has a Slavic name. Literally, the name means “non-alive”. It is encountered among both the Southern and the Eastern Slavs. The Slavic name was adopted by the Romanian tradition too.

Apart from the name, when going into further details, the different distinct Slavic traditions attribute different characteristics to the *nezhit*. For example, the Russian tradition describes the *nezhit* as unclean power, without soul and flesh, but with human looks.³²⁵ The *nezhit* is an elemental force, neither a human, nor a spirit. The term is used to designate a group of supernatural beings, namely the *леший* (forest spirit), the *водяной* (water spirit), the *русалка* (female water spirit), the *полевой* (field spirit), the *домовой*

³²¹ For example, Abyzou (under the name Vizusa) appears in a seventeenth century Bulgarian charm against the *veshtitsa*. In this text Vizusa is one of the names of the witch, listed by her in front of Archangel Michael. For more discussion on Gyllou and Abyzou, see the next sub-chapter “The Witch”.

³²² Barb, “Antaura”, p. 5.

³²³ Known from a Greek inscription, found on a third century CE silver lamella from Carnuntum, Austria. See Barb, “Antaura”: pp. 2-4, and Spier, “Medieval Byzantine Magical Amulets”, pp. 33-34.

³²⁴ Concerning Abra, Barb redirects to texts, published by O. Janiewitsch, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 13 (1910): 627-30. See Barb, “Antaura”, p. 17.

³²⁵ Ryan, “Ancient Demons”, p. 38.

(house spirit), the *кикимора* (female house spirit), but not the supernatural dead (the *упырь* and the *еретик*), neither the *чёрт* or the *бес*.³²⁶ Further on, the term can be used as name for personified illness and as a synonym of demon.³²⁷

The Balkan traditions (Slavic and others) regard the *nezhit* to be an evil spirit, sometimes even the Devil himself. It is an unclean power, the bringer of different illnesses, which makes the affected person “non-alive”.³²⁸ However, the *nezhit* can also be a creature, similar to vampires, “the soul of a dead relative, which attacks sleeping people, sucks out their brain and makes them ill”.³²⁹ According to the Bulgarian tradition, the *nezhit* appears mainly as a perpetrator of illnesses of the head and of the senses. Interestingly enough, the Bulgarian *nezhit* does not have so much of a connection with fever. Causing fever is reserved for the other key Slavic perpetrators of illnesses: the *тресавици* (*tresavitsi*)³³⁰ – a group of female demons, with a strong connection with the sea.

Clearly, the *nezhit* is a composite figure. It seems that an archaic pre-Christian South Slavic supernatural being underwent strong Byzantine influence, when the Christian Byzantine motives met the South Slavic mythology. In its own turn, the Christian Byzantine tradition came as a carrier of older Mesopotamian elements. In its

³²⁶ See [Т. А. Агапкина] Т. А. Агапкина, *Славянская мифология: энциклопедический словарь* (Slavic Mythology: Encyclopaedia) (Moscow: Международные отношения, 2002), pp. 319-321 and [Д. К. Зеленин] Д. К. Зеленин, *Избранные труды. Очерки русской мифологии: Умершие неестественною смертью и русалки* (Collected Works. Essays on Russian Mythology: People, Who Died from Unnatural Death and *Rusalki*), (Moscow: Индрик, 1995), passim.

³²⁷ Ryan, “Ancient Demons”, pp. 38-39.

³²⁸ Georgieva, *Българска народна митология*, passim; [Evgenia Mitseva] Евгения Мицева. *Невидими нощни гости* (Invisible Night Guests), (Sofia: Български фолклор, 1994), passim. For parallels and comparison, see Mirecki and Meyer, *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, pp.37-46, with a discussion of an early Christian gold lamella for headache (Asia Minor or Syria, 2nd century CE). Also, quoted in the same book, H. S. Versnel, “The Poetics of the Magical Charm - An Essay in the Power of Words”, p. 105-158.

³²⁹ Ovcharov, “Проклетият нежит” (The Cursed *Nezhit*), pp. 104-108.

³³⁰ “*Tresavitsa*” means “shaking” or “shaker”, of the same stem like “*treska*” fever.

essence and image, the Bulgarian *nezhit* processes old prototypes of the illness demon (like Lilîtu/Lilith and Abyzou) and old Slavic mythological notions (like the elemental forces)³³¹, and reconnects them in an Eastern Orthodox non-canonical context, where the evil being meets powerful Christian figures. The *nezhit* appears in encounter-charms, which is typical. The *nezhit* keeps most of the features, characteristic for similar older illness perpetrators: it comes from the sea or from the sky; it brings headache and fever; it is expelled in remote places and in animals' heads.³³² The difference is that the *nezhit* is male and one single figure.

Although the *nezhit* is one (and not a group), he is still connected to the *тресавици* (*tresavitsi*), which are the Slavic female personifications of fever and other related ailments and symptoms. The *tresavitsi* are an interesting case by themselves. To begin with, the medical condition of fever is a palpable health problem, often encountered and treated in healing and apotropaic verbal magic. However, the fever does not appear in the form of personified evil power (or powers) in the extant medieval and early modern Bulgarian charms. At least, I did not find the *tresavitsi* as characters or protagonists in the source material of this dissertation.

In her anthology of medieval Bulgarian literature, Petkanova presents a text against fever from an undated Russian manuscript. While sharing a number of common features and historical routes, the Russian and the Bulgarian verbal magic traditions are

³³¹ On the unanswered question about the connections between the *nezhit* and different Slavic pre-Christian supernatural beings, see Ovcharov, “Проклетиет нежит”, pp. 106-107, and W. F. Ryan, “Eclectism in the Russian Charm Tradition,” in Roper, *Charms and Charming in Europe*, pp. 113-127.

³³² Several key books provide valuable materials for comparison. For example, Ferdinand Ohrt, *Danmarks Trylleformler 1* (Magic Formulae of Denmark) (Copenhagen: Kristiania: FF publications, Northern series, 3, 1917, 1921) gives opportunity for comparison with Danish material. Also, Fritz Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters* (Giessen: Alafred Töpelmann, 1907) provides Greek parallels. Adolf Spamer, *Romanusbüchlein: historisch-philologischer Kommentar zu einem deutschen Zauberbuch* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958) gives Western-European medieval parallels. Winkler, *Salomo und die Karīna* provides an insight to the Arabic tradition.

also rather different from each other. This is due to a number of various factors, which shaped the specific characteristic features of the two traditions, and determined the surviving amount of source materials. As William Francis Ryan aptly points out, “The peculiarity of the main Russian belief about the *triasavitsi* is that it has departed some way from the known Greek and South Slavic tradition.”³³³

Indeed, the evil supernatural *tresavitsi* are present in other Slavic traditions from the Middle Ages and the Early Modern times, especially in Russian verbal magic.³³⁴ They are also largely present in the Bulgarian oral folklore tradition too.³³⁵ Based on secondary sources³³⁶ and comparisons, it is very probable that the *tresavitsi* as personifications of fever existed and occupied an important position in the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic. However, there is no direct proof from primary Bulgarian sources from the period. For comparison, here is the Russian charm, presented by Petkanova³³⁷:

On the coast of the Red Sea, there is a stone tower, the great apostle Sisinnius is standing in the tower and sees that the sea rises up in a storm to the sky and twelve longhaired women emerge out of it, like a cursed devilish vision. The women said: We are the tresavitsy (тресавици)³³⁸ – the daughters of Tsar Herod. St. Sisinnius asked them: Cursed devils, why did you come here? They answered: We came here to torment the human race. We are going to hold and tie down and torment the one who is resisting us. And the one who is sleeping until late, who does not pray to

³³³ Ryan, „Ancient Demons“, pp. 42-43.

³³⁴ Extensively discussed by Ryan in his book *The Bathhouse* and in his article „Ancient Demons and Russian Figures“.

³³⁵ As it is discussed above, there are differences between the medieval and early modern sources, and the oral folklore material, collected in nineteenth and twentieth century. See Todorova-Pirgova, *Баяния и магии*.

³³⁶ For example, the Pogodinov Index from eleventh century and the sermons of Joseph the Bearded from the eighteenth century. See Petkanova, “Апокрифните лечебни молитви“, pp. 66-68, and Angusheva and Dimitrova, „Другите авторитети“, pp. 82-83.

³³⁷ Published in Modern Bulgarian translation by Petkanova, *Стара българска литература т. 1*, pp. 304-305.

³³⁸ The Bulgarian term *тресавици* literary means “shakers”. The name of the first sister derives from the same stem.

God, who does not keep the holidays, but after getting up starts eating and drinking, is a fawner of ours.

St. Sisinnius prayed to God: O, Lord, Lord! Save the human race from these accursed demons! And God sent him two angels Sachiel and Anos and the four evangelists. They started to beat the tresavitsy with four iron clubs, causing them three thousand wounds each every day. The tresavitsy begged: O, great St. apostle Sisinnius, Sikhail and Anos and the four evangelists: Luke, Mark, Mathew, John! Please, stop torturing us! In a place where your sacred names can be heard and in a family where your sacred names are praised, from this family we shall run away by three days and through three regions.

Then St. Sisinnius asked them: What are your devilish names? The first one answered: My name is Treseya (Тресея).³³⁹ The second answered: My name is Ogneya (Огнея)³⁴⁰ – like the stove is getting hot from the pinewood, the same way Ogneia is burning the human body. The third one said: My name is Ledeya (Ледея)³⁴¹-like a cold ice, Ledeia hates the humankind and because of her one cannot warm oneself even in a stove. The fourth one said: My name is Gneteya (Гнемя).³⁴² Gneteia settles in the human ribs and human internals squirm, and if this man wants to eat, he can eat, but everything is coming out from his soul. The fifth said: My name is Grunusha (Грънуша).³⁴³ She settles in the human chest, the lungs are starting to rot and the chest starts to rattle from the inside. The sixth said: My name is Gluheya (Глухея).³⁴⁴ She settles in the human head, blocks up the ears, breaks the head and the person becomes deaf. The seventh said: My name is Puhneya (Пухнея)³⁴⁵. Puhneia makes the people to swell. The ninth said: My name is Zhulteya (Жълтея)³⁴⁶. Zhulteia is like the yellow flowers growing in the field. The tenth said: My name is Karkusha (Каркуша).³⁴⁷ She is more evil than the others and breaks down the sinews of arms and legs. The eleventh said: My name is Gledeya (Гледея)³⁴⁸. She too is more evil than the others are, she does not let the man to sleep at night, the devils go to that man and his mind goes mad. The twelfth said: My name is Neveya (Невея)³⁴⁹. Neveya is the oldest sister of the tresavitsi, she is the one that cut the head of John the Baptist; she is the most evil of all. She catches the man and he cannot survive.

339 The Shaking One

340 The Fiery One

341 The Icy One

342 The Oppressing One

343 The Gnawing One

344 The Deaf One

345 The Swelling One

346 The Yellow One

347 The Convulsing One

348 Literary, “The one that is always awake”

349 Probably the name is etymologically related to the Slavic mythological being *нав*, in plural *нави*, which are the ghosts of unbaptized babies and small children.

Unlike the *nezhit*, who is always one and a male, the personified *tresavitsi* always appear as a group of females (sisters). According to the *Pogodinov Index*,³⁵⁰ the Bogomil priest Yeremiya³⁵¹ (*non Йеремия*) wrote a prayer against fever, where the *tresavitsi* are seven sisters.³⁵² In the example above, they are twelve in number. The Russian tradition always presents them as a group of sisters, the daughters of King Herod or even Satan.³⁵³ In the Bulgarian folklore tradition, the *tresavitsi* fit in the usual pattern to present certain illnesses as sisters, who appear and act together.³⁵⁴ For example, that is the case with illnesses like smallpox (presented as two sisters) and erysipelas (presented as two sisters, a red one and a white one). The Slavic fevers have a Mesopotamian parallels. In one Babylonian charm, the headache, the “sickness of night and day” brings burning in the muscles, scorches the members, shakes the limbs, wastes the body, weakens the whole man, etc.³⁵⁵

The number of illnesses or illness-perpetrators is employed differently in the different cases. Although in the Byzantine charms the headache is both “I” and “we”, the *nezhit* in the Bulgarian texts is always one. The fevers are many in number. The South

³⁵⁰ An index of prohibited books from eleventh century. See Petkanova, *Стара българска литература*, passim and Ружа Атанасова Делчева, “Индекси на разрешените и забранени книги в средновековна България” (Indexes of Permitted and Prohibited Books in Medieval Bulgaria), PhD thesis, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, 2009.

³⁵¹ Yeremiya (*Йеремия*) is Bulgarian Christian priest, who lived in tenth century. He is regarded to be a disciple of priest Bogomil (*non Богомил*), the heresiarch of the Bogomilism in Bulgaria. The data about priest Yeremiya are rather scarce and unclear. Most probably, he wrote several apocryphal texts, including a prayer against fever. See Dimitri Obolensky, *The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 111-167 and 271-277.

³⁵² Petkanova, *Апокрифните лечебни молитви*, 66-67.

³⁵³ Ryan, “Ancient demons and Russian Fevers“, pp. 46-47.

³⁵⁴ Petkanova, “Апокрифните лечебни молитви”, p. 67; Todorova-Pirgova, *Баяния и магии*, passim.

³⁵⁵ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, pp. 86-91.

Italian charms speak of numerous illnesses and afflictions, usually nine or twelve³⁵⁶. As it is showed below, the evil *veshtitsa* is one, but has many names.

In its own turn, the Slavic charm with the twelve fever-sisters has a number of Mesopotamian parallels. In the Babylonian tradition, there are certain evil spirits, which are called The Seven³⁵⁷. They are “the evil cough”, who live in the depth of Ocean and bring illnesses to humankind.³⁵⁸ They are also described as forces of nature and animals: the South Wind; a dragon with mouth agape; a grim leopard that carries off the young; a terrible serpent; a furious beast; a rampant [evil being]; and the evil windstorm.³⁵⁹ Such remote and desolate locations are the birthplace of The Seven:³⁶⁰

*Those seven were born in the Mountain of Sunset,
And were reared in the Mountain of dawn,
They dwell within the caves of the earth,
And amid the desolate places of the earth they live,
Unknown in heaven and earth,
They are arrayed with terror,
Among the Wise Gods there is no knowledge of them,
They have no name in heaven or earth.*

Probably due to Babylonian influence, a Syriac charm tells about “seven accursed brothers, accursed sons, destructive ones, sons of men of destruction”³⁶¹. They creep along on their knees and move upon their hands. Their activity is to eat flesh and to drink blood. These seven ghoulish beings are cursed in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Also, God is asked to break their teeth and cut their sinews and the veins of their neck, thus the evil seven brothers will not be able to harm either the sheep nor the

³⁵⁶ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 75.

³⁵⁷ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirit*, vol. I, p. XLII.

³⁵⁸ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, pp. 77 and vol. II, pp. 49-51.

³⁵⁹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 89. The Seven are represented on a Mesopotamian amulet. Placed above an image of Lamashtu, The Seven stand in line, with their right hands raised in the air. Each of The Seven has a human body, but a head of a different animal. See Pócs, “Lilith és kísérete”, p. 220.

³⁶⁰ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 191.

³⁶¹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. XLIV.

oxen of the person, who carries they charm in a written form. Finally, the evil beings are bound in the name of Gabriel and Michael, and ordered to vanish forever, like smoke before the wind.

Another curious parallel can be seen in a Byzantine charm against epilepsy and problems with the bile.³⁶² In the text, Jesus Christ, Michael and Gabriel meet not the illness, but thirteen different plants and herbs, some of which are poisonous. The plants are going to God's servant, in order to drink his blood, to eat his flesh and to darken the light, so that the human will not be able to praise God's creation. Jesus Christ expels them in the mountain and into the head of the deer.

5. 2. 2. The witch

The *tresavitsi* have their main adversary in the person of Saint Sisinnius: a complex figure, composed of the features of different Christian figures, intermingled with Jewish, heretic and pagan elements and beliefs³⁶³. While the personified fevers themselves do not appear as protagonists in the Bulgarian material, St. Sisinnius can be found in Bulgarian charms against the *veshtitsa* and the Devil. Being a good supernatural figure, St. Sisinnius will be discussed in more details below, together with positive figures like Archangel Michael. Their evil adversary the *вещица* (*veshtitsa*), and her companions the *мора* (*mora*), the *вила* (*vila*), and the *дявол* (the Devil), who all share common features with both the *nezhit* and the *tresavitsi*, will be presented here.

Etymologically, the Bulgarian word *вещица* (*veshtitsa*) means “skillful”, “knowledgeable”, “wise”³⁶⁴. It can be roughly translated as “witch”, although this

³⁶² Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, p. LXVIII.

³⁶³ Ryan, “Ancient Demons”, pp. 38-39 and 50-51.

³⁶⁴ On the *veshtitsa* in Bulgarian folklore and popular beliefs, see [Dimitŭr Marinov] ДИМИТЪР МАРИНОВ, *Народна вяра и религиозни народни обичаи* (Popular Beliefs and Popular Religious Customs),

translation does not transmit all the complex notions behind the Bulgarian and the English terms. The *veshtitsa* from the Bulgarian verbal charms is an evil supernatural female being. In the magical context of eastern and central Europe, this *veshtitsa*/witch belongs to “type “C”, the “supernatural” or “night” witches”.³⁶⁵ Having the basic characteristics of a chthonic goddess,³⁶⁶ the figure of the *veshtitsa* is an alloy of features, coming from various belief traditions. This alloy is clearly visible in the charms too.

The medieval and early modern charms against the *veshtitsa* come from the following sources:

- Amulet (lead lamella) from the tenth century, excavated near the city of Varna (Eastern Bulgaria) – one charm. The text is of the encounter-type of narrative, where the *veshtitsa* meets Archangel Michael and tells him her names.³⁶⁷
- *Требник* sine №, from the seventeenth century, kept in the National Library in Belgrade – one charm of the same type.³⁶⁸
- *Часослов*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 631, fol. 162 – one charm. The text tells how St. Sisinnius defeats all kind of evil beings, including the *veshtitsa*.³⁶⁹

(Sofia: Сборник за народни умотворения и народопис, 1914), which has several later reprints; U. Dukova, “Das Bild des Drachen im bulgarischen Märchen”, *Fabula. Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung* 11 (1970): pp. 207-252); Georgieva, *Българска народна митология*; Czirbusz Géza, *A délmagyarországi bolgárok ethnológiai magánrajza* (The Ethnological Self-description of the South-Hungarian Bulgarians), (Temesvár: Csanád-egyházmegeyi könyvnyomda, 1882). Also, see the extensive bibliographies in the two books by Éva Pócs, quoted in the next footnote.

³⁶⁵ Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, p. 11. Concerning the *veshtitsa*/witch as malevolent human, see Éva Pócs, *Fairies and Witches at the Boundary of South-Eastern and Central Europe* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia/Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1989), especially pp. 7 and 39-66, with a comprehensive presentation of “the process by which mythical beings were transformed into human beings and “demonic” characteristics became attributes of the “human witch”.

³⁶⁶ On the chthonic side, the most relevant here are the Thraco-Greek goddesses Hekate, Artemis (in her chthonic aspect) and Semele. There were well-developed and widespread independent Slavic system of beliefs in chthonic deities and nature spirits. The Thraco-Greek notions influenced these beliefs only later, when the Slavs arrived on the Balkan Peninsula. See Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, p. 15.

³⁶⁷ Попконстантинов, “Оловен амулет с апокрифен текст от Варненския музей”, p. 281.

³⁶⁸ Kačanovskij, “Апокрифне molitve, gatanja i priče”, p. 155

- Clerical book sine №, from 1827, kept in a monastery in Montenegro – one charm of the encounter-type, where the *veshtitsa* meets Archangel Michael.³⁷⁰

In addition to these, the *veshtitsa* is mentioned in three protective charms against evil powers, coming from the *Никетово молитвениче*, 1787, Sofia, National Library, № 646, fol. 51v, 61, and 69. The texts are direct commands to the evil beings (including the *veshtitsa*) to do no harm to humans. Two of the Sisinnius-charms from the thirteenth century *Драголов сборник*, discussed below, also contain lists of names.³⁷¹

The typical narrative of the *veshtitsa* can be seen in the charm, preserved on the amulet from the tenth century³⁷²:

The veshtitsa said: “I uproot a fruit tree, I tie female youth, I defeat female malice, I approach and enter the human dwelling as a hen, as a dove, as a snake...” And Archangel Michael said: “Tell me your clan!” 1st name mora, 2nd veshtitsa, 3rd vizusa, 4th makarila, 5th siyana, 6th evgelusa, 7th navradulia, 8th living fire, 9th midday-one, 10th strangler or children...

Although the amulet itself is not very well preserved, the content of the text is clear. It is a typical encounter-charm, very similar to the charms against the *nezhit*. The pivotal element and the big difference here is the list of the *veshtitsa*'s names. The same charm appears again, several centuries later, in a seventeenth century manuscript³⁷³:

The witch said: “I uproot a fruit tree, I tie female beauty, I defeat female malice. I am coming closer and I shall enter the human dwelling as a hen, as a she-dove, as a snake. I strangle the beautiful children and that is why they call me „murderer”. When the true word of God was born, I went there to deceive it. Archangel Michael found me and fettered me, and I swore and said: “I swear in the throne of the Supreme and in the supreme

³⁶⁹ Tsonev, Catalogue, vol. II., pp. 149-150.

³⁷⁰ Kovačević, “Nekoliko priloga staroj srpskoj književnosti”, p. 283

³⁷¹ The charms from the *Драголов сборник* are analysed in the subchapter on St. Sisinnius, because of their relevance for the discussion on the legendary saint, and because there the lists of names are more of an attribute of the devil.

³⁷² Amulet (lead lamella) from the tenth century. Попконстантинов, “Оловен амулет с апокрифен текст от Варненския музей”, p. 283. See no. 11 in the catalogue.

³⁷³ *Требник*, seventeenth century, NBKM № 273. Tsonev, Catalogue, vol. I., p. 175. See no. 12 in the catalogue.

powers that I shall not lie to you and I shall tell you the truth. If a human can copy in writing my name, I shall not enter the home of the servant of God.” And Archangel Michael said: “Tell me your names!” “First name: Mora. Second name: Veshtitsa. Third name: Vizusa. Fourth name: Makarila. Fifth name: Siyana. Sixth name: Evgelusa. Seventh name: Navridulia. Eighth name: Living Fire. Ninth name: Pladnitsa (Midday One). Tenth name: Drowner/Strangler of children. Eleventh name: Thief of the milk of the newborn. Twelfth name: Devil Deceiver.”

The witch told Archistrategos Michael: “Let me go and I shall swear: wherever they pronounce these names, no devil will ever enter. Amen. Neither to the sleeping one, nor to the eating ones, nor at midnight, nor at noon, today, ever and forever, through the ages. Amen.”

This narrative is fuller and more elaborated, but the focus is the same: the list of the *veshtitsa*'s names. There is no such list in the charms against the *nezhit*, but the naming is essential in the charm against the *tresavitsi*. Knowing and pronouncing the name (or the names) of a supernatural entity is a way to control or defeat it. This is a common notion in verbal magic. The name of a divine being or thing is the simplest form of word of power.³⁷⁴ Knowing the name means to know and to control the supernatural enemy.

To mention a few relevant examples, there is the Egyptian (and later Coptic) mythology and magic, where the goddess Isis has a large amount of various names, employed in spells.³⁷⁵ There is the Jewish tradition, where King Solomon orders the demons to tell their names, and thus he has the power to command them.³⁷⁶ There is the Jewish folklore, where the prophet Elijah encounters Lilith, and forces her to tell him the full list of her names (twelve in number). Then Lilith promises that she will not harm the

³⁷⁴ For Mesopotamian examples, see Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. XXII.

³⁷⁵ Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

³⁷⁶ *The Testament of Solomon*, passim. For reference, see F. C. Conybeare, “The Testament of Solomon”, *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 11, No. 1 (1898): pp. 1-45.

house, where these names are at display.³⁷⁷ There are the Byzantine verbal charms and later the Greek folklore, where Gyllou has a long list of names (twelve or twelve and a half or forty).³⁷⁸

On the native Bulgarian side, there is the Slavic mythology and folklore, where it is very common for spirits, demons, illnesses, certain plants and animals to have euphemistic or flattering nicknames, or to be addressed via a list of names and titles³⁷⁹. For example, the elemental spirits (like the *domovoy*, the *leshii* and the *rusalka*) are referred to as “the lord”, “the master”, “the kind one”. Animals like the snake and the bear are called “king of the forest” and “the golden one”.

In the Bulgarian charms, the *veshtitsa*'s supernatural adversary (archangel Michael) is able to apply physical means against her – fettering her in chains and beating her with an iron rod, as we can see in the charm below. Thus, he receives the list of names, which is the strongest and most effective weapon, which the humans can have and use against it. The archangel defeats the evil being in physical battle and through physical strength and weapons, because they both come from and inhabit the same supernatural realm – the Other World. They are both supernatural figures with supernatural powers. The humans, however, can only achieve such a victory through the magical names of the *veshtitsa*. The real victory of the archangel is the purchase of the names. Thus, the inhabitants of Our World too can defeat the invader from the Other World. This can happen only with this special piece of verbal magic: the list of names.

³⁷⁷ Barb, “Antaura”, p. 4; Pócs, “Lilith és kísérete”, p. 214.

³⁷⁸ Barb, “Antaura”, pp. and Charles Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

³⁷⁹ Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, pp. 245-266.

In contrast to the *nezhit*, the *veshtitsa* is addressed by a list of names and has a physical description. This can be seen in a charm from an eighteenth century manuscript.³⁸⁰

Then saint archangel Michael went on the Eleon Mountain and met a veshtitsa, who had long hair down to the ground and eyes of fire and rapacious hands and teeth. And the archangel asked: "Where do you come from and what are you?" And she answered: "I am a veshtitsa and I enter the house as a snake. Since Virgin Mary gave birth, I've been learning to steal new-born babies." The archangel tied her and started beating her with an iron stick with iron nails. And told her: "I shall not let you go, until you tell me your names." And she swore: "I swear in Lord Sabbaoth, whoever knows my names, I cannot do any harm to him, and neither to the one, who carries them with him. My names are: first – veshtitsa, second – twice circumcised, third – circumcised, fourth – nerusha, fifth – veda, sixth – murderer, seventh – osina, eighth – vila, ninth – vilana, tenth – moon, eleventh – harlot, twelfth – slanderer, thirteenth – multiple, fourteenth – saula, fifteenth – inasina, sixteenth – mora, seventeenth – enemy, eighteenth – sati, nineteenth – kumnago." She said all the names.

In the Bulgarian material, the number of the *veshtitsa*'s names varies ten,³⁸¹ twelve and nineteen. While some of the epithets are quite clear, others remain obscure and enigmatic. Up to my knowledge, there is no research, dealing with the meaning, the origin and the etymology of these names.³⁸²

To start with the clearer cases, like for example, the name *визуса* (*vizusa*). It is a corrupted form of the name of the female demon Abyzou, whom we met already above, and who is responsible for miscarriages and infant mortality.³⁸³ The epithet *vizusa* represents perfectly the general profile of the *veshtitsa*, like a distinctive "business card" for her child-killing/child-stealing activities. As a reincarnation of the old Mesopotamian

³⁸⁰ Kovačević, "*Nekoliko priloga*", p. 283. See no. 13 in the catalogue.

³⁸¹ In the case of the amulet, there were probably more names on the damaged part.

³⁸² For a summary and comparative tables of the lists of names, see Velinova, "Българо-Сръбските книжовни връзки", pp. 172-173.

³⁸³ Barb, "Antaura", passim, and especially pp. 4-8, Spier, "Medieval Byzantine Magical Amulets", pp. 29-31) and Fauth, "Der christliche Reiterheilige", pp. 406-407.

female storm-demon³⁸⁴, *vizusa* is one more example of how stable and widespread is the Lilîtu/Lilith/Gyllou motive³⁸⁵. The name *vizusa* corresponds to other nicknames in the lists, like “strangler of children” and “thief of the milk of the newborns”.

As a name of the night-witch, the name Abyzou appears in two South Italian variants of the charm³⁸⁶. In both texts, Archangel Michael meets an evil supernatural being. In the first text, the being is called Αβυζοῦ and has forty names. The third name from the list is ταβυζου. In the second text, the evil is called Pataxaria (Παταξαρία), but also has a many names, twelve in number. In this list, the fourth name is βυζου and the fifth name is ἀβυδαζου. In the Jewish encounter-charm with the prophet Elijah, there are the names Abithu, Amisu and Amisrofuh.³⁸⁷

In broader European context, the name *mopa* (*mora*) signifies “human beings who are able to send their souls out at night while in trance. Thus, they can make journeys by assuming the shapes of animals (snakes, butterflies, mice, hens, cats). They infiltrate people’s dwellings as incubi, confinement demons, or even as vampires, and they “ride upon” or torment people.”³⁸⁸ In the south Slavic context, the name *mopa* (*mora*) stands also for an evil spirit, which is usually female. The *mora* can be a returning dead soul, or the soul of dead people, who were *moras* during their lifetime.³⁸⁹ This last definition matches the *mora* from the charms. As another name of the *veshtitsa*, it clearly expresses

³⁸⁴ Barb argues that the name Abyzou comes (via the Greek ἄβυσσος “bottomless pit”) from the Mesopotamian Abzu (the primordial sea). See Barb, “Antaura”, p. 6.

³⁸⁵ In the Bulgarian case, this is not a surprise, give the strong influence from the Byzantine tradition, where Gyllou/Abyzou occupies a prominent position.

³⁸⁶ Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 23-24 and 28.

³⁸⁷ Pócs, “Lilith és kísérete”, p. 214.

³⁸⁸ Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, pp. 31-33. The word “mora” is related to the Indo-European root *mor-/*mer-, meaning “death”, “horror” and “to die”. Compare with the Latin word *mors* “death”, the Slavic word *mop* “death, pestilence, plague”, the English and French words “nightmare” and “cauchemar”, the Romanian evil supernatural being *moroi*, and with the name of the goddess Morrígan (“Phantom Queen”) from the Irish mythology.

³⁸⁹ Ibidem.

her aggressive and invasive supernatural essence. The *mora veshtitsa* disguises as an animal, and penetrates the human habitat, in order to harm and damage. Her transfiguration abilities make her aggression effective and dangerous. These abilities are also very characteristic feature of the fairies (like the *вила (vila)* – often they are zoomorphic beings or can easily turn into a bird, wolf or a snake.³⁹⁰

The name *mora* can be related to a name, found in a South Italian charm, written in Greek letters.³⁹¹ There, the text exorcises an evil supernatural being, called *Μούρου/Muru*, in the name of God, Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist and all the saints. Pradel comments that the name *Μούρου/Muru* maybe has some etymological connection with the Greek word μαῦρος. As the Devil is called ὁ μαῦρος (the black one), possibly the epithet was transferred to other evil demonic beings.³⁹²

This leads to the next name, the *вила (vila)*, which is a native Slavic word. In the south Slavic tradition, the names *вила (vila)* and *вилана (vilana)*³⁹³ stand for a fairy, which is a demonic or goddess-like supernatural female being who appears periodically among the humans. Closely connected with death, the *vila* has harmful, trouble-making, illness-bringing aspects. On the other hand, she has fertility preserving/fertility-providing features.³⁹⁴ The fairy is also a nature spirit. As cultural phenomena, the fairies are very complex figures. They

preserve diverse heritages: a heterogeneous combination of features related to various beings of disintegrated religious systems. Actually, it is

³⁹⁰ Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, p. 15.

³⁹¹ Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 19-20.

³⁹² Ibidem, p. 95.

³⁹³ Both names come from an Indo-European root, meaning “wind”. Appearance in a storm or a whirlwind is an important characteristic of the *vilas*. It is a sign for their relations with the storm demons of the Balkans, which is discussed below. For comparison, the Mesopotamian Lîlîtu was originally a wind demon or storm demon. See Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, pp.13-14.

³⁹⁴ Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, pp. 12-14.

the combination of the death/fertility goddess and nature spirit/nymph features which particularly characterizes the Balkan fairies.³⁹⁵

Most importantly, the fairies on the Balkans are connected and contaminated with other demonic beings, namely the infernal or winter or storm demons. These are for example the dragons, the unbaptized and the werewolves. They bring bad weather and destroy the crops, or appear around the winter solstice, at new moon, and in other “dark” periods, invading human dwellings, assaulting people and kidnapping children.³⁹⁶

For some of the other names of the *veshtitsa*, only hypothetical conjectures can be made. For example, the name *наврадѹлия* (*navradulia*) is most possibly a very corrupted form of the name Anabardalea,³⁹⁷ which appears as the second name of Abyzou in apotropaic silver amulet from Byzantium.³⁹⁸ Anabardalea is also one of the names of Gyllou.³⁹⁹ In a Romanian version of the charm, quoted by Winkler,⁴⁰⁰ a demoness has nineteen names, among which there is the name *novadaria*. Winkler does not give any etymology.

The name *εβγελυσα* (*evgelusa*) seems to be of Greek origin, or shaped after a Greek model. Maybe it is a placating epithet for Gyllou, meaning “Good Gyllou” (from the Greek *εβ* meaning “good, well” and *γελλώ* (plural *γελλούδες*), which is one of the variants of the demoness’ name). It may possibly also come from the Greek *εβ* and

³⁹⁵ Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, p. 12.

³⁹⁶ Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, pp. 22-27.

³⁹⁷ Αναβαρδαλεα in the Greek original. Phonetically, the transformation of the word “anabardalea” into the word “navradulia” is possible, especially in the light of factors like the phonetic developments in the Greek language and the corruption of words, borrowed from foreign languages and cultures.

³⁹⁸ Spier, “Byzantine Amulets”, p. 38.

³⁹⁹ Ibidem and Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), pp. 182- 195.

⁴⁰⁰ Winkler, *Salomo und die Karīna*, pp. 114-116.

γενούσσα meaning “born” (such a name could be a placating epithet meaning “of good birth”). However, the relation with the Byzantine Gyllou seems the most probable.⁴⁰¹

The name *макарила* (*makarila*) seems to be of Greek origin too. It is a possibility that it hints to the Greek goddess Makaria, mentioned in the tenth-century Byzantine encyclopedia *The Suda*. Makaria is a daughter of Hades and brings blessed death.⁴⁰²

Other names from the list remain without any real meaning and etymology. For example, the word *сияна* (*siyana*) only exists as a female name in modern Bulgarian language, and means, “glowing”. However, some lists contain the names *сана* (*sana*), *сина* (*sina*) and *синая* (*sinaya*), which seem to be related to the name of the Mount Sinai.⁴⁰³ The name *неруша* (*nerusha*) seems to be Slavic too, probably etymologically related to the word *нав*,⁴⁰⁴ meaning an evil spirit of a child, who was stillborn or died unbaptized. The name *саула* (*saula*) maybe comes from the name of the biblical king Saul, who consulted a necromancer, the so-called Witch of Endor (I Sam. 28: 3-25).⁴⁰⁵ The name *кумнаго* (*kumnaĝo*) is very unclear too. In the late Byzantine demonology, discussed by Greenfield,⁴⁰⁶ there is a demon called Gukumon (Γουκουμόν). Another (very hypothetical) option is the female demon Kumeatēl from *The Testament of Solomon*, who causes shivering and torpor.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰¹ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 90-92.

⁴⁰² From the Greek μάκαρ, meaning “blessed, happy”.

⁴⁰³ Velinova, “Българо-Сръбските книжовни връзки”, pp. 172-173.

⁴⁰⁴ See above, the Russian charm against *tresavitsi*.

⁴⁰⁵ According to the Jewish tradition, the name of the Witch of Endor is Seddecla. See Stéphanie Vlavianos, *La figure du mage à Byzance de Jean Damascène à Michel Psellos (8.-fin 11. siècles)*. Paris: Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes, École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 2013.

⁴⁰⁶ Greenfield, *Late Byzantine Demonology*, p. 343.

⁴⁰⁷ *The Testament of Solomon*, p. 85.

The physical look of the *veshtitsa* is described too, albeit rather briefly. She has “long hair down to the ground and eyes of fire and rapacious hands and teeth”. Such an image is rather typical for the winter demons, with their hellish and deformed bodies and features. The outlook of the *veshtitsa* has a close parallel in the physical appearance of the longhaired female *tresavitsi*. The long loose hair is one of the main physical attributes of the fairies;⁴⁰⁸ they even cover their naked bodies with it. The shiny eyes, the eyes like fire or other accompanying luminous phenomena are related to various liminal and chthonic beings: to the souls of unbaptized, the returning dead, the werewolves, the guardian animals from the underworld, and to goddesses like Hecate. The horrific physical appearance of the Bulgarian *veshtitsa* has a parallel in a Babylonian charm, where the headache is described as following:⁴⁰⁹

*A rushing hag-demon,
Granting no rest, nor giving kindly sleep.
It is the sickness of night and day,
Whose head is that of a demon,
Whose shape is as the Whirlwind;
Its appearance is as the darkening heavens,
And its face as the deep shadow of the forest.*

The physical appearance of the *veshtitsa* carries similarities to the Mesopotamian descriptions of gods, demons and monsters.⁴¹⁰ For example, the goddess Nin-tu has horns and her lower body is covered with scales like those of a snake. The sea-monster Sassu-urinnu has the head of a serpent, feet with claws and curled horns. Another goddess (probably an avatar of Ereshkigal) has horns and the body of a fish. An unknown Babylonian god has horns, the body of a lion, wings and a human face. Lahmu has wings,

⁴⁰⁸ The very long hair is very typical for the Slavic nature spirits and other supernatural beings.

⁴⁰⁹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 87.

⁴¹⁰ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, pp. 147-159.

half of his body is human, the other half if that of a dog. Two other goddesses have wings like birds.

In terms of names, image and actions of the *veshtitsa*, the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic has a rich variety of traditions to draw upon. In her own words, she has significant supernatural abilities and her focus is on harming and killing children. In this respect, she is very close to the Lilith/Gyllou figure. The shape shifting is central for the *veshtitsa*. She can turn into a hen, a dove and a snake. The *veshtitsa*'s ability for transfiguration connects her once more with the chthonic aspects of both the fairies and the winter demons.

The same is valid for the animal symbolism and imagery, which stays more or less the same in all the charms. The snake has an immensely rich and complex history as special mythical animal, and it will be addressed below. Clearly, all the supernatural figures, relevant here, are de facto related to the snake too. In the Slavic mythology, this animal is an important supernatural being, regarded to be a chthonic elemental spirit, a magical king or queen of the forest, a patron and guardian of the house, or a zoomorphic manifestation of unclean infernal powers.⁴¹¹ The chthonic goddess Hecate has snakes as companions. In the Balkans, the fairies can appear as partially women, partially snakes. The storm demons are most often in the shape of a dragon or a snake. Even the winter demons can be cynocephalus dragons, i.e. snakes with wolf or dog heads.

The snake imagery of the *veshtitsa* has even older parallels in the Mesopotamian tradition too. The headache is “like a snake, like a snake, a snake it bindeth the head, so that he [the ill person] cannot rest by day or night.”⁴¹² The Mesopotamian evil spirits

⁴¹¹ Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, passim;

⁴¹² Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 81.

called The Seven have animalistic behavior, creep like a snake, pollute the room like mice, and give tongue like hounds.

The bird imagery (hen and dove) connects the *veshtitsa* with the fairies in their role as nature spirits: “The most usual is the transformation of a woman figure into a bird, and vice versa, e.g. the women flying in flocks settle on the trees and are transformed into crows or wild geese.”⁴¹³ Even when anthropomorphic, the fairies may have some bird attributes, like bird’s talons and wings. The souls of the unbaptized also appear as birds or as birds with a child’s head. For comparison, Lilítu/Lilith has bird wings and legs. The Greek and Roman *striges* appear as owls. The Thraco-Greek harpies are half-birds, half-women⁴¹⁴, and the lamias have bird wing and legs, eat human flesh and kill or steal newborn babies. In a South Italian charm the evil spirit can appear as both a human and a bird.⁴¹⁵ There the demon says: “Here is my name, they call me Pataxaria (Παταξαρῖα)”, which seems to be connected to a Greek exclamation to frighten away birds⁴¹⁶.

The shape-shifting ability (especially into an animal) is very important. In the magical belief system, it is this particular transformation that makes the *veshtitsa* so dangerous and so successful in her evil activities. On the one hand, her animal metamorphoses are well known, and the belief and the charms warn against them. The humans should be aware and careful, when encountering such animals, especially in unusual or sinister circumstances.⁴¹⁷ On the other hand, the complete avoidance of such common animals is de facto impossible, especially in rural and pre-industrial settings.

⁴¹³ Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, pp. 15-16.

⁴¹⁴ The harpies bring sudden death. Literary, the name means “snatchers”.

⁴¹⁵ Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 20 and 95.

⁴¹⁶ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 89.

⁴¹⁷ For example, at times (at night, at noon, on unclean days, at full moon, etc.) and at places (crossroads, wells, forests, barns, etc.), connected with the Other World and the supernatural.

Thus, the *veshtitsa* has all chances to cross the border and to sneak into Our World, into the human dwelling places and families. As a Babylonian charm says, the shivering “hath covered the man like a garment...it taketh his shape in the street and none can bind it.”⁴¹⁸

Another Babylonian text tells that “The evil Fever hath come like a deluge”, yet the biggest danger comes from its sneaky ways.⁴¹⁹

*It standeth beside a man, yet none can see it,
It sitteth beside a man, yet none can see it.
When it entereth the house its appearance is unknown,
When it goeth forth from the house it is not perceived.*

A central element of the charms’ narrative is that the *veshtitsa* invades the human homes. She shape shifts into a common, ordinary and unremarkable animal, sneaks into the house and harms its inhabitants. The *veshtitsa* completely and aggressively crosses the border between the supernatural and the human world. While the *nezhit* is simply focused on bringing the affliction to a human individual, the *veshtitsa* assaults the humans, their dwellings and (most importantly!) their newborn children. While the *nezhit* and the *tresavitsi* are rather specialized illness-perpetrators with a limited operative field, the *veshtitsa* carries on a total massive attack against the entire human life. Her aggression is mainly towards the newborn babies, she says: “I strangle the beautiful children and that is why they call me „murderer” and “Since Virgin Mary gave birth, I’ve been learning to steal new-born babies.” Yet, there is a clear indication for other harmful activities too: “I uproot a fruit tree, I tie female youth”.

There is also the clear statement: “I am a *veshtitsa* and I enter the house as a snake”. “Enter the house” is the center of the phrase. Clearly, it is not possible to carry on each of these particular evil deeds, without transgressing into the human daily life. This is

⁴¹⁸ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 81

⁴¹⁹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. II, p. 11.

the evil essence of the *veshtitsa*; this is why she is so dangerous. For once, she is capable of shape shifting, of disguising herself, and of creeping into the human world and into the human abode. Already inside, she is capable of killing and stealing newborn babies, of damaging the crops and the health, and even of threatening the entire community with her slander. She is a supernatural deceiver and killer, who penetrates the actual fabric of human everyday life and existence.

The supernatural invasion in the human world is described in the Mesopotamian tradition. According to a Babylonian charm, the evil spirits behave in the same way as the *veshtitsa*.⁴²⁰

*The highest walls, the thickest walls,
Like a flood they pass.
From house to house they break through,
No door can shut them out,
No bolt can turn them back,
Through the door like a snake they glide,
Through the hinge like the wind they blow,
Estranging the wife from the embrace of a husband,
Snatching the child from the loins of a man.*

Another Babylonian text describes the demons that rage against humankind, spilling the human blood, devouring human flesh, sucking human veins:⁴²¹

*Demons like raging bulls, great ghosts,
Ghosts that break through all houses,
Demons that have no shame,
Seven are they!*

A third Babylonian charm directly expels the demons:⁴²²

*Into my house may they not enter,
My fence may they not break through,
Into my chamber may they not enter.*

⁴²⁰ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, pp. 35 and 53.

⁴²¹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, pp. 69-71.

⁴²² Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 11.

The picture, described by the Mesopotamian texts is essentially the same as the picture from the Bulgarian charms. There is an evil supernatural being (or beings) with semi-human, semi-animal features. Disguised as a snake and a windstorm, this evil being enters into human dwellings in order to steal children and to bring illness, harm and death. Remarkably, this archetypal evil supernatural figure remains more or less the same in the course of several millennia, and is persistently transmitted between traditions.

There are cases, when the *mora* and the *vila* are not names of the *veshtitsa*, but separate figures. There is an example in two charms from the eighteenth century.⁴²³ The text of the first one is as follows:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I step up at the peak, Satan, and I see you condemned by the Lord and by the Lord's Prayer, to be dust and ashes. In the name of the Holy Cross, if the guardian angel that protects me steps away from me, the deceiving evil spirits and their servants will attack me. I praise Christ and I fear the Lord. St. Peter and St. Paul and the Holy Mother of God and St. Cosmas and Damian and Joachim and Anna, amen, and all the saints. May you shut down the jaws of the vila, the jaws of the Devil, all horrible jaws, take them into the sea, shut down the mouth of the veshtitsa, shut down the jaws of the vampire, tie them and throw them into the sea, let them stay there until the end of time. Glorious and pure Holy Cross, protect and guard this home and the ones living in it, here a prayer is being said from dawn till dusk, from dusk till dawn, from dawn until the end of the world and time. Amen.

The texts of the second charm is the following:⁴²⁴

Go away, cursed Satan from all the corners of the temple and from this place, where the servant of God Niketa is bowing down, sleeping, and praying to the angels. They are standing in front of the gates, at the Eleon Mountain and holding swords of flames. They are chasing away all the evil and the evil power and deceit. And the apostles Peter and Paul are summoned to curse the mora and the veshtista and the Devil and all the envious and unclean spirits. In the evening and at midnight, when no dogs

⁴²³ *Никетово сборниче*, dated 1787 (NBKM № 646), fol. 61. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, p.162. See no. 32 in the Catalogue.

⁴²⁴ *Никетово сборниче*, dated 1787 (NBKM № 646), fol. 61. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, p. 162. See no. 33 in the Catalogue.

are barking and no roosters are singing, then you, cursed Satan, shall do no harm to Niketa, but go to your ugliness, I curse you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, now and forever. Amen.

In these two examples, we can see the *veshtitsa* in the company of several other evil beings. In the first charm they are called “deceiving evil spirits and their servants”, and in the second charm “envious and unclean spirits.” Two of them are the *mora* and the *vila*, whose nature was discussed above. The others are Satan (*Сатана*), the Devil (*дявол*), and the vampire (*вампир*). As notions, characteristics and images, all three of them have a long and complex history and development, both canonical and non-canonical. There is also a lot of scholarly research done, and abundant and extensive secondary literature is available on these topics.⁴²⁵ Here, I shall discuss Satan, the Devil and the vampire only in terms of their role in the charms, where they appear as unclean spirits, connected to the *veshtitsa*.

Up to my knowledge, this is the one and only appearance of the word “vampire” in the medieval Bulgarian material of verbal charms. Actually, it is not very clear what exactly the term signifies here: a blood-sucking evil supernatural being, or a blood-sucking dead human, coming out from the grave.⁴²⁶ There are blood-sucking evil supernatural beings in the Thraco-Greek belief system, for example the above mentioned

⁴²⁵ For example, the books by Jeffrey Burton Russell *Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977); *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981); and *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984). Also, Nancy Caciola, “Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture”, *Past & Present* 152 (1996): pp. 3-45. On the Devil and the evil supernatural beings in popular beliefs (with emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe), see the three volumes Éva Pócs and Gábor Klaniczay, ed., *Demons, Spirits, Witches, Volume 1: Communicating with the Spirits* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005), Éva Pócs and Gábor Klaniczay, ed. *Demons, Spirits, Witches, Volume 2: Christian Demonology and Popular Mythology* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), Éva Pócs and Gábor Klaniczay, ed. *Demons, Spirits, Witches, Volume 3: Witchcraft Mythologies and Persecutions* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008).

⁴²⁶ For a comprehensive discussion on the topic see Alan Dundes, ed., *The Vampire, A Casebook*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998) and Helen Parish, *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe: A Reader* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

striges and *lamias*. The blood-sucking beings and spirits appear in the Slavic mythology too, for example the *upyr*, the *bias* and the souls of the people who died from unnatural/untimely death. As this particular Bulgarian text comes from a relatively late manuscript (dated 1787), hypothetically it might have been also influenced by the wave of early modern vampirism cases and stories about dead people, who return from the grave from the grave to attack and suck blood.⁴²⁷

In this particular charm, it seems that the vampire is simply one from the group of the evil spirits, threatening Niketa. While Satan is presented as the chief evil supernatural figure, the vampire seems to be one of his servants. The two charms give kind of hierarchy of the evil beings. Satan is on the top, he commands the unclean and evil spirits, and unleashes them on the humans. The *vila*, the *veshtitsa*, the vampire and the *mora* are the members of Satan's sinister horde. In my opinion, this host of evil supernatural beings, lead and commanded by Satan, is reminiscent of the hierarchy of Hell, as we can see it in the canonical Christian demonology. Here, the legions and ranks of demons are replaced by the evil beings from the popular beliefs. Satan remains as the supreme evil head, in the canonical Christian sense. Defeated and condemned by the Lord, Satan is a deceiving evil spirit, destined to preside over other deceiving evil spirits. This time, however, he is ruling over unclean and evil figures, coming from various mixed Christian and pre-Christian sources. These two charms clearly reflect the merging of Christian and pre-Christian traditions. They are a good example not only for syncretism in verbal magic, but also for popular religion in practice and use.

⁴²⁷ Gábor Klaniczay, *The Uses of Supernatural Power: the Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 1990); Koen Vermeir, "Vampires as "Creatures of the Imagination": Theories of Body, Soul, and Imagination in Early Modern Vampire Tracts (1659-1755)", in Y. Haskell, ed., *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 341-373.

Concerning the more specific features of the vampire, the texts speaks about “jaws of the vampire”, which suggests some kind of biting/devouring/blood-sucking activity. Clearly, the information is rather scarce. In my understanding, the vampire stands a bit out of place here, in this charm. To me, it seems like a ready model or construct, borrowed or copied from some source, different from verbal magic and canonical prayers. Perhaps, the presence of the vampire in the charm is a result of an actual strong impact of the oral folklore tradition. Of course, this is only a hypothesis. Further research can place this particular charm and its vampire can in the context of rural Bulgarian folklore from the twentieth and twenty-first century. The history of the manuscript and its owner/author Niketa can also be examined in more details.⁴²⁸ This might possibly reveal texts, traditions, ideas and motives, which influenced the author and the shaping of the content of his book, including the appearance of the vampire in the text of the charm.

In the last two charms above, the figure of the Devil (*дявол*) is the canonical Christian supernatural evil figure. There is, however, another charm, where this being appears with a peculiar shift. He is in particular relation with bad weather and natural disasters, which is a specific supernatural profile. The following fifteenth-sixteenth century charm from a manuscript is an example⁴²⁹:

Let us pray to the Lord! The priest must say: Indeed Our Lord Jesus Christ justfully, rightfully and well put Archangel Michael to guard the rivers, so that the Devil will not have any power upon them. God came with a great oath with the Father, with the Holy Ghost, to expel through

⁴²⁸ The *Нукетово сборниче* (Miscellany of Niketa). Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 161-166. It is one of the rare cases, when we know by name who is the author and owner of an early modern Bulgarian manuscript. See Diana Atanassova, “The Prayer-Book of Niketa (No. 646 NBKM): A Case Study” (*Scripta & e-Scripta* (1/2003), pp. 187-196.

⁴²⁹ Сборник, NBKM № 308. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 252-254. See also Petkanova, *Смара българска литература*, pp. 87-88.

the Holy Trinity the Devil from the rivers, so that he will not have any power over the labor of the Christians, destroying it with a heavy rain. I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the Living True God and His Pure Mother Mary, betrothed to Joseph! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of all the angels, created by God! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the four angles of the sky! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the four evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who are supporting the sky and the earth! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the great city of Jerusalem, where all the righteous people are resting! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the twelve apostles! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the sixteen prophets! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the forty martyrs! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the great John the Baptist! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the 318 holy fathers, gathered at Nicaea – may it be that you do not have any power over the labor of the Christians, destroying it with a heavy rain! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the four rivers Pison, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates, which are running through the entire universe – may it be that you do not have any power over the labor of the Christians! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the angels and the archangels of our Lord Jesus Christ! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the Lord's baptism! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the resurrection of Lazarus! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the Flower-carrying of our Lord Jesus Christ! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the Lord's resurrection! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of His most beautiful glory! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of power of the justful and live-bringing Cross – may it be that you do not have any power to devastate the Christian fields! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of Sidrach, Micah and Abdenago! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the two stars created by the Lord: the sun of the day and the moon of the night – may it be that you do not have any power to flood the Christian fields! I conjure you, Devil, in the name of the cherubim and the seraphim of Our Lord Jesus Christ and in their never-ending singing. Let our voice will be accepted with diligence and confession, now and forever and for eternal centuries!

To be read at the feast of St. George, at the Day of the Ascension and at the feast of the Holy Ghost. To be read at the four corners of the village up to three times.

This is one of the longest verbal charms from the source material. It has its roots in the canonical Christian exorcism. In the beginning of the text, it is said that a (Christian) priest has to pronounce the charm. It is a remarkable text, because it features an actual practitioner: an Eastern Orthodox Christian priest. In the end, there is an instruction about the time, the place and the manner – when, where and how the charm

should be said. It is a classic case of apotropaic spatial framework and ritual behavior: the charm is to be read “at the four corners of the village up to three times”. Actually, this charm contains a complete apotropaic rite, with text, actions and participants. On one hand, this rite is obviously calendric, as it is explicitly connected with certain dates of the year. On the other hand, what we have here is clearly a crisis rite against flood. It is a classical example for a crisis management through verbal magic.

The temporal frame of the charm consists of three Christian holidays: St. George’s day (April 23)⁴³⁰, the Ascension (forty days after Easter) and the Holy Ghost (fifty-one days after Easter). These three feast days blend a number of popular Christian and pre-Christian beliefs, connected with fertility, health and supernatural beings. St. George is the patron of the livestock and the shepherds, and of the rain, the springs, and the vegetation. His feast day and its rituals are focused on the fertility of the livestock and of the land, and on the health of the people. The agricultural summer labor season starts on St. George’s day. Clearly, the charm against the Devil is part of this ritual context. It is to be read as a prevention against natural disasters and crop damage.

The charm fits perfectly into the context of the other two feast days too. According to popular beliefs, on the feast of the Ascension, the souls of the dead return to the Other World, after visiting their living relatives around Easter. This is also the day, when the fairies and the nature spirits visit humans and heal them. On the feast of the Ascension, the healing herbs and plants are very strong and effective, especially against human barrenness. Similarly, the feast of the Holy Ghost⁴³¹ opens the Rusalian Week (*Русалска седмица*). This is the time, when the *rusalia* (русалии)/the *vilas*/the fairies/the

⁴³⁰ In today’s Bulgaria, this is May 6.

⁴³¹ The feast is always on Monday.

nature spirits walk among the humans and bring fertility to the land. On this feast and during the whole week, a number of agricultural and household taboos should be strictly observed.

Thus, the text of the charm is situated in the ritual framework of three pivotal spring feasts, focused on the fertility, health and prosperity. These feasts themselves are a complex alloy of beliefs, coming from various traditions. The charm against the Devil is such an alloy too. It is an apotropaic text-conjuration against an evil supernatural being, called the Devil/*дьявол*, who has power over the rain and the rivers. In the beginning of the text, Archangel Michael is placed to guard the rivers, “so that the Devil will not have any power upon them.” The Lord himself expelled the Devil from the rivers, and prevented him from pouring a heavy rain over on the fields of the Christians. The motive is repeated through the text, and all the positive and benevolent Christian supernatural figures are summoned with one aim: to deprive the Devil from “any power to flood the Christian fields”.

The charm, the crisis rite, and their context are part of a syncretic belief system. This is valid for the main evil antagonist in the text: the Devil. According to the Christian tradition, the Devil is the bringer of every evil; therefore, he is also responsible for the floods and devastating rains. No doubt that his features and actions are that of the arch-evil supernatural figure, as it is perceived in the Christian canon. In this charm, however, the Devil can be seen from another perspective too. Here, he is a lord of the rivers and rain. In this respect, he is very similar to the fairies (in their destructive aspect) and to the winter demons.⁴³² He can bring heavy rain and bad weather, can make the rivers

⁴³² Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, pp. 27-29, and p. 73, note 95, where it is demonstrated how the Christian devil adopted a number of destructive features from the winter and storm demons.

overflow, can flood the fields and devastate the crops. In my mind, the Devil here is actually a devil: much more a bad destructive water/weather spirit, than a canonical Christian personification of evil. I would say, he could be seen as a malevolent water demon, a water *exotiká*, very similar to the Greek *exotiká*, examined by Stewart.⁴³³

Of course, it is difficult to make a definite conclusion based on a single charm. Still, a transformation of the Christian Devil into a devil, which is de facto a water/weather spirit or demon, is not surprising for the medieval and early modern Bulgarian charms. In my mind, such an interpretation is valid and logical in the context of syncretic figures like the *nezhit* and the *veshtitsa*.

5. 2. 3. The snake

Another syncretic evil figure of this type is the snake. While the Devil possibly shifts from an arch-demon to a specialized water-demon, a common reptile rises to a mythical malevolent beast. All through human history, certain animals have been and are objects of a special attitude and attention. They play a wide range of roles and bear numerous connotations in various contexts: all the way from the physical features and behavior of the actual animal to the deep mythological symbolism and religious allegory. In terms of rich, multileveled and symbolic presence and significance in human culture, the snake occupies one of the top positions. Regarding the snake to be special in some way (for example sacred, divine, cursed, unclean, wise, evil, benevolent, helpful, harmful, superior, inferior, etc.) appears as an universal cultural phenomenon through time and space.

⁴³³ Stewart, *Demons and the Devil*, pp. 137-194, and 251, where the author summarizes about *diávolos*: “In the folk tradition he is given considerably more elaboration in respect to form and he is often referred to in the plural, as one of many such beings. These multiple *diávolo*i are able to assume many forms, especially those of a dog, cat, and even a human being.”

Before looking at the snake in the Bulgarian charms, it is appropriate to provide short information on the actual venomous snakes existing in Bulgaria. These are from four such species, all belonging to the Viperidae family. The first two species is *Vipera Berus* and *Vipera Ammodytes*, which have always been typical reptiles for the Balkan Peninsula, and can be found in Bulgaria today too. The second two species are *Vipera Ursinii* and *Vipera Aspis*, which are currently extinct in Bulgaria. They were still to be found in the nineteenth century, although rather rarely, and scientists agree that *Vipera Ursinii* and *Vipera Aspis* have never been widely spread species in Bulgaria. All the four snakes are venomous, but their venom is relatively weak, and the bites are rarely fatal⁴³⁴. In sum, the venomous snakes on the territory of Bulgaria were and are relatively rare and do not represent an extreme danger.

In Bulgarian verbal magic, however, venomous snakes are often to be found, and their image is rather extreme. The medieval and early modern charms against snakebite come from the following sources:

- *Псалтир* sine № et loco, fol. 263, from the thirteenth century – one charm. The text consists of words of unknown meaning, probably gibberish, among which the words *apostle Paul, Peter, aspida, basilisk* and *Christ* can be read. The text ends with *amen*, repeated three times.⁴³⁵
- *Сборник* № 632, fol. 110-111, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, National Library, Belgrade – two charms. The texts are expulsion formulae.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ D. Mallow, D. Ludwig and G. Nilson, *True Vipers: Natural History and Toxinology of Old World Vipers*, (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 2003), pp. 358-360.

⁴³⁵ Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 65.

⁴³⁶ *Ibidem* p. 69.

- *Сборник* № 11, from the fourteenth century, National Library, Paris – one charm. The text is a direct command to the snakes to obey the person, saying the charm.⁴³⁷
- *Псалтир* № 6, fol. 148r-149r, from 1479, National Library, Sofia – one charm. The text is from the type *Prayer of Apostle Paul against Snakes*.⁴³⁸
- *Часослов* LGOPI № 22, fol. 386 and fol. 415-417, from 1498, Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem – two charms. One of the texts consists of words of unknown meaning, followed by ritual instructions. The other text is from the type *Prayer of Apostle Paul against Snakes*.⁴³⁹
- *Служебник с Требник* № 836, fol. 229, from the fifteenth century, Library of the Seminary, Sofia – two charms. The first text consists of words of unknown meaning. The second text is a direct expulsion formula, with the list of the snake's epithets, very likely a variant of the *Prayer of Apostle Paul against Snakes*.⁴⁴⁰
- *Требник* № 725, fol. 97, from 1505, Library of the Seminary, Kazan – one charm. The text is a request to God to cure the bitten person.⁴⁴¹
- *Требник*, № 1181, fol. 159, sine loco, from the first half of sixteenth century – one charm. The text is a combination of words of unknown meaning and ritual instructions.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁷ Ibidem, p. 66

⁴³⁸ Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, pp. 6-8.

⁴³⁹ Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 66.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 65.

⁴⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 101-102.

⁴⁴² Ibidem, p. 108.

- *Лечебник* № 321, fol. 75, from the sixteenth-seventeenth century, National Library, Belgrade – one charm. The text is a combination of words of unknown meaning and ritual instructions.⁴⁴³
- Marginalia from the sixteenth-seventeenth century in a *Празничен миней*, Q. I. № 1299, fol. 301 from the fifteenth century, Public Library, St. Petersburg – one charm. The text is a combination of words of unknown meaning and ritual instructions.⁴⁴⁴
- *Требник* № 42, from the sixteenth-seventeenth century, Library of the Rila Monastery, Bulgaria – one charm. The text is from the type *Prayer of Apostle Paul against Snakes*.⁴⁴⁵
- *Сборник* № 555, fol. 157-158, from the seventeenth century, National Library, Belgrade – one charm. The text is a combination of words of unknown meaning and ritual instructions.⁴⁴⁶
- *Сборник* IX. H. 23, fol. 188, from the seventeenth century, Czech Museum – one charm. The text is a combination of words of unknown meaning and ritual instructions.⁴⁴⁷

In sum, the snakebite charms belong to three types. Seven of the texts consist of words of unknown meaning (probably gibberish), combined with ritual instructions. Five texts are expulsion formulae or direct commands, addressed to the snake. Four texts are of the type *Prayer of Apostle Paul against Snakes*.

⁴⁴³ Ibidem, p. 66.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 76.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 65

⁴⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 66

From the first type, one text is of special interest. This is the snakebite charm on the fol. 263 of the *Псалтирь* sine № et loco, from the thirteenth century⁴⁴⁸:

Jesus Christ nika [“Jesus Christ wins” in Greek, but written in Cyrillic letters]. [Followed by ten words of unknown meaning, probably gibberish] *Apostle Paul* [unknown word] *Peter* [unknown word] *aspida* [unknown word] *basilisk* [unknown word] *Christ* [unknown word]. *Amen. Amen. Amen.*

The text starts and ends with typical Christian ratification formulae, which are commonly used in verbal magic too. The use of abracadabra-type of words is typical too. In this case, they are “Sarandara, sarandara, marandara, marandara”, etc. The meaning and the origin of these words is unknown. To me, the most logical hypotheses are that *sarandara*, etc. are either corrupted versions of words or phrases from some Eastern language (for example Hebrew or Arabic), or pseudo/gibberish words, made to sound like Hebrew or Arabic.

The abracadabra is followed by a sentence, in which it seems that Apostle Paul and Apostle Peter evidently do something, as a result of which then the *aspida* and the *basilisk* (i. e. the snake) do something too, and finally Christ also does something. The word after *aspida* looks a bit like the Bulgarian verb “to be extinguished”, usually used for fire or flame. The word after Christ looks a bit like the Bulgarian verb “to skin”. In this case, the phrase can be tentatively translated: “Apostle Paul does something, Peter does something, the *aspida* was extinguished, the *basilisk* does something, Christ skins.” Clearly, this is a *historiola*, in which the actions of the apostles neutralize the snakes (extinguish the venom of the *aspida*), and then Christ skins them.

⁴⁴⁸ *Псалтирь*, thirteenth century, sine № et loco, fol. 263, Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 64. See no. 36 in the Catalogue.

Despite the concrete linguistic difficulties, the overall meaning is clear. The charm's narrative presents the case, when the apostles and Christ defeated the snake. Based on this mythical success in the past, the charm is believed to help against snakes now and to cure the patient in the current moment. Such a *historiola* is typical and commonly used in verbal magic. The narrative, where three (or more) supernatural helpers cure through different actions is discussed in more details below, in the next subchapter.

The current snakebite charm offers a peculiar configuration of the actors. The format is two positive figures defeat two negative figures, and then the supreme positive agent confirms the victory and finalizes the process. Such a format can be very syncretic. The *historiola* employs Apostle Paul (who is closely connected with the snakebite theme) and mythical epithets of the snake (*aspida* and *basilisk*), which are typical for another type of snakebite charm, namely the *Prayer of Apostle Paul*. On the other hand, the configuration “two-two-one” seems a bit unusual, at least to Bulgarian verbal magic, where the supernatural helpers usually are three. In my understanding, this peculiar configuration (combined with gibberish words) is probably a result of some kind of corruption of the charm. It is very possible that motives, characters and parts of the plot were misunderstood or simply forgotten. In general, such corruptions and omissions are common in verbal magic. For example, some English verbal charms against fever and burning only tell about two (instead of three) angels, or do not tell what is the third angel doing. In the Bulgarian snakebite charm, there is a positive duo, helping against two evil adversaries are only two. Similar Bulgarian case (a charm using the name Agrippa twice instead of thrice) is discussed below.

Among the snakebite charms, which are direct commands or expulsions, the text from fol. 111 of *Сборник* № 632, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, from the National Library in Belgrade, is interesting. It goes as following⁴⁴⁹:

Deformed wild venom, insane venom, what you do...to his health. Whom the snake bit, go out from the heart into the bones. Form the bones into the flesh. Form the flesh into the hair. From the hair into the ground,...you have it now and forever.

Clearly, this is the same transmission-type of *historiola*, which we already saw in the charms against the *nezhit*. Here, the personified evil is the snake's venom, which is commanded to pass from one element into another, until it disappears. This is the only medieval and early modern Bulgarian example, where the transmission-narrative is used against snakebite.

Four of the charms are of the type, called *Prayer of Apostle Paul*, which expels the snake through a long list of epithets⁴⁵⁰. The *Prayer of Apostle Paul* against snakebite usually contains five parts: title and instructions about the ritual; narrative about the Apostle Paul's miraculous recovery from a snake's bite; narrative of how archangel Michael (or Gabriel) appeared to Apostle Paul in a dream and gave him written charms, aimed to help all people; list of names of snakes, accompanied by an expulsion formula; promise for healing everybody, who applies this text. Here is an example, a charm from a fifteenth-century manuscript:

*Apostle Paul's prayer against snakebite:
If a snake bites somebody, he should do the following: bring a new vessel, make the sign of the cross in the vessel, saying all the prayers about the Holy Cross, and write this troparion around the cross: "Let Moses rise complete on the standard of healing." He must wash himself with holy water from a new moon, if he can find one. If not, he must find clean*

⁴⁴⁹ See no. 10 in the catalogue.

⁴⁵⁰ Yatsimirskii, "К истории ложных молитв", pp. 64-90 and Kristanov, *Естествознанието в средновековна България*, pp. 544-547

water, to wash the whole vessel and if the person bitten by the snake is near, he must drink the water. If he is not nearby, the curing person must drink the water.

Charm:

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost! Once I was a persecutor, now I am an honorary vessel. I went out of my home in Sicily and while I was gathering dry woods, an echidna suddenly appeared because of the heat, bit my right hand and remained hanging there. But I had the power of the Holy Ghost inside me, shook it away in the fire, it burnt completely, and I did not suffer any harm from its bite. I fell asleep, and the great archangel Michael came, turned to me and said: "Saul, Paul, get up, take this piece of paper and you will find words written on it, saying: "I conjure you, sixty-five and a half kind of beasts, which creep on the ground, in the name of the Lord, creator of heaven, earth and sea and in the name of his immovable throne. Pernicious snake, I conjure you in the name of the fiery river, which rises from under the foot of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the unearthly angels. Snake born from a basilisk, tetrachalin snake, dodekachalin snake, lagodroma snake, snake with twelve heads, snake like fire, snake like raven, snake climbing on oaks, snake like an arrow, snake like ashes, snake echidna, who has poison in the right side and whoever is bitten by it, cannot live anymore. And the twenty-four kinds of reptiles, whom the prohibition and the prayer of the holy apostle will reach. When a snake bites a human, let it die immediately, and let the bitten person remain alive in the glory of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost now, and forever and ever. Amen".⁴⁵¹

The summarized list of names, titles and epithets of the snake looks as follows:

snake (змия), scorpion (скорпион), pernicious (губелна), venomous (отровна), harmful (вредна), fierce (яроствна), with venom in the right jaw (с отрова в дясната челюст), born from a basilisk (родена от базилиск), asp (аспида), like a cloud (като облак), like fire (като огън), like hair (като коса), creeping on trees (пълзяща по дървета), flying (летяща), like a raven (като гарван), with three jaws (с три челюсти), three-headed (триглава), tetrachalin / with four mouths (тетрахалина), dodekachalin/with twelve mouths (додехалина), twelve-headed (дванадесетглава), with twelve skins/mouths (с дванадесет кожи/устни), lagodroma/moving like a hare (лагодрома), blind (сляпа),

⁴⁵¹ Псалтир, 1479, Sofia, National Library, № 6, fol. 148r-149r. OCS edition in (Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, pp. 6-8). See no. 34 in the Catalogue.

like an arrow (*като стрела*), black (*черна*), from the ground (*от земята*), biter of women (*хапеца жени*), like sea (*като море*), echidna (*ехидна*), like ashes (*като пепел*), like a sly mouse (*като лукава мишка*), from the Devil (*от дявола*).

The list of names is rather eclectic and heterogeneous. There is a thick layer of canonical and apocryphal Christian symbolism.⁴⁵² The reference to the basilisk and the asp a very clear example of biblical elements. The first one is connected to a passage in Isaiah 14:29, saying: “the serpent's stock can still produce a basilisk, and the offspring of that will be a flying dragon.” The second one comes from Psalm 91:13, where the text goes: “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.”

Here, the impact of Byzantium is clearly visible⁴⁵³, as the Bulgarian charm against snakebite has direct Byzantine parallel – the Prayer of St. Paul against the Biting Snake (Εὐχή τοῦ ἁγίου Παύλου εἰς τὸν δάκνοντα ὄφιν)⁴⁵⁴. Large number of the epithets in the Bulgarian charm have direct parallels in Byzantine text⁴⁵⁵. There, “snake born from a basilisk” is *τὸν βασιλισκὸν δρακόντα τὸν γενναῖον*, “snake like a cloud” is *ὄφιν τὸν νεφελοειδήν*, “snake climbing oaks/trees” is *ὄφιν τὸν δενδροαναβάτην*, “snake like a raven” is *ὄφιν τὸν κορακοειδή*, “tetrachalin snake” is *ὄφιν τετραχάλινον*, “dodekachalin snake” is *ὄφιν δωδεκαχάλινον*, “lagodroma snake” is *ὄφιν λαγοδρόμονα*, “blind snake” is *ὄφιν τὸν τυφλόν*, “snake without eyes” is *ἀόμματον*, and “snake like sea/fierce echidna

⁴⁵² [Tatjana A. Agarkina] Татьяна А. Агапкина, *Славянская мифология: энциклопедический словарь* (Slavic Mythology: Encyclopedia), (Moscow: Международные отношения, 2002), passim; and Georgieva, passim.

⁴⁵³ Robert Mathiesen, “Magic in Slavia Orthodoxa: The Written Tradition”, in Henry Maguire, ed. *Byzantine Magic*, (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), pp. 155-178; and Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, pp. 9-30.

⁴⁵⁴ Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, pp. 330-331.

⁴⁵⁵ Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, pp. 88-89, where the author quotes apocryphal Byzantine texts against snakebite.

with poison in the right jaw” is *έχιδνα τήν σκολίαν τήν έχουσαν τά φάρμακα είς τήν δεξιάν αύτής σιαγώνα*.

It seems that the list of epithets has also a layer of various pre-Christian elements.⁴⁵⁶ For instance, the obscure epithet “like a cloud” probably has relation to a Mesopotamian parallel. A Babylonian charm compares the evil spirits: “They are the wide spreading clouds which darken the day.”⁴⁵⁷ The winged or flying snake and the fiery snake are images, typical for the Slavic and Balto-Slavic traditions.⁴⁵⁸ Already in a syncretic cultural context, the snake plays a key role in the Slavic apotropaic and amulet tradition, expressed in the *zmeevik* (*змеевик*). This is a medallion and pendant amulet with a Christian motif on one side and an ancient pagan motif (involving serpents) on the other. The *zmeevik* appears from the eleventh century onwards and is extensively widespread and used among the Slavs, especially the Eastern Slavs⁴⁵⁹. Some scholars connect this popularity with a supposed ancient cosmic serpent cult. On the other hand, Ryan points out that the *змеевик* has primarily Christian (albeit non-canonical) interpretations. They are based on Byzantine and Near Eastern models and relates to the Biblical text in Numbers 21: 8, 9, saying: “And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. So, Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.”

⁴⁵⁶ Agarkina, *Славянская мифология*, p. 58 and Georgieva, *Българска народна митология*, pp. 36-40.

⁴⁵⁷ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 185.

⁴⁵⁸ The snake is “a fiery queen”, and the lord of the snakes is “flaming king” in Lithuanian charms. See Vaitkevičienė, *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai*, pp. 745 and 839.

⁴⁵⁹ Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, pp. 42-44.

The lists of names, comparisons and color symbolism is common for the Baltic traditions too. The Lithuanian verbal charms present the snake as a powerful fiery being, but also as a “horrible crawling thing” and “cold metal”.⁴⁶⁰ The color-associations are important too. A number of Lithuanian charms are focused on a list of different colors, like in the following examples:

*Peter ploughed, John ploughed, Jesus ploughed; they ploughed three beds and turned up three little worms: one black, one red and one speckled. Praised be Jesus Christ!*⁴⁶¹

*God was walking through the forests and found a nest of snakes. There were red ones, green ones, white ones. God buried the green one, killed the red one, and put the white one in his pocket. God climbed out of the place and he was bitten in the leg. He chopped the head of the white snake off and rubbed the wound. Get out on your own, you cursed snake, image of the devil, die!*⁴⁶²

*Gray snake, mottled snake, brown snake, take your pain back because you will end up on God's trial!*⁴⁶³

*Mottled, black, or blue, stranger! Red-mottled, rofous-mottled, stranger! Red one, sorrel, rofous, stranger!*⁴⁶⁴

The Estonian verbal charms speak about “coppery snake”, “blade snake”, “bush snake”, “water snake” and “clay snake”. It lists certain colors, for example:

*Snn, snn, snakekins
White snakekins
Black snakekins
Many-colored snakekins!
I know where you live:
Under the fence...*⁴⁶⁵

A Finnish charm conjures the snake and asks it to cure the injury from its own bite:

Black worm under ground

⁴⁶⁰ Vaitkevičienė, *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai*, p. 735.

⁴⁶¹ Lithuanian charm, see Daiva Vaitkevičienė, „Lithuanian and Latvian Charms: Searching for Parallels”, in Roper, *Charms, Charmers and Charming*, pp. 186-213, p. 205.

⁴⁶² Vaitkevičienė, *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai*, p. 737.

⁴⁶³ Ibidem, p. 747.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 840.

⁴⁶⁵ Vepsian charm. See Jonathan Roper, “Traditional Verbal Charms”, pp. 30-31.

*Wiggler in the grass
Rod among brushwood
Snake under fences
Bright under the rock
Coiled under the knoll
Iron-hued wretch, thin
Under the steel-glass
You did well to strike
Better if you make better:
bring honey from the hive, mead
from your meadery
drip honey from your tongue, pour
mead out of your mouth
for the time being
for the best ointment.⁴⁶⁶*

In the belief system of the Bulgarian and Balkan folklore, the snake is bringer of evil, but also of good luck. It is a devilish creature, biting the sun or trying to swallow it, but also protecting the house and the crops. The snake is closely associated with fertility (can stop the flow of a river and cause drought, but it can also bring rain), with storms and with the ancestors. It may act as a messenger between the living and the dead.⁴⁶⁷

The snake's chthonic nature is expressed through the close relations with the earth (compare the Bulgarian word "змия" meaning "snake" and "земя" meaning "earth, soil, ground") and with water, wetness and moisture. In this respect, the animal is inseparably associated with the Other World, the Underworld and the Land of the Dead, and even plays an important role in the cosmic opposition between the Earth and the Sun.⁴⁶⁸

In the folklore, the snake's character is ambivalent, combining the positive and the negative. The snake is apotropaic and curative, but it also brings damage. It is unclean and evil, but also possesses enormous wisdom, fantastic powers and protective functions.

⁴⁶⁶ Seventeenth century Finnish charm. See Henni Ilomäki, "Finnish Snake Charms", in Roper, *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic*, pp. 163-172, p. 166.

⁴⁶⁷ Georgieva, *Българска народна митология*, pp. 37-38. Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, pp.15-21.

⁴⁶⁸ [A. V. Gura] A. B. Гура, *Символика животных в славянской народной традиции* (The Symbolism of Animals in Slavic Folk Tradition), (Moscow: Индрик, 1997), passim.

The ambivalence of the snake is very clearly expressed in its double fiery and watery nature, and its ambiguous influence on meteorological phenomena, crops and domestic animals.⁴⁶⁹

In Bulgarian verbal charms, however, the snake is exclusively a negative figure. This figure has two sides. There is the snake as a physical reality: a venomous reptile, whose bite is a threat for the health of humans and other animals. Names like “pernicious”, “venomous”, “harmful”, “fierce”, “black”,⁴⁷⁰ “blind”, “climbing trees”, “coming from the ground”, refer to the physical appearance and characteristics of the snake. There is the snake as a figure with supernatural mythical characteristics. It is a *polycephalous* (three-headed) reptile, which can fly and has three, four or twelve jaws. There are also the comparisons with elements of nature (fire, clouds), with other animals (scorpion, asp, basilisk, raven, hare, echidna, mouse), and with objects (hair, arrow, ashes).

In the context of medieval Bulgarian verbal charms, the snake is connected with the *veshtitsa*. As quoted above, the *veshtitsa* transforms into a snake, in order to sneak into the human dwellings. This transformation demonstrates a higher (or even the highest) level of supernatural power: the evil supernatural being becomes an ordinary animal, which will pass unnoticed in human daily life environment. In one charm, the *veshtitsa* is temporarily reduced to a common reptile; in another charm, the common reptile is elevated to a powerful supernatural being.

⁴⁶⁹ Georgieva, *Българска народна митология*, p. 38, Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, p. 19.

⁴⁷⁰ In the context of Bulgarian snakebite charms this colour is always with negative connotations and again referring to the strong chthonic nature. For comparison, in Swedish material we find *svarta snuva* (black snake), and in Finnish material *mato musta* (black worm). See Ritwa Herjulfsdotter, “Swedish Snakebite Charms from a Gender Perspective”, in Roper, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming*, pp. 54-61, p. 57 and Ilomäki, “Finnish Snake Charms”, p. 167.

Both of these supernatural figures have many faces, and both are defeated by lists of names. The lists organize and define the supernatural adversary, and thus control it and place it a new framework of meanings.⁴⁷¹ Thus, the evil being is effectively recognized, understood, controlled and expelled. In Finnish charms, the purpose of a euphemistic description of the snake is “to create a situation in which the opponent and the charmer are at the same level of authority, and can recognize one another. At the same time, by revealing the outlook and the origin of the snake, the charmer dominates it.”⁴⁷² In Bulgarian charms, this system is applied for both the venomous reptile and the evil supernatural female figure.

5. 3. The good ones

The powerful evil beings presented above are opposed by powerful benevolent figures, providing help and protection. The *nezhit* meets Jesus Christ; the *veshtitsa* is defeated by archangel Michael, the venomous snake is neutralized by Apostle Paul. Medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms rely on a number of good supernatural agents. Most of them are Christian, for example, Virgin Mary, the four evangelists, the archangels and the angels, the apostles, and saints like George, John the Baptist and Cosmas and Damian. They appear in typical roles as protectors and healers, helping the humans, and expelling and destroying the evil supernatural beings. For instance, in the charms above, Archangel Michael fulfills the functions of the positive celestial solar male figure, defeating a negative chthonic demonic female figure, like the *veshtitsa*.

⁴⁷¹ Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises*, pp. 134-135.

⁴⁷² Ilomäki, “Finnish Snake Charms”, p. 169.

Indeed, benevolent supernatural presence of this type is not at all surprising in a Christian context. Jesus Christ and Archangel Michael appear in typical roles, their activities follow usual patterns, and their abilities and features are shaped after common paradigms. Of course, all Christian figures appearing the Bulgarian charms have characteristics, which come from and reach beyond the borders of the canonical Christian tradition. Yet, their images are within the limits of the expectable for a medieval and early modern European verbal magical tradition. In other words, the nefarious *nezhit* and the vile *veshtitsa* are much more remarkable and extraordinary than their positive adversaries.

5. 3. 1. The saint

However, there are good and positive supernatural agents, who are at least as interesting and noteworthy as the vicious ones, if not even more. One such very prominent and original figure is St. Sisinnius whom we already met above, fighting against the *veshtitsa* and the *tresavitsi*.

The medieval and early modern charms with St. Sisinnius come from the following sources:

- *Драголов сборник* № 651, fol. 52-60, from the thirteenth century, National Library, Belgrade. The book contains four charms with St. Sisinnius. The first text tells how the saint chases and defeats the Devil, who stole the children of Sisinnius' sister Melentia. This *historiola* contains a list of the secret names of the Devil. The second charm is the same story, but this time the Devil is chased by St. Sisinnius, St. Sinodor and St. Theodor, and there is no list of names. The third

charm is a shorter variant of the first text, without list of names⁴⁷³. The fourth charm is an encounter-*historiola* about St. Sisinnius, who meets the child-stealing *veshtitsa*. The saint beats her and she tells her twelve secret names.⁴⁷⁴

- *Часослов* № 631, fol. 162, from the seventeenth century, National Library, Sofia. The book contains two charms with St. Sisinnius. The first text is a narrative how St. Sisinnius Isidorus, St. Simon and St. Theodor saved the children of their sister Melentia, kidnapped by the devil. The second text tells how St. Sisinnius is chasing all evil beings and spirits⁴⁷⁵. It is as follows:

Sisinnius was standing in front of the gates of the God's servant (say the name), leaning on a spear, with a sword on his waist, watching at witches and at all kind a of evil spirits. Together with him, I called all the angels, and archangel Michael and Peter and Paul, the apostles of Christ. It [sic] came invisible from the sky and cast away the evils spirits, the witches and the Devil from this place: in the evening, at midnight, when the sea is resting, when the water is not flowing, when the roosters are not singing and when the dogs are not barking – then they cast away all the devils and the dark spirits from this place, from this temple, from these four directions. Here, at God's servant (say the name), there is no place for you, here are the four evangelists, here are the sixteen prophets, they will guard and protect God's servant in the name of the Father, the son and the Holy Ghost.

The etymology of the name Sisinnius⁴⁷⁶ in apocryphal and magical context is unclear. Barb interprets it as a Christian reduplicative adaptation of a Semitic *vox magica* or angelic name with uncertain or misunderstood meaning.⁴⁷⁷ In the light of the strong Mesopotamian influence in verbal magic, it is also possible that the name Sisinnius has

⁴⁷³ In the charms from this manuscript, the Devil introduces himself with the words: “I am *veshtitsa*” and “My name is *veshtitsa*”.

⁴⁷⁴ The manuscript is unpublished. For a list of partial publications, see Velinova, “Из българо-сръбските книжовни връзки”, p. 163, n. 10.

⁴⁷⁵ Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp.149-150 and no.15 in the Catalogue.

⁴⁷⁶ Spelled also *Sisinnios* and *Sissinnios*, in Greek Σισίννιος. See Velinova, “Из българо-сръбските книжовни връзки”, pp. 161-177.

⁴⁷⁷ A. A. Barb, “Three Elusive Amulets”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964): pp. 1-22

its roots in the ancient Akkadian word “sīsû”/“sissû”, meaning “horse”.⁴⁷⁸ If this is correct, then Sisinnius should mean “a horseman”, and indeed this is how he is presented in some traditions (for instance, on the fifth-century Coptic wall-painting from the Monastery of St. Apollo in Bawit in Egypt). However, the Mesopotamian texts of verbal magic do not mention any horseman, fighting against the demons.⁴⁷⁹

Saint Sisinnius from the charms is actually not a saint at all. He is not identical to any of the historical and saintly Christian figures with the same name. St. Sisinnius can be called a legendary or folk saint.⁴⁸⁰ With his specialized curative-protective functions, he is similar to the folk versions of St. Antipas⁴⁸¹ and St. Cosmas and Damian.⁴⁸² Most of all, St. Sisinnius is a positive male warrior-hero-saint type of figure, similar to Archangel Michael and St. George. Armed with a spear, he is victorious against the female demonic beings, coming from the sea, like the personified fevers and the child-stealing Devil.

Clearly, St. Sisinnius originates from the archaic archetype of “positive celestial solar igneous divine male hero versus negative chthonic lunar aquatic demonic female monster”⁴⁸³. The closer and more relevant parallels, to mention a few, include the battles of Marduk versus Tiamat, Perseus versus Medusa, Perun versus Veles, King Solomon versus Obyzouth, the prophet Elijah versus Lilith, Archangel Michael/St. George versus

⁴⁷⁸ Velinova, “Из българо-сръбските книжовни връзки”, *passim*.

⁴⁷⁹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I and II, *passim*.

⁴⁸⁰ Richard P. H. Greenfield, “Saint Sisinnios, the Archangel Michael and the Female Demon Gylou: the Typology of the Greek Literary Stories”, *Byzantina* 15 (1989): pp. 83-141; Wolfgang Fauth, “Der christliche Reiterheilige des Sisinnios-Typs im Kampf gegen eine vietnamige Dämonin”, *Vigiliae Christianae* 53, 4 (1999): pp. 401-425; Velinova, “Из българо-сръбските книжовни връзки”, *passim*. In terms of popularity, St. Sisinnius can be compared for example to Santa Muerte in the Mexican folk Catholicism or the *lwa* spirits in the Caribbean voodoo.

⁴⁸¹ Popularly regarded in the Slavic tradition as helper against toothache.

⁴⁸² Popularly regarded and summoned as healers saints.

⁴⁸³ Of course, this archetype may vary from culture to culture. For instance, the chthonic monster can be male (for example, a dragon), or can be defeated by a female supernatural figure, like for example Virgin Mary or Artemis of Ephesus.

Satan/the dragon, etc. Thus, the battle of St. Sisinnius against the *veshtitsa/tresavitsi*/the child-stealing devil fits perfectly in this epic mythological framework. Both the saint and his enemies are syncretic composite figures, who walked the long way from Mesopotamia to medieval Bulgaria, with all the attached innovations, variations and transformations, and yet remaining remarkably persistent and close to the prototype. They are perfectly adapted and incorporated in Christian context too. The chthonic monster adopted features of the biblical evil beings, while the celestial hero Sisinnius is equipped with the title “saint”. Thus, he is recognized and accepted as an authentic Christian figure, and is smoothly integrated in the Christian apocryphal (and not so apocryphal) tradition.

It seems that St. Sisinnius reached the Slavic verbal magic via Byzantium.⁴⁸⁴ In Byzantium, the legendary saint is an actual popular saint with important practical protective functions. In his role of a rider warrior hero, he appears on a significant number of apotropaic Byzantine *hystera* amulets.⁴⁸⁵ There, the nimbate St. Sisinnius is usually mounted on a horse and spears a female demon⁴⁸⁶. Often, he is also accompanied and assisted by an angel or archangel.⁴⁸⁷ In the Byzantine amulet tradition, St. Sisinnius is closely and naturally associated with King Solomon. The names of these two victorious heroes are interchangeable on many of the Seal of Solomon-type of Byzantine amulets from the sixth and the seventh century.⁴⁸⁸ The earliest example of a Byzantine amulet only with the name of Sisinnius is from the same period too. However, there is the fifth

⁴⁸⁴ Greenfield, “Saint Sisinnios, the Archangel Michael and the Female Demon Gylou”, passim and Velinova, “Из българо-сръбските книжовни връзки” (“On the Bulgarian-Serbian Literary Connections in Thirteenth Century”), passim.

⁴⁸⁵ Spier, “Byzantine Magical Amulets”, passim.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibidem, pp. 61-62.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁸⁸ Spier, “Byzantine Magical Amulets”, p. 37.

century Coptic wall painting from the Monastery of St. Apollo in Bawit in Egypt, where the legendary saint already has a full heroic iconography: with a halo around his head, mounted on a horse and armed with a lance and a shield, he spears an apparently evil female figure, called Alabasdria.⁴⁸⁹

The Byzantine tradition of St. Sisinnius has strong roots not only in objectual and visual magic, but also in verbal charms. For example, the Byzantine apotropaic amulets often contain inscriptions like “φευγε, φευγε, Αβιζου, Σισίνις καί Σισιννία ένθαδε κατυκί καί λάβραξ ο κύον” (“run, run, Abyzou, Sisinis and Sisinnia [chase you]. The voracious dog dwells here”)⁴⁹⁰ or “φευγε, Αβιζου, Αναβαρδαλεα Σισινίς σε διόκι ο άγγελος Αραφ” (“run, Abyzou Anabardalea, Sisinis chases you, the angel Araph”).⁴⁹¹ In their own turn, these amulets have parallels in the Byzantine charm against bile-illness⁴⁹²: “Φεϋγε σκίον, φεϋγε ήμίσκιον, ό βασιλεύς τόν άδον σε δεσμεύει.” (“Run shadow, run half-shadow, the king of hell (spell) binds⁴⁹³ you”)

These inscriptions represent direct expulsive formulae, but also compressed historiolae, referring to the victory of the mythical hero-saint over the demonic being or illness. Actually, if we put the medieval Byzantine amulets and the late medieval Slavic charms side by side (as they actually stand historically too), we can immediately see the continuity, going through several centuries and several levels. The Byzantine amulets present the image and the actions of the saint and of his adversary. This visual-objectual side is accompanied with a short verbal formula. The Slavic charms elaborate on the narrative, developing an entire *historiola*, with almost all the characteristic elements

⁴⁸⁹ Barb, “Antaura”, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁹⁰ Spier, “Byzantine Magical Amulets”, p. 38.

⁴⁹¹ Ibidem.

⁴⁹² Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, p. 334.

⁴⁹³ The Greek verb means “to bind” both by physical and by magical means.

present. If the Byzantine amulets are the pictorial representation of St. Sisinnius' battle, the Slavic charms tell verbally how St. Sisinnius defeated the evil.

St. Sisinnius was successfully adopted and adapted in North-Slavic context. Ryan gives a comprehensive overview of the saint's presence in the medieval and early modern Russian traditions. There, as illustrated by the Russian charm above, St. Sisinnius cures the fevers, defeating and expelling their personifications as twelve demonic women. As Ryan aptly points out, the Slavic notion of the legendary saint was quickly connected with the apocryphal and Bogomil traditions.⁴⁹⁴ The eleventh-century *Euchologion Sinaïticum* contains a charm, which mentions St. Sisinnius, Mount Sinai, the Archangel Sachiël and seven fevers, the daughters of Herod.

The notion of the positive figure of Sisinnius kept living in other medieval and early modern traditions too. He appears in Arabic, Abissinic, Modern Greek, Romanian and Armenian texts. The narrative is more or less the same (the saint/the hero defeats the demons/the illnesses, while the name can be modified respectively. For example, the Abissinic version is Susneyos and the Armenian version is St. Sisi. In the Arabic tradition the role of Sisinnius is taken over by Sulayman (king Solomon), who wins a victory against the child-harming demon Qarīna.⁴⁹⁵

One peculiar example of continuity can be seen in the Hebrew charm of Elijah meeting the child-stealing Lilith is preserved on an early modern Jewish apotropaic amulet⁴⁹⁶. It was used to protect women in childbed. Together with the charm, the amulet is also inscribed with the names of mythical helpers – four pairs of biblical characters and three angels. The names of the angels are Sinov, Vsinsinov and Isomngolof. In such a

⁴⁹⁴ Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, pp. 244-252.

⁴⁹⁵ Pócs, "Lilith és kísérete", p. 216.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 214-215.

context, it is clear that these (especially the first two) are variants of the names of St. Sisinnius and his brothers. This amulet also demonstrates that these angels are believed to help against the child-harming Lilith, i. e. Sinov, Vsinsinov and Isomngolof carry the names and the functions of the legendary saint. If in the Early Christian and Coptic tradition St. Sisinnius was an adaptation of a Hebrew angelic figure, in the early modern Jewish tradition the angels Sinov, Vsinsinov and Isomngolof seem to be an adaptation of the legendary saint⁴⁹⁷.

In Byzantine and especially in Slavic contexts, the legendary saint is closely related to the archangels Michael and Sachiël. The latter one is notable, because Slavic apocryphal Christian texts (as the above-quoted Russian charm) explicitly mention him as a defeater of the evil spirits⁴⁹⁸. St. Sisinnius and Archangel Sachiël are represented together on a silver triptych, dated 1412 and coming from the Suzdal region, central Russia. The triptych is de facto a composite apotropaic curative amulet. The saint appears also in nineteenth-century Russian icons and popular prints, where he is called “The Wonderworker” and expels the *tresavitsi* personified as women⁴⁹⁹. Clearly, St. Sisinnius has a strong position in the Slavic Christian apocryphal traditions, in both textual and visual contexts - in charms, on icons and on amulet objects.

In the Bulgarian variant of the charms, St. Sisinnius is in his typical role of a victorious horseman warrior-protector. Armed with the symbolic weapons (sword and

⁴⁹⁷ Ibidem, pp. 217-218.

⁴⁹⁸ [V. L.Yanin] В.Л., Янин and [A. A. Zaliznyak] А.А. Зализняк, “Берестяные грамоты из раскопок 1990-1996 гг.” (Birch Charters from the Excavations in Years 1990-1996), (Moscow: Наука, 2000) and [Svetlana Vital’evna GnUTOva] Светлана Витальевна Гнутова and [Elena Yakovlevna Zotova] Елена Яковлевна Зотова, *Кресты, иконы, складни. Медное художественное литье XI — начала XX века. Из собрания Центрального музея древнерусской культуры и искусства имени Андрея Рублева: Альбом.* (Crosses, Icons, Repositories. Copper Casting from the Eleventh to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century. From the Collections of the Central Museum of Old Russian Culture and Art “Andrey Rubl’ov”). A Catalogue), (Moscow: Интебрук-бизнес, 2000).

⁴⁹⁹ Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, p. 247.

spear), located at a symbolic setting (near the sea), he successfully fights against the evil supernatural monster, represented by the *veshtitsa* and the child-stealing Devil. St. Sisinnius is also referring to the supreme divine intervention and help of Archangel Michael and the apostles Peter and Paul. The connection and intermingling with Archangel Michael is a typical element too. As Greenfield demonstrates⁵⁰⁰, the Byzantine material contains numerous variants of the charm, where St. Sisinnius is replaced by Archangel Michael and vice versa. There is a similar fusion in the medieval and early modern Bulgarian charms too⁵⁰¹. In the Bulgarian cases, regardless of the variant of the story, the main protagonists can be both St. Sisinnius (with or without his brothers), and Archangel Michael. As we saw above, there is a certain tendency Archangel Michael to be the one that appears more often in the list-of-names-type of charms against the *veshtitsa*.

5. 3. 2. The shepherds

Most often, St. Sisinnius acts alone. Yet, sometimes he appears in the charms together with his brothers. The names of the brothers have different variants: Sisinnodorus, Sinodorus, Sisoë, Theodorus, etc., which suggests that these may be seen as alter egos of the legendary saint himself. He and his brothers are presented as a group of positive figures, chasing and defeating the evil, with St. Sisinnius as the central and most active character. In this sense, the legendary saint is similar to another group of mysterious positive figures from the charms, namely the blind shepherds.

⁵⁰⁰ Greenfield, “Saint Sisinnios, the Archangel Michael and the Female Demon Gylou”, *passim*.

⁵⁰¹ As for example in the charms, preserved in the manuscript *Драголов сборник* dated thirteenth century. See Velinova, “Из българо-сръбските книжовни връзки”, pp. 161-177.

In the above-quoted mini-corpus of twelve charms against the *nezhit*, there is one text⁵⁰², where certain blind shepherds confront the *nezhit* and manage to eliminate it:

The nezhit fell from the sky, the blind shepherds saw him. They chased him without feet, caught him without hands, tied him without a rope, burned him without fire, killed him without a knife, and ate him without mouths. From the bones, the nezhit went into the flesh, into the skin, into the hair, and melted, like salt in water. Let it disappear in the same way from God's servant (say the name) now, and forever and always.

This charm contains a number of typical verbal magical elements. There are the impossibilia (seeing without eyes, chasing without feet, catching without hands, etc.), the physical disability of the positive figures (despite of which they are successful against the illness), and the formula of the as...so... - type, combined with transmission of the affliction from the ill body to various objects, leading to its annihilation.

The impossibilia represent a special condition for controlling the evil/the illness. When put in the “impossible” situation and confronted in “impossible” ways, only then the *nezhit* it becomes vulnerable, manageable and defeatable. The impossibilia-motive connects the Bulgarian text for example to the eighteenth century German *Gerichtsseggen*, presented by Spamer⁵⁰³. In this verbal charm aiming to provide good luck and success we see the three dead men, each of them with different physical defects:

*Vor Gericht und Rath zu Recht behalten.
Jesus Naearenius Rux Judzorum.[sic!] Zuerst trag diesen Charakter bei dir in der Figur, alsdann sprich folgende Worte: Ich N. N. trete vor des Richtes Haus, de schauen 3 todte Männer zum Fenster heraus, der eine hat keine Zunge, der andere hat keine Lunge, der dritte erkrankt, erblindt und verstummt. Da ist, wann du vor's Gericht gehest. Oder Amt und eine Rechtsache hast, dagegen dir der Richter nicht günstig ist, so sprich: wenn du gegen ihm gehest, den oben schon stehenden Segen.*⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰² Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II., pp. 132-135 and no. 5 in the Catalogue.

⁵⁰³ Spamer, *Romanusbüchlein*, p. 54 and pp. 317-319.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibidem*.

It is not surprising that there are also other, much older parallels of this peculiar combination: handicapped supernatural helpers and successful completion of various actions without the necessary tools or body parts. One such charm comes from the Coptic tradition. In a Coptic spell for relieving stomach pain, Horus plays music and captures birds, which he cuts without a knife, cooks without fire and eats without salt. Then, he feels stomach pain, and three demons called Agrippas help him to get in touch with his mother Isis, in order to be cured by her.⁵⁰⁵ The text of this exemplary charm is as follows:

Jesus! Horus [the son of] Isis went upon a mountain in order to rest. He [performed his] music, [set] his nets, and captured a falcon, [a Bank bird, a] wild pelican. [He] cut it without a knife, cooked it without fire, and [ate it] without salt [on it].

He had pain, and the area around his navel [hurt him], and he wept with loud weeping, saying, "Today I am bringing my [mother] Isis to me. I want a demon so that I may send him to my mother Isis."

The first demon Agrippas came to him and said to him, "Do you want to go to your mother Isis?"

He said, "How long will it take for you to go there and how long for you to come back?"

He said, "How long will it take for you to go there and how long for you to come back? I can go there in two hours and I can come back in two."

He said, "Leave, you do not satisfy me."

The second demon Agrippas came to him and said, "Do you want to go to your mother Isis?"

He said, "How much time do you need to go there and how much time to come back?"

He said, "I can go there in one hour and I can come back in one."

He said, "Leave, you do not satisfy me."

The third demon Agrippas, the one with a single eye and a single hand, came to him and said to him, "Do you want to go to your mother Isis?"

"How long will it take for you to go there and how long for you to come back?"

"I can go there with the breath of your mouth and I can come back with the breath of your nose."

"Go then, you satisfy me."

⁵⁰⁵ Coptic manuscript on a papyrus (Berlin 8313). See charm 49b in Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, pp. 95-97.

He went upon the mountain of Heliopolis and found his mother Isis wearing an iron crown and stoking a copper oven. She said to him, "Demon Agrippas, from where have you come to this place?"

He said to her, "Your son Horus went upon a mountain in order to rest. He performed his music, set his nets, and captured a falcon, a Bank bird, a wild pelican. He cut it without a knife, cooked it without fire, and ate it without salt on it. He had pain, and the area around his navel hurt him."

She said to him, "Even if you did not find me and did not find my name, the true name that the sun bears to the west and the moon bears to the east and that is borne by the six propitiatory stars under the sun, you would summon the three hundred vessels that are around the navel:

*Let every sickness and every difficulty and every pain that is in the belly of N. child of N. stop at this moment. I am the one who calls; the lord Jesus is the one who grants healing."*⁵⁰⁶

This text shares a number of features with the Bulgarian charm. We can see the impossibilia cutting without a knife and cooking without fire; then, there are the supernatural figures, helping against the pain; and finally, the demon who actually helps Horus is exactly the physically disabled one, with only one eye and one hand. This disability-motive has a peculiar inverted parallel in a Babylonian charm⁵⁰⁷, which expels an evil demon that had no mouth and no limbs. This demon cannot hear and had no form.

It seems that the Coptic charm represents an older text, to which Christian elements were added later. There is the name of Jesus in the beginning and in the end, in the typical ratification formula *I am the one who calls; the lord Jesus is the one who grants healing*. In the Bulgarian charm, the phrase "God's servant" is the only explicit Christian reference.

The name Agrippas is a very peculiar element. In the syncretic Coptic context, it is possible that this is a Christian element too⁵⁰⁸. Whoever the demon Agrippas was

⁵⁰⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁰⁷ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, pp. 129-139.

⁵⁰⁸ *Agrippa* is an old Latin *praenomen* and *cognomen* of uncertain etymology. It was commonly used in Rome during the entire Antiquity. However, the name was carried also by two Judean monarchs – Herod

originally, his variant appears in Bulgarian verbal magic, probably via Byzantium. One Bulgarian verbal charm against water retention, coming from a manuscript from the end of the sixteenth century, has the following text⁵⁰⁹:

*Against retention.
Agripa Agripa. On horseshoe [?].*⁵¹⁰
On the banks of Jordan, three angels stand. The first ties, the second unties, the third prays to God: “Holy, holy holy God God God Lord Lord Lord, may it passes through the servant of God (say the name) now and forever and for eternity”.

Here, we can see a number of typical features: the appropriate mythical location (the biblical river Jordan); the supernatural trinity (the angels), performing the curative rite (imitative tying and untying, and pronouncing the words of power); the charm per se, which consists of three sacred words (invocation to God), repeated three times and combined with Christian ratification formulae. In respect to these elements, the charm is nothing exceptional among the other medieval Bulgarian texts against water retention. Usually, these charms include three angels, three ritual actions, triple invocation to God and three magical words of unknown meaning⁵¹¹. This *historiola* takes place at the river Jordan. The four biblical rivers Gyon, Physon, Tigris and Euphrates are present too, as their names should be written on nails, fingers or hooves.

However, this particular water retention charm has a unique feature – the name Agripa, repeated twice in the beginning of the text. This name does not appear anywhere

Agrippa (11 BCE – 44 CE) and his son Herod Agrippa II (27–100 CE). They are respectively the grandson and the grand-grandson of Herod the Great. These kings are both mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as being hostile to Christianity. Thus, it is possible that the Christian tradition associated the name *Agrippa* with evil and devilish figures and powers, and the demons from the Coptic charm are named Agrippas due to this association.

⁵⁰⁹ See no. 24 in the catalogue.

⁵¹⁰ The meaning of this phrase is not very clear. It seems to be an instruction, according to which the name/the word Agripa should (probably) be inscribed on a horseshoe. This means that the charm is meant to cure horses. However, the *historiola* only refers to a sick human, and not to a sick animal.

⁵¹¹ These words go by three, in various spellings: *hinen*, *igis* and *mantis*, or *geris*, *tortos* and *gideon*, or *igin*, *igin* and *netaitis*.

else in the medieval and early modern Bulgarian source material, and it has not been discussed or analyzed in the secondary literature either. Although it is not very clear how the name Agrippas came into the Coptic charm, it is certain what does it stands for: supernatural helper of demonic nature. It seems that it was adopted by the late medieval Bulgarian charm, in order to fulfil the same role. Although it is not sure that in the Bulgarian text Agripa was understood exactly as a name of a supernatural entity, clearly it was perceived as some kind of magical word of power.

The difference in numbers (three Coptic Agrippas, but only two Bulgarian Agripa) can be explained in several ways. The simplest one is that the Bulgarian text was physically damaged or corrupted. However, this is rather unlikely, as the text seems to be physically well preserved⁵¹². Another explanation can be a random omission, oblivion or a copyist's mistake. This is possible, especially if the copyist did not understand the word. However, the text's punctuation and graphics is quite clear, which indicates that the repetition is on purpose double (and not triple) This leads to another explanation, namely that the Bulgarian charm was maybe translated from or adapted on the basis of an original, which only contained two Agripa. In this case, the Bulgarian text used a "template", which is already modified or a priori different from the Coptic charm. Finally, it is maybe a case of contamination or merging between motives. It is possible that the Bulgarian charm is a conscious modification of another text, which repeated the name three times. Maybe, the Bulgarian text is an original composition, which drew from several sources and processed the original motives in a new way. Instead of being a

⁵¹² At least, that is how it looks in the publication in Yatsimirskii, "К истории ложных молитв", p. 34.

helpful trinity, Agripa became a word of power, meant to be inscribed (probably symmetrically), followed by the typical trinity-based *historiola*.

In my understanding, the Coptic charm with Horus has two direct Bulgarian parallels or descendants: the charm against the *nezhit* with the blind shepherds and the charm against water retention with the repetition of the name Agripa. The *nezhit* charm inherited the disability-motif and the impossibilia-motif. The water retention charm kept the Agripa Agripa. This probably has something to do with the fact that the water retention charm contains the same number of helpers, like the Coptic one: three.

The professional occupation and the status of the supernatural helpers vary from example to example. In the Bulgarian text, there are blind shepherds, without number specified. In the German charm, there are three dead men, each of them with some physical disability. In the Coptic text, there are three demons with the same name, one of them handicapped. While the helpers always have certain supernatural abilities or status, the specific occupation of shepherds lacks from the Coptic and the German charms.

The motif “shepherds and illness” can also be seen a healing charm in Bulgarian folklore recorded in a later period⁵¹³:

*Three brothers were shepherding the stranitsi*⁵¹⁴,
The first one is dumb,
The second one is deaf,
The third one is blind.
Until the dumb one speaks,
Until the deaf one hears,
Until the blind one sees –
*A wolf took away the stranitsi.*⁵¹⁵

⁵¹³ [Ivanichka Georgieva] Иваничка Георгиева, “Баянията като космогонична концепция в българската народна култура” (Charms as a Cosmogonic Concept in the Bulgarian Popular Culture), *Векове* 6 (1990): pp. 5-19. The author quotes folklore examples collected in the nineteenth century.

⁵¹⁴ *Stranitsi* is the Bulgarian folklore name of an inflammation of the submandibular gland.

⁵¹⁵ The English translation is mine, after the Bulgarian text, published by Georgieva, “Баянията като космогонична концепция”, p. 13.

This is a completely inverted situation – the three shepherds are guarding and looking after the illness (an inflammation). Because of the disabilities of its guardians, the illness escapes and later is eaten by a wolf. In the text against the *nezhit* quoted above, the strange shepherds are benevolent supernatural agents, successfully defeating the illness. In the folklore tradition recorded later, the three shepherds are demonic figures, which ensure the success of the evil activity of the illness⁵¹⁶.

The shepherds can be seen as positive figures also in late antique and early medieval charms, where the defeaters of the illness have this specific occupation. Exactly shepherds appear in the following two Latin charms, given by Marcellus Empiricus in his book *De Medicamentis*. The first text is against heart illness or pain:

*Corce corcedo stagne, pastores te invenerunt, sine manibus collegerunt, sine foco coxerunt, sine dentibus comederunt*⁵¹⁷.

The second charm is against some kind of internal infection in humans or in animals:

*Stolpus a coelo cecidit, hunc morbum pastores invenerunt, sine manibus collegerunt, sine igni coxerunt, sine dentibus comederunt*⁵¹⁸.

It is difficult to say why exactly the shepherds counteract the illness. In Christian context, the occupation and the work of the shepherds has very positive and exemplary symbolic meaning. The image and notion of the “Good Shepherd” is central for Christianity, it applies to Christ and to the Christian clergy. The human and the supernatural shepherds have very special role in a number of Biblical narratives. At his

⁵¹⁶ Ibidem.

⁵¹⁷ Spamer, *Romanusbüchlein*, 323. This Latin text is a quotation from *De Medicamentis*, XXI, 3 written by Marcellus Empiricus (Marcellus Burdigalensis/ Marcel of Bordeaux) – a Gallic medical writer from forth/fifth century CE. See also Jerry Stannard, “Marcellus of Bordeaux and the Beginnings of the Medieval *Materia Medica*,” *Pharmacy in History* 15 (1973): pp. 48-51.

⁵¹⁸ This is another example by Marcellus Empiricus (*De Medicamentis*, XXVIII, 16), quoted by Éva Pócs, “Miracles and Impossibilities in Magic Folk Poetry,” in Roper, *Charms, Charmers and Charming*, p. 34. The article discusses also the interpretations of the “demon falling from the sky” motif and its parallels.

birth on earth, Christ is first met and praised exactly by the shepherds. Thus, the motif “good shepherds versus bad illness” has its Christian background and explanation, and it is not surprising to be seen in a late medieval Bulgarian charm. At a second sight, the charm has a Christian narrative. The shepherds emerge as positive Christian characters, acting according to a typical Christian paradigm.

The positive connotation of this particular occupation may possibly have its roots in the Mesopotamian verbal magic. One of the Mesopotamian charms exorcises the fever by the names of many deities, among which there is “Nin-Tara, the shepherd of flocks”⁵¹⁹. It seems that this line refers to Ninurta, the deity of the ancient Mesopotamian city of Lagash. On one hand, Ninurta is a farmer and a healer, helping against the sickness and demons. On the other hand, he is identified as the South Wind. As we saw already, the first evil spirit from *The Seven* is the South Wind⁵²⁰. Thus, there is a Mesopotamian archetype of a good shepherd, related to healing.

However, the physical disability (the blindness) of the shepherds goes beyond the conventional Christian positive model. Generally, the sight impairments have special place and meaning in culture, mythology and demonology. Important biblical figures like Isaac and Eli have sight disability. Being blind or one-eyed is a main characteristic feature of mythological figures like Odin, the Cyclopes, Tiresias. The third dead man from the German charm is blind too, and the third demon Agrippas from the Coptic charm only has one eye.

In my opinion, this Coptic parallel provides context for the better understanding of the blindness of the shepherds from the Bulgarian text. On one hand, the demon that

⁵¹⁹ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 59.

⁵²⁰ The storm and pest-bringing Mesopotamian demon Pazuzu is also associated with the southwestern wind.

helps Horus is exactly the one with sight disability. On the other hand, Horus himself is symbolically connected with the eyesight. In the ancient Egyptian religion, one of his aspects is as god of the moonless nights⁵²¹ and as god of the blind. He lost his left eye in a battle with Set. Later, the eye is restored magically and became a symbol of healing and protection. This is the ancient Egyptian apotropaic symbol in the shape of a falcon's eye, called the Eye of Horus.

Possibly, these old Egyptian motives and notions were adopted by the Coptic and later in the Byzantine tradition. Via the Byzantine route, they probably also reached the Balkans and Bulgaria. In my opinion, the Coptic and Byzantine motives probably met with the local (Slavic and others) pre-Christian elements and traditions. There, for example, we can see Slavic mythological figures like the Liho (Лихо) and the Pesoglav (Песоглав, a cynocephalous winter demon). Both of them are explicitly evil and one-eyed⁵²².

Regardless of the tradition, the physical disability/the blindness most often means belonging to the Other World. Unlike the ordinary disabled humans, the disabled supernatural beings are able to complete successfully the most difficult deeds, good and evil. The blind shepherds see the dangerous *nezhit*, the one-eyed and one-handed Agrippas help in a nick of time, etc. They manage so well exactly because of their supernatural otherworldly blindness, crippleness, etc. The impossibilia make things possible. In my opinion, this explains why Bulgarian verbal magic has a curative charm, where the blind shepherds are positive figures, and another curative charm, where the blind shepherds are negative figures. Both the good and the evil shepherds come from the

⁵²¹ Called Mekhenti-en-irty, meaning "he who has no eyes".

⁵²² Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, p. 23.

Other World. Each group, however, carries different combination of attributes and meanings. The good blind shepherds come from the Other World to help the humans against the *nezhit*. The evil disabled shepherds come from the Other World to help the illness against the human.

Although the otherworldly origin and affiliation may have some positive connotations, the negative aspects are more prominent in Bulgarian folklore⁵²³. In this sense, the charm against the *nezhit* is rather special. It represents blindness as manifestation of the supernatural, which is good and positive. The narrative from the Bulgarian charm is very interesting, but somehow compressed or incomplete. The comparison and contrast with other texts emphasize its uniqueness.

On the other hand, the supernatural disability of the shepherds can also be interpreted in terms of power levels. Maybe the *nezhit* is so strong and dangerous that it can only be defeated by supernatural figures, whose blindness give them bigger supernatural power in the framework of impossibilia. In this critical situation, the power of the shepherds is more important than their potential sinister nature.

5. 3. 3. The sisters

In their role as positive, yet ambiguous agents, the blind shepherds from the Bulgarian charm have a peculiar relation to a special group of supernatural handicapped helpers – the Graeae from the Greek mythology. The Graeae are three sisters, the daughters of Phorcys and Ceto. They had grey hair from their birth, and only had one eye and one tooth, which they borrowed from one another. In the classical Greek myth, the hero Perseus stole their eye and their tooth, and then return them in exchange for information about Medusa. In some Classical Greek sources, the Graeae have the figures

⁵²³ Georgieva, *Българска народна митология*, pp. 11-15, Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, pp. 19-21.

of swans. The Graeae (being members of the family of Phorcys) were interpreted as marine divinities, and personifications of the white foam seen on the waves of the sea.⁵²⁴

While the Graeae are similar to the shepherds in their physical disability, as a water-related female trio they are connected to other figures in Bulgarian verbal magic. The three supernatural women, who know a lot and help in solving a problem, lead us to another Bulgarian charm. There, we can see the three sisters in the fiery lake, helping against water retention. The charm is from a fourteenth century manuscript, part of a group of three charms against water retention. In the manuscript, the three charms are written together, one immediately following the other. The texts look as following⁵²⁵:

*Prayer against water retention in horse and humans. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Three angels stand on the bank of the river Jordan and hold copper intestines. One ties, the other unties, the third one prays to God, saying: "Holy holy holy God Sabbaoth! Heaven and earth is full with his glory!" **Prayer for the same thing. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I went out in a field of fire and I found a lake of flames. Into it, three sisters were sitting and holding three bowls full with crayfish intestines. The oldest one was tying, the middle one was untying, the youngest one was praying to God: "Lord, let the water pass through this man (the person's name) in the name of the Father."** Third [prayer]. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Write on the front right leg Tigris, on the left rear leg Physon, on the front left leg Euphrates, on the left rear leg [sic!] Gyon. To go all over the earth. In the name of the Father and the Son. Read each of them four times. Soon it will be relieved.*

The first and the third charms are rather typical for the medieval Bulgarian verbal magic. Both the *historiola* about the three angels and the instruction about the four rivers

⁵²⁴ The name Graeae (in Greek γράαια, sg. γράαια) means "grey ones" or "old ones". See William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1867) and Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights* (Third Edition), (California State University, Sacramento. Mayfield Publishing Company. 2000, 1998, 1995), pp. 273–274 and 1039.

⁵²⁵ The manuscript is the famous *Zaykovski Book of Occasional Prayers* (Зайковски требник, NBKM № 960, fourteenth century), fol. 47v. Stoyanov, *Catalogue*, p. 114. See no. 22 and no. 23 in the Catalogue. The highlight in bold is mine.

is found often in the sources. However, the story in the middle is unique for the Bulgarian material, as this is the only verbal charm, employing the *historiola* about the three sisters.

The three sisters charm contains a number of typical magical elements. The locations “field of fire” and “lake of flame” shape the mythical environment. The supernatural figures are sitting in the middle of their magical place, thus manifesting their otherworldly nature. Symbolically, the number three is very significant too, especially when it refers to a trinity of supernatural beings. The crayfish intestines function as a tool for imitative magic. However, most of all, the narrative is centered at the helpful supernatural female trio.

The motif of three women (often sisters or other relatives), who have supernatural powers and prophetic knowledge is widespread. A few parallels are the above-mentioned Graeae and the Moirai in the Greek mythology; the Parcae and the Camenae⁵²⁶ in the ancient Roman religion; the Norns and the Valkyries in the Norse mythology; the Latvian trio Laima, Kārta and Dēkla; the Italian Fate; the Morrígan trio in the Irish mythology; the three witches or weird sisters from the early modern western European literature and imagination⁵²⁷.

All of these figures have certain common features: they are women; often three in number; genetically related (usually sisters); divine or semi-divine; with chthonic origin, nature and features; with supernatural powers; wise and knowledgeable; seers and prophets; closely connected with human life, fate, birth and death. In the Slavic context, similar figures appear in the face of the *Narechnitsi* (наречници), *Orisnitsi* (орисници)

⁵²⁶ The Camenae were Roman prophetic deities and goddesses of childbirth, wells and fountains. They were four sisters, called Carmenta, Egeria, Antevorta and Postvorta.

⁵²⁷ Éva Pócs, “Sors, bábák, boszorkányok. Archaikus sorsképletek Közép- és Kelet-Európa hiedelemrendszereiben” (Fates, Midwives, Witches. Archaic Fate Patterns in the Belief-systems of Central and Eastern Europe), in Pócs, *Magyar néphit*, p. 79.

and *Sudzhenitsy* (судженицы). They are three fairy sisters, who come to the newborn child and foretell the child's destiny. The fairies from the Balkan folklore also can appear in the role of helpful supernatural female trio⁵²⁸.

Thus, the above-presented Bulgarian text comes as a part of a rich tradition. It has direct parallels in the medieval charm-type *Tres virgines* or *Tres sorores* (Three virgins or Three sisters). In this type of charm, three virgins and/or sisters accomplish three actions, and the third one brings the healing/the solution⁵²⁹. In different variants, they can be replaced by three angels, three saints, three flowers, etc.⁵³⁰ Two such charms are given by Marcellus Empiricus. The first one is against heart pain:

*Tres virgines in medio mari mensam marmoream positam habebant, duae torquebant et una retorquebat; quomodo hoc numquam factum est, sic numquam sciat illa Gaia Seia corci dolorem.*⁵³¹

The second charm of the same type is against stomach pain. Its imagery is closer to the Bulgarian example:

*Stabat arbor in medio mare et ibi pendebat situla plena interstinorum humanorum, tres virgines circumibant, duae alligabant, una revolvebat.*⁵³²

A variant of the charm appears also in *Medicina Plinii*, a fourth century Latin medical manuscript⁵³³:

Tres sorores ambulabant, una volbebat, alia cernabat, tertia soluebat.

The Bulgarian charm is very close to the two charms, given by Marcellus Empiricus. In the Latin text, the mythical location is “in medio mari”, in the Bulgarian text the magical spaces are “field of fire” and “lake of flames”. In both cases, the

⁵²⁸ Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, passim.

⁵²⁹ Bozoky, *Charmes et prières apotropaiques*, p. 48.

⁵³⁰ Ibidem.

⁵³¹ Marcellus Empiricus *De Medicamentis*, XXI, 3. The *tres virgines* charm follows immediately after the above-quoted charm with the shepherds.

⁵³² Marcellus Empiricus, *De Medicamentis*, XXVIII, 74.

⁵³³ Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaiques*, p. 93-94.

paraphernalia consists of intestines. In both cases, the sisters are tying and untying. In the Bulgarian charm, the third sister is praying (performing verbal magic) and this particular action is the one that helps and heals.

The sister's help also against hemorrhage in a thirteenth century French medical manuscript, where the text is as follows⁵³⁴:

*Sainte Marie aloit par voie, le fiz Deu portoit, trois serours samanz trova,
l'une avoit a non Resta, li alter Cesta, et li tierce Stupa; plaist Deu le tout
poisans sainte Marie ke de ces plais sains n'isent.*

In this French variant, the helping sisters have names, derived from the Latin verbs with the meaning "to stop". The same verbs are generally often encountered in blood-staunching charms.⁵³⁵ In this fashion, they appear in a French text from a fifteenth-century English manuscript⁵³⁶:

*Ive et Eve e saynte Suene furent seorures. Ceo dist Ive: "scuche";
ceo dist Eve: "estupe"; ceo dist seynt Suene: "meis nen isse gute".*

In the later times, the female trio appears also in a text in the eighteenth century *Romanusbüchlein*, published by Spamer. The German charm is from the Dreifrauensegen-type:

Vor die Geschwulst.

*Es gingen 3 reine Jungfrauen, sie wollten eine Geschwulst und Krankheit
beschauen, die eine sprach: Es ist Heisch, die andere sprach: Es ist nicht,
die dritte sprach: Ist es dann nicht, so kommt unser lieber Herr Jesu
Christ, im Namen der heiligen Dreifastigkeit gesprochen.*

Against Swellings.

*"Three pure virgins went out on a journey, to inspect a swelling and
sickness. The first one said: It is hoarse. The second said: It is not. The*

⁵³⁴ Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaiques*, p. 94.

⁵³⁵ Ibidem.

⁵³⁶ Ibidem.

third said: If it is not, then will our Lord Jesus Christ come." Spoken in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Finally, the Bulgarian text has a very exact Hungarian parallel⁵³⁷:

*Uram Jézus, segíts meg!
Orbán vize mellett
Három szűz lány vala,
Egyik ódi,
Másik köti,
A harmadik hugyát (szarát) eregeti
Ennek a lónak.*

*Lord Jesus, help!
Next to the water of Orbán
Three virgins stand
One unties,
The other ties,
The third one [says]: May urine (excrement)
[go out] of this horse.*

In the context of so many historical parallels, it is indeed surprising that the three sisters narrative appears only once in the Bulgarian material. On the other hand, in the light of the obvious non-canonical style and character of the charm, it is interesting and remarkable that the text infiltrated into a fourteenth-century clerical book. The *historiola* and its supernatural protagonists and locations are most probably pre-Christian and much older than the Christian Trinitarian formulae, added in the beginning and the end. Still, the three sisters made it successfully into the *требник*. In my opinion, this is probably because they were taken for and understood as a variant of the three angels from the previous charm. The physical arrangement of the charms suggest that they were regarded as a functional unit. This is very probable, if the instruction “Read each of them four time” applies not only for the names of the four rivers, but for all the three charms too. The story of the three sisters actually looks almost like a fairytale. In this respect, the

⁵³⁷ Pócs, “Sors, bábák, boszorkányok”, p. 79.

three sisters charm is very similar to the charm with the blind shepherds. Each of these two texts is a *hapax legomenon* in the sources and emphatically non-canonical.

Actually, the three sisters from the Bulgarian charm are to some degree related to a number of the above-presented supernatural figures. Clearly, in their function of helpers and healers, they are similar to the blind shepherds. In their syncretic and ancient origin, they are also similar to St. Sisinnius. However, the three sisters are somehow related to the *nezhit* and the *veshtitsa* too. They have a certain connection with water and this specific space hints to an aquatic origin and chthonic nature, typical for a number of evil illness-perpetrating demons, including the *nezhit*, the *veshtitsa* and the *tresavitsi*. Thus, the *tres sorores* have roots in the long tradition of supernatural female chthonic figures.

Sometimes they can be evil and can do harm, other times they can be good and can bring help and healing. Even when they are with most positive nature and behavior, such female figures still demonstrate a dark side, a reminder for their primordial chaotic essence⁵³⁸. The helping old woman easily turns into a childbed demon, harming the humans⁵³⁹. The benevolent helping *tres sorores* are only a step away from becoming the three demonic sisters, the three witches, or the three child-stealing demons. This can be seen in the wide-spread motive of the three demonic night-witches, discussing to hurt/to kill or to cure/to spare the human victim⁵⁴⁰. This also reminds of the pre-Islamic demonic

⁵³⁸ Indeed, in a fourteenth-fifteenth century Croatian variant of the list of names, the *veshtitsa* is called Ursica, which is probably a variant of the Bulgarian *orisnitsa* (орисница), who decides the fate (орис) of the newborn. Actually, the *veshtitsa* is in a way an *orisnitsa* turned upside-down: she comes to the newborn, not to foretell the baby's future and life, but to destroy it.

⁵³⁹ Pócs, "Sors, bábák, boszorkányok", p. 86.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 88-89.

child-harming female trio Qarīna (meaning “sister”), Sibyan (meaning, “mother of sons”) and Tabi’a (meaning “follower”), expelled by Sulayman.⁵⁴¹

This ambiguity is very typical for the fairies from the Slavic and Balkan folklore.⁵⁴² They can damage, destroy, hurt and kill, but also can protect, build, help and cure. The positive and beneficial conduct of the fairies can be obtained via different methods, which most often include bribing or direct coercion and coercion. It is usual for such supernatural figures to help the humans, but only if they are pleased by a gift or forced by special circumstances and special actions. Like the Graeae in the Greek mythology, who have to be compelled to provide useful information.

Often, the human (the charmer) has to perform certain actions (to be silent, to make certain gestures, to be brave at scary circumstances, etc.) and to fulfil certain conditions (to be without belt or pectoral cross, to have loose hair, to wear certain clothes or to be naked, to fast, etc.), in order to make the fairies to do something. For example, this is very typical for Russian folklore and magic⁵⁴³. Possibly, the entrance in the field of fire, stated by the Bulgarian charmer, is a fulfillment of such a necessary condition. Thus, she or he have the right to ask for the help of the three sisters. This is hypothetical, because the Bulgarian charm has a very short and concentrated narrative, and not all the details are available or clear. It is difficult to say if the three supernatural sisters help because they are good, or because they are obliged or forced to do so.

⁵⁴¹ Rudolf Kriss and Hubert Kriss-Heinrich, *Volksglaube im Bereich des Islam*. Bd. I & II, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1960 and 1962).

⁵⁴² Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, passim.

⁵⁴³ Ryan, *The Bathhouse*, passim.

5. 4. Good vs. Evil

The status of being good or being evil is clear, but it is not the only dimension of the supernatural figures. They can be ambiguous (like the three sister and the blind shepherds), yet benevolent and effective helpers. This is the dimension of the “narrating power”. As David Frankfurter puts it, this term carries a double meaning. “First, when one “narrates” or utters a spell, the words uttered draw power into the world and towards (or against) an object in the world. This is perhaps the fundamental principle of magical or ritual speech.”⁵⁴⁴ Not only the charmer, uttering the charm, uses and exercises the “narrating power”. It is encoded in the structure of the charms and it is employed by the supernatural figures too. Some of these figures are in the role of verbal charmers inside the *historiola*.

At his encounter with the *nezhit*, Jesus Christ starts a dialogue, asking the illness-perpetrator a direct question (“*Where are you going?*”). This is followed by a direct answer (“*I am going into the human head, in order to bemuse the brain, to break the teeth and the jaws...*”, or “*I am going into the human’s head, to suck his brain, to break his bones, to blind his eyes.*”) With this open statement, the *nezhit* draws evil power against the humans. The aim is to bring a negative effect (an illness). Based on this “confession”, Jesus Christ reacts and sends the illness away (“*Go back into the forest and enter the deer’s head and the ram’s head, because they can bear everything and still survive. And stay there until the end of Heaven and Earth.*”) By verbal means, with this direct expulsion formula, Jesus draws good power towards the human world and against the *nezhit*. The aim is to prevent and to cure. In order to exercise control over the evil,

⁵⁴⁴ Frankfurter, “Narrating Power”, p. 457. There, the author also points out that „Scholars like Stanley Tambiah have developed its utility for the study of magic by connecting the idea of verbal power to the notion of the so-called *illocution*, or efficacious statement, in Speech Acts theory.”

Jesus Christ only uses words. As he is a positive supernatural figure with immense power, no other procedures or physical actions are necessary; the verbal “narrating power” is enough to stop the *nezhit*.

Related process happens in the story about St. Sisinnius. He is standing in the stone tower on the Red Sea coast, when the *tresavitsi* emerge out of the sea storm. They speak first, declaring, “*We are the tresavitsi – the daughters of Tsar Herod*”. The saint asks them “*Cursed devils, why did you come here?*” The direct answer follows “*We who came here to torment the human race. We are going to hold and tie down and torture the one who is resisting us.*” The “cursed devils” draw negative power against the human world, and more specifically against the humans, who are righteous people and good Christians. Based on this declaration, St. Sisinnius reacts and asks the Lord for help. The four evangelists and two angels, sent from Heaven, start beating the *tresavitsi* with iron sticks. When the fevers pray for mercy and reveal the magical power of their names, St. Sisinnius asks about their “devilish names” and here follows the list.

While the charm against the *nezhit* is a simple scene, an encounter between Jesus Christ and the illness, the charm against the fevers contains an entire set of characters. There are the evil antagonists the *tresavitsi*, the good protagonist St. Sisinnius, and the angels and the evangelists as good heavenly helpers, sent from above. The story evolves according to a scheme: appearance of the evil – statement of evil intentions – request for a supernatural help – supernatural help in action – list of names. De facto, here saint Sisinnius is as powerful and skillful verbal charmer in a charming session. He operates with the “narrating power” according to the circumstances, and directs it for the sake of human healing and benefit. At the appearance of the fevers, the saint intervenes and starts

a dialogue (asks the *tresavitsi* about their intentions), then prays to the Lord for help, and finally reaches the goal – the list of names, which is an instrument for controlling the *tresavitsi*. St. Sisinnius does not have any physical contact with the fevers, the contact is only verbal. Actually, he is not at all endangered by them; he acts for the sake of the ill humans. Through the dialogue, St. Sisinnius provides the humans with the lists of names, hence with a weapon against the illness.

In the charms against the *veshtitsa*, the dialogue and the verbal communication is central too. The evil figure speaks openly “*The veshtitsa said: “I eradicate a fruit tree, I dry female beauty, I defeat female malice, I approach and enter into the human’s place as a hen, as a dove, as a snake..., etc. ”*” The employment of “narrating power” is explicitly stated (“*The veshtitsa said... ”*”) She does not do anything else, but speaking. All her evil power is in her words. Archangel Michael manages to counteract this via direct order: “*Tell me your names!*” As a result of the order (which may be preceded by physical violence on the side of the Archangel), the *veshtitsa* presents the list of her names. The magically charged names are enlisted out loud by the evil *veshtitsa*, so that the good Archangel Michael (and the humans) can control her. The names as words of power are narrated by the negative figure, but in order to bring a positive effect for the humans. The names are part of the *veshtitsa*’s character and essence (“*I am a veshtitsa and I enter the house as a snake... ”*), then they are also a part of the *historiola*.

In his fight against the *veshtitsa*, Archangel Michael may employ the “narrating power” in combination with physical means – he fetters the *veshtitsa* and beats her with iron stick, thus he forces her to tell her names and to swear that she will not harm the humans. In a way, Archangel Michael is in the role of both charmer and a warrior. He

employs the “narrating power” through verbal means and directs the positive effect towards the human world. At the same time, he enforces the control over the evil through the physical violence. The Archangel, however, does not ask for supernatural heavenly help, because he himself is the supernatural heavenly helper.

In contrast to these predominantly verbal interactions, the blind shepherds do not say a single word. They do not use “narrating power” themselves; they only intervene and fight with the *nezhit* by physical means (“*They chased him without feet, caught him without hands, tied him without a rope, burned him without fire, killed him without a knife, and ate him without mouths*“.) Yet, the blind shepherds are part of the “narrating power” of the charmer, who tells the *historiola*. Preserved and told as a narrative, the successful intervention and the victory of the shepherds draw positive power towards the humans.

In the dialogue, the “narrating power” operates by the means of direct verbal contact and direct speech. Jesus Christ, St. Sisinnius and Archangel Michael react directly to a direct threat. Their intervention is possible and successful in the context of the encounter and the verbal communication.

In the snakebite charms, the evil snake does not speak at all. In the case of the *tresavitsi* and the *veshtitsa*, the lists of names come as a product of the dialogue. In the charms against the snake, the names come as an outside definition of the snake’s evil nature. Apostle Paul received the list (as part of an entire charm) from Archangel Michael, who is the positive supernatural helper, coming in a dream and providing verbal magical instrument. Paul acts as charmer in a charming session, he narrates a *historiola* inside the *historiola*. In his dream, he received a charm inside the charm, including the

list of the names and the titles of the snake. The list is actually a very long expulsion-extermination formula: *“I conjure you, sixty-five and a half kind of beasts, which creep on the ground, in the name of the Lord, creator of heaven, earth and sea... Snake born from a basilisk, tetrachalin snake, dodekachalin snake, lagodroma snake, snake with twelve heads, snake like fire, snake like raven, snake climbing on oaks, snake like an arrow...you cannot live anymore!”* The snakebite charm has a story inside the story-structure. The charm starts with instructions, these instructions contain a mini-reference to a biblical narrative (*“Let Moses rise complete on the standard of healing.”*), followed by a first-person narrative of Apostle Paul, which contains his experience with snakebite and his dream, inside which Archangel Michael comes and provides a charm, which is an expulsion formula, containing the list of names of the snake.

In the list of names, the “narrating power” operates by the means of definition and description. The fuller and the more elaborated, the better and the more effective. In the examples above, the enumeration of the names is a central element. In the charms against the *tresavitsi* and the *veshtitsa*, this element comes because of the dialogue. For the *veshtitsa*, the list of names is an aggressive statement of self-definition and self-description of her power. In the snakebite charms, the list is the inner part of the story inside the story-structure. For the snake, the list of names is a direct expulsion-extermination formula and definition of the power of the charmer (Apostle Paul).

The “narrating power” is strongly manifested in the impossibilia too. Some of them are actually rather “feasible” or “realistic”. Jesus Christ send the *nezhit* away into the forest and into a deserted place, into the head of a ram and a deer. In the charm against rabies, St. John meets iron soldiers and rabid wolves, which is not so impossible

either. In one of the protection charms, “*The apostles Peter and Paul are summoned to curse the mora and the veshtista and the Devil and all the envious and unclean spirits. In the evening and at midnight, when no dogs are barking and no roosters are singing...*”. These spatial and temporal details are symbolically significant, but not beyond the possible human reality. The shepherds, however, operate in much more “fantastic” settings and by much more “fantastic” means. They see without eyes, chase without feet, etc. The highest degree of “fantastic” is reached in the water detention charm. There human (the charmer) goes out in a field of fire and finds a lake of flames. In this “impossible” lake, the three supernatural sisters, who are trying, untying and saying words of power.

In the impossibilia, the “narrating power” operates by the means of fantastic and impossible in various degrees. The more impossible and unbelievable, the better and the stronger. The impossible conditions and elements are magically important, as they give means to control the evil. At the same time, the impossibilia are from the narrative point of view and stylistically important, as they make the *historiola* vivid, dynamic and fascinating, similar to an adventurous fairytale. In terms both of meaning and form, the impossibilia produce strong effect, which has significant magical and narrative impact.

Being texts, the *historiolae* (and actually the verbal charms as a whole) possess what Frankfurter defines as “an additional sense to “narrating power”: a “power” intrinsic to any narrative, any story, uttered in a ritual context, and the idea that the mere recounting of certain stories situates or directs their “narrative” power into this world.”⁵⁴⁵ Loaded with sacred information, the *historiolae* tell about previous victories of the good supernatural beings over the evil ones. Thus, they legitimize and validate the effect of the

⁵⁴⁵ Frankfurter, “Narrating Power”, p. 457.

charm in the present. They guarantee that in the evil powers will be successfully defeated and expelled now, as this happened in the past⁵⁴⁶. Essentially, the *historiolae* are power narratives – “per formative transmissions of power from a mythic realm articulated in narrative to the human present.”⁵⁴⁷

The *historiolae* promise a complex ritual solution for the crisis and a complete restoration of health and wellbeing. To use the terminology of Bell, each charm is a redefinition of the cosmological order “in response to new challenges and new formulations of human needs.”⁵⁴⁸ Each charm is a promise for permanent victory, each ratification formula claims to fix the final “clinching”, so that the evil will not be back. Yet, the evil always returns. The charms do not solve the problem, but give „a resolution without ever defining one”⁵⁴⁹. They define and narrate the problem in new terms, and thus postponing the crisis. „There is no point of arrival but a constant invocation of new terms to continue the validation and coherence of the older terms.”⁵⁵⁰ Thus, each charms is a constant narrational combat zone of the positive and negative supernatural figures.

The pattern is a good supernatural power to fight against each evil supernatural power. The evil ones have the power to attack, destroy, hurt, damage, kill, etc. The good ones have the power to protect, cure, build, repair, revive, etc. Most of all, the good ones have the power to help against the evil ones, to counteract them and to defeat them. The victory of the positive over the negative is fundamental. The essence goes down to Archangel Michael/St. Sisinnius/the blind shepherds winning against the devil/the *veshtitsa*/the *nezhit*, and not vice versa.

⁵⁴⁶ Frankfurter, “Narrating Power”, p. 461.

⁵⁴⁷ Frankfurter, “Narrating Power”, p. 464.

⁵⁴⁸ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, p. 120.

⁵⁴⁹ Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, p. 106.

⁵⁵⁰ Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, p. 123.

As these are Bulgarian verbal charms, there is the question about the presence and the influence of the Bogomil dualistic doctrine and ideas. The Bogomilism and its dualism definitely left traces in Bulgarian popular religion, and especially in the folklore⁵⁵¹. The south and east Slavic magic folklore contain a rich variety of beliefs and practices, some of them preserving many archaic features⁵⁵². From the late ninth century onwards, this folklore tradition adopted and assimilated the Byzantine magical and divination-knowledge. This led to the formation of symbiosis between the Bogomil dualistic beliefs and practices, and the traditional pre-Christian beliefs and practices. This symbiosis is very typical for the Balkans in particular. After the disappearance of the Balkan Bogomils, the Balkan folklore remains as the keeper of the ancient dualistic beliefs and legends.⁵⁵³ The imprint of the obscure dualistic tradition, found in the south Slavic and Balkan folklore is de facto one of the few remnants of the once powerful heretic movement⁵⁵⁴.

The Bulgarian verbal charms are a sphere, where Bogomil dualism had a significant and deep impact⁵⁵⁵. The constant direct combat between the good and the evil can be clearly interpreted in Bogomil dualistic terms. These dynamic scenes and impressive stories are inherited from the dualistic Bogomil apocryphal mythology, with

⁵⁵¹ There is a vast literature on this topic. Generally on Bogomilism and its impact on spirituality and popular beliefs, see Obolensky, *The Bogomils*, and Димитър Ангелов, *Богомилството в България* (The Bogomilism in Bulgaria), (Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1980). Specifically on the traces of Bogomil dualism in the Balkan folklore, see Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God: Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), especially the chapter “Heresy and Magic – East and West”, pp. 232-249. I used both the American and the Bulgarian edition of the book, which is Юрий Стоянов, *Другият бог. Дуалистичните религии от Античността до катарската ерес* (Sofia: Кралица Маб, 2006).

⁵⁵² Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God*, p. 316.

⁵⁵³ Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God*, p. 338.

⁵⁵⁴ Obolensky, *The Bogomils*, passim, Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God*, p. 340.

⁵⁵⁵ Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God*, 315.

its plasticity, and vivid and bright imagery⁵⁵⁶. As form and content, many of the charms are actually heretic apocryphal narratives. For example, the encounters and the dialogues between Jesus Christ and the *nezhit*, and between Archangel Michael and the *veshitsa* have clear parallels in the apocryphal arguments between God and the Devil. The snakebite charms, where the snake is repeatedly named as the most evil creature, fits perfectly into the Bogomil legends about the seductive Satan, appearing to Eve as a snake.

From a broader mythological perspective, the dualism or the duality manifested in the Bulgarian charms can be interpreted in relation to an archaic, dual cosmogonical system⁵⁵⁷. In this system, the dualism is between the supernatural and the human, between Our World and the Other World. The emphasized spatial and temporal dichotomy and the strict separation between the humans (the living) and the supernatural (the dead) play central role. The “sacred boundaries complex” is a pivotal cosmological concept⁵⁵⁸. In this archaic dual cosmogonical system, both the good and the evil, the destructive and the creative supernatural powers are primarily located on the other side,

⁵⁵⁶ Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God*, 344. The author points out that this plasticity and vividness of the dualistic mythology is among the strongest points of the Bogomil and Cathar propaganda, together with the asceticism.

⁵⁵⁷ Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, p. 19.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibidem, Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, p. 128, where the terms “sacred boundaries complex” and “sacred centres complex” are explained: “Christianizing the wilderness did not alter the main structure of categories in Karelian ritual thought nor affect the “otherworldly” status of the nature spirits. This is because, in the cultural thought underlying the rituals, the most salient distinction still lay between this world and the other side (forest, wilderness). In the ritual communication carried out within the *sacred boundaries* complex, Christianity was not a *category* used to classify or organize the relations between this world and the other side, but was rather an *attribute* to forge strategic and situation-specific equivalences between two spheres plotted as opposites. In other words, the ‘boundary’ in the sacred boundaries complex did not lie between the realms of Christian versus non-Christian (=pagan/evil), but between the human world and the ‘other side’ (wilderness, abode of the dead). In this context, Christianity could be an attribute of *all* sentient beings capable of agency, communication, and moral conscience, whether supernatural or human. In the rituals taking place in the *sacred boundaries* complex, there were no participants who were expressly ‘un-Christian’ or evil supernatural beings, and no category which would oppose and therefore define ‘Christian’ as closer to purity, more central.” This distinction is emphasized elsewhere: “within the *sacred centres* complex, which served the function of dividing the world into more or less purely Christian spheres and persons.”

in the supernatural realm of the Other World⁵⁵⁹. This side, Our World, is the human realm, where the human life and the human everyday needs and issues are located.

Thus, the dualism or the duality in the Bulgarian verbal charms can be interpreted beyond the dichotomy Christian vs. non-Christian. Instead, these charms can be placed in the context of ritual relationships between humans and supernatural beings “which were based on *reciprocity* and a *shared moral orientation*.”⁵⁶⁰ In this context, Jesus Christ, St. Sisinnius, Archangel Michael, Apostle Paul, the blind shepherds, the three sisters, etc. live in the same realm as the *nezhit*, the *veshtitsa*, the *tresavitsi*, the *devil*, the venomous snake, the illnesses, etc. These positive figures, however, intervene in the side of the humans and act for the humans’ benefit, health, success, etc. If any distinction between Christian and non-Christian was ever made, it is of little relevance, when it comes to the positive supernatural figures. The *tres sorores* in the lake of flames are nowhere to be seen in canonical Christian narratives. They, however, cure water detention, and that is what counts. There is no saint Sisinnius in the official church hagiography and calendar. He, however, heals fever and protects against evil spirits, and that is the most important fact about him⁵⁶¹.

⁵⁵⁹ There is a similar situation in today’s Vepsian charming practice, which is living and active, with a thick net of charms and a manifold variety of topics (healing, love, “black magic”). It also has a living tradition in addressing supernatural beings and forces. Its main point is to draw the line between Our World and the Other World, and to safeguard. The main difference is not between Christian and non-Christian, but between human and non-human. The Others are the forest, the realm of death, and even the monasteries. Christianity is an attribute, not a concept, and can be used for both good and bad. I am thankful to Madis Arukask for the discussion on the Vepsian verbal magic.

⁵⁶⁰ Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, p.13. The book by Laura Stark is about Orthodox Karelians in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It is relevant here, because it provides a comprehensive analysis of a pre-industrial culture, which has many similarities with the early modern Bulgarian culture.

⁵⁶¹ In Orthodox Karelia, the wilderness is regarded Christian. Due to “the primacy of the human/wilderness boundary within religious ritual”, the Christian-derived sacred agents are figures from the wilderness, sharing roles and functions with forest and water spirits. See Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, p. 126.

In some charms, Good vs. Evil is a static binary opposition, identical with the categories Christian vs. non-Christian, or more exactly, anti-Christian. For example, this is the case with the protection charm from Niketa's book of prayers⁵⁶²:

Go away, cursed Satan from all the corners of the temple and from this place, where the servant of God Niketa is bowing down and sleeping and praying to the angels. They are standing in front of the gates, at the Eleon Mountain and holding swords of flames. They are chasing away all the evil and the evil power and deceit. And the apostles Peter and Paul are summoned to curse the mora and the veshtista and the Devil and all the envious and unclean spirits. In the evening and at midnight, when no dogs are barking and no roosters are singing, then you, cursed Satan, shall do no harm to Niketa, but go to your ugliness, I curse you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, now and forever. Amen.

The angels, the apostles Peter and Paul and the Holy Trinity are the good positive supernatural figures, clearly Christian by nature. Satan, the *mora*, the *veshtitsa*, the devil and the unclean spirits are the evil negative figures, clearly anti-Christian. Together with the battle against the evil, the good supernatural figures also guard the fixed sacred border. This motif can be seen across traditions, like for example in the Mesopotamian apotropaic formula for protection⁵⁶³:

*Shamash (is) before me,
Sin (is) behind (me),
Nergal (is) at (my) right hand,
Ninib (is) at my left hand.*

Or in the Latin apotropaic formula from fourteenth century⁵⁶⁴: *Protege me domine a dextris et a sinistris, ante et retro, intus et superius*. According to a German charm, if a

⁵⁶² Никетово молитвениче, 1787, Sofia, National Library, № 646, fol. 61. OCS edition in (Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 162-163). See no. 32 and no. 33 in the Catalogue.

⁵⁶³ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 15.

⁵⁶⁴ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 100.

soldier want to be unharmed in battle, he has to secure the sacred border. The soldier has to hold a coin in his hand and say the following protective formula⁵⁶⁵:

*Herr Gott Vater über mir,
Herr Gott Sohn vor mir,
Herr Gott Heiliger Geist hinter mir, etc.*

In other charms, the categories are hazier. The antagonism Good vs. Evil is present, but it is dubious if the identity of the good figures is clearly Christian. This is the case with the pseudo saint Sisinnius. At best, the blind shepherds are only loosely related to biblical imagery, while the three sisters are obviously out of place among the Christian characters and notions.

For the Bulgarian charms, it is unknown if the contemporary people did any distinction of this kind. From parallels from more recent times, we see that “what people needed were agents with whom they could negotiate the boundaries of ‘this world’ versus the ‘other world’, ‘this world’ being the sphere of an ordered cultural universe, while the other world was the sphere to which ritual specialists relegated any ‘dirt’ which did not fit into the symbolic Order.”⁵⁶⁶ This is true not only for Orthodox Karelia in nineteenth century. It is also valid for Bulgarian rural folklore from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which is characterized by a deep syncretism between Christian, pre-Christian and Muslim traditions. The Muslim elements in particular are clearly recognized as such. Yet, positive supernatural figures are summoned from across traditions and religions. With their help, the humans can establish the sacred boundary and can place themselves within Our World, while the evil, the “dirt” and the chaos remain in the Other World.

⁵⁶⁵ Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 100-101.

⁵⁶⁶ Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, p. 65.

6. In Our World – human processes

The sacred boundary between the Other World and Our World is strongly marked and secured, yet crossable. As we saw so far, the frontier can be crossed (and is crossed) from the supernatural side. However, it can be crossed from the direction of Our World too⁵⁶⁷. Together with the supernatural side, the complex of verbal magic can be seen from the human side, where “the point of departure is the person with all their human qualities as seen in everyday life”⁵⁶⁸.

For example, this happens in the following charm for curing a wounded horse:

Find a dry bone from a horse, cast a spell with it and then return it back to the place where you took it from. Draw a line with the bone and say the following:

*In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost a certain person (say the name) was walking, neighing and crying. The Mother of the Lord, the healer saints Cosmas and Damian, and Cyprian, Pantaleymon, Manuel, Savel, Ismail and Roman met him and asked: What is wrong with you (say the name), so that you are neighing and crying? I am crying, because a thorn hit my good horse and now the wound is festering. The holy healers told him: Turn back, you (say the name), go to the God’s servant (say the name), let him take a dry bone and to give the illness to the dry bone, the dry bone to give the illness to the earth, the earth – to the grass, the grass – to the dew, the dew – to the sun, the sun – to the wind. And let the illness dissipate, may it have neither a top up, nor roots down. Say three times: Let us stand with fear!*⁵⁶⁹

This text is a typical encounter charm with a dialogue, where Virgin Mary and a group of saints provide the supernatural help. The usual *historiola* tells about the familiar

⁵⁶⁷ “Real people in complicated situations find themselves in need of concepts for divine agents who promote rapid generation of inferences and predictions rather than abstract reflection. Because of this, the popularly-defined sacred is characterized by expansion, fluidity and plurality, as well as a close, personal, and unmediated interaction with the supernatural and divine. Researchers have explored the tendency within popular or folk religion for the sacred symbols and personalities of Christianity to become less unitary, universal and abstract, and more fragmented, individualized, localized and concrete, in other words, rendered more intimate and ‘everyday’ than the Church is often comfortable with.” Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, p. 31.

⁵⁶⁸ Ilomäki, “Finnish Snake Charms”, p. 47.

⁵⁶⁹ Added folio from the seventeenth century, in a *Служебник* from the fifteenth century, Plovdiv, National Library, № 79. See Tsonev, *Catalogue Plovdiv*, p. 49 and № 25 in the catalogue below.

transmission, where the affliction is passed from one object to another, until its complete annihilation. The part with the technical instructions is rather typical too, and it will be discussed below.

The unusual element here is the behaviour and the role of the owner of the horse. In a way, he or she “becomes a horse”, then crosses the sacred boundary and enters the Other World. There, the owner physically performs and demonstrates the pain of the animal, thus asks for supernatural help and receives it.

This motif of the *historiola* is very specific and very peculiar. So far, I have not found a parallel in another verbal charm, Bulgarian or foreign. One medieval South Italian text against wolves (written in Greek letters) shows some similarity⁵⁷⁰. In the Italian text, Santu Silvestru is herding his livestock, but the animals are attacked by a wild beast from the forest. Santu Silvestru is standing in the middle of the road, crying and shedding tears. Jesu Christu and la virgi Maria pass by and ask him why he is crying. The saint explains that a wild beast from the forest attacked, killed and devoured his domestic animals. Christ and Virgin Mary ask Sylvester why he did not tie down the wild beast. The saint answered that he did not know how to do this, and it was getting dark too. Then the text becomes unclear, but it seems to tell that the wolf is very strong under the moonlight and that the net will not manage to constrain him. Finally, at the end the text states that the lupine danger can be averted by summoning of the names Christ and Virgin Mary, and by saying Pater Noster and Ave Maria prayers.

As it has the same encounter narrative, dialogue and animal-related problem, this Italian charm provides some reference point. It is possible that the Bulgarian text used it a

⁵⁷⁰ Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 26-27.

template, replacing the attacked livestock with the wounded horse, and the forest attacker with a thorn. However, there is no trace from the imitation of the suffering of horse.

The Bulgarian motif of the neighing human may possibly be related to the horse/horseman winter demons from the Balkan popular beliefs⁵⁷¹. Inhabiting the underworld, these demons visit the human world in the winter and bring chaos in people's homes and injuries in people's bodies. They can appear as horses, horsemen or centaurs or strange deformed humans with certain equine attributes. The winter demons also carry away the souls of the dead. Although these being are clearly connected to death and destruction, the sacrifices offered to them, include healing curative magical rites⁵⁷².

Another possibility is that this element of the narrative is simply a description of imitative magic. If so, then the charm was probably a part of a curative rite, where the charmer was re-enacting the *historiola* and neighing like a horse.

Besides the curious animal transformation, this charm shows how verbal magic was used by a real person in a complicated situation⁵⁷³. It is a dynamic narrative about a crisis and its solution. Human and supernatural "individuals are involved in real-time problem solving"⁵⁷⁴, in order to cure an ill horse. The supernatural figures intervene from their special otherworldly position. They cross the boundary, armed with their special supernatural powers, and this equipment is effective enough. The humans, however, need

⁵⁷¹ For example, "the horses of St. Theodore", the Romanian *sântoaderi* and the Serbian *todorci* and *todorovci*. See Pócs, *Fairies and Witches*, pp. 22-27, and especially p. 25. It is worth nothing that the Orthodox St. Theodore is the protector of the horses. In some charms, St. Sisinnius (The Horseman) has a brother called Theodor.

⁵⁷² Ibidem.

⁵⁷³ "Within Orthodox Karelian folk religion, categories of divine figures and key ritual concepts were often hazy. Ritual concepts and designations could have multiple meanings, and the sacred agents described in the texts were often only vaguely identified, or appear to have been 'fusions' of two different categories of sacred agents. This was not due to ignorance or confusion among uneducated Karelians so much as the fact that among the ordinary people, the sacred was kept relevant and practical for everyday needs in 'this world' (making a living, preserving one's health, keeping out of harm's way)." Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, p. 63.

⁵⁷⁴ Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, p. 31.

additional technical guidance and information, in order to perform the rite successfully. Besides the *historiola*, the charm contain such technical instructions.

6. 1. Ritual performance

The technical guidance is in this practical part of the charm's text, which contains instructions and technical information about the charming procedure. It tells about the performance and the actions of the rite (what to do), and about the paraphernalia, the settings, the human actors and the proxemics (who, when, where and how to do it, and what equipment to use).

The verbal charms are almost the only primary source on the paraphernalia, used in medieval and early modern Bulgarian magical practice. However, some contemporary sermons also contain pieces of such information and provide a bit broader context. For example, an eighteenth century collection of instructive texts for pious Christian life contains two sermons against magical practitioners⁵⁷⁵. One of the texts (fol. 62v-73v) is about the encounter between apostle Peter and Simon Magus. The more interesting is the other text (fol. 48r-62v), entitled *Sermon about the samovili, the brodnitsi, the magicians and the charmers*.⁵⁷⁶ The beginning of the text is as follows:

*The samovili, the brodnitsi and the charmers are all disciples of the Antichrist. These people, who visit them, are bowing to the Enemy and the Enemy enlists them as his people. From all the sins, there is no bigger and graver sin. This sin is very serious sin for God. You stupid woman, seduced by the Enemy, when God commanded and God's angels came to take away the man's soul, can you, whore, resist to the will of God with your charms, so that the soul not to depart from the body? What help can be given through a **piece of rope, a charcoal, a piece of blue cloth, a knife with black handle, a herb, a piece of wood from willow tree and many other devilish devices? How they can help the ill person?***

⁵⁷⁵ Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, p. 313. The highlight in bold is mine.

⁵⁷⁶ The *samovili* and the *brodnitsi* are supernatural female beings. It seems that here the terms are used for female practitioners of magic.

The same charming equipment (charcoal, a piece of blue cloth, black knife, herb, a piece of wood from willow tree) is mentioned again in a similar sermon against magicians from the nineteenth-century manuscript.⁵⁷⁷ As it is shown below, the same type of instrumentarium (knife, rope and various plants) is used in the verbal charms and the charming rites. The presence of this magical paraphernalia in both sermons and charms can be a mere literary stereotype or. However, the practical orientation of charms suggests some actual ritual application of the objects.

From my source material, 54 charms contain such technical information and instructions. Most often, the instructions refer to the technical equipment to be used in the charming procedure. The following objects are specifically mentioned in the instructions:

- dry bone from a horse (the charm for wound on a horse's leg)⁵⁷⁸
- wine (the charm against rabies)⁵⁷⁹
- bread (charms against rabies and against toothache)⁵⁸⁰
- knife (charms against rabies and charms for staunching blood)⁵⁸¹
- hemp rope (the charm against sudden pain)⁵⁸²
- sticks from pumpkin plant (the charm for protection of the bees)⁵⁸³
- sticks from vine (the same bee charm)

⁵⁷⁷ Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, p. 426.

⁵⁷⁸ See № 25 in the catalogue.

⁵⁷⁹ See № 19 and № 21 in the catalogue.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁵⁸¹ *Сборник*, around 1390, Prague, Czech Museum, IX. F. 10, fol 162v. Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 18, *Часослов*, 1498, Jerusalem, Library of the Othodox Patriarchate, LGOPI № 22, fol 413. Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, pp. 17-18, *Сборник*, fifteenth and sixteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 308, fol. 115v. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, pp. 252-253, *Требник*, sixteenth century, Savina monastery, sine №, Kačanovskij, “Апокрифне молитве”, pp. 155-156, *Сборник*, sixteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 80, fol. 115v-116, Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, p. 253, Marginalia, sixteenth-seventeenth century, in a *Празничен миней*, fifteenth century, St. Petersburg, Public Library, Q. I. № 1299, fol. 301, Yatsmirskii, К истории ложных молитв”, p. 18.

⁵⁸² *Требник*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 146. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, 1923, pp. 136-137.

⁵⁸³ See № 26 in the catalogue.

- sticks from wattle fence (the same bee charm)
- stones (the same bee charm)
- incense (the same bee charm)
- (new) cup or bowl (snakebite charms)⁵⁸⁴
- water (charms against sbakebite and water detention)⁵⁸⁵
- the nails or the hooves of the ill human or horse (water detention charms)⁵⁸⁶
- paper (charms against hale and the *nezhit*, and for blood-staunching)⁵⁸⁷
- lead (charms against the *nezhit*)⁵⁸⁸. In the manuscript where the twelve charms

against the *nezhit* are preserved together, the last text is followed by the instruction “*Write this prayer on lead.*” This sentence is written in a new separate paragraph. Clearly, it is related to the last charm, which tells about transmission of the *nezhit* from Adam to Eve, from Eve to the lead, etc. However, it is not excluded that the instruction is maybe applicable to other texts against the *nezhit* from the same group.

In the majority of the cases, the instructions about the rite are usually rather short, kept to the minimum. Most often, they refer to writing, with the phrase: “*Write these*

⁵⁸⁴ *Псалтир*, 1479, Sofia, National Library, № 6, fol. 148r-149r, Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, pp. 6-8. *Требник*, first half of sixteenth century, № 1181, fol. 159, Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 68. Marginalia, sixteenth-seventeenth century in a *Праздничен миней*, fifteenth century, St. Petersburg, Public Library, Q. I. № 1299, fol. 301, Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 66, *Сборник*, seventeenth century, Belgrade, National Library, № 555, fol. 157-158, Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 65).

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibidem*. *Часослов*, 1498, Jerusalem, Library of the Othodox Patriarchate, LGOPI № 22, fol. 417v-418, Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 34, *Сборник*, 1739, Serbian Academy, № 138, fol. 239, Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 38, *Сборник*, 1853, Tver Museum, № 4883, fol. 23v-24v, Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 34.

⁵⁸⁶ See № 23 in the catalogue.

⁵⁸⁷ *Часослов*, 1498, Library of the Othodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem, LGOPI № 22, fol. 390-397v, Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 24, and Added folio, seventeenth century, in a *Служебник*, fifteenth century, Plovdiv, National Library, № 79, Tsonev, *Catalogue Plovdiv*, p. 49.

⁵⁸⁸ See № 5 and № 6 in the catalogue.

words on...” and may come before or after the letters, the words, or the text that have to be inscribed on the material support. This instruction is usual for the charms against water retention, against rabies, against snakebite, against the *nezhit*, for birth giving and for staunching blood. Here is a typical example from a charm for blood staunching⁵⁸⁹:

For blood flowing from the nose or the mouth. [twenty-three Cyrillic letters follow] Write these words and put them on the person, whose blood is flowing. If you do not believe, write these words on a knife and stab any animal and there will be no blood.

The material support may vary. The charms for staunching blood operate mainly with knives, but there is a case, when paper is needed. The charms against snakebite require a cup or a bowl. The charms against rabies use bread. The charms against water retention instruction to write on the nails of the affected human or animal. The charms against the *nezhit* and for birth giving require paper and lead.

In a charm against water retention, the names of the four biblical rivers have to be written on the four legs of the animal. In another charm for the same purpose, the names of the biblical rivers have to be written on the nails or the hooves of the ill person or animal. In a charm for staunching blood, twenty-three Cyrillic letters have to be written down and placed on the wound. The charm offers a control procedure: *“If you do not believe, write these letters on a knife and stab any animal, there will be no blood.”* This test, identically phrased, appears often in blood staunching charms.

Another important ritual action is to pronounce or to read aloud some words or an entire text over water or over the ill person’s head. This instruction appears in charms against water retention, toothache, snakebite and fever. The charm against thunder and

⁵⁸⁹ *Требник*, sixteenth century, Savina monastery, sine №, Kačanovskij, “Apokrifne molitve”, pp. 155-156. For comparison, see no. 35 in the Catalogue.

lightning is meant it be read aloud, when stormy clouds appear in the sky. The charm for a good journey is also supposed to be read aloud before departure. The text against water retention instructs⁵⁹⁰:

The priest to read this [charm] three times over clean water, and at every reading to make the sign of the cross over the water, and then the ill person to drink the water.”

There are several charms, which contain instructions in more details, or refer to a more peculiar procedure. As we saw already above, in the charm for curing the wound on a horse’s leg the procedure goes as following:

Find a dry bone from a horse, cast a spell⁵⁹¹ with it and then return it back to the place where you took it from. Draw a line with the bone and say the following: [here comes the charm itself, followed at the end by an instruction about the conclusive formula] Say three times: Let us stand with fear!

The central element here is the animal bone, and this is the only case in the source material of using this particular equipment. In Slavic and Balkan magical traditions and beliefs, the animal bones are often employed in divination and prognostication⁵⁹². In verbal magic, the bone can be associated with fractures, injuries and traumas of limbs, and therefore used in charms for curing or preventing such ailments. A famous example is the Second Merseburg Charm, containing the curative formula “*bone to bone, blood to terblood, joint to joint as they are glued*”⁵⁹³. The *Bone to Bone* charm type has Slavic

⁵⁹⁰ Часослов, 1498, Jerusalem, Library of the Othodox Patriarchate, LGOPI № 22, fol. 417v-418. Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 34. See no. 35 in the Catalogue.

⁵⁹¹ The Bulgarian verb used here is “обаявам”, which means “to charm, to cast/to say a spell, to make a magical gesture with/over an object”.

⁵⁹² One of the medieval Slavic prohibited prognostication books is called *лопаточник*, and instruscts how to predict, using the scapula (*лопатка*) of a sheep. The bone is placed above fire and the divination is made based on the changes in the bone’s colour. See [Adelina Angusheva-Tihanova] Аделина Ангушева-Тиханова, *Гадателните книги в старобългарската литература* (The Prognostication Books in Old Bulgarian Literature), (Sofia: Време, 1996).

⁵⁹³ This formula also gives the name of the *Bone to Bone* charm type.

parallels⁵⁹⁴, most of which simply follow the German model, without instructions about the rite. However, one of the Belorussian texts implies that the charm was accompanied by some ritual action:

*At first time, at God's hour I will pray to God, I will bow to the Virgin. Jesus Christ rode across the golden bridge. His donkey made a step and sprained its foot. Jesus Christ is standing and crying. The Virgin comes up to him and says: – Oh, my beloved son. Why are you crying? – I was riding across the golden bridge. And my donkey has sprained its foot. Do not cry, my son, I made it as if it was at birth. I put his bone to bone, tendon to tendon, blood to blood. Help me, God, I asked God for help.*⁵⁹⁵

It is possible that the phrase “I put his bone to bone” refers to an actual ritual gesture: to bring physically the two broken bones together, or maybe to touch the injury ritually with a bone. Such an imitative magical act is completely logical, and the rite can be seen as a re-enactment of the most important curative gesture from the *historiola*.

In my understanding, the Bulgarian text is in a way related of the *Bone to Bone* charm type. Clearly, there are differences: the charm is for a festering wound, not for broken leg; the formula *Bone to Bone* is missing; the plot of the *historiola* is different. However, there are also important common points: it is a charm for curing an injury on a horse; bone plays central role as a ritual tool; there is a full description of the accompanying rite, where the charming is done with the bone. From this perspective, I think that the Bulgarian charm can shed some light on the actual charming rite from the *Bone to Bone* type. Hypothetically, the instructions from the Bulgarian text are showing what could be the ritual magical actions of Odin/Virgin Mary/the charmer from the German and the Belarussian charms.

⁵⁹⁴ See Tatiana Agapkina, Vladimir Karpov and Andrey Toporkov, “The Slavic and German Versions of the Second Merseburg Charm”, *Incantatio* 3 (2013): 43-59. The article presents and analyses Belorussian parallels. I am thankful to Andrey Toporkov for the inspiring and informative discussion on these parallels.

⁵⁹⁵ Quoted from Agapkina, Karpov, Toporkov, “The Slavic and German Versions”, p. 53.

Another very detailed technical description of a rite is given in the fourteenth century charm against rabies:

When someone is bitten, do this. Take wine, sour bread and your knife. Put the wine on the ground, take the bread in your hands and the knife in your right hand and say the following prayer to the Holy Mother of God: ... [here comes the prayer to be said; after that the rite continues] Read this prayer nine times in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, make the sign of the cross with the knife. If the bitten person is near, give him wine and bread. If he is far away, quickly pour out of the wine, and at midnight put the knife under a big stone and say the following prayer twice: ... [here comes the second prayer, where the body and the blood of Christ are pointed as a curative substance].⁵⁹⁶

In this case, the equipment consists of the wine, the bread and the knife. They are referred to in the narratives, where Saint John carries an iron weapon (an axe) and is advised to give to the bitten person “the body and the blood of the Lord”, which will bring the healing. The rite is actually a dramatization of the *historiola*. The charmer holds the bread and the knife and tells the story of Saint John, who went to cut trees, met rabid dogs and wolves, gets scared and received the cure (the wine and the bread). The charmer says the charms nine times, makes the sign of the cross with the knife, then re-enacts the *historiola*’s advice, i. e. give the bitten person wine and bread. If the patient is not present, the charmer pour out some wine, puts the knife under a stone at midnight and tells the other *historiola*, which is very similar to the first one.

The wine and the bread are clearly situated in the context of the biblical symbolism. However, they are ritually inseparable from the knife and the stone. The usage of a knife have parallels in South Italian curative charm⁵⁹⁷ (where the knife is used

⁵⁹⁶ *Зайковски требник*, fourteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 960, fol. 45v. Stoyanov, *Catalogue*, vol. III, p. 114. See no. 19 in the Catalogue.

⁵⁹⁷ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 25.

in combination with herbs and potions) and in Byzantine exorcist charm⁵⁹⁸ where the knife is used to make the sign of the cross in water⁵⁹⁹. Back in time, the knife from the Bulgarian and Byzantine charms have parallels in a Babylonian text and rite, employing an axe of gold and a silver pruning-knife.⁶⁰⁰

If all the equipment is taken together, the Bulgarian rite can be interpreted also as ritual offering to the supernatural powers: the placement of the wine on the ground, the libation, the placement of the knife under a stone, the specific temporal settings (midnight). At the same time, the rite may also re-enact the transmission of the venom/the illness from the afflicted person into the water and finally into the ground

Another important piece of equipment is the new bowl. The snakebite charms require it and the three sisters use it to cure water retention. This has a clear parallel in a South Italian charm for successful fishing, containing two parts. First, there are ritual instructions (written in the vernacular):

Pillia una scutella nova ed in kila di acqua dillu mari, e di kuistu psalmu supra la scutella, septi voti, psalmu 113 év κτλ. e di poi cun ditta acqua sprezzia la riti e la varca, da poi di kusta orazioni supra la riti.

This is followed by the *orazioni*, which is prayer for success in fishing (written in Greek), which summons the help of God and the cherubim⁶⁰¹. The motif of the (new) bowl has a Mesopotamian parallels too. In a number of Babylonian charms, “a clean vessel of the gods” is the main equipment, together with “a clean reed, a long reed”⁶⁰². The rite from the Babylonian charm is in a way illustrated by an incantation bowl from

⁵⁹⁸ Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 33-34 and Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, p. 334.

⁵⁹⁹ Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 130-131.

⁶⁰⁰ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 173.

⁶⁰¹ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 17.

⁶⁰² Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. 111.

Nippur. In its center, there is a drawing of a man, holding up a tree branch in his hand. The rest of the bowl is covered with a Hebrew charm to be recited.⁶⁰³

The magical employment of vessels is best illustrated by the Jewish incantation bowls (around 2000 in number), discovered during archeological excavation in the Middle East. Produced from the 6th to 8th century AD, they are usually inscribed in a spiral, beginning from the rim and moving toward the center. The texts are mostly in Aramaic languages. The bowls were buried face down and were meant to capture demons. They were commonly placed under the threshold, courtyards, in the corner of the homes of the recently deceased and in graveyards; in the same period, Christian incantation bowls (often written in Syriac) bowls are also found in Syria. The Babylonian texts, the Jewish and Syriac incantation bowls, the South Italian charm and the Bulgarian example demonstrate a continuity of the practice. Clearly, the charm, the bowl and the rite form a stable magical unit.

The bread and especially the host of the Eucharist is believed to have special magical properties. The use of the host for magical purposes (including writing charms on it) is prohibited by both the Western and the Eastern Christian cannon⁶⁰⁴.

Another peculiar rite is described in the charm for protection of the bees⁶⁰⁵. After the Trinitarian formula, the instruction goes:

Take three sticks from pumpkin, three from vine, and three from wattle fence. With three stones on the door, fumigate three time with incense, in the month of March, on the first day. [The charm follows]

While the charm is about the protection and preservation of the bees, the rite is focused on the purification. The purification is related to liminal space and time. It is

⁶⁰³ Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits*, vol. I, p. XLIX.

⁶⁰⁴ Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, pp. LXIII-LXVII.

⁶⁰⁵ See № 26 in the catalogue.

performed on the border between two places and between two periods. The aim is to bless and to fertilize the new period for the bees. At the same time, the purification is done on the boundary, in order to secure the sacred border, to purify the bees and to protect them from evil, which may emerge at the point where one period/one space ends and another one begins. These considerations are visible in the rite's structure, based on liminality: the spatial and the temporal settings like the fence (where the sticks are taken from), the door (where the stones and the incense are applied) and the first day of March (end of the winter and beginning the spring and revival of vegetation), are clearly liminal.

The connection to March 1 is very important. This is one of the pivotal and most significant dates in the Bulgarian popular beliefs. The first day of March is the day of Baba Marta⁶⁰⁶ and the *martenitsa*⁶⁰⁷. It is primarily and closely related with good health, fertility, vegetation, spring and revival of nature. The *martenitsa* tradition has the one and only purpose to provide good health for humans, animals and plants for the whole year. This tradition is alive and very active today. In this respect, the bee charm is important, because it probably represent an authentic rite, as it was actually practiced.

The bee rite is based on the number three: three plants, three sticks from each plant, three stones, and triple fumigation. Magically, the number is very significant and powerful. The role of the particular plants (pumpkin, vive and wattle) is not so clear. It is possible that they are associated with the vegetative powers, or are used in the fumigation. Curative or disinfectant properties may be of significance too.

⁶⁰⁶ Old woman, personification of the month of March and of the approaching spring.

⁶⁰⁷ Apotropaic and health amulet, made out of red and white treat. It is put on humans, and on domestic animals and plants, then later, when the blossoming starts or the migrating birds star returning, the *martenitsa* is put on a blossoming tree.

While the role of the plants in the bee charm is obscure, other charms definitely employ certain plants as curative substances. This happens in charms against snakebite, for staunching blood and against rabies. The texts against snakebite instructs “*When a snake bites somebody, take branches of green elder, put it on the wound, or on the hands, or on the legs. Apply often and say this prayer* [here follows the *historiola*]. The charm for staunching blood requires leaves of ivy to be mixed with egg white and saffron, and then to be applied on the forehead of the ill person. The charm against rabies instructs to write certain words and letters on bread, then the charmer have to “*take a knife and cut green burdock and give the bitten to eat it*”.

The charms with instructions about preparation and employment of curative plants and substances are de facto medical recipes. These are the most practically organized texts. They provide full comprehensive curative service according to the scheme: a particular health problem is treated with particular magical words and rites, combined with particular curative plants, applied in a particular way, and with particular remedies, prepared according to particular recipes. These charms manage the crisis from two perspectives. On one hand, there is the verbal-magical and ritualistic approach; on the other hand, there is the pharmaceutical-medical technical operative method.

The two approaches can be compared with the help of the two snakebite charms. There is the text, which employs words of power with a plant (the green elder). It uses a narrative and a curative substance. It relies on both a magical rite and a medical-pharmaceutical procedure. The recipe, the words of power and the rite form a curative whole.

However, the snakebite can be treated purely magically and ritualistically. This is the above-quoted case with the charm with Apostle Paul,⁶⁰⁸ which instructs about the following procedure:

If a snake bites somebody, he should do the following: to bring a new vessel, to make the sign of the cross in the vessel, saying the prayers about the Holy Cross, and to write this troparion around the cross [here follows the sentence about Moses from the Bible, then the procedure continues] He must wash himself with holy water from a new moon, is he can find one. If not, he must find clean water, to wash the whole vessel and if the person bitten by snake is near, he must drink the water. If the bitten is not nearby, the curing person must drink the water.

This text relies primarily on the power of the words and the power of the rite. The health problem is treated through a complex *historiola* and magic formulae. The curative unit consists of the magical words and the rite. The objects (new vessel and water) acquire healing and magical power, because they are placed and use in ritual context. They also have the task to re-establish the ritual message and guarantee that this message will be preserved and transmitted successfully⁶⁰⁹.

Inside these two approaches, the special magical functions of the objects and the substances coexist together with their ordinary quotidian roles. There is a constant shift and the same objects can move in and out of ritual context, can be both ordinary and extraordinary, special. Inside the rite, the proportion changes too: the same objects can be central and of primary ritual significance, but can play a more peripheral or secondary role⁶¹⁰. In the snakebite charm with the green elder, the emphasis is on the plant and the recipe. The plant in the center of the rite, the words are not used without it. The verbal

⁶⁰⁸ *Псалтирь*, 1479, Sofia, National Library, № 6, fol. 148r-149r. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, p. 6-8.

⁶⁰⁹ Todorova-Pirgova, *Баяния и магии*, p. 64.

⁶¹⁰ Todorova-Pirgova, *Баяния и магии*, p.76 and Annette B. Weiner, "From Words to Objects to Magic: Hard Words and the Boundaries of Social Interaction", *Man* 18:4 (1983): pp. 690-709.

charm can be seen as an accompaniment of the physical application of the herbal curative substance. In the snakebite charm with Apostle Paul, the narrative and words play the central role. The vessel and the water are the material support for the words, the physical transmitter for the ritual message.

As providers of specific instructions and practical guidance, the charms belong to the specialized technical literature, which is usually called with the well-defined and widely accepted German term *Fachliteratur*⁶¹¹. Widely spread in the Middle Ages, it covered for instance the *Septem Artes Liberales*, *Artes Magicae*, various crafts, human and veterinarian medicine, hunting and fishing, agriculture, fighting, cooking, pharmaceuticals, alcohol making, playing games, cheating, etc⁶¹². *Fachliteratur* included books on conjuration of demons, divination and prognostication, necromancy, astrology, preparation of amulets and talismans, etc.⁶¹³. The medical and cooking recipes (for preparing food, drinks, household substances and remedies, but for magical curative, love or poisonous potions) are typical examples⁶¹⁴.

⁶¹¹ The *Fachliteratur* is a non-fiction technical literature, which records, preserves and transmits information about experience of various kinds – theoretical and practical know-how (usually essential one) in a certain field. The *Fachliteratur* provides practical guidance needed for successful completion of an activity: the theoretical knowledge, the instructions and advices, the practical experience and skills, the reference information and data. Handbooks, manuals, guides, “how-to-do-it” books, instruction books, specialized reference books, technical literature belong to the *Fachliteratur*. The term (or its Bulgarian equivalent *специална техническа литература*) has never been used in connection with the Bulgarian verbal charms. However, it aptly describes the technical information and instructions found in the charms.

⁶¹² Haage and Wegner, *Deutsche Fachliteratur*, pp. 14-20.

⁶¹³ Haage and Wegner, *Deutsche Fachliteratur*, pp. 266-82. For example, the Merseburg charms are among the first texts in every research book on practical magic, but at the same time, they are the first ones listed in scholarly pieces on *Fachliteratur*. See Haage and Wegner, *Deutsche Fachliteratur*, pp. 295-7.

⁶¹⁴ Jerry Stannard, “Rezeptliteratur as Fachliteratur”, in William Eamon, ed., *Studies on Medieval Fachliteratur. Proceedings of the special session on medieval Fachliteratur of the Sixteenth International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan (U.S.A.), May 10, 1981* (Brussels: Omirel UFSAL, 1982.); Francisco Alonso-Almeida, “Null Objects in Middle English Medical Texts”, in Javier E. Díaz Vera and Rosario Caballero, ed. *Textual Healing: Studies in Medieval English Medical, Scientific and Technical Texts* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 1-28. For example, the medieval and early modern Bulgarian prognostication books and divination texts are typical *Fachliteratur*, as much as they are in the form of manuals and reference handbooks.

As demonstrated above, the “false prayers” are associated with “the stupid village priests”, and can be found in their books⁶¹⁵. Indeed, the charms are found in devotional religious manuscripts, whose initial official canonical purpose is very practical: to be the professional handbooks for the Christian priests and to guide them in their liturgical and spiritual activities. Canonical or not, the charms additionally enrich this specialized technical literature in terms of practical ritual guidance. In medieval and early modern Bulgaria, no treatises of high ritual magic survived – neither original compositions, nor Old Church Slavonic translations of Byzantine examples⁶¹⁶. Therefore, the manuscripts containing an alloy of canonical prayers, verbal charms and recipes, are what comes the closest to a set of written magical equipment.

6. 2. Amulets in action

From the technical information, it becomes clear that writing plays an important role in the charming rite. Consequently, the paper and the lead play a role of special paraphernalia. They are not simply daily life objects, used in ritual context. The paper and the lead are the material support for making amulets. The closer parallels can be seen in a South Italian example, where the εὐχή (actually a rather lengthy text) has to be written on ὄστρακον. A Byzantine charm against breast-pain also instructs: “Write the following and hang it on the chest”⁶¹⁷.

⁶¹⁵ Similarly to the two medieval Russian chronicles quoted above, the Bulgarian *Pogodinov Index* of prohibited books (fourteenth century) states that a priest, who takes “false books” in church, must be excommunicated and the books must be burnt. However, according to the marginalia, there is a number of liturgical manuscripts, which belonged to lay people. See below the subchapter on practitioners.

⁶¹⁶ Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God*, p. 315. For comparison, Egypt in the Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages is “a world where ritual dominated the resolution of most crises in life” and handbooks with spells were highly valued. Despite the diversity of the Coptic spells, “it is more challenging to look at these spells as a group, which is the way their user regarded them. It is clear that they make up a single practitioner’s portfolio.” See Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, pp. 259 and 275.

⁶¹⁷ Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, p. 334.

Form all the Bulgarian charms, only six texts contain explicit instructions to be written on paper. Due to the fragile nature of the material support, no such charm survived as it was used, i.e. written on a piece of paper. Meanwhile, three charms contain explicit instructions to be written on lead. These are a charm against destructive hard rain and two charms against the *nezhit*. One of the charms against the *nezhit* comes from manuscript, dated fifteenth and sixteenth century. The other charm against the *nezhit* comes is in a manuscript, dated seventeenth century. None of these two texts survived on a piece on lead. We have the charms and the instructions about the amulets, but no actual amulets (on paper or lead) with these two charms reached our time.

However, as we already saw above, there is another charm against the *nezhit*, coming from a seventeenth century manuscript⁶¹⁸, which is as follows:

Jesus came down from the Seventh heaven, from his home, met the nezhit and asked it: "Where are you going?" And the nezhit answered: "I am going into the human head, in order to bemuse the brain, to break the teeth and the jaws, to deafen the ears, to blind the eyes, to distort the mouth, to block up the nose, so there will be headache day and night." And Jesus said to the nezhit: "Go back into the forest and enter the deer's head and the ram's head, because they can bear everything and still survive. And stay there until the end of Heaven and Earth. And be afraid of the Lord, who is sitting on the cherubim throne, until He comes to judge the entire universe and you too, rabid nezhit, who are the source of every infirmity. I am conjuring you, nezhit! Go away from the God's servant (say the name) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

This text has three parallels, inscribed on amulets from earlier times. This is the charm from the tenth century amulet from the village of Odürtsi, Varna region⁶¹⁹:

Dear Lord Christ, win! The nezhit was coming from the Red Sea and met Jesus. And Jesus asked him: "Where are you going?" He answered: "I am going to the human, to drink his brain, to shed his blood, to break his

⁶¹⁸ *Требник*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 133v-136. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, Vol. II, p. 132-135). See no. 5 in the Catalogue.

⁶¹⁹ See no. 1 in the Catalogue.

bones". Then Jesus said: "I conjure you, nezhit! Do not go to the human, but go to a deserted place...find the deer...enter their [sic!] heads Drink their brain, shed their blood, break their bones and tear their joints, because they can stand any illness. Go there and do not come back!" Now and forever, until the Judgment Day, prepared for him. Be afraid of the Lord, sitting on the cherubim throne, everything visible and invisible is afraid of him. Fear mostly the Lord, the glory belongs to him forever. Amen!

Then, there is the charm again the *nezhit* from an amulet (tenth-eleventh century, from Păcuiul lui Soare, today's Romania)⁶²⁰:

And when Jesus came down from the seventh heaven...and while walking, he met the nezhit, and told him: Where are you going, nezhit? The nezhit replied: I am going into the human head, to drink the brain, I am going into the bones, to destroy them, to blind the eyes, to deafen the ears. And Jesus told him: Go back in the ...forest and into the deer's head and into the ram's head, because the deer and the ram are patient, here and now and forever. Amen.

Finally, there is the charm against the *nezhit* from eleventh-twelfth century⁶²¹. It is on an amulet, found in a medieval grave near the town of Kŭrdjzali, Southern Bulgaria. Although the text is partially corrupted, it is clear that this is the same charm:

*Jesus Christ was coming from the seventh heaven from...
... the evil spirit was coming from the Red Sea...
Jesus met is next to his home and asked it: "Where are you going, brother?" And the evil spirit said: "I am coming here in the human head to suck
The brain out, to dry the eyelids, to cover the backs, to deafen the ears, to blind the eyes, to twist the mouths and to block the noses ... illnesses of the head day and night." And Jesus told it: "O, brother, ...
you evil spirit, go to the mountain and enter the deer's head and... because you all tolerated and all suffered. There
you stay and wait until the sky and the earth end. Be afraid of God, who sit on the cherubim throne, until the Lord
come to give justice in the universe. And you, rabid spirit, lord of every infirmity, I conjure you,
... you, evil spirit, go away form God." Dear Lord. Heaven and earth.*

⁶²⁰ See no. 2 in the Catalogue.

⁶²¹ See no. 3 in the Catalogue.

102 years. Now and forever, and for eternity. Amen.

The charms against the *nezhit* are part of a verbal-amulet apotropaic system, which has the following hypothetical model: certain verbal charms against the *nezhit* are in circulation in Bulgaria in the period from tenth to seventeenth century. The charms are accompanied by an instruction to be written on lead. The instructions were followed, and the pieces of lead inscribed with the charms were used as apotropaic amulets. In seventeenth century, the charms were also written down in manuscripts, together with the instruction about the lead. For the period before seventeenth century, there is no data if the circulation was only oral and amuletic or the charms were also kept in written form for reference purposes.

Similar process can be observed in the case of protection against the *veshtitsa*. There is a number of charms against the *veshtitsa*, where the list of names occupies a central position. These charms were discussed in details above. The most characteristic example, coming from the seventeenth century, is the following:

The witch said: "I uproot a fruit tree, I tie female beauty, I defeat female malice. I am coming closer and I shall enter the human dwelling as a hen, as a she-dove, as a snake. I strangle the beautiful children and that is why they call me „murderer". When the true word of God was born, I went there to deceive it. Archangel Michael found me and fettered me, and I swore and said: "I swear in the throne of the Supreme and in the supreme powers that I shall not lie to you and I shall tell you the truth. If a human can copy in writing my name, I shall not enter the home of the servant of God." And Archangel Michael said: "Tell me your names!" "First name: Mora. Second name: Veshtitsa. Third name: Vizusa. Fourth name: Makarila. Fifth name: Siyana. Sixth name: Evgelusa. Seventh name: Navridulia. Eighth name: Living Fire. Ninth name: Pladnitsa (Midday One). Tenth name: Drowner/Strangler of children. Eleventh name: Thief the milk of the newborn. Twelfth name: Devil Deceiver."

The witch told Archistrategos Michael: "Let me go and I shall swear: wherever they pronounce these names, no devil will ever enter. Amen."

Neither to the sleeping one, nor to the eating ones, nor in midnight, nor at noon, today, ever and forever, through the ages. Amen."⁶²²

This text has a parallel in a charm against the *veshtitsa* from the tenth century.⁶²³

It survived on an amulet, excavated near the city of Varna, Eastern Bulgaria. Although the amulet is not in a perfect condition and parts of the text are corrupted, it is clear that this is the same text⁶²⁴:

The veshtitsa was saying: "I eradicate a fruit tree, I dry female beauty, I defeat female malice, I approach and enter into the human's place as a hen, as a dove, as a snake..." And Archangel Michael said: "Tell me your clan!" 1st name mora, 2nd veshtitsa, 3rd vizusa, 4th makarila, 5th siyana, 6th evgelusa, 7th navradulia, 8th living fire, 9th midday one, 10th strangler of children ...

The charms against the *veshtitsa* too seem to be part of a verbal-amuletic apotropaic system. Its hypothetical model is the following: certain charms against the *veshtitsa* are in circulation in Bulgaria in the period tenth-nineteenth century. The list of the *veshtitsa*'s names is the central and most important element of the charm. In the tenth century, this type of charm was inscribed on a piece of lead and used as an apotropaic amulet. In seventeenth century, the same type of charm was preserved in manuscripts. The texts from the manuscript mention or instruct that the names of the *veshtitsa* have to be not only remembered and uttered, but also written down and carried as protection.

The charms against the *nezhit* and the *veshtitsa* clearly demonstrate continuity of practice and probably of tradition too⁶²⁵. Continuity or at least some possible

⁶²² Сборниче с апокрифни молитви № 273, fol. 50r-50v, Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, pp. 174-175. See no. 12 in the Catalogue.

⁶²³ Amulet (lead lamella), tenth century. Excavated near the city of Varna, Eastern Bulgaria. Попконстантинов, "Оловен амулет с апокрифен текст от Варненския музей", p. 283. See no. 11 in the catalogue.

⁶²⁴ See no. 11 in the Catalogue.

⁶²⁵ As Ralph Merrifield puts it, religious and magical beliefs "may change from generation to generation; what remains constant is the ritual itself – the proper thing to do in certain circumstances, and

corresponding motives can be found for three other amulets, although they do not have parallels from manuscripts. The amulet with the charm against the devil could fit very well for instance among the apotropaic texts from the seventeenth century book of hours or book of occasional prayers from Sofia. The amulet charm also corresponds in tone to the St. Sisinnius and Archangel Michael charms against *vehstitsa*, *mora*, evil spirits, etc. It could be connected with the Niketa's book of occasional prayers, among its emphatically apotropaic text against evil supernatural powers.

The same is valid for the amulet with protection charm. With its simple iconography and bilingual verbal content, this is one of the shortest charms, and also one of the most concentrated apotropaic biblical *historiola*⁶²⁶:

Side A (Old Church Slavonic): *The cross was raised, Christ was crucified. Christ was resurrected, the man was forgiven.*

Side B (Greek): *Christ was born, Christ the unburied one, Christ the unburied one.*

Hypothetically, such amulet and such text could be worn by any of the users of the charms from seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century. A medieval and early modern priest could make such an amulet (or at least provide the verbal charm for it) for a member of his congregation. On one hand, the bilingual inscription suggests a certain level of literacy. On the other hand, the Greek text is de facto corrupted. Instead of a reference to Christ's resurrection or divine power, the amulet repeats the same phrase

something that is might be unsafe to neglect." See Merrifield, *The Archeology of Ritual and Magic* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1987), p. 115.

⁶²⁶ See no. 17 in the Catalogue.

twice. A fuller of more “correct” version can be seen for instance in a South Italian Greek example, where the formula goes⁶²⁷:

+ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐγεννήθη + ἔπαθεν + ὁ Χριστὸς ἐζανέστη + ὁ Χριστὸς σωτηρία
γένονεν + ὁ Χριστὸς ῥέγνατ + ὁ Χριστὸς βασιλεύει +

Another South Italian verbal charm (written in Greek) contains the same formula, (written in the vernacular)⁶²⁸:

... εἰς τὸ ὄνομα χῶ fu natu e fu battizzatu e fu crucificatu e risursitatu e fu
suttirratu...

It is very possible that the mistake in the Greek text on the Bulgarian amulet comes from a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the magical significance of the number of the phrases and of the numbers themselves. To some degree, this inscription is similar to the water retention charm, containing two Agripas, instead of three. In both cases, it is difficult to say with certainty if the Bulgarian charm are damaged/corrupted or consciously modified.

The amulet with thirteenth-fourteenth century charm for protection of the family and the household⁶²⁹, and for the wellbeing of the livestock and the crops corresponds to the bee charm and the charm for wound on a horse. In my opinion, the amulet charm is also in the line like the charms against water detention in animals, and the charms against storm, bad weather and flood. These texts are related in the sense that they provide comprehensive and inclusive protection. They take care not only of a particular human,

⁶²⁷ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 14.

⁶²⁸ Pradel, *Gebete*, p. 32.

⁶²⁹ Amulet (lead lamella), thirteenth-fourteenth century. Excavated in 1974, in the medieval cemetery next to the medieval palace of the town of Veliko Tŭrnovo, central northern Bulgaria. Kept at the National Museum of History, Sofia. The original text of the charm and a modern Bulgarian translation is published in Kvinto and Drangov, “Оловна пластинка”, pp. 240-241. See no. 18 in the catalogue.

but also of a family, of domestic animals, of the crops. In a way, these charms are for protection of the entire household, the entire farm, the entire human world.

In the broader Slavic context, it is remarkable that in the Bulgarian charms against snakebite seem unrelated to an amulet tradition. The source material speaks about bowls and cups, but there is no reference to amulets, similar to the Russian *zmeeviki*, for instance. Clearly, the list of snake's names and titles are supposed to be recited as a central part of the narrative, but nothing hints to the existence of an amulet with the titles and the names on it. Neither there is a hint to an amulet with the biblical reference about Moses.

In the context of Byzantine cultural influence, it is remarkable that the Bulgarian charms with St. Sisinnius are nor related to an amulet tradition. The story about this marvelous saint appears in manuscripts, but is not present on amulets, neither as a text nor as an image. The extant pieces of lead show only the variant of the narrative, where the evil *veshtitsa* is defeated by Archangel Michael.

6. 3. Practitioners

The figure of the charmer is something, on which the technical guidance provides very little amount of primary data. Obviously, a human practitioner is needed in order to do the charming, to perform the rite, to utter, read or write the charm and to do things with paraphernalia. On the other hand, the charms rarely say something about this practitioner. There is no information about sex, age, ethnicity, religion, social or marital status, occupation or level of literacy. Most often, the practitioner is either referred to as “you” (“ти”) via the pronoun or a verb in second person singular, or the instructions are

given through impersonal phrases like “to be written” (“да се напише”), “to be read” (“да се чете”), etc.

Although rare, there are cases in the source material, when there is some information (like given name, occupation and sex) about the author and the owner of the book, who potentially can be the user of the charms. The following manuscripts provide such information:

- *Драголов сборник* № 651 from the thirteenth century, from the National Library in Belgrade. The manuscript was written by the Serbian priest Vasilij Dragol. It was discovered in the year 1875, in Albania, in the family of an Eastern Orthodox priest, where it was kept for seventeen generations⁶³⁰.
- *Зайковски требник* № 960 from the fourteenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol. 1r, there is note: “June 2nd, 1900, Toma Zaykov, merchant from the town of Vidin.” On fol. 1v-2r, there is note: “My father bought this book from Mount Athos, from a monk, it is very old.” On fol. 68v, a note says that the book belonged to the teacher Neno. On fol. 75r, the male name Tseko Zayko is written.
- *Псалтир* № 6 from 1479, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol. 147v, there is a note in Italian:

Mi Simon di Sittniza, o schritto quisto libro in gloria di dio con la mia mā propria e fii chonfitto ai 1479 adj 29 di marzo, a sta maria chastamia ā chorffo.

On fol. 82r, there is a note that the book property of Father Petka from the town of Prilep.

⁶³⁰ Petkanova, *Encyclopedia*, p. 131-132.

- *Сборник* № 308 from fifteenth and sixteenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol. 33v, there is a note that the manuscript is written by Deacon Gregory. On fol. 130v, a note says that the book was property of Father Michael, followed by a note from later time, with the name Hristo Yoanovich.
- *Псалтир* № 464 from the seventeenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On the back of the cover, there is a note, saying: “I, Father Yovan, wrote this.”
- *Требник* № 616 from the sixteenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol. 78, there is a note from 26th of May 1836 that the book was property of Andon Chiznets.
- *Часослов* № 631 from the seventeenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol.182 and fol. 184, there are notes that the book was a property of Stano Semkov and Velo.
- *Часослов* № 1391 from 1744, from the National Library in Sofia. Based on the handwriting and the paleography, the manuscript is attributed to Father Milko from the town of Kotel. On fol. 2r, there is a note from the year 1867, telling the family history of Dobri Radiov. He seems to be the owner of the book in later times.⁶³¹
- *Никетово молитвениче*, № 646 from 1787 from the National Library in Sofia. The manuscript contains a large number of prayers and charms, which mention God’s servant Niketa.

⁶³¹ Hrsitova, Catalogue, pp. 87-89.

- *Лечебник* № 799 from 1800, from the National Library in Sofia. On the first fol., there is a note: “Father Gregory, son of John, wrote this healer’s book.”⁶³²

In all these cases, the information is actually only about the name of the person, who wrote and owned the book. There is only one manuscript, where the user of the charms is named explicitly as such. The book is the *Никетово молитвениче* (Niketa’s Book of Prayers) and this is Niketa, who seems to be the owner of the book. The manuscript is from the year 1787 and contains (among other texts) ten verbal charms. These are charms for all joints, charms against storm and wind charm against lightning and thunder, charm to kill you enemy, two charms against the devil, charm for protection, two charms for success in the court of law and a charm for a good journey⁶³³. From these ten texts, eight are explicitly referring to “God’s servant Niketa”. In third person singular, he appears as a character in the narratives. One of the charms against the devil has a description of the ritual actions of Niketa. Apparently, he bows down, prays and sleeps in the church.

Based on the charms’ texts, we can draw some features from the portrait of the practitioner Niketa. He is male, Christian by faith, who knew Old Church Slavonic language and who could read. It seems that he owned the prayer book with words of power. His economic and financial status was probably good enough to allow him to acquire such a book, unless he received the manuscript as a gift, or stole it. If we take at face value the charm against the devil, it hints that Niketa might have had some kind of closer connections or relations with the clerical milieu or at least with a particular church. Such connection would provide him with constant access to the church building, in order

⁶³² Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 492-493.

⁶³³ Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 161-166.

to perform the verbal magic (to pray and to sleep there). On the other hand, there is the possibility that Niketa was not a real person, but only a fictitious human character in the *historiolae* of the charms.

Based on the sources, this is the closest we can get to the image of a Bulgarian charmer from the period. There are a few other texts, which also give some hints about the charmer.

One such case is the above-quoted charm for curing a wound on a horse. According to the *historiola*, the owner of the animal has to imitate the equine behavior and to re-enact the horse's pain. However, it is not clear if any person with an ill horse can or should do so, or the animal should be brought to a healer (for charming rite, including the utterance of the charm and possibly a dramatization) or to the priest (for reading the charm above the ill horse).

For comparison, the other equine-related charms (the ones against water detention) do not say anything about humans, imitating animal behavior and re-enacting the pain and the urinary problems of the horse. In the water detention charms, the instruction is usually to write letters or words on the hooves of the animal. It is not specified who should do the inscription: the owner of the horse or a charmer. The fact is that this person should have some reading and writing skills, even if only elementary ones. Hypothetically, the priest can write the water detention charm on the hooves of the horse. The priest is a very probable practitioner for two reasons. First, he knows to read and write, or at least a little bit. Second, the words to be inscribed are usually the names of the four biblical rivers, thus the charm and the charming rite are legitimate, decent and

Christian. Therefore, hypothetically there is no reason for an Eastern Orthodox Christian priest not to use the charm and inscribe the hooves of the horse with the biblical names.

The birth-giving charms are another peculiar case. It is possible that due to the physiological details and sex/gender specifics of the delivery, the charms for giving birth were only employed by women. These can be for instance the midwives or other female healers, or any woman, who assists the delivery. Maybe the birth-giving charms do not tell who the practitioner is, because it was self-understood that it is always a (healing) woman. However, it is also possible that the priest was called to read the charm above the delivering woman in the beginning of the birth. Thus, he may not be present at the actual act of delivery.

The priest was probably also called to read the charm in case of complications during delivery. Hypothetically, this would be an extremely critical situation, when all help available would be mobilized, regardless of gender-related taboos. This seems to be the case with a charm, entitled “Prayer for when a woman cannot deliver”.⁶³⁴ Preserved in a seventeenth century book of occasional prayers, the text contains first a non-canonical biblical narrative about St. John curing a woman with intestine problems. Then comes the charm itself (“*As the Lord and Holy Virgin Mary and St. John and St. Elizabeth are coming, the same way come out soon you too, young one, Lord’s servant John is calling you, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.*”) At the end, there is the technical instruction: “*Write this prayer and the woman to put it under her left breast*”. In this case, it is possible that two practitioners do the charming. One practitioner would be for instance the priest, who reads the *historiolae* and possibly writes the

⁶³⁴ *Требник*, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 144v-145. Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 135-136).

invocation formula on paper. The other practitioner would be the midwife or the female healer, who puts the inscribed paper on the woman's body, but who may also utter the narratives and pronounce the invocation formula, as part of the charming rite.

In the source material, there are only two charms, which explicitly mention Christian Orthodox priest (*свещеник*). These are a charm against water detention⁶³⁵ and a charm against hale⁶³⁶. The first one, preserved in a book of hours from 1498, is one of the very few occasions, where the charming and the charmer are presented together. In the text, the *historiola* about the three angels on the bank of river Jordan is followed by the instruction: “*The priest to read this three times above clean water and every time to make the sign of the cross above the water, and the ill person to drink the water.*” In this case, it seems that there is only one charmer: the priest, who has the *historiola* in his book, reads it aloud above water, and performs the entire charming rite. This variant has a parallel in a South Italian charm against headache and illness (written in Greek), which is intended to be pronounced by the Christian Priest (ὁ παπᾶς) at the end of the liturgy⁶³⁷.

The other example, the charm against hale, is on a seventeenth century folio, added to a fifteenth century service book. The text instructs: on the first day of March, the names of the Holy 40 Martyrs to be written on paper, then “*the priest to come with the procession and to place [the names of the martyrs] around vineyards and fields. Do not be afraid of hale! [the names of the martyrs follow]*”. In this case, it seems that there are two practitioners. The charmer, the farmer, or the owner of the land is practitioner № 1. Hypothetically, on March 1, he or she writes down the names of the Holy Forty Martyrs

⁶³⁵ Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 34. See no. 28 in the catalogue.

⁶³⁶ Tsonev, *Catalogue Plovdiv*, p. 49. See no. 29 in the catalogue.

⁶³⁷ Pradel, *Gebete*, pp. 35-36.

on a piece of paper, and then gives the paper to the priest. During the festal procession, the priest as practitioner № 2 places the inscribed holy names in the fields.

The last two examples present complete and logical charming systems. Schematically, these systems would look like this:

- There is a charmer, who is an Eastern Orthodox Christian priest. He has a specialized book, containing the verbal charm together with the technical instructions for the charming rite. When someone experiences water detention, he or she goes to the priest. The priest takes out the book and performs the charming rite: he reads aloud the charm above water makes the sign of the cross and gives the water to the ill person to drink it.

- There is a charmer, who has a specialized book with words of power, or an access to such book. The charmer writes down the charm on material support. Then this practitioner turns to the Eastern Orthodox Christian priest. During a legitimate Eastern Orthodox Christian religious ceremony (a procession), the priest plays the role of a charmer too. He places the inscribed charm in the vineyards and the fields.

These models are realistic and probable for three reasons. First, the charms are preserved in clerical liturgical books. Second, the priest is explicitly pointed out in the texts of the charms. Certainly, there is clerical presence and activity in the rite. Third, the narratives of both charms consist of biblical *historiolae* with biblical characters, acting in biblical settings and framed by Christian Trinitarian formulae. Although non-canonical, this textual and ritual complex is a legitimate and decent Christian procedure. At least looks like one, and this might be of bigger importance for the survival, the usage and the transmission of the charm.

These two charms against water retention and hale in a way support the chronicles, which mention the “stupid village priests” as main practitioners of verbal charming. These two charms are actual primary sources about members of the Christian clergy, practicing verbal charming.

The charms do not reveal any information on the gender aspect. Being Christian priests, the charmers were surely males. However, the above-quoted sermons connect the charming practice and its ritual paraphernalia explicitly with the female practitioners (*обаялници*). This is a picture, similar to the female healers, represented on the fresco from the Rila Monastery. In my opinion, it would be odd and strange, if a Christian priest would use magical instrumentarium like dry bones, hemp ropes, knives, etc. To me, it seems more probable that these ritual objects were employed by lay people, especially in the agricultural charms. The character of the paraphernalia and the information from the sermons allows the possibility that at least some part of the charmers were lay women.

7. Outcome

At this stage, it is possible to outline certain patterns. First of all, the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms and rites exhibit continuity. This is a continuity of aboriginal pre-Christian Slavic-Balkan motifs. This is also a continuity of pre-Christian and Christian imported motifs, transmitted mainly via the Byzantine influence. As a result, we can see high levels of syncretism. One good example is the *nezhit*, which recombines features of archetypal Mesopotamian illness-perpetrators with pre-Christian Slavic elemental forces, and functions in Christian South Slavic context.

The charms and the rites are characterized by inter-connectivity, inter-relativity and inter-changeability. This is especially valid at the structural level. Characters, motives and narratives are recombined for different purposes and occasions. For instance, Jesus Christ, Archangel Michael or the group of angels help not only against the *nezhit*, but also against the *veshtitsa* or against water retention. The *veshtitsa* can strangle newborn children, but can bring illness too, which is the sphere of the *nezhit*. Both the headache (*the nezhit*) and the snake venom can be transmitted from one thing to another, until they disappear completely. The charms are connected among each other. As it is seen in the analysis, it is de facto impossible to speak about a character, a motif or an issue, without considering or at least mentioning its connections with other characters, motifs and issues.

At the same time, the charms and the rites exhibit a number of peculiarities and irregularities. The blind shepherds, the three sisters, the *historiola* about the wounded horse and the invocation of the two (instead of three) Agripas are examples for this. These can be a result of mistakes, corruption or contamination of the texts. However, it is very probable that the unique elements in Bulgarian verbal magic may come as a result of adaptation and innovation, done only in South-Slavic context. Such innovation is de facto visible in figure of the well-adapted *nezhit* too.

Essentially, the verbal charms are power narratives. They function through the constant battle between the good and the evil supernatural figures. The positive agents always win, yet the negative ones always come back, and the *historiola* is repeated again and again. The verbal charms and rites promise a permanent solution of the problem, but actually do not provide it. Yet, they give the humans the necessary hope, mental support

and sense of power to do something in the face of the trouble. The medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms are used in and suited to human life and mentality. They are magic not in theory, but in action – a dynamic field, providing belief and opportunity to manage and eliminate the crisis. In a challenging environment of limited resources and knowledge, verbal charms give real or imaginary ability to go beyond the sacred boundary and to keep the search for supernatural solutions of the everyday problems.

The medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic is curative and apotropaic. In the extant sources, there is no love magic and aggressive magic. This situation might be due to the fact that the charms were mainly preserved in and transmitted through Christian religious books. There is a big probability that the main users of the charms were members of the Christian clergy, especially parish priests. In case of illness and malevolent supernatural assault, a Christian priest is canonically obliged and naturally expected to provide help via prayers, exorcisms, service, ritual, etc. Although non-canonical, the verbal charms were one more instrument for coping with the situation.

In its own turn, such occupational and social profile of the practitioners explains the particular predominance of these three themes. The health problems, the protection against evil and the uncertainties of a journey, of a law procedure or of the weather, constituted the most common concerns in the daily life of a medieval and early modern community. Hence, these were the three spheres, where the parish priest has to respond to challenges and to solve problems. Hence, it is natural for the members of the clergy to gather and accumulate tools (including verbal charms), which are believed to be effective and which can be used in fulfilling their priestly assignments and obligations. At this

stage, it is not possible to be completely certain about the users of the charms. Although the role of the clergymen seems to be very significant, it is very probable that verbal charming was practiced by lay people too.

It seems that the infiltration of non-canonical texts among the canonical contents was especially easy in the case of the *требници* (the books of occasional prayers). These manuscripts were a priori designed as clerical manuals, meant to provide sacred texts and words of power for various expected and unexpected occasions in the daily life of a Christian. In a situation of insufficient or non-existing authoritative control, and facing harsh and demanding quotidian realities, it is natural that the curative and apotropaic charms made their way among the canonical texts and were integrally incorporated in the priests' manuals and practices.

The verbal charms appear not only in the manuscripts, but also on amulets. Thus, the charms can be seen in usage. Taken together, the amulets and the manuscripts form an important complex. They demonstrate continuity in time: the same charms against the *nezhit* and against the *veshtitsa* reappear in the period of almost eight centuries. What is even more important, there is continuity in practice. The amulets as objects apply and employ the written instructions from the manuscripts.

It seems that the verbal charms are part of crisis rites. The texts of the charms indeed contain some information, although scarce, about these rites. The picture is rather fragmentary, yet clear enough. The components of the crisis rite are:

- the verbal charm;
- the paraphernalia (bowls, knives, water, bread, etc.);

- the actions and the proxemics (reading or uttering the charm, making signs with the knife, fumigating, etc.);
- the temporal and spatial settings (before sunrise, on the first day of March, etc.);
- the amulets (made out of lead and inscribed with the charms, as the charms themselves instruct);
- the manuscripts, which are de facto manuals, providing reference and stock of charms
- the practitioners. Often, they are Christian priests (in the charms against water retention or against natural disasters). However, they can be laity people (in the charms for protection of the bees or against rabies)

The crisis rite is performed as a means of coping with a problem, most often an illness or other health issue. Thus, the crisis rite functions as a system of crisis management. In the light of the sources, it seems that the verbal charm plays a central role in this crisis management. The charm has magical power, but also carries technical information about the components and the performance of the rite.

The thesis has several methodological contributions. First of all, it brings and analyses together material, which so far has not been considered as a whole. The thesis clarifies the size and the scope of the existing editions of Bulgarian verbal charms and uses these editions as a corpus of Bulgarian verbal magic. For example, after the charms from amulets and charms from manuscripts were brought side by side, the continuity of practice was better clarified. The same is valid for the *nezhit* charms, where a whole mini-corpus was established.

Part of the material analyzed here was so far completely unknown and untouched by scholars. It turns that these unstudied texts contain some of the most interesting specimens, for instance the charm for curing a wounded horse, the water retention charm with the two Agripas, the blind shepherds and three sisters. Other, more explored items (like for instance the *veshtitsa*, the snake and St. Sisinnius) proved to have unknown aspects too.

The verbal charms are regarded as a way of acting and interacting. Considered not only as pieces of text, but also as pieces of action, they revealed a whole ritual system and its actors. Thus, the verbal charms become a valuable source on medieval and early modern popular religion and its practice, which are otherwise often inaccessible.

Finally, the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms are precious resource for the research of today's Bulgarian and Balkan popular supernatural beliefs and popular demonology. A study on modern time's magical and religious phenomena may benefit and progress significantly, if the medieval material is taken into consideration as a reference point, both comparatively and contrastively. The analysis from this thesis is only one episode from the examination of verbal magic and popular religion. It is a starting point with potential to be continued and expanded in the direction of today's supernatural beliefs and spirituality.

8. Catalogue

This catalogue contains the original texts of the medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms, which are discussed in the thesis. The original Old Church Slavonic (OCS) texts of the charms are scanned from the respective editions and

publications, as it is specified in each case. This way of presentation of the source material was chosen for two technical reasons: the editions are well made in terms of fonts and graphical layout, and it is practical and effective to make use of such a resource; all typos and other mistakes, which a retyping process would unavoidably produce, are thus avoided.

1. Encounter *historiola* (charm against the *nezhit*)

Amulet (lead lamella), 7.5 x 3.5 cm, dated tenth century. The amulet is excavated in the medieval fortress on the island of Păcuil lui Soare (located in the Romanian part of the Danube, fifteen kilometers from the town of Silistra, northeastern Bulgaria). The fortress was Bulgarian and Byzantine, and existed between the eighth and fourteenth century. The original text of the charm is published in Popkonstantinov, “Молитва против нежит върху амулет от X век”, p. 124. According to Popkonstantinov, the amulet is kept in the Archeological Museum in Bucharest, Romania. For English translation, see above p. 198.

The text is partially damaged. However, it is clear that the text is the well-known *historiola* about the encounter between the *nezhit* and Jesus Christ. Here the story is rather compressed. The *nezhit* only lists three assignments, Christ expels it in the head of the deer and the ram, and the story ends with “Amen” and “Jesus Crhist Wins” (in Greek). To this moment, this is the earliest known appearance of the *nezhit* in Bulgarian verbal magic.

Лицева част: съхѡдащѡу ісоу отъ з...о н [евесе]
 [хо] дащѡу же нежитѹ сър [ѣ] те ісѣ і рече
 емѹ камо ндешн нежитѣ ре
 че ем ѹ нежитѣ азъ ідѣ въ члв [ж]
 главѣ мозга нсмръчатъ въ к [остн]
 [съкр]ѹшитѣ шці ослѣпитѣ і рече емѹ о [в]раті сѣ
 въ
 [пѹстѣин] ж горѣ і въ елен главѣ н въ

обратна страна:

[овѣ] нѣ тѣ во естѣ трѣпѣ
 лнвъ нѣнѣ н прсно
 н въ вѣкы вѣкомъ ам [ннѣ]
 іс хс нка

2. Encounter *historiola* (charm against the *nezhit*)

Amulet (lead lamella), 5. 7 x 4. ¼. 5 cm, dated tenth-eleventh century, with a ring at one side, clearly designed to be hanged as a pendant. The amulet is excavated near the village of Odŭrtsi, northeastern Bulgaria. The original text of the charm is published in Doncheva and Popkonstantinov, “Апокрифна молитва от X-XI век”, pp. 288-289. For English translation, see above p. 86.

The text is the same *historiola* about the encounter between the *nezhit* and Jesus Christ. This variant is longer and with more details.

Лицева част (А):
 г(оспод)н : ѿ(е)ѿ х(рист)е н(и)к(а) оделѣ
 нежитѣ надѣше от у
 рѣмѣнаго морѣ и сърѣте
 нс(оу)су и реуе емѣ камо нде
 онѣ же р[е]уе ндж въ уловѣ
 кж мозга нсръцатѣ кръве
 пролнмѣтъ костн съкрж
 шитѣ и реуе емоу зака
 ннаж та не[жи]те да не
 ндеши въ уловѣк[ъ] нѣ нде
 ши въ пѣ[с]то мѣсто и . . ж о
 браштешн . . . д . . .
 еле[нж] . . . ѣнѣн вънндѣ
 ши въ главѣ нхѣ

Обратна страна (Б):
 и тѣмѣ мозгѣ нсръ
 уешн и к[о]стн съкрж
 шнши жнлѣ сърѣ .
 еши ти бо трѣпатѣ въ
 сакѣ азѣ нди и не обра
 . . с . въ вѣкѣ до бготова
 наго дне сждѣ на е[го] бво
 и сѣ бог[а] сѣдѣштаго на
 прѣстолѣ херѣвнмѣсц
 ѣ его же трепешга види
 ма и невндима ты же
 пауе бвои сѣ в(ог)а емж
 же слава въ вѣка а
 [м]ннѣ.

3. Encounter *historiola* (charm against the *nezhit*)

Amulet (lead lamella) 12 x 7 x 0.1 cm, dated eleventh-twelfth century. Excavated in 2002, in a medieval grave near the town of Kŭrdjzali, Southern Bulgaria. The original text of the charm and a modern Bulgarian translation is published in Garena and Iliev, “Новооткрит старобългарски надпис-заклинание”, pp. 152-153. For English translation, see above p. 189.

This is de facto the same variant of the charm as the one from the previous amulet above.

- 1 (сѣхожа)амн(е) нѣз отъ ж го невсе о (т) ъ - -т - - - - в
- 2 о - - - р (хо)дацино нежитос отъ чрѣмънаго морѣ д т- - е - -
- 3 в(ънѣ ж)ианица своег(о) сѣрѣте нѣз и реч(е) емоу камо идеши (в)-
- 4 (р)ате и рече нежитъ сѣмо пдѣж вѣ (чл)ѣчѣ глакѣ моз(га)
- 5 немрѣцатѣ вѣка их неосиштѣ р(рѣ)вѣ ихъ обитѣ оу(шшо)
- 6 н(х)ѣ глаошштѣ очно ихъ с(ѣ)лѣшнт д оуѣтѣ ихъ крикитѣ и н-
- 7 оца ихъ роуѣнати глакѣнихъ волѣзихъ дѣнѣ и
- 8 ноцѣ и рече емоу нѣз о братне с - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
- 9 (не)житѣ пдѣ вѣ горѣ и вѣлѣзѣ вѣ еленѣ главоу и в
- 10 в - ? ѣн та во вѣсе трѣшнтѣ и прѣветрадаѣте т-
- 11 оу прѣвѣдѣи и пожадѣи дождеже н(е)во и зе-
- 12 маѣ конѣцѣтѣ се оубои се ва сѣдациаег(о) н-
- 13 а прѣветолѣ херошнѣтѣ дождеже прѣдетѣ
- 14 рѣ сѣдѣтѣ вѣселенѣи и теѣѣ вѣсковѣнѣи нежи-
- 15 те начаѣѣче вѣсѣкомоу неджгоу (тѣ з)аклипаю
- 16 - - - т(ѣи) нежитѣ отпдѣи отъ ва вожи земаѣ нево амни
- 17 дѣва и ста год(ѣ) нѣшнѣ и пр(нѣно и вѣ вѣкѣи вѣкорѣ)

4. Corpus of charms (seven charms against the *nezhit*)

Требник, fourteenth century, sine № et loco. The original texts of the charms are published in Kačanovskij, “Apokrifne molitve”, pp. 153-154. For English translation, see above p. 86.

The author did not provide any additional information about the manuscript. If all the texts really come from the same book, and if the dating of this *требник* is genuine, then it is an important source about the *nezhit*. First, it contains variants of the same encounter *historiola* (and other types of anti-*nezhit* texts) from the fourteenth century. Thus, it fills a time-gap and adds information about the continuity. Second, it represents a

corpus, a collection of charms on the same topic, which is a rarity in medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic.

Молитви нежїтоу .а. І҃гда идѣше нежити ѿть соухаго мора и срѣте его ісоусъ, и реуе іемоу ісоусъ: гдѣ идешн нежите? и реуе іемоу нежити: идоу оу удовкѣю главоу кости прѣломити, моз'га сръцати (sic), крѣке прохнати, уелюсти прѣломн(ти). ѿнь же реуе іемоу: азъ зкланнаю те именовъ госьподьиннь ісоусомъ хрїстомъ и всьми светымн, неходн въ главоу удовкѣю, ни кости прѣломн, ни моз'га нсръун ми крѣке прохн, ни смрти прѣдждѣ; нь нди въ поустою гороу и въсеки се въ іельноу главоу, та бо іестъ трѣпѣлнѣа и смртъ трѣпнѣть въ нме ѿтъца.

б) Молитва .б. томоужде. Сходешю нежїтоу ѿть соухаго мора и сходешюу ісоусу ѿть .з. небесе, и реуе іемоу ісоусъ: како идешн нежите? реуе іемоу нежити: сьмо ндѣ, господи, къ удовкѣю главоу моз'га сръцати, уелюсти прѣломити, зоубы нхъ ронити, шнѣ нхъ прѣвнѣти и оушн нхъ ѿглоушнѣти, оун нхъ ѿслабнѣти, носѣ гоугьнати, крѣке нхъ прохнати, кѣкѣ нхъ ісоушнѣти, оустынь нхъ крѣнѣти, и оудовъ нхъ раслаблатн, жнѣн нхъ оумртвѣти, тѣла нзънѣждати, хѣпотоу нхъ нзмѣнѣти, бѣсомъ моушнѣти іе. И реуе іемоу ісоусъ: ѿбрати се нежите, нди въ поустою гороу и въ поустыноу; ѿбрати тоу іельноу главоу и въсеки се къ ню; тѣ бо все трѣпнѣть и все страждетъ, тѣ бо брѣмена смѣтѣетъ къ рожищнхъ свонхъ, си рѣубъ тебѣ нежите, егда спѣде с небесе; нди въ каменне, тѣ бо все трѣпнѣть, знмоу и знон и всько паодѣство, тѣ бо ѿтъ варн жестокъ іестъ, въ себе дрѣжатн те сильнъ іестъ, нежити; да тоу нмѣн жнѣнѣе, дондѣже небо и земля ннмонде; тѣ и коуѣетъ се. ѿтъннди ѿтъ раба божнѣа. смер. нн къ томоу . . . небуди тебе, нн именн твоѣга въ нме, іако дастъ господъ здравнѣ рабоу своѣмоу. іме р. іако томо (томоу) подобѣетъ всѣа.

г) Молитва .г. томоужде. Светы мнхѣнѣ гаврнѣлъ гредѣше възъмъ жельзньнѣ лоукъ и жельзымъ стрѣламъ стрѣлатн хотѣ іельна и іельноу; и неѿсрѣте тоу іельнѣа и іельноу; нь ѿбрати нежитѣ, нже сѣдѣше камъ рѣцѣнѣкѣ; и въпросн нго: что ты іесн, нже сѣдншн камъ рѣцѣнѣкѣ? ѿтъвѣрѣлъ іемоу: азъ іесьмъ нежити, нже удовкѣе главе рѣцѣнѣю и моз'га нсръуоу, крѣкѣ іемоу прохнѣю. И реуе моу мнхѣнѣ гаврнѣлъ: прохдѣты и прохдѣтъе нежитѣ, не моз'га сръцн, нн глакы рѣцѣнн; нь нди въ поустою гороу и вълѣзн въ іельноу главоу: та ти іестъ трѣпѣлнѣа трѣпнѣти те: днѣ дн те по сѣмъ дннѣ ѿбратиоу, любо те постѣкоу, любо те прострѣлю. И възъмолн се нежити: не постѣци, нн прострѣлн мнѣ; да вѣжоу въ гороу и вълѣзѣ (sic) іельноу главоу; іегда ннѣмѣ оуслышнѣти светѣаго мнхѣнѣа. вѣжатн ннѣмѣ по трн землѣ, всегда і нн(нѣ).

д) Молитва .д. томоужде. Пондѣ .з. аьгѣль .з. арханьгѣль .з. свѣщнносѣрѣе .з. ноуж ѿстрѣрѣе; и срѣте нхъ арханьгѣль гаврнѣлъ и реуе нмѣ: како идѣте .з. аьгѣль .з. арханьгѣль .з. свѣщнносѣрѣе .з. ноуж ѿстрѣрѣе? и рѣше іемоу: идѣмъ нежитѣ свѣщнн, нзъснѣтн; нь ѿстанн се раба божнѣа. іме р. въ нме ѿтъца и снѣа.

е) Молитва .е. томоужде. Сѣдмьдѣсетъ аьгѣль, сѣдмьдѣсетъ арханьгѣль; и срѣте іе светы мнхѣнѣлъ и гаврнѣлъ и светы коуз'ма и дамнѣнѣлъ и рекѣше іемоу: како идешн нежите? и реуе нмѣ нежити: идоу (въ) удовкѣю главоу кости прѣломити, моз'га сръцати рскоше іемоу: нди въ поустою гороу и вѣннн въ іельноу главоу и ѿстанн се раба божнѣа. іме р. и тоу клѣтѣкоу да ннлншн; ннѣ сѣщнѣетъ водоу съ крѣкнѣю божнѣю; подобнѣнъ іестъ ннодѣ. станѣнѣ добрѣнѣ, станѣнѣ страхомъ, тако да станѣтъ сѣ нежити въ нме ѿтъца.

з) Молитва ѿть нежнѣа. Несонн вѣ слово и слово бѣ въ богѣ и богѣ бѣ слово и сї бѣ несонн ѿтъ бога. въ нме ѿтъца и снѣа и светѣаго доуха. Адѣмъ нмѣше нежити вселѣн и мѣнн и доуноу дастъ га еѣ'ке, а еѣнѣа вѣстрѣ, а вѣстрѣ рѣцн, а рѣкѣ морѣ, а морѣ вѣлѣ-клѣмъ, а вѣлѣкѣ крѣю, а крѣнѣ пескоу, а несекъ землн, а землѣа тракѣ, а трава росѣ, а росѣа растлѣ се прѣдъ слнцѣмѣ. тако и снѣа болѣзнь да се растѣетъ къ главе и къ всѣмъ тѣлѣ раба божнѣа. ннѣ р. іакоже нзндѣ врѣнѣ не коуѣега поѣека, тако и снѣа болѣзнь да нзндѣтъ и да се не възвратнѣтъ къ раба божнѣа. ннѣ р. въ нме ѿтъца и снѣа и светѣаго доуха и нннѣа и прѣсно

и) Молитва ѿть нежнѣа. Благн домокннѣкѣ, лоукѣа домокннѣа, тако мн прострѣтѣа лоунаго, нди немоушн ѿтъ раба божнѣа. ннѣ р. іако же и зѣмнѣа ѿтъ концѣа тѣрѣдѣа тѣрѣдѣа урѣннѣа поурѣнѣмо съ медннѣмъ прѣнопаснѣнѣемъ и съ меднннѣмъ ѿбѣрѣамн; цѣо гредѣшѣ іако коу-кошъ, нскашъ іакоже елѣнъ медѣ по медѣ; прнѣнн въ место тѣоѣ двѣастѣанѣо съ сѣдѣмьдѣсеты покнѣа тѣоннн. Станѣмъ добрѣ, станѣмъ съ страхомъ.

5. Corpus of charms (twelve charms against the *nezhit*)

Требник, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 133v-136. The original texts of the charms are published edition in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II, pp. 132-135. For English translation, see above p. 87 and 150. This is largest extant collection of charms against the *nezhit*, preserved together in one manuscript. It includes the *historiola* about the blind shepherds.

Мл̑тви ѿ проклѣтаго нежитя . . .

Съхощеца Іс̑ъ ѿ седмаго нб̑е съ готоваго жалища своего и срѣте нежитя и рече ѣмъ х̑с̑: где идѣши нежите? и рече ѣмъ нежить: ѡвъ їди въ чл̑чю главъ мозгъ ѡсмръцати, зѣби съкроушити, челюсти слоумити ѡшчи ѡслѣпити еѡчи ѡслепити, ѡуста ѡжкривити, нб̑съ ѡжгнати, главе болѣзнь днь и нощь. И рече ѣмъ Іс̑: ѡбрати се нежите въ горы и вниди въ ѣлины главъ и въ ѡвню, та бо все трѣпнать и прѣстрадаеть те прѣбѣди и пожи дондѣже н̑бо и зѣмля скончаѣтсе. ѡубой се бѡ седѣщаго на прѣстолѣ херувим̑сѣ, дондѣже прийдѣтъ седити всей н̑селеней. И тебѣ ѡсѡвни нежите, начелниче всакому недѣгоу, заклїнаю те, нежите, ѡтїди ѿ раба бж̑га ім̑е въ име ѡца и с̑на и с̑го . . .

Идѡше нежить и полъ нежитя и срѣте ѣго араггль Гаврїаль и выпроси ѣго: где идѣши, нежите, и полъ нежитя и четверть нежитя. И рече, г̑и что ни свѣрацаѣши ѿ главы чл̑че да не вылезѣмъ въ главоу чл̑чу їстлѣти ѣмъ моагъ и ѡчи изврѣтети. И рече ѣмъ араггль їзѡ ви заклїнаю вѣликимъ ѡименѣ бж̑гемъ. ѡстани се ѿ раба бж̑га ім̑е, того бо еѡ дрѣжава ѡца и с̑на и с̑го д̑ха, бѡ видѣ ѡко звѣздоу їсхощаца їзмѡра и рѣккѣ прѣвѣнаше билдѣ нежить, билдѣ бе главе болѣзнь дн̑ и нощь. Слїшавже іс̑ и выпроси Михайла и Гаврїала что вѣс и реветь. И рече їзѡ ѣмъ нежить, їзѡ їди въ чл̑чу главъ мозга ѣго ѡсмръцати и крѣвь їспїю и рече ѣмъ іс̑, заклїнаю те їзѡ, нежите, їди въ ѡвстоу горы и вниди въ ѣленю главъ и въ ѡвню да кости ѣго сътрѣшь и мозга его їзѣни ѡстани се ѿ раба бж̑га ім̑е, въ име ѡца и с̑на . . .

Хе їстани бѡ н̑шь выложи рѣккѣ на главъ їдамѡвъ. Адамъ не боле главоу ни нежитомъ ни полъ нежитя ни четверта чѣсть нежитя. Тако и с̑ раб̑ бж̑г̑ ім̑е да не болить нежитомъ, ни полъ нежитя въ име ѡца и с̑на и с̑го . . .

Пойдъ . . . ѡггль . . . ар̑хгль . . . сечивъ ѡстрѣще и . . . свѣще носѣще и срѣте їхъ Михайла и Гаврїала и ре̑ їмъ: где хощете поити . . . ѡггль? ѡн̑же рекоше: (л. 135) їдемъ нежитя їсѣщи и съ свѣщами їждѣнци и крѣвь їзѡ ѡвню їстребити рабъ бж̑го ім̑е всег̑а и н̑на и н̑рно . . .

Тн̑ бѣ н̑шь їзвѣдѣ агглі свое ѿ сѣхаго мѡра їдїцим̑же имъ въ с̑ти грядъ видѣше чл̑ка на п̑ти мѣчима люте и с̑ла: г̑и и с̑и что, ѡн̑же ѡвѣщавъ рече. їмать болѣзнь нежитя съхощеца на с̑н̑и чл̑чскїе ѡкоже с̑н̑иде рѡса їрмон̑ска на браду Ароноу, тако и с̑а болѣзнь носїма вѣтрѡ да с̑г̑и прилїчнтсе їли въ ноци їли въ дн̑и заѡтра їли вечерѣ нападаѡще ѡвду творїт̑. Тога гла Филипъ, въ име ѡца и с̑на и с̑го д̑ха тебѣ рече проклѣти нежите творе ѡвдъ чл̑к̑ семъ, ѡїди скоро ѿ чл̑ка сѣго, їди въ ѡвстїню їе х̑у прѣстоѣнца како смель їси прокосяти се твѣри ѡжне їли побнь бы Кайнъ рѣвнївомъ х̑с̑ прогонитъ те, нежите, съ всеми с̑г̑ми . . .

Ізѣ н̑шь іс̑е х̑е запрѣти нежитя ѡкоже запрѣти д̑хомъ с̑г̑ми лѣтеца агггла разорн̑аго їспрѡврѣша все с̑вѣзанїе ѣго. прїари на раба твоѣго ім̑е ѡдрѣженцаго болѣзнью нечїстоу, запрѣти глѣхѡмъ нежитя їзїти ѿ главы ѿ ѡчино и повѣли г̑и разорїти все болѣзнь. Повеле же г̑и Козме и Дамїанѡу глѣхаго нежитя прѡснати не възвратїти се въ с̑вѣзанїю семъ бж̑го ни мозга їсмръцати ни ѡчи ѡслѣпити ѡтврѣди главъ ѣмъ м̑литвами ѡце и всехъ стѣихъ твоїхъ . . .

Заклїнаю те, нежите, стою ѡцею и стїмъ їоанїномъ кр̑тїтелемъ . . . ѡггль и всеми нб̑нїми силамї херѡвїмомъ и сѣрафїмомъ, с̑г̑ми аггглі (л. 136) Михайломъ Гаврїломъ, ѡурїломъ, Рафайломъ и всеми с̑г̑ми прѣноѡбнїми. Заклїнаю те, нежите, да не ходїши въ чл̑ки, не їди въ горы и вниди въ ѣленю главъ и въ ѡвню те пребоуди до ѡгѡванн̑аго дн̑е великаго с̑зда, дондѣже прийдѣтъ х̑с̑ х̑теї соудити всеї вселен̑ей и тебѣ, ѡсѡвни нежите, начелниче всакому недѣгоу ѡубой се бѡ седѣщаго на прѣстолѣ херувим̑сѣмъ. Заклїнаю те, нежите б̑гомъ саваѡѡб̑ . . . м̑, м̑нїк̑, ѡстани се ѿ раба бж̑га ім̑е їїди ѿ н̑его и не възвращай се к̑томоу, ѡко г̑на те дрѣжава ѡца и с̑на . . .

Заклїнаю те, нежите, послїшай мл̑тви сїе ѡубой се бѡ творца всеѣ ѣгоже послѣшаеть вѣтръ и мѡре, зѣмля и звѣри, с̑дѡти и г̑ади, п̑тїци, аггглі арагглі вл̑сти и всеї зѣмльни дѣмѡни. Без̑нї ѡжасаѡтсе, и всакъ ѡзїкъ ѡжасаѡтсе и трѣпѣцеть. Что стѡїши зла їзо набѣстїва тѣла, їїди ѡстѣпи ѿ главы чл̑ку семъ раб̑ бж̑го ім̑е въ име ѡца . . .

Поклонїшя въ с̑тей цр̑кви нїже крѣви пролей, нїже ѡмрѣти с̑творї їїди ѿ н̑его, не с̑крї се въ н̑е, ни н̑презай врѣдѡвнїхъ ж̑їл̑, ни гноа съїраи, н̑ иди їн̑дѣже їси прїшл̑. Въ име ѡца и с̑на и с̑го д̑ха . . .

Нежить съ нб̑е спадѣ, настїрїе слѣпн̑и видѣвше ѣго, без̑ ногъ говїше ѣго и без̑ рѣкъ їше ѣго, без̑ їока с̑везаше ѣго, без̑ нѡжа заклїаше ѣго. їїдѣ нежить ѿ кости въ мѡса и ѿ мѡса на власи и тако р̑стай се ѡко соль въ водѣ въ име ѡца и с̑на . . .

Бе іс̑ и с̑г̑на ѡца и с̑ти їоан̑н̑ь кр̑тїтель и ѡбрѣтохъ чл̑ка и выпроси х̑х: чл̑че, что ти бѣ? и рече, г̑и певемъ что ми се рѡдїло ївр̑к̑ или седрак̑. Абе послѣ г̑ѣ ѡжѣнїка Симона и нѡжъ їмоу д̑де ї свое вер̑ствїе, и рече їмоу: їди и прѣрежи корнїе нежитя въ име ѡца и с̑на и с̑го д̑ха и н̑на и н̑рно . . .

Адамъ їмее нежить. їди Адамъ и д̑астъ їве, їва ѡловъ, ѡлово мѡра, мѡре вл̑намъ, вл̑нн̑и краевн̑и, краї пѣски, пѣсѡкъ тр̑вѣ, тр̑ва росе, рѡса сл̑нц̑. Сл̑нце всл̑авн̑шя їсѣше рѡса. Тако да їсѣх̑нетъ нежить ѿ раба бж̑га, въ име ѡца и с̑на и с̑го д̑ха и н̑на и н̑рно и въ вѣкл̑ вѣкѡ . . .

— Сїю мл̑твѣ п̑їши на ѡлово . . .

6. Instruction to inscribe on lead (charm against the *nezhit*)

Сборник, fifteenth and sixteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 308, fol. 116r. The original text of the charm is published edition in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. I, pp. 252-253. For English translation, see above p. 87. This is the *historiola* about Jesus Christ, who put his hand on Adam's head and cured him.

СѦА МАТКА ѿ НЕЖИТА ПИШЕ НА ѠЛОВО, ꙗ ПОЛОЖИ
НА ГАЛВѢ: ХС КС, ВЪЗЛОЖИВИ РЪКЪ СВОЮ НА ГАЛВЪ АДАМА РАМА. АДАМЪ КЪ
ЗДРАВЪ ѿ ТОГО ЧА ЗРАВЪ НЕ ПОКОЛѢ НИ ГАЛВОЮ СВОЮ КЪ ПЛЕ ѠЦА ꙗ
СНА ꙗ СТО ДХА. ꙗ НИА ꙗ ПРНО. ꙗ КЪ РЕКЪ РЕКО АМНН.

7. Transmission *historiola* (charm against the *nezhit*)

Часослов, 1498, Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem, LGOPI № 22, fol. 410. The original text of the charm and a modern Bulgarian translation is published in Ovcharov, “Some Little Known Apocryphal Prayers”, p. 82. For English translation, see above p. 87. This is a variant of the *historiola* about the transmission of the *nezhit* from Adam to Eve, etc.

1. МОЛИВА ѿ НЕЖИТА (л. 410).

АДА НИА НЕЖИТЪ И ПРАДАДЕ ПЪ ЗВЪХЪ (Е)КЪГА, [ХЛОКЪ] МЕРЪ, МЕРЪ КЛАВЪ, КЛАВЪ ПЕНА.
ПЕНЪ КРА[ИМ], КРАИ ПЕСКЪ ПЕСЬКЪ ТРАКЪ, ТРАКЪ РЪСЪ, РЪСНАЖЪШЪ САНЦЕ И БЪШЪ. ЧАКО ДА
ПЕСШЕТЪ НЕЖИТЪ НА РАКА ВЪЖИ НА[Е] Р[КЪ]. ВЪ ПЛЕ ѠЦА И СНА И СТАГО ДХА. И НИИА И
ПРИСНО И КЪ РЕКИ РЕКА. АМНН.

8. Transmission *historiola* (charm against the *nezhit*)

Часослов, 1744, Sofia, National Library, № 1391. The original text of the charm is published in Hristova, *Catalogue vol. V*, p. 89. For English translation, see above p. 88.

This is a variant of the *historiola* about the transmission of the *nezhit* from Adam to Eve, etc.

- Адамъ имаше нижитъ и придади го Еви. Ева го придади
оубвѣ. Оубвѣ море, море шани, шани краю, краю пескъ, песакъ теви, тева роси, роса
сани. како разиди роса ѿ сани, тако да се разиди нижитъ ѿ равина бжїа Драгани въ
име оца и сина и стаго дха нша и присно и въ вки бегком (!) аминъ.

9. Transmission *historiola* (charm against the *nezhit*)

Лечебник, 1800, Sofia, National Library, № 799, fol. 15v. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II., p. 493. For English translation, see above pp. 87-88. This is a variant of the *historiola* about the transmission of the *nezhit* from Adam to Eve, etc.

За нижитъ когѣ болї главѣ.

Адѣ имѣше нижитъ и даде егѣ Еви, Ева же даде егѣ морѣ, море
же даде егѣ волнѣ волна же даде егѣ пѣна, пѣна же даде егѣ краю-
краю же даде егѣ пескъ, пескъ же даде егѣ травѣ трава же даде егѣ
росѣ росѣ же даде егѣ солнцѣ солнцѣ же даде егѣ вѣтрѣ. Развѣи вѣтрѣ
нижитъ ѿ главѣ раба бжїе: имѣркѣ во име ѿца и сина и стаго дха аминъ.

10. Transmission *historiola* (charm against snakebite)

Сборник, beginning of fourteenth century, Belgrade, National Library, № 632, fol. 111. The original text of the charm is published in Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 69. The same type of transmission *historiola* is used, this time against snakebite. The text is partially corrupted, but the important lines 5-7 are readable. In

translation, they say: “The snake’s venom to go out from the heart and into the bones. From the bones into the flesh. From the flesh into the hair. From the hair into the soil”.

МѢНТЕА · В · :-
Оуроди дива ктры. (БЕЗЪОУЛЬ)
НА КТРЫ. ЧТО ТЕОРИШЬ. . . .
ТЬ ВО КМОУ ЗДРАВНК. КРОЖЕ
ЗМНѢ ОУСТЬ ИЗН Ѡ СРЦА НА
КОСТИ. Ѡ КОСТИ НА МЕСА. Ѡ МЕ
СЬ НА ВЛАСЫ. Ѡ ВЛАСЬ НА ЗЕМЛЮ
. ПАМА ТИ ВСЪДА И ННѢ.

11. List of names (charm against the *veshtitsa*)

Amulet (lead lamella), tenth century. Excavated near the city of Varna, Eastern Bulgaria. The original text of the charm is published in Popkonstantinov, “Оловен амулет с апокрифен текст”, p. 283. For English translation, see above p. 200.

А. ГАЯГОДЯЖЕЪЩИЦА ДРЪВЪ ПЛОДО
ВИТЪ И РЕЧЕ МИХАИЛАЪ АРХИСТРАТИ
ГЪЩЕ МННѢ ПОВЪЛАН МЕНЪ СИНѢ И
Б. МАМОНТЪ И ПОСТИТНИ КЛЪХЪ СЪЖЕМЪ
И РЕЧЕ МИТЯКО МН МАНТИХЪ
КЪСОКЪ ЯЕЪЩИЦА БОЕЪ КЛАМННЪ

12. List of names (charm against the *veshtitsa*)

Требник, seventeenth century, Belgrade, National Library, sine №. The original text of the charm is published in Kačanovskij, “Апокрифне молитве”, p. 155. For English translation, see above p. 109.

Молитва светата архистратига михаила . и то еста ѿд неусты-
ваго дѣха и ѿд вѣщце и ѿд море и ѿд виле и ѿт зла ветрѣ и по-
гана когда ѿд свѣлаго и свѣлаго зла. Когда нскождше скети михаила
архистратиг ѿт горе елѣонске и срете вѣщцѣх нмѣри влѣси до земли
и ѿи ѿгнень и збѣе, рѣке криаве. и рече свети архистратиг михаил:
ѿтвѣду си ти, чловекуе божи, и што е нма твое? она рече: ја сам
вѣщцѣ, родѣ чловекуескоу изгнѣтеницѣ, навѣраюу мако в матери,
зато се зовем чествоунницѣ; рѣдуе се срѣе, кад се роди днѣтѣ ѿд
матере, млдѣнцем и вунцѣх (sic) вашѣх навух пѣкати; и аз испо-
ведл(и) и проповѣдл(и) за авоже сѣе истини и слово божие . Тогда тамо
и ѿтвѣду да избеже и вѣтл е . Тогда свети архистратиг михаил и
свѣзл е и поуче е бити гвоздскои и ѿгниенои иланцои, и рече свети
архистратиг михаил: жив господ и блгослокен богъ, не имам те пѣ-
стити, доке не скажеш нмѣн родѣ твое и да се заквнем да не-
хоцеш тако зло творити . И зквѣ се емѣ вѣщцѣх: тако ми небес-
нога господа бога савѣста, где се роджн тѣе навѣтти преписати (sic)
и ѿдлн немнмѣ ѿблѣсти ни можѣ ти вѣщци, нити кѣкѣ сотонаста
да препивлют сл скетнн роди. есте : 1. вѣщцѣ 2. обѣзѣнцѣ .
3. пребѣзѣнцѣ . 4. мѣдѣнцѣ . 5. глѣвета (sic) . 6. голѣбѣнцѣ .
7. слѣзѣ . 8. вѣзѣ . 9. свѣнцѣ . 10. мѣсеунцѣ . 11. алѣдѣнцѣ .
12. вѣзѣтѣ . 13. слѣзѣ . 14. зѣсѣнцѣ . 15. нлгнмѣра . 16. нрѣзѣ .
17. мрѣлѣстнн . 18. зѣзѣтѣнцѣ . 19. вѣзѣтѣнцѣ . 20. вѣрѣвнѣ-
нцѣ . 2(1). прострѣн стрѣшнн . И обѣзѣ вѣщцѣ сва нмѣн родѣ свое .
И чѣдн сле писанн и да е нл изѣзѣнне и нл здравле и нл спѣ-
сенне рѣкѣ божиенѣ со скетнн архистратигѣ михаилом и рѣкѣ бо-
жиенѣ нкѣнѣ нкѣнѣнѣ . слава богу и богородици ва век века амин .

13. List of names (Charm against the *veshtitsa*)

Clerical book, 1827, kept in a monastery in Montenegro, sine №. The original text of the charm is published in Kovačević, “*Nekoliko priloga*”, p. 283. For English translation, see above p. 111.

Зависъ от вѣштице. Тому же от неустыго дѹха, и от вѣштице, и от грознице, и от ноѣнице, и от море, и от волке и изоре.

Тогда свети архангелъ Михаилъ отишо гори елѣонскон и сrete вѣштицу, власи имаше до землѣ и оун огниче, и рѹке и зѹби керкави. И реуе архангелъ: Откле си лхи што си? И реуе онл: **Ѧ** самъ (2 рѹц) вѣштица, и ѹлазиць ѹ кѹѣу кл и змиц. Откако се родила дѣва Млрнл, ѹуни се млдѣице калтъ. Онда архангелъ свезл е и поуе е бнт' прѹтоць гвозденнелъ, и реуе: Неѣу те пѹштнтъ докле ми не кжеш имени твою. Онл се закле нещѹ: Тако ли господи савлота, ко зна мою именл, не могу мѹ ништа, и кон може носитъ сл собомъ. **Ѧ** имени еѹ ми: .л. вѣштица, .в. второобрезаница, .г. обрезаница, .д. керѹша, .е. оведл, .с. ѹвница, .з. аснл (оснл), .ш. влал, .ф. виланл (виллл), .т. млссунца, .дл. влѹдннца, .кл. клеветннца, .гл. множностъ, .дл. слѹлъ, .ел. нлзснл, .зл. тморя, .зл. врѹнъ, .ил. сати, .фл. кѹнлзго. **Каза** свл имени свою.

Овл молитвл светлго архангела Михаилл да бѹде мл номоѣъ, коне се запише.

14. Protection against evil (charm against the Devil)

Amulet (lead lamella), dated tenth century. Excavated in 1998 in unknown location. The original text of the charm is published in Popkonstantinov, "Кирилица и глаголица срещу дявола", pp. 69-70. The text has a number of missing and unclear. It is an apotropaic charm, summoning the help of God and the four Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael. For the discussion of the amulet, see above pp. 196-203.

- | Лице: | Обратна страна: |
|--|---|
| 1. ԵՁԽԵՆ
ՍՈՄՈՒՆ
ՆՈՒՅ
ԵՆՏԻՄՆԻՌՄ | 1. ՕՏԻՃՆԵՆՏԵ
ՔԵՃՄԵՆԵՄ
ՏԵՃԻՄԵՆՈՏ
ՆՃՆ:ԳԻ:ՏՃՆԵՆ |
| 5. ԵՍԻՅԻՄԻՆԱԿՐՅԵ
ԵՃԱՏԱՐՈԳԱՆԳՐԱ
ԲԱՆՔՈՅԱՆՆԻԿՅԵ
ՅԻՔԱՆՆԻՔԵՏԱԾՅ
ՄՅՕԱԳԻՄՆԱՄ | 5. ՏԵՆՆԵՅՏՅՆՅ
ՆՅՅՏՆԱՅ:ՄՆՃԱ
ՆԱՆԳԻՅՐՆԱԼ
ՕՄՆԱՆՐԱՓԻՆԱԼ
ՕՔՅՏԵՃԻՐԱՏՕ |
| 10. ՆՄՅՆՏԻՄՅ:ՍՐՆՄ
ՅՃՅՍԻՄՅԵՅՏՅՄ
ՆՐՅՆԵՅՏԵՆՄՆՅ
ՏԱՅՅԻՅ:Ն:ՃԻՄՕ
ՅՐԻՃՐՕՄՆՏՄ | 10. ԱՃԱՏԱՐՅՔԱԾԵ
ՆՅՆՆՈՒՅՆԵ
ՍՕՄՆԵԱՔԵՂՅՄՕ
ՄԵՏՍԵՅՔՐԱՆ
ՆՏՆՆՅԻՄՕԵՆԱ (Ն.Ն.ՄՕՏԵՆ) Ն |
| 15. ՔԻՄԵՆՅԿՅԱՕԻՅԵ
ՔՅԱՅՅՄՏԵՅՕՏՅ
ԱՅՏԵՆՏՅՈՒՅ
ՅԱՔԱՆՆԻՔԵՏԱԳԾ
ՅՆԻՄՆՅՆԵՅՆ | 15. ԴՕՄՅԵՐՈՒՅՄ.
ԾԵՆՅՆ..ՆԵՅ
ՏՕՏՅՄՏԵՐԵ
..ՕՂՅՆՄՕՆՏԵՆ
ՄՆՏԵՆԱՏԱՐՕ |
| 20. ՄՅՆՏՐԻՄՅՆՅ
ՄՅ.ԵՅՏՐՅՆՅ
ՍՐՆՄՏԵՅՆՅ
ՍՐՆՃԵՅՍՕ:ՕՅԱ
ՔՕՄՅՍՐՆՃԵՅ
ՆՂՅՏՆՏՅՅԾ | 20. ԳԱՆՐՅԵՒՅՏ
ՄՅՅՅՕՄԵՏ.
ՆԱԾՅՅՏԱՒ.
..ԵՏՅՆ...
ՅՆՄԱՏՅՕ... |
| 25. ՆՂՅՏՆՏՅՅԾ
ՆՏՅՅՏՅՅՅՅՅ
ԱՆ:ՆՏՅՕՔԵՍՕՍԵ
ՄՅՆՅՏՆԱՅՄՕ
ՆՏՅՕՏՆՃՆ... | 25. ԱՅՐԵՄ.
ՆՅՆ |
| 30. ԲԱՆՔՈՅԱ
ԱՅԱՔԵՅՏՕ
...ՏՅՍՕՆԱ
ՆԵՅՔՐԵՄԵ
ՆՆԱՅԵՄԱ | |
| 35. ՆԵՅՐԻ.
ԱՆՆ.... | |

15. Saint Sisinnius (charm against the Devil)

Часослов, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 631, fol. 162. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II., pp. 150-151. For English translation, see above p. 77.

Мѣтва ст҃го Сисѣина и Симѡна и Сидора и Оеодора. Въ
име о҃ца и с҃на и свет҃аго д҃ха. Стоить Сисѣинъ прѣѣ двери раба бж҃їа
имѣ копнемь (се) подпрѣль, мьчем҃се крѣпо(насилъ) мѡра(мь) и вещицамь
и всѣаку рѣкѣ виламь и вилицамь назѡромь темже възвѣ вси аг҃ли
съ ноѣ аг҃ль Михѣилъ, аг҃ли х҃ви Петра и Павла. Прииде ѿ нб҃сѣ
невидѣмъ и прогнѣше ѿ места сѣго мѡре и вещици и ѿ дивѡбла
всѣаки чл҃вѣ: вечерь и ползноци (въ) годинѣ сгда мѡре почивають е҃га
вода не тѣчеть ни пѣрли поють ни ѷи лають то҃га вси бесѣи и
тъмнѣе дх҃и ѿгнѣе ѿ места сѣго ѿ храма сѣго ѿ сѣи четириѣ (странѣ)
раба бж҃їа имѣ зде несть въмь мѣсто, зде .д. е҃вѣлисти зде .кв. ап҃то҃л
зде ѿ прѣри и превѣстла и бранища раба бж҃їа имѣ въ име
о҃ца и с҃на и ст҃го д҃ха

16. Saint Sisinnius (charm against the Devil)

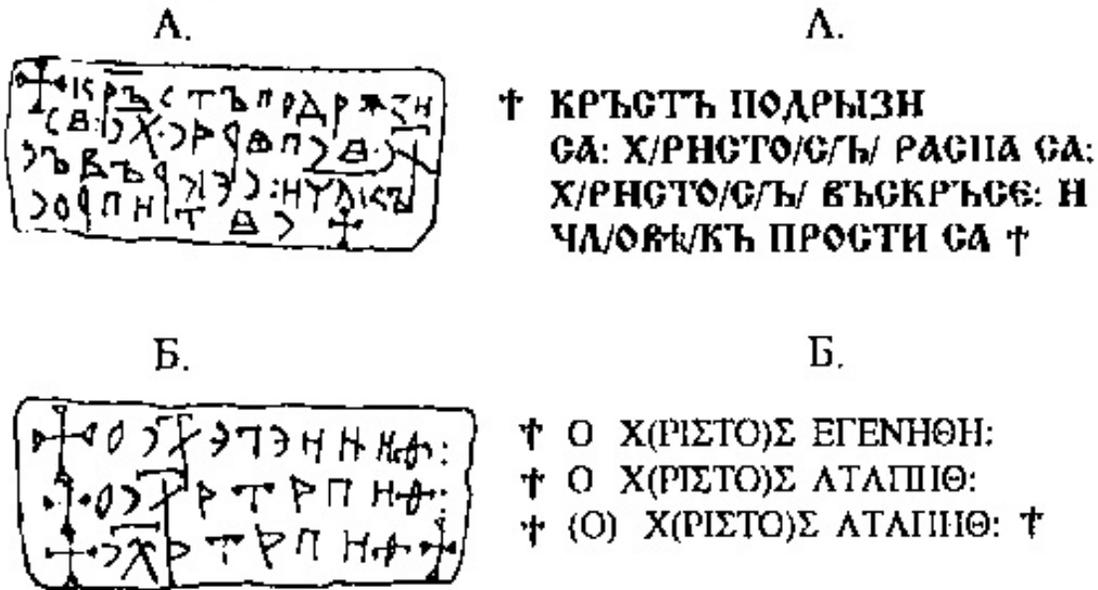
Часослов, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 631, fol. 162. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II., pp. 149-150. For discussion of the content and English translation, see above p. 143.

Млтва стго Сисїна Псиѣора и Симеона и Феѡѡра.

Въ име ѡца и стго дха ѡко бїсть воинъ ѡкоже стї Сїсїнъ и Симеонъ Исидѡръ иже многимъ всѣмъ ѡделѣваше ѡ асириѡномъ .ѡ. измїтеленѡмъ. Егдаже бѣше .ѡ. и землю аравискои изидоше стї на лѡвъ и навї се Сисїну аггль гнѣ и рече емъ. иди къ сестре свое Меленїти, ѡ родїла ѣ синѡве и дїаволь възель. Нїѡа младо отрѡче имать и хѡцетъ и него дїаволь хѡцетъ оузеть нѣ дѡ не сѣтвори лѡвца дїавольз и томъ прогонїль и всѣмъ дїаволь. Тогда стї Сисїнъ оустрѣмї се иди къ сестре свое Меленїти и ти бѣше сѣтворила слѣпъ мраморенъ и ѡковала го бе гѡвде излїна го ѡлѡво и закова медими и внѣла бе брѡшно за ѣ леть и дѡе отрѡковїци на слѣзѡи себѣ. Егда приближи се стї Сисїнъ къ слѣзи и внѣзапї и бїѣ бїра велика и зїма и рече стї Сисїнъ. сестро моя, Меленїти. ѡврѣзї ми да вѣнїдъ понеже бїра велика смуцаетъ ме. И рече Меленїти. не смею ти ѡврѣзї брѡте мои понеже имать младо отрѡче и бою се ѡ дїавола. И рече стї Сисїнъ. не бои се азъ емъ лѡвецъ дїавольз томъ прогонїтель. Меленїти слїша глѡа его ѡврѣзе емъ слѣпъ. Тога дїаволь сѣтвори се просѣно зрѣно и прилѣни се коно потъ кошїто и внїде въ слѣпъ. Тогда бїсть въ ползѡнѡци Меленїти ѡсезавїши отрѡче своѡ (рече) ѡ брѡте его мрѣтво и възвїи гласѡмъ велиемъ глѡючи брѡте мои Сисїне ѡко ти реѡхъ такѡ ми бїѣ. Тогда стї Сисїнъ вѣсѣе на конъ свои ѡкоже пламенъ дїхаше врага гонѣца ѡбрете врѡбо бѣжи (и рече) виде ли врага бежуца отрѡче носѣца она бе видѣла и рече не вїдѣхъ. Тогда стї Сисїнъ прокле на цвѣтъ да имашъ а плодъ да пемашъ. И паки ѡбрете кїпина и рече виде ли врага бежуца отрѡче носѣца она бе видѣла и рече не вїдѣхъ. Тогда стї Сисїнъ прокле а кїпинѡ, да сї члѣкѡ на пренетїе а себѣ на проклетїе де ти корѣнъ тѣ и врѣхъ. И паки ѡбрете аворъ дрѡво бѣжїе (и рече) авѡре, виде ли врага бежуца отрѡче носѣца она бе видѣла и рече вїдѣхъ и рече стї Сисїнъ да сї бѣжено, авѡре, да сї въ црѣвахъ клѣпало да прозовешъ правѣдникї на сїенїе а грѣшникї на покаанїе. И паки ѡбрете маслїна дрѡво бжїе маслїно (рече) не видѣли врага бежуца отрѡче носѣца она бе видѣла и рече вїдѣхъ попѣри се въ морѡ съ рїбамї морскїмї (и рече стї Сисїнъ маслїно, да сї бѣжена и црѣва и члѣкѡ на исцеленїе)¹ Тогда стї Сисїнъ сѣтвори млтва къ гу и врѣвѣже вїиць въ морѡ извлече врага на сухо и начѣти его бїти и мчїти глѡючи дажѣ ми дѣти сестрени мои Меленїти и зелїхї и рече стї Сисїнъ живъ гѣ бѣ мой на нѡси и на землї не има те пѣститї, дїаволе, не изнїеши изъ рѣки моеї дѡндеже пѣастъ дѣти Меленїтїни. И рече дїаволь изель ти самъ. И рече изблѡи ми млѡко матерїно своѡ, еже еси сисїаль млаѣ да азъ блѡвамъ дѣти оупорїраше се дїаволь. Тогда стї Сисїнъ, млтва сѣтвори къ гѣ глѡщие гнї иѣ хѣ оуслїши раба тѡбѡго дїѣ да прослѡвлю те рабѣ твой дїаволь да посрамїтѣе и блѣна млѡко матерїно своѡ. Посрами се дїаволь и оукрѡтише се силї его и изблѡва ѣ синѡве Меленїтїни. И рече стї Сисїнъ живъ гѣ бѣ мой на нѡси и на землї, не има те пѣститї дїаволе, не излежешъ изъ рѣки моеї аще не клѣнешї се идеже млтва мой чететъ се име моѡ помѣнїть ме, тѣ не можеть прїїти морѡ ни вещьца ни дїаволь. Тогда дїаволь клѣпетъ се Сисїне, такѡ ми вїшнїго и такѡ ми силї нѣбени и такѡ ми .м. попове иже поѡтъ непрѣстѡно на нѡси, идеже име помѣ(язетсе) млтва мой четѣ се въ домъ раба бѣжїа и м то и да не прїстѡнїтъ ни морѡ ни вещьца ни злѣ дхъ ѡ века и до века аминь.

17. Triple formulae (charm for general protection)

Amulet (lead lamella), tenth century. Excavated near the village of Pet Mogili, near the town of Shumen, northeastern Bulgaria. The original text of the charm is published in Popkonstantinov, “Оловна пластина”, p. 149. For English translation, see above p. 201.



18. Apotropaic charm for the entire household:

Amulet (lead lamella), thirteenth-fourteenth century. Excavated in 1974, in the medieval cemetery next to the medieval palace of the town of Veliko Tŭrnovo, central northern Bulgaria. Kept at the National Museum of History, Sofia. The original text of the charm and a modern Bulgarian translation is published in Kvinto and Drangov, “Оловна пластинка”, pp. 240-241. For English translation, see above p. 202.

Разчетеният текст на страна А гласи:

1 СРЪВ
2 ЕН КАМО П
3 РЕЧЕ НДА ВЪ ПУСТЫА ГОРЪИ
4 ВЪ ПУСТАВЪ ПОЛЪ ХЪИЗА НСК[А]
5 ТИ Н РЕЧЕ ЕН СТЪИ ЗАСИМА ЕТ -
6 О НДА ЛОВЦИ НСКОВАВЪИЕ ОСТ
7 РЪИ СЕКЪРЪИ ДА ВРАТНСА КЪ СВ
8 ОСМУ ГОСПОДАРСКИ ВЪ ГОТО
9 ВЪИА ХАТЪВНИИ Н БЛАДЕШИ
10 ЦРЪКЪКАМЪ СВЪТНО О ВЪ НИ
11 С ОЦА П СНА Н СТАГО ДУХА НЪИЕ
12 МОЛИТВА НА АТИЕ ГРЕШАМЪ ОТЪ
13 СОЛОМУНА ЦРЪВ: ОТЪ ЗАСИМЪИ СТА
14 ГО ЕЖЕ ТА ЕСТЪ НЪИЕСАЪ НЪ РА
15 ТЪ СТАГО СЪБЕРИ НЪИЕ ГРЕЛО С
16 СКОЕ СТАДО Н СВОА РОА Н СЪБ
17 СРИ ПИЦА СЕБЪ Н САДИ СТАГО
18 . . . Д . . . Н ЗАСИМЪИ НЪИЕ Н ПР[И]СНО
19 СТЪИ ПАХОМНЕ П СТЪИ ЗА
20 УМНОЖИ ТА
21 БЛАГО
22 А

На страна Б

1 ДБ
2 ЕМУ
3 Н ВЪ ПШЕН
4 НИЦА НАН ПРОСУ НАН ГОВЪДОМЪ: НАН ОВ
5 ЦАМЪ НАН КОНЕМЪ НАН АН СВНИИЕМ
6 Ъ НАН ГРЕШАМЪ ГН НС ХЕ БЕ НАИЪ СЪИ
7 УСТН АРХАГАА МИХАИЛА Н ГАВРИЛА
8 РАФНАЛА ЕЖЕ ДРЪЖАТЪ ПРЕСТОЛЪ
9 ТВОИ ВЛАДЪИКО ДА ЗАВЪЖАТЪ ЗАО
10 ДЪИЦИ РАЦЪ Н НОЗЪ Н УСТА ДА НЕ
11 ПОСМЪЕ СА РАБУ ЕЖИУ НОВАУ
12 НАН ПРИРОДУ ЕМУ ГН НС ХЕ БЕ НА
13 ШЪ ТКО НАНА ПРОРОКЪ ЗАВЪЗА: З: Н
14 СЕБЕСЪ Н НЕ ОДЪЖАЪИ ПО ЗЕМН: Г: АЪ
15 ТА Н Ш: М ТОГО ЗАВЪЖИ ХЕ ЗАОД
16 ЧТВАРИНКА ТВОРАЦИМЪ ДЪАА НЕИ
17 РИЕЗНИНА НАН МАЖЪ НАН ЖЕНА ДА НЕ
18 ТВОРИТЪ ЗАА РАБУ ЕЖУ НОВАУ НА
19 П ПРИРОДУ ЕГО НИ ЖИТУ НИ СКОТУ С:
20 ГО ГН НС ХЕ БЕ НАИЪ ОСНОКАВЪИ ЗЕМ
21 . . . НА ВОДАХЪ ГН ТАКО СНОКИ ЗАА
22 ТВАРИНКА ДА НЕ ПОМЪШИАЪ
23 Ъ РАБА ЕЖИЕ НОВАНА ЗЕМ
24 ЕМУ БЛАДИ ТАШКА
25 ТО ЗАОДЪИЦИ НИ
26 ПРИ
27 А

19. Crisis rite (charm against rabies)

Зайковски требник, fourteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 960, fol. 45v.

The original text of the charm is published Stoyanov, *Catalogue vol. III*, p. 114. For English translation, see above p. 189.

(45^o) мѣва ѿ вѣсна пса или ѿ вѣсна вѣсна. | еѣа нагасть члѣвкѣ. |
сиде твори. вѣзми | вино и хлѣвъ кысѣль и ножь свои сѣ. | и поста-
вить вино на земан и хлѣвъ въ | рѣцѣ и ножь въ рѣкоу деснѣа
и рекѣ трѣсто и трѣ. того днѣ. и стѣма врачема трѣ и кѣ рѣцн тѣ
мѣтвоу снѣ. | гн бѣ гредѣше стѣ иванъ, въ стѣа | горѣ. и ношаше
стѣа бравницѣ. | да оусѣчеть стѣе дрѣво. и срѣтош | га вѣсни
лѣси, и вѣсни вѣци и доиде яемоу гла ѿ оца и сѣа и стѣо дѣа |
ѿвѣне ѿвѣне възвращан се не оужасан се. нѣ дан члѣкомъ вѣниѣ | тѣло
и вѣниѣ крѣвь да падеть и да имѣ ѿ на и сѣѣлениѣ. и да се мажѣ |
(46^a) Еѣ имѣ ѿца и сѣа и стѣо дѣа: снѣ мѣн | тѣа чѣти, д. цѣ но-
жемъ чинѣ крѣть | ако ѿ близь члѣкѣ тѣзи. дан яемоу вино и
хлѣвъ. ако ли ѿ далеко. а ты на | посороу вино оулигѣвъ подан. и
ножь подложи по становни каменѣ. | оу полоуноциѣ. и снѣ мѣ
в: рѣци. | Еѣ имѣ ѿца и сѣа и стѣо дѣа. поиде стѣ | ѿванъ пѣ-
темъ. и видѣ воѣ желѣзниѣ, и вѣкѣ вѣснѣ. и оубога се и.
въстрѣпѣта, и възъгогота. и рѣ яемоу гѣ | не вои се ѿвѣне. не
гогоцы и не трѣпѣци. нѣ вѣзми вѣниѣ тѣло и вѣниѣ крѣвь.
и дан члѣкомъ да падеть и да имѣ | ѿ лѣкѣ ѿ вѣстока и до за-
пада въ имѣ ѿца и сѣа и стѣо дѣа и нѣкѣ и нѣно и вѣ: —

20: Triple formulae (charm against rabies)

Требник, fifteenth century, Rumanian Museum, № 1715, fol. 5. The original text of the charm is published in Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 97. The text consists of unknown words, among which the names Jesus and Christ appear three times each.

МОЛІТВА ТОМЪ ЖДЕ.

Авриса. нкростѣ нвреке. нврисе. авриса. нкгасѣни. нврнке
нрриса. авриса. нкресен. нврекен. нврриса. нсусь навриса. нсусь
кавриса. нсусь кавриса. христось гедиврисани. христось геди-
врисани. христось гедиврисани.

21. Crisis rites (charm against rabies)

Требник, sixteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 616, fol 10v. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II., pp. 123-124. For English translation, see above p. 75-76.

Мѣтва ѿ беспя ѱѣа или влъкаа: егда нанастъ чѣлка
сицѣ твори: възми вѣно и хлѣбъ кисель: ножъ свои: и поставитъ вѣно
на землі и хлѣбъ въ роуцѣ; и ножъ въ роукъ десноюю: и рѣци:
трѣстое: и трѣ того дѣне: и стѣмъ врачевемъ: трѣ и ко Бѣци: таѣ
мѣтвой сію:

Гѣи бѣе нашъ. грѣше сѣти Іѣванъ, въ сѣтоу горъ и носеше сѣтю
брадвицъ да пресечеть свето дрѣво. и сретеше га Іѣанна бесни пѣси
и бесни влъци и дойде емъ гла ѿ ѿца и сѣна и сѣго дѣха и рѣ. ѣ
Іѣане, Іѣѣе, възврати се не оубои се, нѣ дай чловекоѣ бѣже тѣло
и бѣжю кровь да надеть и да имъ есть на исцѣленіе: . и да се маже
въ ѿца и сѣна и сѣго дѣха: . и трѣ стѣмъ бесребрѣницѣ. Сію мѣтвѣ
чѣти ѿ тицѣ, ножемъ чни крѣсть. Ако е близъ чѣлкѣ тоу, дай емъ вѣно
и хлѣбъ, ако ли е далеко, а ти напои поскоуръ вѣно. и подаи.
и ножъ положи по становнѣ камѣ оу полъноцѣе и исцѣлене чѣлкѣ
тѣи. — — мѣ вѣ рѣци:

Вѣиме ѿца и сѣна и сѣго дѣха. приде сѣти Іѣѣ поутемъ и видѣ
вое желѣзніе и влъци бесни и оубоиа се и оустрепета и въз'гольгота
и рѣ емъ гѣ бѣ: небои се Іѣѣе не гольтоти и не трѣпети нѣ
възми бѣже тѣло и бѣжю кровь и дай чѣлкоѣ да надеть и да имъ ѣ лекъ
ѿ востока и до запа въ име ѿца и сѣна и сѣго дѣха и нѣна и прѣно
и въ: . амн: —

22. The helping sisters (charm against water retention in horses and humans)

Зайковски требник, fourteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 960, fol. 47v,

The original text of the charm is published in Stoyanov, *Catalogue vol. III*, p. 114. For English translation, see above p. 160-161.

(47^v) Млѡва ѿ запора коноу или члѡвоу. | Бѣ и мѣ шца и сѣна
и стѣго дѣа. г. аггѣми | стожице шв онь поль иوردана мѣдѣна чрѣва
нмжице. іедина вежѣ а дроугы рѣшнть. а трети ба мѣнтъ и
глѣть. стѣ, стѣ, стѣ г. саваша испльнь | нѣво и земля славы
своѣ: мѣ в томоужѣ | Бѣ и мѣ шца и сѣна и стѣго дѣа. изидѣ | на
поле шгѣно, и шбрѣто ѡзеро | пламенно. и на немь сѣдѣхоу. г. |
сестрѣнице. дръжеще. г. блюда рачиу чрѣва. старѣта везаше.
срѣдна рѣшаше. младѣта ба мѣташе. | разрѣши бѣ проходъ воды
члѡвоу сепоу равоу бжню и мѣ. въ и мѣ шца: — | г. Бѣ и мѣ шца
и сѣна и стѣго дѣа. пиши | на прѣдней нозѣ десной. тигрь. | на
лѣвой задней нозѣ, фисонь. | на прѣдней нозѣ лѣвой. іефратъ. | на
лѣвой задней нозѣ гишнь. | Обѣхоще в соу землю. въ и мѣ. (48^a)
шца и сѣна и чѣти кѣжѣ по д. крат. ѿпѣ: .

23. The helping sisters (three charms against water detention in humans or horses)

Требник, sixteenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 616, fol 121. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev, *Catalogue, vol. II.*, pp. 123-124. The texts are identical to those from the previous manuscript.

Мѣтва ѿ запора чѣлкѣ или коню:

Въ име ѿца и сна и стго дѣха и нѣна Трѣ аѣглѣи стоюще ѿбонь поль Іѿрданѣ на медь на чрева имѣще, ѣдинь вѣжетъ аѣ дръгѣи рѣшиѣ ѣ трѣты бѣа молитъ и глѣеть сѣ сѣ сѣ гь Сѣваѣ испльны ни нѣбо и землю слави свое: .

Мѣтва вѣ томоужѣе:

Въ име ѿца и сина и стго дѣха. Изѣидѣѣ на поле ѿгньно и ѿбрѣтѣѣ езеро пламено и на нѣемь сѣдехъ трѣ сѣстрице и дръжехъ трѣ блюдаѣ рачихъ чревъ. старѣа вѣжаше, средна разрешаше младеа бѣа молеше: раздрени бѣе прохѣдь водѣ чѣлкѣ сѣмъ рабѣ бѣжѣю нѣмъ въ име ѿца:

Мѣтва гѣ томажѣе: .

Въ име ѿца и сѣна и стго. Пиши на прѣднои нозѣ деснои. тѣгѣр, на левой нозѣ заднои ѣѣфѣиць | сонь, на прѣднои нозѣ левой Еѣфоа. на левой задней нозѣ гѣѣонь, ѿбѣхѣдѣе вѣсѣ землю. Въ име ѿца и сѣна: — чѣти кѣждо вѣсѣкъ по .ѣ. тѣщѣ.

24. The two Agripas (charm against water retention)

Сборник, end of sixteenth century, Lvov, № 193. The original text of the charm is published in Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 34. For English translation, see above p. 153.

ѿ запора.

агрипа агрипа. ѿво^окоѣъ (sic).

ѿвѣонь поль иѿрдана. стоимъ гѣ. аѣглѣи аѣ. нѣ вѣжетъ ѣ. и раздрѣшѣетъ гѣ. вѣа мѣлѣтъ ѣ ѣ ѣ вѣ вѣ вѣ гѣ гѣ гѣ истоустѣтѣсѣа прохѣды рабѣѣ бѣжѣю тѣмѣрь всегда и нѣнѣ и прѣно.

25. Crisis rite (charm against a wound on horse's leg)

Added folio, seventeenth century, in a *Служебник*, fifteenth century, Plovdiv, National Library, № 79. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev *Catalogue Plovdiv*, p. 49. For English translation, see above p. 180.

Млтва егда ѿтечѣ конѣ. (Обрѣцени съ кость ѿ ковъ. и обай съ нею г^м и павы^н положї ю на мѣсто иде^н ю си възель. и паво-конѣ очрътан съ костью. по^н рци:

Въ име ѿца и сѣна и ст҃го дѣха, їдѣше ѿвсица імѣ. цвѣленце ѿ плачеце и срѣте кто мѣти бжїа и ст҃и врачевн Козма и Дамїанъ ѿ К^лу^рноѣ. Пантѣлеимонъ ѿ манзїанъ и Савель, Исмаїль ѿ Ромапъ и выпросїше него. что тѣе імѣ ерѣ цвѣланшъ и плачешн. Како не въ плакатѣ. Конь мой добрѣи здарѣ вльчѣць. берѣ и гвоить. И рѣше йому ст҃и врачевн, врати се імѣ лїдїи къ рабоу бжїю імѣ да взмѣ^н сзхоу кость да прѣдасть болесть сзхои кости а соуха кость земли а земля травѣ а трава росѣ (а роса) слїцоу. а слїце горамъ. а горѣ вѣтрѣ. И да се разидѣ^н нво вѣтрѣ. ни горѣ връхъ ни долѣ корѣнїю. Станѣ^н страха^н рци г^м.

26. Apotropaic rite on March 1st (charm against enchantment of the bees)

Псалтур, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 464, fol. 141v. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II., pp. 11-12. For English translation, see above p. 78.

Млтва ѿ оуороки п'челамъ.

Въ име ѿца и сѣна и ст҃аго дѣха. възми г^н стравн тїквепїи и г^н лознїи и г^н ѿ плѣта гране и г^н камени^н на прѣходѣ и темнѣиъ и покади^н г^н. марѣѣа мѣца а днѣ: —

ѿхожденїе п'челамъ. грѣмехи и летехи слѣдѣше и благе пчелїци и срѣте и ст҃и Зѣсимъ и рѣ имъ вѣмо їдете бл҃гїе п'челїци. їдемъ въ горѣ галїлею клетї градїтї. и рѣ имъ ст҃и Зѣси^н. заклинаю ви ца не идете въ горѣ галелею ни клетї градїтї ни прїклетї. възвратите се въ рабѣ бжїю їмѣ. и тѣ градїте клетї и прїклетї. Ст҃и Зѣсимъ врати мои п'челї къ своѣи матїци:.

27. Apotropaic rite on March 1st (charm for general protection)

Требник, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 146. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev, *Catalogue*, vol. II., p. 137. Only the

beginning of the texts is preserved, it summons the holy trinity to protect the grapes. The first line contains the instruction “to be said on the 1st of May in the middle of the vineyard.

Мѣтва ѿ грижевь рѣци лѣ прѣви дѣль марѣта ѿсербѣдъ вино
града .: .

Въ ѿме ѿца ѿ сѣна ѿ стго дѣха, бежи погани звѣрѣ ѿз мой вино
градъ. Ако некешь бѣгать да имать сѣдъ како ѿ кѣмь кой вѣлива вода
ѿ кѣмова вина. Бежи погани зверѣ ѿзмой вино градъ, ако некешь бѣжить
да ѿ | — прекъсва се поради изгубени листи.

28. Priest as charmer (charm against water retention)

Часослов, 1498, Jerusalem, Library of the Othodox Patriarchate, LGOPI
№ 22, fol. 417v-418. The original text of the charm is published in Yatsimirskii, “К
истории ложных молитв”, p. 34. The ritual instructions are discussed in the subchapter
Ritual performance.

English translation:

*Prayer. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. On the banks of
Jordan, three angels. One ties, one unties, one says “Holy, holy, holy gingos angi God
eftenie. Jesus Christ defeated the enemy.” The priest to read it three times above clean
water, and to cross the water at every reading. And the ill person to drink the water.*

. мѣтѣд. Въ имѣ
 ѿца и сѣна. и стго дха:
 ѿв оны полъ ѿрѣана.
 три ѿгган. мѣднѣ
 ѣднѣ вежетъ. ѣ
 днѣ рѣшитъ. ѣднѣ
 гаеть. стъ. стъ
 стъ. гѣгосъ. ѿнгѣ
 гѣ. ѣфтенѣ. ѿ хс.
 повѣди врагѣ. И да
 прочтеть сѣеникъ
 на вѣдою чистою.
 ѿ. и на есако прочь
 тетѣ. да прѣ
 крѣтитъ вѣдѣ .:
 и да испнѣтъ болны .:

29. Priest as charmer (charm against hale)

Added folio, seventeenth century, in a *Служебник*, fifteenth century, Plovdiv, National Library, № 79. The original text of the charm is published in Tsonev, *Catalogue Plovdiv*, p. 49). For English translation, see above p. 208.

Миѣ марта ѿ днѣ прѣвнши именѣ стѣ мѣ мѣникъ на зтрѣ надъ
 хартѣ и да поидѣ поць (?) съ лѣтѣ, и да постави надъ мѣста ѿколѣ
 лозѣ или иивѣ — небой се граѣ. Слѣдватъ имената на 40-тѣхъ
 мѣченици.

30. On the road (charm for a good journey)

Требник, sixteenth century, Kiev, Library of the Seminary, № 193, fol. 227-227v. For English translation, see above p. 78.

МАТВА. КЪ ПОУТЬ ИДОУЩИМАЪ:

ГѢ БѢ НАШЪ. ХОДЯЩИ СЪ СЛОУГОЮ СВОИМАЪ ІАКОВОМАЪ И СТРА-
НЕНЪ БЫГЪ СЪ РАБОМАЪ СВОИМАЪ ІОСИФОМАЪ. ИДИ И СЪ СИМА
РАБОМАЪ ТРОИМАЪ, ІАКЪ. ВАКО ГѢ ИЗВАНИ ЕГО СЪ НАПАСТИ, И ВСАКОГО
ТРОУДА. (л. 227 об.) И ОУСТРОИ ЕГО КЪ МИРѢ И ВЪ ЭРАВЕИ ПЪТЬ-
ШЕСТЬСОКРАТИ СПОДОБИ ВСАКОУ ПРАВДѢ ДѢЮЩА ПО ЗАПОВѢДЕМА
ТВОИМАЪ. ИСПОЛНИ ЖИТИЕ ЕГО ПЪНИИ И ЗЕМНИИ ВАГЪ. ВЫЕШЛА ЖЕ ЕГО
НА ПОУТИ ПАВЫ ЭРАВЕА КЪЗВРАТИ. ХВАЛАЩА ИМА ТВОЕ СТОЕ. ІАКО
ТВОЕ ІЕСТЬ ЦРТЕО И СИЛА И СЛАВА ОЦА И СНА И СЪГО ДЪХА. ПИИѢ И
ПРНО И ВЪ ВѢКЫ ВѢКОМАЪ, АМИНЪ.

31. In the court

Требник, seventeenth century, Sofia, National Library, № 622, fol. 145-146. OCS edition
in (Tsonev 1923, 136). For English translations, see above p. 79.

МѢ НА СѢ ИДѢЩЕ .: . —

ГѢИ БЛѢВЫ ОЧЕ ВСТАХЪ РАНО ЗАОУТРА И ПОМЪЛЯХСЕ ГОУ БОУ И СТОИ
ДЪНИЦЕ, СЪЖЕ ИСХОДИТЬ ИЗОБА АВРАИМОВА СЪ КОВИМИ ТЪКЪ. КЛЮЧЕВЕ ЖЕЛЕЗНЫ
И ОЛОВЕНЕХЪ И МЕДЪЕНЕХЪ И ЗАКЛОЧИ ПЪ ОУМЪ И СРЪЦЕ И ЕЗИКЪ ІАКЕ О МНЕ
ЗЛО МЪСЛЕТЪ, НЕМИ ДА СТАНѢТЬ, А МЕНЕ ДА ПОЛОТИТЬ СЪЗНЪ ІАКО И ПРЪЗ-
ВИТЕРѢ (л. 146) ПОМОУ ІЕУАТЕ. ЗАКЛОНИ, ГѢИ СВЪРЪШНИКЪ МОЕМЪ ВЪМЪ И СРЪЦЕ
И ВСЕ ВЛАСТЕЛО И СОУДИАМЪ ІАКЪ РАБЪ БОЖИ ІМЪЕ ИЗИДОХЪ ВЪ КРАСОТЪ
И ОУ ЗАВИСТЬ ВСЕГДА И ПИИНА .: . —

32. Niketa against the forces of nature (charm against storm and wind)

Никетово молитвениче, 1787, Sofia, National Library, № 646, fol. 51v. For English
translation, see above p. 122 and p. 178.

Млѣтва ѿ вѣтра и ветра:

Во име оца и сѣна и сѣаго дѣха настѣнаю на вѣръ твою, сатано, видехъ бо те осуждена ѿ бѣга ѿ млѣти бжїа, но яко прахъ и пепель еси. Ѡ крѣте Исѣе, но яко аггѣль порячникъ мой еже ме хранитъ, ѿстѣпите ѿ мене, лѣкави бесове съ своими поспешники творцѣ бо моемъ хѣхъ хвалѣхъ воздаю ѿ немъ бѣ гдѣхъ моемъ сви те потрясоше се: тѣи бе стѣи Петъръ и Павелъ и престалъ бѣа стѣи Козма и Дѣмѣланъ и Акимъ и Ана аминъ и васи стѣи и мѣе да заклопите виламъ челюсть, заклопите уста дѣаволѣхъ, заклопите васакѣи неприазни чѣлхѣсть, верзете ихъ во море, заклопите вещицамъ оуста, заклопите и вампиромъ челюсти, верзете и въ море клокетеще и кипеще, тамо да пребѣвають до скончаніе века. Крѣте чѣсни славни и васехвални, покри и сохрани домъ са живѣющимъ идеже стоитъ млѣтва сия презъ днѣ до ноцѣ ѿ поцѣ до петли, ѿ петли до света и до века.

33. Niketa against the Devil

Никетово молитвениче, 1787, Sofia, National Library, № 646, fol. 61. For English translation, see above p. 122 and p. 178.

Млѣтва ѿ проклетого дѣавола и сатанѣ:

Ѡгиди проклета сатано ѿ васехъ .д. згли храма сего места ѿ сего ложа зде рабѣ бжїю Никетѣ — повланиетсе и спит и хоцетъ зде аггѣли прѣверми прѣдѣстоютъ ѿ васехъ горѣ елѣбнски держеще палици огне ѿгонеще васакѣ злобѣ ѿ зла сѣа и ложа сего возвѣ и возгласи апоѣтола Петра и Павла да прокълнетъ морѣ и вещицѣ и дѣавола и васе неприазни и нечистне дѣхѣи и ва васе вечерис и полунощи еѣа ни ѣци лаютъ ни петли пеютъ тогда ти провлета, сатано, накоетъ да не сотворишъ рабѣ своемъ Никетѣ — но иди въ свое гровство, проклинаю те со оцем стѣимъ дхомъ и нинѣ и прѣно . . .

34. Apostle Paul versus the snake (charm against snakebite)

Псалтур, 1479, Sofia, National Library, № 6, fol. 148r-149r. For English translation, see above p. 136.

и. стго пакла ѿ змиѣ. ариѣ когѡ. всекнствъ. поѡмствъ
 сириѣ творити: Да принесетсе кмодо ново. и сътворитсе къ кмоде крѣтѣ.
 съвсѣѣ послѣдованиѣ крѣта, и да напишетсе трѡ смѣ ѡколо крѣта ѡколо.
 къздвѣи мѡусѣи на стѣвнѣ, ищцѣлѣннѣхъ. късѣ до конца. и да ѡмѣстсе
 сѣрѣшнѡю кодою. покомѣсною ариѣ ѡбвѣстѣтсе ариѣ мѣ ни. а ти ѡзми
 ѡнствъ водѣ и ѡмѣи кмодо късѣ. и да ищнѣ вгнзени змиѣю ариѣ кавзѣ
 ѣ. ариѣ ли ни да ищнѣ ириѣи лѣкованиѣ. Слѣдва тропарѣ и извѣстната
 вече молитва, слѣдѣ когѡ слѣдва таѣ мѣтка : : — Къ имѣ ѡиѣ
 и сѣа и стго дѣа. ииода гонитѣ, ниѣ же утѣи съсвѣдѣ. ииодѡ ѡ ѡсн-
 талицѣи мѡусѣѡ къ синѣаю. и стграмажѣннѣми сѣхи розгѣи и лѣсѣ
 ѡхидѣа изыиѣши ѡ топаоти. всекнѣ ме къ дѣсною рѣкѣ, и ѡбеси сѣ.
 аѣже (л. 148^б) имѣи къ себе спав стго дѣа. и сѣю ѡтрѣ къ рожденѣ
 памени. и съжжѣна вѣ късѣ до конца. и ни ѡднѣ пакѡствъ ириѣ ѡ
 всекноксѣиѣ иѣѣ. къ сѣиѣ прѣложѣи сѣ и принѣ архгѣлѣ велѣни мѣхайѣлѣ.
 къзглѣси мѣ гѣѣ. Савлѣ пакѣе къстанѣ. и къспрѣми сѣю кнѣгѣ. и ѡбвѣ-
 щѣниѣ слѡко написанио сириѣ глѡбѣе заканиаю къ хѣ. и половнѣв рѡдѡкъ,
 зкѣрѣи пѣзѣающѣе по земаѣи. къ вѣ сътворилѣ иѣо и земаю и морѣ и къ
 невокозѣснѣи ѡгѡ прѣстѡ змиѣ пакѡствѣи заканиаю тѣ къ рѣкѣ ѡг-
 нѣннѣю. и пѣсходѣтѣ ѡ подножѣи ногѣ гѣю. и вѣ и сѣсѣ нашсѣмѣ иѣ хѣ.
 и къторѣ всекпѣтѣи ариѣлѣ. и клѣнансѣа змиѣ рѡдѡ. змиѣ тетрахлѣннѣа.
 змиѣ додекахлѣннѣа. змиѣ алгодрома. змиѣ двѡѣ на десѣте глѣннѣаго. змиѣ
 ѡгнѣскѣннѣаѣ. змиѣ кранѡвѣннѣаго. змиѣ двѡкѣсхѡннѣаго. змиѣ стѣрѣаниѣю.
 змиѣ пенѣннѣвѣю. змиѣ ѡхидѣно. и имѣ къ дѣсною странѣи иѣдѣ. утѡ любо ариѣ
 вѣствѣ. немоцнѣо иѣ ѡмѣв житѣи. Сирѣѣ къ рѡ скалѣкъ. иѣѣ постигнѣ
 вѣрнѣаго и стго аиѣла мѣтка (л. 149^а) и запрѣщѣннѣе. къ коѣи лѣсѣ уѣ
 вхлѣннѣиѣи вѣрѣѣ. уѣкъ же вѣзвѣннѣи ѡ иѣсѣ живѣ вѣдѣ. къ слакѣ ѡиѣ и
 сѣа и стго дѣа. и ниѣ и ириѣи и къ кѣкѣи къѡѣи ариѣ.

35. Crisis rite (charm againts water retention)

Часослов, 1498, Jerusalem, Library of the Othodox Patriarchate, LGOPI № 22, fol.
 417v-418. For English translation, see above p. 187.

. мѣтѣд. въ имѣ
 ѿца и сѣна. и стѣго дѣа:
 ѿв онѣ полѣ ѿѿрана.
 три ѿгган. мѣднѣ
 ѣднѣ вежеть. ѣ
 днѣ рѣшнѣ. ѣднѣ
 гаетѣ. стѣ. стѣ
 стѣ. гѣгосѣ. ѿггѣ
 гѣ. ѣфтенѣ. ѿ ѿс.
 повѣди врагѣ. И да
 прочтеть сѣченикѣ
 на вѣдою чистую.
 ѿ. и на всако прочь
 тетѣ. да прѣ
 крѣтитѣ вѣдѣ .:
 и да испнѣтъ болны .:

36. Charm against snakebite

Псалтир, thirteenth century, sine № et loco, fol. 263. OCS edition in Yatsimirskii, “К истории ложных молитв”, p. 64.

и́сѣу х̄с̄. ни ка

сарандара. сарандара марандара марандара ршхъ сетѣоусѣ
 хаза оулаты сетндарѣ дѣлты. ѿпѣль павѣл рахасѣ петръ салтасѣ
 аспнда дѣрасѣ каснанско дегенѣ. х̄с̄ дерѣти. амин. аминѣ.
 амин.

9. Bibliography

The bibliography does not have a section on unpublished primary sources, because this study is based exclusively on published materials.

As it is explained in chapter 2. Sources (pages 36-42 above), the medieval and early Bulgarian verbal charms have not been published as a separate collection, but only as part of various scholarly works. In other words, there is no verbal charm edition or editions that can be listed as primary sources. That is why this bibliography does not have a section on published sources either.

[Агапкина, Т. А.] Агапкина, Т. А. *Славянская мифология: энциклопедический словарь* (Slavic Mythology: Encyclopaedia). Moscow: Международные отношения, 2002.

[Агапкина, Т. А.] Агапкина, Т. А. *Восточнославянские лечебные заговоры в сравнительном освещении: Сюжетика и образ мира.* (East Slavic Healing Charms from the Comparative Point of View: Motives and Worldview). Moscow: Индрик, 2010.

Agapkina, Tatiana, Vladimir Karpov and Andrey Toporkov. "The Slavic and German Versions of the Second Merseburg Charm". *Incantatio* 3 (2013): 43-59.

Agapkina, Tat'iana and Andrei Toporkov. "Charm Indexes: Problems and Perspectives". In James Kapaló, Éva Pócs and William Ryan, ed., *The Power of Words: Studies of Charms and Charming in Europe*. Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2013, 71-99.

- [Almazov, A. I.] Алмазов, А. И. *Апокрифическите молитви, заклинания и заговори* (Apocryphal Prayers, Charms and Spells). Odessa: Летопис Новорос. университета, 1901, 221-340.
- [Angelov, B.] Ангелов, Б. and [M. Genov] М. Генов. *Стара българска литература (IX-XVIII в.) в примери, преводи и библиография.* (Old Bulgarian Literature (Ninth-Eighteenth Century) with Examples, Translations and Bibliography) Sofia: Български писател, 1922.
- [Angelov, B. St.] Ангелов, Б. Ст. “Апокрифи”. In *История на българската литература. I.* (History of the Bulgarian Literature, vol. I). Sofia: Българска Академия на Науките, 1962, 178-192.
- [Angelov, B. St.] Angelov, B. St. *Из старата българска, руска и сръбска литература.* (From the Old Bulgarian, Russian and Serbian Literature). Sofia: Българска Академия на Науките, 1958 (part one), 1967 (part two), 1978 (part three).
- [Angelov, Dimitŭr] Ангелов, Димитър. *Богомилството в България* (Bogomilism in Bulgaria). Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1980.
- [Angusheva-Tihanova, Adelina] Ангушева-Тиханова, Аделина. *Гадателните книги в старобългарската литература* (The Prognostication Books in Old Bulgarian Literature). Sofia: Време, 1996.
- [Angusheva, Adelina] Ангушева, Аделина and [Margaret Dimitrova] Маргарет Димитрова. “Другите авторитети: слова против магьосици и баячки в дамаскинарската традиция” (The Other Authorities: Sermons against Magicians and Charmers in the Tradition of the Damaskins). *Годишник на Софийския*

университет “Св. Климент Охридски” (Център за славяно-византийски проучвания “Иван Дуйчев”) 92 (11) (2002): 81-99.

Angusheva, Adelina and Margaret Dimitrova. “Medieval Slavonic Childbirth Prayers: Sources, Context and Functionality”. *Scripta & e-scripta* 2 (2004): 273-290.

[Arnaudov, M.] Арnaudов, М. *Студии върху българските обреди и легенди*, т. 1-2 (Studies on Bulgarian Rituals and Legends, vol. 1-2). Sofia: Българска Академия на Науките, 1971-1972

Asplund Ingemark, Camilla. *The Genre of Trolls: The Case of a Finland-Swedish Folk Belief Tradition*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2004.

[Atanasov, Petŭr] Атанасов, Петър. *Начало на българското книгопечатане* (Beginnings of Bulgarian Book-Printing) Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1959.

Atanassova, Diana. “The Prayer-Book of Niketa (No. 646 NBKM): A Case Study”. *Scripta & e-Scripta* 1 (2003): 187-196.

Bailey, Michael D. *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies. The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe*. Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Barb, A. A. “Three Elusive Amulets”. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964): 1-22.

Barb, A. A. “Antaura, the Mermaid and the Devil’s Grandmother”. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966): 1-24.

Barkalaja, Anzori. “Some Personal Notes about the Fieldwork (On the Examples of the Eastern Khantys)”. In Pille Runnel, ed., *Rethinking Ethnology and Folkloristics*. Tartu: NEFA Rŭhm, 2001, 144-158.

Beck, Hans-Georg. *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1971.

Bell, Catherine. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Bell, Catherine. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

- Betz, Hans Dieter, ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Borsje, Jacqueline. "Druid, Deer and "Words of Power": Coming to Terms with Evil in Medieval Ireland". In Katja Ritari and Alexandra Bergholm, ed. *Approaches to Religion and Mythology in Celtic Studies*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, 122-149.
- Bostock, J. Knight. *A Handbook in Old High German Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Oxford: Polity Press, 1994.
- Bozóky, Edina. *Charmes et prières apotropaiques*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2003.
- Caciola, Nancy. "Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture". *Past & Present* 152 (1996): 3-45.
- [Čausidis, Nikos] Чаусидис, Никос. "Оловен амулет со испишана молитва против "нежит" од градот Чрешче" (Lead Amulet with an Inscribed Prayer Against "Nezhit" from the City of Cresce). *Зборник на Музеите на Македонија (Археологија) new series* 1 (1995): 153-166.
- Conybeare, F. C. "The Testament of Solomon", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 11, 1 (1898): 1-45.
- Czirbusz, Géza. *A délmagyarországi bolgárok ethnológiai magánrajza* (The Ethnological Self-description of the South-Hungarian Bulgarians). Timișoara: Csanád-egyházmegyei könyvnyomda, 1882.
- Davies, Owen, "French Charmers and Their Healing Charms". In Jonathan Roper, ed., *Charms and Charming in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 91-112.

[Delcheva, Ruzha Atanasova] Делчева, Ружа Атанасова. “Индекси на разрешените и забранени книги в средновековна България” (Indexes of Permitted and Prohibited Books in Medieval Bulgaria). PhD thesis. Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, 2009.

Díaz Vera, Javier E. and Rosario Caballero, ed. *Textual Healing: Studies in Medieval English Medical, Scientific and Technical Texts*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2009.

Dimitrova, Margaret and Adelina Angusheva. “Protective Powers: Texts and Saints“. In Marija-Ana Dürriegl, Milan Mihaljević and Franjo Velčić, ed. *Glagoljica i hrvatski glagolizam. Zbornik radova s međunarodnoga zvanstvenog skupa povodom 100. obljetnice Staroslavenske Akademije i 50. obljetnice staroslavenskog instituta (Zagreb-Krk 2.-6. listopada 2002* (Glagolitic Alphabet and the Croatian Glagolitic Alphabet. Collection of papers from the International Conference on the Occasion of the Hundred Year Anniversary of the Slavic Academy and the Fifty Year Anniversary of the Institute of Old Church Slavonic (Zagreb-Krk, October 2-6, 2012). Zagreb: Staroslavenska Akademija, 2004, 355-366.

[Dinekov, Petŭr] Динеков, Петър *Стара българска литература* (Old Bulgarian Literature). София: Български писател, 1953.

[Dinekov, Petŭr] Динеков, Петър. *Похвала на старата българска литература*. (Laudation for the Old Bulgarian Literature). Sofia: Български писател, 1979.

[Dinekov, Petŭr] Динеков, Петър, ed., *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия*, том I. (Cyrillic-Methodian Encyclopaedia, vol.1). Sofia: Издателство на Българската Академия на Науките, 1985.

- [Doncheva, Lyudmila] Дончева, Людмила and [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов, “Апокрифна молитва от X-XI век върху оловен амулет от с. Одръци, Толбухинско” (Apocryphal Prayer from Tenth-Eleventh Century on a Lead Amulet from the Village of Odürtsi, Tolbuhin Region”. In [Velizar Velkov] Велизар Велков, ed. *Сборник в чест на акад. Димитър Ангелов* (Collecton of Essays in Honor of Acad. Dimitür Angelov), Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1994, 288-292.
- Dukova, U. “Das Bild des Drachen im bulgarischen Märchen”. *Fabula. Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung* 11 (1970): 207-252.
- Dundes, Alan, ed. *The Vampire, A Casebook*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.
- Dundes, Alan, Jerry W. Leach and Bora Özkök. “The Strategy of Turkish Boys’ Verbal Dueling Rhymes”. *The Journal of American Folklore* 83, 329 (1970): 325-349.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Fauth, Wolfgang. “Der christliche Reiterheilige des Sisinnios-Typs im Kampf gegen eine vielnamige Dämonin”. *Vigiliae Christianae* 53, 4 (1999): 401-425.
- Flint, Valerie I. J. *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*. Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Fortson, Benjamin W. *Indo-European Language and Culture: an Introduction*. Chichester UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Frankfurter, David. “Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells”. In Marvin W. Meyer and Paul Mirecki, ed. *Ancient Magic and*

Ritual Power (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129). Leiden: Brill, 1995, 451-470.

Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough: a Study in Magic and Religion*. London: Macmillan, 1992.

[Garena, Petŭr] Гарена, Петър and [Ivan Iliev]] Иван Илиев. “Новооткрит старобългарски надпис-заклинение от Кърджалийско” (Newly Discovered Old Church Slavonic Inscription-Charm from the Region of Kŭrdzhali). In *Културните текстове на миналото: носители, символи и идеи. Материали от Юбилейната международна научна конференция в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д.и. н. Казимир Попконстантинов, Велико Търново, 29-31 октомври 2003* (The Cultural Texts of the Past: Carriers, Symbols and Ideas. Materials from the Jubilean International Scholarly Conference in Honor of the 60th anniversary of Prof. Dr. Hab. Kazimir Popkonstantinov. Veliko Tŭrnovo, October 29-30, 2003), Sofia: Университетско издателство “Св. Климент Охридски”, 2005, 150-157.

Gaster, Moses. “200 Years of a Charm Against the Child-stealing Witch”. *Folk-Lore* 11 (1900): 129-62.

Gay, David Elton. “On the Christianity of Incantations”. In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms and Charming in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 32-46.

Geertz, Hildred. “An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, I”. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6, 1 (1975): 71-89.

van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960.

[Georgiev, E.] Георгиев, Е. *Литература на изострени борби в средновековна България* (Literature of Dramatic Struggles in Medieval Bulgaria). Sofia: Българска Академия на Науките, 1966.

[Georgieva, Ivanichka] Георгиева, Иваничка. *Българска народна митология* (Bulgarian Folk Mythology). Sofia: Наука и Изкуство, 1993.

[Gnutova, Svetlana Vital'uevna] ГнUTOва, Светлана Витальевна and [Elena Yakovlevna Zotova] Елена Яковлевна Зотова. *Кресты, иконы, складни. Медное художественное литье XI — начала XX века. Из собрания Центрального музея древнерусской культуры и искусства имени Андрея Рублева: Альбом* (Crosses, Icons, Repositories. Copper Casting from the Eleventh to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century. From the Collections of the Central Museum of Old Russian Culture and Art “Andrey Rubl'yov”. A Catalogue). Moscow: Интебрук-бизнес, 2000.

Golopentia, Sanda “Towards a Typology of Romanian Love Charms”. In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms and Charming in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 145-187.

Graf, Fritz. *Magic in the Ancient World*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Greenfield, Richard P. H. *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology*. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988.

Greenfield, Richard P. H. “Saint Sisinnios, the Archangel Michael and the Female Demon Gylou: the Typology of the Greek Literary Stories”. *Byzantina* 15 (1989): 83-141.

- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1854-1971.
- [Gura, A. V.] Гюра, А. В. *Символика животных в славянской народной традиции* (The Symbolism of Animals in Slavic Folk Tradition). Moscow: Индрик, 1997.
- Harris, Stephen L. and Gloria Platzner. *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*. Sacramento: California State University and Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000.
- Herjulfsdotter, Ritwa. "Swedish Snakebite Charms from a Gender Perspective". In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 54-61.
- Honko, Lauri. *Geisterglaube in Ingermanland*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1962.
- Honko, Lauri ed. *Science of Religion: Studies in Methodology*. The Hague: Mouton, 1979.
- Honko, Lauri "Empty Texts, Full Meanings: On Transformal Meaning in Folklore". *Journal of Folklore Research* 22, 1 (1985): 37-44.
- Honko, Lauri. "Types of Comparison and Forms of Variation". *Journal of Folklore Research*, 23, 2/3, Special Double Issue: The Comparative Method in Folklore (1986): 105-124.
- Honko, Lauri, Senni Timonen, Michael Branch, ed. *The Great Bear: A Thematic Anthology of Oral Poetry in the Finno-Ugrian Languages*. New York: Oxford University Press for the Finnish Literature Society, 1994.
- Honko, Lauri, ed. *Thick Corpus, Organic Variation and Textuality in Oral Tradition*. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2000.

[Hristova, Boryana] Христова, Боряна, [Darinka Karadzhoва] Даринка Караджова and [Nina Vutova] Нина Вутова. *Опис на славянските ръкописи в софийската народна библиотека*, том V (Catalogue and Description of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia, vol. V). Sofia: Edition of the National Library, 1996.

Hurwitz, Siegmund. *Lilith, the First Eve: Historical and Psychological Aspects of the Dark Feminine*. Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag, 1992.

Ilomäki, Henni. "Finnish Snake Charms". In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 163-172.

Jagić, Vatroslav. "Sredovječni liekovi, gatanja i vračanja: opisi i izvodi iz nekoliko južnoslovenskih rukopisa" (Medieval Cures, Divinations and Charms: Descriptions and Excerpts from Some South-Slavic Manuscripts). *Starine* 10 (1878): 81-126.

Kačanovskij, Vladimir. "Apokrifne molitve, gatanja i priče" (Apocryphal Prayers, Divinations and Legends). *Starine* 13 (1881): 150-163.

Kapaló, James Alexander. *Text, Context and Performance: Gagauz Folk Religion in Discourse and Practice*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011.

Kapaló, James Alexander, Éva Pócs and William Ryan, ed. *The Power of Words. Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe*. Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2013.

Kieckhefer, Richard. *Magic in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

- Kieckhefer, Richard. "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic". *The American Historical Review* 99, 3 (1994): 813-836.
- Klaniczay, Gábor. *The Uses of Supernatural Power: the Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 1990.
- Knuutila, Seppo. "How to Seize Mentalites". In Pille Runnel, ed. *Rethinking Ethnology and Folkloristics*. Tartu: NEFA Rühm, 2001, 17-53.
- [Kodov, Hristo] Кодов, Христо. "Един ръкописен лекарственник от миналия век" (A Handwritten Healers' Book from the Last Century). *Известия на Народния етнографски музей в София* 8-9 (1929).
- Kõiva, Mare. *Eesti Loitsud (Estonian Charms)*. Tallinn: Pegasus, 2011.
- [Konstantinova, Velichka] Константинова, Величка and [Kazimir Popkonstantinov] Казимир Попконстантинов. "Апокрифна молитва от X век върху оловна пластина" (Aporicphal Prayer from the Tenth Century on a Lead Lamella). *Die Slawischen Sprachen* 13 (1987): 45-54.
- Kovačević, Ljub. "Nekoliko priloga staroj srpskoj književnosti" (Some Contributions to the Old Serbian Literature). *Starine* 10 (1878): 274-284.
- Kriss, Rudolf and Hubert Kriss-Heinrich. *Volksglaube im Bereich des Islam. Bd. I & II*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1960 and 1962.
- [Kristanov, Tsvetan] Кристанов, Цветан and [Ivan Duichev] Иван Дуйчев. *Естествознанието в средновековна България. Сборник от исторически извори* (The Natural Sciences in Medieval Bulgaria - A Collection of Historical Sources). Sofia: Българска Академия на науките, 1954.

- Krojež, Monika. "Slovenian Charms between South Slavic and Central European Tradition". In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 145-162.
- [Киев, К.] Киев, К. Съдбата на старобългарската ръкописна книга през вековете (The Fate of the Old Bulgarian Hand-Written Book through the Centuries). София: Наука и изкуство, 1979.
- [Kvinto, Lidia] Квинто, Лидия and [Boris Drangov] Борис Дрангов, "Оловна пластинка с молитва и заклинание от Търновград (XIV век)" (Lead Lamella with Prayer and Charm from Tŭrnovo, fourteenth century). In *Сборник в чест на проф. Станчо Ваклинов* (Collection of Essays in Honor of Prof. Stancho Vaklinov). Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1984, 239-245.
- Maguire, Henry ed. *Byzantine Magic*. Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 1995.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Coral Gardens and Their Magic: a Study of the Methods of Tilling the Soil and of Agricultural Rites in the Trobriand Islands*. London, New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Mallow, D., D. Ludwig and G. Nilson, *True Vipers: Natural History and Toxinology of Old World Vipers*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 2003.
- Marcellus Empiricus. *De Medicamentis*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1889.
- [Marinov, Dimitŭr] Маринов, Димитър. *Народна вяра и религиозни народни обичаи* (Popular Beliefs and Popular Religious Customs). Sofia: Сборник за народни умотворения и народопис, 1914.

- Mathias, Elizabeth. "La Gara Poetica: Sardinian Shepherds' Verbal Dueling and the Expression of Male Values in an Agro-Pastoral Society". *Ethos* 4, 4 (1976): 483-507.
- Mathiesen, Robert "Magic in Slavia Orthodoxa: The Written Tradition". In Henry Maguire, ed. *Byzantine Magic*, Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 1995, 155-178.
- Mauss, Marcel. *A General Theory of Magic*. London, New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Merrifield, Ralph. *The Archeology of Ritual and Magic*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1987.
- Meyer, Marvin and Richard Smith, ed. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*. San Francisco: Harper, 1994.
- Mikhailova, Tatyana A., Jonathan Roper, Andrey L. Toporkov, Dmitry S. Nikolayev, ed. *Oral Charms in Structural and Comparative Light. Proceedings of the Conference of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research's (ISFNR) Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming. 27–29th October 2011, Moscow*. Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities, 2011.
- [Miltenova, Anisava] Милтенова, Анисава. "Към литературната история и типология на сборниците със смесено съдържание" (Concerning the Literary History and Typology of the Miscellanies). *Старобългарска литература* 7 (1980): 22-36.
- [Miltenova, Anisava] Милтенова, Анисава. "Към въпроса за сборниците със смесено съдържание в българската книжнина от XV-XVII век" (Concerning the Miscellanies in the Bulgarian Literature from the fifteenth-seventeenth century). In [Docho Lekov] Дочо Леков, ed. *Литература, общество, идеи* (Literature, Society, Ideas). Sofia: БАН, 1986, 66-87.

[Miltenova, A.] Милтенова, А. and [A. Kirilova] А. Кирилова. *Средновековни лековници и амулети* (Medieval Healers' Books and amulets). Sofia: Време, 1994.

[Minchev, G.] Минчев, Г. “Мястото на новооткритите листове от Синайския евхологий сред другите текстове от ръкописа. Филологически и литургически анализ на молитвите от денонощния богослужебен цикъл (asmatike akolouthia)” (The Place of the Newly-Discovered Folia of the Euchologium Sinaiticum among the Other Texts in the Manuscript. Philological and Liturgical Analysis of the Prayers from the Twenty-four Hours Church Service Cycle (asmatike akolouthia). *Palaeobulgarica/ Старобългаристика* 17 (1993): 12-36.

Nahtigal, Rajko. *Euchologium Sinaiticum. Starocerkevnrnoslavanski glagolski spomenik. I del. fotografski postenek* (Euchologium Sinaiticum. Old Church Slavonic Glagolitic Manuscript. Part I. Photographs). Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1941.

Nahtigal, Rajko. *Euchologium Sinaiticum. Starocerkevnrnoslavanski glagolski spomenik. II del. Tekst s komentarjem* (Euchologium Sinaiticum. Old Church Slavonic Glagolitic Manuscript. Part II. Text with Commentary). Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1942.

Nelson, Felicitas H. *Talismans and Amulets of the World*. New York: Sterling, 2000.

Obolensky, Dimitri. *The Bogomils: a Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

- Ohrt, Ferdinand. *Danmarks Trylleformler 1* (Magic Formulae of Denmark). Copenhagen, Kristiania: FF publications, Northern series, 3, 1917.
- [Ovcharov, Nikolay] Овчаров, Николай. “Проклетият нежит. Между археологията и етнологията” (The Cursed Nezhit. Between Archeology and Ethnology). *Българска етнология* 1-2 (1997): 104-106.
- [Ovcharov, Nikolay] Овчаров, Николай. “Няколко слабо известни апокрифни молитви от 1497/1498г.” (Some Little-Known Apocryphal Prayers from 1497/1498). *Българска етнология* 3-4 (1998): 81-88.
- [Panayotov, V.] Панайотов, В. “Системността в славянските богомилски текстове”. In *Преславска книжовна школа т. 7* (The Preslav Literary School Vol. 7). Sofia: Научен Център “Преславска книжовна школа”, 2004, 308-315.
- Parish, Helen. *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe: A Reader*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.
- [Penev, Boyan.] Пенев, Боян. *История на новата българска литература* (History of the New Bulgarian Literature). Sofia: Министерство на народното просвещение (Държавна печатница), 1976.
- [Petkanova, Donka] Петканова, Донка. “Фолклорът в апокрифните молитви” (The Folklore in the Apocryphal Prayers). *Български фолклор* 2 (1976): 28-40.
- [Petkanova, Donka] Петканова, Донка. *Стара българска литература в седем тома. Том I: Апокрифи* (Old Bulgarian Literature in Seven Volumes. Vol. I Apocrypha). Sofia: Издателство на Българската Академия на Науките, 1981.
- [Petkanova, Donka] Петканова, Донка. “Богомилството и апокрифната литература” (Bogomilism and Apocryphal Literature). *Palaeobulgarica* 3 (1982): 143-153.

- [Petkanova, Donka] Петканова, Донка, ed. *Старобългарска литература. Енциклопедичен речник* (Old Bulgarian Literature. Encyclopedia). София: Петър Берон, 1992.
- [Petkova, Svetla] Петкова, Светла. “Средновековните лековници. Специфика на културното изразяване” (The Medieval Healer’s Books. Specifics of the Cultural Expression). *Старобългарска литература* 37-38 (2007): 208-227.
- [Petkova, Svetla] Петкова, Светла. “Неволите на тялото в средновековните лековници” (The Troubles of the Body in the Medieval Healers’ Books). *Електронно списание LiterNet* 2 (2009). The article is only available on the internet, no pagination.
- Pócs, Éva. *Magyar Ráolvasások, vol. 2* (Hungarian Charms). Budapest: A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtárának Kiadása, 1986.
- Pócs, Éva. *Fairies and Witches at the Boundary of South-Eastern and Central Europe*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia/Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1989.
- Pócs, Éva. *Between the Living and the Dead: A Perspective on Witches and Seers in the Early Modern Age*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998.
- Pócs, Éva. “Nyers és főtt”: Halál és élet. A kulturális vívmányok helye az európai parasztság archaikus világgképében” (Raw and Cooked: Death and Life. The Place of Cultural Achievements in the Archaic Worldview of the European Peasantry). In Éva Pócs. *Magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán* (Hungarian Folk-beliefs on the Border between Central and Eastern Europe). Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002, 41-49.

- Pócs, Éva. “Más világok: másvilágok. Az idegenek az újkori hiedelemrendszerekben” (Other Worlds: the Other World. The Foreigners in the Early Modern Belief-systems). In Éva Pócs. *Magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán* (Hungarian Folk-beliefs on the Border between Central and Eastern Europe). Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002, 50-63.
- Pócs, Éva. “Sors, bábák, boszorkányok. Archaikus sorsképletek Közép- és Kelet-Európa hiedelemrendszereiben” (Fates, Midwives, Witches. Archaic Fate Patterns in the Belief-systems of Central and Eastern Europe). In Éva Pócs. *Magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán* (Hungarian Folk-beliefs on the Border between Central and Eastern Europe). Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002, 78-105.
- Pócs, Éva. “Én vagyok mindennél nagyobb orvos, te vagy mindennél nagyobb bájós”: egyházi benedikció-paraszti ráolvasás” (“I Am the Greatest Doctor of All, You Are the Greatest Charmer of All”: Church Benedictions – Peasants’ Charms). In Éva Pócs. *Magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán* (Hungarian Folk-beliefs on the Border between Central and Eastern Europe). Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002, 173-211.
- Pócs, Éva. “Lilith és kísérete”. Gyermekágyas-démonoktól védő ráolvasások Délkelet-Európában és Közel-Keleten” (“Lilith and Her Company”. Verbal Charms against Childbed Demons from Southeastern Europe and the Middle East). In Éva Pócs. *Magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán* (Hungarian Folk-beliefs on the Border between Central and Eastern Europe). Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002, 213-238.
- Pócs, Éva and Gábor Klaniczay, ed. *Demons, Spirits, Witches, Volume 1: Communicating with the Spirits*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005.

Pócs, Éva and Gábor Klaniczay, ed. *Demons, Spirits, Witches, Volume 2: Christian Demonology and Popular Mythology*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006.

Pócs, Éva and Gábor Klaniczay, ed. *Demons, Spirits, Witches, Volume 3: Witchcraft Mythologies and Persecutions*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008.

Pócs, Éva. “Miracles and Impossibilities in Magic Folk Poetry”. In Jonathan Roper, ed., *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 27-53.

Pócs, Éva. *Hiedelemszövegek (Belief Narratives)*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2012.

Pócs, Éva. *Ráolvasások. Gyűjtemény a legújabb korból (1851-2012) (Verbal Charms. Collection from the Modern Period)*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2014.

[Popkonstantinov, Kazimir] Попконстантинов, Казимир and [Georgy Atanassov] Георги Атанасов, “Оловна пластинка с надпис от X век” (Lead Lamella with Inscription from Tenth Century). In *Плиска-Преслав, том 6 (Pliska-Preslav, vol. 6)*. Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1993), 149-151.

[Popkonstantinov, Kazimir] Попконстантинов, Казимир. “Оловни пластини с надписи” (Lead Lamellae with Inscriptions). In [Petar Dinekov] Петър Динеков, ed. *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия, том 2 (Cyrillo-Methodian Encyclopedia, vol.2)*. Sofia: Българска Академия на Науките, Институт за литература, академично издателство "Марин Дринов", 1995, 850–853.

[Popkonstantinov, Kazimir] Попконстантинов, Казимир. “Молитва против нежит върху амулет от X век от Пъкуйул луй Соаре” (Prayer against the Nezhit on a

Tenth Century Amulet from Păcuiul lui Soare). In *Българите в северното причерноморие*, том 6 (The Bulgarian on the Northern Shores of the Black Sea, vol. 6). Veliko Tŭrnovo: Университетско издателство, 1997, 123-129.

[Popkonstantinov, Kazimir] Попконстантинов, Казимир. “Оловен амулет с апокрифен текст от Варненския музей” (Lead Amulet with Arcyphal Text from the Museum in Varna). In *Търновската книжовна школа и християнската култура в източна Европа* (The Literary School in Tŭrnovo and the Christian Culture in Eastern Europe). Veliko Tŭrnovo: Университетско издателство, 2002, 283-286.

[Popkonstantinov, Kazimir] Попконстантинов, Казимир. “Кирилица и глаголица срещу Дявола, или още един оловен амулет от X век” (Cyrillic and Glagolitic Letters against the Devil, or One More Lead amulet from Tenth Century). *Palaeobulgarica/Старобългаристика* 28, 4 (2004): 69-75.

[Popkonstantinov, Kazimir] Попконстантинов, Казимир. “Заклинателни молитви върху оловни амулети от средновековна България и паралелите им вtreбници от средновековна Сърбия” (The Conjurative Charms from Lead Amulets from Medieval Bulgaria and Their Parallels in Books of Occasional Prayers from Medieval Serbia). *Зборник радова Византолошког института/Recueil des travaux de l'Institut d'études byzantines* 46 (2009): 341-351.

Pradel, Fritz. *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters*. Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1907.

- Roper, Jonathan. "Traditional Verbal Charms with Particular Reference to the Estonian and English Charms-Traditions". MA thesis, University of Sheffield, 1997.
- Roper, Jonathan, ed. *Charms and Charming in Europe*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- Roper, Jonathan. *English Verbal Charms*, (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2005).
- Roper, Jonathan, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming. International Research in Verbal Magic*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Roper, Jonathan. "Charms, Change and Memory: Some Principles Underlying Variation". *Folklore- Electronic Journal of Folklore* 9 (1998): 51-70.
- Roper, Jonathan. "Typologising English Charms". In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms and Charming in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 128-144.
- Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984.
- Ryan, W. F. *The Bathhouse at Midnight: An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia*. London: Sutton Publishing and University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

- Ryan, W. F. "Eclecticism in the Russian Charm Tradition". In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms and Charming in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 113-127.
- Ryan, W. F. "Ancient Demons and Russian Fevers". In Charles Burnett and W. F. Ryan, ed. *Magic and the Classical Tradition*. London: Warburg Colloquia, 2005.
- [Shniter, Maria] Шнитер, Мария. *Молитва и Магия* (Prayer and Magic). Sofia: Университетско издателство "Св. Климент Охридски", 2001.
- [Shniter, Maria] Шнитер, Мария. "Молитвите против природни бедствия в новооткритата част на Euch. Sin. и техните късни южнославянски съответствия" (The Prayers Against Natural Disasters in the Newly Discovered Parts of the Euchologion Sinaiticum and Their Late Slavonic Correspondences). In [Anisava Miltenova] Анисава Милтенова, ed. *Петти достойтъ. Сборник в памет на Стефан Кожухаров* (Collected Volume in Memoriam Stefan Kozhuharov). Sofia: Издателски център „Боян Пенев“, 2003, p. 112-124.
- Siikala, Anna-Leena. "Variation in the Incantation and Mythical Thinking: The Scope of Comparative Research." *Journal of Folklore Research*, 23, 2/3, special double issue: The Comparative Method in Folklore (1986): 187-204.
- Skemer, Dan C. *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.
- Smallwood, T. M. "The Transmission of Charms in English, Medieval and Modern". In Jonathan Roper, ed., *Charms and Charming in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 11-31.

- Smith, William. *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1867.
- Smith, William Robertson. *Religion of the Semites*. New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002.
- Spamer, Adolf. *Romanusbüchlein: historisch-philologischer Kommentar zu einem deutschen Zauberbuch*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958.
- Spier, Jeffrey. "Medieval Byzantine Magical Amulets and Their Tradition". *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 56 (1993): 25-62.
- [Sprostranov, E.] Спространов, Е. "Народни лековници" (Folk Healers' Books). *Сборник за народни умотворения, наука и книжнина* 22-23 (1906-1907).
- Stannard, Jerry. "Marcellus of Bordeaux and the Beginnings of the Medieval *Materia Medica*". *Pharmacy in History* 15 (1973): 48-51.
- Stannard, Jerry. "Rezeptliteratur as Fachliteratur". In William Eamon, ed., *Studies on Medieval Fachliteratur. Proceedings of the special session on medieval Fachliteratur of the Sixteenth International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan (U.S.A.), May 10, 1981*. Brussel: Omirel UFSAL, 1982, 1-28.
- Stark, Laura. *Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises: Ritual and the Supernatural in Orthodox Karelian Folk Religion*. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2002.
- Stark-Arola, Laura. "Christianity and the Wilderness: Syncretisms in Karelian Magic as Culture-Specific Strategies." In Ülo Valk, ed. *Studies in Folklore and Popular Religion* vol 2. Tartu: University of Tartu, 1999, pp. 93-120.

[Stefanova-Georgieva, Krasimira] Стефанова-Георгиева, Красимира. “Оловна пластинка с надпис на старобългарски език от средновековното селище при с. Крън, Казанлъшко” (Lead Lamella with Inscription in Old Church Slavonic from the Medieval Settlement near the village of Krŭn, region of Kazanlŭk). In *Културните текстове на миналото: носители, символи и идеи. Материали от Юбилейната международна научна конференция в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д..и. н. Казимир Попконстантинов, Велико Търново, 29-31 октомври 2003* (The Cultural Texts of the Past: Carriers, Symbols and Ideas. Materials from the Jubilean International Scholarly Conference in Honour of the 60th anniversary of Prof. Dr. Hab. Kazimir Popkonstantinov. Veliko Tŭrnovo, October 29-30, 2003), Sofia: Университетско издателство “Св. Климент Охридски”, 2005, 148-149.

Stewart, Charles. *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture*. Princeton N. H.: Princeton University Press, 1991.

[Stoyanov, Manyo] Стоянов, Маньо and [Hristo Kodov] Христо Кодов. *Опис на славянските ръкописи в софийската народна библиотека, том III* (Catalogue and Description of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia, vol. III). Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1964.

[Stoyanov, Manyo] Стоянов, Маньо and [Hristo Kodov] Христо Кодов. *Опис на славянските ръкописи в софийската народна библиотека, том VI* (Catalogue and Description of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia, vol. VI). Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1971.

Stoyanov, Yuri. *The Other God: Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy*.
New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

[Stoyanov, Yuri] Стоянов, Юри. *Другият бог. Дуалистичните религии от
Античността до катарската ерес* (The Other God: Dualist Religions from
Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy). Sofia: Кралица Маб, 2006.

Tambiah, Stanley. *Culture, Thought and Social Action: an Anthropological Perspective*.
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Tarnanidis, Ioannis C. *The Slavonic Manuscripts Discovered in 1975 at St. Catherine's
Monastery on Mount Sinai*. Thessaloniki: St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai
and the Hellenic Association for Slavic Studies, 1988.

Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies of Popular Beliefs in
Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England*. London: Penguin Press, 1971.

Thomas, Keith. "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II". *The Journal of
Interdisciplinary History* 6, 1 (1975): 91-109.

Thompson, R. Campbell. *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia. Vol. I "Evil Spirits"*.
London: Luzac, 1903.

Thompson, R. Campbell. *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia. Vol. II "Fever
Sickness" and "Headache"*. London: Luzac, 1904.

Thorndike, Lynn. *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols. New York:
Columbia University Press, 1923-1958.

[Tihonravov, N.] Тихонравов, Н. *Памятники отреченной русской литературы*.
(Records of the Prohibited Russian Literature). Moscow: Университетская
типография, 1863.

- Timotin, Emanuela. “*Ieși, năjite, pricăjite...* de la molitvele mincinoase le descântece.” (Get out, nezhit, cursed one... from False Prayers to Verbal Charms). *Limba română* 55 (2006): 72-83.
- Timotin, Emanuela. *Descântecele manuscrise românești (secolele al XVII-lea – al XIX-lea)* (The Romanian Manuscript Charms (17th – 19th centuries). Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2010.
- Timotin, Emanuela. “The *năjit* between Prayers and Charms. A Study on the Romanian Manuscript Tradition”. In James Alexander Kapaló, Éva Pócs and W. F. Ryan, ed. *The Power of Words. Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012, 216-230.
- [Todorova-Pirgova, Iveta] Тодорова-Пиргова, Ивета. *Баяния и магии* (Charms and Magic). Sofia: Академично издателство "Марин Дринов", 2004.
- [Tsibranska-Kostova, Mariyana] Цибранска-Костова, Марияна and [Elka Mircheva] Елка Мирчева, *Зайковски требник от XIV век. Изследване и текст* (Zaykovski Trebnik form the Fourteenth Century. Analysis and Text). Sofia: Валентин Траянов, 2012.
- Tsiklauri, Meri and David Hunt. “The Structure and Use of Charms in Georgia, the Caucasus”. In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming. International Research on Verbal Magic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 260-272.
- [Tsonev, Venyo] Цонев, Беньо. *Опис на ръкописите и старопечатните книги на Народната библиотека в София*, том I (Catalogue and Description of the

Manuscripts and the Early Printed Books in the National Library in Sofia, vol. I).
Sofia: Edition of the National Library, 1910.

[Tsonev, Venyo] Цонев, Беньо. *Славянски ръкописи и старопечатни книги на Народната библиотека в Пловдив* (The Slavic Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in the National Library in Plovdiv). Sofia: Edition of the Plovdiv Library, 1920.

[Tsonev, Venyo] Цонев, Беньо. *Опис на славянските ръкописи в софийската народна библиотека*, том II (Catalogue and Description of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the National Library in Sofia, vol. II). Sofia: Edition of the National Library, 1923.

Turner, Victor. *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1967.

Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1969.

Vaitkevičienė, Daiva, ed. *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai: gydymo formulės/Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms*. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2008.

Vaitkevičienė, Daiva. "Lithuanian and Latvian Charms: Searching for Parallels". In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming. International Research on Verbal Magic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 186-213.

Vassiliev, Athanasius. *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina. Pars Prior*. Moscow: Universitas Caesareae, 1893.

[Velinova, Vasya] Велинова, Вася. "Из българо-сръбските книжовни връзки през XIII в." ("On the Bulgarian-Serbian Literary Connections in Thirteenth

Century”). *Зборник радова Византолошког института/ Recueil des travaux de l'Institut d'études byzantines* 47 (2012): 162-177.

Vermeir, Koen. “Vampires as “Creatures of the Imagination”: Theories of Body, Soul, and Imagination in Early Modern Vampire Tracts (1659-1755)”. In Y. Haskell, ed., *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012, 341-373.

Versnel, H. S. “The Poetics of the Magical Charm - An Essay in the Power of Words”. In Marvin W. Meyer and Paul Mirecki, ed. *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129)*. Leiden: Brill, 1995, p. 105-158.

Vlavianos, Stéphanie. *La figure du mage à Byzance de Jean Damascène à Michel Psellos (8.- fin 11. siècles)*. Paris: Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes, École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 2013.

[Vlasova, Z.] Власова, З. “К изучению поэтики устных заговоров” (Towards the Study of the poetics of Oral Verbal Charms). In [S. N. Azbelev] С. Н. Азбелев, ed., *Русский фольклор XIII: Русская народная проза (Russian Folklore XIII: Russian Folk Prose)*. Leningrad: Наука, 1972.

Weiner, Annette B. “From Words to Objects to Magic: Hard Words and the Boundaries of Social Interaction”. *Man* 18, 4 (1983): 690-709.

Wilson, Stephen. *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-modern Europe*. London: Hambledon and London, 2004.

Winkler, H. A. *Salomo und die Karina – Eine orientalische Legende von der Bezwingung einer Kindbettdämonin durch einen heiligen Helden*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1931.

Wolf-Knuts, Ulrika. “Charms as a Means of Coping”. In Jonathan Roper, ed. *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 62-70.

[Yanin, V. L.] Янин, В. Л. and [A. A. Zaliznyak] А. А. Зализняк. Берестяные грамоты из раскопок 1990-1996 гг. (Birch Charters from the Excavations in Years 1990-1996). Moscow: Наука, 2000.

[Yatsimirskii, A. I.] Яцимирский, А. И. “К истории ложных молитв в южнославянской письменности” (On the History of False Prayers in South Slavic Literature). *Известия Отделения русского языка и словесности* 18, 3 (1913): 1-102 and *Известия Отделения русского языка и словесности* 18, 4 (1913): 16-126.

[Zelenin, D. K.] Зеленин, Д. К. *Избранные труды. Очерки русской мифологии: Умершие неестественною смертью и русалки* (Collected Works. Essays on Russian Mythology: The Dead from Unnatural Death and the *Rusalki*). Moscow: Индрик, 1995.